

**Message from Dr. Akinwumi A. Adesina**  
**President, African Development Bank Group**  
**Development Evaluation Week**  
**29 September, 2022**

**Protocols**

Thank you for joining us for this year's Development Evaluation Week organized by the African Development Bank Group.

It is always a pleasure to see participants from our member countries, Bank staff, and partners, taking part in events that allow us to engage in meaningful conversations. These are conversations that and guide our operations, policies, and strategic approaches towards our shared vision of a prosperous, inclusive, and resilient Africa.

Let me use this opportunity to again congratulate Karen Rot-Münstermann on her appointment as Evaluator General. I know that under Karen's extraordinary leadership, our Independent Development Evaluation function will continue to deliver on accountability, learning, and use of evidence to inform the bank's interventions and improve its development effectiveness.

I also salute the Independent Development Evaluation staff for carefully selecting the theme "Building a Stronger and More Resilient Africa". It aligns with our current agenda as the African Development Bank Group is in the process of developing its Ten-Year Strategy for 2023-2032.

The last time we gathered for Evaluation Week, in 2020, the world was plagued by the Covid-19 pandemic. This was amid several other challenges. Since then, the bank has invested heavily to support African countries in dealing with and overcoming the effects of the pandemic.

Just as we hoped that Africa was emerging from that crisis, Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February and the ensuing war there has had an impact on Africa's economies. Amid these challenges, I call on you all to re-imagine a picture of a resilient Africa. What needs to be done so that natural and man-made shocks will have less devastating effects on our people and our economies?

The discussions during this three-day event will focus on areas of strategic importance to the African Development Bank. These development areas, if adequately addressed, will allow the bank to contribute to meeting the objectives of the African Union's Agenda 2063. This foresees building an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, based on inclusive growth and sustainable development.

The areas for discussion include the infrastructure gaps in Africa, particularly in the field of energy, as well as the question of how to maximize agricultural productivity, to improve food security and nutrition. We will also talk about the increasing debt burden, which is exacerbating inequalities and poverty levels; and social and human development, in particular jobs and youth.

Much of the knowledge, experiences and ideas to be shared during this event are drawn from the African Development Bank's various departments, units and offices. Some are drawn from the excellent development partners we have worked with over the years. This tells me that the bank's staff have the capacity and are empowered to generate knowledge that guides our strategic priorities.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The decision to review and adjust our strategies to address issues of infrastructure and economic and social progress in our new Ten-Year Strategy is informed by the lessons and knowledge that we have gained from our previous interventions: what has worked, what has not, and why?

While independent development evaluation and other evaluators play a crucial part in producing and disseminating this knowledge, all of us, colleagues, peers at partner institutions, and counterparts in our member countries, have important knowledge and experience to share. So please speak up, share without fear and with clarity and vision to improve the work of the bank.

This is why we widely embrace engagements like these, where we can take a critical look at our approaches and our position. I want to leave you with three things to think about as you discuss the challenges facing the African continent and what we can do to help make the continent more resilient to these challenges:

First, learning from success: these are three days of reflection and learning. The only way to learn from success is through objective analysis of why there was a positive outcome from our intervention and a good return on our investment.

A simple repeat of the same input may not result in a win the next time around, so it is important to examine and identify the factors that contributed to success, and whether these factors can be replicated in other situations.

The second point is courage to admit failure. Please feel free to talk openly about failure, or where results have fallen short of expectations. And draw lessons from those experiences. We learn from our mistakes. That's how we improve ourselves. That's how we make ourselves accountable.

Third, do your part and speak up. Evaluation Week is unique in that we can reflect, speak out, express our ideas and share our knowledge every two years. This is not only your opportunity, but your duty to do so. So please, think outside the box. Be innovative. There are no wrong answers.

We all aspire to see a united and resilient Africa, working together, lifting one another and leveraging our accelerators of growth. I sincerely hope that these deliberations will help inform the next ten-year strategy for the bank. It will be a strategy will support the institution in contributing to the Africa we want.

I wish you all fruitful deliberations over the next three days.

Thank you.

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