

**Summarizing and Concluding
Remarks**

by:

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Closing Session

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Learning from the Past,
Enabling a Better Future”**

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Honorable Former Presidents of Ghana, Mali, Namibia, Nigeria and Portugal,
Honorable Director General of UNESCO,
Honorable UNU Rector,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Participants and Guests,

I wish to thank the Rector of UNU for inviting me to address such an honorable audience. Allow me also to express my deepest appreciation for the generous hospitality of the prestigious United Nations University hosting the 2009 UNU/UNESCO International Conference on “Africa and Globalization” and to provide us with the opportunity to learn intensively from the outstanding presentations regarding visions for Africa’s future in light of the ongoing and accelerating process of globalization, presented by the Honorable former Presidents and distinguished participants. I congratulate both UNESCO and UNU on the marvelous success of this Conference.

I would move now to propose a number of bullet-form remarks that are combining both my own reading of the proceedings of the Conference as well as my own contribution to some of the issues raised in the context of this Conference.

First, the Conference has been encompassing virtually all aspects of life in Africa on the one hand, and all dimensions of globalization on the other. In fact, this characteristic of the Conference reflected the diverse and far reaching activities of UNU in Tokyo dealing with issues ranging from sustainable development, to peace and conflict studies, with a noticeable focus on Africa.

Second, I totally appreciate what the Honorable Alfa Omar Konare, former President of Mali, emphasized on the need not to be trapped in the logic of separating Africa into North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa. He also highlighted the central role of Egypt, South Africa and Nigeria in the development of the African continent. We have already gone a long march in Africa beyond this logic of division, which is a legacy of the colonial era. Our leaders have reflected that awareness on many occasions. The non-African world should accordingly give up such divisive discourse.

Third, I was particularly impressed by the “Leadership Forum”, as well as interventions by the five former Presidents in the rest of the sessions, as they provided us with rich and different perspectives, varying from those seeking reconciliation between Africa and globalization, to those calling for pan-African action as a means that Africa can benefit from globalization and avoid damage from it, to those that critically highlight the dangers enshrined in globalization and calling for African well preparedness when dealing with it.

Fourth, I want to touch on a broad subject that has been referred to recurrently in the two days of the Conference. This subject has been that of education, science and technology. In this respect several remarks are worth notice as follow:

- There is a concrete example of cooperation between Africa and Japan in the field of higher education; namely the establishment of the Egypt_Japan University for

- Science and Technology (E_JUST), whose agreement was signed last March. This University, the first of its kind in Africa and the Middle East, had a provision of its agreement specifying that it will be open for African and Arab students.
- The Science and Technology in Society Forum (STS) annually held in the Japanese city of Kyoto is another example from Japan that we can benefit of in Africa as it seeks to link decision makers, academicians and business circles.
 - The first Africa Japan Meeting for Ministers of Science and Technology held in Tokyo in October 2008 was yet another example of cooperation in the field of R&D activities between Africa and a developed country with all its potentials and should be used as a model to be emulated. To this effect, the African Diplomatic Corps in Japan (ADC) consecrated one of its committees to the issue of Science and Technology.
 - Cooperation Agreements between African Universities, research centers and think tanks and their counterparts in the developed world can play an instrumental role, via exchange of students, scholars and holding joint projects of research, symposia and workshops, in capacity building and human resource development in Africa. The experience of 2008 as the Year of Science and Technology Cooperation between Egypt and Japan was a demonstration of the success of such strategy. By the end of that year more than 70 of such cooperation agreements were signed between Egyptian and Japanese educational and research institutions.
 - Some speakers referred to the question of “brain drain”. While some perceived this phenomenon as negative, others addressed its positive aspects. I have had a personal experience with that subject, as I used to chair in the late 1980s and early 1990s a Working Group in UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) in Geneva dealing with this matter under the title of “Reverse Transfer of Technology”. I can confidently and safely argue that this phenomenon can serve either as an investment or as a depletion of human resources, depending on how we approach it and manage it.

Fifth, African leaders, particularly former Presidents Obasanjo and Kufour, highlighted the importance of regional cooperation and integration schemes in the continent. One cannot agree more with such proposition. I particularly refer to two success stories in this respect, namely “COMESA” and “NEPAD”. Yet, we should bear in mind that the potentials of both are not yet totally realized and more work should be done by Africa in this respect, but also more recognition and cooperation from the international community with these groupings should be forthcoming.

Sixth, Former President Obasanjo legitimately mentioned the need for revisiting the composition of G20 as Africa is underrepresented there. I would go one step further to mention that both the G8 and G20 composition, mandate, function and roles should be reviewed. The G8 does not include any African country, although the latest G8 Summit held in Italy in July 2009 invited the so called O5 countries (including South Africa) and Egypt to join. French and Italian ideas about turning the G8 into G14 by adding the O5 (including South Africa) and Egypt may ensure, if implemented, that Africa is fairly represented. As for the G20, we should bear in mind that it was established during the Asian financial crisis of 1997/1998. Since then

many changes took place at the global economic and financial scenes, thereby justifying rethinking the composition of the Group and its role to add countries from the continent such as Egypt and Nigeria, as currently only South Africa from the continent enjoys membership of this Group.

Seventh, the issues of democracy, good governance and respect for human rights were repeatedly raised in the past two days. While submitting to the validity of the need for such requirements, one has a number of remarks as follow:

- Both selectivity and double standards should not be allowed.
- There is a need for a balanced approach when dealing with different categories of human rights (civil, political, economic, social and economic) with no hierarchy among such them.
- Democracy and good governance are not confined to the domestic situations of African countries or other developing countries, but should be implemented in the decision making process in international relations and organizations, including those institutions dealing with financial, economic and trading matters.

Eighth, another notion that was touched upon in the presentations, interventions and discussions in this Conference, was that of “Human Security”. One should be careful here to differentiate between both the United Nations definition and the Japanese definition of this notion on the one hand, and other definitions that tend to try to manipulate the humanitarian dimensions of this notion to justify intervention in the internal affairs of countries, including military intervention. We have witnessed in the past few years some catastrophic humanitarian results of the misinterpretation of “Human Security”.

Ninth, the issue of cultural cooperation and exchange was a recurrent issue in this Conference. This matter requires an approach that would delicately balance between the need for asserting “Cultural Authenticity” and the inevitable task of avoiding to be trapped in any kind of narrow mindedness and fanaticism, but rather be open for others’ cultures and experiences.

Tenth, tripartite cooperation, i.e. cooperation between a developed country with an African country in another African country has proved to be a positive factor in the development of Africa, while taking place in a similar socio-cultural environment, particularly as far as human resource development and capacity building are concerned. Again going back to Japan where we are meeting today, I would like to cite here the example of the initiative of CARD, launched by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) during TICAD IV Summit held in Yukohama, Japan in May 2008, and aimed at doubling rice production in Sub-Saharan Africa in ten years, while involving an African country with a success record in this field, namely Egypt.

Eleventh, supporting African born and grown initiatives on peace keeping and dispute settlement is another field the international community, particularly development partners, could contribute to strengthening Africa’s own capabilities.

In this domain, we witnessed last year 2008 support by both UNDP and the Government of Japan to several regional centers for dispute settlement and peace keeping in Africa, including those existing in Egypt, Cameroon, Ghana, South Africa, among others.

To conclude, I would like to mention in one sentence that globalization poses challenges and offers opportunities for Africa. The outcome of the interaction will largely depend on the handling of globalization by Africa, its development partners and the international community at large.

I thank you for your patience and attention.