



**UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA**

**Opening Remarks
By
Abdoulie Janneh
UN Under-Secretary-General and
Executive Secretary of ECA
At the
Africa Regional Meeting on Peace building and State building
On the Road to Busan**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
8 September 2011**

H. E. Ato Sufian Ahmed, Minister of Finance, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia,

H.E. Mr. Erastus Mwench, Deputy Chair, the African Union Commission

Dr. El Keshen, Vice president, The African Development bank

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am pleased to have the opportunity to welcome you to this important regional meeting today at the United Nations Conference Centre in Addis Ababa, organized by the African Development Bank, the African Union, and the Economic Commission for Africa, with the participation of the International Dialogue on Peace building and State building. I would also like to express my appreciation to Government and People of Ethiopia for their continued warm hospitality to the UNECA and African Union who are headquartered here and all our conference participants. Minister Sufian, your presence here with us today is indeed another sign of your country's strong support for our mutual endeavors, and we are most grateful that you have agreed to make the opening statement.

Excellencies,

Distinguished Participants,

This regional conference is part of the collaborative work of three institutions, the African Union, the African Development Bank and the ECA, which is focused on addressing the challenge of managing transitions from conflict, and helping to build strong governance institutions and the mechanisms for sustainable peace, which are essential to political and economic development in Africa.

A key element of our partnership relates to the strengthening of good governance in African countries. Peace building is a long-term process which requires a strategic approach to address state building concerns, such as building infrastructure, institutions and meeting overall developmental goals. Previously, peace building focused primarily on short term initiatives such as disarmament, rehabilitation, and reintegration, while these remain an imperative aspect of peace building, the fragility of peace continued as a concern without adequate state building. This nexus between peace building and state building should be our new focus in moving forward.

In addition, institutional building is imperative to promote greater peace, security and prosperity throughout Africa, especially against the backdrop of the current global economic crisis. Some challenges facing institutional building in Africa is first and foremost the vulnerability and risks of continued violent conflict, infrastructure development and proper human resource development; and expanding transaction costs across borders and regional integration.

In order for Africa to achieve further socio-economic development it must implement wide-ranging programs and new government structures that diffuse the need of knowledge and promote a relatively greater distribution of policymaking. This can be done by building the capacity of different sectors within the government. Post-conflict states in Africa tend to be fragile states, especially in the immediate post-conflict period, where vulnerability to the threat of renewed conflict is greatest, in the absence of effective measures to contain or prevent it, the task of economic reconstruction is enormous and the challenges of establishing the rule of law and rebuilding shattered and debilitated institutions is daunting. African post-conflict situations are often characterized by weak governance and public

administration capacity, reduced ability of the state for delivery of services and contribute to reduced aid effectiveness. Salient examples of this may be seen in Somalia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Sudan, among others.

Excellencies,

Distinguished Participants,

The governance of development in Africa requires a good mix of political, economic and social policies. First, today it is generally accepted that following protracted conflict, effective governance and administration, of acceptable legitimacy, are among the key requirements in order to enable progress towards stabilization, rehabilitation and recovery. These processes require investment and effective delivery of services. Their success however, depends upon effective implementation of projects and programs that meet perceived public needs. In this regard, while elections can be a catalyst of conflict, thereby elevating social tensions and provoking violence, fair, free and credible elections can contribute to conflict prevention.

Secondly, (re)-establishing the rule of law through judicial and legal reforms is also regarded as a prerequisite for the development of stable and peaceful societies. However, improving conflict management strategies are dependent upon the ability to address unprecedented global threats, such as extreme poverty, income disparity, exclusion, environmental degradation and terrorism.

In addition, meeting basic survival needs of the people can help reduce the threat of renewed conflict and provide a breathing space in which to move towards rehabilitation and recovery.

Excellencies,

Distinguished Participants,

The UN Durable Peace initiative highlights this importance of long term state building, sound political institutions and the role of the developmental state in leading the development agenda. Creating sound political institutions includes supporting constitutionalism, the evolution towards multiparty democracy; as well as promoting transparent bottom-up governance approaches that include civil society. It also includes support to the promotion of inclusive political processes. Our collaboration hence focuses a great deal on the prevention, or management, of conflicts that accompany political transitions. This is a critical factor in building strong governance institutions and creating the mechanisms for durable peace. To do this effectively, we believe, it is imperative to increase the capacity of key stakeholders to identify the triggers to conflict during political transitions, and to build positive relationships among civil society, policymakers, and regional and international organizations. It is also essential to contribute to the academic and policy literature on peaceful political transitions.

Today Africa faces several fundamental challenges in the transition from conflict to sustainable peace and good governance. Following long decades of conflict, the legacy of conflict often includes severely damaged infrastructure, weak governmental structures, prevalence of ethnic tensions, and in many post-conflict countries, a proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and the detritus of conflict.

Peace, security and good governance are all central to economic and social development. Indeed, the paramount importance of good governance in the

achievement of development goals, including the MDGs has been recognized in the 2001 AU/NEPAD Foundation Document on Conditions for Sustainable Development in Africa. Good governance involves the creation by states of the benign socio-economic, legal, political and institutional environments to their citizens from abject poverty, preventable diseases, ignorance, squalor and idleness; to provide the citizenry with the voice to choose those who rule over them, to hold those in power accountable when they do not work for the greater good; and to treat every citizen equal without regard to gender, race, ethnicity, religion, creed and other irrelevant criteria. Good governance also entails the whole society partaking in the fruits of development.

Excellencies,

Distinguished Participants

As you are aware, this Africa Regional Meeting on Peace building and State building is designed to make an important input into the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness often referred to as HLF4. The Forum, which is the subject of the present meeting, will take place in Busan, Korea during 29 November to 1 December 2011. The ministers and specialists attending will assess progress since the first meeting of the Forum in 2008 and chart the way forward.

We are expected to propose a new framework to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. This conference will also examine how to situate aid in its overall development context while taking account of such factors as trade, security and climate change. With only four years to go before the MDG target date of 2015, a great deal remains to be done. To achieve this, HLF4 needs to revitalize the existing commitments, while sustaining the political momentum.

There is a great deal that needs to be done, but I am confident that it will. Developing countries priorities for aid effectiveness are: predictable aid, the use of country systems to manage it, an end to policy conditionality, country-driven capacity development, mutual accountability, and reduced transaction costs.

In brief this is why we are here today, with the aim of ensuring a strong African contribution to shaping the aid effectiveness agenda and promoting broader collaboration on peace building and state building in the continent.

To conclude, I would like to express my confidence that the present meeting will contribute towards the articulation of strong African voices on peace building and state building issues in Busan.

I thank you for your kind attention and wish you fruitful deliberations.