



Side Event Draft Concept Note

Title: “TRANSFORMING THE CLIMATE FOR BUSINESS TO ACCELERATE PRIVATE SECTOR-LED GROWTH AND PROGRESS TOWARDS THE MDGs”

Sponsor/Co-Sponsor: UN Office for Partnerships, The LTB Foundation, Business Action for Africa, and Permanent Mission of the Netherlands to the UN in cooperation with the Commonwealth Business Council, The Corporate Council on Africa, Africa Investor, and the Public-Private Alliance Foundation.

Date: 22 September 2008

Time: 1:15-2:45pm

Venue: Delegates Dining Room

Potential Moderator/Chair, Panelists/Resource persons (initial ideas):

Welcoming Remarks

Amir A. Dossal, Executive Director, UN Office for Partnerships

Louise T. Blouin MacBain, Founder and Chairman, Louise T. Blouin Foundation

Jeffrey L. Sturchio, Chair, Business Action for Africa

Chair

Albert Gerard Koenders, Minister for Development Cooperation of the Netherlands

Speakers (invited)

Omari Issa, Chief Executive Officer, Investment Climate Facility

Muhtar Kent, President and CEO, The Coca-Cola Company

Richard Meddings, Group Finance Director, Standard Chartered Bank

Reuel Khoza, Chairman, NEPAD Business Foundation

Amos Namanga Ngongi, President, Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa

[**Focal Point:** William Kennedy, kennedyw@un.org, 212963-6438 or Sheba Crocker, sheba.crocker@gatesfoundation.org]

Context

A favourable investment climate is vital for economic development. The extent to which a given country provides an enabling business environment strongly influences the decisions of domestic and international investors. Business environments are shaped by government policies, laws and regulations, and the way in which they are implemented. African policy-makers recognize that obstacles to both domestic and international investment are seriously impeding Africa's development.

According to the Investment Climate Facility, if Africa is to reach the core MDG of reducing the number of people living on less than US\$1 a day by half by 2015, it must achieve a sustained economic growth rate of at least 7 per cent per annum.

Session objectives / desired outcomes

This event will serve as an opportunity for heads of African governments and business leaders to explore and discuss how the business and investment climate can be improved through effective public-private cooperation frameworks.

More specifically, the session will aim to:

- Create a better understanding of the challenges and consequences of weak investment climates for business and governments
- Discuss how business and governments can work together to harness each others core strengths to improve the investment climate, by:
 - Finding ways of opening and maintaining effective lines of dialogue
 - Sharing examples of best practice in governance
 - Examining how the private sector can assist governments with capacity building and skills development to improve the prospects for businesses at all levels to invest, grow and create jobs

Main issues and challenges to address

This event will highlight good practices and experiences in Africa of policy and regulatory frameworks that promote economic growth and contribute to poverty reduction by encouraging entrepreneurship, enterprise development, investment and trade. Issues to discuss include:

- Encouraging transparency and good governance standards
- Building capacity for well functioning institutions of governance
- Streamlining regulatory and legal processes to enable businesses – both large and small – to grow.

Provisional questions to guide speaker remarks

- What are the most common bottlenecks and barriers to improving the investment climate and how can we overcome them?
- How can business most effectively assist governments in improving the investment climate?
- How can durable dialogue frameworks be established between business and governments?
- What can we learn from existing investment climate initiatives?
- What are the constraints and opportunities in promoting a robust SME sector?

Outcome

- An outcome of the meeting will be a white paper on improving the business and investment climate in Africa – summarising the key points of the discussion, which could subsequently be shared with session participants and delegations to the High Level Meeting on Africa's Development Needs.

Host Organizations

United Nations Office for Partnerships

Business Action for Africa

LTB Foundation

Permanent Mission of the Netherlands to the United Nations

Supporting Organizations

Africa Investor

Commonwealth Business Council

Corporate Council on Africa

Public-Private Alliance Foundation

15 August 2008