Report on Uganda CSOs Virtual Open Day – August 11, 2021

Introduction

In Uganda, the demand for Open day came as a result of the need to consult all stakeholders for the 2022-2026 Country Strategy Papers. Prior to this, the Country Office in Uganda had minimal engagements with CSOs. The Open day was setup by the Country office to have an open dialogue with CSOs to share its operations in Uganda, get feedback from CSOs on their experiences and opinion of AFDB projects carried out in Uganda, get CSOs input in the new CSP 2022-2026. These interventions were made through power point presentations, questions and answers, and comments from all participants.

An invitation was extended to CSOs through their national body, Uganda National NGO Forum. The East African Civil Society Organization Forum (EACSOF) also extended invites to CSOs whom they work with in Uganda. The Open day had in attendance, 54 representatives of different CSOs in Uganda and 11 staff of the Bank.

Issues Raised

The following issues were raised by CSOs during the Open day.

1. In the Banks guiding principles for Civil Society Engagement, there is need for practical partnership at all levels of engagement.
2. The need for creation of legal aspects to effectively safeguard the borrower, which also benefits CSOs
3. How does the AFDB ensure confidentiality when CSOs want to raise an issue especially when it is against the government. What mechanisms are set up by the Bank for CSOs or other stakeholder to make complaints or raise issues of concern.
4. The need to set up a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework on Civil Society Engagement by the Bank.
5. There is need to connect the energy component of the CSP vis a vis the new bill on energy for Africa. What is the Bank doing in terms of investing in the mini grid solutions and off grid as very little is being done with regards to energy.
6. The need for a practical partnership between CSOs and the Bank, so that there is a representation of the voice of communities in Bank's documents and policies.
7. Support of the Bank to address the issues of legitimacy and leadership deficit that exists with CSO in Uganda to enable them engage with partners like AFDB.
8. Support of the Bank to ensure a favorable relationship between the CSOs and the government on Uganda. So that the government is able to broaden the space within which CSOs work.
9. NGO sustainability: the need for the Bank to support CSOs to set up a entrepreneurial structure so that they become organizations that can raise resources and are not dependent on funds from partners .
10. The need for the Bank to support CSOs in building back post-Covid.
11. Subsidiarity principle- Using local solutions to solve local problems.

12. The Banks plan for supporting CSOs that are undertaking advocacy in infrastructural projects as there is limited funding for social accountability across the value chain of infrastructural projects.
13. Banks support in monitoring implementing agencies to prevent violation of rights that happen in projects.
14. Bank should consider mapping out a plan for healing of communities that may have experienced conflict in the past, instead of embarking on conflict resolution as the first plan.
15. AFDB should consider supporting CSOS in the health sector to carry out quality assurance on projects.
16. How does the Bank address the cross border concerns for food quality and export promotion for improved life and youth employment.
17. Support of Uganda in resolving issues on debt
18. The Banks extent of support for vaccine access in Uganda.
19. The Bank should consider including offgrid solutions as part of key areas of focus in the 2022 to 2026 Uganda CSP. The Bank should also consider financing for offgrid solutions and clean cooking solutions.

Conclusion / Next steps

The following are the next steps

1. COUG's continuous consultations and engagements with CSOs
2. Set up a tripartite committee between CSOs, Government and AFDB