



6th INTERNATIONAL AFRICA DEVELOPMENT FORUM

PRESS RELEASE

THE 6th EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL AFRICA DEVELOPMENT FORUM WAS A GREAT SUCCESS

Casablanca 15 March 2019 - Placed under the High Patronage of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God assist Him, the 6th edition of the International Africa Development Forum (FIAD) under the theme "When East meets West" was, like previous editions, a great success.

A key event for economic and commercial trade meetings in the African continent, the International Africa Development Forum has once again delivered on its promises by bringing together economic operators and policy-makers to address issues related to development in Africa.

More than 2,000 operators from 34 African countries gathered in Casablanca to hold more than 5,000 business meetings on the sidelines of the plenary sessions. Among the sectors that have received the most demand for partnerships, we can mention the agri-food, construction, trade, distribution, energy and the transport and logistics sectors.

The presentation of the recommendations resulting from the work of the two plenary sessions and the various panels was one of the highlights of this closing ceremony. Indeed, during the first plenary session, only one guiding principle emerged: East and West must converge their efforts to jointly develop infrastructure on the African continent, in particular connectivity infrastructure, which is an essential lever for integration, as well as to put in place appropriate policies for the movement of people. The need to develop the digital "Soft infrastructure" that can also effectively contribute to accelerating the integration of SMEs was also underlined.

For its part, the "Stand Up for African Women Entrepreneurs" panel highlighted the innovative initiatives and financing mechanisms currently being implemented to support women entrepreneurs, as well as the need to accelerate the roll-out and communication on these drivers to foster women's entrepreneurship. Thus, the agreement signed between the Attijariwafa bank group and the African Development Bank and the Women's Employers' Associations is fully in line with this approach, and demonstrates the Group's commitment to offer affiliated and client women entrepreneurs the best possible advisory, support and financing solutions.

Finally, the panel on the use of digital technology as a lever for growth in Africa and the contribution of young African startupper also resulted in a rich set of recommendations in two dimensions: increased support from public authorities to create regional champions and better synergy with the private sector through an inclusive approach.



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The second plenary session provided an opportunity for economic operators to participate in a plenary session on the theme “Positive Impact, guarantor of inclusive and responsible growth”. In his opening speech, Mr. Hassan OURIAGLI, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Al Mada, recalled the purpose of the various constituents of the AL MADA Fund and their respective roles in sustainable development both in Morocco and in the countries where they operate. He has also endeavored to make Al Mada’s vision tangible for both Africa and Africans. Mr. Hassan OURIAGLI asserted that Positive Impact has now become “a real trademark”.

As in previous editions of the Forum, all these recommendations will be consolidated in the 6th White Paper of the Forum, aimed at public and government policy-makers.

In addition, in the margins of the Forum, a cooperation agreement was signed between the Attijariwafa bank group and Kenya Commercial Bank, Kenya’s largest bank. It will help the group to offer its economic operators, in all the countries where it is present, access to the Kenyan market as well as to all the markets covered by KCB in East Africa. Furthermore, a Memorandum of Understanding was also signed between Attijariwafa bank and the Ministry of Trade and Industry of Sierra Leone for the promotion of investment and the establishment of businesses in the countries where the group is present and in Sierra Leone. Similarly, an agreement was signed with the Regional Investment Agency of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa. It concerns the joint development of investment opportunities in the Agency’s member states (COMESA).

During the “Young Entrepreneurs Awards” Mr. Hassan OURIAGLI, who chaired the jury, underscored in particular the commitment of the Al Mada Foundation, through the creation, in 2017, of the Injaz Al-Maghrif Association, recognized as a public interest organization. Indeed, the mission of the aforementioned association is to raise awareness and introduce the youth to entrepreneurship. Mr. Hassan OURIAGLI reiterated the Foundation’s commitment towards the youth, to guide them, coach them and provide financing.

This year, the first prize was awarded to Oussama Abbou, CEO of “Smart prospective”. The second prize was awarded to Yassine Es-said, founder and CEO of “Smart on IOT”. And the third prize was won by Gael Egbidi, co-founder and CEO of Bassite Customer Relationship. The Jury also gave out a “Special Award” to Tunisian Ayoub Rahoui, founder of Health Services for his use of artificial intelligence to help people with Alzheimer’s disease.

This 6th edition renewed its annual tradition of rewarding the most deserving companies through the “South South Cooperation Award”. This year, the first prize, the “Platinum” award, was won by Egyptian company EL SEWEDY ELECTRIC. The second prize, the, “Gold” award went to EBOMAF, a company from Burkina Faso. Finally, the third prize, the “Silver” award, was won by Mauritanian company INFOLOG.



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At the end of this ceremony, Mr. Salaheddine MEZOUAR, President of the General Confederation of Moroccan Enterprises (CGEM) and Co-chair of the Jury of the “South South Cooperation Award” commended the Attijariwafa bank group for its initiative and invited other countries to emulate it in order to encourage other companies to transcend boundaries and build on cooperation ties.

Another highlight of this edition was the presentation of an honorary award to the President of Sierra Leone, His Excellency Julius Maada Bio, in recognition of his leadership, commitment and support of South South cooperation.

In his closing remarks, Mr. Mohamed EL KETTANI, after having thanked all the participants and panelists for their mobilization and for sharing concrete testimonials, called upon economic operators to “encourage their partners, clients and suppliers to further increase their commitment to South South integration.” He added that “The Africa Development Club, which already boasts 3,000 members, is at your disposal to extend the dialogue beyond the Forum, to further strengthen our business relations, and to collectively seize new growth opportunities”.

Mr. Mohamed EL KETTANI ended his address by reiterating the commitment of the Attijariwafa bank group, backed by the support of its reference shareholder, Al Mada, the private Pan-African investment fund, to the development of the continent and its firm commitment to increase its efforts to facilitate access to the banking system, support VSEs, SMEs and large corporations in fulfilling their projects.

The International Africa Development Forum ended with the participants’ unanimous commitment to further increase and consolidate intra-African trade and to strive towards greater inclusion of the continent’s populations.

Press contact – Attijariwafa bank

Ms. Ouafaa GHAOUAT

Head of Media Relations

Phone : 00212 522 54 53 57

Mobile : 00212 647 47 32 90

Email : O.Ghaouat@attijariwafa.com