STATEMENT BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

Mr. Chairman,
President Kaberuka,
Fellow Governors,
Ladies and Gentlemen

I wish to join colleagues in thanking the people and Government of Senegal for their warm welcome and excellent hosting of this event.

At this time of global economic turmoil, the need for our Bank to be strong, effective, well-resourced is more apparent than ever. Not only is the Bank important in the finance it provides – its advice and leadership are vital in helping African countries and the wider world respond to the crisis. I applaud President Kaberuka for his leadership, and for the role the Bank has played in formulating and disseminating African positions on the crisis, especially for the G20 London Summit. I would also like to thank the President for his personal role and the Bank’s on Zimbabwe. The time has come for accelerated support from the Bank for Zimbabwe’s economic reform and stabilisation, and I call on the President to bring forward proposals, consistent with Zimbabwe’s own Global Political Agreement.

At the London G20 summit, leaders underlined the importance of the multilateral development banks in providing their member countries with finance in the current constrained environment. I welcome the way in which the Bank has responded, with additional lending and specific facilities introduced in March. We, the shareholders of the Bank, must ensure it has the resources it needs and back management in accelerating new commitments and responding flexibly to changing needs.

Mr President, the UK has demonstrated its commitment to the African Development Bank in recent years. We are more committed now to this institution than we have ever been. We fully support both a rapid General Capital Increase, and also an accelerated replenishment of the ADF. We must complete the next replenishment in time for programmes to deliver at the start of the 2011, not half-way through the year. And we need a large replenishment, recognising the needs of the poorest countries.

It is critical also that every penny or cent mobilised for development has the biggest possible impact. The Bank showed in its response to the food crisis that it could be flexible and responsive. With many sources of finance drying up, budgets are under strain in many countries. We as the shareholders should give the Bank authority to provide more budget support in response to these exceptional needs. And the authority to reallocate money that is tied up in slow-moving projects.

Of course, the economic crisis isn’t the only challenge the Bank is tackling – the Millennium Development Goals and the threat of climate change remain major challenges. I highlight three areas where the Bank has taken some important steps, but where more progress is needed.
First, we know that in every area of development, being female is a disadvantage. Women get paid less, get poor maternal health care, suffer more violence, get less schooling and make fewer decisions about things that affect them. This is unacceptable, and is why I welcome the Bank’s new Gender Action Plan. Implemented well, it will ensure the Bank is making its contribution to righting these injustices.

Second, fragile states. Fragile states experience huge poverty and human development problems. In these countries, the Millennium Development Goals are most off-track with extreme poverty, and child and maternal deaths three to four times more prevalent than in other developing countries. The Bank’s Fragile State Facility is an important instrument, and the Bank must continue to increase its efforts to respond to the needs in these countries.

Thirdly, delivery. We need to ensure the Bank’s considerable human and financial resources are deployed flexibly and responsively. This requires the Bank to staff field offices with the right expertise, and give them the authority to take decisions and drive progress close to where implementation is happening. It also requires better management and reporting of results, making the most of the new, single results system.

Ladies and Gentlemen, there is a saying in Senegal that ‘all birds will flock to a fruitful tree’. In these difficult economic times, we must work together more than ever to ensure the African Development Bank continues to bear fruit for its borrowing members. With your leadership, Mr President, that fruit will contain the seed of an economic recovery that will benefit the poorest across the continent. And then the birds will be right to flock to the Bank.