Statement by Omar Kabbaj,
President of the African Development Bank Group
at the Opening Session of the Second Roundtable on Managing for Results

5 February 2004
Marrakech, Morocco
Your Excellency President Yoweri Museveni,
Honorable Ministers,
Your Excellencies,
The Presidents of the Multilateral Development Banks and the
Head of the OECD/DAC Committee,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Multilateral Development Banks and the OECD Development Assistance Committee, it is a pleasure for me to welcome you all to the Second Roundtable on Managing for Results. We are indeed delighted to co-host this meeting with the World Bank.

I would like, in particular, to extend, on behalf of all of us, a special welcome to His Excellency President Yoweri Museveni and to express to him again our heartfelt appreciation for having graciously accepted to be our keynote speaker at the dinner last night.

I would also like, on behalf of all participants, to express our deep gratitude to His Majesty King Mohammed VI and his Government for their generous hospitality, the warm welcome accorded to all participants in this historic city of Marrakech, and the excellent organization of the meetings.

Further, I would like to welcome the Ministers and high officials from both the developed and developing countries who are taking part in this Roundtable. Other distinguished participants and experts have, in addition, kindly agreed to take part and share with us their extensive knowledge and experience. I would like to thank them all for honoring our invitation and for their valuable contributions to the workshops yesterday.

Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I believe we would all agree that development effectiveness is today at the center of development discourse. Both the international donor community and developing countries are giving high priority to enhancing the development impact of their interventions. Our stakeholders are also calling on us to measure and demonstrate the economic and social
impact of our interventions. This is critical to enable us to improve the quality of the projects and programs that we support, individually and collectively.

Two years ago, at Monterrey, the Heads of Multilateral Development Banks called on developing countries and their partners to redouble their efforts at better measuring, monitoring and managing for results. This call was followed by the MDBs organizing, in cooperation with OECD/DAC, the First Roundtable on Results in June 2002, hosted by the World Bank. The meeting represented an important watershed in our collaboration in this important area. Permit me to briefly recall its conclusions.

First, the Roundtable stressed the importance of aligning donor programs and projects to country priorities. Indeed, the critical role of country ownership for ensuring development results was recognized by all.

Second, it highlighted the importance of addressing the results issue at all stages of the project/program cycle, including the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages. Managing for development results requires that interventions be guided from very start by clearly articulated goals and objectives.

Third, the Roundtable stressed the importance of independent evaluations to assess the performance of the donor community – jointly and individually – although it concluded that the attribution of country results to specific agency actions would be difficult. In addition, the need for concerted and coordinated support for statistical capacity building in developing countries, as well as for monitoring and evaluation, was highlighted.

Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I believe the first Roundtable enabled us to lay down the broad framework for our cooperation in managing for development results. Since then, we have all taken a number of important initiatives to implement it. This Second Roundtable should, therefore, allow us to assess the progress we have made. In addition, given the strong representation of developing countries, it will also give us an opportunity to examine in greater depth the challenge we face in implementing the results agenda at the country level. It is our hope that, at the end of
our deliberations, we will arrive at a set of core principles that will guide our work in the future.

In this regard, I am delighted to note that the organization of the current Roundtable represents a further deepening of the close collaboration between donors and developing countries that we have witnessed in the recent past. Of particular importance, in this respect, was the 2003 High-Level Forum in Rome on Policy Harmonization. This laid out a clear action plan for achieving policy coherence and for improving the quality and efficiency of donor assistance. I am confident that our efforts today will similarly contribute to mapping out a course of action for our collaboration in the important area of managing for results.

Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before concluding, permit me to provide you an overview on the steps we, at the African Development Bank, have taken to enhance the development effectiveness of our interventions, as well as the measures we are implementing to advance the results agenda.

The Bank’s strategy for enhancing its development effectiveness has for some time now rested on three elements: first, country ownership; second, the use of the participatory process at all stages of the project cycle; and third, enhanced collaboration with all our development partners. In addition, we have taken measures to improve the quality of our projects, both in their design and implementation. These have resulted in a significant decline in the proportion of projects we classify as having serious problems.

The Bank has also taken a number of other steps to strengthen its results measurement framework. I am pleased to note that this work has been carried out in close collaboration with the World Bank. The goal here is to improve the measurement of the contributions of ADF resources to country-development outcomes. Towards this end, our results-oriented Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) will have definable outcomes and measurable indicators.

I should also add that all our CSPs are currently closely aligned to the poverty reduction strategies of our regional member countries, where these are available. This is critical to promote country ownership and to coordinate our intervention with other development
partners. Further, our concessional resources allocation system is performance-based. This has resulted in the bulk of the resources of the African Development Fund – our concessional window – being allocated to the best-performing countries, to ensure their effective use.

Finally, the Bank is managing the new round of the International Comparison Program (ICP) for Africa. Through the program, we will assist our regional member countries generate reliable data for comparing economic performance with the rest of the world. In addition, we will help them assemble the data necessary to help them assess their progress towards achieving the MDGs. Towards this end, the program will incorporate a statistical capacity building component which would complement the current work we are doing to enhance monitoring and evaluation capacity in our regional member countries.

Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Permit me to conclude by welcoming you once again and by inviting you all to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the Roundtable to explore the multi-faceted challenges that lie before us in implementing Managing for Results. As I noted earlier, I believe that we are making progress and we will continue to do so, especially in the light of the spirit of collaboration that now exists among all the members of the development community. And given the broad representation in the Roundtable and the depth of the expertise assembled, I am confident that we will today significantly advance the results agenda. Indeed, I look forward to our adopting, at the end of our deliberations, a set of core principles and an action plan to guide our future efforts.

I thank you for your kind attention and I wish you fruitful and productive deliberations.