

**Eighth ADB Business Opportunities Fair**  
**Welcome Remarks by Deborah Stokes**  
**Vice President for Administration and Corporate Management**  
**Asian Development Bank**  
**22 March 2017**

Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen.

I wish to warmly welcome you to ADB's eighth Business Opportunity Fair.

Participation at this year's Fair is the largest to date. More than 1,200 individuals have registered, representing 45 countries.

We are also pleased to see the growing number of participants representing CSO, NGO, and academia.

This year, ADB is celebrating its 50th Anniversary. Over the past five decades, ADB has mobilized more than \$250 billion to support economic development and poverty reduction in Asia and the Pacific.

Throughout the past 50 years, ADB and our developing member country partners have relied on consultants and companies such as those represented in the audience today to deliver projects and to achieve results on the ground.

I wish to recognize this indispensable contribution to ADB's 50-year history.

Despite the tremendous progress that has been achieved in the Asia-Pacific region, our developing member countries face many persistent as well as new development challenges such as climate change.

330 million people still live in absolute poverty on less than \$1.90 a day.

There are large infrastructure gaps.

ADB has assessed that developing Asia and the Pacific will need to invest \$26 trillion from 2016 to 2030, or \$1.7 trillion per year if the region is to maintain its growth momentum eradicate poverty and respond to climate change.

To help our developing member countries meet their development goals, ADB is committed to becoming a stronger, better and faster bank.

We are doing this in a number of ways.

First, ADB is significantly expanding its operations.

In 2016, our loan and grant approvals reached a record level of \$17.5 billion.

As a result of the merger of the Asian Development Fund with the Ordinary Capital Resources balance sheet which took effect on 1 January 2017, we will be able to increase our annual loan and grant approvals to more than \$20 billion in 2020.

This significant increase in financing will bring substantial increases in the number of business opportunities under ADB-financed projects in coming years.

Already we have a pipeline of \$28.8 billion of loan and grant funds still to be contracted.

Transport and energy sectors account for around 57 % of this uncontracted amount, while water, urban and agriculture sectors cumulatively amount to another 25%.

This pipeline represents wide-ranging business opportunities for consultants, suppliers and contractors.

In addition to the significant expansion in our operations, we are taking steps to improve our procurement processes, recognizing that these are a fundamental aspect of our operations.

The first phase of procurement reforms began in 2014 with the 10 Point Procurement Reform Action Plan.

A central feature of these reforms was the adoption of a risk-based approach to the oversight of procurement activities.

This round of reforms has resulted in:

- greater support for procurement planning in projects;
- deeper scrutiny of high risk procurement transactions, and
- reduced decision-making time within ADB.

We have embarked upon a second phase of reforms to help further reduce end-to-end procurement time, as well as improve project quality and enhance procurement delivery systems (our own and those of our DMCs).

The Draft ADB Procurement Policy and Borrower Regulations were posted on our website in January for public comment and feedback.

We are particularly grateful for the practical suggestions on the policy and regulations that have come from the private sector.

You have asked us to strengthen mechanisms to resolve contractual problems, expand capacity building support for executing and implementing agencies, and put in place measures to enhance security of data submitted by consultants and contractors.

We are taking these suggestions on board in the current reforms.

The new Procurement Policy takes a principles-based approach and is less prescriptive.

Procurement arrangements will be designed to be fit-for-purpose.

This will allow us to better accommodate the varied needs and circumstances of our DMCs.

The approach we are taking is aligned with the reforms that have been undertaken by the World Bank and the African Development Bank.

The policy will include two new core procurement principles - quality and value for money - in addition to economy, efficiency, fairness, and transparency.

These new principles will allow us to better support the implementation of quality projects as well as projects involving high-level technologies. They will also support the strengthened integration of life-cycle costs.

The new policy introduces alternative procurement arrangements, to allow the use of agency and country systems, as well as the procurement systems of co-financing partners.

One further step we are taking to ensure that ADB is well-prepared to respond to the needs of its developing member countries is the formulation of Strategy 2030.

The draft Framework for Strategy 2030 is available on the ADB website and I encourage you to look at it.

Under the draft Framework, ADB will have a key focus on eliminating poverty, promoting prosperity, deepening inclusion, and strengthening sustainability and resilience.

ADB will add value by being:

- a catalyzer of finance as well as regional cooperation and integration,
- a provider of advanced technology solutions,
- a supporter of good policies,
- a facilitator of knowledge, and
- a promoter of partnership with CSOs, private sector and academia.

Strategy 2030 is expected to be finalized in 2018.

Our partners in the business sector, CSOs and academia will have a vital role to play in the successful implementation of the upcoming strategy.

You have a full 2-day program ahead of you, which will cover: ADB's procurement system, sector-specific opportunities, emerging themes, and other aspects of our operations that we hope will be of interest to you.

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

Let me thank you for your participation.

With your support, the annual Business Opportunities Fair has become one of the most well-attended events hosted by ADB.

We particularly appreciate the efforts of various embassies in Manila in promoting the Fair.

I wish you a successful forum and a productive visit to the ADB.

Thank you.