
"Mr. President,

It is a great privilege and honor for me to participate in this important discussion under your stewardship.

2. Our discussion today focuses essentially on the inextricable link between peace and development. The two reports of the Secretary-General — on the causes of conflict and promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa; and on the progress in implementation and international support for NEPAD — complement each other. The reports offer a comprehensive and coherent picture of the continent’s efforts to resolve conflicts, stabilize peace, and create the necessary conditions for development.

3. The Secretary-General has reported steady progress in the areas of peacemaking and peacekeeping in Africa. It is heartening that, as compared to 1998, the number of African countries in a situation of armed conflict or facing deep political crises has decreased. This is due, in part, also to the progress in the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD). African leadership and institutions are increasingly involved in seeking African solutions to African problems. The African Union and its Peace and Security Council are assuming important responsibilities. IGAD, ECO WAS and CEMAC are making notable contributions to regional peace and security. The United Nations’ cooperation and coordination with these regional and sub-regional organizations has considerably evolved. These trends are highly positive, and must be sustained and further strengthened. We support the Secretary-General’s intention to explore new ways of collaboration between the United Nations and the African Union.

Mr. President,

4. While these achievements are impressive, new conflicts and complex crises continue to afflict Africa. Risks of re-lapse into conflict are real. New trends and sources of conflict present potential threats to peace and security. The Secretary-General has mentioned poverty, and particularly youth unemployment, in this context. He has also mentioned illicit exploitation of and trade of natural resources as a major source of instability. We could not agree more. In our view, many of the conflict situations in Africa today are the direct consequence of the “politics of poverty and scarcity.” HIV/AIDS pandemic is another source of destabilization; so are the demographic pressures and ecological factors, as acknowledged in the report of the Secretary-General.

5. Pakistan is a significant stakeholder in the international community’s investment in peace in Africa. We believe Africa’s potential cannot be fully realized as long as conflict rages in the continent. Pakistan is convinced that sustainable peace can only be assured by evolving a comprehensive conflict, prevention strategy, addressing the root causes of conflict, strengthening long-term capacities for peaceful settlement of disputes, and mobilizing resources for post-conflict
peace-building, reconstruction and development. The United Nations system and the international community must work together to evolve a comprehensive, integrated and coherent policy response.

Mr. President,

6. We are glad that efforts to build a viable and effective partnership to tackle the myriad challenges in Africa are already underway. We commend the African leadership for their vision in launching NEPAD -- an Africa-led, Africa-owned, and Africa-driven initiative providing integrated and comprehensive framework for Africa's sustainable growth and development. Fittingly, NEPAD sets out a broad vision for Africa's future, outlines a strategy for achieving that vision, and spells out a programme of action focused on a number of key priority areas.

7. The Secretary-General's report notes that NEPAD has made considerable progress in developing sectoral policy frameworks, implementing specific programmes and projects and establishing targets for expenditure in NEPAD sectoral priority areas, including, among others, infrastructure, health, education, agriculture, environment. This is indeed very heartening. None of this could have been achieved without the determination and collective political will of the African countries to make NEPAD work for development.

8. The progress is unmistakable, but unfortunately it is still far below the real potential of NEPAD, which faces several constraints in the effective execution of its programmes. The foremost, in this regard, is the serious inadequacy of fiscal resources to meet the targets and the needs.

9. There is overwhelming evidence suggesting that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) would remain largely illusive for Africa unless something is done to substantially enhance the existing development assistance flows to generate the resources required for achieving the MDGs. Africa's inability to realize MDGs would also be seen as a failure of NEPAD.

10. The issue of resource flows has to be addressed effectively and expeditiously with the support and assistance of the international community. The Secretary-General's report cites various actions taken by the international community to bolster development activities and initiatives in Africa. But more is needed and urgently.

11. An important endeavor, acknowledged in the Report, is the grant of debt relief, including debt cancellation to Africa by the developed country partners. This is a welcome development. Such efforts need to be further expanded to cover other countries in Africa that are in financial distress.

12. The continuing rise in FDI flows into Africa is another encouraging sign, even though the numbers are still insignificant in terms of global FDI flows. We strongly feel that bolstering investments, expanding trade by allowing greater market access to exports from Africa and building capacity and human resources are the most important tools to put Africa on the fast
development track. These, we believe, should be the three main pillars for a strategic partnership between Africa and the rest of the world.

13. We also see the Tokyo International Conference on Africa Development, the recent Asia-Africa Sub-Regional Conference, and other similar initiatives, as important processes, which could complement NEPAD.

14. Policy coherence is as much a fundamental policy challenge for Africa as it is for the rest of the developing world in the context of international support. We would, therefore, like to take this opportunity to highlight the long standing need for an integrated development strategy not just for Africa but also for other developing regions.

Mr. President,

15. For its part, Pakistan has always actively supported initiatives that seek to address the problems and crises faced by the countries of Africa. We have also been a strong supporter of the effective and early implementation of NEPAD. Pakistan has consistently supported the political and economic aspirations of Africa. We are equally proud of our participation in several UN peacekeeping operations in Africa. Our military and civilian personnel have been part of UN operations in Burundi, DRC, Cote d’Ivoire, Liberia, Namibia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and Western Sahara.

16. At the national level, the Government of Pakistan has been successfully running a special technical assistance programme for Africa since 1986, a fact acknowledged in the Secretary General’s report. Hundreds of young African professionals in various fields have benefited from this ongoing programme.

Mr. President,

17. I wish to conclude by noting that conflict has sapped Africa’s potential for too long. The peoples of Africa continue to suffer as a consequence. The challenges that the continent faces are colossal. But Africa has the opportunity to finally turn a corner. NEPAD represents a realistic framework to meet these challenges. Commitments are there, so are the plans. It is time to turn words into deeds. This is a moral obligation as well as a political responsibility.

I thank you".