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Directorate of Information and Communication

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MEDIA PUT TO TASK AS 2018 PIDA WEEK KICKS OFF



Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, November 26, 2018: The 2018 Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) Week kicked off today in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe with a united call to the media to project Africa's image positively during a media breakfast session that brought together journalists, infrastructure policymakers, development partners and private sector to discuss Africa's infrastructure deficit and how that can be reduced to ensure inclusive development on the continent.

The African Union Commissioner for Infrastructure, Energy and Tourism, Dr. Amani Abou-Zeid said Africa was making a lot of progress in terms of infrastructure development. She implored the media to highlight the continent's success stories in that regards.

"African leaders are fully committed to the development of transboundary infrastructure projects on the continent which will make a huge difference in terms of regional integration, job creation and related issues so let us talk about the positive things that are happening on our continent so we can continue to build on that as we push for inclusive growth in Africa," Ms. Abou-Zeid said.

The NEPAD Agency's Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, said the role of PIDA in contributing to the success of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCTA) cannot be over-stated and necessitates an integrated approach to infrastructure development on the continent.

"As regional integration arrangements deepen and intra-African trade increases, we need to focus on improved trans-continental highways in terms of road and rail networks. And deepening of financial markets and increased cross-border financial flows, including money transfer will require us to make additional investments in ICT

and digitalisation while growing industrialization and agro-industries will require more reliable and affordable power supply across the energy mix.”

Dr. Mayaki said he recognizes the key role that the media plays as agenda setters and opinion influencers on the continent.

“We therefore deem it necessary to continuously update the media fraternity on the work that we do in the realization of an integrated Africa through successful infrastructure projects,” he added.

The NEPAD Chief urged the media to advocate on success transboundary infrastructure projects such as Kazungula Bridge on the border of Zimbabwe, Zambia and Botswana, to remind Africa and the world that Africa is indeed rising.

GIZ African Union Office Director, Ms. Inge Baumgarten said Africa has so much untapped potential that can be harnessed through massive infrastructure development. “If the Asian tigers could make it then the African Lions can also take a giant leap forward and do it as well. It is not impossible,” said Ms. Baumgarten, adding much has been achieved in infrastructure development through GIZ partnership with the African Union and its partners on the continent.

Mr. Hubert Danso, the Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of Africa Investor (Ai), said Africa is leading the way in terms of mobilizing financing, including from pension funds, to be able to invest in infrastructure development on the continent.

He praised the work done under PIDA by the African Union Commission, the NEPAD Agency, the African Development Bank and the UN Economic Commission for Africa in pushing the continent to close the infrastructure gap in Africa.

Ms. Moono Mupotola, the Regional Intergration Director at the African Development Bank said the bank will continue to support transboundary infrastructure development on the continent.

The Media Breakfast is a platform that seeks to raise the profile of infrastructure development in the African media landscape, increase the volume and quality of positive news on the role and impact of PIDA in infrastructure development on the continent.

The 2018 PIDA Week is being held under the theme “*PIDA Implementation through Good Governance – Realizing Smart Infrastructure for Africa’s Integration*”.

The Media Breakfast, which gathered about 100 targeted participants, was co-organized by the African Union Commission (AUC), the NEPAD Agency the AfDB and the UN Economic Commission for Africa.

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