

**PRESIDENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

October 18, 2006

Moscow, Kremlin

**To the Participants of the 7th Meeting of the Africa Partnership Forum**

I am pleased to welcome the participants of the 7th meeting of the Africa Partnership Forum.

Since its establishment in 2003, the Forum has become a significant framework for dialogue among the representatives of African countries and their major partners where they can jointly discuss the strategy of achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals on the continent. Elaborating of practical recommendations in order to enhance the effectiveness of steps taken by African States in implementing the «New Partnership for Africa's Development» (NEPAD) Program has become an important track of Forum activities.

We note with satisfaction that the agenda for the current meeting of the Forum is in line with the priority topics of the G8 Summit in St.Petersburg. I am convinced that consistent implementation of the decisions adopted during the Summit in the sphere of energy security, education and fight against infectious diseases fully meets the long-term interests of African peoples.

Availing myself of this opportunity I would like to reaffirm that Russia will continue to pursue an active line in rendering comprehensive assistance to African countries, including through participation in coordinated efforts within the G8 as well as in the framework of the Africa Partnership Forum.

I am confident that substantive discussion during the Moscow meeting of the Forum will contribute to enhancing the efficiency of the international cooperation in the interests of social and economic development of Africa, as well as of strengthening stability and security on the continent.

I wish to the participants of the meeting fruitful work and further success in implementing the important tasks of the Forum.

V. Putin