



PORTUGAL

MARIO LOBO, Head of Delegation

On behalf of the Government of Portugal, I would like to express my most sincere gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Korea for hosting the 37th Annual Meeting of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) on this beautiful island of the Republic of Korea.

I take this occasion to welcome Luxemburg and Palau as new members of ADB.

Since Portugal became a member of ADB in 2002, we have had the best relationship with the institution. The activities developed in collaboration with ADB over the past year, the visit of President Tadao Chino to Lisbon, as well as the third Donors Meeting of Asian Development Fund (ADF) IX, held in Lisbon, were a sign of this close and fruitful relationship.

I, therefore, wish to congratulate you, President Tadao Chino, for your strong leadership and thank you as well to the Management and all ADB staff for your support which allows us to fully integrate as a non-regional member of ADB.

Asia is a particularly vulnerable continent when it comes to sustainable development. The reconstruction process in Afghanistan, the tensions arising from the situation in Iraq, global terrorism, and the viruses that have recently affected this area of the globe are responsible for delaying the progress towards the improvement in the living conditions of the populations of many developing countries in the Asia and Pacific region.

Yet, these countries have registered positive economic indicators in the last couple of years and their levels of poverty has decreased.

However, to attain the Millennium Development Goals, there is still much to be done, namely in the social area and towards a more equitable distribution.

In general, the policies implemented by ADB deserve Portugal's support.

Regarding the Poverty Reduction Strategy, ADB should enhance dialogue with developing countries as well as with development partners in order to identify ways and means of providing additional aid to these countries. Attention needs to be given to Country Strategy Papers as they reflect the development priorities of these countries, both at the national and local levels.

On aid effectiveness, particular focus should be addressed to project design and efficient monitoring of project implementation.

In a different but equally important area—anti-money-laundering and the fight against terrorism—ADB can play an important role in supporting developing countries to pursue good governance in order to fight corruption and, at the same time, assist them in the process of concluding double-taxation agreements.

ADB's Human Resources Policy must also deserve careful attention. It should seek to promote accountability and staff motivation.

Regarding the private sector, ADB should create the conditions to increase ADB's operations in this area, given the fact that a dynamic private sector is extremely important for developing countries to achieve greater economic growth, which certainly will have an impact on poverty reduction.

Referring to the Replenishment of ADF IX, Portugal will maintain the same participation share of the last Replenishment, recognizing not only the need to ensure an adequate level of concessional resources to support the Developing Member Countries in the period 2005–2008, but also ADB's engagement in pursuing measures which contribute to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of its assistance in terms of development impact.

I could not go without referring to Timor-Leste and the role that ADB can play in that country, in terms of poverty reduction, by seeking to provide better and more efficient aid, which can contribute to greater stability and peace consolidation, joining the efforts that Portugal and other donor countries are making by providing technical and financial bilateral assistance to Timor-Leste.

ADB has proved to be a prominent institution in the fight against poverty and we look forward to continuing cooperation in fulfilling its mandate.