



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

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

“Expectations for the Development Cooperation Forum in 2012”

Bamako, Mali 5 May 2011

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Friends of the DCF,

I am delighted to join the Minister of Education in welcoming you to this meeting. I would like to begin by thanking the Government of Mali for hosting this High-level Symposium in Bamako.

Mali has set the trail in many areas. It has proactively promoted aid effectiveness. It has mobilized donors around its national development priorities. It is bringing the United Nations system together as a volunteer in the “Delivering as One” approach.

Thus, launching preparations for the Development Cooperation Forum in Bamako augurs well for the 2012 Forum.

We are fortunate that we have once again with us such a diverse mix of distinguished policy makers and experts from developing and developed countries, from different Ministries, parliaments, local authorities and a wide range of civil society organizations and multilateral institutions.

This “multi-stakeholder” character has been a hallmark of the DCF.

Heads of State and Government created the Forum in 2005 to respond to the sea change in development cooperation. They wanted a platform to foster coherence among the soaring number development cooperation actors.

They wanted a forum to spearhead the reflection to increase and improve development cooperation.

The Forum has been injecting new ideas into the debate on development cooperation. It amplifies the views of the poorest countries and other countries and actors.

Five years on, the work of the DCF is of even greater urgency. The prospects for a global economic recovery remain uncertain. Food and oil prices are at record highs. The impact of climate change is increasingly being felt. There is a real danger that hard won development gains are being reversed.

At the same time, the world economic situation is stifling aid budgets. Doing more with less has become the new slogan.

Some speak of an aid fatigue.

We hear pessimistic views about the impact of aid.

Our best defence to stem the tide of aid cuts is to demonstrate that aid works.

We hope that our discussions will add to the evidence that aid does deliver sustainable broad-based development results. That aid works when it is country owned and led, and underpinned by strong mutual accountability frameworks.

We will discuss whether developing countries are truly in the lead to define, spur and evaluate aid results.

All development cooperation actors are accountable on whether aid impacts on development and the lives of the poor. We will reflect on this accountability is best institutionalized.

At Istanbul next week, new commitments will be adopted to tear down the walls that lock LDCs in deep poverty.

We will look at how to ensure follow-through on these commitments. We will outline the broad lines of a framework for accountability on quantity and quality of aid to Least Developed Countries.

Next week, the key messages from Bamako will be presented at a Special Event at the fourth United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries.

The Bamako symposium will also make an important contribution to the OECD/DAC Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness to be held in Busan, in the Republic of Korea, in November 2011. A contribution rooted in the rich debate which I know we will have here.

We are charting the course for a successful Development Cooperation Forum in 2012. After Bamako, we will gather in Luxembourg in October to debate the role of aid in mobilizing development finance that impacts on the lives of the poor. In the first quarter of 2012, we will reconvene to examine the interlinkages between development cooperation and sustainable development – ahead of the Rio plus 20 Conference.

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf recently wrote: “Aid should, of course, never be an end in itself. Provided that it is delivered on the basis of being timely, temporary, and targeted, it can save lives and transform life chances in today's developing world”

This is a good message to keep in mind as we start in this symposium.

Thank you.
