

Translated from French

Benin

Allow me first to express my heartfelt and sincere thanks to the Government of our sister Republic of Ethiopia for the excellent arrangements made to accommodate this global meeting in this beautiful land of Africa, providing us with a unique opportunity to reinforce our shared vision of a common future.

I thank the Ethiopian people for their hospitality: the attentions we have received since our arrival in Addis Ababa fill us with satisfaction.

The year 2015 will be a special one in the annals of the United Nations, as it not only marks the seventieth anniversary of the creation of the Organization, but also affords humankind the opportunity to fully assume our historical responsibilities, with a new, human-centred framework for the harmonious development of nations, built on three pillars, namely: economic sustainability thanks to inclusive economic growth, to create decent jobs; social sustainability flowing from the eradication of poverty and inequality; and environmental sustainability, whereby development proceeds with due respect for the capacity of the environment.

We have good reason to celebrate the organization of this meeting in Addis Ababa, as a prelude to the meeting of world leaders this September and the Paris Conference on climate change in December 2015, because it shows the way to the conclusion of a sacred alliance affirming the bold actions to be implemented in the context of the global partnership for sustainable development.

I should like once again, before this august assembly, to lend my voice to the
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development partners to support the Technology Bank for LDCs to the tune of 0.1 per cent of their ODA envelope.

Because international trade is an effective engine of development and development financing, it is important to strengthen trade assistance to LDCs, to increase their production and export capacities. Full implementation of the Bali Package for LDCs, including the provision of duty-free and quota-free market access, is also of vital importance for our countries.

Further, we cannot ignore the plight of those least developed countries that are groaning under the weight of external debt and which spend their meagre income, which might otherwise have been invested to promote sustainable development, on servicing matured debt. We therefore ask the international community to continue to implement measures to relieve LDCs of their debt burden.

Similarly, we observe that the world is facing economic turmoil, growing inequality, and crises and shocks of various kinds. Environmental challenges, such as the adverse effects of climate change, natural disasters and loss of biodiversity, have devastating effects on our countries. The Ebola epidemic that struck West Africa or the cyclone that ravaged Vanuatu last March compel us to rethink our development strategies to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. Hence, the LDCs need considerable support to build resilience, adaptability and mitigation capacity. That is why we are calling for the creation of a mitigation and resilience-building fund for the LDCs.

It should also be noted that there is an urgent need to finance programmes related to human security, such as health, education, nutrition, or other areas which, though they may not directly generate revenue, are pertinent to human resource development.

Here, we should emphasize our common desire to involve LDCs in making decisions that affect their development, whether in aid coordination, debt relief measures, trade facilities, human rights promotion or global economic governance.

In this connection, we welcome the results of negotiations on the draft final document of the third International Conference on Financing for Development, which captured many of the concerns expressed by the LDCs. As the pending issues are to be discussed here in Addis Ababa, I urgently appeal to all stakeholders not to let the progress so far achieved be compromised.

In closing, as spokesman for LDCs, it is my duty to plead with you, Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, honourable participants in this conference, to redouble your efforts to halve the number of members of our group by 2020. Indeed, some will have changed category through their own efforts and with your support, and a country that has risen out of poverty becomes a strong partner.

I would like to stress that to ensure a future of dignity for all, we must radically reform our economies, tackle inequalities and protect our planet. We need to ensure that no one is left behind.

Thank you for your kind attention.
