



## Press Release

### **African policy-makers take stock at inaugural infrastructure meeting in Abidjan**

**Nov 17, Abidjan - At the close of a week-long meeting in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, African policy-makers re-committed themselves to accelerating infrastructure development across the continent to further strengthen regional integration and boost economic growth.**

More than 150 participants including senior government officials, representatives from continental organizations and the private sector gathered in the Ivorian capital for the inaugural PIDA Week (Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa) organized by the African Union, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the African Development Bank. The aim of the high-level meeting was to evaluate the progress made toward the implementation of the 16 priority infrastructure projects identified under the PIDA initiative. These projects were selected and announced at the Dakar Financing Summit in June 2014 and are of particular strategic, political and economic importance, most notably because of their transformative power in regional development.

Since 2012 progress has been recorded, but several challenges lay ahead, delegates heard at the meeting. Five of the 16 projects have already broke ground: the Abidjan-Lagos corridor; the Dakar-Bamako rail link; two hydroelectric dams, Sambangalou in Guinea and Ruzizi III in Rwanda; and the road from Serenje to Nakonde in Zambia. The others are slated for completion by 2025.

“Once implemented, the 16 projects are expected to significantly boost Africa’s competitiveness and business climate,” said Dr Ibrahim Mayaki, CEO of the NEPAD Agency. He added, “Trade between countries and regional cooperation are of the utmost importance when it comes to building a strong and sustainable African economy. By encouraging regional integration, NEPAD also helps countries to improve their trade links, to better share their resources, and to build infrastructure that will form the foundations of vital economic diversification for development.”

Following the adoption of PIDA in 2012 by the African Union Assembly, the NEPAD Agency has worked with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank, the Regional Economic Communities and key strategic partners to undertake comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of more than 400 PIDA Priority Action Plan projects. In June 2014, President Macky Sall of Senegal hosted the Dakar Financing Summit, where 16 of the 400 projects were identified and endorsed for immediate implementation.

The 16 mega-projects are documented on a dedicated map designed on the occasion of the PIDA Week. They include transport corridors, energy projects, ICT connections of the hinterland by means of optic fiber and ports.

“A new consensus has taken shape in Abidjan. Various workshops with participants from all over the continent have allowed us to validate key steps on the road to developing our 16 projects. African

governments, the donor community and international investors are now defining a new paradigm that heralds a new era in Africa's development, based on the financing and construction of infrastructure that will unlock its economic takeoff," Dr. Mayaki said.

He added that delegates expressed interest in ensuring that the PIDA Week become a major annual event on Africa's development calendar to ensure close monitoring and evaluation of the progress achieved.

### **About NEPAD**

*As a catalyst for African integration, the NEPAD Agency works with African nations to develop closer partnerships across borders and to cooperate more effectively with international partners. Its role was cemented in the Union's Agenda 2063 strategy set forth in 2013. NEPAD is tasked with implementing the major development projects that will shape Africa's future in six main areas: agriculture and food security, crosscutting topics - gender, capacity building, climate change, infrastructure, human development and governance.*

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