Statement by
Ms. Maria Kiwanuka
Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
Uganda

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The global economy continues to recover at a stable, but weaker rate. Aggregate output, which grew by 2.3 percent in 2012, is expected to post a marginal slowdown in 2013 to 2.2 percent. On the other hand, the performance of developing countries will remain positive, largely on account of growing domestic demand.

As for Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), economic growth has been increasing and is projected to further increase by 4.9 percent in 2013 and in the next two years by 5.2 percent and 5.4 percent, respectively. This growth momentum is largely attributed to improved macroeconomic policies and management and heightened political commitment to poverty reduction and development. In addition, we have continued to scale up public expenditure on infrastructure and are increasingly attracting more Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). This internally-driven progress has put our region’s economy on a stable growth path. Notwithstanding this outlook on growth, poverty levels in the region remain widespread and high. Furthermore, infrastructure deficit has remained a major drag on our development efforts. The region also lags behind in meeting the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of halving poverty by 2015, with rural areas bearing a disproportionate burden of the problem. Climate change and adaptation, particularly as they relate to the issues of soil erosion, access to safe water and ground cover pose daunting challenges to our countries. Other challenges faced by our countries include capacity limitations in project preparation and implementation, leading to cost overruns and completion delays. Furthermore, there is inadequate capacity to undertake the necessary associated socio-economic cost-benefit analysis of proposed solutions. This incapacity exists at both the country and regional levels.

Against this background, attaining the two goals of ending extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity is an urgent imperative. In this regard, our Constituency statement focuses on the agenda for this year’s Development Committee Meeting, in particular the changes we would like the WBG strategy to address.

1. World Bank Group Corporate Strategy and the Change Process

We welcome the World Bank Group (WBG) Corporate Strategy and support its overarching objective of delivering programs with the greatest development impact. We are encouraged that the Strategy calls for the WBG to operate as One entity with enhanced capacity. We also welcome the Strategy’s emphasis on transforming the WBG into a ‘Solutions’ Bank, emphasizing a development solutions culture embedded in widely disseminated knowledge of what works and how to deliver it.
We appreciate that the Strategy rightly recognizes the relevance of Africa to achieving its twin goals, as the continent lags far behind in meeting the MDG of reducing extreme poverty and hunger by half, despite the recent encouraging economic performance. We reaffirm our commitment to make our best efforts to use available resources to improve this performance in ways that would positively impact the lives of the poor in our countries. In this regard, we call on the WBG to strengthen its engagement with us and maintain a strategic focus on Africa and other areas that are hard hit by poverty.

In the implementation of the Strategy, we urge the WBG to embrace the demand-driven approach in its true sense and ensure that: (i) programs identified to assist countries are country-owned and country-driven; (ii) when engaging with clients during the Systematic Country Diagnostic (SCD) and the Country Partnership Framework (CPF) processes, staff attune themselves to be better listeners than advocates of what they consider best for the concerned countries so that solutions identified in this process match with countries’ priorities and development objectives; (iii) diversity in staffing increasingly reflects the diversity of its shareholders; (iv) the long-standing call of the African Middle Income Countries (MICs) for the WBG to develop instruments suitable to their needs be addressed appropriately; and (v) focus is placed on large-scale transformative initiatives both at the country and regional levels. In this context, we welcome the development of a Global Infrastructure Fund (GIF), which we hope will help in addressing the pressing infrastructure gap in Africa.

Our countries are making progress towards meeting several of the MDGs, notably the goals on universal primary education, gender equality and empowering women, combating HIV/AIDS, TB, malaria and other diseases, and global partnership for development. Therefore, we believe it would be in order to use the WBG Strategy to support our countries in meeting the goals where they are lagging far behind.

We welcome the WBG’s ongoing Change Process, which supports its Modernization Agenda towards making the WBG a more effective and results-oriented institution. We commend the efforts of the WBG’s Senior Management and the Working Groups on the various change initiatives. We agree that these initiatives have the potential to enhance the WBG’s effectiveness in achieving the goals and realizing its vision over time. However, this potential can only be realized if it is supported by the effective leveraging of human and financial resources, partnership and efficient use of knowledge and expertise. More importantly, the efficacy of the change process will be judged by its ultimate results. In this vein, we expect the Change Process to reduce and streamline the lengthy WBG internal processes and procedures, including the undue delays related to the ‘no-objection’ requests, that for long contributed to the high cost of our doing business with the Bank. Likewise, we call for the reforms taking place at the top to cascade to points of contact with clients for appropriate and effective engagement.

2. IDA 17 Replenishment and Financing for Development

Our countries continue to show commitment to reforms that support enhanced mobilization of domestic resources to finance, among other things, infrastructure and human resource capacity gaps. We recognize that these resources cannot be substitutes for Official Development Assistance (ODA). We remain concerned that ODA, which many poor countries still heavily rely on, has taken a declining path in recent years. We therefore call for a strong support to IDA17 Replenishment. We see IDA as the key instrument for the WBG to meet the twin goals of ending extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity.

A strong IDA 17 Replenishment is, therefore, essential for the WBG Strategy to deliver on the stated goals. In this context, we encourage the WBG to forge strong partnerships with both the public and private sectors. This also calls, among other things, for optimizing the synergies among the four WBG entities.
Relatedly, we are encouraged by the progress made in delivering interim country assistance strategies for Somalia, Sudan, and Zimbabwe. In this regard, we reiterate our call for the timely support of development partners to help these countries to benefit from the debt relief initiatives. In the same vein, we welcome the Strategy’s focus on the Fragile and Conflict-Affected Countries (FCS), several of which are in our Constituency, and call for innovative instruments and scaled up support to address the challenges faced by these countries.


We acknowledge the achievements on the key targets on the Gender Equality Agenda, laid out for FY 2013. In particular, we welcome the progress made in mainstreaming gender in all the country assistance strategies and the increased gender-informed operations, especially in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States (FCS). We are cognizant of the challenges ahead, including the unrealized MDGs and other emerging challenges such as those associated with climate change and fragile situations. We, therefore, support the WBG gender specific commitments and proposals in IDA 17.

Relatedly, we welcome the Africa Region Gender Action Plan FY2013/17, with which the Bank seeks to advance development for both men and women in Africa through operations grounded in robust evidence and informed country dialogue. In this connection, we call for coordinated efforts of our development partners, including the WBG, to alleviate the plight of women and girls particularly in fragile and conflict-affected states. Our Governments remain committed to achieving gender equality, especially since women and girls make up the majority of the poor, and they continue to face numerous challenges including access to health services, education and finance.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, we support the WBG Strategy, especially its focus on eradicating extreme poverty and promoting shared prosperity. The Strategy is pertinent to our countries, which are a long way towards achieving these goals. In this view, we reaffirm our commitment to making our best efforts to deal with these development challenges. We call upon our development partners to honor their ODA commitments and support a strong IDA17 Replenishment, which is critical for the success of the Strategy. We also call for adherence to the Paris Principles on Aid Effectiveness, which are anchored on predictability and reliability of development assistance and its alignment with national development priorities, to ensure long-term positive impact. Similarly, we call for the Bank to be a better listener to its clients and truly embrace the principle of demand-driven development programs in the implementation of the Strategy. Furthermore, we urge the WBG to ‘walk the talk’ and encourage staff not to offer conflicting and fragmented advice to countries.