Statement on the Occasion of the Inauguration of the Fufulso-Sawla Road and Community Development Project

Donald Kaberuka
President
African Development Bank

Larabanga, Ghana, 6 August 2015
Your Excellency, the President of The Republic of Ghana, Honourable Ministers,
Members of Parliament,
District Chief Executives and Assembly Members,
Members of the Northern Regional Coordinating Council,
Esteemed Traditional Chiefs and Elders,
Distinguish Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am honoured to be here with you today for the inauguration of the Fufulso-Sawla Road and Community Development Project.

On behalf of the African Development Bank Group, and on my own behalf, I want to thank President Mahama for his kind invitation and to the people of Ghana for their warm hospitality.

A few years ago, almost everyone in the northern region of Ghana and across the country knew this region
registered the highest levels of deprivation and for its isolation from the rest of the country.

We have heard many anecdotes about the long distances that women and girls travelled to fetch water;

the high level of water-borne diseases in the area;

and the negative impact that the poor state of the road network had on access to health services, which contributed to the high maternal mortality in this area.

A few years ago, due to the deplorable state of the road, the 148-km journey from Fufulso to Sawla would normally take 5 hours.

But today, the story is much different – the 5 hours’ travel time has been reduced to less than 2 hours.
The timely completion of the Fufulso-Sawla Project signals the Government’s commitment to transform Ghana into a full-fledged middle-income country.

I wish to commend the government for this great achievement under the leadership of President Mahama.

The AfDB, which has returned to its headquarters in Abidjan, is proud to have played the role of main financier of this great project.

This flagship project is unique in many ways as it spans several sectors beyond just roads – water supply, education and health – to name just a few others.

By improving connectivity and improved access, it will help unlock the economic potential of the project area and yield significant benefits, including regional integration through enhanced trade with neighbouring countries.
Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The cooperation between the Bank and the Republic of Ghana goes far beyond this project.

To date, the Bank has committed US $3.5 billion for development operations covering almost all sectors of the economy.

Ghana has achieved significant socio-economic progress in recent years and the democratic dividends have contributed to peace and political stability in the country.

The evolving political rights, civil liberties and press freedom point to a mature democracy that showcase the country as an excellent example of successful political transformation in West Africa.

While Ghana’s current macro-economic challenges are noted, we remain confident that the economy can
maintain a high growth trajectory with the implementation of a robust fiscal consolidation program.

The Bank remains committed to support the country’s development efforts through, among others, a proposed US $100 million budget support operation.

This will support the country to carry out economic and structural reforms necessary to maintain macroeconomic stability, strengthened governance and accountability, and to improve the investment and business climate.

Ghana has several key strengths, including its strategic location within the West African region, the Government’s demonstrated commitment to implement prudent economic policies; and the deepening of domestic financial markets.

It can leverage these strengths to take advantage of opportunities for economic diversification and inclusive growth.
The impacts of infrastructure development and regional connectivity on the economic performance of the country are already very tangible.

But I would like to emphasize the need to maintain this momentum by further expanding the partnerships with the private sector.

In this regard, we applaud the establishment of the Ghana Infrastructure Investment Fund (GIIF) focusing on the development of strategic infrastructure in partnership with the private sector.

The GIIF, which is expected to enable self-financing projects to be taken off the Government’s balance sheet, will complement the Africa50 Fund, newly established by the Bank to mobilize resources for development of transformative infrastructure in the continent.
Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The African Development Bank celebrated its 50-year Anniversary last year.

Looking ahead to the next 50 years, the Bank is positioning itself to be responsive to the evolving needs of the continent, and to be at the centre in supporting Africa’s transformation.

It is with great pride that I will hand over the presidency of the Institution in three weeks to my successor, Dr. Akinwumi Adesina.

I am confident that you will extend the same support you gave me to the new President and his team.

Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen,

A new road is born today.
It is a symbol of the new Ghana, which is not only building a physical infrastructure, but a social bridge too.

This road, like many others in Africa where the AfDB has been involved, also points to the emerging Africa, in spite of difficulties and challenges in some places.

But this African emergence requires us to build stable, inclusive societies.

Meeting the challenges of instability and repeated political crises that has cost Africa so many opportunities and destroy its assets.

Meeting the infrastructure challenges that every year cost the continent 2% of GDP growth.

Meeting the challenges of urban planning.

Meeting the challenges of integration into a single African market.
In short, meeting the challenges of economic transformation and job creation for its young people.

Mr. President, Excellencies, dear friends,

The opening of this road marks a special milestone for Ghana.

The AfDB is proud to have played its part as lead financier.

We will be there, every time that we are approached for projects of this type.

Congratulations, and fair winds for the rest of the voyage.

Thank you all.