

2017 Global Infrastructure Forum
Delivering Inclusive and Sustainable Infrastructure

Plenary Panel led by UN-DESA
Challenges of Infrastructure Investments and the Role of MDBs

Closing remarks by
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Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, I am privileged to offer some brief closing remarks to this informative panel.

The Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development recognized that investing in sustainable and resilient infrastructure is a prerequisite for realizing many of our goals. If we are to achieve sustainable development, leaving no one behind, we must address, as a matter of urgent priority, the large infrastructure financing gap of some 1.5 trillion dollars in developing countries, including countries in special situations.

To this end, the international community established this Global Infrastructure Forum. As we can see today, the Forum, in its second year, has already led to an unprecedented collaboration between the multilateral development banks, national development financing institutions and the United Nations system.

But the Addis Agenda calls for concrete action. Developing countries have high expectations from this Forum as their domestic options to finance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are very tight.

Therefore, listening to the voices of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), the Land Locked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), as well as civil society and the business sector, is extremely important.

A full set of outcomes of this panel, and of the Forum overall, will be reported to the UN Economic and Social Council Forum on Financing for Development Follow-up in May in New York. However, we can already draw some first conclusions here and now.

This panel discussion provided very valuable lessons about the specific nature of infrastructure needs and capacity gaps of developing countries in special situations. These relate to the climate resilient investments in SIDS, development of transport links in LLDCs to allow for more trade and the challenges LDCs face to attract private investment and engage local contractors for sustainable development projects. We have also heard from civil society about the human rights concerns on behalf of indigenous populations regarding some infrastructure investments.

We must convert these important lessons into concrete actions, in order to achieve progress on the ground. Practical policy solutions brought forward by our Panel include a range of options for strengthening capacity development and finding the right opportunities for blending finance, based on country-led infrastructure plans.

Our key message is strong and clear. Only if we bring all stakeholders together can we address the urgent infrastructure financing needs of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, in the interest of sustainable development for all.

Thank you.