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THE REFERENCE GROUP ON INFRASTRUCTURE (RGI) MEETING KICKED OFF TODAY



Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, May 17, 2018: The Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) Reference Group on Infrastructure (RGI) kicked off today at the African Union Headquarters. The central theme of the meeting is one of the guiding strategic priorities adopted at the 5th African Union (AU) - European Union (EU)

Summit held in Abidjan in November 2017.

The main objective of the RGI meeting is to contribute to the implementation of the 5th AU-EU Summit of November 2017 conclusions, stipulated in its Political Declaration under Strategic Area 3: "Mobilising Investments for African structural sustainable transformation".

Director for Infrastructure and Energy Mr. Cheikh Bedda, while officiating the opening session of the meeting noted the satisfaction of the leadership of the AU Commission with the work done related to infrastructure. He recalled that the meeting is happening in special



context as issues of sustainable development are of concerns to Africa's citizen as well as Europe.

Mr. Cheikh Bedda emphasized the success in the first phase of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) and noted the support from EU to the programme. He concluded by saying that AU needs to draw lessons learned from the first phase to assist in the implementation of the second phase.

Mr. Paolo Ciccarelli, European Commission Official, working in DEVCO in the Infrastructure field (transport sector), addressed the meeting on the involvement of the EU Commission in the partnership with the AU Commission. He underlined the importance of availing reforms and enabling environment for the investment to succeed.

Mr. Ciccarelli further noted that Energising Africa, Digitalising Africa, and Interconnecting Africa, are the main revenues to engage within the AU-EU Infrastructure agenda during the period 2018-2020.

During the two day meeting, participants will discuss, among others, issues on;

- 5th African Union – European Union Summit Conclusions on Infrastructure Cooperation and the way forward
- PIDA implementation within a challenging infrastructure context: State of Progress and way forward
- Scaling-up Investment for Infrastructure (Energy, Transport, Water, Digitalisation) – The Potential for Synergies between the European External Investment Plan (EIP) and PIDA.
- Enhancing the financial viability of Water projects in Africa through the application of a nexus approach.
- Mainstreaming Climate Change in Infrastructure Cooperation.
- Innovation – Opportunities emerging for Rural Electrification from Digitalisation.
- Preparation of Joint RGI Conclusions.

The RGI is mandated to steer the strategic Infrastructure Roadmap in the framework of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy. During the two-day meeting, the Group will address the 2018-2020 Africa-EU infrastructure agenda across sectors (energy, water, transport, and digitalisation). The Group calls for strategic coordination and agreement between partners on actions related to the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), the potential of digitalisation, investment promotion, climate change and the role the new European Investment Plan is expected to play for quality infrastructure investment and delivery.

The RGI conclusions will be subsequently used to guide the 2018 AUC-EC College-to-College (C2C) Meeting taking place on 23 May 2018 in Brussels, Belgium, as well as relevant other fora of JAES partners in relation to infrastructure

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