

NETHERLANDS

Written Statement – EBRD Annual Meeting – 1 July 2021
The Netherlands

Distinguished Governors,

Mrs. President,

On behalf of the Netherlands, I would like to start by expressing our appreciation to EBRD's management and staff for guiding the Bank's activities in a solid and successful manner throughout the COVID pandemic – in difficult working circumstances - and for providing adequate support to its countries of operations.

While we are still confronted with the ongoing impact of the pandemic, and the Bank's solidarity package is still in place, it is of vital importance for the region to make the transition to the recovery phase. Therefore, the EBRD should indeed refocus on building back better as quickly as possible, optimizing its transition impact, particularly in those fields that were lagging in the crisis phase and where it can help to actively shape the post-crisis economy. While we value all transition qualities equally, the most pressing catching up in our view is in the Green Economy Transition (GET). More in general the SDGs and the Paris Agreement should serve as cornerstones for these activities to be aligned with.

The world stands at a turning point and the looming impact of climate change is known to all of us. Many countries in the EBRD region face great challenges in terms of energy efficiency and carbon emissions. Therefore, we applaud the commitment of the Bank – as one of the first among the MDB's - to become fully aligned with the Paris Agreement by 31 December 2022. Perhaps even more so, we welcome the new climate ambition, which goes well beyond doing no harm, contributing to the acceleration of de-carbonization in our region. In our view, this is just the beginning. In this fast moving field, we trust the Bank will continue to push the envelope on a stringent interpretation of the joint MDB Paris Alignment methodology, phasing out its support for fossil fuel investments and pursuing assertive and innovative approaches to energy efficiency and renewables. Being a multilateral institution with a European backbone, the EBRD should remain firmly in the vanguard among MDBs. We strongly share the Bank's view that besides contributing to a necessary radical decrease of carbon emissions, a green transition – based on carefully designed and Bank-assisted net zero carbon pathways – provides long lasting benefits for all countries in terms of boosting new market opportunities, innovation and jobs.

During the Annual Meeting last year, the Netherlands supported the decision to postpone discussions on the potential expansion of the EBRD's geographic scope, given the challenging circumstances and uncertainties of that time. Recalling the continued strategic interest in a limited and incremental expansion to sub-Saharan Africa and Iraq, as set out in the Strategic and Capital Framework 2021-2025, we are happy with the proposed sound analysis and preparatory work. A well-sequenced, inclusive and transparent process is key for us, resulting in an honest assessment of the implications of a possible selective expansion. In our view, this is also important for a broad consensus among the EBRD's shareholders. This discussion should of course also be put in the context of the developments on the European financial architecture for development, which reaffirmed the importance of maintaining fruitful relations with our partner institutions. The Netherlands welcomed the feasibility study published in March this year and we are satisfied to see that there appears to be a wide consensus within the EU for the Status Quo Plus scenario as the way forward. We fully trust that the EBRD's valuable relationships with partner institutions, and a sound decision-making process involving all shareholders, will lead to a useful design and implementation of the 'plus'.

Given the major importance of the aforementioned topics, I would like to highlight that we as shareholders of the Bank have been able to take positive steps forward with a spirit of compromise, despite the challenging nature of some of these discussions.

To conclude, we congratulate the EBRD management and its staff with the resolutions that are presented here and we look forward to their implementation heralding the next phase of the Bank.