

Welcome Remarks

Tegegnework Gettu

UN Assistant Secretary-General &

Director of the Regional Bureau for Africa, UNDP

**On the occasion of the Africa-China Poverty Reduction
& Development Conference**

Addis Ababa

Monday 1 November 2010

Your Excellency, Mr. Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister of Ethiopia,

**Your Excellency, Mr. Zheng Wengai, Vice Minister, State Council Leading Group Office
of Poverty Alleviation and Development,**

Madam Helen Clark, Administrator of UNDP,

**Your Excellency, Mr. Trevor Manuel, Minister in the Presidency, Republic of South
Africa,**

Your Excellency, Dr. Donald Kaberuka, President, African Development Bank,

**Your Excellency, Mr. Ato Sufian Ahmed, Minister of Finance and Economic
Development of Ethiopia,**

Honorable Ministers,

Colleagues from UNDP and the UN system,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted and honoured to welcome you to this country and Addis Ababa on the occasion of the Africa-China Poverty Reduction and Development Conference, which is co-hosted by the International Poverty Reduction Centre in China, the Government of Ethiopia and UNDP. Please allow me to extend my gratitude to the Government and People of Ethiopia for their warm welcome and known tradition of hospitality.

I am particularly grateful to Prime Minister Meles Zenawi for his relentless support to this event, and for being present at this opening session.

I am also deeply grateful to Vice Minister Zheng Wenkai and UNDP's Administrator Miss Helen Clark for launching this event. We are particularly grateful to the Administrator who all her support on Africa. Their presence today is a vivid expression of the deep commitment from both UNDP, China, and Africa to our new partnership on development in support of Africa.

I would like to especially acknowledge the presence of Minister Trevor Manuel of South Africa and President Kaberuka of the African Development Bank, who have joined us here and will be addressing us later on this morning. Our meeting will be enriched by the valuable insights they will share with us and we thank them for their continued contribution to Africa's development.

It is also a true privilege to be able to welcome so many distinguished Ministers from Africa today and we appreciate their engagement on this important event. We are also honoured by the presence of so many eminent African, Chinese and international partners as well as participants based in Addis. Your perspectives and contributions will ensure a rich and fruitful discussion in furthering our common commitment to Africa.

After decades of stagnation and developmental setbacks, the African continent has seen over the last decade some remarkable economic and development successes. Many African countries are making good progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). On the basis of the compelling evidence gathered and the extensive analyses conducted over the past year by UNDP and other development actors, we are confident that the MDGs are within reach.

Thus, Africa may be on the verge of a development breakthrough, which we all aspire to.

To seize this opportunity and realise their tremendous development potential, African countries will have much to gain from dialogue and exchanges with other developing countries. This is especially true of those emerging economies that have been successful in consistently growing and reducing poverty over time. China, of course, is a good example of a development success story as is Vietnam, Singapore, Brazil and Indonesia. We are also fortunate to have among us representatives from other southern countries with similarly outstanding track records in development. We welcome Vietnam in particular.

While learning from and drawing upon the experiences of others, Africa as region and each specific country will need ultimately to chart its own path to development, tailored to its specific context. The experiences of China and other emerging economies also highlight the need for pragmatism in guiding development policy. Rather than treading a pre-set path towards economic development, countries in Africa need the policy space to learn from experimentation, and to respond flexibly and pragmatically to unintended outcomes and unforeseen events.

The purpose of this conference is to generate momentum for accelerating progress on the MDGs by strengthening South-South dialogue and with our development partners who have been helping Africa. Toward that end, this conference will aim to generate insights and foster genuine learning about innovative approaches to promoting inclusive and pro-poor economic growth and development in support of Africa from a realistic perspective.

In doing so, it will address a set of critical issues for the region, including ensuring a high and inclusive growth in Africa, furthering agricultural development to ensure a food secure continent, enhancing societal capabilities and maintaining social cohesion, and examining the paths of emerging economies and charting new development partnerships.

With the high quality and contributions of speakers, panellists and participants gathered here over the next two days, I have no doubt that we will make great strides towards achieving these goals. As I conclude, I remain optimistic about Africa and its future economic prospects and the role that all partners can play in supporting efforts towards Africa's development and the achievement of the MDGs for its population.

Thank you.