DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
(Joint Ministerial Committee of the Boards of Governors of the Bank and the Fund on the Transfer of Real Resources to Developing Countries)

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Statement by

Ms. Nialé Kaba
Minister of Economy, Planning and Development
World Bank Group Governor

for Côte d’Ivoire
President of the Africa Group II Constituency

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109th Meeting of the Development Committee

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On behalf of the 23 countries of the Africa Group II Constituency, I would like to thank the Management of the World Bank Group for the concise report, providing information on the progress made, in collaboration with the Board of Directors, in implementing the reform package adopted by the Governors at their Annual Meetings in October 2023 in Marrakech. While it is true that significant strides have been made since that date, we must remain focused on the effective implementation of the reforms. Therefore, as we welcome the tangible progress made, I would like to draw attention to some of the most important issues for our Group.

First, we appreciate the emphasis placed on IDA as a strategic priority, particularly in the context of the IDA21 replenishment. Indeed, the United Nations believes that IDA countries are not on track to achieve the SDGs, owing mainly to fiscal constraints, low growth and high debt levels. As an international community, it is imperative that we work together to achieve an ambitious IDA21 replenishment that is commensurate with the challenges that countries face.

In this regard, we welcome the Bank’s mobilization efforts in this area, including the President’s participation in the mid-term review held in Zanzibar. Our collective efforts have already helped meet the financing needs of IDA20, guaranteeing US$30 billion per year through the end of the 2025 fiscal year.

I take this opportunity to invite you to participate actively in the Summit scheduled for April 28-29, 2024, in Nairobi, to collectively continue the advocacy for IDA21.

The second point of note relates to energy, and here, let me say that we welcome the goal of providing access to electricity to 200 million people in Africa, as part of the Global Public Goods agenda. This is a step in the right direction. However, we urge the World Bank Group to develop a comprehensive energy strategy for Africa, accompanied by a “five-year action plan” similar to the Bank’s “Climate Change Action Plan,” in accordance with the Memorandum submitted to the President of the Bank by the African Governors.

This strategy would entail using the World Bank Group’s global convening power to create a platform for other players, such as the multilateral development banks (MDBs) and the private sector, to make their contribution, so that Africa can definitively resolve its energy deficit.

Access to sufficient and affordable energy remains a prerequisite for the transformation and growth of African economies. The fact that there are still more than 600 million Africans without electricity, in a
world of artificial intelligence, should, indeed, challenge our collective conscience. We must use our best efforts to leverage energy for the benefit of Africa.

Turning to scorecard indicators, which are the subject of our third point, we note that these have been streamlined into 22 areas, all of which target tangible results, while also integrating cross-cutting issues, such as inclusion of women and youth and better living conditions in countries facing violence, fragility and conflict (FCV). Of particular note are the grim statistics from the Bank, indicating that by 2025, more than 50 percent of people living in extreme poverty will be in FCV countries.

While we welcome the Bank’s commitment to stand by these countries to ensure that tangible results are generated on the ground, we reiterate our position that the continued and sustained engagement of the Bank is absolutely imperative. This is driven by the Bank’s mandate and FCV strategy. Indeed, in regions such as the Sahel, the Great Lakes, the Horn of Africa, and Sudan, we are facing complex challenges, such as unspeakable violence, forced displacement, and illegal migration. By prioritizing FCV situations, the Bank is naturally aligned with its vision and mission. In this regard, we look forward to the implementation of the enhanced crisis response mechanisms for the first 50 IBRD and IDA countries, including the implementation of the Crisis Preparedness and Response Toolkit.

Fourth, in the area of climate action, we note the Bank’s increased ambition to allocate 45 percent of its annual financing to climate-related projects by FY25, splitting the financing equally between adaptation and mitigation. Adaptation and resilience must be the top priority. In this regard, we call for concessional financing to help Small States and Small Island Developing States tackle climate change and address vulnerability to natural disasters.

In this vein, we must accord importance and priority to providing access to resources in the context of the ongoing operationalization of the Loss and Damage Fund, drawing lessons from existing mechanisms such as the Green Climate Fund. The key challenge is to provide the necessary support to countries facing existential threats.

With regard to domestic resource mobilization, efforts should be stepped up to help countries, at their request, to restructure their private sector, as well as mobilize resources and private and hybrid capital to achieve sustainable development; to this end, improving the Public Finance Review would be a key first step. We therefore urge the Bank to work toward an effective global strategy to combat illicit financial flows. This topic should also be systematically addressed in public finance reviews, particularly in Africa where losses from illicit flows are estimated at approximately US$88.6 billion per year by UNCTAD.

With respect to the Knowledge Compact, we believe that the relevant Global South institutions, especially in Africa, should be fully involved in this initiative, including through the Academy project, as we seek to foster policy making based on reliable data and lessons learned. We also hold the view that the Compact should strengthen the link between knowledge and operations, given that projects both generate and consume knowledge. Moreover, the work of the Independent Evaluation Group should leverage digital technologies, including artificial intelligence.

We welcome the focus on impact and replicability in the new playbook with a view to effective implementation of country-defined policies and priorities. In keeping with the One World Bank Group approach, the new model is expected to improve coordination, synergies, coherence and complementarity among World Bank Group institutions, including through reforms to the country engagement model. In this regard, we look forward to the results of the pilot phase of joint World Bank Group country representation in 20 country offices. By the same token, we look forward to the impact of enhanced country-level documents, namely Country Partnership Frameworks, which should take into account
financial resources, knowledge and policy advice in order to yield better results, as well as Country Climate and Development Reports and Systematic Country Diagnostics.

Furthermore, we support the renewed commitment to partnerships with stakeholders, including MDBs, the United Nations, regional organizations and civil society.

To carry out this reform, we encourage the World Bank Group to implement incentives to attract and retain a high-performing, motivated, and committed workforce, in particular through the introduction of a career development plan.

In closing, it is our view that this highly ambitious reform requires the mobilization of adequate resources, in accordance with the objectives of the World Bank Group Evolution. We therefore call for consultations on the review of the Bank’s capital resources. Indeed, despite tremendous efforts, additional resources are required to eradicate extreme poverty and address the intertwined global challenges. This is consistent with our shared goal of a better, bigger and more effective Bank to deliver on development priorities.