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BUNDESKANZLERIN
Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche
Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung

Welcoming Remarks (English)

CONNEX Negotiation Support Forum

Donnerstag, den 15. Juni 2017, 09.00 Uhr

Raum CC15, OECD Conference Centre, Paris

Es gilt das gesprochene Wort!

Dear Ambassador Duquesne!

Honorable Panelists!

Distinguished conference
participants!

- It is my great pleasure to extend a warm welcome to all of you to this fourth session of the CONNEX Negotiation Support Forum within the OECD Policy Dialogue on Natural Resource-based Development! My special thanks go to Mr. Touré for co-chairing this session today on behalf of Guinean minister!

- Since the agenda for today's session is pretty full I will limit my introduction to a few remarks:
First, I would like to thank the OECD and Lahra Liberti and her team at the OECD Development Centre for organizing and shaping the Forum, coordinating the Friends of CONNEX group as well as drafting our Forum's products. With the draft Guiding Principles for Durable Extractive Contracts the Negotiation Support Forum has achieved a remarkable product that hopefully will have impact far beyond our discussions.

I look forward to today's discussion for their finalization.

- Since our last meeting, there have been good developments in terms of strengthening CONNEX support for partner countries: As some of you might have heard, Germany launched the CONNEX Support Unit in Berlin in January 2017. The CONNEX Support Unit provides assistance to a growing number of governments of developing as well as transition countries. The core mandate of the CONNEX Support Unit concentrates on assistance for Complex Contract

Negotiations. This involves negotiating, renegotiating or implementing large-scale complex investment contracts in the extractive sector.

- The Support Unit's main function is to boost the CONNEX Initiative's efficiency by providing direct assistance for complex contract negotiations in the extractives and to generate international support among like-minded countries and private donors.
- In addition, I would like to thank all those organizations that are part of

our growing CONNEX partner network: In particular, thanks to you, Stephen Karangizi and your team from the African Legal Support Facility, for your continued cooperation and your valuable support and advice. Thanks also to you, Estherine Fotabong and your team from the NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency, for organizing another Regional Dialogue on contract negotiation and fiscal policies in the extractive industry with us! Finally, I am happy to announce that the CONNEX Support Unit will very soon conclude a

Memorandum of Understanding with the International Senior Lawyers Project for improving the cooperation among each other and better coordinating respective activities.

- With all these measures, Germany wants to build a solid ground for the CONNEX Initiative's future. You are all invited to join this endeavor! Thanks again to the OECD for organizing this Negotiation Support Forum, to all of you for coming here today and for your efforts to bring forward the

CONNEX Initiative! I wish all of us
some fruitful and enriching
discussions!