Ida Mc Donnell, Head of Development Research Unit, Development Co-operation Directorate, OECD

- Closing remarks

Rather than summarise our discussions, let me highlight three conclusions that I think should shape our work – and partnerships - going forward.

First, our analytical frameworks need to catch up with reality and uncertainty. Trade, debt, investment, fiscal policy, climate and development finance are increasingly interconnected, yet we too often analyse them separately. The complexity of today's policy challenges requires more integrated analysis that reflects the choices policymakers actually face.

Second, evidence matters most when it is shared, challenged and translated into better decisions. No institution has all the answers. Better policy comes from comparing evidence across countries, testing assumptions and learning from different experiences.

Third, there is no shortage of ideas, research and evidence across the African continent. It is shaping global policy discussions. I see it at the OECD and in the G20. However, there is scope for it to be more visible and present in international policy. A recurring question I get from OECD member states when we start new research on international development policy: we are systematically asked to show how it will be useful for policy makers in African countries. It is through partnership and network with African research institutions and policy makers that we can make it useful.

The discussions over the past three days have also pointed us towards a practical agenda for continued collaboration.

The first is the political economy of reform. We heard repeatedly that good economics is often not enough. The evidence increasingly shows that implementation, sequencing, communication, institutional capacity and public trust determine whether reforms succeed and endure. As economists, we need to spend as much time understanding *how* reforms happen as *why* they make economic sense. This is how we can build and accelerate reform potential.

The second is financing productive investment. We identified important opportunities to strengthen the evidence on Africa's cost of capital, distinguish more clearly between risk and the pricing of risk, improve transparency of financing terms, and better understand the productivity of debt and public investment. Better data can help improve both policy and markets. Regional integration can build economies of scale.

The third is building a stronger evidence base on industrial policy and economic transformation. The question is no longer whether governments have a role, but under what conditions policy interventions raise productivity, strengthen resilience and

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improve people's lives. That requires rigorous evaluation, comparative evidence and a clear understanding of what works in different country contexts.

These are exactly the kinds of questions the Global Chief Economists Network was created to address.

The Network should be a platform for testing assumptions, sharing evidence, challenging each other's thinking and helping each other to help policymakers make better decisions. That is why the OECD is committed to deepening our partnership with the African Development Bank and economists across Africa - not only through meetings, but through collaboration and joint analytical work focused on solutions. The newly launched African Chief Economist Network offer an exciting new platform for collaboration among peers and grounding research in reality.

As the OECD Secretary-General reminded us yesterday, we already have many of the tools we need. The challenge is to implement them, to finance them, and to work together for greater impact.

That, perhaps, is the clearest message from these two days. Better evidence alone is not enough. It must be matched by stronger partnerships, practical implementation and sustained collaboration.

Thank you to the African Development Bank and to the UNDP, to all our partners in the Chief Economist Networks and to everyone who contributed so openly and generously to the discussions here in the great city of Abidjan.

And a special word of thanks to the teams at the AfDB and the UNDP for your generosity, hard work, and the warm collaboration.

We look forward to continuing this work together.

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