



**AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP**

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**Statement of**

**Donald Kaberuka**

**President of the African Development Bank Group**

**Commitment to Capacity**

**Towards capable states**

**On the occasion of**

**The African Capacity Building Foundation 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Summit**

**8-9<sup>th</sup> February 2011**

**Kigali, Rwanda**

**Your Excellency, Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda,  
Distinguished Heads of States and Governments, Eminent personalities,**

**Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**The ACBF's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary offers us an opportunity to reflect and chart the path for the future at a most opportune time, at a time of profound transformation in Africa and in the global arena.**

**Allow me therefore to thank you Mr. President, the Government and the people of Rwanda for having graciously accepted to host this important gathering.**

**The presence of several distinguished Heads of State and Government present and eminent personalities is a reaffirmation of our collective unflinching commitment to capacity building on the continent.**

**Congratulations to Dr. Frannie Léautier, Executive Secretary of the ACBF. During the past one and a half years, you have provided the much needed strategic direction and leadership to the Foundation.**

**Thanks to you, the Board of Governors, the Executive Board and staff, ACBF is back on stable ground.**

**Your Excellencies,  
Honorable Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**In recent years, much has been said about the so called "CAPABLE STATES", defined as one that can conceive, implement and deliver superior results for the people.**

***Emerging Africa as a potential engine of global growth***

**It is common to hear statements such as: "African countries must be in the driving seat". But we also know that ownership without capacity is a forgone opportunity.**

**Such affirmations remain evangelical unless translated into practice.**

**A public sector that fails to deliver will have its legitimacy questioned, irrespective of how it came to office.**

**Gone are the days when Africans would implement externally generated agendas, with externally provided support, convincing ourselves and others that we have internalized them.**

**Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**A new era has opened during the millennium. The centre of gravity of the global economy has shifted. Africa's moment of opportunity is recognized by all – from the IFIs to McKinsey.**

**The challenge of this generation is how to unlock the potential of this great continent and its billion people.**

**To unlock that potential, exploit the opportunities of the new landscape requires endogenous capacity.**

**The capacity we look for is to self-develop, exercise our sovereignty, ask the right questions, peer into the future, plan strategically.**

**In short, to consolidate state legitimacy, by providing social services, mobilizing our resources, and creating an environment for all and sundry to prosper.**

**Your Excellencies,  
Honorable Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Today, as we celebrate 20 years of ACBF accomplishments, I would like to believe we have made some head way. But we also recognize that, capacity building via TA, training, project by project, fragmented, has shown its limits.**

**TA by its nature is self-perpetuating and seldom leads to sustained capacity. And where TA is Donor Driven, it has tended to aim for short term results, too much firefighting, scrambling to meet requirements of donors and IFIs and quite often undermining the possibility of seizing the policy space.**

***Three key areas for capacity building in Africa***

**My colleagues from the AfDB who are here, with me, will articulate our approach to the way we address capacity building on the continent.**

**In this respect, I would like to mention three areas which will require increased attention.**

**First, as has been mentioned – is the special attention to countries recovering from war and conflicts such as Burundi and Southern Sudan. In these countries, often, state has to begin from scratch.**

**I therefore look forward to our side event on Southern Sudan today.**

**Second, capacity to manage external shocks.**

**Over the last three years, Africa has suffered three seismic shocks in quick succession – it has come out bruised but standing. This somewhat mitigated impact of the triple crisis;**

**the sharp increase in food prices, the financial crisis and the volatile energy markets, attest to the improved resilience a result of the policy buffers, built over years of reforms, and capacity to manage our affairs much better than we have done in the past.**

**But the new landscape is full of uncertainties, and poses new forms of risks even to rich and emerging countries.**

**Third, capacity to manage climate change.**

**While rich countries can afford prolonged, unproductive “beggars thy neighbor” negotiations on cutting CO<sup>2</sup> emissions; for us in Africa, the impact of climate change is real and is here now, and threatens to derail our achievement, a powerful reverse gear on our development.**

**Our ability to integrate the issues of mitigation, adaptation into overall development given that the three are inseparable, will determine how much we can sustain the recent momentum built across Africa.**

***Bank and ACBF’s strengthened partnership***

**At the African Development Bank, we see capacity building as a CORE not a COLLATERAL objective. It is about a patient process of building institutions; it is about complementing not supplanting local capacities.**

**It is about identifying areas of strategic gaps and opportunities – and working with countries to seize these opportunities.**

**As a founding member of ACBF, the African Development Bank remains committed to this goal and to the Foundation.**

**That is why we have accompanied the Foundation through its journey; that is the reason last month we provided a USD 12-million grant to the ACBF.**

**Your Excellencies,  
Honorable Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**We believed in ACBF 20 years ago, we believe in ACBF today. We will look closely at the new strategic plan and call upon all the partners of the Foundation to join hands in this laudable endeavour.**

**Thank you.**