

# PORTUGAL

## **EBRD Annual Meeting 2020**

### **Written statement by the Alternate Governor for Portugal,**

**Mr. José Carlos Azevedo Pereira, Director-General of the Office for Economic Policy and International Affairs (GPEARI) of the Ministry of Finance, Portugal**

Distinguished Governors,

Mr Acting President

It is with pleasure that we take the opportunity to convene at this meeting to take stock of work accomplished by the EBRD during last year, and to provide guidance on its next 5-year strategy.

First, I would like to show our appreciation to the Bank's management, and its staff, for the effort on delivering on our commonly agreed agenda during 2019, which already seems like a very distant past. These were outstanding results, that allowed us to enter the crisis in a very robust position.

Allow me also to include in this appreciation the contribution made by Sir Suma Chakrabarti, during his 8 years as President, and of course, a word of gratitude for the leadership role that you, Mr. Acting President, have been providing.

We are now in uncharted territory, as this pandemic has hit the world in unimaginable ways. The challenges ahead of us in the coming years are, without a doubt, some of the greatest we have ever faced, and will require a response like no other we have seen before. We express our gratitude for the work being done during the complex and uncertain times caused by the Covid 19 Pandemic, and call on the Bank to continue to pursue its mandate, while maintaining its status as a solid and reliable institution.

Although we appreciate, and welcome the solidarity package, and how EBRD acted swiftly, as part of the global MDB system to face this additional challenge (which comes on top of other, more persistent and long-term challenges), we hope that the Bank can adapt to these new times and provide the solutions the countries of operation need. Indeed, as nationalist movements are on the rise, democracy is at stake in many countries, and governments have limited space to respond to the sanitary, social and economic crisis brought about by the virus, EBRD must act as a promotor of inclusiveness and cooperation. Only with sustainable and inclusive growth, that brings about equality and prosperity, we will be able to fight the dark times ahead of us, and EBRD, together with the other multilateral financial institutions, is a key piece in this effort.

We are glad to support the proposed Strategic and Capital Framework for 2021-2025. We believe it is a comprehensive document that does a good job of communicating what the EBRD does, and what it will aim to do. We hope that EBRD will be able to deploy its business model, with a particular emphasis in green transition and equity, which we believe will be much needed in the years of recovery ahead of us.

EBRD's mission is essential at a time when, more and more, governments are again needed to intervene directly in the economy. How they will succeed will be a direct consequence of important lessons on economic governance, an area where the EBRD is a trusted partner.

We also appreciate that the SCF puts the EBRD even more in track for becoming, more and more, an impact driven bank, measured by tangible results achieved.

As many of you are aware, Portugal will chair the Portuguese Presidency of the UE during the first semester of 2021. Africa, as one of our top priorities in foreign policy, will have a center role in our Presidency of the EU in terms of international partnerships, in order to reinforce the relationship between the EU and Africa – a goal supported by the Commission.

We consider of paramount importance the role of investment and the private sector, and in that context, we plan to organize an Investment and Economic Forum in Lisbon, to gather European

and African leaders, government representatives, and the private sector. In this initiative we plan to discuss the future of bilateral investment between the two continents, with a particular focus on green investment and energy transition, as major priorities of the EU. We hope the pandemic will allow us to go ahead with this initiative, and I would very much like to see you there. Hopefully this Forum will also give some food for thought for the future discussions we will have on the expansion of EBRD operations to Sub-Saharan Africa.

In the Portuguese Presidency of the EU, we also expect to contribute to creating a European model of development cooperation that is more strategic and in line with European foreign policy objectives; in this sense the focus of the EBRD in green transition and digitalization are very welcome, and we hope that we can work with you on that. We also want to contribute to the discussion on graduation, and how to ensure a smooth transition process that ensures access to financial markets at affordable prices for graduate countries. We have much work ahead of us, but we are ready to rise to the challenge.

Thank you.