

**Ninth ADB Business Opportunities Fair**  
**Welcome Remarks by Deborah Stokes**  
**Vice-President for Administration and Corporate Management**  
**Asian Development Bank**  
**14 March 2018**

Excellencies, ADB Board members, ladies and gentlemen.

I wish to warmly welcome you to ADB's 2018 Business Opportunities Fair.

We are pleased to see so many of you here today. Around 1,400 individuals have registered, from 47 countries. This is our largest Fair to date.

In addition to the many consultants and contractors in the audience, I wish to welcome participants from NGOs, civil society, and academia.

I also wish to acknowledge the efforts of various embassies and trade commissions in promoting the Fair.

Today, I would like to highlight several features of ADB's current operations as well as update you on the preparation of our new corporate strategy which will guide ADB's operations through to 2030.

**Growing ADB operations**

The first and most significant feature that I wish to highlight is that ADB is continuing to significantly expand its operations.

In 2017 ADB, from its own resources, approved new loans and grants valued at \$19.1 billion. This represented a 9% growth on the previous year.

We expect to keep expanding our portfolio in the years ahead.

Projected commitments for the three-year period, 2018-2020, are \$60.4 billion, which is 22% more than the actual commitments for the preceding three-year period, 2015-2017.

This expansion follows the merger of the Asian Development Fund with ADB's ordinary capital resources balance sheet which took effect on 1 January 2017.

This merger significantly increased ADB's ability to leverage its existing funds into more loans and grants for our developing member countries.

This growing pipeline is creating more business opportunities for partners like you. Over the next two days you will hear much more about these opportunities.

### **Better and faster**

The second point I wish to highlight is that ADB is making improvements in the way we do business – we want to be better and faster in what we do.

We are implementing a new procurement framework that takes a principles-based approach and is less prescriptive. The Framework includes new principles of quality and value for money.

At the same time, we are putting more procurement specialists into our resident missions.

Together, these steps aim to speed up procurement time and allow us to better serve the unique needs and circumstances of our developing member countries. This will also facilitate the procurement of advanced technological solutions.

We have included a dedicated session on these procurement reforms in the program later this morning.

In addition to our procurement reforms, ADB is making significant investments in our internal information technology systems. We are embracing digital technologies to strengthen our responsiveness, resilience and our efficiency.

Matching our internal focus, ADB is also committed to integrating digital solutions into our operations. To support this, we are increasing our staff resources and focus on digital technologies for development.

Third, ADB is expanding its role as a knowledge provider and policy advisor to our developing member countries.

Our clients are not only looking for loans – they want access to the best knowledge available including innovative solutions. ADB consultants, contractors and other partners play a critical role in helping ADB to harness the latest knowledge and embed this in in our operations.

## **Strategy 2030**

Turning to our future directions, we expect to finalize ADB's Strategy 2030 later this year.

To assist us with its preparation, we have consulted widely throughout our member countries.

Despite the tremendous progress we have witnessed in the region, ADB's developing member countries face persistent as well as new challenges such as climate change, unprecedented rates of urbanization and a rapidly changing technological landscape.

We can expect some of the major themes of the Strategy to include:

- addressing persistent poverty and reducing inequality
- tackling climate change mitigation and adaptation

- making cities more livable
- promoting rural development and food security
- strengthening governance and institutional capacity
- accelerating progress on gender equality
- deepening regional cooperation and integration.

ADB will also continue to expand our private sector operations.

We will intensify our role as a catalyzer and mobilizer of financial resources.

ADB will promote the use of advanced technologies including digital technologies.

We will deepen our role as a knowledge provider.

Finally, more than ever before, we will customize our approaches to suit the very different needs of developing member countries. These include fragile and conflict-affected situations, small island states, low-income and lower middle-income countries, as well as upper middle-income countries.

The framework for Strategy 2030 is available on our website.

### **Annual Meeting in Manila**

Strategy 2030 will be a major focus of ADB's Annual Meeting to be held in Manila in May, hosted by the Government of the Philippines.

The theme of the meeting is "Linking People and Economies for Inclusive Development", and we expect about 3,000 participants. Registration is now open, and I invite you to register through ADB's website.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, ladies and gentlemen, when ADB was established, the Asia Pacific region was the poorest in the world.

Today, the region has become a central pillar of the global economy.

ADB has been a key partner in this transformation.

Throughout our history, ADB and our developing member countries have relied on partners like you to deliver our projects and achieve results for those who need them most.

We look forward to further strengthening this partnership.

I wish you a productive two days here in ADB.