



Manila
2018
51st ADB ANNUAL MEETING
3-6 MAY



THE NETHERLANDS

Jan Willem van den Wall Bake, Temporary Alternate Governor

Chairman Dominguez, President Nakao, distinguished Governors, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government of the Netherlands, I would like to express my deep appreciation to the Government of the Philippines and Asian Development Bank for their warm hospitality.

The Netherlands places great value on its engagement with Asia and the Pacific, and we view the Asian Development Bank as a key multilateral development partner in fostering sustainable, green and inclusive economic growth throughout the region. To deliver as effectively as possible on its ambitious mission to eradicate poverty in Asia and the Pacific, we believe that development impact should be at the heart of ADB's new long-term strategic framework, Strategy 2030. We want to highlight three aspects that we consider crucial in this regard:

First, The Netherlands believes that the Bank's main contribution to the region is not funding in itself, but the knowledge it provides. Therefore, the Strategy must go hand in hand with adequate adjustments of staff incentives - from volume driven to more quality and innovation driven incentives. Furthermore, the Strategy remains thin on the question of how the Bank can strengthen its role and instruments for incorporating and disseminating knowledge through its operations. We believe for example that ADB should further expand its funding to technical assistance. Another example is the key role ADB plays in the field of water. It is important to further enhance the Bank's role in more sophisticated and innovative projects in areas like integrated water resource management and flood protection.

Second, given the different stages of development of countries in Asia and the Pacific, we welcome the proposal of differentiated approaches for different country groups as part of the new Strategy. In this regard, let me mention one recently agreed best practice from the World Bank, namely the introduction of enhanced price differentiation.

Third, we welcome the fact that the Strategy includes a focus on the poorest and most vulnerable countries and people and shared prosperity as despite the region's many successes, it remains home to a large share of the world's poor. We would like to underline the pivotal importance of empowering women and girls and investing in climate change mitigation and adaptation. We welcome the targets on both topics in the draft Strategy. At the same time, we feel that these targets could be further enhanced by more specificity in definition and indicators, and the question of how the goals will be met. As this is the first overarching strategy since the merger of the Asian Development Fund with the Ordinary Capital Resources, integrated approaches and ambitious milestones on these issues are more important than ever.

Finally, given the recent allegations of sexual misconduct in international development, please allow me to also use this opportunity to underline the importance of transparency, openness and an independent Ombudsperson.

At the project level clear and adequately specific safeguards should ensure the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. I would like to thank the President Nakao and others in the Bank for their commitment in this field. In a broader sense, we would encourage the Bank to firmly promoting gender equality, both within ADB as well as in its operations.

Thank you.