Statement by the Alternate Governor for Portugal, Carlos Costa Pina

During the 45th Annual Meeting of Governors

Of the African Development Bank Group

Mr. President of the African Development Bank Group,

Mr. Chairman of the Boards of Governors,

Honourable Governors,

1. I would first like to congratulate the Government of Cote d'Ivoire and the authorities of the City of Abidjan for the organization of these meetings, and to thank them for the warm reception accorded us.

2. 2009 was a very difficult year for the Bank. Despite the negative consequences of the world financial and economic crisis on Africa, the African Development Bank was able to fulfil its mission and even consolidate its status in the region, not only in relation to Middle-Income Countries, but also in terms of operations in Low-Income Countries, especially through cooperation with the private sector.

3. There is no doubt that 2010 marks a historic year in the annals of our Institution. We welcome the agreement by shareholders over the Sixth General Capital Increase that will triple the Bank’s current share capital, putting close to 50 billion Euros at the ADB’s disposal. We equally welcome the conclusion of the agreement to
increase the number of Executive Directors during negotiations in which we were privileged to play a special role. We await a replenishment of the resources of the African Development Fund in line with the needs of the targeted countries and the Institution’s implementation capacity.

4. Mr. President, the consensus that characterized your re-election is the mark of support and great confidence that Bank Group shareholders have in your leadership qualities and capacity to manage the Bank.

5. However, this mark of confidence in the Institution and the increase in its resources comes with greater responsibility still, especially with regard to pursuing the implementation of ongoing institutional reforms to their logical conclusion. We believe that the Bank can further improve the current level of project implementation and effectiveness, as well as the quality of projects at entry and exit. Therefore, there is need to consider a general strategic review of the processes at the operational and management level. That will encourage enhanced effectiveness and further bolster the capacity to produce results.

6. Specifically, and in line with the Institution’s mandate, we believe that more resources should be devoted to fighting poverty and helping the most disadvantaged. Hence, it is imperative to adopt measures and instruments enabling Low-Income Countries and Fragile States to access Bank resources. Similarly, the poverty control component should be strengthened within the framework of cooperation with the private sector which is naturally a key sector in terms of job creation and sustainable development, especially in Low-Income Countries.
7. In analyzing international division of labour with other international financial institutions, the Bank Group’s core comparative advantage in the region is precisely its contribution in such areas as Fragile States, combating climate change and, particularly, regional economic integration. In this regard, regional integration strategies ought to be harmonized with the Regional Economic Communities that already exist in Africa, in view of the fact that institutional capacity building in such communities is indispensable to the successful implementation of the integration process. Consolidating decentralization and harmonization of rules and procedures with other institutions is also important.

8. Portugal is willing to strengthen institutional and economic ties between Europe and Africa, assigning the African Development Bank Group the role of lead strategic partner in the region. We believe that this Institution has the capacity to play its role as the major Pan-African development institution. However, attaining that objective is contingent on the strong presence of the Bank in all Regional Member Countries without exception, taking the specificities of each country into account.

9. We note with considerable concern that the implementation of Bank projects in Lusophone countries falls far short of expectations in these countries. This weak commitment is also due to language-related difficulties. We acknowledge that since President Kaberuka took up the mantle of leadership, much effort has been made to bring the Bank closer to Lusophone countries. Even so, we believe that greater effort is possible. It is for this reason that we request the Bank to place stronger emphasis in promoting Portuguese, notably:

i. With regard to Bank officers, particularly those responsible for Lusophone countries;
ii. Ensuring that all strategic and policy documents are translated into Portuguese; and

iii. Setting up a Portuguese portal on the Bank’s website.

Mr. President,

Honourable Governors,

10. I could not end my statement without reminding you that Portugal will be hosting the 2011 Annual Meetings of the ADB Group. The Portuguese Government is ready to take up this challenge with great enthusiasm and responsibility. By so doing, we will once more demonstrate our strong commitment to this Institution and to the African continent. Therefore, it is with confidence that I guarantee you that we will put all necessary resources at your disposal in order to render the 2011 Annual Meetings in Lisbon memorable. Kindly accept our welcome in advance!

Thank you for your kind attention.