

## Infrastructure Africa to address the role of women in overcoming Africa's infrastructure deficit

To maintain the recent economic growth rates in Africa, it is necessary to address inequality, and in particular inequality associated with gender. Research indicates that overcoming gender inequality and gender-related legal restrictions would increase annual GDP growth in sub-Saharan Africa by 0.75 percent.

Research also shows that addressing the infrastructure gap remains critical to facilitate sustainable economic growth across Africa. The OECD, for instance, highlights that infrastructure investment contributes as much as 2% to the GDP, with particularly positive effects in East and Central Africa. In absolute terms this means that for every dollar spent on public infrastructure development the GDP of a country rises up to USD\$ 0.25.

“By investing in Infrastructure, African countries can boost economic growth and provide their citizens with essential services,” says Geraldine J. Fraser-Moleketi, Special Envoy on Gender at the African Development Bank (AfDB). “However, from experience, intrinsic gender inequalities mean that women and men often don’t benefit equally from infrastructure investment. Women and girl children from African households face disproportionate challenges in access to infrastructure and participation in economic activities,” explains Fraser-Moleketi.

Global data shows that women and men travel by different modes of transport, at different times and for different purposes. Poor access to transport for women has major implications on development, adversely affecting their education, health and economic activities. Understanding the specific needs of women is crucial to addressing their demand for transport and ensuring equitable access to mobility.

The **African Development Bank Group** (AfDB) identified gender equality as a core aspect of inclusive growth in its Ten Year Strategy, and in January 2014 launched its *“Gender Strategy (2014-2018): Investing in Gender Equality for Africa’s Transformation”*. In line with this strategic approach, the AfDB is sponsoring the upcoming fifth **Infrastructure Africa** Summit.

This two-day June conference and exhibition in Johannesburg, South Africa, provides African companies with the platform to focus on the continent's growth hotspots, discuss infrastructure trends, meet project developers and relevant government authorities, whilst exploring infrastructure business opportunities.

**Infrastructure Africa 2016** will also host the inaugural **Africa Inclusive Infrastructure Forum (AIIF)** from the 9 – 10 June 2016 at the Sandton Convention Centre. This stream will address the question of how to strengthen women's economic inclusivity in African Infrastructure as a strategy to boost growth and ensure its sustainability.

"Although, we have always designed projects with users in mind, it is only now that we are re-focusing our approach to understand the different needs that women have, stemming from cultural pressure, gender role norms, resources and rights. The Africa Inclusive Infrastructure Forum will help us to systematically examine how we involve women in transport projects at all levels," says Michelle Tutt, Senior Transport Engineer, AfDB.

"It's crucial to implement a gender mainstreamed approach at the project level, but also in our national strategic plans, sensitising our politicians and governments. Africa will benefit exponentially when women are no longer seen as passive beneficiaries but are integrated into every phase of infrastructure roll out including design phase, capacity building, and forming part of transport programme teams as contractors, engineers and decision-makers."

## PRESS RELEASE ENDS

### About the 2016 Infrastructure Africa Business Forum

The Infrastructure Africa Business Forum offers attendees the exclusive formal **Business Matchmaking Programme** to allow for crucial business networking. This programme affords all exhibitors and conference delegates the opportunity to meet and engage with this year's high-level speakers, exhibitors, sponsors and delegates on a one-on-one private meeting basis, at the event. It is uniquely designed to help delegates make the right contacts, fulfil their business and target market objectives and establish long-lasting and valuable contacts in the infrastructure space.



## PRESS RELEASE

Key sectors to be featured at the 2016 event include water, energy, ICT & Telecomms, transport and finance.

**For more information on the event, or to register your attendance, please visit**

**[www.infrastructure-africa.com](http://www.infrastructure-africa.com)**

### **About the Africa Inclusive Infrastructure Forum**

The **Africa Inclusive Infrastructure Forum** will have a key focus towards issues of gender in infrastructure development across the continent. The event will discuss financing for women-owned businesses in the energy, transport, ICT & telecomms and water sectors across Africa. Cross-border and regional trade will feature highly on the discussion agenda and ministers and industry specialists will participate and share their expertise and unpack a roadmap for the way forward.

In addition to the AIIF, the AfDB will be hosting all the **Infrastructure Ministers +1** (the Minister plus his top advisor or another senior official) and will be hosting a **Ministerial Meeting** alongside the event.

### **For media enquiries:**

To arrange media interviews or to speak to infrastructure experts, please contact:

**Liz@infrastructure-africa.com** or 011 463 9184

**Julie@siyenzaevents.co.za** or call 083 295 0526

