

Advancing investment policy reform in Africa
Investment in transport infrastructure and regional integration

Opening remarks for Mr. Mario Amano
Deputy Secretary-General, OECD

Introduction and credits

Dear Ministers, Ambassador Willoughby, your excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, it is a pleasure to welcome you to the third NEPAD-OECD Africa Investment Initiative annual high-level meeting and expert roundtable. For me it is a great honour to participate in this important meeting on investment policy reform, which is even more needed in these times of crisis.

Why Uganda?

Ladies and gentlemen, we are here in Kampala today, because the Republic of Uganda kindly offered to hold these high-level meeting and expert roundtable. My first duty, therefore, is to extend to your Excellencies, OECD's sincere thanks for your personal interest in the roundtable and for the generous hospitality of the government and the people of Uganda. I also thank Minister Professor Kiwanuka and his team for their excellent collaboration and for all they have done to make this dialogue possible.

It is also fitting that this high-level meeting on advancing investment policy reform and the expert roundtable on investing in transport infrastructure in Africa are taking place in Uganda, a reform-oriented country and a member of the East African Community. The East African Community has recently recorded pro-business reforms and a steady growth of private investment – which could be even more important if transport infrastructure was more developed in the region. It is thus important to seize the opportunity of this roundtable to consider concrete possible actions for increasing investment in transport in East Africa.

Why OECD investment co-operation with Africa is important?

Please let me now try to highlight why the NEPAD-OECD Africa Investment Initiative and its work in African countries are important to us at the OECD. The OECD intends to promote sustainable growth and development throughout the world. We encourage market economies, good governance and open and transparent investment policies. We also rely on a method which is about carrying out evidence-based analyses and policy dialogues, sharing experiences, developing policy recommendations and monitoring countries through peer review.

In this view, cooperation with Africa and NEPAD is important to us as NEPAD shares the same philosophy, as illustrated by the APRM. In addition, NEPAD is also interested in catalysing private investment for sustainable growth and development, which is the main objective of the NEPAD-OECD Africa Investment Initiative.

What do we hope to achieve during the next two days?

Ladies and gentlemen, let me now turn to what we hope to achieve during the two days?

Some of you here today participated in our previous roundtables in Entebbe, Brazzaville and Lusaka. These meetings initiated a dialogue on possible options for strengthening the investment component of the APRM. They also facilitated discussions on the PFI and other investment tools for improving the business climate. All this has recently led to critical decisions that should trigger further reform implementation. In addition, the Initiative has started to address ways of increasing private investment in infrastructure and will try to answer the need for more private investment in road infrastructure.

- ***Strengthening investment policy reform through peer learning and the APRM***

The APRM initiated a process with the AfDB which is aimed at revising the Country Self-Assessment Questionnaire. This could lead to a substantial consolidation of the APRM's investment component. This is indeed timely in a context of financial crisis. Maintaining momentum for reform may become even more critical in order to mobilize resources for development. I hope that we will be able to discuss concrete proposals as regards the content of the questionnaire as well as possible options for using the PFI in assessing investment-related questions in the APRM.

- ***Making optimal use of investment policy tools such as the PFI***

Since we started discussions about the PFI in Brazzaville, Egypt has already carried out a self assessment of its investment framework using the PFI. Rwanda has also asked the OECD to support its efforts aimed at benchmarking its investment policy reforms against the PFI. Furthermore, some OECD members like Japan and Finland have started using the PFI in their bilateral ODA. Discussions could try to identify how this could help building recipient countries' capacities to set policy priorities and facilitate development partners' harmonization and alignment around these priorities.

- ***Furthering private investment in road transport infrastructure***

Distinguished participants, please let me now address the challenges of the expert roundtable tomorrow on investment in road transport. While transport infrastructure is the backbone of regional integration and can increase opportunities for potential investors, there are still obstacles that are hampering its development in Africa. Drawing on investment tools such as the OECD *Principles for Private Sector Participation in Infrastructure*, this one-day expert meeting aims to identify the main constraints to increasing investment in African road infrastructure and how to overcome them.

In conclusion, ladies and gentlemen, we should have very rich and very challenging discussions during these two days. I am sure that the great depth of knowledge and expertise from speakers and participants will result in forward-looking proposals that will help answering Africa's investment needs.

Finally, I would like to welcome expressions of interest from African countries to host a future meeting of the Initiative and to say how grateful we are to those who supported this roundtable. Without the financial support from Japan and Belgium and the remarkable commitment of the Ugandan government, this meeting would not have been possible.

I thank you for your attention.