

RELEASE IN FULL

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Subject: Fw: AFP - Clinton urges rights standards on aid

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Clinton urges rights standards on aid

(AFP) – 41 minutes ago

BUSAN, South Korea — US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton urged aid donor nations Wednesday to ensure standards on human rights and called on recipients to be "smart shoppers" as China steps up funding.

At a conference in South Korea, Clinton said traditional and new donors must work together to ensure that developing countries avoid a "resource curse" where they export oil, diamonds or other lucrative goods but remain poor.

"All of us must live up to the international standards that the global community has committed to, starting with a commitment to help countries become more self-sufficient," Clinton told the 160-nation conference on aid effectiveness in Busan.

"Being an accountable partner also means refusing to look the other way when leaders repress their own people," Clinton said.

Clinton said the United States would also step up efforts, pledging that it would join the International Aid Transparency Initiative which provides public records of how aid is distributed.

She warned developing countries to avoid "quick fixes" that fill short-term budget gaps without lasting benefit.

"Be smart shoppers. Be wary of donors who are more interested in extracting your resources than building your capacity," she said in a speech.

Clinton did not single out China, which has ramped up assistance around the world and insists that it will avoid what it calls a moralising tone by the West.

But Clinton hit China's arguments head-on, saying: "While national sovereignty is an important principle, it cannot become an excuse for avoiding scrutiny of development efforts -- not if we want results."

She did not exclude developed countries such as the United States from criticism, saying aid was too often motivated solely by "our own political interests" or "development orthodoxies".

The Busan talks are led by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which says members of its Development Assistance Committee spent \$129 billion last year.

Booming economies such as Brazil, India and China are not OECD members. China has come in for criticism in the West for bankrolling countries such as Sudan and Zimbabwe, weakening the impact of Western pressure aimed at addressing human rights concerns.

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