



Africa welcomes Japan's quality infrastructure model

Addis Ababa, 01 September 2015 (ECA) – “Africa has been identified as one of the leading regions in implementing regulatory reforms to improve their business climate. The environment for investing in Africa’s infrastructure has improved considerably in recent years and is getting better over time,” said Mr. Abdalla Hamdok, the Deputy Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) during his keynote address at the Africa-Japan Business Investment Forum currently taking place in Addis Ababa.

Titled “Quality Infrastructure of Africa’s structural transformation: Opportunities for the Business Sector”, Mr. Hamdok’s speech referred the attending business delegates to the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), a strategic framework which provides a unified platform for engagement among African countries and between African countries and their development partners for the continent’s infrastructure development.

Japan is decidedly interested in investing in Africa and in finding local partners especially in public-private partnership programmes. Mr. Hamdok pointed out that PIDA prioritises 51 projects and programmes, with 15 in energy, 24 in transport, 9 in water, and 3 in Information and Communications Technology.

“It is clear that the current infrastructure financing gap estimated at US\$50 billion per annum, is set to grow if immediate steps are not taken to address the current deficit and inefficiencies,” said Mr. Hamdok identifying this area as one where partnerships between private and public sectors can be established and be prosperous.

Mr. Hamdok indicated that though in the past, “examples of successful private-public partnerships infrastructure investments have been generally limited to South Africa and Nigeria, the list of examples has progressively started to reach other parts of the continent”, illustrating by citing examples of hydropower in Uganda, and renewable energy projects in Kenya.

He mentioned other opportunities for example that one of the flagship projects of Agenda 2063 is to connect all African capitals and commercial centres through the Africa’s Integrated High Speed Train Network. As Japan specialises in quality infrastructure, human resource development and high-tech goods, connecting populations on the continent is a potential area of engagement for Nipponese businesses.

ECA’s 2012 Economic Report on Africa concluded that closing Africa’s infrastructure gap will increase the continent’s per capita economic growth by 2 per cent a year and increase productivity of firms by as much as 40 per cent.

“Experience between Africa and Japan has been a positive journey. Japan’s engagement with Africa has been non-prescriptive and this framework is extremely important for Africa’s

inspiration,” underscored Mr. Hamdok during a press conference held after his address.

Mr. Hamdok summed up the continent's wishes: “Africa is aspiring to build a partnership with Japan for a win-win situation.”

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