

REPUBLIC OF TUNISIA
MINISTRY OF DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION
Statement By
Mr. ABDELHAMID TRIKI
Secretary of State for International Cooperation and Foreign Investment
Abidjan, 27 – 28 May 2010

Mr. Chairperson of the Board of Governors,
Honourable Governors,
Mr. President of the African Development Bank Group,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured and pleased to address these Annual Meetings of the ADB Group in this beautiful city, Abidjan.

On this occasion and on behalf of the Tunisian Government, I would like to express my thanks and deep appreciation to the Ivorian Government and people for the warm reception and excellent organization of these Meetings.

It is also with pleasure that I extend my thanks to President Donald Kaberuka, the Board of Directors and Bank staff for their significant and constant contribution towards strengthening our Institution and promoting it to the rank of Africa's leading development finance institution.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

These Annual Meetings of the African Development Bank Group are taking place in a context marked by crises that are constantly spreading from one region to another, and even worsening following the debt crisis in Euro zone countries. This has caused economic instability and uncertainties over recovery in Africa due to the consequences of the crisis on financial flows and FDIs in favour of African countries and exports.

We are proud to note that despite this difficult situation, the Bank was able to respond strongly to the growing demand of its Regional Member Countries by doubling its interventions compared to 2008, while preserving its financial stability. This enabled it to maintain the trust of the international rating agencies.

We also congratulate the Bank for adopting a number of pertinent initiatives which provided a swift and judicious response to new challenges brought by the crisis, even as it continued to stay the course of its strategic priorities, among which infrastructure development, enhanced governance, improved regional integration and support to Fragile States.

We also wish to seize this opportunity to commend the Bank's substantial intervention in favour of the private sector, where commercial banks have either been incapable of acting or too demanding due to the shortage of funds at reasonable cost.

Moreover, we support the joint initiative by the ADB, the AU and the ECA under the “CLIM-DEV AFRICA” framework, which seeks to address the challenges of climate change threatening our continent’s sustainable growth and development. We hope that this trust fund will help provide an adequate response to these challenges.

Furthermore, we welcome the Bank’s effort to promote regional integration through infrastructure development, aid to trade, financial integration and provision of regional public goods. This strategy cannot but strengthen relations between our countries and foster the emergence of an entity capable of wielding international influence.

We thank the Bank for this effort and the results it has achieved, despite the challenges that have hampered the activity of various donors. Without any doubt, these results are the fruit of hard labour by the Bank’s entire team.

On this occasion, permit me to congratulate Mr. Kaberuka for the trust that he has won from our countries. We offer him all our support for his second mandate.

We would also like to thank the outgoing Executive Directors for the work accomplished during their mandate. We wish the incoming Executive Directors full success in their mission and hope that the new Board of Directors will consolidate the achievements of its predecessor.

We hope that the new team will maintain the spirit of symbiosis that has so far guided relations between the Board of Governors, the Board of Directors and Senior Management. Doing so will generate maximum synergy and consolidate conditions favourable to good governance within the Bank.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Despite the difficult context, Tunisia was able to weather the storms of the crisis. Apart from short-term measures to help export-oriented businesses in difficulty and preserve jobs created, Tunisia – at a time when the crisis was raging - adopted a major integration and competitiveness support programme with ADB support, thanks to a loan of 250 million dollars, that is to say five times the amount initially planned.

The results recorded in 2009 were generally satisfactory, thereby demonstrating the wisdom of our development strategy that has successfully combined the quest for economic growth with significant improvement in the social and living conditions of Tunisians.

These are the strengths of a development model based on deep and, in particular, gradual reforms. The model has made innovation a vector of competitiveness and an engine of growth.

Furthermore, although Tunisia is not rich in natural resources, various international agencies have, on the strength of this progress, classified Tunisia among the best performing countries in terms of human development, as well as competitiveness, good governance, dissemination of ICT, level of openness of the economy, etc.

Moreover, with the preparation of the 2010-2014 Five Year Plan, Tunisia has embarked on a new phase aimed at giving its development a qualitative leap and raising it to developed country status through investments, especially those with high technology content. We count on the support of our partners, particularly the ADB with which Tunisia maintains privileged relations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Tunisia is determined to forge ahead on the road to fruitful, sustainable and mutually beneficial partnership with all African countries, be it bilateral or within the framework of triangular cooperation.

Having always promoted joint African action, Tunisia is ready to share its experience with its African partners and offer its expertise in implementing development projects, particularly in such sectors as health, education, training, telecommunications, infrastructure, and others.

The 2009 global economic crisis and the current debt crisis in the Euro zone have demonstrated, more than ever, that the intensification of cooperation is indispensable for accelerating growth in Africa and meeting the challenge of development.

Donors have a key role to play in supporting inter-African partnership. In that regard, we count on our Bank, the African Development Bank (ADB).

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are aware that the Sixth General Capital Increase, which has demonstrated our solidarity in these times of crisis, and the trust that the Bank enjoys among its shareholders, will consolidate the financial base of our Institution and enable it to respond professionally and effectively to the ever-increasing needs of its Regional Member Countries.

In this connection, we wish to reiterate our desire to see the Bank pursue reforms in order to preserve and improve its competitiveness, while avoiding, as much as possible, the systematic review of tariffs.

Thank you for your attention.