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Opening Speech at
the Second International Conference on the Emergence of
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I am very pleased to join H.E. Alassane Ouattara, the President of Cote d'Ivoire, in welcoming you to this second *International Conference on the Emergence of Africa*.

I wish to thank the President and his Government most sincerely for organizing this important conference in collaboration with UNDP. I also thank the African Development Bank and the World Bank for their support for the conference.

The impressive turnout of participants from Africa and around the world underlines the importance of emergence for Africa. I

welcome you all and, in particular, thank the Heads of State and Government present for joining us here in Abidjan.

Since we last gathered, in 2015, the international community has agreed on the ambitious and universal *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, and the associated *Sustainable Development Goals*. The SDGs aspire to eradicate poverty and hunger, fight inequality and discrimination, and tackle climate change. They also recognize the importance of peaceful and inclusive societies for the achievement of sustainable development.

Africa's emergence will be a major contributor to realisation of the *2030 Agenda* and of the African Union's visionary *Agenda 2063*. Emergence must lift not only GDP per capita; it must lift human development in the broadest sense. This is recognised in the important "High 5s" agenda of the African Development Bank, with its emphasis on improving the quality of life for the people of Africa.

The 2015 Abidjan Declaration from the First International Conference on the Emergence of Africa recognized the potential for emergence across the continent and the progress already made. It also offered recommendations on how to accelerate progress. This second conference is an important opportunity to take stock of progress since then, and to share experiences, from both within and outside the region. We can also reflect on how emergence will contribute to the success of global, regional, and national development agendas.

To set the stage for the discussions at the conference, let me:

- elaborate on how emergence is already proceeding on the continent;
- note some of the challenges to emergence; and
- suggest some strategic actions which would be conducive to further progress.

1. Africa's emergence: progress to date

We can see progress in:

- **the substantial *growth in infrastructure investments*, across electricity, transport, ICT, water, and sanitation. These include significant improvements in ICT in Mali, Ghana, and Nigeria; in transportation systems in Kenya and Mauritius; and in increased water supply and improved sanitation in The Gambia, Senegal, Madagascar, and Tanzania.¹ Better infrastructure means improved services and access for African citizens and improvement in the enabling environment for quality business investments.**

- **the steady increase in *manufacturing output* on the continent.² In 2015, Africa’s total manufacturing output was worth around \$500 billion, with Egypt, Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa, and Tunisia leading the way. McKinsey and Company estimate that with continued improvements to the business environment on the**

¹ https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Publications/Africa_Infrastructure_Development_May_2016.pdf

² See [Mckinsey](#) (2016)

continent, manufacturing output could rise to \$930 billion by 2025; and

- **rapid *transformation of economies*, with shifts in employment from traditional to modernized agriculture and to non-agricultural sectors. Countries such as Ghana, Ethiopia, and Rwanda are diversifying at an accelerated rate, while productivity and value addition to agriculture is increasing in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, and Rwanda³.**

The combined impact of these and other advances on *economic and social development*, is clear:

- **African economies continue to be among the fastest growing in the world. The ten fastest growing economies⁴ on the continent increased their national income by five to**

³ <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/assr.pdf>

⁴ Cote d'Ivoire, Tanzania, Senegal, Djibouti, Rwanda, Kenya, Mozambique, Central African Republic, Sierra Leone, Uganda

8.5 per cent in 2016, compared to a global average of 3.2 per cent⁵;

- **eighteen countries on the continent have now achieved medium to high human development status, reflecting improved health, education, and overall living standards. According to UNDP's 2016 Human Development Report, Senegal, Zimbabwe, DRC, Mali, Niger, and Ethiopia were some of the fastest improvers on the global Human Development Index;**
- **significant strides have also been made in reducing multidimensional poverty - since 2005, it has fallen in thirty of the 35 African countries included in the global Multidimensional Poverty Index⁶;**

⁵ <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/04/which-are-africa-s-fastest-growing-economies/>
<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/04/worlds-fastest-growing-economies/>

⁶ <http://www.ophi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Global-MPI-2016-8-pager.pdf>

- **around seventy per cent of African citizens currently live in a country which has seen improved governance between 2006 and 2015.⁷ This is positive for inclusive and sustainable development.**

Emergence is driving transformation of the prospects of our host, *Cote d’Ivoire*, with preliminary figures estimating that it was Africa’s fastest growing economy last year. In 2016, Cote d’Ivoire’s GDP increased by around eight per cent,⁸ which is significantly higher than the Sub-Saharan African continental average of 2.0 per cent. Cote d’Ivoire is also making consistent progress on health and education outcomes, its infrastructure has greatly improved, and there have been significant gains in agricultural productivity and access to electricity and ICT. The country’s Human Development Index has risen by 1.4 per cent per annum since 2010 which is 38 per cent higher than the regional average.

⁷ <http://mo.ibrahim.foundation/news/2016/progress-african-governance-last-decade-held-back-deterioration-safety-rule-law/>

⁸ http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/reo/2016/afr/eng/pdf/stats_1016.pdf

More transparency, accountability, and efficient public services are also improving social service delivery and contributing to human development here. The Mo Ibrahim Index suggests that this country has made the most progress on the continent on improving citizen security and the rule of law.⁹

The experience of Cote d'Ivoire demonstrates the importance of forward looking policies, structural reforms, and key investments in driving emergence. The new *National Development Plan* for 2016-2020 prioritizes structural economic transformation through industrialization, infrastructure development, and inclusive growth.

UNDP is proud to have supported the Government of Cote d'Ivoire in preparing the Plan, and in facilitating its alignment with the outcome of the 2015 International Conference on the Emergence of Africa and the 2030 Agenda.

⁹ http://s.mo.ibrahim.foundation/u/2016/10/01184917/2016-Index-Report.pdf?_ga=1.243833539.777454692.1490034300

We are now working with the Government to set up a monitoring and evaluation framework to follow the implementation of the plan, and also to organize a national dialogue on inclusive public policies and efficient budgetary processes. Looking ahead, we stand ready to use our global presence to facilitate the exchange of development experiences in areas of interest to the Government of Cote d'Ivoire.

2. Challenges to Africa's emergence

- **Continent-wide there is still an *over-reliance on primary commodities*, and the lower prices of some of these in recent years have dampened economic growth. Creating greater resilience to primary commodity price shocks calls for greater economic and export diversification and industrialization.**

- ***Trade restrictions* remain higher in Sub-Saharan Africa than anywhere else in the world.¹⁰ This, combined with a proliferation in bilateral and regional trade agreements¹¹, can negatively impact the policy space African countries need to promote emergence. Successful completion of the Doha Development Round of the WTO would be an important step in putting trade to the full service of Africa's development.**
- ***Institutional capacities* need to be improved to support forward looking analysis, implementation, and monitoring of strategies and policies aimed at emergence;**
- ***The gains from emergence to date are not equitably shared. On average, the top twenty per cent of earners in***

¹⁰ http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/ditctab20162_en.pdf

¹¹ Such as the: Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), The Economic Partnership Agreement between EU and Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (AU-ACP). Although they have benefits, these trade agreements reduce policy space for many African countries on trade.

NOTE: RBA recommends NOT mentioning specific agreements.

Africa have incomes which are more than ten times greater than those of the bottom twenty per cent.¹² The unequal distribution of resources, power, and wealth, combined with inequitable social norms, sustain persistent inequalities. Gender inequality costs sub-Saharan Africa on average \$US95 billion a year, or six per cent of the region's GDP.¹³ Leaving no-one behind is a key element of the 2030 Agenda, and something which will be critical to the full emergence of Africa.

3. Accelerating Africa's emergence

The 2015 *Abidjan Declaration* highlighted three pillars of Africa's emergence: structural economic transformation, building the developmental state, and lifting human development. At UNDP, we see action needed in five strategic areas to drive progress on across these pillars:

¹² Africa Human Development Report 2016.

¹³ <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/hdr/2016-africa-human-development-report.html>

First, Africa's industrialization should focus on areas of comparative advantage, including building on agriculture and the extractive industries. That would support the continent to move up the ladder of value chains, and to facilitate the development of industrial clusters and growth of SMEs as backbones of the economy. A successful example of this comes from Ethiopia, which has demonstrated the potential of industrial parks and special economic zones in transforming manufacturing and driving industrialization.

Second, promoting entrepreneurship and leveraging the vitality of the private sector. This requires skills-building through education, technical, and vocational training to enhance employability and unleash the creative power of youth and women. By harnessing the potential of youthful populations, the emergent countries of Asia expanded their labour forces and became more competitive and productive.

Third, continued and large-scale investments in quality infrastructure are critical. The World Bank and the African Development Bank have estimated that in order to overcome critical infrastructure deficits, Sub-Saharan Africa needs to invest an additional \$93.0 billion dollars per year in infrastructure until 2020. Stable electricity supply, good systems of road and rail networks, and efficient air and sea ports and communications systems are needed to drive emergence.

Fourth, sound social policies are needed to transform economic growth into human development gains. There are many examples of how social policies have translated into more inclusive growth, within and beyond Africa. Experiences from countries such as Cabo Verde, Mauritius, Tanzania, Senegal, and Rwanda can be replicated and scaled up.

Last, but not least, a developmental state with a clear and shared vision, accountable and transparent governance, and strong institutional capacity is vital. Accelerating emergence is one part

of the equation; sustaining it is another. A state which promotes risk-informed and resilient development, including through disaster risk reduction and climate action, and social protection and social cohesion, is better prepared to drive and sustain the emergence agenda.

UNDP is actively working with African partners to document and share lessons and experiences from transformational initiatives on emergence. The thirteen-country case study on successes and challenges associated with the implementation of emergence to be presented at this conference is an example of this effort. Working with the African Development Bank and the World Bank, UNDP also plans to expand the partnership on emergence to other multilateral and bilateral partners which could help accelerate progress on emergence in Africa.

At the country level, UNDP is committed to supporting the integration of the three pillars of emergence into national

development plans, and to align its own programmes with those pillars, the SDGs, and national development plans.

Conclusion

In conclusion, let me emphasise that the pursuit and promotion of emergence will accelerate human development in Africa, and is central to achieving the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 on the continent.

Let me assure you of UNDP's commitment to work with all partners to ensure that emergence and the benefits it brings become a reality across the continent.

I wish you a very successful conference.