

**Keynote Statement by H.E. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf,  
Thematic Session 3: “Towards the Post-2015 Development Agenda”  
at the 5<sup>th</sup> Tokyo International Conference on African Development  
Yokohama, Japan  
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Mr. Secretary-General;  
Mr. Foreign Minister;  
Excellencies;  
Heads of State and Government;  
Ministers and Ambassadors;  
Distinguished Guests;

I'm pleased to participate in the Fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development, and I wish to extend our appreciation to the Government of Japan; to the sponsors of this event – the United Nations, the African Union Commission, the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme, and all the other stakeholders – for making this such a participatory event. We thank the people of Japan for their warm hospitality and generosity in hosting the conference.

Today, Africa and indeed the entire world stand at major crossroads in our drive to eradicate poverty and build sustained prosperity for all peoples. We can continue with business as usual and get the same results, which keeps hundreds of millions of people in poverty and deprivation; or we could begin to transform economies in order to achieve sustainable development.

While Africa has experienced significant economic growth over the last decade, major challenges remain: human development indicators, as measured by achievements of the Millennium Development Goals, continue to show some progress, but many of our countries are not on track to achieve all of the MDGs by their expiration in 2015. Accordingly, a transformative development agenda must be pursued, not only by African countries, but by all countries as we live in an interconnected world where socio-economic development challenges are cross-cutting and universal. Issues of abject poverty, high youth unemployment, fragile States, gender inequality and environmental degradation pose existential threats to humanity. We are all in the same boat.

In July of 2012, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon established a High-Level Panel with three co-Chairs and 24 eminent persons from around the globe, to consult and devise a new development framework that would replace the MDGs as they expire in 2015. Almost a year of global consultations, deliberations and panel meetings on four continents were taken, and the draft Report was presented to the Secretary-General a few days ago, on May 30.

In this venue, I would like to extend special commendation for the contributions of Naoto Kan, Sung, Hawn Kim, and Yingfan Wang.

The Panel spoke with people from all walks of life around the world. In all, we heard from over 5,000 civil society organizations in 120 countries, across every region. We consulted with experts from multilateral organizations, national governments, local authorities, and academic and scientific communities. We also heard from 250 private companies in 30 countries. We benefited from the report commissioned by the African Union and the studies from Africa's own continental organizations – the African Development Bank, the UN Economic Commission for Africa – which produced the African Common Position.

After listening to the people of the world, we put together a report that is not only bold and ambitious, but also anchored in current realities with evidence based on global resources and capacities. The available evidence suggests that we could be the first generation to eradicate global poverty. Eradicating poverty is just the start. We need to ensure the fulfillment of human rights and dignity, and put in place the building blocks of prosperity.

The new global development agenda requires five fundamental transformations, away from business as usual. It aims to:

1. Leave no one behind – ensuring the inclusion of all persons regardless of ethnicity, gender, geography, disability, race or other status into basic economic opportunities and human rights;
2. Put sustainable development at the core – making a rapid shift to sustainable patterns of production and consumption, acting to slow the alarming pace of climate change and environmental degradation, which pose unprecedented threats to humanity;
3. Transform economies for jobs and inclusive growth – ending extreme poverty improving livelihoods by harnessing innovation, technology, and the potential of business by diversifying economies, with equal opportunities for all;
4. Build peace and effective, open and accountable public institutions – in which it is a fundamental shift which recognizes peace and good governance as a core element of well-being rather than an optional extra;
5. Forge a new global partnership – which is anchored on our shared humanity and based on mutual respect and benefit.

The proposed new development agenda calls for a total paradigm shift, a new way of looking at problems all over the world and thus finding and bringing new perspectives to its resolution.

For Africa, the Panel puts forward concepts based primarily on the capacity to effect change and the resources, both of which represent the main ingredients of our development.

Recognizing the success and the importance of continuity with certain indicators of the Millennium Development Goals, particularly as regards poverty, hunger and maternal and child health, the Panel calls for a further push in pursuit of social development by investing in improvements in the quality of education, health and human capital development, focusing on youth, gender equality, access to clean water and shelter.

The Panel calls for attention to the productive sectors to create the endogenous conditions for economic transformation, with focus on inclusive green growth, including agriculture and food security, value addition and infrastructure development.

For Africa, we cannot stress enough the importance of national ownership and the need to reorient the development paradigm away from externally driven initiatives towards domestically inspired and funded initiatives. This can be achieved by strengthening financial intermediation, broadening our own tax and revenue generation capacities, stemming illicit capital flows and ensuring equity in the use of our natural resource capital.

The African Common Position is consistent with the new development agenda; not only is it global, but it's also continental and African.

I thank you.