

Speech by Dr. John O. Kakonge, UNDP Resident Representative  
At a Cocktail Reception

Mamba Point Hotel, Monrovia  
12 February 2000, 7.00pm

Honorable Ministers

Deputy Ministers

Senior Government Officials

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Members of the NGO Community

UN colleagues

Members of the Private Sector

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

There is a long-established informal tradition within UNDP for the Resident Representative to meet with all the key stakeholders and partners once a year. I wanted to uphold this tradition by inviting all of you here this evening to say thank you for the partnership and collaboration we have, and continue to enjoy. I also wanted to take this opportunity to inform you of the recent approval of the UNDP Country Cooperation Framework for Liberia.

For the past ten years, in the absence of a Country Programme, which was occasioned by the civil conflict, UNDP's assistance to Liberia has been on a project-by-project basis. We are very encouraged that the Country Cooperation Framework for Liberia, which was developed with the participation of Government, UN agencies, donors and NGOs during 1998 and 1999, has just been approved by the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board in New York for the period 1999-2001. Through this programme, UNDP will work with its sister UN agencies and other partners to support the national development objectives of peace building, reconstruction, consolidation of democracy and poverty reduction, by focusing on the two main areas of: (1) Good Governance and Economic Management; and (2) Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Livelihoods.

The key to success is partnership, working together to make a difference. In order to achieve our goals, there needs to be collaboration with all partners, Government, donors, NGOs and the society as a whole. I would like to congratulate us all for efforts made towards this end, and encourage us to continue in this endeavor. Having a strong partnership helps to promote ownership. The thrust of our programme is to strengthen the capacity of Government so that they, and ultimately society at large, can assume ownership of Liberia's development.

Ladies and Gentlemen

This is a momentous time for Liberia, entering the new Millennium with many opportunities ahead. We have seen the consolidation of peace in this country and significant strides have been made towards National Reconstruction. The UN system has played an important role in the transition process and is poised to continue its support to the consolidation of peace and reduction of poverty in this country.

At this stage, we would like to express gratitude to donors and development partners who, because of their trust in us, channeled additional resources through us and further strengthened our hand in assisting Liberia. These include, in particular, the US Government through USAID, the Netherlands Government and the Government of Sweden.

As we enter the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, we face many challenges as we attempt to address the reconstruction and development needs of this country. One of the main challenges, which cannot be over-emphasized is partnership, without which there is duplication of efforts, waste of resources and a lack of coherence. If we are to succeed in our endeavors, then we need to collectively embrace the idea of partnership and all it entails.

I am sure we all would agree that development outcomes are achieved through a complex set of interventions by many different actors. Partnership is therefore integral and crucial to the achievement of these outcomes. It is no longer primarily a dimension of external relations; it is rather a precondition for development effectiveness and effective mobilization of resources.

In order for partnership to be effective, there are a number of conditions that need to be met:

- A good partnership calls for common goals and objectives.
- A good partnership calls for a set of rules, regulations and agreements.
- A good partnership calls for transparency, trust and respect.
- A good partnership is one where we are able to share constructive criticism for the mutual benefit of all.
- A good partnership, especially in development, is a continuous learning process for each other, with humility.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Having identified these conditions for effective partnership, allow me to highlight some of the tools that I see as important for strengthening partnerships between us.

#### 1. Coordination

Effective coordination at all levels and between all actors will reduce duplication of activities and ensure complementarity. At the heart of partnerships lie the national actors who must own the development process. With this in mind there is, therefore, an urgent need for improved coordination both within the government on a ministerial level, and also between the government and its partners, including donors, UN agencies, NGOs and society as a whole. Part of this coordination process is networking, which helps to ensure that there is effective and open dialogue with one another, and facilitates the sharing of information, discussion of problems and the finding of common solutions to achieve common goals.

#### 2. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation goes hand in hand with coordination. In order to coordinate activities, one also needs to be able to effectively monitor the activities and evaluate their impact on the population. Monitoring and evaluation is not just the responsibility of one ministry or one donor. Rather it is the joint responsibility of all partners.

#### 3. Information and Data Collection

We are all aware of the lack of up to date, reliable and accurate data. Yet this type of information is crucial and strategic for comprehensive development planning purposes and effective coordination. Data collection and dissemination is an expensive venture. It therefore calls for partnership between the various stakeholders, pooling resources together to ensure the availability of useful and relevant information.

#### 4. Promotion of Best Practices

Part of partnership is the sharing of our ideas and experiences, in particular best practices and lessons learnt, which could be replicated. As partners we are all working together towards achieving the same objectives. An exchange of ideas and information on those best practices that could be replicated in any country, will reinforce our efforts at consensus building on key development issues and measures to address them, and thus help to speed up the development process in Liberia.

Partnership between different sectors of society promotes integration and maximizes both national and external competitiveness. There are many good examples, particularly from the Southeast Asian countries, where partnerships between the private and public sectors have achieved significant results. One such example is in India where a partnership between the Government and the private sector resulted in the successful electrification of the rural areas.

#### 5. Responsibility and Accountability

As partners, there are responsibilities and commitments that must be assumed, both in terms of what the Government and the development partners should be doing, and also regarding the local inputs that are required to make the partnership work. We all need to be committed to make the partnership succeed, and that means taking our responsibilities seriously. In addition, we must be accountable to one another and also to the target beneficiaries, whom we are ultimately serving.