



**CLOSING STATEMENT
PRESIDENT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**

**FIRST HIGH-LEVEL SYMPOSIUM IN PREPARATION FOR THE 2012 UN
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION FORUM**

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear friends of the DCF,

Following two exceptional days of rich discussion, I would like to use this opportunity to once more express our special thanks to the Government of Mali for hosting this important event and the government of Switzerland for its generous support.

This meeting would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of the staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mali, the UN team in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the UNDP Mali country team as well as the many other helping hands involved in preparation of the event.

I also wish to acknowledge and sincerely thank the moderators, panelists and participants for so generously sharing your insights and exchanging lessons learned. Our frank and candid discussions has produced a wealth of ideas.

I would like to share with you the key conclusions of the Bamako symposium

- In many countries, the world economic crisis has dampened hopes that the Millennium Development Goals would be realized by 2015.
- Ever growing attention should be given to the need to maximize and demonstrate the results of development cooperation. This is a responsibility towards the poorest countries and people.
- The impact of aid should be assessed with regard to these overarching development goals – while bearing in mind the concern to ensure that it is achieved in a cost effective way. Aid should improve the lives of the poor. It should lead to greater empowerment, human rights and gender equality.

- It is important to understand better how development cooperation should be planned and delivered to maximize progress towards national development goals and the MDGs.
- While short term results build support for development cooperation, it is important to aim for medium term and long term results. Clear benchmarks should be established to make development results measurable and evaluable.
- Many commitments have been made – both in the United Nations and in the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action to improve the quality of aid and, through it, its impact.
- Inclusive leadership and ownership of developing countries is critical to direct development cooperation to the areas and sectors where it will have the greatest impact. It should drive the definition of results to be achieved from development cooperation – as well as their monitoring and evaluation.
- Multiple conditionalities continue to hinder national ownership and leadership. In cases where they are needed; they should be drastically reformed; rooted in national strategies; agreed between donor and programme countries, as well as rationalized among donors.
- While providing many opportunities, the growing number of development actors challenges programme countries in coordinating aid. There is a need to better understand the results that can be expected from South-South cooperation and its comparative advantage.
- An all out effort should be launched - in partnership with developed countries - to build capacities across the board, including in the area of policy making, monitoring and evaluation and statistics. Without this, the poorest countries will not be able to shape the development effectiveness agenda nor to influence aid quality at national level.
- Engaging civil society in development cooperation processes, is essential to ensure strong and inclusive national ownership and results. The capacities of its representatives and organizations should be strengthened.
- Robust mutual accountability mechanisms are needed between donor and programme countries. Common results frameworks with a limited number of joint indicators and targets for individual donors are a good instrument to rectify the imbalances between donors and recipients in aid coordination.
- Transparency and access to information on aid is also critical in ensuring accountability within countries.
- There needs to be greater political will to change development cooperation behaviours in response to mutual accountability reviews.

- Least developed countries (LDCs) not only face the greatest structural challenges to development – but also receive aid of a lesser quality than other developing countries. Countries in post conflict situations face even greater constraints.
- The commitments on increasing aid to LDCs have not been followed through. Aid allocation among countries should ensure that no poor country is left under-aided.
- Aid should be geared to fund evenly the priorities of LDCs, including infrastructure, the productive sector and agriculture. Delivering more aid through budget support, using countries' own systems, reducing conditionalities, improving predictability and enhancing flexibility of aid are all critical.
- It is hoped that the fourth United Nations Conference on LDCs from 9 to 13 May 2011 in Istanbul will revive these international commitments.
- A framework should be developed to improve accountability between LDCs and their donors on commitments relating to the quantity and quality of aid. This would support the reviews of the implementation of the Istanbul programme of Action at all levels.
- In the area of education, global accountability mechanisms are in place. But they need to become more effective. At national level, countries have put in place sectoral accountability mechanisms. The adoption of one strategy with nationally defined indicators is critical and should serve as the basis for donors' support.
- The United Nations Development Cooperation Forum has an important role in carrying them forward and in keeping under review whether and how aid achieves results.
- For development to take off, ambitious goals and targets need to be set for development cooperation and for supporting country –led development – even if it is sometimes perceived as “risks”

Ladies and gentlemen,

- There is no doubt that the conclusions of this symposium should enrich preparations for the High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan in November 2011. It, therefore, remains for me to thank you most sincerely for your participation and wish all of you bon voyage as you return to your respective destinations.
- I thank you.