AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

CONCEPT NOTE
FORUM FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS
AT THE BANK GROUP'S ANNUAL MEETINGS
JUNE 10, 2011

1. INTRODUCTION

The African Development Bank will hold a Side-Event –Forum for Civil Society Organizations- during its 2011 Annual Meetings. The Side-Event will be held on June 10 2011, in Lisbon, Portugal. About 50 CSOs will be represented at the event. Participants will meet with senior management and staff of the Bank to discuss pertinent issues and observe the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the Meeting.

The AfDB's 2008-2012 Medium Term Strategy (MTS 2008-2012) mandated enhanced collaboration between the Bank and the CSOs. The decision was based on the recognition that civil societies throughout the region have extensive experiences in their various relevant fields and can make valuable contributions to the Bank's strategic objectives. In line with its Medium Term Strategy (MTS2008-2012), and consistent with policy and guidelines for enhanced cooperation with CSOs, the Bank seeks to nurture and promote effective partnership with the CSOs. The purpose of closer cooperation and engagement with CSOs is to:

- Foster stakeholder's participation as a key strategy for achieving its over-arching objectives of poverty-reduction and shared growth, consistent with the organization's key principles of client focus, ownership and results monitoring; and
- Improve effectiveness on the ground by learning about how the Bank and its Regional Member Countries (RMCs) can better work with civil society organizations to optimize project results and sustain development impact.

A Network of national and regional CSOs regularly exchanged ideas and experiences with the Bank on issues related to the financial crisis, MDGs, building peace and security in fragile states and post-conflict countries, and democratic and financial governance, etc. Beginning the year 2000, the Bank has facilitated the **participation of CSOs in its Annual Meetings** and major international and regional African development forums. The AfDB/ CSOs Participation Forums are regularly organized parallel to the Annual Meetings. There is a clear indication of a stronger engagement as evidenced by the increased number of participation of CSOs representatives in the meetings.

The CSOs participation in the 2011 Annual Meetings also builds on the momentum created at the Civil Society Forum organized by the Bank in March 2010. The forum discussed ways in which CSOs can provide concrete inputs into the Bank's key policies and development programs. The Forum decided that there is room for further collaboration for more policy and in-country contextual analysis to enable better understanding of the social and political landscape of member countries vis-à-vis CSOs engagement. It proposed intensified engagement between the Bank and CSOs for a better perception of development challenges and bottom-up defined priorities that will inform the Bank's work going forward.

2. Objectives and Expected Outcomes

Objectives

The overall goal of the side-Event is to afford CSOs substantive inputs to the Bank's up-dated CSOs Engagement Framework and strengthen the existing mechanisms for coordination of cooperation. The specific objectives are:

- Provide opportunity for CSOs inputs on the Concept Note for Up-dating the Bank's CSOs Engagement Framework including: governing principles, engagement mechanisms, strategic

approach, institutional setting, coordination of relationships and instruments of communication and outreach;

- Discuss with Bank staff and management on cooperative working modality and enhanced cooperation of AfDB and CSOs;
- Finalize the Terms of Reference for the AfDB/CSO Committee;
- Elaborate on CSOs involvement in such areas as; the Bank's Social and Environmental Safeguard Mechanisms, Information Disclosure Policy and Compliance Review Policies and Procedures; and
- Explore further entry points and outreach and communication strategy between the Bank and African CSOs.

Expected Outcomes
Key expected outcomes of the Side-Event include:

- Final up-dated engagement framework that incorporates the input of CSOs.
- Final Terms of Reference for the AfDB/CSO Committee.
- CSOs familiarized with Bank's Social and Environmental Safeguard mechanisms, information disclosure policy and compliance review policies and procedure.
- Enhanced partnership between the Bank and African CSOs.

3. Participation and Focus Areas
The Bank is currently updating its CSOs Engagement Framework. The Side-Event will be designed to afford the African civil society community an opportunity to have inputs to the development of the up-dated engagement framework. Representatives of CSOs will make substantive contributions to enhance cooperation and interface between the Bank and the CSOs.

Draft Terms of Reference of the AfDB /CSOs committee will be sent to participating CSOs well ahead of the meeting to give the time to reflect and make comments and suggestions and come prepared to finalize.

AfDB's Social and Environmental Safeguard procedures and the new tool kit, Information Disclosure Policy and Compliance Review Policies and procedure and publications on the Independent Review Mechanism will be distributed to the attending CSOs. .

Participants
About 51 leaders and practitioners of the civil society community and several pertinent Bank staff will attend the event. The selection of participants was made on the initial list extracted from the mapping exercise conducted by the CSOs Working Group. Further consultations were made with the Ad-hoc committee members of the AfDB/CSOs Committee representing the sub-regions in Africa. Civil Society Organizations from non-regional member countries are also invited to attend the event. The event will provide an opportunity to discuss key Bank policy documents, and dialogue to deepen Bank's engagement with CSOs. The event will be fully participatory and will provide room for interactive dialogue, experience sharing and discussions of best practices.

All interested parties can attend the event. Special invitation is extended to the members of the Board and senior manager to attend the event.