Welcome Remarks at the Second Africa Resilience Forum

“Building Resilience at the Bottom of the Pyramid”

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Honourable Ministers,

Excellences Ambassadors accredited in Côte d’Ivoire,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning and welcome to the second edition of the Africa Resilience Forum. As an institution, we do appreciate your presence during the next two days.

I regret not being in Abidjan with you in person to participate in this exciting Forum.

This year’s Forum is held under the theme Building Resilience at the Bottom of the Pyramid. The theme was drawn from the recommendations made in last year’s event. The 2017 Forum Report is included in the package that has been provided to you.

Those of you who were here in January 2017 when the African Development Bank launched this Forum will recall that we focused on the theme Building a Partnership for Resilience.

Allow me to highlight the recommendations from the inaugural Forum, which were:

a. Forging stronger partnerships as the foundation for a more effective delivery in insecure environments through leveraging the various partners’ comparative advantages;

b. Paying closer attention to the increasingly complex fragility challenges in the context of the security-humanitarian-
development nexus in view of the recent large scale forced human displacements;

c. Scaling up delivery of the High 5s and planning for sequenced engagement in fragile situations to ensure greater impact of AfDB’s activities in particular countries or regions; and

d. Collaboratively responding to the needs of those at the bottom of the poverty pyramid by delivering quick community level interventions in fragile situations to ensure enhanced inclusiveness while also giving hope to the most vulnerable populations.

It was in this context that our President announced the 10,000 Communities in 1,000 Days initiative at the inaugural Forum. This initiative is at the heart of the second edition of the Forum, which also features an exhibition of innovative solutions and technologies.

So let me now turn to the purpose and objectives of this Forum. The primary purpose of this event is to share knowledge and to think outside the box for innovative solutions for reaching the people at the bottom of the pyramid. Our endeavor is to leverage this knowledge and technological innovation for the betterment of the lives of the people we serve.

Given the theme for this Forum that focuses on delivering basic services to vulnerable communities, our objective is to contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals, with particular attention on ensuring that no one is left behind.

We recognize that governments play a critical role in delivering services to their citizens and ensuring its sustainability will require enhancing fiscal space. Currently, many countries on the continent are facing challenges in that regard, which is a hindrance to what governments could do. In that regard, there is going to be a special lecture delivered
on improved domestic resources mobilization. In addition, we will interrogate the role of technology in enhancing domestic resource mobilization in Africa, with particular attention on transition countries.

In responding to the needs of these vulnerable communities there is need for speed, ensuring affordability of the services and doing so in a sustainable manner. Some of the immediate questions that we will need to address are the following:

(i) What opportunities exist for reaching the isolated, forgotten and vulnerable communities in Africa?
(ii) How can we better deliver community-level interventions?
(iii) Are these interventions sustainable financially, institutionally and organizationally?

As you will notice from our Agenda, the Forum is organized such that all parallel sessions follow initial discussions during plenary sessions. This is meant to allow for deeper and wider discussions that would ensure that we draw useful conclusions.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the diversity of the participants in this Forum who come from different backgrounds and professions. We should exploit this diversity to draw on the experiences and knowledge that it presents.

Thank you.