REGIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM SOUTHERN AFRICA

ENGAGEMENT AVEC LA SOCIÉTÉ CIVILE
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«Engaging Civil Society in Building Resilient Economies in Post Covid-19 **Southern Africa»**

GROUPE DE LA BANQUE AFRICAINE
DE DÉVELOPPEMENT
AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP

November 24th, **2021**

ACRONYMS

AFAWA	Affirmative Finance Action for Women
AfDB	Africa Development Bank
AfCTA	African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement
ADF	African Development Fund
AFRICAN-WIB	African Women in Business
AWIBI	African Women in Business Investments Limited
AIDS	Auto Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AU-AFDB-GCA	African Adaptation Acceleration Summit
BREFONS	Building Resilience in Food and Nutrition Security
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CAMFED	Africa For the Campaign for Female Education
CSE	Civil Society Engagement
CODE	Cooperative Development Environment
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CR	Consumer Reports
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DBDM	Development Business Delivery Model
EAC	East African Community

GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOP	Indicative Operational Programme
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OSISA	Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa
PIDA	Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa
PPP	Public Private Partnerships
RDGE	East African Regional Office
REC	Regional Economic Community
RI	Regional Integration
RISP	Regional Integration Strategy Paper
RMC	Regional Member Countries
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SMMEs	Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises
TAAT	Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refuges
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

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INTRODUCTION

Background and Rationale

As a major innovation of the 2021 Civil Society Forum, based on feedback from previous forums and as one of the main recommendations of the Capitalization Study on 10 years of the Bank's Annual CSO Forums, regional forums will be organized across the continent in lieu of the annual Bank Civil Society Forum. This is in alignment with the aim of the Bank to consult and engage further with the broader civil society community and, the Bank's Civil Society Committee.

This initiative stems the Bank's desire, through its Development Business Delivery Model (DBDM), to be closer to the people it serves. It will also be an opportunity for the Bank to share its regional vision and priority areas that inform its operations (RISP), and to explore key opportunities for strengthening civil society engagement at the regional level. The theme closely aligned with that of the Bank's 2021 Annual Meetings on "Engaging civil society in building resilient economies in post Covid-19 Africa" will be defined in close consultation with the Regional/Country Managers, Regional Civil Society Committee Members.

Regional Approach

The overall goal of this regional approach is to enhance stakeholder engagement at the regional level. Each region will determine its most relevant theme by highlighting existing challenges and opportunities with a view to enhancing Civil Society engagement and thus to improving the impact and quality of the Bank's operations. The main recommendations, conclusions and concrete commitments of these regional forums will lead to a follow-up and implementation plan.

Specifically, the regional CSO Forum shall provide a platform for giving an overview of orientations of the Bank's Regional Integration Strategy Papers (RISPs) and Civil Society Engagement (CSE) in the region; deliberating on the theme(s) selected while highlighting challenges and existing opportunities for CSE that can enhance the relevance, impact, and quality of the Bank's operations; and identifying concrete areas where the Bank can engage with CSOs in the regions.

OPENING SESSION

Welcome Remarks

Dr Kennedy Mbekeani - Deputy Director General, Regional Office for Southern Africa

The Deputy Director-General welcomed the participants on behalf of the Bank, whose priority areas ("High 5s") are aligned with the activities of CSOs. While the Bank engages directly with communities, the establishment of the Civil Society Department has improved the way the Bank manages its collaboration with CSOs, who have on-the-ground knowledge and can help to refine how the Bank engages with communities. The Forum's theme reinforces the spirit of the Bank's Regional Integration Strategy Paper (RISP) for Southern Africa, whose objective is to foster an integrated and diversified region through infrastructure connectivity and market integration and industrialization.

The Deputy Director General wished all present successful deliberations that draw out existing challenges, opportunities and concrete areas where the Bank can enhance regional integration and sustainable growth and development together with CSOs in the region.

Introductory Remarks

Zeneb Touré, Manager, Civil Society and Community Engagement Division (AHGC.2)

After welcoming the audience, the Manager of the Bank's Civil Society and Community Engagement Division, Ms Zeneb Toure, observed that the successful realization of Africa's development agenda was a collective responsibility, involving not only of governments, development partners and the private sector, but CSOs, whose role in development is critical. CSOs are key actors in the transformation of any country's socio-economic situation and are therefore a crucial partner in development whose essential and evolving role to the resilience of a global system, alongside government and the private sector, cannot be overstated. This is particularly more so in the COVID-19 era.

Ms Touré explained that this year, five Regional Civil Society Fora were being organized in the five sub-regions of the continent in lieu of the continental Annual Civil Society Forum, and that they are in line with the Bank's desire to decentralize its operations in order to be closer to the population that it serves. Such events offer a platform for dialogue and regular exchanges between the Bank and CSOs at the regional level, which means that this forum will hopefully mark the beginning of a strong collaboration between the Bank and CSOs for people-centred development in Southern Africa.

Special Message

Ms Maria Mulindi, Director of Special Programmes, Office of the President

Ms Mulindi thanked the participants for their attendance and informed them that the Bank is sharpening its partnerships to focus more on a people-centred approach, working closely with local, regional and continental CSOs, social entrepreneurs and innovators to create values that will be owned and shared by African citizens and have a significant impact on their lives. This calls for civil society in the region to increase their visibility and learn from past experiences.

She explained that during the Bank's Annual Civil Society Forum last year, the President of the Bank, Dr Akinwumi Adesina, reaffirmed the Bank's strong commitment towards civil society. The world currently requires an effective and inclusive response, innovative approaches of engagement, and the establishment of new partnerships. Lessons learned should help all concerned to rethink strategies and find practical

mechanisms and solutions that will ensure building back better.

Southern Africa Regional Integration Strategy Paper (RISP-SA) 2020-2026 (Regional Integration Coordinator RDGS, Bokang Mokati-Sunkutu)

Mr Bokang's presentation focused on the regional context in which the Southern Africa's RISP was developed and is implemented. While diversity in the region offers opportunities for broad-based economic growth, it also imposes challenges which are addressed as core issues in the current RISP-SA. The economic and social context has faced significant challenges including poverty, inequality, gender inequality, youth unemployment, and HIV and AIDS, with variations across countries. With the advent of COVID-19, the 2021 prospects for recovery are bleak due to falling commodity prices and export revenues and worsening fiscal and current account deficits.

The Bank's orientation in Southern Africa was articulated around two priority areas, namely infrastructure connectivity and Market integration and industrialization. Notably, the RISP-SA integrates gender, youth employment, climate change and fragility as cross-cutting issues. These focus areas are being selected based on the lessons learnt from the previous RISP-SA, national and regional consultations, and Regional Integration (RI) developments at the continent level, among others.

Key Messages

- There is need for enhanced capacity-building efforts of CSOs to translate the Bank's Strategy into practical activities within African Countries through a clear engagement strategy..
- The Bank makes efforts to involve CSOs in the development of the country strategy papers and there is a need to raise more awareness on entry points for CSOs and to improve knowledge sharing between the Bank and CSOs.

HIGH-LEVEL PANEL: "ENHANCING WOMEN'S RESILIENCE: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES"

Ms Linet Miriti-Otieno, Chief Gender Officer - RDGS

Ms Otieno prefaced her presentation with the observation that crisis is never gender neutral. COVID-19 brought recessions in the labour market for women, wreaking havoc on industries were where they work: the home-care sector, tourism, hospitality food service, entertainment and retail. Gender-based violence increased to the extent that it was actually called a shadow pandemic. The women whose financial inclusion was lower before the pandemic experienced a worse situation.

The Bank's Gender Strategy (2021-2025) is titled 'Investing in African Women to Accelerate Inclusive Growth'. The Bank uses gender mainstreaming approaches to narrow gender gaps and has a gender marker system to track where changes are happening. There are also standalone projects such as AFAWA, Fashionomics Africa, and 50 Million Women Speak. The Bank is building knowledge through country gender profiles and publishes a gender index to show the continent's progress on gender issues. A resilient post-COVID world will require more robustness in the Bank's programming flexibility on finance in order to help women bounce back into both their businesses and livelihoods.

Dr Shungu Gwarinda, Graca Machel Trust (CSO Committee Member)

Dr Gwarinda shared Graca Machel Trust's work experience with the audience. Women in the region are mostly self-employed, with contracts in SMEs, but the impact of COVID-19 worsened their conditions and deepened pre-existing fractures within these economies. Countries' responses to the impact of the pandemic have little female leadership or representation in decision-making structures. The Trust launched a project to advocate for inclusive economic reconstruction responses to the pandemic and to push for women's representation in key policy decision-making bodies.

The Trust documented the experiences of women entrepreneurs relative to both the pandemic and measures in place to support businesses. The findings showed the severity of the impact of the pandemic on SMEs around business growth and survival, yet relief measures and business support facilities put in place flowed through the same systems that often serve as barriers for women entrepreneurs. The direct engagement of women entrepreneurs in the formal and informal sector by financial institutions was found to be key. The Trust has curated networks of women's business associations at national level, and partners with organizations and CSOs that support women entrepreneurs across various sectors. This should help amplify the leadership role of African women and push for accountability.

Women in Business Representative – Prisca Soko, Chairperson, African Women in Business

Ms Soko introduced African Women in Business ("AFRICAN-WIB") as a one-stop resource organization representing the interests of all women entrepreneurs across all industries, with chapters across the continent and particularly in SADC. Also called African Women In Business Investments Limited ("AWIBI"), it is a public unlisted investment company that was incorporated in South Africa to invest in wealth-creating opportunities for members. The company pooled business women's small amounts of monies to invest in bigger businesses. The company is pursuing equity investments in qualifying companies in operations in eight sectors: water and infrastructure, health, energy and renewable energy, mining and beneficiation, transporting and logistics, agriculture and agro-processing,

information and communications technology, and manufacturing and processing.

Most SMEs lack bankable assets or knowledge of how to do business digitally or navigate social media. Language barriers is another challenge in cross-border trading. Banks should provide more favourable interest loans to women to incentivize them. Training of women in the new digital economy should be provided. Il is also important for bigger companies to create mentorship platforms for women in entrepreneurship while serving as or searching for key equity funding partners to collaborate with on feasible projects.

Key Messages

- Existing economic systems fundamentally disadvantage women. More than men, women are directly affected by constraints in legal and policy instruments. Such gender gaps need to be bridged in order to create more inclusive economies.
- Gender responsive data and statistics are important to identify gaps between men and women. In case of gender gaps in projects, the available data can inform the appropriate interventions.
- Bank's AFAWA programme, which is a growth guarantee instrument, gives better chances to women willing to access financial institutions.
- Statistical databases and knowledge repositories are required by governments and financial organizations for efficient planning of their interventions. When based on reliable statistical data, planning can influence and inform policy setting and decision-making at all levels.

SUB-THEMATIC SESSIONS

Thematic Sessions

Role of Civil Society in the rebuilding process after COVID-19 through the development of Human Capital and the creation of Jobs for Youth – Angie Murimirwa, Executive Director, Africa for the Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED)

Ms Murimirwa's presentation on education focused on how to build back better, especially in post-COVID Africa. Education is inextricably linked to social justice, economic development, climate action and employability. Over 52 million girls in sub–Saharan Africa were out of school before the outbreak of the pandemic. With COVID-19, many have left school, including the girls, and specifically those from the poorest and most marginalized communities, who account for the majority of school leavers. COVID-19 added to many other factors, such as the costs of education, the inadequate number of schools, long distances between homes and school, inadequate infrastructure, and the limited number of tertiary institutions.

Investing meaningful resources to guarantee quality education are needed. Appropriate safety nets for learners are necessary to ensure safe and supportive learning environments, including ending corporal punishment and child marriage and providing re-entry opportunities for affected girls. Women's access to finance, to land, property, and assets should be promoted. The Bank can mobilize resources to ensure free education for all and champion education curricula that prepare young people for the world of entrepreneurship and work, including vital life and self-development skills.

Role of CSOs in Promoting Post-Covid Governance and Accountability in the Region– Vela phi Mamba, Team Leader for Economic and Social Justice - OSISA

Mr Mamba stated that while Africa needs a push and civil society, CSOs in post-COVID times are going through a difficult period. Their resilience to future challenges therefore depends on the extent to which they will be supported. A number of them have collapsed because of funding constraints. This means that core support funding to CSOs is critical. Understanding CSOs entails going beyond the normative usual definitions to embrace a broad spectrum of actors. The Bank should also examine the role of movements that may not be as concretely organized, formalized or institutionalized as genuine CSOs in order to advance good governance and accountability.

Any governance framework that excludes the delivery of the social contract is hollow. Southern Africa is currently facing various crises such as climate change and endemic corruption. Accountability is key to the social contract. Accountability sites must feed into global microframeworks of good governance and accountability that play a key role at all levels for Africa. CSOs need to re-envision how they undertake accountability. The role of the AfDB in propounding a pan-Africanist philosophy for sustainable economic models and policies that are commensurate with the development aspirations of Africans is important for tackling inequality, poverty and unemployment.

The Bank's Support to CSO Engagement for the Promotion of Trade and Investments in the SADC Region – Lufeyo Banda, Chief Regional Operations Officer

In his presentation Mr Banda expounded on the Bank's mechanism of engaging CSOs and its support to CSOs for participation in the promotion of trade and investment. Historically, CSOs have played a role in shaping and monitoring the Bank's development strategies and results since the first AfDB/NGO Consultative Meeting of 1996, which resulted in a Joint AfDB/NGO Declaration, a Joint Plan of Action and the creation of the interim AfDB/NGO Committee. CSOs play an active role at three levels: operational (project), corporate, and regional/country.

Mr Banda crowned it all with various recommendations, including on how CSOs participation can yield results. CSOs can provide valuable insights into the expectations of people of the region as regards the promotion of trade and investment. CSOs are also well placed to advocate not only for trade integration, but also for the signing and ratification of Protocols on Trade when these are effectively supported by the Bank. As such, there is need to ensure that CSO issues are mainstreamed in the Bank's trade and investment operations, as it is the case for any other safeguard issues.

Key Messages

- CSOs should be provided with platforms to participate in advocacy efforts for trade and investment processes, negotiations, cross-border trading of SMEs and exchange of information. CSOs could also be involved as implementation partners in certain projects, where possible.
- CSOs can advocate for trade integration and ratification of trade instruments, and provide valuable insights for the design of Bank-supported projects. They can also support safeguard measures and ensure their problems are considered in the Bank's operations.
- It is imperative to come up with a new global framework for accountability with Africa playing a rule-maker role. This will bolster growth, supported by policies designed to address persistent issues such as inequalities, corruption, and low-level inclusive and equitable growth.

Case Study

CSO Participation in the Implementation of a Bank-funded Project in the Region: Key Achievements and Lessons – Joel Bizure, World Vision, Zimbabwe

A case study was presented by World Vision Zimbabwe on its work in Tongogara Refugee Camp. Launched in January 2020, the project focuses on the livelihoods of people as well as on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH). With the support of the Bank, World Vision was able to increase the number of water points and taps in all sections in order to decongest people as part of COVID-19 preventive measures. Solar-powered piped water systems were installed in the host community, and the increased water supply surpassed the required United Nations standard of 20 litres /bucket per person per day to reach more than 100 litres per person per day. The project resulted in the installation of 125 solar-powered light towers.

Certain challenges reduced the impact of the interventions. They include the COVID-19 pandemic, which slowed down implementation of activities; supply chain breakdowns and delays; increased number of the population in need; increased demand of resources and social amenities; and limited number of income-generating activities. However, the project is planning future interventions concerning WASH, livelihoods, and infrastructure development.

Key Messages

- Mobilizing resources for qualitative and relevant education will also contribute to promoting entrepreneurship and fighting poverty. It is necessary to review curricular to make them relevant to the 4th Industrial Revolution and to resilient and sustainable economies.
- Directing resources towards underserved women will help to build back better through inclusive approaches.
- Africa needs a transformative, new economic and social paradigm shift that can accelerate rebuilding. A robust response from CSOs for accountability and proactive governance is well overdue.
- Bridging the digital divide is critical for Africa's growth, and specifically for small-scale cross-border traders, who are driving regional integration.
- CSOs have a role to play in trade and investment processes; platforms should be promoted to engage them as implementation partners in certain Bank’s projects, where possible.

ACTION POINTS AND WAY FORWARD

Key Action Points and Way Forward - Njeri Kinyoho, Senior CSO Officer, RDGS

Ms Kinyoho, senior CSO officer, highlighted key messages as follows:

1. The Bank can play a role in boosting capacity building for CSOs, especially through a sector-based approach, in order to secure the quality of its operations and the implementation of its regional strategies.

2. It is essential to develop funding or banking tools with low interest rates to suit women entrepreneurs, particularly those in rural areas. It is important to also build the capacity of financial institutions to render them more gender responsive. Commercial banks, amongst other financial institutions, must come up with products and tools that promote women in business.

3. Statistical databases and knowledge management for effective planning, policymaking, and programming are fundamental components of effective decision-making and service delivery for governments and financial institutions such as the Bank.

4. CSOs should advocate for trade integration and ratification of trade instruments. They can support safeguard measures in the Bank's operations. Where applicable, CSOs should be integrated in some of the Bank's projects as implementing partners.

5. Meaningful allocated resources should specifically target women in the education sector, as well as youth, vulnerable female groups and communities, to address the gaps and inequalities that currently exist in the region.

CONCLUSION

Closing Remarks

Dr Shungu Gwarinda, Graca Machel Trust

Dr Gwarinda expressed great appreciation to the workshop participants. She emphasized the need to rebuild African economies in a more inclusive and responsive manner, and specifically meeting the needs of women and girls. Africa needs a new economic architecture with robust accountability and governance, and the role of civil society in its broad sense is very critical. The Bank has the required political and resource capital to drive this agenda substantively in the public and private sectors, help build a more robust African CSO sector and inform how architecture and priorities should look like. Dr Gwarinda concluded by appreciating the Forum as the reaffirmation of the Bank's desire to involve particularly civil society actors in the selection of development priorities in African countries and sub-regions.



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ANNEXS

Annex 1: List of Panelists

1	Miriti Linet Gatakaa
2	Prisca Soko
3	Banda Lufeyo
4	Velaphi Mamba
5	Shungu Gwarinda
6	Mbekeani, Kennedy K.
7	Maria Mulindi
8	Joel Bizure
9	Rosemary Bokang Mokati-Sunkutu
10	Angeline Murimirwa
11	Martha Njeri Kinyoho
12	Luther Yameogo
13	Hafsa Dia Enoh
14	Edward Mzeka Nsobe
15	Kalumiya Ndoli
16	Zeneb Toure
17	Chikanne Joannes Ezeigbo
18	Laura Nyirinkindi
19	Grace Obeda

Annex 2: List of Attendees

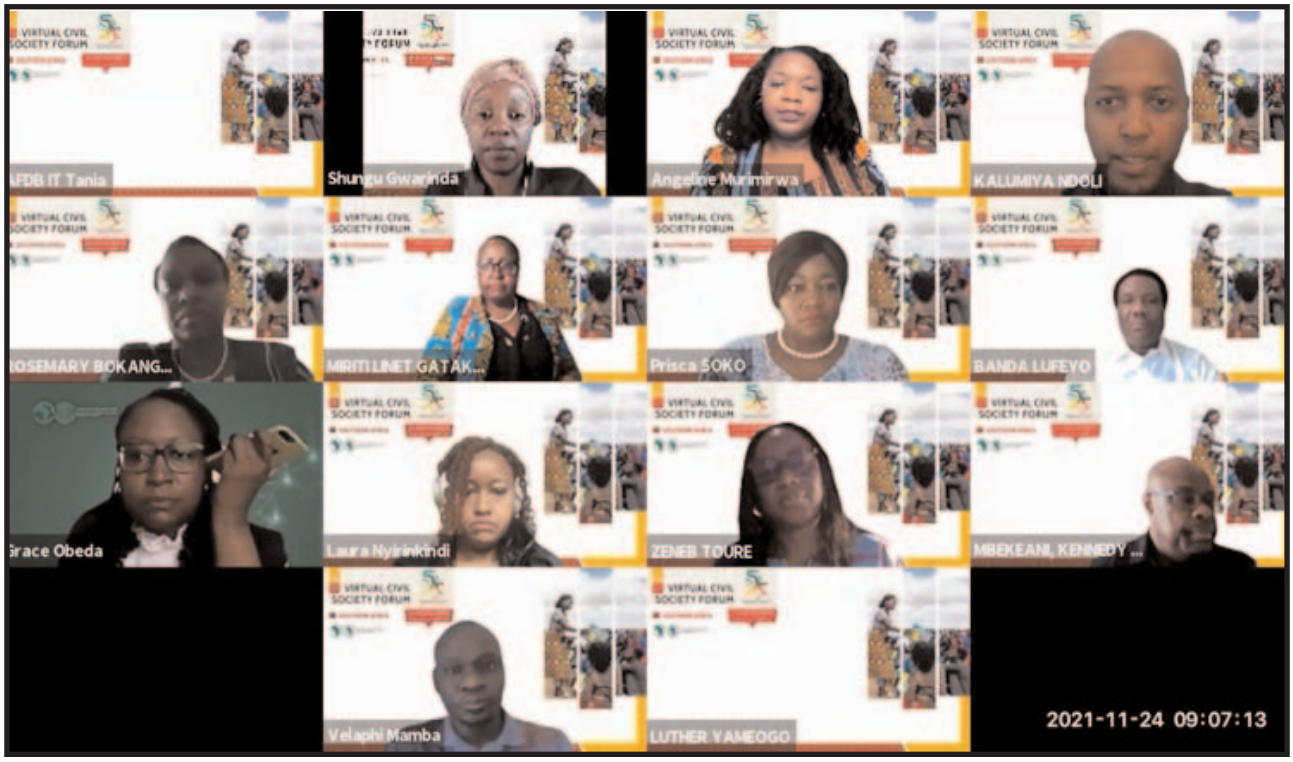
1	Arthur Nkosi	41	Thabo Leon Jeremiah
2	Christine Tamukedde	42	Botumelo Molefhe Ndebele
3	Grant Kasowanjete	43	Alex Area
4	Norman MAPELA	44	Segakweng Tsiane
5	Jennifer Seif	45	Martha Momba
6	Emily Mungai	46	Soneni Ncube
7	Olivia Packalén-Peltola	47	Stanley Mutale
8	Kabengele Guy Dibwe	48	Jean Rakotoary
9	Jon Rosser	49	Abigail Mushendami
10	Takondwa Manda	50	Khemil Gobin
11	Juliet Mbesha	51	Rumbidzai Musakaruka
12	David Kamkwamba	52	Mercy Simbi
13	Pirira Ndaferankhande	53	Phatsimo Molefi
14	Nicholas Ahadjie	54	Jean Chilemba
15	Godfrey Dzveta	55	Skholoanyane Kholoanyane
16	Ronny Dempers	56	Hlobisile Nxumalo
17	Ts'epang Matsietsa	57	Florence Mende
18	Mantopi Martina de Porres Lebofa	58	Carine SEKE
19	Jo Musonda	59	Tumisang Ndove
20	Gcebile Sithole	60	Monametsi Sokwe
21	Pennia Mavedzenge	61	Issa Alli
22	Justice Saccc	62	Charles Baduya
23	Deborah Taylor	63	Joylet Genda
24	Frank Phatshwane	64	Martha Momba
25	Yassin Nhara	65	Michael Charles
26	Pako Dick	66	Thabiso Mudau
27	Kgalalelo Nganje	67	Carlos Cambuta
28	Khumo Senopiwa	68	Tawonga Msowoya
29	Otsile Ditiro	69	Julien Ramiandrisoa
30	Nichodimas Cooper	70	Martin Munkhondya
31	Elsie Alexander	71	nayang balebetse
32	Angellah Mandoreba	72	Ithobogeng Nono Setimela
33	Janet Zhou	73	Lerato Molise
34	Lerato Radebe	74	Zaza Audoux Razanatafika
35	Onkabetse Ketshabile	75	Patricia Malila
36	Chikondi Chabvuta	76	Madalitso Makwandu
37	Agnes Kanengoni	77	Lucy Msukwa
38	Ella Mwanza	78	Yewo Gondwe
39	Bongolethu Maqungo	79	Rugare Zimunya
40	Rueben Ntusa	80	Veronica Sapalo

81	Hastings Mkandawire	121	Daniel Somolekae
82	Stanley Mbewe	122	Trisha Patience Thunde
83	Refiloe Mamokhantso Nkune	123	Devine Matare
84	Raymond Mamattah	124	Agnes Nfila
85	Titus Dlamini	125	Maclein Harawa
86	Forbes Msiska	126	Thabo Bagwasi
87	Cuthbert Magawa	127	John Maketo
88	Alick Kaonda	128	Kingsley Namakhwa
89	Musole Musumali	129	Joseph Makwakwa
90	ida Mokereitane	130	Betty Mkandawire
91	Didi Monnakgotla	131	Francisco Fhote
92	Ceaser Chembezi	132	EVRA N'DA
93	Brenda Okoth	133	Refilwe Mazongo
94	Gloria	134	Augustine Tawanda
95	Andree Abel Ondo Lependa	135	Fredrick Chigwa
96	Peter Chimuka	136	Robert Chirambo
97	Brenda Tautsagae	137	Cesar Neves
98	Richard – Bloggers of Zambia	138	Arnold Kalapa Kakunta
99	Bonolo Kelefang	139	Chileshe Chilangwa
100	Anke Adams	140	Eric Chikukwa
101	Mohamed Touré	141	Raul Manhisse
102	Stephane Tchriffo	142	Kamogelo Lefuti
103	Frederic Bambara	142	Osman Saidi
104	Kadidia Yeo Ouattara	144	kitso Mosarwa
105	Mary Malunga	145	Madalitso Bula
106	Anne Songole	146	Bara Poloumbodje
107	Edgar Bayani	147	Masheane Khasoane
108	Kenneth Mtago	148	Lehlogonolo Ratlabyana
109	Abiodun Sotola	149	Florence Kacou
110	Phillip Mudavanhu	150	Adeniyi Constant
111	Bradley Tjongarero	151	Jane Kroese
112	Jacob Makambwe	152	Joan Nganga
113	Caroline Bernice Akishule Ntumwa	153	Edah Gondwe Chimya
114	Happy Shapaka	154	Rose A. A.
115	Moreblessings Chidaushe	155	Fatoumata Mbodji
116	Bassa Armand	156	Patrick Mduduzi Dlamini
117	Princess Modikwa	175	Brossileei Bonfim
118	Evelynne Change	158	Basil Jones
119	Paida Bvumbe	159	Stanley Nyamanhindi
120	Antonio Kiala	160	Ghislain Anselme Rasolomampionona

Annex 3: Recording Link

https://afdb.zoom.us/rec/share/Bmz66UsuUElWw0ZgEDBAN3eQhKgDMSMsbGFlV21CwMZVCeW9rtWqxCzKJ_YH5829.vKk45vOhCfhO6TrE

Annex 4: Gallery of Photos





Annex 5: Special Message: Maria Mulindi, Director, Special Programmes Office of the President

Ms Mulindi, director of special programmes, aimed to inform participants in the forum that one of the responsibilities of her office is to strengthen the Bank's strategic engagement with CSOs across all sectors and build partnerships that promote social sustainability and inclusion. The Bank is sharpening its partnerships to focus more on a people-centred approach. To this end, it is working closely with local, regional and continental CSOs, social entrepreneurs and innovators, to use values that are owned and shared by African citizens and that have a significant impact on their lives. This calls for Southern Africa's civil society organizations to increase their visibility and learn from experiences. This can be achieved through the development of tools that enable them to evaluate and measure their impact and sharing of data and best practices amongst each other. Ms Mulindi revealed that the Bank was exploring how to support the development of these tools and methods, as well as their adoption by civil society organizations and help them to better demonstrate and enhance their impact.

Civil Society organizations were urged to always consider the fact that Africa's citizens expect a fairer recovery from COVID-19 . This calls for a better collaboration between the Bank, civil society, governments and the private sector. It is now imperative to involve CSOs in the design and implementation of the Bank's regional strategies and country strategy papers, the setting of national priorities, the establishment of framework building, as well as in any other opportunities for policy dialogue. Moreover, CSOs should pay attention to the Glasgow Climate Pact, the AU-AFDB-GCA African Adaptation Acceleration Summit, as well as to the implementation of policy documents coming out of such meetings. The Bank will continue to dialogue and support Africa's civil society on matters requiring climate action and adaptation for the continent's development agenda.

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCTA) Agreement is key to stronger intra-African trade and will connect 1.2 billion people into a single economic block without any trade tariffs, laying the basis for increased intra-Africa trade. CSOs have to contribute to improved visibility of and engagement for AfCTA, sharing information and educating African citizens on related policies and processes. CSOs can also conduct needs assessments to determine to which extent the Agreement can be integrated in national frameworks and programmes. Similarly, they should consider participating in multisectoral consultations with relevant public authorities on AfCTA implementing policies and hold African governments accountable for intra-African trade development.

Annex 6: *"Enhancing Women's Resilience; Challenges and Opportunities"*, Dr Shungu Gwarinda – Graça Machel Trust (CSO Committee Member)

Dr Gwarinda described the work of the Graça Machel Trust. Women in the region are mostly self-employed in SMEs, but the impact of COVID-19 has worsened pre-existing fractures within economies. Countries' policy responses to address the impact of the pandemic have little leadership or representation of women. The Trust launched a project to advocate for inclusive economic reconstruction responses to the pandemic and for women's representation in key decision-making bodies. The Trust documented the experiences of women entrepreneurs in relation to the pandemic and measures in place to support businesses.

The findings showed the severity of the impact of the pandemic on the growth and survival of businesses, including SMEs. Many businesses had to close or downsize. Relief measures and business support facilities are being put in place by the public and private sectors, including the Bank. However, support flows through the same systems that have often acted as barriers to funding and business support for women entrepreneurs. Other areas identified were skills and capacity building, inclusive regulatory frameworks, and the reduction of gender inequality in ownership of technological infrastructure or assets. The direct engagement of women entrepreneurs in the formal and informal sectors by financial institutions was found critical.

Building ecosystems for action and accountability is important. The Graça Machel Trust has curated networks of women's national business associations, partner organizations and CSOs that support women entrepreneurs across various sectors. The Trust aims to promote capacity building and advocacy while facilitating peer-to-peer mentorship. At the regional level, an expert leaders' group of current and past female deputy governors and governors of central banks has been convened to foster heightened political will for policy action. This group will engage with regional economic communities, the Bank and globally amplify the leadership role of African women, highlight good or promising practices and, more importantly, push for accountability.


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