

AFRICAN UNION

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**THE FIRST ORDINARY SESSION OF THE
AFRICAN UNION SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
ON
TRANSPORT, TRANSCONTINENTAL AND INTERREGIONAL
INFRASTRUCTURE, ENERGY AND TOURISM**

THEME: FINANCING INFRASTRUCTURE IN AFRICA

WELCOMING REMARKS

BY DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENERGY

Lomé, Togo, 13th – 17th March 2017



RÉPUBLIQUE TOGOLAISE



GRUPE DE LA BANQUE AFRICAINE
DE DÉVELOPPEMENT
AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP



United Nations
Economic Commission
for Africa

Your Excellency, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Togo

Representative of the African Development Bank

Representative of UNECA

Representative of NPCA

Distinguished Heads of Delegations

Ladies and Gentlemen

All protocols observed

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to our very first meeting of the Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Transport, Transcontinental and Interregional Infrastructures, Energy and Tourism. Let me from the onset, deeply express our profound gratitude to the Republic of Togo for hosting and facilitating this historic meeting so generously. We deeply appreciate the hospitality and facilities that have been put at our disposal to enable all of us to effectively work on the agenda of the continent in transport, energy, tourism and infrastructure in general.

We also commend the collaboration we have developed with our key partners in the continent, as part of the larger African Union family, for the effective organisation of this meeting. They are the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency (NPCA), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).

As you would note, this is the first time that the African Union Commission (AUC) through its Department of Infrastructure and Energy has convened a Ministerial meeting bringing together the divergent sectors of transport, energy, tourism and infrastructure under the STC configuration. In that context, you may wish to know that STCs are statutory Technical Organs of the African Union decision-making process. The shift from the previous single sector decision-making structures is considered essential in order to enable Africa to exploit the synergies existing in related sectors. It is expected that this integrated approach will enable the AU to effectively advance the overall objective of accelerating continental socio-economic development and integration in a holistic way.

Excellency

Ladies and Gentlemen

The theme of this STC meeting is on “*Financing Infrastructure in Africa*”. This topic has been selected in consideration of the huge challenge of mobilising colossal financial resources required to improve infrastructure in Africa to the level expected to support Africa’s development aspirations under the AU Agenda 2063. It is crucial for Africa to come up with sustainable means for mobilising adequate financing for infrastructure development, otherwise, realisation of concrete development in the sector could easily become a mirage. There are various potential sources of funds for infrastructure development in Africa. Hence, finding ways of unlocking that potential is critically important. During the STC meeting, we are expected to make concrete proposals on means of financing infrastructure projects including mobilisation of investments for the preparation, structuring, implementation and risk mitigation of climate resilient infrastructure projects.

To that end, as part of the STC meeting, we have included the **Pan African Investment Forum** which will take place on Thursday 16th March 2017. The Forum will feature high-level Ministerial panel discussions to exchange views on the best ways of stimulating investments in infrastructure development in the continent. This will be complemented by various presentations on the theme during the preceding sessions by Member States, pan African institutions and partners.

Excellency

Ladies and Gentlemen

At sector level, the Meeting will consider notable developments in Energy, Transport and Tourism, and make recommendations for key decisions by the Ministers.

Under the energy sector, the meeting will consider Electricity Market Development and Investments Promotion, New Initiatives in Renewable Energy and discuss contributions from various partnerships. In addition, Member States will share lessons learned in successfully implementing flagship projects.

The transport sector will, among others deliberate on the future of the Single African Air Transport Market, Vision 2063’s vision of the Integrated High Speed

Railway Network, transformation of SMART Corridors as well as on enhancing the capacity and efficiency of African ports to spur economic growth.

In tourism, the focus will be on the AU Agenda 2063's vision of making Africa the preferred destination for tourism. To that end, the continental tourism action plan formulated in the context of NEPAD will be reviewed and potential flagship projects on tourism will be discussed as well as various ways of enhancing Africa's tourism competitiveness, among other pertinent issues for the sector.

Excellency

Ladies and Gentlemen

These projects are by no means exhaustive of the issues affecting Africa's development challenges in energy, transport and tourism. What is important is to prioritize those issues that will have the maximum positive impact on the continent in order to uplift the welfare of the African people wherever they may be in the continent. Each sector will, therefore, be required to critically consider the issues before it and make recommendations for the Ministers to pronounce themselves on the most important policy and strategic decisions that will unlock key infrastructural developments and add impetus to the continental integration agenda.

As the STC focusing on the infrastructure development of the African continent, let us not lose sight of the rural and remote areas of Africa where the majority of African live; currently estimated at about 60%. No transformative development can take place if this category of Africans is not carried along. One way of integrating the rural and remote areas into the mainstream development programme is to develop a continental strategy that embraces all infrastructure aspects in an integrated and holistic manner.

The AUC Department of Infrastructure and Energy is in the process of developing a Strategy Paper on Unlocking Rural and Remote Areas Access to Basic Infrastructures and Services. The objective of this paper is to recommend policy and strategic interventions for accelerating development of basic infrastructure in rural and remote areas through an integrated programme to be implemented alongside ongoing major infrastructure development programmes. I call upon the STC to consider this initiative favourably and provide necessary guidance for concrete steps to be made towards developing a comprehensive strategy for integrated infrastructure development in the rural

and remote areas of Africa. I further call upon our partners to support us in this noble endeavour.

Excellency

Ladies and Gentlemen

In conclusion, allow me to once more thank the Government of the Republic of Togo, the AfDB, UNECA and our NPCA colleagues for their support and contribution in co-organising this STC. I further thank the Government and people of Togo for the warm hospitality and all the courtesies extended to all delegations since their arrival.

I wish you all a pleasant stay in Lomé and fruitful deliberations during the STC meeting.

Thank you.

Cheikh Bedda

Director, Infrastructure and Energy