It gives me great pleasure to warmly welcome you to the 2019 Annual Meetings of the African Development Bank Group here in the beautiful country of Equatorial Guinea.

In a short period of time, Equatorial Guinea has built world-class infrastructure which will provide today’s younger generation with tremendous advantages. While physical infrastructure is key to development and regional integration, ‘grey matter’ infrastructure—human capital development—is even much more important.

Just a few weeks ago, I attended an IT and Coding Boot Camp right here in Malabo and was thrilled by the ingenuity and creativity of the participants—young men and women—who in five days created an amazing array of technological solutions. Among them, Sigfredo, who developed a moving robot and one day intends to study aeronautics and robotics; 18-year old Angelica, who created an intelligent stick for the blind and visually impaired; Mathias, who, inspired by the beauty of his country, designed an impressive online visitor portal; Celso, who has a well-thought-out agro-business idea for processing mangoes and avocados; and Quintin, who is developing a safety and security App for taxi users.

As a Bank, we are committed to creating 25 million jobs in 10 years. Many of these new jobs will be in science and technology, IT, agro-businesses, fashionomics, multimedia, and a host of other startups and companies. We will continue to work hard to ensure that young entrepreneurs are able to scale up, shape the economies of their countries, and succeed in their respective enterprises.

I appreciate the feedback and support I have continued to receive from the Governors of our Bank. Thanks to their insights and counsel, we continue to impact the daily lives of the people of Africa. Actually, 181 million lives in less than 4 years. Men and women farmers who are producing better harvests on account of improved access to agricultural technologies; Children, who can study at night because they have access to electricity. Young men and women such as Sigfredo and Angelica, who can imagine better futures for themselves; and traders and businesses, who are covering greater distances ever more quickly, on account of improved roads and the creation of one stop border posts.

To all of our participants, I trust that you will have successful meetings, productive networking opportunities, inspiring knowledge events, and that together, we will help shape the future of an integrated and economically prosperous Africa.
In 2018, the fictional country of Wakanda in the blockbuster movie Black Panther was ranked fourth as the most mentioned ‘country’ in Africa during TV broadcasts, according to a recent study by the University of Southern California. Coverage of Wakanda far exceeded mentions about African business, travel, health, sports, or development. While the finding is amusing, it is a reminder of the significant challenge an integrated Africa faces in showcasing opportunities and the many transformational changes taking place on the continent. Ultimately, effective and transparent communication will be key to regional integration, and the capacity to attract investor and partner interest.

At the heart of every civilisation is a human desire for game-changing solutions that transform nations and human lives. Vibranium, Wakanda’s equally fictional precious metal, was the key to making it the most technologically advanced nation on the planet. But in reality, critical to a regionally integrated ecosystem will be how Africa continues to innovatively use, manage and add value to its tremendous resources.

Tectonic global shifts are already changing every aspect of our economies and enterprises. Also affected are policies, education, research, ICT, finance and banking, trade, migration and the mobility of human capital, goods and services. The African Continental Free Trade Area agreement, which was ratified in May, 2019, holds the tantalising prospect of a single market for goods, services and the free movement of people, with a total GDP of $2.5 trillion, and a combined population of one billion people.

Astounding and rapid technological developments are already underway in artificial intelligence, robotics, nanotechnology, quantum computing and Big Data. The African Development Bank and partners such as the Rockefeller Foundation, Microsoft, and Facebook, have launched a Coding for Employment Foundation, Microsoft, and Facebook, to help make Africa’s regionally integrated Africa.

In 2019, as the African Development Bank commemorates its 55th anniversary, we are poised to play an even more strategic role, in conjunction with the African Union Commission and other partners, to help make Africa’s economic integration a concrete reality. Together, we will irreversibly impact and transform the lives of millions of Africans.
Africa’s regional integration gains momentum at African Development Bank Group Annual Meetings in Malabo

If we get integration right, Africa can develop with dignity and confidence,” African Development Bank President Akinwumi Adesina told journalists at a press conference to herald the Bank’s 2019 Annual Meetings, due to open Tuesday in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea.

The theme of this year’s meetings is “Regional Integration for Africa’s Economic Prosperity.” Regional integration gained momentum with the agreement on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in March 2018 and is now at the threshold of its launch next month.

The AfCFTA will constitute the world’s largest free trade area, consolidating an integrated market of 1.3 billion consumers with a combined gross domestic product (GDP) of about $3.4 trillion. It is estimated that Africa’s GDP growth could reach 6% a year in a continent without borders (UNECA).

Answering questions from pan-African and international journalists, Adesina said that the Bank has invested around $1 billion through various initiatives, including cross border infrastructure, to move trade across African borders. Most has gone to small and medium enterprises – the engine of economic growth.

Cesar A. Mba Abogo, Equatorial Guinea’s Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, who co-hosted the press conference, spoke about the country’s significant efforts on the economic and infrastructure front, to connect markets in Central Africa.

“It is a real privilege to host the Bank’s Annual Meetings... the Bank’s High 5s – are very much in line with our development strategy between now and 2025,” Abogo said, revealing that the country’s road networks both in Malabo and throughout the mainland, were better than across large parts of Africa. In addition, Equatorial Guinea has invested in social housing and will continue to improve human capital, through capacity building and training programmes, while recognising the challenges presented by skill shortages.

Equatorial Guinea had been selected as host of the Annual Meetings because of its economic potential and because Central Africa could benefit a great deal from regional integration, said Adesina.

“We believe that the potential is immense, but the level of integration is not enough,” he said.

Regional integration is one of the Bank’s High 5s and is seen as pivotal to boosting Africa’s economic development.

The Bank is committed to accelerating Africa’s integration process. In the last five years the Bank has invested more than $15 billion in the construction of regional infrastructure in energy, transport and ICT. Some of these projects include a $93.8 million loan for the long-awaited Trans-Gambia bridge linking the Gambia and Senegal, resulting in a 50% cut in freight costs and improved transport, health and education services for 900,000 local people.

Earlier in the morning at a media breakfast, Adesina underscored the importance of regional integration in Africa.

“If we get our integration right, Africa will be more competitive, will be able to create a massive amount of jobs and, more importantly, Africa can develop in dignity and confidence,” Adesina said.

C’est avec un réel plaisir que je souhaite la bienvenue aux assemblées annuelles du Groupe de la Banque africaine de développement, dans cette belle ville de Malabo, en Guinée équatoriale.


Les réunions sont une excellente opportunité pour partager les produits de connaissances au cours de sessions phares et parallèles, qui faciliteront les échanges entre participants, mais aussi les opportunités d’affaires.

Cette année, le thème de nos assemblées annuelles : « L’intégration régionale pour la prospérité économique de l’Afrique », vient à point nommé. L’intégration régionale est le chemin le plus rapide et le plus sûr pour transformer les économies africaines. L’intégration régionale symbolise le destin commun de nos pays membres régionaux.

Les années 2018-2019 ont été décisives en matière d’intégration. La zone de libre-échange continentale africaine (ZLEC) a été lancée en mars 2018 puis ratifiée en avril 2019. Les ministres africains du commerce se sont donnés rendez-vous le 7 juillet 2019 pour travailler à la mise en œuvre de la ZLEC.

Nous comptons réaliser l’Afrique que nous voulons – une Afrique intégrée et prospère, qui utilise ses richesses, offre des opportunités d’emplois durables à ses jeunes. Acheminons-nous rapidement vers cette Afrique : avec courage, confiance, coopération et dignité.
The president of the African Development Bank, Akinwumi Adesina, toured the Sipopo Conference Centre in Malabo on Monday 10 June, where the Bank Group’s 2019 Annual Meetings will be held from tomorrow.

The visit took place following a joint media breakfast with Equatorial Guinean Minister of Economy, Finance and Planning, Cesar Augusto Mba Abogo, which took place at the Sipopo Sofitel Hotel nearby.

Adesina walked around the Convention Centre, which includes a 1,600-seat conference hall in which the opening ceremony will take place on Tuesday, 11 June. An estimated 2,000 participants are expected for this year’s Annual Meetings, which will be opened by President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo and attended by several government officials, civil society representatives and media.

‘Let’s make sure the smallest, weakest countries benefit from regional integration,’ President Adesina says as he welcomes media to African Development Bank’s Annual Meetings, African Development Bank President Akinwumi Adesina on Monday welcomed journalists from all over the world to the Bank’s 55th Annual Meetings, taking place this week in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea.

At a media breakfast, Adesina spoke about the theme of the conference: Regional Integration for Africa’s Economic Prosperity.

He said the recently ratified African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) was instrumental to boosting trade among African countries and thereby accelerating growth. The AfCFTA will come into effect in July 2019 and is expected to create the world’s largest free trade zone.

“What we have to do is make sure that the force of cooperation is really strong, so that even the smallest and weakest countries will find themselves richer and more prosperous…”
Our impact in numbers from 2014 to 2018: ADF Snapshot

- 206 MW of new power capacity
- 59 MW of new renewable power capacity
- 7,699 km of roads rehabilitated
- 2,188 km of cross-border roads delivered
- 11,556 roads linking farmers to markets
- 546,000 small and micro-enterprises have accessed financing
- 45.5 million people had access to transportation
- 82,000 ha with improved water management
- Improved agriculture for 71 people per million
Highlighting the achievements of companies and individuals that contribute to the transformation and development of Africa’s financial sector.

www.africanbankerawards.com

11th June 2019, Malabo, Equatorial Guinea
"The Bank Group focuses on fragility"

Désiré Vencatchellum
Director

The 15th replenishment of the African Development Fund (ADF) began on 20 March 2019 and will end with a pledging conference in November 2019. The ADF is the preferred source of funding for 70% of regional member countries: a successful replenishment will improve operations on the ground, and assist the decentralisation process.

How is the current ADF-14 turning out?

The Bank Group focuses on fragility. It’s a unique approach and it helps us to focus on the essential challenges of most African countries: civil conflict, ‘triangles of disaster’ (the vicious spiral of environmental degradation, youth unemployment and extreme poverty) and debt accumulation. Accordingly, during ADF-14 the Bank’s presence increased in areas of fragility, with offices in 11 fragile states. We are also using the Private Sector Credit Enhancement Facility (PSF), an ADF innovation, to enable us to lend more in fragile states.

Approvals and planned operations in ADF-14 mainly support infrastructure (45%)—transport and energy (25% and 20% respectively) and agriculture (18%). The majority are investment projects. The current pipeline is robust and healthy, and while the resources available have not met the demand from the ADF countries, the ADF-15 pipeline comprises 370 operations in investments estimated at close to $16.8 billion. That’s not a bad outcome to begin with.

The ADF is delivering sustainable impact, and could deliver even more proportionately if we had additional resources. It has regularly crowded in additional partners or donors in its financing, bringing products or projects to the market for the first time in the country.

Jobs for Youth in Africa will create 25 million jobs in Africa. Last year we provided $340 million for Enable Youth projects to support agricultural entrepreneurs in eight countries.

The institutional reforms have made significant improvements in our operational efficiency and value for money. The Bank reforms have improved processes and systems. Time taken between approval and signature, as well as disbursement, has decreased, and value for money has improved.

Finally, the ADF supports RMCs in transitioning to lower middle-income countries and graduating to emerging economies. 11 LICs have graduated to lower middle-income countries since 2002. During the ADF-14 cycle, Nigeria was able to exit the ADF.

What’s the overall approach and theme of ADF-15?

ADF countries are still mostly reliant on concessional resources. We need to scale up access to grants, concessional loans and innovative financing, and the ADF should innovate and explore market access for enhanced financial resources to meet the growing needs of Africa’s low-income states. The overall theme of ADF-15 is to create an enabling framework for inclusive growth and to build and maintain resilience in all ADF countries.

Improving quality of life means promoting inclusive growth. It means a stable environment for job creation, combating poverty, and building capacity by providing education, clean water and health services for all, especially women and children. But broad-based inclusive growth will not happen in an environment of fragility, conflicts and instability.

We want to make selective investments in areas of comparative advantage: particularly in infrastructure, people and institutions, and all within the general context of the High 5s.

Our operational priorities in particular are the two key pillars derived from the High 5s: Pillar I is to invest in quality and sustainable infrastructure for economic transformation and integration. Pillar II is to invest in people and capacity development to promote inclusive growth and job creation.

How do you keep consistency between the comprehensive strategic approach of the Bank, demonstrated in its High 5 objectives, and the need to be selective in your ADF spending, concentrating on what the Bank does best?

There is no inconsistency here. First, the High 5s are strategic objectives, stating the Bank’s ambition for an Africa that is economically transformed in every sense of the term. Many hands are being found to do this work. The High 5s are of course general objectives and it’s clear that the Bank cannot do everything, but for the African Development Bank they are an agenda of ambition for us, our partners, colleagues, friends and stakeholders.

We divide this work up and help and encourage each other in doing so. Of course we must select and concentrate our work on what we do best. For other work we will act as a catalyst, as an agent of encouragement, to inspire others, including our own partners, to help finish it. African economic development is after all a common, and a collaborative cause. It is not and cannot be a partial or solo enterprise.

We know that there are some very specific challenges in ADF countries, and we seek to address them in an equally specific fashion. But economic development is made up of social, community, environmental, employment, educational, public health, transport, and many other factors, which must all be treated together. We want to be there with our partners and others in the common enterprise, in which each will offer their best and each will encourage the others to do the same.
**Morocco**
Mohamed Benchaaboun

The emerging African economy continues to depend on economic integration, including through harnessing intraregional synergies and existing instances of complementarity in key areas, and through taking advantage of development opportunities created by new technology and the green economy.

**Côte d’Ivoire**
Niale Kaba

Our population includes a high proportion of intelligent young people who are dynamic and increasingly well trained. Regional integration will provide them with more opportunities and therefore improve what they call growth spill-over, and significantly reduce poverty.

**Cameroon**
Alamine Ousmane Mey

Integration is a policy that is both fair and timely. It is a strategic option that suits the current economic and commercial climate of Africa, with its considerable fragmentation and 16 landlocked countries.

**Equatorial Guinea**

is made up of two regions: the continental part that borders Cameroon and Gabon, and the island of Bioko, home to the capital Malabo and the island of Annobón.

**Uganda**
Matia Kasaija

Countries should focus on fostering regional peace and security for economic and political integration to take root because the continent is full of conflicts and wars which consume most of the resources that would be used to promote growth and development.

**Ethiopia**
Ahmed Shide

The Continental Free Trade Area will give a comprehensive framework to move Africa forward. It’s a framework that will unite all African countries, and unlock huge potential given Africa’s economic dynamism.

**Germany**

Maria Flachsbarth

Regional integration is a political task. National governments, regional economic communities and the continent at large need to build and foster the institutions and regulations that form the basis for successful integration. This will require not only time, effort, and money but also political will. Above all, it will be necessary to clarify and articulate shared objectives and joint regional priorities.

**Cameroon**
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**Equatorial Guinea**

is made up of two regions: the continental part that borders Cameroon and Gabon, and the island of Bioko, home to the capital Malabo and the island of Annobón.
Will 2019 be Africa’s year of regional integration?

Travelling through Africa’s vast terrain by air, road and sea is about to get cheaper and easier, at least in principle, if plans to remove hurdles to trade and the free movement of good and persons are implemented this year by African governments. With visa-free travel for Africans impeded by red tape and diplomatic inertia, the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area means that the momentum of integration can move from policy to action.

Undoubtedly, the journey ahead promises to be an interesting one, requiring not just intra-African cooperation but also global partnerships. And because countries have different incentives for integration, the achievement of economic growth and environmental health will not be easy given the unavoidable trade-offs between development and democracy, national security, and open borders.

Pitching the continental free trade plan to world leaders at the 2019 World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, African Development Bank President Akinwumi Adesina said, “Think of the next China, after China. This is exactly what the continental free trade area is, almost $3 trillion of combined GDP. That’s the market to focus on.”

By UN projections, Africa’s population will double from 1.2 billion today to 2.5 billion by 2050, before almost doubling again to 4.8 billion by 2100. McKinsey, a consulting firm, reckons that by 2034 Africa will have a larger working age population than India or China. With this market size, it will be difficult for the rest of world to ignore Africa.

Experts at the African Development Bank forecast that Africa’s food and agriculture market will hit $1 trillion by 2030. Household consumption will hit $2.5 trillion, with business-to-business expenditure at $3.5 trillion by 2025.

Intra-regional trade currently hovers between 14% and 18% of total trade in Africa, the region with the lowest level globally. The North America Free Trade Area averages 54%, the European Union 70%, and Asia (ASEAN) 60%.

By progressively eliminating tariffs on trans-frontier trade, the Continental Free Trade Area will stimulate intra-Africa trade by up to $35 billion per year, creating a 52% increase in trade by 2022, and a vital $10 billion decrease in imports from outside Africa. It also affords an opportunity to redefine the terms of Africa’s debt exposure to lenders in the international financial markets.

To be sure, a plethora of complementary integration projects are also on the table, under the auspices of the African Union, NEPAD, the regional economic communities and the African Development Bank. They include no less than 14 trading blocs, the AU Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons; the African Passport; the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM), also launched a year ago; the AU Supply Chain Platform, unveiled in Ethiopia this January; and numerous cross-border infrastructure initiatives under the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA).

These initiatives will bring collective benefits and shared wealth for all African nations, especially landlocked and island countries. They will also advance the Sustainable Development Goals, from targets for decent work and economic growth (Goal 8) and the promotion of industry (Goal 9), to food security (Goal 2) and affordable access to health services (Goal 3).

This makes accelerating investments in national and regional infrastructure a priority to boost connectivity, reduce costs and raise competitiveness. The African Development Bank’s commitments to infrastructure, mostly cross-border transport, energy, finance and ICT connectivity, have totalled more than $12 billion over the last six years.

Amongst other commitments, the Bank allocates $1 billion to PIDA projects every three years, and 10% of the Bank’s funding in each infrastructure project is also dedicated to ensuring that there is coordination and harmonisation of policies and regulation across countries. Development experts at the Bank now routinely look at governance, gender, policy, and regulatory issues at every stage of infrastructure project development and delivery.

As the Bank continues to accelerate implementation of its High 5 priorities, in particular ‘Integrate Africa’, Africa’s business community will be hoping that this is the year that they can begin to enjoy and profit from the free movement of people, goods and services across African borders, using their common African passport.
Experts say the African Continental Trade Agreement is a game changer for a single market across Africa, but concerns remain that barriers may not be removed to allow private businesses and companies to operate freely across borders. What is the opinion of the Bank’s private sector department?

The African Continental Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) will create a single continental market for goods and services, with free movement of people, goods, capital and investments. It will enhance intra-African trade, which is currently far too low between 14 and. The agreement commits AU member states to remove tariffs from 90% of all goods, with the remaining 10% on sensitive items to be phased out over time. This will stimulate Africa’s industrialisation and reduce its dependency on commodity exports. It is a game-changing opportunity for the African private sector, which can now play its full role in economic development through job creation and value-added production.

Some barriers will remain: tariffs on sensitive products will be phased out over a longer time and some excluded items will be exempted from any tariff reduction. The reason is to delay or limit tariff revenue losses, which can be significant for key export commodities, especially in agriculture. We also need to address the challenges caused by the diversity of African economies, and acknowledge the wide variations in their levels of development. We must also be aware of the increased competition it could have in some sectors (SMEs, for example). No one should be left behind. This is why differential policies are needed for SMEs, sensitive sectors, intellectual property, and fragile economies.

In summary, the Bank believes that the AfCTA will create a positive environment for a prosperous Africa and play a genuinely catalytic role in its implementation.

Could you share an overview of the Bank group’s non-sovereign operations focusing on key successes? To what extent have these operations had an impact on SMEs?

The objective of the Bank’s non-sovereign operations has been to accelerate the continent’s economic transformation and stimulate sustainable economic growth and inclusive social development through loans, lines of credit, guarantees, blended finance, equity investments and trade finance.

At December 2018, the non-sovereign operations portfolio was valued at around $11.3 billion, comprising 240 projects in 33 countries. In 2018 the NSO department lent around $1.6 billion to the private sector, approximately 23% of the Bank Group’s total approvals.

In 2018, the Bank provided critical support to the African banking and financial sectors through loans, direct equity, lines of credits, or initiatives to boost financing to economic sectors, including SMEs. The Africa SME programme, for example, supports medium and small (Tier 2 and Tier 3) financial institutions, to increase their on-lending capacity to SMEs on competitive terms. 19,500 SMEs benefited from the programme, with an average loan size of about $60,000 per SME. The NSO department also provides technical assistance facilities for projects, funding $85 million.
projects from 2006 to 2017 with $64 million of grants. 54% of the portfolio was dedicated to SMEs’ access to finance.

**SMEs are key drivers of economic growth. What have been the Bank’s major flagship projects over recent years?**

Accounting for more than 80% of private businesses, SMEs are key to the sustainable development and inclusive growth of African economies, and are therefore a central focus for Bank policies and programmes.

A few transformative projects stand out for their size, complexity, and SME impact:

1) A $100 million asset-backed structured loan to Taxi SA, a firm in South Africa that lends to SMEs for their purchase of environmentally friendly minibus taxis. 14,400 direct jobs will be created. A large proportion of Taxi SA clients are not in the formal banking sector. 21% of the direct beneficiaries are women, and 17% are under 35 years old.

2) The $29 million Small Entrepreneurs Loan Facility Microfinance Fund for entrepreneurs in Tanzania, especially in rural areas. The development impact was significant with 105,788 beneficiaries (56% of them women), receiving loans from 432 microfinance institutions, creating 227,000 jobs.

3) A $12 million trade finance intervention providing liquidity and letter of credit confirmation lines for Liberian SMEs through three selected local banks.

4) In April 2017, a five-year $7 million credit line was granted to the Banque Populaire de Mauritanie (BPM), to enable it to develop its loan portfolio for SMEs, which constitute 63% of its clientele. 35 SMEs covering eight business sectors benefited from these highly successful facilities.

5) The Elite Bourse Régionale des Valeurs Mobilières Lounge programme builds capacity for West African SMEs to access funding from markets. The Bank funded a first cohort of 10 companies through its Fund for African Private Sector Assistance. 20 firms have so far benefitted from the programme.

The Bank Group has had a long and fruitful partnership with the Netherlands Development Finance Corporation (FMO). What is it all about and what are the concrete results of this collaboration?

The Bank’s strategy is to leverage partnerships with other development partners on the continent. FMO is one of the world’s leading development banks targeting the private sector. Examples of successful collaborations between the Bank and FMO are numerous and include:

- Zambia’s flagship 120 MW Itëzhi-Tezhi hydropower project, which was the first public-private partnership project in the energy sector in Zambia. It contributed substantially to the country’s self-reliance in electricity, and in 2018, for the first time in its history, Zambia imported no electricity.

- A tripartite EUR 66 million investment to build an 86 MW power plant ensuring reliable power supply and energy security in Cameroun.

- The Bank funded the modernisation of Dakar container terminal, reducing the average waiting time in the harbour from 15 to 2 hours for ships and from several hours to less than 30 minutes for trucks. The project allowed a substantial transfer of skills and helped to create more than 300 jobs.
This road crosses the towns of Djougou, Péhunco, Kérou and Banikoara. It is used by the high-capacity vehicles that move cotton from the fields to the region’s 18 ginning mills. The cotton sector, a major employer, plays a key role in the Beninese economy, accounting for 45% of fiscal revenues exclusive of customs duties, 13% of national GDP and 80% of official export earnings. Some 60% of Benin’s industrial fabric owes its existence to cotton. The cotton road, therefore, is significant to the country’s economic and social development. The towns and villages that it crosses have agricultural potential: cereals (maize, sorghum, millet and rice), tubers (yam, sweet potato and cassava) and legumes (soybeans, cowpeas, goussi and Bambara groundnut). The cultivation of cashew nuts, locust beans and shea is also a source of income for the people of the region.

The Djougou-Péhunco-Kérou-Banikoara road is subject to violent weather. In times of rain, means of transport become rare and prices go up, due to the degraded state of the rural roads. Bush taxis are replaced by motorcycle taxis, which considerably increases travel costs, especially on non-market days. During public consultations, one Péhunco resident said, “All the cars that normally use this road are withdrawn after a while. Their drivers say that the risk of damage to their vehicles is too high. The condition of this road is making us poorer.”

During this period, water floods a bridge located at Péhunco on the Djougou-Banikoara road, making it impassable for several days. This makes accidents much more likely. “In addition to the state of the road, you should see what condition the bridges are in! In times of rain, vehicles from Djougou cannot get as far as us. The lorry drivers fear accidents with all the load they are carrying. Our markets shrink during this period,” said another resident of Péhunco.

**Promising consequences for residents and trade**

In 2018, the Bank approved funding for the project to refurbish 210 kilometres of the roads that make up the 900-kilometre cotton road, to include four kilometres of single carriageway road and 152 kilometres of improved rural roads. Its contribution amounts to $140 million, or more than 60% of the total cost of the project. Its goal is to reduce poverty in the region by developing basic socio-economic infrastructure. The reduction in transport costs on the road will lead to lower costs for the production and export of cotton and a consequent improvement in the country’s competitiveness. In 2018, the average travel time for cotton was 10 hours. The improvements to the road and bridges will reduce journey time to four hours by 2022.

The modernisation and asphaltng of the road will lead to increased traffic and trade, lower transport costs and improved quality of life for those living along the route. By 2022, 30% of the population will be within two kilometres of a drivable road, against 20% before the project. The walking distance to bridges will be reduced and access to the Internet will be improved, thanks to fibre optics.

The project will also have a positive impact on the economic activity of the population, particularly by increasing the employability of women and young people. Priority will be given to rural activities practised by women, such as food crop production and processing and marketing activities. These actions will be supported by training in agricultural product processing, in developing projects likely to attract funding, and in accessing finance to diversify household incomes. The budget allocated to activities to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment will be €3.6 million.

**Benin: The road to progress**

In north-west Benin, a 210-kilometre road forms the backbone of the cotton-road network. In addition to supporting the cotton sector, its modernisation will bring positive impacts for all the Beninese people.
A new model of education is necessary to support the revolution in information and communications technology in Africa. Carnegie Mellon University, an institution of higher learning based in the United States, has established a campus in Rwanda dedicated to accomplishing just that. The campus is the product of a partnership between the African Development Bank, the Government of Rwanda, and Carnegie Mellon University. The educational model is aimed at encouraging a revolutionary form of higher learning to take root, one that is based in Africa, offering a quality education, focused on technology, and intrinsically linked to the private sector.

The model also helps further the Government of Rwanda's 2020 vision and its goal of building a knowledge-based economy. It encourages interaction and debate among professors, students, and young entrepreneurs and companies both in and out of Africa, to stimulate growth and create African jobs.

Carnegie Mellon University Africa in Rwanda was designed to serve as a centre of excellence and as a regional hub for information and communications technology in East Africa. It includes an innovation incubator developed to help students build their own businesses, a management training centre, a mobile research centre, an applied learning centre and a programme for designing secondary school curriculum.

Beyond training an elite generation of Africans in cutting-edge technology, the campus offers the added benefit of slowing the African brain drain. One faculty member, a graduate of the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology, chose to return to Rwanda so that her knowledge might benefit her country. Faculty testimonials also speak volumes: “If you educate advanced engineers abroad, they are very likely to stay there; by contrast, most of our students are eager to stay and work in Africa,” said the director of the University.

A variety of career opportunities await the students. Some work in the financial sector, in public administration and in IT companies while others go into agriculture or telecommunications. Demand is so high that students are sometimes hired before they graduate. Some go on to launch their own companies.

The Bank contributed 13 million euros to this singularly innovative initiative in sub-Saharan Africa.
In pursuit of its key targets for 2025, the Bank will do the following:

- **Facilitate the construction of 3,600 kilometres of cross-border transmission lines, and substantially increasing electricity access for communities.**

- **Support initiatives encouraging financial services so that they represent more than 5% of GDP instead of the current estimated 1%-2%.**

- **Reduce the cost of cross-border trading from $2,350 to $1,950 per 20-foot container by sea on average.**

- **Increase intra-African trade to 23% of all traded merchandise, and 20% of trade in total goods and services.**

- **Support ICT projects to help sustain progress towards the African Union Vision for communications by 2040, and increase African internet connectivity from 14.5% in 2014 to 30% in 2025.**

- **Help to increase air travel to 13.5 million passengers and air freight to 143 million tonnes – an increase of 7% from 2015 levels.**

- **Support the construction of railway lines to meet the African Union’s 2040 goals, and expand and energise transport corridors.**

- **Enhance the construction or rehabilitation of 10,000 kilometres of cross-border roads to improve intra-continental connectivity.**
Integration

Volume of exports (%)

- Europe: 37.8
- Asia: 34.0
- North America: 13.8
- South America: 3.4
- Middle East: 5.6
- Others: 3.0
- Africa: 2.4

African merchandise trends 1995-2016

- Intra-African Total Merchandise Exports and Imports
- Total Merchandise Exports and Imports
- Intra-African Total/Total Merchandise Trade

- Malabo Bulletin • 11 Juin 2019
Accreditation agents ready to welcome thousands of delegates for the African Development Bank’s 2019 Annual Meetings in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea.

Beneficiaries of the African Development Bank’s projects in pictures...

Equatorial Guinea Secretary of State for Treasury, Ms Milagrosa Obono Angue welcomes African Development Bank Group President Akinwumi Adesina ahead of a tour of Sipopo Conference Center.

Behind the Scenes…

Registration of delegates attending the African Development Bank 2019 Annual Meetings.