



AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP

# Pan African University Support Project Grant Agreement Signing Ceremony

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Event: Grant Agreement Signing Ceremony of the Pan African University Support Project (Multinational project)

Tunis, Tunisia

20 August 2013

Honourable Commissioner for Human Resources Science and Technology,  
African Union Commission,

Colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to welcome you to the African Development Bank's Temporary Relocation Agency here in Tunis and to speak to you on behalf of President Donald Kaberuka.

I wish to begin by highlighting the Bank's continued commitment to support the African Union Commission's efforts to build human capital in Africa. We commend those efforts, necessary for Africa's social and economic development. As we know, this is fully in line with the NEPAD's "Consolidated Action Plan for Science and Technology".

The Bank's support to the Pan-African University (PAU) is also a clear demonstration of our commitment to play a key role in Africa's transformation. As you are aware, "Regional Integration" as well as "Skills and Technology" are core operational priorities of the Bank's Strategy 2013-22. We are also finalizing a Human Capital Strategy, which presents a New Model for Education in Africa (NEMA) with a strong focus on addressing the critical issue of unemployment among youth.

Recent studies have shown that a large majority of young people in Africa are out of work, accounting for up to 60% of unemployment in the region. And even if working, most young people engage in low-productivity and poor-quality jobs, mostly in the informal economy. Hampering the productivity of young workers is their lack of technical and entrepreneurial skills—and of information about jobs and market needs.

Accordingly, the AfDB will invest in skills for competitiveness and science and technology. It will ensure that those skills better match the opportunities and requirements of local job markets.

Our commitment to skill development and science technology is clear, with an active social and human development portfolio of some 70 projects totalling more than USD 2 billion.

The AfDB is therefore pleased to partner with the AU Commission for the establishment of the PAU, which is expected to serve the entire continent. We are confident that the PAU has the potential to provide Africa with several of the high level skills (Masters and PhD graduates) needed to add value to its natural resources and enhance its competitiveness and growth.

The protocol agreement signed today confirms the African Development Fund's support to the PAU. This contribution will assist in operationalizing the PAU governance at central and country levels. It will also foster academic and research activities at the following 3 PAU thematic institutes: PAU Institute for Basic Sciences, Technology and Innovation (PAUSTI in Kenya), PAU Institute for Life and Earth Sciences (PAULESI in Nigeria), and PAU Institute for Governance, Humanities and Social Sciences (PAUGHSS in Cameroon).

I would like to urge the African Union Commission, the host countries and host universities as well all other PAU partners to give special attention to maintaining excellence. They should also find adequate solutions to issues related to the mobility of students, teachers, researchers, equity in access to the institutions, as well as gender balance. Those are essential to ensure a leadership role to the Pan African University as well as further its regional integration.

I will conclude by highlighting the excellent partnership that exists between the African Union Commission and the Bank Group. As one of your privileged partners, I wish to reiterate the African Development Bank's full support in working with you in supporting Africa's transformation agenda.

Thank you.