

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL

**ADDRESS TO OPENING OF THE REGIONAL
COORDINATION MECHANISM MEETING, ECONOMIC
COMMISSION FOR AFRICA**

Addis Ababa, 5 November, 2009

Your Excellencies,

Mr. Erastus Mwencha, Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission and Co-Chair of the Regional Coordination Mechanism,

Esteemed Commissioners Rhoda Tumusima and Ibrahim El Ham,

Our host, Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa,

Dr. Ibrahim Mayaki, Chief Executive Officer of the NEPAD Secretariat,

Mr. Tegegnetwork Gettu, Director of UNDP's Regional Bureau for Africa,

Esteemed Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be back with you in the historic city of Addis Ababa for this Regional Coordination Mechanism meeting. Last year, at our ninth session, I underscored the need for the high-level participation of all UN Agencies and Organizations in the RCM process. I am pleased to see so many of you here today.

As you have heard, more is expected of us than ever before. And we need to deliver. We need to coordinate our work better. We need more coherence. And we need to deliver as one United Nations.

I have heard that, of our nine clusters, only two—Social Development and Governance—are functioning well. I trust that in the course of our presentations today, we will hear about substantial achievements by all of our clusters.

At the outset, I would like to note my gratitude for the strong and constructive partnership we have with the African Union Commission. The General Assembly mandated the entire United Nations system to support the work of the African Union and its New Partnership for Africa's Development. I warmly thank my brothers, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Jean Ping, and the Chief Executive Officer of NEPAD, Ibrahim Mayaki, for their good work to deliver on this common endeavour. It is good to see the increasing integration of NEPAD's work into the mainstream activities of the African Union.

Let me also congratulate the Executive Secretary, Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, for his skilful stewardship of the ECA. Under his leadership, the RCM has taken on a higher profile. It is becoming an ever-more effective forum for Africa's priorities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is a momentous time for Africa. The broad effects of climate change and the global financial crisis have overshadowed some of our hard-won development gains.

As you know, Africa achieved impressive economic growth rates during the early years of this new millennium. Prudent macroeconomic policies, improved governance and reformed environments for private--sector investment all played their parts in supporting this achievement.

But this good news is in peril. The present economic crisis, for which Africa bears no responsibility, has reversed recent trends. Africa's growth is projected to fall from an average of over 5 percent in recent years to a paltry 1.7 percent increase in 2009. The indicators are plain to see: we have already seen dwindling export revenues and reduced remittances. Many people are losing their jobs and falling back into poverty.

Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals is likely to be adversely affected. The food and energy crises, as well as climate change, are also complicating our work.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Last year, many of you participated in the Secretary-General's MDG Africa Steering Group. The Secretary-General sought to bring together the eight leading multilateral institutions working in Africa around a practical plan to accelerate progress toward the MDGs. It was gratifying to see the recommendations endorsed by the African Union last July. And we have seen some progress in implementing them. For instance, the G8's twenty billion dollar L'Aquila Initiative directly addresses one of our principal concerns: the need to raise agricultural productivity across Africa.

Much more remains to be done. I call on you and your institutions to join us in a concerted effort to implement the Steering Group's recommendations. The RCM Clusters are ideally placed to advance this work. And I have no doubt that they are all working well.

This is why the MDG Africa Secretariat recently asked you to take stock of achievements thus far. I look forward to meeting with you again on 23 November in the framework of the MDG Africa Working Group, to review progress and identify areas where action needs to be intensified.

In particular, I would like to draw your attention to the work that has been done on an initial set of ten 'Gleneagles Scenarios'. These analyses have given us a clear indication of what could be achieved if donors follow through on their Gleneagles commitments to more than double aid to Africa. They also show that scaling up can be achieved without compromising the macroeconomic stability that so many African countries have fought to achieve.

Dear Friends,

The Secretary-General and I, in close collaboration with the UNDP Administrator, use every opportunity to call on donors to put forward country-by-country plans to deliver on the Gleneagles commitments. We hope you will join us in this advocacy. 2010 is only months away. We also hope you will work with donors to ensure that countries have the support they need to implement their national development strategies.

Dear Friends,

I cannot overstate the urgency of this work. There are only five years left before the MDG target year of 2015. Despite some notable achievements, progress is off track across the continent. The poor progress to date on improving maternal health is particularly troubling.

The General Assembly has endorsed the Secretary-General's call for a high-level plenary meeting next September. We hope this gathering will catalyze action for the

Goals, particularly in Africa. To ensure success in 2010, we need your input and engagement. We need you to make the meeting a key focus of your work across the RCM over the next year.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends,

The threat of catastrophic climate change will continue to be a significant part of this picture. A few weeks ago, at the Secretary General's Summit on Climate Change in New York, we heard again how Africa is affected by climate change. We also discussed what the continent must do to respond. And more recently, many of you worked with African ministers to reach understandings on a set of key climate change priorities for the continent.

Today's meeting provides an opportunity for the RCM to add concrete support to Africa's national and regional preparations for Copenhagen.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Friends

While we have intensified our work in Africa, we must do more to engage as one United Nations family. We need to build on the complementarities and inherent synergies that make the United Nations system unique.

The Delivering as One pilot countries show us how this can be done at the country level. Across the continent, the RCM and the UNDG Regional Directors' Team give us focused channels through which we can make our support coherent, consistent, and more effective at the regional and national levels across Africa.

The RCM has come a long way since 1999. There is real cause to celebrate. The mechanism is performing its envisaged functions. More and more United Nations agencies are making effective use of the RCM. They are participating in the work of its clusters. Interagency coordination has been strengthened. And the relationship between the United Nations and African regional and subregional organizations has been enriched.

Crucially, the RCM Secretariat is playing a more proactive and strategic role in

supporting the clusters. This is possible because you have provided financial and human resources for the Secretariat. Many institutions have also taken concrete steps to align their work programmes with the priorities of the African Union. Our immediate challenge is to sustain the achievements we are celebrating today, while embracing the challenges for the future.

Looking ahead, we need to ensure that the RCM's work is linked more clearly to the Chief Executives' Board for Coordination—the CEB—and its three pillars: the High-Level Committee on Programmes, the High-Level Committee on Management, and the United Nations Development Group. The RCM is a natural implementation channel for the CEB's nine Joint Crisis Initiatives to combat the economic and financial crisis.

The economic crisis makes the need for action even more urgent, ladies and gentlemen. The crisis has pushed about 100 million people back into extreme poverty across the world. It has cost more than 50 million jobs this year alone. Although some markets are bouncing back, the early signs of recovery have not produced many new jobs. For the crisis to be over, those who want to work should be able to find stable and productive jobs.

This is why the CEB's initiatives include the ILO's Global Jobs Pact. And this is why we are creating a new Global Impact and Vulnerability Alert System, or GIVAS. If we are to have smart, effective policymaking, it needs to be informed by real-time data. And we need analysis on how the crisis is affecting the poorest and most vulnerable. We need your support in advancing these initiatives. You can all play a vital role in translating the Global Jobs Pact into national-level policies and programmes. And your help will be indispensable in collecting data for the GIVAS.

The regional and country-level dimensions of both initiatives highlight the need to continue building even stronger collaboration between the RCMs and RDTs. There is much we can do to ensure greater synergy between these two regional entities.

Dear Friends,

The starting point for enhanced collaboration should be a consensus on

common goals and priorities. And from this consensus, decisions on the division of labour between the RCMs and RDTs can proceed, consistent with each body's comparative advantages. Flexibility and pragmatism should be the hallmarks of this effort. We must be ambitious, but we must also be able to deliver on our ambition.

I hope that at this meeting, we can consider a productive division of labour between the RDT and the RCM. For instance, the RDTs could focus more on operations while the RCM could focus more on normative and analytical work. Similarly, the RDTs could focus on countries while the RCM focuses on cross-country themes.

Doing this would strengthen our ability to coordinate the work of the UN in Africa. Indeed, this task is so crucial that we should embark on it immediately. The ECA, as coordinator of the RCM, has a critical role to play in this process.

**Colleagues,
Dear Friends,**

Let us make this tenth session of the RCM another memorable one. Let us rededicate ourselves to the objectives of the RCM. Let us use the RCM to advance the work of the African Union and NEPAD. Let us contribute to a successful CoP15 in Copenhagen. And let us prepare the way for next year's high-level plenary meeting in New York to advance the MDGs and Africa's overall development.

**I would like to thank you for your kind attention.
Asante sana.**