Welcome Address

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On Behalf of

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Windhoek, Namibia

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Excellences
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Introduction

It is my privilege to deliver this welcome address to such a distinguished gathering on behalf of Mr. Kurt Lonsway, Manager of the Environment and Climate Change Division of the African Development Bank Group.

On a personal note, it gives me great pleasure to be here with you in Windhoek, for the 2014 Africa Carbon Forum, the sixth meeting of its kind. This is a clear testimony that Africa continues to take seriously a low carbon development agenda for its future.

So, allow me to join my esteemed co-organisers in expressing our appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Namibia through its Ministry of Environment and Tourism, for graciously hosting us, and to you all for taking the time to actively participate in this important event.

Focusing on the Quality of Growth

Africa has experienced strong economic growth in the past decade and is one of the world’s fastest growing regions. It is therefore imperative that urgent attention be given to the consequence of this growth. We all agree that economic growth on its own is not enough; and we have
to question ourselves about the quality of growth that the continent needs. At the African Development Bank we have reflected on this deeply. Our ten year strategy for 2013 – 2022 focuses on two objectives to improve the quality of Africa’s growth, namely: inclusive growth, and the gradual transition to green growth.

We are cognizant of the fact that long-term sustainable economic growth which simultaneously meets development objectives should be based on comprehensive and robust development models that promote efficient use of natural assets, reduce waste and pollution, and strengthen the resilience of livelihoods.

In this context, the theme of the Africa Carbon Forum “promoting access to low-carbon development in Africa” is one which has its rightful place within our development agenda. We recognize that it will be impossible to eliminate carbon emissions as African economies grow, but we can help ensure that carbon emissions are minimized to the greatest extent possible.

**Access to Low Carbon Development in Africa**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The promotion of sustainable energy and clean technologies in Africa should be motivated by both the potential contribution to social and economic development, as well as the need for a development path that helps mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change.
On this note, it is quite encouraging to see how several of our African countries have embraced the low-carbon development agenda in the provision of appropriate energy infrastructure for their population, setting an example for others that this is the right path for the continent, yet much more work still remains. We need to strive to balance the goal of avoiding high carbon emitting infrastructure choices today, with the goal of enhancing long-term access to clean modern energy services for the future.

There are enormous opportunities that can be realized as Africa’s renewable energy potential is very high – up to 93% of the continents natural and renewable energy resources remain untapped. In the same vein, there are still several impediments that need to be overcome, among which include inadequate financial resources and limited institutional capacity.

Access to sufficient finance is at the heart of the needed response, with increased resource flows required to promote resilient and cleaner technologies. Furthermore, adequate policy frameworks and governance arrangements must be put in place. Capacity building and knowledge sharing are also essential in this regard.

It is our expectation that the discussions we shall be having today and over the course of the Forum will be geared towards identifying the much needed solutions including the modalities for implementation.
Role of the African Development Bank in Supporting Low-Carbon Development in Africa

Distinguished delegates,

The African Development Bank is committed to supporting its Regional Member Countries in advancing their inclusive and green development agenda through investment projects across all the key economic sectors. And, to do so, we are able to wear several hats, that of: financier, knowledge promoter, facilitator and honest broker.

In the energy sector for instance, the AfDB has channeled 4.3 billion USD into clean energy projects since 2007 – thus becoming the largest financier of clean energy on the African continent. A few concrete examples include the Moroccan Integrated Solar and Wind project as well as the Menengai Geothermal Development Project in Kenya, which is the first of its kind in the region. Of course, our financing is often combined with that of our other development partners who also play a critical role in providing much needed resources.

In our role as facilitator we established an African Natural Resource Management Centre in 2013. The Centre has been designed to provide independent advice, capacity building and technical assistance to African Countries such that they maximize the development outcomes derived from natural resources.
I am also pleased to inform you that in April this year, we launched the Africa Climate Change Fund with an initial contribution of USD 6 million from Germany. The overall focus is on funding climate finance readiness activities in African Countries, especially as we look to the Green Climate Fund becoming operational.

**Conclusion: Replicating Successful Solutions for a Greener Africa**

Distinguished delegates,

Let me conclude with the following remarks;

Africa has much it can learn from the accomplishments of others, and in the same vein the continent also has much to offer. Sharing our individual and collective experiences on a regular basis is important for success, hence AfDB’s strong continued support in co-organising these Africa Carbon Forums. Equally important is the need for us to also draw the lessons from where failures have occurred, in order to avoid making similar mistakes made by others.

Therefore I look forward to lively discussions ahead, especially those in which we share bold and creative ideas that will enable us promote the building of resilient and low-carbon African economies.

Thank you for your kind attention.

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