

CLOSING STATEMENT

BY

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PRESIDENT OF AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT THE BANK GROUP**

2008 ANNUAL MEETING

**MAPUTO, MOZAMBIQUE
MAY 15, 2008**

Mr. Chairman
Honourable Governors
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The 43rd Annual Meetings of the Bank Group have come to an end. Our discussions and deliberations have been extremely constructive and enriching. As President, I have benefited from your guidance and this will contribute to sharpening our responses and approaches on important strategic issues for the Bank in the next twelve months.

Let me seize this opportunity to express my appreciation to all for the success of our meetings. I once again express, in your name, my deep gratitude to the Mozambican authorities and the People of Maputo for their warm hospitality and the quality of the organization. In particular, I would like to express our profound gratitude to their Excellencies President Armando Emilio Guebuza and President Denis Sassou N'Guesso for finding time to honour our Conference and their inspiring statements and strong support of our institution.

Let me also once more thank the outgoing Bureau and Governor Cuereneia in particular for his leadership throughout the past year. Governor Cuereneia, thank you for your time and your contribution. Allow me also to congratulate the incoming Chairman, Governor Diop and his Bureau and assure them of Management's full support and cooperation over the next year.

Equally, I want to extend my warm congratulations to the elected new members of the Board of Directors. We look forward to working closely and constructively with the Board. You come in at the right time. Indeed a cohesive seamless working relationship between Management and the Board is vital for the health and efficiency of the Bank as the Board carries out its oversight function. It is a must for good corporate governance. I also thank all who have contributed to the success of this meeting, the Bank, Management, staff, interpreters, translators and our Mozambican logistical staff for a job well done.

High Level Panel Report

I would like once again to thank the HLP for its work. The GCC endorsed the management's response to the Report and we will take forward the work as proposed. We will proceed with the crafting of a new strategic vision – the first since 1999 – which will inform the finalization of our Medium Term Strategy.

It is clear that the debate has begun on some of the longer term issues raised in the Report. For instance, how best to leverage the Bank's assets in order to maximize development impact, a debate to be informed also by the thinking in response to the issue on capital adequacy.

What I have heard, from the GCC debate on management's response to the Report, in the statements, and in my bilateral consultations is broad satisfaction with the strategic direction now in place. There is agreement on focus and the need for anchoring selectivity.

I intend to maintain the operational discipline, to ensure strategic fit around our core operational areas as enshrined in our draft Medium Term Strategy. Of course this is not a strategy cast in stone – our annual work programme and budgeting will take account of experience, changing needs and circumstances.

Response to the Food Crisis

I very much appreciated the discussions on the role of the Bank and the response to the food crisis. I welcome your endorsement of our three-pronged action plan to deal with the crisis in the short - medium and long-term. The Bank will refine the plan and move towards its implementation, while also engaging and collaborating with other institutions, including specialized agencies of the United Nations.

Governors have agreed that we should make use of some of the resources in our Surplus Account. I intend to come quickly to the Board with proposals, and we will welcome also financial contributions from donors disposed to do so. It cannot be overemphasized that our success in this area will depend as much on funding levels as well as on our collective ability to ensure an effective and coordinated response. I appreciate your approval of the Fertilizer Facility which gives us an additional instrument.

For our part we will work with the other MDBs and donors so that there is a coordinated response which draws on the strengths and expertise of each. We will coordinate also in deepening our analysis of the impact country by country, and in the advice we provide. We must be guided by the lessons of the past. We should not again do those things that failed before. I want us to showcase such complementarities at the Accra High Level Forum; who will do what in each area, from providing inputs, to access to credit, to community support, through rural roads, post-harvest facilities, to the strengthening of institutional capacity in Ministries of Agriculture. This Bank will continue to do those things that we can do best.

Etats Fragiles

Comme il ressort clairement du rapport du Comité de Haut Niveau, la Banque a un rôle spécial à jouer dans les Etats fragiles et les pays sortant d'un conflit. La crise alimentaire a davantage mis en relief l'importance de notre engagement. Je remercie le Gouverneur pour les Pays-Bas d'avoir organisé un séminaire très fructueux sur la dimension régionale des Etats fragiles. Il est utile que les ministres nous disent eux-mêmes les défis auxquels ils sont confrontés. Je suis persuadé que nous devons mettre en œuvre rapidement et efficacement notre politique en faveur des Etats fragiles afin de produire des résultats concrets sur le terrain et d'aider ces pays à renforcer leurs capacités à plus long terme.

Pays à revenu intermédiaire

L'un des messages du panel de Haut Niveau qui m'est revenu ici est que la Banque doit continuer à jouer un rôle pertinent pour l'ensemble des pays membres régionaux. Cela ne signifie pas toujours prêter au pays mais également prendre des engagements qui vont l'aider à faire avancer son propre programme de développement. Je retiens le message que nous devons être plus souples, plus créatif et, en même temps, tenir compte de chaque pays. A cet égard, j'ai demandé que notre approche concernant les pays à revenu intermédiaire fasse l'objet d'un examen plus approfondi.

Delivery and Results

I have taken careful note that whilst we have had enthusiastic endorsement of our strategy, you now expect us to deliver results. I agree absolutely and I am content to be held to account. I am putting in place arrangements which will ensure greater coherence across the Bank that we focus on priorities, track performance and manage for results. I am confident that by the time we meet next year we will be able to report progress. We will continue decentralization with prudence and will further empower country offices. Decentralization is an exercise not without its risks and we will therefore continue to balance prudence with speed.

Other Key Deliverables

Let me also mention some of the other areas in which I know you expect, and we intend to make progress before we meet again. This includes: i) implementation of the gender action plan; ii) mainstreaming climate change with a focus adaptation; and iii) conducting a skills gap audit with the view to strengthening our delivery capacity.

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

This has been a very good year for the Bank. I hope when we meet next year, I can report even greater progress.

Let me close and wish you all safe journey back home and, see you all in Dakar, Senegal, in May next year.

Thank you for your kind attention.