

**The Honourable Lawrence Cannon,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada**

Speech at the 14th Africa Partnership Forum

**Toronto, Ontario
April 30th, 2010**

Distinguished Co-Chairs,
Honourable Ministers
Members of the Forum,
Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be here to address delegates of the 14th Africa Partnership Forum, the first to be hosted by Canada since the inception of the Forum in 2003.

I am especially pleased to be addressing this Forum during such an important year for Canada.

Canada is proud to be one of the APF's four Co-Chairs, and we look forward to hosting the G8 and the G20 Leaders Summits in June.

Canada last hosted the G8 Summit in Kananaskis in 2002, which saw the adoption of the G8 Africa Action Plan to support and complement the objectives of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

Of course for Canada, the relationship with Africa is not new.

Through our shared membership in the Commonwealth and the Francophonie, and our strong people-to-people ties, the friendship and partnership our countries share is historic and fruitful.

The upcoming Summits, the G8 in Muskoka and the G20 here in Toronto, come at an equally important time in the relationship between Africa and its development partners.

It has been almost five years since the G8 Summit in Gleneagles, and key commitments made at that Summit are now coming due.

I am proud to say that Canada has met our Gleneagles commitment to double aid to Africa, and we met that commitment a full year ahead of the deadline.

This means that Canada's support to Africa rose to \$2.1 billion in 2008-2009.

In addition, Canada has fully untied our food aid and we are on track to untie our overall aid by 2012.

We are committed to the implementation of the L'Aquila accord in food security, to which Canada had contributed \$600 million in new funds.

The Muskoka Summit also represents the two-thirds point in the pursuit of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

While there has been significant progress in some areas, with only five years remaining before the MDG target date of 2015, much remains to be done to achieve the MDGs, particularly with regard to Africa.

The upcoming G8 Summit presents an opportunity to take stock of efforts toward the realization of the MDGs and other commitments.

As host, Canada will advance a pragmatic and results-driven agenda that follows up on past G8 commitments and sets focused goals for G8 leadership.

The G20 will also be an important mechanism as we move toward the realization of our common goals for global economic prosperity.

We believe that the G20 has been and will continue to be a leader in outlining concrete and credible solutions to global economic challenges. We fully support the G20 in its new role as the premier forum for international economic cooperation. Ensuring that the G8 and the G20 are accountable and deliver on their commitments is a key priority for Canada.

Doing this in partnership with Africa and the global community at large lies at the heart of G8 and G20 credibility and legitimacy.

We cannot deliver on our commitments or achieve our common objectives alone. We will need to work with international partners to chart the course to recovery and new prosperity.

Since its launch at the 2003 G8 Summit in Evian, France, the Africa Partnership Forum has proven to be an effective vehicle through which governments and international institutions can support Africa's development and the political and economic reform agenda set out in NEPAD.

The Forum plays a key role in promoting mutual accountability and monitoring the delivery of commitments by both sides of this partnership.

Additionally, the Forum provides us with an opportunity to work together, not only to discuss the challenges facing the continent, but also to build upon the opportunities the new, dynamic Africa offers.

We must not lose sight of some Africa's impressive achievements:

- As many as 76% of children are finishing primary school, and about two-thirds of the continent is literate.
- Annual GDP growth in Africa increased from 2 percent in the 1990s to more than 5 percent in 2008.
- Between 2004 and 2008, the continent's economic growth outpaced the average economic growth rate for emerging economies.
- Democracy on the continent is on the rise and elections are now the norm.

The Forum has the potential to be a key venue through which such urgent challenges can be discussed and creative solutions identified, and through which support for those solutions can be broadened.

Similarly, Canada has stood by Africa and responded when the region faced humanitarian challenges.

While the Forum is not a humanitarian-aid body, in an era of heightened food insecurity and exposure to natural disasters, it can and must serve as a vehicle through which to enhance our collective capacity to reduce Africa's vulnerability.

I am pleased to see this morning's focus on the MDGs, in particular maternal, newborn and child health.

In our early planning consultations for the Muskoka Summit, African partners told us that was the most urgent issue challenging Africa's ability to reach the Millennium goals.

Subsequently, Prime Minister Harper, announced that Canada will champion a major new initiative to improve the health of women and young children in the world's most vulnerable regions.

My colleague, Minister Oda spoke to you about it last evening.

The second pillar of the G8 Leaders Summit will focus on peace and security.

One issue we will address that has particular relevance to Africa, is how better to assist vulnerable states and regions to build the capacity to prevent future conflicts and to mobilize civilian capacity in support of peace.

At the G8 Foreign Ministers' meeting in Gatineau, Quebec in March, we agreed that regional approaches are key to addressing the challenges of terrorism and its root causes more effectively.

We also talked about how to help both countries in this region and regional institutions build their capacity to combat terrorism, and related problems of organised crime, drug trafficking and piracy.

In closing, I want to assure all of you that even in this momentous year for Canada in the international scene, we will remain steadfast and focussed in our commitment to our historic partnership with Africa.