Address by Mr. Bobby Pittman

AfDB Vice President in charge of Infrastructure, Private Sector and Regional Integration

On the occasion of the signing ceremony of nine grant agreement letters for the financing of seven economic and sector work studies and two capacity-building support projects.

Tunis, March 12th, 2010
**Excellency, Mr. Minister:**

Ladies and Gentlemen the General Directors and Directors of the Tunisian Administration;

**Ladies and Gentlemen:**

On behalf of Mr. Donald Kaberuka, President of the African Development Bank Group, his Board of Directors, and on my own behalf, allow me to express my sincere appreciation in proceeding with the signing of nine (9) grant agreement letters for a cumulative amount of UA 4.28 million, or about TND 9 million.

Financed through the Middle Income Countries (MIC) Technical Assistance Fund and the Japanese Fund for Technical Assistance to the African Private Sector (FAPA), these grants will be funding 7 studies and 2 capacity-building support projects in five sectors:

- **Water and Sanitation:**
  1. Zarat Seawater Desalination Study (FAPA funded).
  2. Water Supply Improvement Study in Bizerte and Beja
  3. Flood protection study in the North-East greater Tunis.
  4. Strategic Water Sanitation Study for 80 municipalities

- **Health**
  5. Emerging and Re-Emerging Diseases Study
  6. Health Services Export Strategy Study

- **Agriculture:**
  7. Agricultural Clusters Strengthening Program Support Project

- **Micro-finance:**
  8. Performance Evaluation of the National Micro-credit System

- **Macroeconomic Analysis:**
  9. Support to the Institute for Competitiveness & Quantitative Studies

For more details on these 9 grant-supported projects, I am pleased to refer you to the press release and hand-out available here.

The African Development Bank is pleased to support the Tunisian Government in its analytical and knowledge deepening efforts in areas that are critical to its policies and action programs, and to effectively contribute to its economic growth and job creation which are two major objectives of Tunisia’s 11th Economic and Social Development Plan (2007-2011).
We sincerely believe that these studies and support activities reflect the Bank’s commitment to promote a constant and constructive economic policy dialogue that strengthens an economic cooperation focused on results and aligned with Tunisia’s development priorities.

The Bank strives to achieve this through the identification and implementation of studies and projects that will improve social and economic potential and can meet the employment and social progress targets of the Tunisian people.

*Your Excellency, Mr. Minister,*

With these new grants, the Bank Group’s ongoing portfolio in Tunisia now comprises eleven (11) projects and nine (9) studies and capacity-building support projects for a net cumulative amount of UA 864.4 million, representing close to TND 1.82 billion. This level of commitment makes Tunisia one of the Bank’s most important regional member countries in terms of portfolio size.

Furthermore, the Bank’s portfolio in Tunisia is one of the best performing ones and we welcome and appreciate the quality of the Bank’s relationship with the various executing agencies, their respective ministries, and the Ministry of Development and International Cooperation which continuously contribute to this success. We will continue to strengthen this relationship and to strive to achieve and exceed the expected results by effectively implementing the projects for which we are signing grant agreements today.

Finally, Mr. Minister, I would like to reiterate our deepest gratitude to the Tunisian Government for the excellent cooperation and partnership relations that our institution has been maintaining with Tunisia for over forty years, and more recently as the host of the Temporary Relocation Agency of the African Development Bank and I would like to assure you of the Bank’s unwavering support to the social and economic progress of Tunisia and its people.

Excellency, Mr. Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for your kind attention.