INTRODUCTION:

1. The World Bank is undertaking consultations and discussions on key sectors and areas of its activities to enable it better manage its global development agenda. In this regard, Trade Strategy Consultations began May 2012 and will be concluded June. Education Strategy Consultations started earlier in February 2010 and will last till August 2012. Similarly, Energy Strategy Consultations which had been initiated in January 2010 will last till June 2012. Meanwhile, Environment Strategy Consultations are scheduled to last a whole year between October 2009 and October 2010.

1.2 Africa Action Plan Consultations under the auspices of the Africa Region of the Bank are a part of this series of consultations and discussions. Four of such ongoing multi-stakeholder sub-regional consultations are planned for Africa and are intended to renew Bank interventions in the region. They are scheduled as follows: June 1, 2010, Midrand in South Africa; June 4, 2010, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; June 7, 2010, Abuja, Nigeria; and June 10, 2010 at Dakar, Senegal.

1.3 This report is a summary of the proceedings of the third Regional Consultation on the Africa Action Plan which held at the Transcorp Hilton Hotel in Abuja. Participants were drawn from the four West African countries of Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ghana and Nigeria.

WELCOME AND SETTING THE AGENDA

2.1 The consultation started 9.00 am after the Facilitator, Dr. Douglas Zormelo, welcomed participants and set the agenda for the one-day meeting. He said that the objective of the consultation was to deliberate on new ways by which the World Bank could improve on its methods and approach in dealing with the development challenges in the continent.

2.2 According to the Facilitator, the Bank has gone through a learning process after adopting and applying several strategies and approaches which included Economic Recovery Programme and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. Since 2005, the World Bank Group’s engagement with Africa had been guided by the Africa Action Plan (AAP). Among other things, AAP was designed to enable African countries achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals. The periodic review which followed were made to meet the changing needs of the continent. These were done however when the global economy was buoyant and aid to Africa was on the increase. The dramatic global economic changes of 2008-9 had brought about equally dramatic changes in the global economic environment and in the continent. The changing international economic landscape, including that of Africa, had altered in a manner that the original design of APP could not possibly have anticipated.
2.3 Although the worst effects of the last global economic shocks may have so far been addressed, the world economy still remains volatile. Also, even though some African countries are beginning to show signs of recovery, a post-crises World strategy for the region has to be different and capable of ensuring that the continent’s economy is prepared to enable it benefit from the rebound of the global economy. The AAP consultations are therefore meant to furnish the Bank with the fresh insights and right perspective it needs to scale up its operations in key sectors in the regions. In conclusion, the Facilitator signaled that the discussion was expected to be both vigorous and rigorous. The participatory process adopted for the current consultations is what is expected to bring about improvement to Bank strategy compared approaches it had adopted in the past. He encouraged participants to be willing to ask Bank officials tough questions which may have been raised by issues such as “conditionalities” and “cross-conditionality” which had been attached to Bank strategies in the past but were not clearly understood.

3. Opening Remarks and Setting Rules of Engagement
3.1 Next, World Bank Country Director in Nigeria, Mr. Ruhl Onoh, made Opening Remarks and also welcomed participants to the consultation. He noted that important changes had been taking place in the Bank in the past few years. A new knowledge strategy had been evolved and changes had taken place in the way Bank operations are designed and implemented. Also, the Bank was paying an increasing emphasis on the global public good which is creating a larger space to pursue some bold initiatives to tackle Africa’s problems. The Africa Region of the Bank intended to seize this unprecedented opportunity and adjust its strategy to what best supports its programmes in the continent. For these reasons, the Country Director reiterated, as Douglas Zormelo had done earlier, that the idea behind APP was different. In the past, the Bank often eagerly stepped into the arena to direct and shape public discussions and debates. This time, it would be the other way round. He and other Bank officials intended to be listening instead of talking. They would take the back seat and made notes and let participants do the talk. This was how the consultation was structured and it was what happened.

4.1 The Chief Economist of the Bank for Africa Region, Mr. Shantayanan Devarajan, gave additional background information and the rationale behind AAP. He started by giving the cheery news that Africa had turned the corner for the better and was at this point in time where India was 20 years ago and China 30 years ago. He listed several important areas where the continent had made progress in the last several years and concluded that, for the first time in recent history, the continent was escaping from vicious cycle to virtuous cycle. Progress report covered improvement in the political environment in the last 20 years. Naturally, with a more stable political environment came a better business environment. For example, capital flow into the continent had been increasing and, in 2007, was higher than aid. As a result, Africa made progress in the economic front after recording a 5 per cent growth rate. Some African countries had also stabilized in regard to the fight against HIV/AIDS.

4.2 These and several other key economic indicators showed that reforms that African governments have been implementing in the last several years have been yielding results. Although the continent is on the outermost fringe of the global economy, it was not isolated from the global economic crises. In fact, the crises as well as the food, fuel and fuel crises which
compounded them either threatened or reversed the gains the continent had made in some key areas. However, despite the tough global economic environment at the time, when poverty rate was falling 1 per point a year, some African countries managed to keep a firm hand on the economic challenges they faced. These countries generally used fiscal policies to counter the effects of slowdown in economic activities. Overall, a widening of fiscal deficits by about 3 per cent of GDP was witnessed in 2009. For the oil exporting group of African countries, fiscal deficit rose by over 9 per cent of GDP. In middle income countries, fiscal deficit was less at 7 per cent. A pattern was also observed among the low income countries in the continent. Those of them which had fiscal space such as Tanzania and Zambia ran modest fiscal deficit. Those that did not, like Ghana, were still in control and actually contracted their deficits.

4.3 Devarajan added that one core objective of the consultations was to leverage on the bold and courageous start the continent has made so far and continue to manage for growth. Several critical areas needed to be identified where intervention would help prevent social unrest and promote development. A very good example revolved round youths whose very large population qualified Africa to be described as a young region. Put at about 200 million and largely unemployed as well as vulnerable, youth-related issues were urgent and could lead to volatility if not addressed immediately. It was important that the consultations came up with clear directions and concrete steps to tackle youth challenges. Also, the meeting should also look at ways to make government accountable using the power of private sector and civil society.

4.4 The Chief Economist concluded that the Bank was very serious with the consultations as it intended to use them to shape its Africa Development Agenda. So the process was not expected to end with the series of meetings. Already, a website () had been created to offer an offline opportunity to move the consultations forward after the online meetings had been concluded. In fact, the plan is that the sub-regional multi-stakeholder dialogues will be stepped down to country level consultations, deliberations at the two tiers building on and complementing each other to form a fuller of the state of African development. To demonstrate further faith in the consultations, the Bank will distribute a draft copy of the deliberations to participants by September 2012 so that “you can see that your input is properly reflected in the final document,” the Chief Economist said. “We want you to hold us accountable for the consultations. We are trying to be as transparent as possible.”

5. Country Feedback and Thematic Issues
5.1 Prior to the consultations of June 7, 2010 in Abuja, the four participating countries had organized their respective feedback. These were presented by Hon. Kuku Dorbor (Liberia); Andrew Lavali (Sierra Leone); Bight Simons (Ghana); and Pro. O. Ibidapo-Obe (Nigeria).

5.2 Liberia
5.2.1 Liberian country-level consultation reported that the nation operates a framework of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme. Under it, Liberia has successfully mobilized external resources including foreign private sector investment, negotiation for debt cancellation and reaching the final stage of fulfilling HIPC requirements. The Liberian government continues to maintain some level of safety net. This has, despite the global economic crises, achieved social cohesion. Peace and security, maintained by UNMIL, is stable.
5.2.2 The Liberian country-level consultation reported further that challenges remain in the following areas:

- Strengthening anti-corruption programmes to ensure greater accountability and transparency;
- Building partnerships with national structures (public sector, private sector and civil society) and ensuring synergy of policy and action among them;
- Building institutional and human capacities to implement development agenda and achieve better outcomes;
- Investing in growth sectors and acquisition of commensurate skills to generate employment;
- Transformation of the productive capacities of the large informal sector especially in agriculture and indigenous business.

5.2.3 Priority should be given to agriculture, entrepreneurship (business), health and education and concerns of women factored into programme designs and implementation. Doing this should begin with ensuring women participation in decision-making process and infusing gender into policy design and implementation framework.

5.2.4 Agriculture

- Creating awareness which makes women farmers see agriculture as a profession;
- Provide training and incentives to attract women into agriculture extension;
- Make laws and policies to ensure land ownership by women and implement such laws and policies where they already exist;
- Provide subsidy directly to women farmers in terms of seeds, implements and purchase of produce.

5.2.4 Entrepreneurship (Business)

- Provide training for women in production and service delivery;
- Empower women financially for investment and provide loans at favourable rates and longer repayment terms;
- Provide incentives for women to engage in manufacturing and business expansion;
- Arm women innovation to add value to primary produce and manufacture for export.

5.2.5 Health

- Provide clinics in all towns and districts;
- Healthcare facilities should be friendly, accessible, affordable and address sexual and reproductive needs of women;
- Train more women as service providers for sexual- and gender-based violence (SGBV);
- Set up community centres for survivors of rape, domestic violence and female genital mutilation (FGM);
- School curriculums and educational programmes should include control and prevention of HIV/AIDS and STDs.
- Involve the private sector in healthcare delivery (managerial and supply services, etc.).

5.2.6 Education
• Provide women with full and equal access to training and careers in scientific and vocational fields;
• Provide scholarship as incentive to motivate women and girls to pursue courses in science and technology and career guidance at schools to enlighten especially girls on opportunities in the job market;
• Intensify adult education programmes to achieve functional literacy among women and citizens;
• Support women education at tertiary levels in building technical and managerial capabilities.

5.3 Sierra Leone

5.3.1 Youth Empowerment and Participation
From Sierra Leone country-level consultation, it emerged that youth empowerment is a huge challenge across the continent. Employment and participation of youths should be seen and addressed as a development and security challenge. The issue was that the World Bank has not developed a policy which factors youth empowerment into its mainstream development assistance to Africa. The group recommended that the Bank deliberate action to promote youth empowerment. Doing so would, among other things, increase the continent’s manpower base and make Africa more competitive in the global economy.

5.3.2 Tackling Rural Poverty where Youths are Trapped
Rural poverty was identified as a major challenge in empowering youths and mainstreaming development in the continent. The feedback noted that, because most young people live and work in rural Africa, rural poverty has to be addressed in the continent. A first step is to engage youths at the sub-national level, which is not the case at the moment. There are proposals to make decentralization programmes more effective and open a lending window for local-youth-serving agencies.

5.3.3 Regional Integration Inclusive of Youth
A similar youth challenge discovered at sub-national level was also prevalent at the sub-regional level. Regional integration programmes is also not effectively addressing youth issues. Therefore, an integration plan that increases young people’s access to markets and incomes should be pursued.

5.4 Ghana

5.4.1 Private Sector
There is need for the involvement of the Bank in the development of host countries to refocus on acting as catalyst. Acting as facilitator, on one hand, will strengthen the Bank’s position to help synchronize country development programmes at multiple levels. On the other hand, the Bank will be in a better position to coordinate and align donor interests and programmes with national priorities. As a result, countries will gain better focus and orient which their public sector to lead and deliver evidence-grounded, nationally-owned projects and programmes. This will also ensure a stakeholder-inclusive process which will ensure economic growth and sustainable development.

5.4.2 Civil Society
The Bank’s engagement with African civil society should be based on framework that augments the latter’s “pluri-lateral” character. Widening participation in all aspects of decision-making for all citizens in this manner implied accountability to traditional and non-traditional constituencies as well as competence in the evaluation of development policies. In doing this, special care should be taken to ensure inclusion of those who lack access to the formal structures of institutional governance, checks and balances as well as information production and dissemination.

5.4.3 Private Sector
The Bank’s lending, grant-making and technical assistance policies can be better channeled through innovative, cost-effective distribution mechanisms. The private sector provides such distribution mechanism which acknowledge the roles of small and medium enterprises and social entrepreneurs in fostering employment generation. The divide between rural and urban economies across Africa can be bridged, so long as these mechanisms are inclusive of gender and youth and are rich in terms of knowledge-base and are designed and directed towards the provision of public goods which include infrastructure.

5.5 Nigeria
5.5.1 Brainstorming for the Nigerian consultation took place at the African University of Science and Technology, Abuja, with four college professors in attendance. Education and especially two of its key components, science and technology, formed the key focus of the Nigerian country feedback.

5.5.2 National Development Challenges: Question 1
- Lack of human security in all its facets;
- Abject poverty for the greatest/majority of the population;
- Lack of robust and stable food security;
- Ineffective healthcare delivery system;
- Disregard for merit in appointment to key positions;
- Inappropriate education with poor skills content;
- Underemployment and poor job creation strategy especially for youths;
- Pervading and escalating incidence of corruption;
- Uncompetitive national goods and services in local and global markets;
- Overcoming social and economic challenges and reducing absolute poverty;
- Generating more valued added from natural resources;
- Combating water-borne infectious diseases by deepening access to clean drinking water;
- Increasing energy/electricity (clean) for the populace;
- Increasing productivity and competitiveness of local industry and generating higher-paying jobs.

5.5.3 What Solutions?
- The country must build capacity to find and invest in appropriate technologies, adapt them to local environment as well as deploy them to solve local problems;
- The strategy should be to strengthen STEI (Science, Technology, Engineering and Innovation) capability as a tool for achieving the country’s priority social and economic development objectives.
5.5.4 What Capability and Building Programme?
- Training scientists, engineers, technicians and policy makers;
- Promoting grass-roots, inclusive innovation;
- Developing local institutions that can scale up locally-generated grassroots innovations and also identify, evaluate and import technology that is in widespread use around the world but which is not being used domestically to address local development objectives;
- Strengthening the capacity of local scientific and engineering institutions to conduct research and development needed to adapt these technologies for local use and to generate socially and economically new technologies;
- Developing technology transfer know how that will be required to move inventions from laboratory to market;
- Helping local enterprises become more innovative;
- Improving the governance and financial sustainability of nation STEI system;
- Promoting value addition to agro, mineral and petroleum resources;
- Building new capacities in new technology (Biotech, Nanotech, Advanced Materials, etc.);
- STEIF/STI Capability Chain (Human Resource, Acquiring Existing Knowledge, R&D);
- Technology Transfer, Enterprise Innovation, Governance and Sustainability.

5.5.5 World Bank’s Role in Meeting Q1
- Encourage Nigeria to increase investment in STI and build a solid Science and Engineering infrastructure;
- Finance innovative Capacity building activities and complementary investments to build a synergistically critical mass of scientist and engineers with focus on innovation and entrepreneurship;
- Convening meetings to coordinate partnership between African countries that need to develop STI capabilities and other countries that have the expertise as global partners;
- Support regional institutions (AUST et al) to develop world class facilities so that they can serve as a platform or hub to link up other national institutions engaged in STI.

5.5.6 Skills, Job Creation for Youth and Empowerment of Women in Business: Q2
- To build competitive workforce that is science-based so that the share of manufacturing in GDP can be increased from current 4 per cent to 20 per cent by 2015;
- To support curriculum and pedagogical reforms to focus on relevant skills (Student internships-IT, SIWE, Teaching Practice, etc.) for job market including information reasoning skills, communication and cultural skills;
- Support HEIs to incorporate and mainstream skills acquisition strategies in the curriculum of every discipline;
- Encourage gender balance in all World Bank-supported innovations and entrepreneurship programmes.

5.5.7 Inter-African Trade, Regional Solutions for Infrastructure (Energy et al) subject to Environmental Sustainability and Competitiveness: Q3
The World Bank to assist in convening regional meetings to review laws that inhibit optimal intra-African trade and IP policies and other fiscal laws to ensure seamless integration;

The Bank to forge a National Innovation System that encompassed all existing and new STI institutions so that the R&D output … should be patentable by 2015 (50,000 patent applications) and 20 per cent by 2020 (100,000 patent applications);

Commission a study for the development of a blueprint for best practices in local content development;

Development of climate change adaptation system; Invest through IFC, AfDB et al infrastructural regional facilities such as the Trans-Sahara Highway, the pipeline route, Water Mass Transfer, Power/Energy Grid Expansion, etc;

In order to ensure competitiveness, the Bank should scientifically support SMEs and promote IT-related enterprise especially for outsourcing for software development. This is one of the rational for ‘inclusive innovation’ for this sector’

5.5.8 Fostering Social Protection Mechanisms: Q4

- The World Bank to support Human Security schemes including Food Security for the POP (poorest of the poor), Inclusive Health Insurance and reasonable housing policies;
- Support reforms of the National Pension Scheme;
- Engender a culture of science, technology and innovation in society through the provision of incentives for S&T professionals especially in the education sector;
- The Bank to provide grants to National Academies and similar institutions (Science, Engineering, Social Sciences, Letters) to do research and organize for on-focused thematic developmental challenges.

5.5.9 Good Governance and Accountability: Q5

- The World Bank should continue to be seen at the vanguard of good governance through best practices by training NGOs, journalists, media outlets and civil society organizations as ‘watch dogs’;
- Encourage African Peer Review Mechanism to be deepened and impact on states and local governments;
- Encourage anti-corruption efforts and support anti-corruption agencies of government such as ICPC, EFCC and police reforms;
- Improve on BPE, BPP (Procurement) and SERVICOM performances;
- Ensure government commitment to S&T in national planning by the creation of a National Foundation for Science, Innovation and Competitiveness at the highest level of governance.

6. Interactive Session and Recommendations

6.1 A point to note emerged during the deliberation which followed presentations of country feedback. Development challenges of individual African countries are not isolated to those counties which reported on them. Challenges in one country were seen to cut across all others. Differences observed in the challenges in countries were those of degrees and variations and individual peculiarities So solutions proffered for them could not be juxtaposed outright. With some adaptation, they could fit into individual country needs.
6.2 Of all the thematic issues which were deliberated, participants dwelt most on agriculture and education. Both subjects generated heated debate and captured and sustained the interest of all countries throughout consultation. However, while all countries returned repeatedly to the issue of agriculture, education and the culture it creates appeared to be the chief concern of participants from Nigeria. A second point to note was that youth profile which the Sierra Leone country feedback made fitted very closely into the Consultation Note dated June 2010 which was one of several background materials provided by the World Bank for June 7, 2010 Abuja consultation:

6.3 “Africa is a young region. The continent’s youth – those between 15 and 24 – comprise around 200 million people (more than 20 per cent of the population) and is expected to double by 2045. In the medium and long term, the number of young Africans positions the continent as a strategic market for the future. In the short run, it further increases the urgency of job creation. Each year and estimated 7-10 African youth enter the labour force, often directly from school. The majority lives in rural areas and is mostly employed in agriculture, for which they account for 65 per cent of total employment. Youth employment and underemployment on the continent is steadily worsening, particularly in the wake of the current global economic recession.”

6.4 Another key issue which emerged in regard to agriculture, as also covered in the Consultation Note, was the need to ensure that policy formulation and practice integrated women and youths as main drivers into programmes in the sector. There was the need to ensure that conception for the sector covered policy design and incentives in the entire value chain of food security, production, storage, processing, extension services, research, marketing, export, etc. Additionally, the World Bank should also help in providing useful prototypes.

6.5 The session generated other recommendations including:

- Investment in rural infrastructure critical to supporting women and Youths to embrace agriculture. Women should be targeted as agents of change.
- The Bank should assist in scaling up things already done, through civil society intervention. Agriculture should also be transformed to make it more attractive as a course of study;
- Manufacturing is key to wealth and employment creation. The World Bank should assist to catalyst manufacturing through science, technology and innovation. This can be achieved in collaboration with national governments;
- The World Bank should be more innovative in its support to Africa. It support private sector-led value chain/production processes. Encourage partnership between the public and private sectors;
- More emphasis should be placed on malaria control and treatment in the region. This can be done by promoting free testing and treatment for malaria;
- A proportion of the STEP-B funding should be channeled towards supporting research and development in private educational institutions also. Need to support need-based technologies;
• Capacity building and education should form a basis for looking at other sectoral issues. Curriculum development should be more creative; e.g. entrepreneurial teaching should be encouraged in schools. There should be appropriate mechanism for monitoring curriculum implementation.
• Need to target education of people living with HIV/AIDS;
• The World Bank should more consistent in its policies for education. Investment in education should involve management of the institutions;
• Need to improve on data collection and storage from researchers, while institutions involved in research should be strengthened;
• In PPP, the World Bank should broaden its engagement and build the right capacities;
• The World Bank should focus on checking funds leakages at the implementation stage of its intervention. The bank should engage CSOs (Civil Society Organisations);
• There should be a linkage between the traditional learning systems and the orthodox. Also engage with state Parliamentarians/governments in a grassroots policies/interventions;
• Regional bodies such as ECOWAS, etc should be encouraged to learn from exposures/expertise of the bank;
• For future engagement, the bank should endeavour to bring together the Anglophone and Francophone countries together, to promote regional integration;
• Finally, the Bank should actively engage the media as partner in its intervention programmes.

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