

Preface

DONALD KABERUKA, President, African Development Bank Group

CHRISTIAN FRIIS BACH, Danish Minister for Development Cooperation

KLAUS SCHWAB, Executive Chairman, World Economic Forum

JIM YONG KIM, President, World Bank Group

The Africa Competitiveness Report 2013, the fourth report jointly published by our organizations, comes out at a time when international interest in Africa is surging and the continent is seen both as an investment destination of choice and as a region marked by greater prosperity and development.

Talk of an “African economic renaissance” continues to grow: the continent has experienced an average growth rate of more than 5 percent over the past decade, when much of the developed world still struggles to recover from crisis. However, Africa will need to translate this impressive economic growth into rapidly improving living standards for all Africans, as has happened in other regions with a similar growth performance. This is imperative if the continent is to take advantage of its historic opportunity to end poverty and embrace shared prosperity. Decisions and actions today will have a strong bearing on whether Africa places itself on an inclusive and sustainable growth path.

On a biennial basis, *The Africa Competitiveness Report* highlights areas requiring policy action and investment to ensure Africa lays the foundation for inclusive and sustained growth. The *Report* leverages the knowledge and expertise of the African Development Bank, the World Bank Group, and the World Economic Forum to present a policy vision that can help Africa connect its markets and communities through increased regional integration.

Through a comprehensive analysis of Africa’s most pressing competitiveness challenges, the *Report* discusses the barriers to increased trade, including the state of Africa’s infrastructure and its legal and regulatory environment. It similarly considers how innovative public-private partnerships, often anchored to potential growth poles, can serve as incubators for self-sustaining industrialization, more jobs, greater opportunities, and more dynamic regional integration. The *Report* also delivers detailed competitiveness profiles for 38 African countries, providing a comprehensive summary of the drivers of productivity and competitiveness within the continent.

We hope that this year’s *Report* will stimulate enthusiastic discussion among government, business, and community leaders about what we can all do together to better connect Africa’s markets, to advance

regional integration within the continent, and to ensure that the benefits of growth are equitably shared. For regional integration, a vibrant private sector—as the producer of tradable goods and services—will play a key role. Businesses can advocate for reforms that enhance competitiveness at the national level and lend their support to initiatives that facilitate trade beyond national borders. Governments can lay the foundations for the sound business climate required for firms to prosper, and can provide the legal and regulatory frameworks required for regional integration.

Africa is at an auspicious moment in history, when the successes of past decades and an increasingly favorable economic outlook combine to give the continent an unprecedented opportunity to boost investments and spur regional integration to end poverty within a generation.