

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 31 January 2010 - Secretary-General's remarks to the Summit of the African Union - "An Agenda for Prosperity and Peace"

Your Excellency Colonel Muammar Al-Qadhafi, Chairperson of the African Union, Your Excellency Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Your Excellency Jean Ping, Chairperson of the African Commission,

Distinguished Heads of State and Government of the African Union, Your Excellency Prime Minister Zapatero of Spain, Your Excellency Deputy Secretary-General of the League of Arab States,

Excellencies, Honorable Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to be back in Ethiopia with the leaders of this great continent.

I am proud to reaffirm the United Nations' special relationship with the African Union – and to do so just after you have flown the new flag of the African Union for the first time.

Africa's future is one of my top priorities.

We come together to build peace and prosperity for all Africans.

We also gather in solidarity and sorrow.

The nation of Haiti is an ocean away, yet I know it is so close to the hearts and minds of the African people. Haiti's history and culture are deeply rooted in Africa.

Today, the Haitian people are enduring one of the greatest humanitarian challenges in recent years and loss of life on an unimaginable scale.

The United Nations has suffered the largest human loss in our history.

Our team in Haiti was led by a son of Africa.

My Special Representative Hedi Annabi of Tunisia was the soul of United Nations peacekeeping.

I thank the African Union and your citizens for reaching out to Haiti in this time of need.

Despite all of the difficulties, we have hope.

When I was in Port au Prince, I saw heartbreaking devastation. But I also saw the things that no earthquake can destroy. Dignity. Resilience. Faith.

On the streets of Port au Prince, people told me they want jobs, opportunity, a better future.

Give us the tools, they said. We will build.

That is the aspiration of people all over the world.

Haiti's plight is a reminder of our wider responsibilities.

Excellencies,

Ten years ago, the international community began a new century with a compact to tackle extreme poverty. To promote development. To save our planet from catastrophic climate change. To focus on the priorities and needs of Africa.

We have made great strides toward the Millennium Development Goals. But there is not much time to the 2015 deadline, and still much distance to travel.

The global recession, the energy crisis, food insecurity, climate change – all these have made development more difficult, yet more urgent.

We must remember that the MDGs are more than numerical targets – they hold the world's hopes, dreams, and shared commitments for ending extreme poverty, hunger and disease and ensuring sustainable development for all.

Now is the critical time to mobilize action.

That is why we will convene a special MDG Summit meeting alongside the opening of the General Assembly of the United Nations in September in New York.

The Summit will focus on four priorities.

First, we will mobilize support for scaling up MDG successes.

We have seen a sharp decrease in malaria and measles deaths across the continent – vital gains in primary school enrollment – marked improvements in child health.

We must build on these successes and help spread them around the world.

Second, the September Summit meeting on MDGs will shine attention on gaps that need urgent action.

Too many women still die in childbirth. Too many children still never live to see their fifth birthday. And too many women are unable to realize their full potential.

Emerging donors are offering new sources of support and investment – growing South-South cooperation is extremely encouraging. But that does not remove the responsibility of traditional donors to deliver on their promises.

Third, we will emphasize action in priority policy areas.

Our development strategies should generate jobs -- productive employment and decent work for all Africans, with a special focus on the vulnerable -- women and young people.

The most important employment sector remains agriculture, with more than half of the workforce. Africa's smallholder farmers can achieve a Green Revolution.

And of course, we must invest in women and girls. When we empower women, we empower Africa.

We should also harness the full potential of knowledge and technology, including Information and Communication technology (ICTs).

I commend this Summit for highlighting ICTs and development.

Fourth, we must build a coalition for action.

In 2007, I convened the MDG Africa Steering Group. We brought together the world's key multilaterals and regional institutions, including the AU Commission.

Today, I am announcing the creation of the MDG Advocacy Group, eminent personalities from all walks of life who will raise awareness and emphasize Africa's MDG priorities. This group will sound the global call for action at the September Summit and put their influence to work for this vital cause.

I call on you to personally participate in the September Summit. Bring your ideas and stories of successful efforts to share. Raise your voices throughout the continent and the world in support of the MDGs.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Together, let us aim for the global adoption of a practical, dynamic, accelerated action agenda.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

No where are the linkages between sustainable development and climate clearer than right here in Africa.

African nations are among the least responsible yet the most susceptible to climate change impacts.

It is just one month since the Copenhagen Climate Conference. The Copenhagen Accord represents an important step forward. I welcome those African countries who have already become associated with the Accord and I urge others to do the same.

We must keep up the momentum towards achieving a binding global climate agreement as soon as possible.

Developing countries need assistance to rapidly scale-up clean energy efforts.

They also need significant support to adapt to the consequences of climate change.

Some \$30 billion is to be immediately mobilized and put into circulation over the next three years for adaptation and mitigation efforts in developing countries.

Looking forward, \$100 billion annually is to be mobilized per year by 2020 for developing countries.

We hope to move quickly to secure these resources and implement programs on the ground.

Excellencies,

Sustainable development sustains peace. Peace promotes development.

I commend the leaders of Africa for designating this year, 2010, as the Year of Peace and Security.

I pledge the full support of the United Nations. We are proud to back the African Union as it fulfills its potential as a strategic and operational partner, under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter.

To make the most of our efforts, African Union Member States should also provide the necessary resources in support of the AU Commission.

We know that preventive action is far more cost-effective than intervening between warring parties. That's why conflict prevention should be at the heart of our collective efforts to build peace and security in Africa.

As we look across the continent, our joint work has delivered results throughout Africa. We have seen it most recently in Guinea. Cooperation between the United Nations, the African Union, ECOWAS and our international partners resulted in the Ouagadougou Joint Declaration.

I strongly urge our partners to support the transition, prepare for the elections and implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry that investigated the 28 September massacres in Conakry.

Looking ahead, the African continent also faces a number of other critical elections. Of the 13 nations that have elections scheduled in the coming two years, six are in countries with UN peacekeeping or peacebuilding operations.

We must work to ensure that these lead to strong foundations for stability and democracy.

In Cote d'Ivoire, we have seen contending political parties assume full ownership of a peace process, use regional facilitation and benefit from security, logistical and technical support from the United Nations to resolve conflicts.

I urge the parties to overcome the outstanding issues and set a definite date for the elections.

In Liberia, I pledge UN support for building security institutions as we near next year's elections. We must work together to make Liberia an enduring success story in the transition to peacebuilding.

In Sudan, time is of the essence. The elections are just three months away. The two referenda to determine the future shape of Sudan are in just under a year.

At the same time, millions continue to be displaced in Darfur.

Earlier this morning I attended a mini-Summit on the future of Sudan hosted by the African Union Chairperson. I am grateful for their strong support of the United Nations work.

In pursuit of a peaceful resolution to these two conflicts and to avert a crisis with grave risks for regional instability, I was pleased that African leaders supported the United Nations efforts to pursue a four-track strategy.

First, we will seek to forge consensus among member states on the way forward. Second, we will continue to strengthen the UN presence on the ground. Third, we will promote discussions on key post-referendum issues. Fourth, we will build the capacity of South Sudanese institutions.

At the same time, we must continue work to deepen the encouraging improvement in relations between Chad and Sudan.

In Somalia, recent events have tragically shown that the conflict has a direct bearing on global security.

The United Nations remains strongly committed to continuing to work with the African Union to strengthen the capacity of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, We will also help build an armed force capable of protecting civilians and which can progressively take over security responsibilities from our peacekeeping force, MONUC.

We will continue efforts to end the conflicts in the east, restore state authority, facilitate the return of refugees, and protect civilians against all forms of violence including sexual violence.

I am horrified and outraged by the use of rape as a weapon of war.

We must spare no effort to end this once and for all. And in this regard, I have informed the Security Council of my intention to appoint Ms. Margot Wallstrom, Vice-President of the European Commission--as my Special Representative to intensify efforts to end sexual violence against women and children in conflict areas.

The UN and the AU are also working closely to establish dedicated mechanisms to build peace.

The UN Peacebuilding Commission is currently engaged with Burundi, Sierra Leone, Central African Republic and Guinea-Bissau to support these post-conflict countries in their peacebuilding efforts.

The Peacebuilding Fund has provided \$130 million to peacebuilding projects in 10 African countries. Four out of every five dollars from the Fund has gone to Africa.

There is enormous potential for even closer strategic cooperation in this area. I encourage the AU to actively engage and contribute to the upcoming review of the UN peacebuilding architecture.

Excellencies,

Looking ahead, we must keep our focus on emerging and worrying trends.

The resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government in Africa is a matter of serious concern. These actions run counter to fundamental UN values, international law, and the AU's own Constitutional Act. We must also guard against the manipulation of established processes to retain power.

Drug trafficking is also a rising threat to international peace and security in Africa. Criminal networks are very skilled at taking advantage of institutional weaknesses on the ground.

As we address all of these challenges, we must show our determination in the fight against impunity not only in Africa but around the world.

In May, I will participate in the first Review Conference for the International Criminal Court which will be held in Kampala, Uganda.

I urge all of you to join me there.

Let us take this opportunity to strengthen the International Criminal Court, the foundation stone of our system of international criminal justice.

Peace cannot be sustained without justice.

Excellencies,

Our challenges are linked, our solutions must be as well.

No one doubts the challenges before us. We confront them together each and every day.

My hope springs from what I have seen throughout Africa -- all of its promise, all of its potential, for all of its people.

I pledge to you my full commitment in that common cause.

Thank you very much.

Source: <http://www.un.org/apps/sg/sgstats.asp#>