



SWEDEN

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Let me begin by joining others in thanking the Korean authorities and the province of Jeju for organizing this year's annual meeting. It is a true pleasure to be here in Jeju, enjoying the atmosphere and your hospitality.

I would like to focus my remarks today on how we can move forward with the recently adopted strategic reform agenda outlined in President Tadao Chino's crucial statement in Copenhagen at the start of the Asian Development Fund (ADF)-9 discussions. In our view this agenda provides the key framework for a strengthened focus on poverty reduction and for enhancing the development impact of the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Tremendous results in reducing poverty have been achieved. The prospect to reduce extreme poverty by half by 2015 looks bright for the region as a whole. But if you look at the social realities behind the figures and on a country basis, much remains to be done if we are to achieve the non-income-related Millennium Development Goals. Asia and the Pacific still host almost two thirds of the world's poor. As a regional institution, ADB has a distinct advantage in supporting its Developing Member Countries to empower and increase opportunities for the poor to improve their own lives.

The reform agenda through its results focus is geared to ADB's overarching objective of reducing poverty in the region. An important cornerstone in the reform agenda is the commitment to improved transparency, accountability, and internal governance within ADB.

Sweden welcomes this. Let us not forget that a successful outcome depends on how well implementation is managed, as much at country level as in headquarters. It is only through implementing the reform agenda that ADB can significantly enhance its development impact.

Effectively aligning the resources and knowledge at hand to the implementation requires ADB to promote a strong internal ownership in support of poverty reduction and managing for development results. To support the results focus and cultural change needed, the new Human Resources Strategy must create the appropriate incentives for both staff and management. We will follow this closely.

ADB's revised Poverty Reduction Strategy provides us with yet another means to fulfill the objective set out in ADB's mandate. A successful implementation essentially depends on how close ADB's country strategies and programs align with the national

poverty reduction strategies. The challenge must be to support the priorities of the borrowers, in building policies and practices through which sustainable poverty reduction can be achieved, in order to attain the Millennium Development Goals. Successful implementation is also dependent on the capacity and commitment of ADB to harmonize and coordinate development efforts with others. In our view this means that all different actors involved, at headquarters as well as at the country level, must work together to support the fulfillment of the development priorities set by the countries themselves. We are pleased to note that ADB has made considerable progress in this regard. There is however room for further improvement, and we encourage ADB to contribute to making donor collaboration more coherent and efficient. In this context we call for a continued strong focus on the empowerment of ADB's resident missions.

The formulation of the action plan for results-based management and the establishment of the new Results Management Unit are also important elements of the reform agenda. However, achieving results on the ground must ultimately be seen as a common responsibility for everyone in ADB. We encourage ADB to regularly update the Board of Directors of the status of the action plan.

Defining the future role and direction of ADB is of high importance to Sweden. ADB's capacity to respond to the changing environment must be regularly addressed, reacting to changes at the country level as well as in relation to the international multilateral architecture. In this regard, the time has come to start to prepare for ADB's second Medium-Term Strategic Framework. We must work closely together to ensure that the reform agenda set by ADB is clearly reflected in this framework, through clear indicators and targets.

ADB has come a long way since its vision—an Asia and Pacific region free of poverty—was established as the overarching goal. Today ADB is well equipped and has an array of innovative policies and instruments at its disposal, aimed at supporting poverty reduction. For this I would like to commend ADB, which, under the committed leadership of President Chino, has made considerable progress. The time is now ripe for concrete implementation. I can pledge Sweden's continued staunch support for ADB in this crucial task.