



AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP

Address to the Horn of Africa Pledging Conference

Dr. Donald Kaberuka

President

Event: Horn of Africa Pledging Conference

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

25 August 2011

Much has been said this morning that is very pertinent and which I fully endorse. But allow me to very briefly spell out what we at the African Development Bank intend to do.

Let me begin by applauding you, Mr. Chairman, for this initiative and to my good friend, Jean Ping, for the invitation to join you for this platform towards an African response for the recurring cycle of famine in the Horn of Africa. What needs to be done now, immediately, to mitigate the suffering while addressing the root causes, has been effectively spelt out by many speakers today, which we can fully associate with.

A consensus has been built

Time has come to put an end to these repeated cycles of famine in the Horn. The technical solutions, whether they relate to robust water resource management, arid zone farming techniques, modernization of the pastoral economies – most of the solutions are known. They are not beyond our grasp. Many countries in Africa and elsewhere in the world have accumulated valuable experience on how to sustain livelihoods and economic activity, even in more hostile environments or those subject to idiosyncratic climate behaviour. So how do we get it right this time?

First, while we can blame Mother Nature for a lot of what is happening, we need to take a careful look at our track record in the past, all of us – including donor agencies' acts of omission and commission – that exacerbate the impact of droughts and other natural disasters. We know quite well that, as we seek to cope with the immediate impact of the crisis, sooner or later we will be facing another cycle of droughts, perhaps getting more severe each time. Doing the same things and each time expecting a different outcome is what we should bring to an end.

These are not tsunami-like emergencies. We know months ahead the extent of these so-called “slow moving emergencies”. Indeed, as we heard from Prime Minister Meles, some governments active on early warning systems were able to take pre-emptive actions.

Second, the challenge we face is one of recurrent drought, but also internally displaced persons and refugees. Money is indeed needed, the reason we are here today, but we need more than money. Before 1990, Somalia was for many years able to feed herself and was a net exporter of agricultural produce. Peace – lasting peace – must return to the Horn, especially in Somalia, in order for the long term solutions, to which we are now all committed, both nationally and regionally, to yield results.

These solutions are necessarily premised on a stable, peaceful region without the flow of refugees and internally displaced persons. Peace building and strong cross-border cooperation must underpin all efforts for a durable solution. We applaud and encourage all efforts to bring back peace and viability to Somalia and we are prepared to play any supportive role in line with our mandate – and I join those who have urged for greater support to AMISOM.

It has been said several times this morning the drought in the Horn is the worst in a long time. But what we face is more than drought. What many countries are facing, or are likely to face, are a combination of issues: impact of climate change; excessive volatility in food prices across the world; and dysfunctionality in the markets.

They require multiple responses with each one of us acting in their domain of specialization.

The commitment of the African Development Bank

While “humanitarian mission” is not our mandate, the African Development Bank has joined in the efforts to provide humanitarian support to the affected countries, to the tune of four million dollars, which we have already disbursed via competent organizations.

Address the root causes

But our role is that of building resilience in the long term in this region – resilience to resist shocks – and consolidating foundations for steady, strong and broad-based economic growth, which is the ultimate form of resilience. I know that this is where you all expect us to bring our expertise and resources to bear. That is what we will do and have embarked upon, working closely with AU and IGAD.

You will be pleased to hear that we have recently completed a comprehensive study on sustainable livestock development in the Greater Horn. We look forward to its validation by member states of IGAD shortly in Djibouti next month. It is a carefully costed investment program of over 15 years, which we believe – building on what others are doing – has potential to change the dynamics of livestock management in the region. This is a critical element of building resilience and eliminating extreme impacts of drought in this region. We are supporting this program financially.

I am pleased to announce that we will be committing 300 million dollars for the period 2011-2013 for the first phase of this special regional program. We will renew that commitment beyond 2013 with additional resources for water and agriculture infrastructures and promoting economic opportunities in vulnerable regions.

To conclude, drought is not unique to the Horn of Africa and the Horn is not experiencing drought only. The crisis due to Somalia's war has undermined the region's capacity to resist drought. Many other regions in Africa will increasingly become vulnerable, to varying degrees, as a result of climate change. Developing appropriate national adaptation plans to climate change will become critical to cope with distressed ecosystems.

To this extent, you will be pleased to know that the Joint AU/AfDB/ECA "CLIMDEV AFRICA" program to enhance climate information will shortly be operational. At the COP17 in Durban we must redouble our efforts to secure broad support for the African Green Fund. I would like to assure you of the support of the African Development Bank in this common endeavour of returning the Horn into a resilient region.

Thank you.