

DENMARK
KIRSTEN GEELAN, Head of Delegation

Let me start by joining others in thanking the United States Government and in particular the Hawaiian authorities for hosting this meeting. We have been moved by the welcoming hospitality extended to us at this 34th Annual Meeting of the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

For the second consecutive year the Asian region has recorded positive economic growth rates higher than in any other continent. Recovery, however, seems fragile.

In addition the social consequences of the financial crisis remain. In many countries the number of people living in absolute poverty is higher than before the crisis. The ADB has an important role to play in promoting pro-poor and sustainable economic growth including supporting national efforts to stem the negative impact of macroeconomic instabilities.

Denmark welcomes the transparent process leading up to the adoption of the long-term strategic framework and ADB's firm commitment to the International Development Goals.

We would have welcomed an outline of a long-term vision for ADB based on the region's potential, as well as specific development needs, in addition to a clearer definition of ADB's comparative advantage. Hopefully, these important parameters will be reflected in the medium-term strategic framework providing concrete guidelines and benchmarks for the implementation of the poverty reduction strategy. We fully support the introduction of poverty analysis in all projects and programs. At the same time we look forward to the ADB's proposal for a reorganization, which should enable ADB to develop into a full-fledged development institution and respond to the demands of the development agenda.

While governments and the people in the developing countries have a major responsibility for creating a better future through sustainable development, the international community must confirm the global commitment to support the achievement of the international development goals. National ownership based on a broad dialog with governments, private sector, civil society, and non-government organizations is a key feature of the Danish strategy for development cooperation called Partnership 2000. We encourage ADB to work closely with the World Bank and other international development institutions in supporting development countries within the framework of the Comprehensive Development Framework, to help countries formulate poverty reduction strategies and turn them into action. This important task should be exercised within the framework of a solid long-term partnership between ADB and the borrowing countries and in close coordination with the relevant bilateral and multilateral agencies. In this context I urge ADB to be particularly open to transparent and vigilant coordination

with other donors active in the same country or sector.

In addition, we encourage the involvement of the regional development banks in preparing the conference on Financing for Development in 2002.

The promotion of good governance and transparent administrative practices free of corruption are essential elements in the creation of pro-poor growth and stable societies. The adoption of performance-based lending and its focus on good governance indicators represent an important step. While we welcome ADB's Action Plan for Promoting Good Governance, we encourage a widening of the agenda to include the promotion of effective, accountable, and democratic public administration in the borrowing countries of the region.

Furthermore, we must draw upon the resources of both women and men if we are to achieve sustainable progress. A central aspect of poverty reduction must be the promotion of equity and the empowerment of women. It means ensuring equal access to and control over resources, as well as equal access to education.

Denmark supports ADB's commitment to mainstream a gender perspective into the poverty reduction agenda. In particular, we are looking to ADB to incorporate into the medium-term strategic framework strategies based on the lessons learned from the regional gender network and other initiatives.

The promotion of environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable development is another crucial element of poverty reduction. We welcome the priority given in the long-term strategic framework to the promotion of sustainable development. Denmark hopes to set up a trust fund in support of ADB's efforts to enhance the use of renewable energy and improve of energy efficiency in rural areas.

Before concluding, allow me a few words on the HIV/AIDS pandemic - one of the most devastating health threats to poor people. We welcome the reference to HIV/AIDS in the Donors report from the recent replenishment of the Asian Development Fund (ADF). However, preventive measures are of vital importance. We look to ADB to integrate the HIV/AIDS dimension into in particular ADB's health programs.

Finally, let me conclude by complimenting ADB on the many achievements in 2000 and particular the successful conclusion of the ADF 7th replenishment. This is essential for the poorest countries. We also welcome the steady move toward restoration of the prudential indicators, which hopefully will pave the way for transferring ADB's surplus to ADF and thereby to the benefit of the poorest countries in the region.

Denmark pledges to you, Mr. President, and to ADB our continued trust and support in our common efforts to achieve poverty reduction and sustainable growth in Asia.