



Advancing knowledge for human security, peace, and development

**Africa and Globalization
Learning from the Past, Enabling a Better Future**

Welcoming remarks

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Director-General Matsuura,
Mr. Tetsuro Fukuyama, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs,
Ms. Masaharu Nakagawa, Senior Vice-Minister, Ministry of Education, Culture,
Sports, Science and Technology,
President Eanes,
President Konaré,
President Kufuor,
President Nujoma,
President Obasanjo,
Professors Brito, Mohamedbhai and Sawyerr, members of the UNU Council,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to welcome all of you to the United Nations University
Headquarters for this the 2009 UNU-UNESCO International Conference on Africa
and Globalization - Learning from the Past, Enabling a Better Future.

Amidst the current international financial crisis, the African continent is now faced with a devastating new set of challenges, including a fall in commodities prices, a drop in levels of foreign direct investment and increased uncertainty regarding levels of overseas development aid. Policies and actions that can help mitigate the impact of the crisis have been at the core of recent high-level meetings, although the fate of the African continent and its people and measures to enhance the development prospects for the nearly one billion people of Africa have not necessarily been as high on the agenda as they deserve to be. I very much hope that public events such as the Africa day Symposium which the UNU held jointly this past May with the African Diplomatic Corps in Japan, and today's conference, being jointly organized with UNESCO, will raise awareness and enhance understanding of the importance of African development, not only for African people, but for all of us.

I am therefore particularly pleased that the UNU's active collaboration with UNESCO, led by my colleague, Director-General Matsuura, has over the past weeks and months made it possible for us jointly to bring together a very impressive list of participants. Five former heads of state, including four African and one European President, renowned scholars, practitioners, decision-makers, and civil society representatives from Africa, Europe and Asia will participate actively over the coming two days, and will share with us their insights and experience on issues core to the future of the African continent, through consideration of socio-political cohesion, governance and sustainable development.

I wish to extend my warmest welcome to each one of the conference participants for joining us on this very important occasion. Quite a number of you have already been contributing actively to UNU's activities in and on Africa, as well as to public events held at the UNU in past years and it is a great honour and pleasure to welcome you back to UNU.

I am most grateful to my colleagues on the UNU Council, Professors Lidia Brito, Goolam Mohamedbhai and Akilagpa Sawyerr, for their ideas and advice which helped to shape the programme for today's conference. I am also pleased to see among the audience a number of members of the academic and diplomatic

communities in Tokyo, UNU and UN agency colleagues, all of whom I hope will help to contribute to the depth of our deliberations over the next two days.

As you can see from the programme which was distributed to you, the first session this morning is led by the presidents, while in the afternoon, eminent academics and experts will present their own frank assessment of what have been and could be the positive and negative consequences of globalization for the African continent and its people. Later today, we will bring the presidents and panellists together for an open exchange of views and analysis which I very much hope will contribute to identifying concrete steps which can lead the further development of the continent. Tomorrow, the conference participants will gather and focus on governance and sustainable development in two important sessions. In preparing for this two-day conference, we have aimed at enabling interactions with members of the audience in a lively, open and frank exchange of ideas.

As many of you know, the UNU carries out research and capacity development activities in Africa, with African experts, as well as with international scholars and scientists to address pressing global problems. The location of the UNU Headquarters in Japan enables us to contribute to the ongoing dialogue between Japan, its Asian neighbours and Africa and to foster creative thinking about critical international issues, such as climate change, the international financial crisis, human security issues to name just a few. I very much hope that the coming two days will enable us to come up with new ideas and approaches to promote the sustainable development and a better livelihood for those on the African continent.

Prior to concluding these brief welcoming remarks, I wish to reiterate my deepest thanks to all those who have helped to make this meeting possible: the organizers, the speakers and the sponsors, and to the Government of Japan for its strong support in helping us host all of the conference participants. I would also like to express my personal gratitude to the Ambassador of Ethiopia in Japan for the very beautiful Ethiopian roses which adorn our stage today. This is, I believe, a very positive example of a benefit which globalization has brought whereby we can enjoy

the beauty of Ethiopia here in Tokyo and which can bring benefit also to the people of Ethiopia who have grown and nurtured them.

I look forward very much to joining you in what I hope will be a productive, interesting and challenging set of discussions over the next two days.

Thank you very much.