

PIDA Week ends with call for Africa to accelerate infrastructure projects

The fourth Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) Week was held in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe from 26-28 November. The event concluded with ministers and other delegates in attendance agreeing that accelerating solutions to Africa's infrastructure gaps must be taken seriously if Africa is to realise the aspirations of its people as enshrined in Agenda 2063 and the global agenda for sustainable development.



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Zimbabwe's state minister for Matebeleland North Province Richard Moyo said the acceleration would add impetus to the continent's integration process. "We need to have the right infrastructure mix and align our national infrastructural projects to the PIDA programme for collective gain."

NEPAD CEO Ibrahim Assane Mayaki stressed the need to, "continue holding a constructive dialogue with the partners, including the private sector so that we can deliver concretely."

Good governance

For his part, the African Union's infrastructure director Cheik Bedda emphasised the importance of good governance to promote infrastructural development that will positively impact the continent's economies.

Representatives of the European Union and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ), a major partner to NEPAD and its partners in the PIDA programme, also spoke in support of Africa's quest for an integrated infrastructure network.

"Big change is on the way for Africa through PIDA and we have to stay the course. Huge investments are required for it to become a reality. We as GIZ are with you. There are also huge opportunities in terms of human capital as well for the continent at all levels," said GIZ African Union office director Inge Baumgarte

The meeting also noted the need to increase projects under construction from the current 32% to 50% if Africa is to achieve its developmental aspirations. Furthermore, the continent should create an enabling environment for the private sector to have space to buy into the continent's key priority projects.

There was consensus on "bankable and smart infrastructure with cross border orientation", which would propel socio-economic growth. Governments were urged to proactively involve all stakeholders, in particular communities to make the projects inclusive and true enablers for development.

Project-specific working groups

To realise NEPAD's 5% Agenda and the African Infrastructure Guarantee Mechanism (AIGM), the delegations recommended the establishment of PIDA project-specific working groups to focus on data transparency and dissemination; advocacy work; project development; review and funding; partnerships and capacity building.

They also pledged to launch and use the PIDA Job Creation Toolkit as a part of the package and means to attract and convince pertinent stakeholders, including financiers and development partners on the benefits of key PIDA priority projects in the construction phase.

The PIDA Quality Label received recognition as a framework needed to ensure projects fulfil set criteria.

They further recommended that PIDA PAP 2 (2020-2030) draws from the ongoing review and consultative process and ensure that it has a realistic list of projects that should be inclusive of all sectors as well as a strong strategy to communicate progress on priority PIDA projects and facilitate sharing of lessons and experiences on the implementation of PIDA projects.

The partners, including the African Union Commission (AUC), NEPAD Agency, the African Development Bank (AfDB), and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), vowed to continue working together to put in place sustainable capacity building mechanisms for key infrastructure sectors on the continent and to invest in efforts to accelerate development of key infrastructure projects.