

# The African Development Bank Group



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## EMINENT SPEAKERS PROGRAM

**Presentation by Professor Wangari Maathai on  
“Natural Resource Management and Poverty Reduction:  
Strengthening the Links”**

**Closing Remarks by**

**Donald KABERUKA  
President of the African Development Bank Group**

Tunis, Tunisia

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## **Ladies and Gentlemen**

1. We have come to the end of this Eminent Speakers' presentation. Please join me in applauding the Nobel Laureate for a job well done. The session has been very interactive and has provided the opportunity to share our thoughts on the need for a balanced management of agricultural practices, lumbering, water resource exploitation and environmental protection. She has highlighted the impact of natural resources management and poverty alleviation in Africa.
2. Professor Maathai has stressed the inextricable links between natural resources endowment, institutional and organizational capacities of countries, good governance and the roles of local communities. We have heard from her how some countries and communities have succeeded in harnessing their resources for economic growth and poverty alleviation, and why others continue to be trapped in poverty when the potentials abound for transition to prosperity. Throughout her presentation, she has provided evidence on how the "natural resources curse" can be reversed.
3. One key conclusion from the deliberations is that in most cases, the task of managing natural resource call for joint efforts by all stakeholders. There is a need for national and regional partnerships to maximize the shared benefits from natural resources which transcend national borders. In this regard, support and convening experiences of the bilateral and multilateral development agencies such as the African Development Bank will always be required.
4. From her presentation, I also noted the call for integrated and participatory approach in natural resources management. This is to allow environmental governance from the grassroots, and bring about improved awareness and ownership of programs by local population. I am pleased to state that these have been central to all the Bank's projects on natural resources use. We will step up our endeavor in these regards and

complement these approaches with increased flexibility in project design and swift implementation.

5. Professor Maathai, this brief but highly educative exchange has sharpened our awareness on the need for more creative thinking, so as to solidify the foundation for sustainable use of the continent's natural resources, while seeking to boost productivity and reduce poverty. I want to assure you that we will accord due consideration to your recommendations. We have learnt a lot from your presentation and I would like to convey the sincere appreciation of the Bank.

6. Once again, I thank you all for coming and wish Nobel Laureate Professor Wangari Maathai a safe return to Nairobi.