There are nearly 420 million young Africans between the ages of 15 and 35 today. Within ten years, Africa will be home to one-fifth of all young people worldwide. These millions of young people are sources of ingenuity and engines of productivity, that could usher in a new age of inclusive prosperity on the continent.

But there are no guarantees. While the youth population in Africa’s asset, it can also easily become a liability. Let us be clear: it is only the existence of opportunity and the young person’s belief that they can access that opportunity, that prevents pessimism and political unrest. Inaction is not an option: young people without opportunity, and more importantly without belief in their leaders’ ability to provide opportunity, are a certain source of civil unrest and we are seeing it everyday.

Jennifer Blanke, AfDB Vice President

"It is important to close the infrastructure gap on the African continent, not just somehow, but in the spirit of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, by building sustainable infrastructure, especially in the energy sector. That’s why we are advocating for more support for the African Renewable Initiative of the African Union hosted within the African Development Bank. The AfDB is the right institution to mobilise and catalyse investments in order to address the most urgent infrastructure gap in Africa… just like the Ethiopian, Kenyan and other African long distance runners, the African Development Bank is going the distance with us."

Thomas Silberhorn, State Secretary, Ministry for Economic Cooperation, Germany

"While covering these Meetings as a journalist, I have come to appreciate the level of development planning involved for the AfDB to deliver on its mandate. The emphasis on agriculture and solving Africa’s food security challenges has always seemed like the sort of grand statement coming out of talking shops. But when you back up your statements with proper planning and execution, these agendas actually change lives. To critics of development planners, I would simply say that I have seen the results. I have witnessed farmers receiving weather information on their mobile phones. They now have easy access to fertilizers, and they understand the value of technology in agriculture. These are issues which have been implemented as a result of years of debate, in places like the AfDB Annual Meetings. They are now a reality. Economic development for Africa is possible. And the AfDB and its partners are among the leaders in making it possible."

Kennedy Abwao, Bureau chief, Panapress news agency

"Si vous voulez que les gens s’intéressent à l’agriculture, il faut faire des films qui les divertissent. Autrement, ce sera du “documentaire” que personne ne regardera."

Omoni Oboli
Célébre actrice et réalisatrice nigériane. Dernier film produit et dans lequel elle joue le rôle principal : Last Lady (2016)

Jennifer Blanke, AfDB Vice President

"Most of Africa’s challenges persist not due to lack of knowledge, plans or technical solutions, but due to a lack of political will. Too many chances have been squandered in the past. What it needs now is a new sense of urgency amongst African governments as well as their international partners.

The time has come to enact the vision of building bridges between the ageing, savings-heavy countries of the north and the young, investment hungry countries of the south. This is the last chance in generations to avoid the perfect storm of global inequality, ecological destruction and a historically large disenfranchised population – we have to turn the tide now. … we can fast track Africa and make this continent a new pole of global economic growth. Nothing less must be the aspiration."

Kofi Annan & Horst Kohler, Co-Chairs, Special Panel of the African Development Bank

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Annual Meetings ‘Asides’
N°03 - WEDNESDAY MAY 24, 2017

Occasional quotes, 24/05/17

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Sundry images, 24/05/17

[Images of various scenes from the Annual Meetings]
I’m the alternate governor of Malawi, here on behalf of the Minister of Finance. I am the senior civil servant in the Treasury, and before that I held the same role for Energy. So I know the Bank both from a financial and an operational perspective. The last Annual Meeting I attended was in Marrakech 4 years ago. Under President Kaberuka, the Bank had a very strong infrastructure focus, including energy. Now, there’s energy and more included in President Adesina’s High 5 agenda.

I enjoyed today’s Governors Dialogue discussion, though in fact it’s inconclusive and ongoing. I am interested in how we might end up changing the legal framework and constitution of the Bank. If we change or open up the shareholding, yes, we will generate much-needed cash, but I fear we might do so at the cost of African ownership of the Bank.

This Bank is the African dream.

As for these meetings, well, they are fun. I have been in Mumbai and Delhi. As for meetings, well, they are fun. I have been in Mumbai and Delhi. I have very good relations with the local office in Lilongwe. The Resident Representative Andrew Mwaba, who’s just leaving, is a friend and colleague. The Bank does brilliant things in Malawi. I know it has just done a feasibility study on the big Kholombidzo hydro-power plant. It has also done important things to help us in crop production, SMDs, social protection, climate change – it’s a big player in Malawi.

As for these meetings, well, they are fun. I have been in Mumbai and Delhi before, but never here. One thing that has struck me is that my liaison officer is a brilliant guy. He’s Dillon Hings – in his normal life he’s a chemical engineer at a local Gujarati Fertilizer and Chemicals company – but for now he’s looking after me – he’s a Phenomenon!

Ben Botolo, Secretary to the Treasury, Ministry of Finance, Malawi

The government has assigned me as Medical Doctor in case of emergency situations during the African Development Bank’s Annual Meetings. My role is to provide medical services to the participants (men and women) in case of emergency. Do you have an idea of what is happening in this Conference center? I know they are discussing Africa’s agriculture and how to use it to employ the youth. We sat up here in 24 May and to date, we have received 160 patients out of which around 90 to 95 are Africans. The general complaints are abdominal discomfort, sore throats, weakness, and insomnia. How do you discuss with your African patients? Most of them speak English and some of us understand French. I can say few words in French. Bonjour, comment tu t’appelles? Comment ça va? Merci. I learnt French from my son. He has French as a subject at school. I like speaking French. Everything was fine during the conference, except that some patients got irritated when there are problems of communication. To make them comfortable in case of misunderstanding, we call Dr. Nelly Iteta, an African Doctor and the Chief of the Bank’s Medical Center.

We have had very good collaboration with our African colleagues. Their attitude is very good. We don’t move from our Medical Box. But we learnt the Annual Meetings are going on very well. We feel proud and privileged to have you among us in India.

The Member governments, regional & non-regional

I have attended a number of ADB meetings. I think, given the time I have attended its meetings, it is the first time ADB is really putting great emphasis in agriculture. And this is very good for the continent and for us who work in agriculture. I have so far attended a number of seminars which have emphasized different aspects of agriculture, but more importantly, the wealth that can be created from agriculture. And this will in turn solve the problem of food insecurity. The approach ADB is taking is demystifying the idea that agriculture is only for the poor. Successful African entrepreneurs like Bangura of mangoes is putting money in agriculture because it benefits them as investors, and helps solve the problems of food security in Africa. Bringing the meeting to India has enabled a meeting of minds between Africa and India, so that Africa can learn from India’s green revolution and ICT experience. The meetings were very well organized and discussions were very evangelical and compelling. We, as CABI, an organization, have responsibility to partner with ADB to realize the dream of a prosperous Africa.

The ‘third sector’ (civil society), the ‘fourth estate’ (press)

The African Development Bank

From ‘behind the scenes’ at the Annual Meetings

The Private Sector

Quick conversations 24/05/17

As a Director of the Energy partnership, my role here in Ahmedabad is on behalf of our corporate partners to discuss collaboration to implement President Adesina’s High 5, “Light Up and Power Africa” and the New Deal on Energy for Africa. Last week, I attended a conference with CSOs on channeling public finance towards clean energy access between India and Africa. Again here in Ahmedabad, the CSOs and the Bank are in full agreement on many issues. They are complimentary about the Bank’s New Deal for Energy and would like to see the Bank increase its financing in renewable energy and decentralised energy access.

I have also met with the Bank’s governors (EDs and their teams) to discuss the implementation of the New Deal and their bilateral support, as well as with private sector partners. These meetings helped to address the coordination challenges between the many energy initiatives in Africa in the spirit of the Transformative Partnership for Energy which aims to implement the Bank’s target to achieve universal access to energy by 2027.

The organization of these Annual Meetings has been good. I managed to see as many people as possible and to build new partnerships. We organized a wide range of events from a Garden Party to listen to African entrepreneurs. We also financed a 1 MW solar power plant at the local university. There is a lot the Bank can learn from India in developing innovative technology and financing solutions in the area of agriculture and energy. We also hope to receive India’s financial support in these sectors.

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Astrid Manroth, Director, Transformational energy partnership
Tweets of the day, 24/05/17
#AfDBAM2017

@OmokeOjomuyide
#AfDBAM2017 Thank you for the Fashionomics panel looking forward to the Nollywood meets Bollywood panel @Omonioboli

@PIB_India
Power Minister @PiyushGoyal at the Strengthening International Solar Alliance & Africa-India #RenewableEnergy Partnerships #AfDBAM2017

@Daljuz
Watching @FashionomicsADB event #India #Ahmedabad #AfDBAM2017 - fascinating insights & information on value of sector #vlisco #china #india

@edithbrou
Traversez la rivière en posant des pierres - citation de @HelenHaiyu - CEO of Made in Africa initiative #AfDBAM2017 #Fashionomics

@Ulla_Tornaes
Youth is the future #AfDBAM2017: youth, fragility, empowerment sustainable growth @afdbam2017 @AfDB_Group

@PiyushGoyalOffc
Mr. @akin_adesina, President, @afdb_group, called on Shri @PiyushGoyal, in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. #AfDBAM2017