

A Symbiotic relationship for the advancement of Development Capacity in Africa

**Statement on behalf of Abdoulaye Mar Dieye
UNDP Assistant Secretary General and Director Regional Bureau for Africa**

Your Excellency, Honourable Phelekezela Mpoko, Vice President of the Republic of Zimbabwe

Honourable Patrick Chinamasa, ACBF Governor for Zimbabwe and Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Government of Zimbabwe

Dr. Shehu Abubakar, Misau, Representative of the Chair of the Executive Board,

Your Excellency, Honourable Goodall Gondwe, Chair of the Bard of Governors

Your Excellency Honourable Dr. Soumana Sako, Former Chair of the ACBF and Former Minister of Finance, Government of Mali.

Mr. Manungo, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development

Professor Emmanuel Nnadozi, Executive Secretary African Capacity Building Foundation

Dr. Anthony Maruping, Commissioner for Economic Affairs, African Union Commission

Senior Government officials here present

Your Excellencies members of the Diplomatic Corps

Fellow distinguished panelists and fellow founding members of the Africa Capacity Building Foundation

Distinguished Members of the ACBF Executive Board

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentleman,

Good morning

There is no doubt that the narrative that “Africa is rising” can no longer be denied. Africa has over the past decade made the greatest economic gains than any other

region in the world. The largest 11 countries in sub-saharan Africa have seen growth rates of over 51 per cent in the past ten years according to Bloomberg, twice the global average of 23 percent. At the same time, poverty is declining. Since 1996, the average poverty rate in sub-Saharan African countries has fallen by about one percentage point per year, and between 2005 and 2008, the portion of Africans in the region living on less than \$1.25 a day fell for the first time, from 52 percent to 48 percent. Africa has also made great strides in education and health care.

The challenge, however, is that this growth has not been rapid enough nor inclusive enough to create the Africa we want. The Africa Millennium Development Report for 2015 notes that amongst the factors that have hindered the attainment of the MDGs in Africa is that the focus has been on outcomes such as poverty reduction without particular attention being paid to the pathways or the enablers required to achieve the goals including such as strengthening capacities in development planning, domestic resource mobilization and public expenditure management, amongst others.

This is where the symbiotic relationship of UNDP and the ACBF has had a major role to play. The Africa Capacity Building Foundation and the United Nations Development Programme have had an close relationship since the establishment of the ACBF twenty-five years ago. Together the focus of UNDP and the ACBF was the recognition that for Africa to attain its long-term sustainable development the human capacity to manage all facets of development needed to be enhanced in recognition of the fact that Africa's sustainable inclusive development rests with its people.

We have moved a long way from the deployment of expatriate technical assistance programmes of the early seventies, wherein, we defined a development programme and relied on international agencies and donor

partners to steer the implementation. For the UN the turning point was the adoption of UN General assembly resolution 44/211 of June 1989 which formalized the rules and procedures to promote and maximize the utilization of and strengthening of national capacities, while enabling governments to make effective use of expertise available from the UN system. Thus our relationship with the Africa Capacity building foundation was in response to this call by all the member states of the UN General Assembly to maximize the use of national capacities.

As we are all aware UNDP was at the table at the very genesis of the ACBF in February 1991, we had heeded the call that in order to scale up the development of Africa which by all accounts had made limited progress since the independence of most African states, we had to analyze the challenge that the continent faced and how to resolve this impediment. We all now talk of enhancing capacity and Institutional capacity building as the normal development discourse.

As Nelson Mandela once stated:

If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart.

We had been talking to our fellow Africans in a language that they understood but we needed the African Capacity Building Foundation to talk to Africans in their own language to take the message to heart. The New development paradigm pioneered by UNDP and the ACBF started to take root, we were helping African governments, institutions and professional start developing their own policies, strategies and ensured their implementation through their own efforts. Through the design of capacity building initiatives to be implemented through an African owned institution the ACBF blazed the trail of economic policies that Africans were designing for their own development.

As UNDP, and I personally, we have been and continue to be committed to the work of ACBF, we have participated in the genesis of ACBF, walked along side as the institution grew over the years with the support of committed partners such as the World Bank, the African Development Bank and other development partners (including the United States, Sweden, Japan, Canada, Switzerland, the U.K. and Austria) who through their generous financial and moral support have ensured that the aims and objectives of establishing this Foundation remained at the very top of the agenda. While the ACBF over the past twenty years has grown into a multi-million dollar institution, lessons have been learnt along the way, according to Ofusu-Amaah these included:

- A clear focus on Macro-economic capacity development**
- Addressing the lack of capacity in economic policy research institutions**
- Ensuring that support by the ACBF should be on demand basis**
- Promoting coordination, collaboration and partnership amongst institutions supported.**
- Ownership by African government and respecting their views and recommendations**
- Partnership with other development partners in addressing the broad range of capacity development requirements in Africa.**

These lessons have been well learned.

We celebrate 25 years of the Africa Capacity Building Foundation's pioneering work in enhancing the capacity of African institutions an institution that has grown over the years with over 250 projects in 44 countries and half a billion dollars committed to enhancing capacity in Africa. Yet challenges still remain and ACBF is as needed today as it was yesterday. Africa faces numerous challenges that still need to be surmounted if we are to leave no one behind.

ACBF now has the challenge of supporting African Governments and institutions integrate the agenda 2063 and the sustainable development goals in their long term vision, goals, strategies and plans. We need to support African governments broaden their tax base, stem illicit financial flows from Africa and facilitate domestic resource mobilization as agreed at the 3rd Financing for Development Conference and through the Addis Ababa Agenda for Action. Part of the challenge is the retention of African talent and skills on the continent. We should examine further how we can reward and create an enabling environment to retain this talent, Africa has the requisite talent and skills for its development but these skills are being used elsewhere.

Your Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentleman

There is still a great need for capacity enhancement programmes in Africa. We need enhanced capacity for budgeting resources for agreed upon development goals; delivering services to the poor and the most vulnerable in our societies; instituting broad based and qualitatively superior educational systems that focus on improving science and technology; providing the bedrock of a health care system that is sustainable and invulnerable to major shocks such as the Ebola outbreak; creating a climate conducive for small and medium enterprises to grow and thrive and therefore address and absorb the growing youth bulge; creating employment opportunities for women and youth; capacity of local governments to deliver services to their communities in an efficient, timely and consultative fashion; and finally capacity of governments and regional communities to resolve conflicts and enhance peace on the continent.

We still have a long way to go and hand in hand with all our partners we need to enhance the capacity of the ACBF, the related think tanks and knowledge networks to support and deliver on these capacity requirements into the next 25 years.

I thank you for your attention.