



REPUBLIC OF GHANA

MINISTRY OF FINANCE

REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS ON THE OCCASION OF THE SWEARING-IN CEREMONY OF PRESIDENT-ELECT OF AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP

KEN OFORI-ATTA
MINISTER FOR FINANCE
GHANA



SWEARING-IN CEREMONY OF AfDB PRESIDENT

DISTINGUISHED OUTGOING CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

HONOURABLE GOVERNORS

ALTERNATE GOVERNORS,

DR. AKINWUNMI ADESINA, PRESIDENT ELECT,

EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS,

THE VICE PRESIDENT, AfDB, Ms. SWAZI TSHABALALA,

SECRETARY-GENERAL, AfDB, PROF. VINCENT

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS – LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

1. Thank you very much for coming to witness the occasion of the swearing-in the President-Elect, Dr Akinwumi “Akin” Adesina, of the African Development Bank Group. This ceremony is historic in the sense that this is the first time an electronic voting system has been used to elect a President of the Bank, the first time a sitting President seeking re-election has received a unanimous endorsement (obtaining a 100% from both regional and non-regional members of the Bank) and the first time a swearing-in has been telecast. Covid is forcing us to reimagine our future.
2. The African Development Bank has, under your leadership, been integral to the spurt of economic growth on the continent in recent years. The reorganization of management and the restructuring of the Bank’s operations around the High 5s, which represent a response to Africa’s more critical development needs was and is indicative of your ability to foresee and design appropriate solutions for the times. The dynamism witnessed in this Bank in the last 5 years, was epitomized in the success of the historic 125 per cent General Capital Increase



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(GCI-VII) from \$93billion to \$208billion, the largest capital increase in the Bank's history.

3. In addition, in these uncertain times, you have demonstrated leadership through the \$10 billion COVID-19 Response facility to assist member countries to protect lives and livelihoods and revitalize our economy.
4. Mr President, your historic re-election was cast in the shadows of an unprecedented time. Africa is facing a double crisis: health and economic crises due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We are in the middle of the first recession in sub Saharan Africa in the last 25 years and a depression which may last well over 3 years. Many of our economies are facing economic contractions (of up to 15% of GDP) and severe liquidity challenges.
5. We stand the risk of between 26 million to 39 million Africans being pushed into extreme poverty. We urgently need liquidity and debt sustainability solutions in order to truly recover from this pandemic. Currently, it is estimated that Africa needs US\$100 Billion a year over the next 3 years to combat the effects of the pandemic. These are not normal times.
6. We need tailored, African solutions to our problems; as Africa's premier bank, the AfDB is best suited to lead this role in such a time as this.
7. Mr President, Africa has made tremendous progress in achieving the African Continental Free Trade Area. The AfCFTA is bringing together 55 African countries with a combined population of about 1.3 billion people and a combined GDP of more than US\$2.5 trillion. The AfCFTA is expected to consolidate the African market, making it easier for its



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businesses to reach greater economies of scale, promote the development of regional value chains and lower costs of trading for businesses.

8. According to a study undertaken by UNECA, the AfCFTA can significantly boost intra-African trade from 12% to 52% by 2022. A 1% increase in trade, \$90 billion in revenue for the continent. A focused implementation of the AfCFTA will accelerate the implementation of the Bank's High 5 priorities, the AU Agenda 2063 and Africa's recovery from the pandemic. The AfCFTA is a critical step in our collective vision for an Africa Beyond Aid. Ghana is humbled and privileged to host the AfCFTA Secretariat.
9. Mr. President, but we must digitalize Africa if we are to be effective in providing services to our people and generating our deserved taxes. We cannot continue to lose \$70 billion to illicit flows. We cannot continue with an average tax to GDP ratio of 17% versus 34%. In the OECD countries, Africa's tax revenue of \$439 billion could be approximately \$ 900 billion. We can then fund our own development.
10. How do we reimagine the Africa that we have to leverage its national and human resources to eliminate poverty and become the Eden of prosperity and human rights for the next generation?
11. Mr. President, Governors, we must question fundamental... for need ecclesia.
 - Why are commodity exchanges not on the continent?
 - Why do we pay an "African" premium when we go to the markets?
 - Why are we subject to the whims of the rating agencies?



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- Why do we keep our sovereign wealth outside and borrow at usury rates?
 - Why do we spend so much on insurance premium?
 - Why do we still lose \$ 70 billion from illicit financial flows?
 - Why do we have \$100 billion of AUMs earning marginal, sub-par, and negative earnings and Africa does not have the \$ 100 billion needed annually for its infrastructure?
12. There are many more global institutional arrangement with deep unconscious bias against the continent. The AfDB should work with Finance Ministers and the ACBF to tackle these as a matter of urgency.
13. Let me not miss the issue of digitalization of Africa.
14. Let me use this opportunity to once again thank Madam Kaba for her wisdom in guiding us to achieve this miraculous show of unity. I also want to acknowledge the non-regionals and the US for rising to a call for the good of the Bank. This show of Collective Trust will be built up during my tenure. We will fundamentally review our governance protocols to be world class by the AfDB and Africa into the new dawn. The fierce urgency of now is upon us!
15. Mr President, in the last few months, our discussions and deliberations have focused on the governance of the Bank. These conversations highlight the urgency to reposition the Bank as a world-class institution capable of "Building Resilience for a Post-COVID-19 Africa". We need to continue to steer and direct the Bank's efforts to setting global standards of excellence, integrity, commitment to service and responsiveness to the challenges of the Continent.
16. Mr President, we also have an opportunity to pursue economic justice for our people. There has never been a more opportune time



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to challenge the global financial infrastructure that is inherently biased towards Africa. We stand at the precipice of history; we will have to answer the question posterity will ask of our leadership: “What did you do to challenge the unjust systems?”

17. As I reflect on your fortitude and commitment in the face of our recent challenges, I am reminded of the Adinkra symbol, Mframadan, which is a symbol of resilience and readiness. It is my firm belief that this historic victory is only the beginning of greater things to come. I am in no doubt that we have secured the right leadership to drive us towards these and other exciting expectations. We must muster the needed courage and will to push further the frontiers of transforming the Continent. On our part, we the Board of Governors will remain resolute in our duty and support the President and Management of this Bank. I truly believe in the manifest destiny of Africa. I know that your second tenure as President of the Africa Development Bank will be characterised by a period of rapid transformation towards the realization of the vision of an Africa Beyond Aid: A Beautiful Africa!

18. Akin, let me leave you with a poem from Louis Urterneger which seeks to caption the chemistry of Faith and doubt (humility) working together for great good:

Ever insurgent let me be
Make me more daring than devout
From sleek contentment set me free
And fill me with buoyant doubt!

So go forth with God’s Spirit of humility and unity to serve Africa.



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19. Mr. President, you earned a new mandate in a most historic fashion. We are expectant; Africa is expectant; This is the charge to you; A continent to serve and God to glorify. So Akin lead us with a spirit of courage, love and self-discipline and together, speaking one language we will build a righteous and prosperous Africa for all to God's Glory.
20. Congratulations once again, Dr. Adesina, for making the Continent proud.

Thank you and God bless our Continent.

