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Directorate of Information and Communication

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Media Breakfast kicks-off 2017 PIDA Week

Swakopmund, Namibia, December 13, 2017 - The African Union Commission (AUC), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) on Monday hosted a media breakfast to kick-start the 2017 PIDA Week in Swakopmund, Namibia providing journalists a rare opportunity to engage the principals of these institutions about infrastructure development in Africa.

The Namibian Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Works and Transport expressed his county's honour in hosting the 2017 PIDA Week in the "land of the brave".

The AUC Director for Infrastructure and Energy, Mr. Cheikh Bedda stressed that the political commitment behind PIDA was very strong, adding that future EU/AU collaboration on infrastructure would go through the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA).

"Of the 433 PIDA projects selected, Mr. Bedda said, 30% are either under construction or fully operational. The capacity of infrastructure to include the rural areas in an inclusive manner would be key for the success of PIDA, " highlighted the Director.

The African Union Commission is tasked with the responsibility of driving the implementation of PIDA works jointly with the NEPAD Agency and the African Development Bank to ensure the accelerated implementation of PIDA projects in the continent.

NEPAD's Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, highlighted five key areas for the media; the rationale behind the creation of PIDA, priority PIDA projects' capacity to create jobs, PIDA's institutional architecture necessary for projects implementation, corridors development and efforts to accelerate PIDA implementation.

"We are an active minority and we have a responsibility to ensure that PIDA is a success, through the Service Delivery Mechanism, the Continental Business Network and the 5% Agenda," Dr. Mayaki said.

"This latest mechanism is about encouraging African sovereign wealth funds and pension funds to invest a greater part of their assets in Africa's development. We cannot blame them for not investing enough, we need to incentivize them," Dr Mayaki added.

On his part, Mr. Mohan Vivekanandan, Group Executive for the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) explained that the Bank established and grown internal project preparation capabilities and funding.

He highlighted that the European Union (EU), the World Bank's Global Environmental Facility and the United Nation's Green Climate Fund, have accredited DBSA to manage third party funds for the development of bankable infrastructure projects on the continent.

Also on the panel, Southern African Development Communities' Acting Director, Mr. Phera Ramoeli spoke about key projects the region is currently putting emphasis on, notably the North-South corridor and the Beira Corridor.

He also talked about ICT and broadband deployment in the region, as well as railway projects to unlock investment in the SADC region.

"Because we have frameworks and documents that are already agreed upon, we can move much faster," added Mr Ramoeli.

The Namibian Permanent Secretary of Information and Communication Technology, Mr Mbeuta Ua Ndjrakana commented that there is scope to improve the PIDA regulatory framework and ensure advantages that a country like Namibia benefits from.

"Infrastructure takes time, we have to start now to do it for the future generation", he concluded after pinpointing the importance of initiatives such as the Presidential Infrastructure Champion Initiative to accelerate the development of infrastructure on the continent.

Speaking from a Development partner's perspective, Mr. Francisco Carreras, Head of Cooperation Section at the European Union said the magnitude of Africa's needs cannot be solved by public money only.

He said that there were schemes available to mobilize wider pools of finance if public money was used as seed investment, adding the EU fully supports PIDA to accelerate infrastructure development in the continent.

The media breakfast was held in collaboration with the Namibian Government and aimed to assist the media in the continent understand why PIDA Week is important and allow the principals and the journalists to discuss progress made so far in the implementation of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) projects on the ground, among other related issues.

The media also had an opportunity to engage with experts who were present to get clarity on progress made so far and how PIDA is facilitating economic and social integration on the African continent through its projects.
Robust discussions centered around PIDA project implementation, the role of Regional Economic Communities in the implementation of national infrastructure projects, investor

expectations, private sector role in transforming the African continent, and the role that infrastructure should play in creating jobs on the continent.

The event brought together policy makers, RECs representatives, private sector, development partners and stakeholders involved in various aspects of infrastructure development in Africa.

Click on the link below to watch the Live Streamed video
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MW4gyKbIYyk

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