



IRELAND

Paul Ryan, Alternate Governor

Mr. Chairman
Governors
Honourable Board of Directors
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Government of Ireland, I would like to join others in thanking the Fijian Government for hosting this 52nd Annual Meeting of the Asian Development Bank (ADB). I would also like to commend our hosts, along with the management and staff of the Bank, on the professional organisation of the event and for the warmth of the welcome we have received here in Fiji.

2018 was a milestone year for ADB, with the adoption of Strategy 2030 which sets out our response to the evolving developmental needs and challenges facing the region. We were pleased at the opportunity to engage and assist in shaping the direction and vision of the Strategy. Of course, the merit and quality of any Strategy lies in its implementation. For us, this has two important elements. Firstly, we welcome the inclusion of numerical targets. Secondly, and in order to build on those and other targets still to be elaborated, it is vital that we now develop a comprehensive corporate results framework which will provide the waypoints necessary to navigate the delivery of the Strategy 2030 vision. This is the only tangible way that that we can translate policy ambition into progress on the ground.

Ireland recently launched our new international development policy – ‘A Better World’. The Policy’s development ambitions of gender equality, reducing humanitarian need, strengthening governance and climate action are closely reflected in the priority areas in Strategy 2030. A Better World is underpinned by our committed to contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals and that contribution will be underpinned by the Government of Ireland’s renewed commitment to reaching the international goal of allocating 0.7% of GNI to ODA by 2030. In that regard, the impetus within Strategy 2030 on contributing to the Sustainable Development Agenda, as well as the implementation of the Paris Agreement are very welcome. Indeed, ADB provided a welcome input to our new Policy during the public consultation period and we are grateful for this contribution.

Protecting the most vulnerable and those marginalised in societies is a key goal for Ireland’s international development. Through strategy formulation and policy interventions underpinned by this goal, we seek to protect those who are most at risk while also supporting those furthest behind in terms of progress and prosperity. Putting the furthest behind first is the overriding ambition of our ‘A Better World’ Policy. I am glad to note that this approach also resonates with Operational Priority 1 under Strategy 2030, Addressing Remaining Poverty and Reducing Inequalities. To this end, Ireland strongly supports the approach which President Nakao has elaborated that

strengthening ADB's commitment to diversity and inclusion, where everyone is treated with respect, regardless of gender, nationality, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, physical ability, and thinking style, is central to the organisation's effectiveness.

A critical objective for Ireland is our long-established and ongoing strong support for Small Island Development States and our response to humanitarian crises, especially those in Fragile, Conflict and Vulnerable Situations. As a small island state, Ireland has long had an affinity with the SIDS. In this regard, I'm delighted to inform you that earlier this week Ireland signed an agreement with the Bank to establish of a Trust Fund targeted at the SIDS members of the Bank, with funding in the region of €12 (around \$13.5 million) over 5 years. The Fund aims to increase the availability of technical assistance (TA) funding for ADB projects and programmes in the SIDS, and at the same time represents a deepening of our engagement with the ADB.

This commitment to SIDS will also be reflected in our engagement with the ADF 13 during the coming months up to the 2020 Annual Meeting. As part of that work, we will advocate targeting of resources towards those who are most vulnerable and those who need it most.

In addition to our commitment to the SIDS, this ambition for ADF13 will specifically focus on regions experiencing Fragile, Conflict and Vulnerable Situations. Unfortunately, these regions are facing a growing range of very challenging issues such as conflict, refugees, climate-related natural disasters, as well as climate change resulting in altered weather patterns with an impact on food, environments and economic development. Given the existing and potential problems facing these situations, they have to be placed centre stage of the ADF13 negotiations.

At this stage, I would like to take the opportunity to express my gratitude to our representation at the Board of Directors, through our Executive Director, and his excellent team. Ireland's representation within the Constituency Office has been very significant in terms of cementing and strengthening our relationship with the Bank. Going forward, we hope to build upon this engagement and look forward to deepening our participation in the years ahead, in conjunction with our Constituency colleagues. On this point, I note that Ireland plans to open an embassy in Manila in the next 18 months as part of the Irish Government's Global Footprint Policy which aims to double out diplomatic and trade representation abroad by 2025. In addition to our Constituency Office involvement, this will help Ireland continue to work closely with the ADB.

Finally, I would like to extend my well wishes to President Nakao in advancing the work of the Bank, specifically in bringing to reality the vision contained in Strategy 2030, and with regard to progressing a successful replenishment of the Asian Development Fund over the coming months to the 2020 Annual Meeting.