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Africa Progress Report calls on African leaders to turn “scramble for Africa” into real results for the continent

Panel wants action from policymakers to translate continent’s “immense resources” into concrete benefits for its people

Johannesburg - 25 May 2010: The Africa Progress Report launched today by the Africa Progress Panel (APP) states that African leaders need to boost “political determination and capacity to use what revenues they have to achieve results for people”.

Kofi Annan, Chair of the Panel and fellow Panel members Linah Mohohlo, Peter Eigen and Olusegun Obasanjo presented the Africa Progress Report on Africa Day – five years since the establishment of the Panel and 10 years since world leaders signed up to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The report takes stock of Africa’s progress since 2005 and assesses future opportunities for the continent.

“This landmark report argues that Africa’s future is in its own hands, but that success in managing its own affairs depends on supportive global policies and agreements,” Annan said. “There is no lack of resources, no deficiency of knowledge and no shortage of plans. Africa’s progress rests above all else on the mobilisation of political will, both on the continent and internationally.”

The Report, focusing on Africa’s emergence as a “new economic frontier”, notes that economic engagement with the Global South - China, the Far and Middle East, South Asia and Latin America - “is already having a substantial development impact on Africa”. However, the report asserts that “Africans beyond elite circles are not benefiting sufficiently” while at the same time “there is great scope to improve Africa’s partnerships with the Global South”. The report also notes that “African leaders... need to realize that the benefits of increasing economic ties are not automatic, but only accrue to those that take adequate and pro-active steps to exploit them through targeted policies.”

In particular, the report calls for:

- Transparency throughout the entire resource system, from how contracts are awarded and monitored, to how taxes and royalties are collected, to how investment choices are made and executed.
- Policies that ensure that the revenues from the continent’s natural wealth reach everyone. This requires major policy shifts and significant investments of resources in institutions, human capacities, women, health, education and infrastructure.

Stating that “Africa’s development and the welfare of its people depend above all upon the political commitment and capacity of its leaders”, the Panel also urges African policymakers to:

- 1) **Empower women** by enforcing existing conventions, laws and policies and link their efforts with effective implementation strategies including reliable reporting mechanisms

- 2) **Climate proof development**, not least through integrating adaptation to climate change into growth and development strategies, accelerating regional integration, harnessing the potential of information technology and anticipating demographic shifts

The Panel also identifies three priority areas for action for Africa's partners, recording that Africa's leaders "need an international environment that is fair and supportive of their efforts." The report calls for international policymakers to:

- 1) **Provide a level playing field**, addressing the fact that "the continent is starkly underrepresented in virtually all international fora" and that "bloated subsidy regimes and unfair trade rules" leave African countries "heavily disadvantaged."
- 2) **Increase policy coherence for development**, "recognising the overall impact that countries' domestic and international policy mix has on the continent and seek to minimize their negative effects."
- 3) **Fulfil promises on resources and assistance**, and "Africa's partners to recommit to the consensus on the continent's development and fulfil the many promises on financial support and assistance they have made over the last decade".

Focusing on the approximately \$100billion of financial assistance in annual expenditure from Africa's partners required to achieve the Millennium Development Goals in the presence of anticipated climate change, the report records that "much of this could actually be met if partners were to fulfil the pledges they made over the last couple of years and realize the financing ambitions outlined in the Copenhagen Accord." It notes that "the mechanisms to collect, administer, and disburse these funds are already in place."

Looking back on Africa's progress over the last five years, the report describes it as "a truly mixed picture." It states that "remarkable progress has been achieved in many fields, but... a number of set-backs, chronic problems and the effects of the global economic crisis and climate change combine to threaten the gains made since 2005."

The Africa Progress Report highlights that the central challenge for Africa's leaders is to inspire processes and build practical capacities, both nationally and regionally, to ensure that assets are translated into social benefits and that their people are able to access opportunities that can transform their lives, countries, and continent.

ABOUT THE AFRICA PROGRESS PANEL:

The Africa Progress Panel brings together a unique group of leaders under the chairmanship of Kofi Annan. The Panel monitors and promotes mutual accountability and shared responsibility for progress in Africa. Its three focus areas are economic and political governance; finance for sustainable development, including ODA; and MDG achievement – notably in light of climate change. The work of the Panel aims to track progress and draw attention to critical issues and opportunities for progress in Africa.

The Africa Progress Panel is comprised of:

- **Kofi Annan** (chair of the Africa Progress Panel, former Secretary-General of the United Nations and Nobel Laureate)
- **Tony Blair** (founder, Africa Governance Initiative and former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
- **Michel Camdessus** (former Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund)
- **Peter Eigen** (founder and Chair of the Advisory Council, Transparency International and Chairman of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative)
- **Bob Geldof** (musician, businessman, founder and Chair of Band Aid, Live Aid and Live8, Co-founder of DATA and ONE)
- **Graça Machel** (President of the Foundation for Community Development and founder of New Faces New Voices)
- **Linah Kelebogile Mohohlo** (Governor, Bank of Botswana)
- **Olusegun Obasanjo** (Envoy of the Secretary-General on the Great Lakes region and former President of Nigeria)
- **Robert Rubin** (Co-Chairman of the Board, Council on Foreign Relations and former Secretary of the United States Treasury)
- **Tidjane Thiam** (Chief Executive Officer, Prudential Plc.)
- **Muhammad Yunus** (economist, founder of Grameen Bank and Nobel Laureate)

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