

**Seventh ADB Business Opportunities Fair
Welcome Remarks by Deborah Stokes
Vice President for Administration and Corporate Management
Asian Development Bank
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Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen.

I would like to warmly welcome you to ADB's seventh Business Opportunity Fair.

We are very pleased that participation at this year's Fair is the largest to date. More than 900 individuals have registered, reflecting an increase of nearly 250% compared with the pilot year in 2009. We are pleased also to welcome a growing number of representatives from CSOs and NGOs.

46 countries are represented here today with the largest numbers from Philippines, United States, Australia, Japan and India.

The Fair has become one of the most well-attended events hosted by ADB and I thank you for your strong interest.

I also appreciate very much the efforts of various embassies in Manila in promoting the Fair.

Ladies and Gentlemen, later this year ADB will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary.

We are very proud of our record as a strong and reliable development partner in the region over five decades, playing our part in the remarkable economic transformation we have witnessed in many parts of Asia.

And for nearly fifty years, ADB has relied on consultants and companies such as those represented in the audience today to deliver projects on the ground and to facilitate technology transfer and knowledge sharing. I wish to recognize this contribution.

I would also like to take this opportunity in our fiftieth year to recognize the unique contribution made by the Philippines Government and people in hosting ADB for the past half century.

Despite the development successes throughout our region and a sharp reduction in the number of poor, our work is not yet done.

In developing Asia, an estimated 1.3 billion people still live in poverty, defined as living on less than \$3.10/day. Out of this, 451 million live in extreme poverty, with less than \$1.90/day. A significant number of these are women and vulnerable, and a large number live in fragile and conflict-affected states. With ADB's aim to promote an Asia and Pacific region free from poverty, we have a strong and important contribution to make.

To support ADB's development mission, we will continue to need quality consultants, contractors, manufacturers and suppliers, contracted by ADB's developing member countries, to implement ADB-financed projects.

The Business Opportunities Fair provides a one-stop forum for you to obtain information about how to offer your goods and services for ADB-financed projects, as well as an excellent opportunity to meet with industry peers and ADB staff, including sector specialists.

Our aim is to give you information to help you submit responsive bids, proposals and expressions of interest to meet the needs of our developing member countries.

ADB-funded projects can only benefit from competitive procurement of high-quality goods, works, and diverse consulting expertise.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is a particularly exciting time to look for business under ADB funded projects.

First, as of end of 2015, ADB's active portfolio totaled around \$75 billion with almost \$28 billion of loan and grant funds still to be contracted. Transport and energy sectors account for around 60% of this uncontracted amount while water, urban and agriculture sectors cumulatively amount to another 30%.

Second, ADB has raised its financing capacity to as much as \$20 billion per year, or 50% more than the previous level. This is being made possible by the merger of the Asian Development Fund lending operations with the Ordinary Capital Resources balance sheet. This path-breaking development was agreed last year and will take effect on 1 January 2017.

The increase in financing capacity will put us in an even stronger position to support developing member countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Third, ADB will double its annual climate financing to \$6 billion by 2020, up from the current \$3 billion. \$4 billion is for mitigation and \$2 billion is for adaptation. ADB's spending on tackling climate change will rise to around 30% of its overall financing by the end of this decade.

Fourth, under the Mid-Term Review of Strategy 2020, we found that more than 80% of our operations were in five areas – infrastructure, environment and climate change, regional cooperation and integration, finance sector and education, with infrastructure operations being the main contributor.

While supporting these sectors, the Mid-Term Review highlighted the need to sharpen ADB's operational focus on poverty reduction and inclusive growth – including through an increased share of investments in education, up to 10% of the portfolio, and health, up to 5% of the portfolio.

The mid-term review also underlined the continuing importance of gender mainstreaming in ADB's work as well as effective social and environmental safeguards.

Finally, we are well on our way to implementing recommendations arising from the midterm review to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of project implementation and portfolio management.

There are many facets to this – from ensuring project readiness to developing effective capacity in implementing agencies.

Promoting the most effective procurement process is also critical, and what we have done here, and plan to do, will be of interest to you.

In 2014, ADB launched the first phase of its procurement reforms, adopting a risk based approach to our oversight of procurement activities.

This has resulted in: (i) greater support for procurement planning in projects; (ii) deeper scrutiny of high risk procurement transactions, and (iii) greater procurement efficiency, in the form of reduced decision-making time within ADB.

We have started work on the second phase of reforms to focus on the end-to-end procurement time, i.e. including the time taken by executing agencies for procurement of goods, works and selection of consultants.

The new reforms will also facilitate the adoption of high level technology solutions in ADB projects, by sharpening the focus on quality. Such a focus will help our developing member countries (DMCs) put in place innovative, environmentally sound and cutting-edge technology solutions.

As we continue reforming our procurement framework, we will keep our already strong anticorruption and integrity requirements intact.

All of these developments mean that the ADB has expanding opportunities for our partners in the business sector.

Before concluding my remarks, there is a further initiative that I wish to brief you on. ADB is not only focused on celebrating its fiftieth anniversary and reflecting on five decades of achievement – it is also planning ahead. The President has launched the preparation of a new strategy for ADB in 2030.

The strategy will outline a vision and key directions for ADB's future engagement with our developing member countries (DMCs).

It will describe how ADB will align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) approved in September 2015 and the new global climate agreement agreed in Paris in December 2015.

The strategy will also emphasize organizational, staffing and business process reforms to strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of ADB's engagement.

We aim to have this finalized in 2018, and will provide an update at next year's Business Fair.

Ladies and Gentlemen, turning to the here and now.

You have a full 2-day program ahead of you, which will cover:

ADB's procurement system; sector-specific opportunities, emerging themes; and other areas that we hope will be of interest to you.

You will hear from a range of ADB colleagues from different work areas, and there will be networking opportunities.

I wish you a successful forum and a productive visit to the ADB. And we look forward to working with you.

Thank you.