



Statement by Pedro Manuel Moreno, Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD

## World Investment Forum 2023: High-level round table on investment in sustainable infrastructure

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates  
20 October 2023

Excellencies,

Dear Panelists,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I welcome you to this high-level round table on investment in sustainable infrastructure – a key topic not only to help mitigate climate change, but also to adapt to it.

The problem is that today, a lot of infrastructure is still unsustainable, which often leads to waste and resource depletion. Infrastructure with high carbon emissions and resource wastage exacerbates climate change.

But sustainable infrastructure cannot be a luxury. It is a necessary condition to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

It helps preserve our environment.

Investing in energy-efficient buildings or low-emission transportation systems reduces our carbon footprint.

Energy-efficient buildings and smart water management systems save critical natural and financial resources. They offer win-win solutions for the environment and the economy.

Sustainable infrastructure helps protect people.

It can help us deal with natural disasters. Resilient buildings, flood defenses, and energy systems are a buffer for human lives and livelihoods.

It is also a driver of economic growth.

Investing in clean energy, public transportation, and resilient urban planning create jobs – and jobs that have prospects for the future. It stimulates innovation – a key driver of economic growth.

And it can enhance social well-being and our quality of life.

Efficient public transportation systems reduce commute times and air pollution. Green spaces enhance mental well-being. Access to clean water and sanitation is essential for public health.

The benefits are evident. Yet they are not automatic.

So, the challenge is: How can governments promote investment into sustainable infrastructure, especially in developing countries?

First, government commitment is a sine qua non condition.

Government policies and incentives are key, such as tax measures, subsidies, and regulatory support to encourage private and public investment in sustainable projects.

Governments can also set targets and create frameworks that require the integration of sustainability into infrastructure planning and development.

Second, we must better harness Public-Private Partnerships to raise funds and combine expertise.

Collaborations between the public and private sectors can reduce the cost of capital and bring together expertise and resources of both sectors to fund, design, and implement projects that might otherwise be financially prohibitive.

Third and key to developing countries, we must explore a broad range of financing options.

Financing mechanisms such as green bonds and impact investments can help raise funds as these financial tools attract socially responsible investors.

And infrastructure investments require a long-term view to make the investment worth it. This is challenging, even in developed markets, given the uncertainty about the future. And for developing countries, uncertainty is likely to weigh in more.

This brings me to my final point. International support for developing countries.

We must support developing countries to set up long-term plans. Such plans should include sufficient details on infrastructure and investment gaps, projected demand and revenue, regulatory approvals, technical feasibility studies, impact assessments, among others. This may sound like a lot, but it is necessary to market projects to investors and give them the confidence to commit for the long term.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Investing is seldom about the present. It is much more about the future. Investing in sustainable infrastructure is not about the present. It is a solution to build a viable future.

This session is a platform to share knowledge, build trust and pave a way to tap these opportunities.

I wish you a fruitful discussion and a successful outcome.

Thank you.



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