U.S. Department of the Treasury Awards
Gender Support in Cote d’Ivoire and Agriculture in Uganda

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President

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It is a tremendous honour to be here with my colleagues to receive these awards.

This is the second time that we have come here for such an occasion, and I would like to express my deep appreciation to the US Treasury for this initiative.

Beyond the individual celebration of project excellence, we are celebrating the fact that our collective endeavours are making a difference in the lives of ordinary people, and that we are winning, and getting results.

For us in Africa, at a time of great promise, we are pleased that the African Development Bank, the continent’s premier development instrument, is having an impact.

In 2013, 12 African countries will see GDP growth above 7%, six will see it at more than 8%, 15 at above 5%, and 16 at above 4%. Only 10 countries will grow at below 4%: the two Sudans, Somalia, Swaziland and Egypt, all of which have their own special conditions.

This is very encouraging, and shows a continent which is not mirroring the downward trends of the rest of the world.

But major challenges abound: the need for inclusion and opportunity; the need for jobs; the need for transformation and moving up global value chains.

The prizes the Bank receives today honour the work of the African Development Fund, to which the USA is a long-standing and firm supporter, contributing just under 200 million dollars a year, or about 585 million dollars in the last three-year period. In these tight economic times, times of budget constraints, these awards are visible evidence that the ADF has been an effective tool, and together we should strengthen it in the ADF13 replenishment which is going on right now.

The first award [Cote d’Ivoire: emerging from Conflict / multi-sector support project (Gender-based component)] concerns our work in fragile states, and often in post-conflict situations. In the 1990s and early 2000s, Africa suffered large pockets of violence, mayhem and destruction.

Thanks to the AU and the Regional Economic Communities, these conflicts are now on the wane in the Horn of Africa, the Sahel, and in parts of Central Africa, though instability persists in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic.

Dealing with fragile states is a core area for the African Development Fund. 7.5% of the ADF is solely dedicated to fragile states though a Fragile States Facility,
which has a solid track record in Côte d’Ivoire, in Liberia, in Burundi, and soon in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa.

This project in Côte d’Ivoire is a good example of its work.

Côte d'Ivoire, our HQ, used to be a prosperous country, but it went into civil war 10 years ago. As so often in crises, it is women and girls who pay the highest price, through death and other extreme forms of violence. In this case, 67% of women in some areas suffered some form of physical or sexual violence. Even when the conflict is over, survivors of gender-based violence grapple with various forms of trauma and disempowerment, and the absence of supportive institutions from justice to social services.

So, as the Fund began the process of helping to rebuild Côte d’Ivoire’s institutions through a 31 million dollar grant, a critical component related to gender-based violence.

This component of the project benefitted 3,500 women, and indirectly 1.5 million. It helped on social and economic reintegration, promoting awareness and institutions that deal with GBV, and empowering women through income-generating activities.

Women are 51% of Africa’s 1 billion people, but they make up a disproportionate part of its poor. Together with child soldiers, they suffer the most in places like the Central African Republic.

The transformation of Africa hinges very much on inclusive development, and that is why gender is very much at the heart of the ADF. And that is also why I have just appointed a special envoy to take forward our work on gender.

The second project [Uganda: Community Agricultural Infrastructure Improvement Programme] was aimed at increasing agricultural productivity in Uganda, and ensuring that markets function.

It is a project which demonstrates three important things: how relatively small investments can generate very large returns; how critically important is infrastructure; and how international institutions work together, each in their field of comparative strength. In this case we worked with IFAD: the Fund put in 45 million dollars and IFAD 32 million dollars.

As IFAD dealt with the 'soft' issues, we concentrated on what we know best – removing the infrastructure bottleneck, helping farmers move up value chains, and cutting down the level of post-harvest losses, often as much as 40%. We supported 2.6 million farmers in 26 districts in 78 counties in eastern and central
Uganda. We built 300 kilometres of roads, 532 markets, and 123 assorted agro-processing plants and equipment like coffee and rice hullers, maize mills, milk coolers. Look at the results: the price of cassava went up 2½ times, maize 20 times, milk 4 times, bananas 2 times.

Meanwhile the cost and time for farmers to transport their produce came down by half. Much more important, as incomes rose, school enrolment rose, girls’ school retention increased, and health indicators went up.

Agriculture in Africa remains the source of livelihood for the majority, especially women, in low productivity, low income, back-breaking work. A project like this can transform the lives of millions by providing them the infrastructure they need. This is the Fund at work, giving our farmers roads and electricity.

Just look at how mobile phones now ensure that farmers get the right prices for their goods. Good infrastructure – combined with credit, support services and smart subsidies – is what will lay the basis of agricultural transformation, and create jobs.

The African Development Bank staff worked diligently on these two projects, as they do for many others. Today, they truly appreciate this recognition of their work. But they also appreciate that this happens in broad partnership with so many partners, through the ADF.

Our new Ten Year Strategy is about transformation through growth, trade and investment – but quality growth, that is inclusive and which leaves no one behind.

Today’s events show that together we can make a difference.

We will draw lessons – lessons on how we can support Africa’s food security, employment, and empowerment through infrastructure.

In this case it was roads, markets, processing facilities. All these will require electricity that is accessible, affordable, reliable and sustainable – and that is why the Bank supports and plays a key role in President Obama’s Power Africa Initiative.

Sustaining the current economic momentum will not be possible until we overcome the power crisis in Africa. Just look at a place like Liberia, which provides only 53 megawatts of power a year, of which only half is available, and at the highest prices in the world.

Together – with Power Africa and other initiatives – we can make it happen.
In the last five years, our commitment to infrastructure was 12 billion dollars, of which 7.3 billion went into the power sector.

I look forward to working with you all in impacting peoples’ lives, and making change happen.

Thank you.