

## CONCEPT NOTE

### **GOVERNMENT OF ZIMBABWE TO CO-HOST CLOSING CEREMONY FOR AFRICAN CAPACITY BUILDING FOUNDATIONS'S 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

Established 20 years ago, on 9<sup>th</sup> February 1991, the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) is the outcome of collaboration between African governments and the international donor community. Its mission is to build sustainable human and institutional capacity for sustainable growth and poverty reduction in Africa. ACBF's vision is for Africa to be recognized for its socio-political and economic capabilities and endowments – a continent with effective institutions and policies acquired through sustained investment in people and institutions. The Foundation aims to become a leader, major partner, and centre of excellence for capacity building in Africa.

ACBF's 20th Anniversary, which comes to a close on Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> February, 2012, is a major land mark for ACBF in Africa's capacity development agenda. With only five years to go before the deadline for the Millennium Development Goals, this event will provide a strategic forum for dialogue at the highest level between the Foundation and its development partners on the role of capacity in the Continent's development agenda.

The general environment for capacity development has shifted a great deal since the creation of ACBF twenty years ago. Africa's economic prospects and the challenges facing the continent in light of the global financial crisis have made transparent the key gaps in capacity to handle these challenges. Success factors and key risks facing the continent have also rendered more visible the role of capacity development, and, by definition, the contribution of the Foundation.

Africa's journey, since independence, highlights the pivotal role of capacity in development and motivates the need to look back and learn from the past and from each other. It is in this light that ACBF embarked on a series of learning events, lectures, presentations and workshops. These events are aimed at invigorating dialogue at the highest levels on the importance of building capacity in various scenarios and positioning capacity development as a key prerequisite for poverty reduction and economic empowerment.

#### **WHERE / WHEN?**

---

The Harare Closing Event of the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary will be held at the Harare International Conference Centre (HICC) in Harare on 08 February 2012. It will be a one day event.

#### **WHO?**

---

Five hundred (500) high level participants are expected at the Event, including Government of Zimbabwe Officials at the highest level; High Level SADC officials; ACBF Governors from the SADC Region; Heads of Multilateral Institutions; Founding Members of ACBF, Members of the Diplomatic Corps and Heads of International Agencies; Captains of Industry; Heads of Civil Society Organizations; Directors of ACBF-supported Projects; Youth Groups; National and International Media and ACBF Executives and Staff.

## WHAT?

---

The 20th Anniversary is a major land mark for ACBF in Africa's capacity development agenda. With only five years to go before the deadline for the Millennium Development Goals, this event will provide a strategic forum for dialogue at the highest level between the Foundation and its development partners on the role of capacity in the Continent's development agenda.

The general environment for capacity development has shifted a great deal since the creation of ACBF twenty years ago. Africa's economic prospects and the challenges facing the continent in light of the global financial crisis have made transparent the key gaps in capacity to handle these challenges. Success factors and key risks facing the continent have also rendered more visible the role of capacity development, and, by definition, the contribution of the Foundation.

Africa's journey, since independence, highlights the pivotal role of capacity in development and motivates the need to look back and learn from the past and from each other. It is in this light that ACBF embarked on a series of learning events, lectures, presentations and workshops. These events are aimed at invigorating dialogue at the highest levels on the importance of building capacity in various scenarios and positioning capacity development as a key prerequisite for poverty reduction and economic empowerment.

## WHY?

---

This 20th Anniversary Summit presents an opportunity to rejuvenate and reinvigorate commitment to capacity building on the African continent at the highest levels of policymaking; share lessons and best practices in capacity building; and, raise further awareness about the ACBF.

Today, more than ever, our continent is confronted with many challenges on its path to sustained growth and development. There is no denying the fact that Africa needs to substantially improve growth performance, if it is to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Furthermore, beyond the MDGs, Africa still needs to position itself in an increasingly globalised world, in order to find solutions to a myriad of development challenges. In addition to the highlighted emerging issues, central to the myriad challenges facing our Continent are the inadequacy of human and institutional capacity and the absence of a systematic and institutionalized mechanism for peer learning and experience-sharing amongst countries. As a result, there is an urgent need for a public sector that is knowledgeable, efficient, empowered and committed; a private sector that is not only innovative and growth oriented, but also driven and competitive; civil society that is constructively responsive and capable of collaborating with both the public and private sectors with a view to achieving development goals; a political system that is responsive to its citizens and premised on good governance; and, a socio-economic and geo-political environment that is enabling and inclusive of all.

## HOW?

---

The overall theme for the entire Celebrations is: ***"The Future of Africa is Now! – The Critical Role of Capacity Development, focussing on Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship: Africa's hidden wealth and the Role of Regional Integration in Employment Creation."***

The Harare Event will include two plenary discussions and a Ministerial Round Table. The first one will provide a final opportunity to discuss how capacity can help the continent taking full ownership of its development process while the second one will review how capacity building can contribute to

employment creation, especially for the youth. The Ministers Forum will look at the role of regional integration in employment creation.

These plenary discussions will precede a High Level Forum (HLF) for the closing of the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, concluding one year of learning events. The HLF, chaired by HE President Robert G. Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, will be attended by Heads of State and Government from the SADC Sub-region, Ministers, other Government officials, high representatives of multilateral organizations, the private sector and the civil society. The HLF will include presentation of the recommendations of the two plenary sessions held in the morning, followed by a Forum of Ministers on the role of Regional Integration in Employment Creation in the SADC region.