World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim's Remarks During Press Conference in Bamako, Mali

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World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim
Press Conference Following Meetings With Country Leaders and a Day Visit to Timbuktu
Bamako, Mali

Transcript

DR. KIM: Thank you very much. First, I'd like to express my sadness over the tragic deaths of the two French Radio RFI reporters just a few days ago in northern Mali. My condolences go out to the families and the colleagues of the reporters, Claude Verlon and Ghislaine Dupont.

Their deaths, unfortunately, underscore the need to further improve the security for all in this Region. It is my hope that that day will come soon. Those of us sitting here today came for one purpose: to link peace and security with economic development, and to do that with urgency and purpose.

I'm grateful to the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his leadership in bringing us here today, and I'm also grateful to the leaders of the African Union Commission and the European Union here with us today for their commitment to linking peace with development.

This week, the World Bank Group announced a new package of funding for the Region, $1.5 billion additional on top of what we've already committed over the next two years for the Region. This funding will support major regional development priorities such as social safety nets to help families weather the worst effects of economic diversity and natural disasters, improved infrastructure, and create opportunities in rural areas.
It will also create more hydropower and other sources of energy to greatly expand irrigation and transform agriculture, protect and expand pastoralism for more than 80 million people living in the Sahel who rely on it as a major source of food and livelihood, expend health services for women and girls, and improve regional communications and connectivity between countries.

And it includes $300 million from the IFC, the World Bank Group's private sector arm, which will support economic development in several countries in the Sahel. The inclusion of funding for private sector projects is aimed at attracting additional billions of dollars which will be necessary in order to create good jobs and help bring civility to a Region that has been rocked by conflict in the last two years.

The people in the Sahel Region desperately need security, peace, jobs, education, and good health care. For too long, the people of the Sahel, especially the women, have struggled with the devastating impact of too little economic growth and opportunity, a harsh climate, hunger, high fertility rates, and far too many women dying in childbirth, and far too many children dying before their fifth birthday. This cycle of harm inflicted on good people must stop.

Today, we had the wonderful opportunity to visit Timbuktu. As we went into a meeting with the community, the local griot started shouting, which surprised me, but his words reflected the feel and the mood of the event. He shouted out, "Welcome, Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon! Welcome! You are the president of the entire world. You are a man of peace. You are a man of dialogue. We need you here in Timbuktu."

And then, members of the community, one after another, proceeded to tell us of their wishes and aspirations for themselves and for their children.

The Grand Imam of the Great Mosque of Timbuktu spoke, then a representative of the Christian community, then a representative of the local government, then a representative of young people, and a representative of the women, and they all said the same thing. They said, "We are peace-loving people. We have lived together in this diverse community for years. We want peace, but we also want development." The young people wanted a good education. They wanted to be able to play soccer on a soccer field. They wanted a chance to have a job. Peace. Development. Jobs. Hope for a better future. This is what the people of Timbuktu wanted.
And for me, having the opportunity to visit them doubles and triples my own resolve at delivering just those things for the people of Mali and the people of the Sahel who deserve them and who've been waiting far too long to get them.

Thank you.

[Applause.]

**JEUNE AFRIQUE:** .... How can you promote development when there isn't security?

**DR. KIM:** You know, I'll let the Secretary-General talk more specifically about security. Our traditional work is not security, but the entire premise of this trip and this trip to the Great Lakes is that the root cause of insecurity is poverty, lack of hope, lack of jobs, lack of education.

And so, it's very significant that we come here when there are active problems happening. The same thing happened when we visited the Great Lakes Region. There was active fighting in Goma when we arrived, and then the fighting stopped when we visited.

Now, we deeply believe together, the Secretary-General and I, all of us on this panel, that there is an intricate link between security and hope. And hope means that there is development, there is water, there is health care, there's education, there's jobs.

And so, the strategy that we're taking now is that, instead of waiting for peace before we come in with our development projects, while there is still insecurity, we're making even a larger commitment to development, hoping that the message we send is that there is hope. We are committed to you as a people, we're committed to young people, we're committed to job creation, we're committed to education, and our hope is that that will contribute somehow to security.