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Speech

Luxembourg, 20 October 2015

Speech by Vítor Caldeira, President of the European Court of Auditors

International conference - European development aid after 2015

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The spoken version shall take precedence.

ECA Press

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Cher Monsieur le Ministre, Chère Madame la Présidente du Comité du développement du Parlement européen, Cher Monsieur le Commissaire, Chère Madame la Secrétaire général-adjointe des Nations Unies, Excellences, Chers invités, Chers Collègues,

Je vous adresse la plus cordiale bienvenue à la Cour des comptes européenne à Luxembourg. J'aimerais aussi envoyer une salutation spéciale à tous ceux qui nous suivent à travers la diffusion « live webcast ».

Comme vous le savez, depuis juillet de cette année le Luxembourg assure la Présidence du Conseil de l'Union européenne. Cette conférence est organisée par la Cour en association avec la Présidence luxembourgeoise, et je vous en suis très reconnaissant, Monsieur le Ministre, de l'engagement que vous avez apporté à cette initiative, qui traduit bien la réputation du Luxembourg en tant que partenaire active dans le domaine du développement, ainsi que les priorités ambitieuses liées au développement établies par la Présidence luxembourgeoise.

Ladies and gentleman,

2015 has been an important year for Luxembourg, the other Member States and the EU to reflect on Europe's contribution to sustainable development.

The European Parliament declared it the European Year for Development to deal with the European Union's external action and the EU's role in the world.

It is a year which has been providing opportunities to all those involved in world development to show their and the EU's commitment and action taken to eradicate poverty, and to inspire Europeans to get engaged in development.

2015 is also the year in which the Millennium Development Goals expired and new Sustainable Development Goals were agreed.

Last month the world united to agree on the future global framework for poverty eradication and sustainable development.

The Secretary General of the United Nations hailed the new goals as a universal and transformative vision for the future, which should engage all actors.

It will be a great challenge to achieve these objectives:

We live in a world where:

- half of all wealth is in the hands of only 1% of its people, and
- where it is projected that:
 - the population will grow and age,
 - the climate will change unpredictably, and
 - natural resources and eco-systems will come under increasing pressure.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We know that the world around us is changing fast and that we need to act.

Developed and developing countries will need to work together better than ever to build peaceful and prosperous societies and to make a safer world with economic benefits for all.

And they will need to work together in new ways. The old distinction between developed and developing countries is shifting. Some former developing countries have become emerging donors, new development partners and new sources of financing have come forward, and the classic donor-recipient relationship is evolving.

This evolution and the new Sustainable Development Goals have significantly altered the development landscape.

As the biggest aid donor, it is essential for the EU to take account of these changes when dealing with its many public and private partners, including the UN agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations and third countries.

In this context, the EU has committed itself to ensuring the effectiveness of aid through results based management and a results framework to strengthen accountability and transparency.

This is very important.

It reflects the increasing priority that citizens and their representatives attach to seeing the results achieved through the different policy interventions.

In particular, citizens want to know what development aid achieves; the impact on the ground and on people's lives. This point was also stressed when the Sustainable Development goals were adopted at the United Nations summit in September.

I believe that public audit institutions, like the European Court of Auditors, have a crucial role to play in assisting this process.

We can provide assurance that aid is well managed and highlight the lessons that can be learned from spending it. Policy makers need this feedback and the citizens of donor countries need to know that aid makes a positive difference to their lives and societies.

In this way, public auditors, like the ECA, can contribute to maintaining public support for the public investment needed to meet the new sustainable development goals.

It is why we, together with the Luxembourg's Presidency of the EU Council, arranged this conference and it is why we are very pleased that you are here today.

Excellences,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you all for attending the conference, and thank you also to those who are following the live webcast.

Finally, allow me to thank you, Minister Schneider, and all colleagues here in the Court that have worked hard for this event, in particular my colleague, Daniele Lamarque.

I wish you all fruitful discussions and reflections – in the words of the European Year of Development - for our world, our dignity, our future!

Thank you!