



MINISTÉRIO DOS NEGÓCIOS ESTRANGEIROS

PORTUGAL

12th APF – ROME 10th June 2009 – Opening by co-chairs

Dear colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to start my brief statement by greeting all members and participants of this 12th Africa Partnership Forum meeting, and by thanking Italy for their magnificent hospitality, it is wonderful to come to Rome.

We have a quite intense working day ahead of us, one that is in tune with the present main challenges to development, in Africa as in the rest of the world.

- With regards to the current economic and financial crisis, our common concern must be on how to collectively face it, together with taking the right measures in order to mitigate its short term impact while preserving and enhancing the medium and long-term development prospects and goals of African development.

We all know that an ambitious action plan was approved at the G-20 summit last April and that this Forum contributed to put forward Africa's concerns in its agenda, following our Lisbon co-chairs meeting in March. We should make use of this Forum to keep the actions decided under review, to monitor what is actually happening and to compare perceptions from all partners. One way of doing this is to find effective ways to feed into international mechanisms and processes and the APF could take the opportunity to convey specific messages regarding Africa's particular needs to the upcoming UN Conference on the

World Financial and Economic Crisis and its Impact on Development, rescheduled for the end of June, as well as thinking about how we can contribute to the next G20 Summit in September.

- In what concerns the challenges presented by climate change, this APF meeting is a precious opportunity to discuss specifically what is at stake for Africa, and to get a better grasp of Africa's needs as regards mitigation and adaptation. We must bear in mind that in the upcoming Copenhagen conference in December, the world leaders will gather around a new global plan to tackle climate change, where Africa's concerns and needs must be integrated. This session is definitely an important opportunity towards this integration.

- On Peace and security: the issues put forward for discussion, though African in their location, are part of our common wider concerns about illicit financial flows, be it tax evasion or money laundering from illegal activities. Drug issues in particular require our serious and committed efforts. We had the privilege of hearing the strong and clear message on this regard by H. E. the President of Togo. When a Head of State speaks to us in these terms, we cannot afford to ignore his words...

Enhanced cooperation on these issues is part of an improved and inclusive global governance, and we very much look forward to hearing our African partners' views on the two specific themes presented.

Last but not least, we also have the future of the Africa Partnership Forum itself on our agenda. Since the end of 2008 we have been exchanging views between APF members, through formal and informal channels and at co-chairs meetings. We have

engaged in a review and assessment of what role this Forum has played since its inception, the way it has worked, and what could be changed to improve its effectiveness and relevance.

As co-chairs from the OECD side in 2009, we have tried to promote this discussion among our constituency and to contribute to the debate by putting forward our vision of how this Forum should evolve, namely through:

- broader inclusiveness to reach other significant stakeholders in Africa's development and indeed in world governance;
- improved outcomes of its meetings, to be focussed on feeding into other international relevant processes
- reinforced monitoring function of mutually agreed commitments, as well as a contribution to policy making on Africa's development agenda.
- improved collaboration among co-chairs to ensure that these common objectives are met.

Substantial progress has been made towards a common view at the last co-chairs meeting in South Africa. While acknowledging that differences still remain, let us not lose the momentum and agree on a document that can constitute a sound framework for our future interaction in this forum.

Thank you very much for your attention and may this day's work be fruitful.

Joao Cravinho

Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation

Portugal