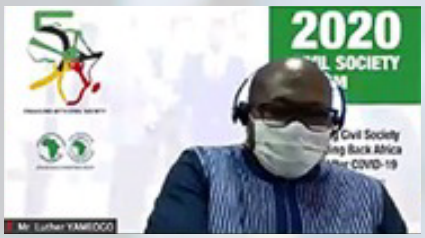
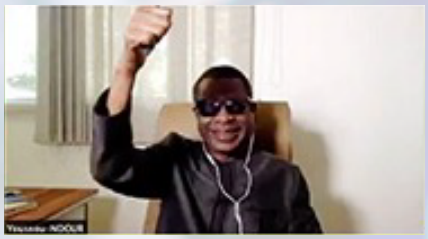
AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP
GROUPE DE LA BANQUE AFRICAINE DE DÉVELOPPEMENT

ENGAGEMENT AVEC LA SOCIÉTÉ CIVILE
ENGAGING WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

2020 CIVIL SOCIETY VIRTUAL FORUM













THEME

Engaging Civil Society in Building Africa Back Better After COVID-19

#AfDB_CSOForum2020

GENERAL REPORT

26 – 27 November 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS 3

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS 4

INTRODUCTION 6

SESSION 1 : INAUGURAL SESSION 7

- Opening Ceremony 7
- In conversation with 8

SESSION 2 : VIRTUAL EXHIBITION 10

- "Civil society vs COVID-19" initiative virtual exhibition 10

SESSION 3 : INDUCTION SESSION 15

- The African Bank Engagement with Civil Society 15

SESSION 4 : CSO LED SESSIONS 18

- Post COVID-19 priorities and Civil Society Engagement 18

CONCLUSION 22

- Closing ceremony 22

ANNEXES 24

- ROADMAP - ACTION PLAN 2020-2021 24
- CONCEPT NOTE AND AGENDA 31
- MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA REPORTING 35
- GALERY OF PHOTOS 35

ACRONYMS

ADF	:	African Development Fund
The "Bank"	:	African Development Bank
AHGC2	:	Civil Society and Social Innovation Division
AfCTA	:	African Continental Free Trade Agreement
AM	:	Annual Meetings
CSE	:	Civil Society Engagement
CSO	:	Civil Society Organizations
DBDM	:	Development and Business Delivery Model
ECGF	:	Economic Governance Department
FIRM	:	Partnership and Resource Mobilization Department
JfYA	:	Jobs for Youth in Africa
DAI	:	Disclosure and Access to Information Unit at the African Development Bank
IDEV	:	Independent Development Evaluation Unit at the African Development Bank
PACJA	:	Pan African Climate Justice Alliance
WACSI	:	West Africa Civil Society Institute
GMT	:	Graça Machel Trust

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



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THEME

Engaging Civil Society in Building Africa Back Better After COVID-19

Thank you

#AfDB_CSOForum2020

We express our warmest gratitude to the participants of the virtual 2021 Civil Society Forum. In participating to this forum, you have all contributed in setting a cornerstone for the collaboration between the African Development Bank and Africa's civil society.

Our gratitude goes to the representatives of civil society organizations who shared their insights and voiced their opinions on how we may all work better together for our common goal of improving the life of the populations of Africa.

We express our special gratitude to the President of the African Development Bank, Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, for his leadership and support that have been key in enabling a stronger engagement with civil society. The President calls for clear actions, with outcomes that are measurable in the Bank's engagement with the civil society envisioning to see at the next civil society organizations Forum: "civil society organizations on the platform sharing how they have worked with the Bank to deliver concrete outcomes".

Our thanks also go to the Vice-Presidents, Directors, Managers, staff and consultants who participated in the preparation, organization and holding of this event.

Our deep appreciation similarly go to Mrs Graça Machel and Mr Youssou Ndour, for joining the Opening ceremony of the forum and contributing to fruitful discussions.

Like every year, the Forum was aligned with the theme of the Bank's Annual Meetings under the formulation "Engaging Civil Society in building back better after COVID-19".
Participants reflected how best, altogether, civil society organizations, Bank staff and other stakeholders can contribute to a more efficient and impactful response and post-pandemic recovery.

On behalf of our whole team, we would like to express to you ALL our deepest gratitude for your tremendous support for this edition of the Civil Society Forum.
Your contributions and commitment to this important milestone helped create a meaningful platform for exchange, as well as amplify civil society voices over the continent and beyond.

The productive exchanges will result in concrete actions, and we look forward to continuing to work altogether in enhancing our engagement of civil society organizations across the continent for more people-centered development impact.

With our warmest regards,

INTRODUCTION

Each year, since 2009, the Bank organizes the Civil Society Forum which brings together more than 300 civil society organizations across the continent. The forum serves as a platform for structured dialogue between the Bank and civil society organizations. It enables various stakeholders to voice the priorities of citizens and discuss civil society's role in implementing the Bank High 5 strategy.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and for the first time ever, the 2020 forum was held virtually November 26-27, and aligned with the theme of the 2020 Annual Meetings as follows: "Engaging Civil Society in Building Africa back better after COVID-19". Despite these unprecedented times, the forum brought together 814 participants and 33,000 followed via Facebook (207,530 people reached and 8,333 contributors), putting the civil society forum at the top list of high-level events organized by the Bank this year.

The two-days event objectives were to provide a platform for structured dialogue between the Bank and the civil society on supporting the implementation of the Bank's post-pandemic agenda, showcase and document CSOs actions and best practices on combatting the pandemic, rally common areas of joint advocacy and social mobilization in support of the Bank's strategic objectives and agree upon concrete steps on how best the Bank and civil society could contribute to a more efficient and impactful response and post pandemic recovery.

This edition was preceded the first virtual statutory meeting of the new African Development Bank-Civil Society Committee, November 24 on the sidelines of the forum to install officially the new members of the Committee for the 2021-2022 mandate.

President Akinwunmi Adesina's remarks and strong will to revamp the Bank's approach in engaging civil society "from being process-driven to outcomes-driven, advocating and pushing for a people-centered approach should definitely pave the way to next year roadmap with the Forum's commitments implemented.

This report is presented as follows:

Session 1- Inaugural session

Session 2- Virtual exhibition

Session 3 - Induction session

Session 4- CSO led-sessions

Closing ceremony

SESSION 1:

INAUGURAL SESSION

Opening ceremony

The welcome remarks were addressed by **Vanessa Moungar**, Director for Gender, Women and Civil Society at the African Development Bank, it can no longer be business as usual, there is a need to find innovative approaches to engage and partner, to ensure outreach to the most vulnerable of our populations. The biggest lesson of this pandemic is that the world is interconnected, and global stability relies on local resilience.

In her address, Acting Vice President for Agriculture, Human and Social Development at the African Development Bank, **Wambui Gichuri**, who stressed the importance for the Bank to foster strategic investments in building resilient healthcare infrastructure and improving access to healthcare systems across the continent as well as the role of civil society organizations in assisting governments and mobilizing resources to support communities.

This year's edition was represented by two high level civil society champions and keynote speakers whom participation and valuable interventions were not only inspiring but also have highly contributed to the discussions.

Honorable **Graça Machel** (with the Graça Machel Trust which recently joined the Bank-Civil Society Committee) was very vocal in the necessity of channeling more



resources to strengthen the civil society sector as it responds to the challenges that COVID-19 has revealed and harnessed their incredible potential to accelerate social change at scale. She also underlined the significance of continuing to enhance our focus on women and girls as drivers of change to accelerate Africa's transformation.

President **Adesina's** statement which concluded the official ceremony, resonated in stressing the importance of civil society organizations' role in monitoring government interventions and ensuring that they effectively reach the poor and vulnerable, who are the most affected. He also pointed out how transparency and accountability are key requirements in the Bank's support to countries.

In conversation with

The opening ceremony was immediately followed by a conversation engaged by President **Adesina** with **Graça Machel** and **Youssou Ndour.** For the former Culture and Tourism Minister of Senegal and musician, "artists should be on the frontline of Africa's development, given their pivotal role as communicators". President **Adesina** suggested that **Youssou Ndour** coordinated the production of a High 5 "anthem" to drive and translate the Bank's High 5 vision and strategy.

This high-level conversation highlighted among other priorities, the African Development Bank group response to the COVID-19, the engagement of artists and influential personalities/African leaders in the post COVID-19 reconstruction agenda.

Mr **Youssou Ndour** shared his experience and his significant contribution to the response to COVID-19 on the continent and the projects induced by the cultural perspective in the renascence of the continent.

The President of the Bank recalled the responses the African Development Bank Group provided to lessen the severe economic and social impact of this pandemic on its Regional Member Countries (RMCs). The President stressed on the importance of engaging African leaders to help Africa build back, boldly, but smartly, paying greater attention to quality growth.



The high-level conversation also identified the gaps in the rise of Africa after COVID-19, with regard to community engagement and identified further areas of collaboration between Civil Society and the Bank towards the reconstruction agenda.

Engaging artists to support the efforts of the Bank to instill inclusive growth in Africa and to render the impact of development work more extensive will be catalyst. This is matching the convening power of the Bank with the influence of artists who can significantly inform public opinion and engage communities on Africa's development agenda. The added value of national and international renowned African personalities will allow for the Bank to adjust relevant and matching messages to the citizens of the world's youngest continent and restore hope for a better Africa. Their voices can significantly inform public opinion and will help reaching out to populations and raising awareness on key development challenges and solutions brought by institutions such as the Bank.

Important questions were addressed around this discussion: How to better engage Civil society and influential personalities to raise awareness, sensitize and educate African citizens and civil society at large about the ongoing efforts of the Bank to develop African economies? How to leverage on this network to combat misinformation and share lessons from the interventions that the Bank is undertaking at local and national levels to fast-track Africa's development? How to engage Artists to communicate and advocate for Community Engagement across the Bank's High5s: Energy, Agriculture, Industry, Regional Integration, Quality of Life.

This conversation confirmed that inclusive growth requires a human face - beyond statistics - ownership and equitable access to basic social services. With their reputation, notoriety and community commitment, African Champions will help meet this challenge on the continent. This community development approach is not only a necessity but also an important paradigm shift fueled in the era of COVID-19. More than a social mobilization, it will also include a strong advocacy component to unlock any bottlenecks and open windows of opportunity for Women, Men, Young people, Hard to reach Populations, African Citizens.

Youssou Ndour even mentioned that culture is so important that the Bank should consider promoting it as High6 in its strategy.

Graça Machel powerful words echoed about the civil society organizations role and resilience. "They stepped up during the pandemic, with limited resources and in very dangerous conditions, to save lives and restore dignity to communities in the midst of this pandemic". For her, we cannot forget that "resources for organizations working with women, children and those living with disabilities and in the rural areas are desperately needed". She also added that we must be all aware that supporting women in particular, would help to reap long-term dividends for African economies.

Along the lines of his opening statement, President Adesina emphasized the fact that the critical issue was not the amount of funds that are provided by the Bank and others, but who they reach, adding that the urgency is to rebuild back, bolder, better and with greater economic and social and climate resilience.

With these two champions on board and their respective organizations, the Bank's strategic partnership with civil society will be enhanced for more impact on the ground.

SESSION 2:

VIRTUAL EXHIBITION

"Civil Society vs COVID-19" Initiative Virtual Exhibition

In June 2020, the Civil Society and Community Engagement Division launched the "African Civil Society against COVID-19 Initiative". The aim of this initiative is to identify, and document existing solutions and initiatives launched by civil society organizations during the sanitary crisis that have helped or are helping the most vulnerable communities endure the pandemic and mitigate its effects on the economy and social life.

After receiving more than 400 projects from civil society organizations across the continent, an inventory was conducted to highlight, promote and support the most relevant initiatives and solutions.

Of the hundreds of projects received, the Bank selected 6 initiatives led by CSOs-based on various criteria among which innovativeness and readiness for deployment- to be showcased during the Virtual Civil Society Forum, under specific categories:



- Communication and Information/Youth
- Education
- Gender
- Health
- Information technology
- Access to Food and Nutrition

Six short videos made by these organizations were broadcasted during an afternoon session of the Forum on 26 November, preceded by an introduction of the person representing each organization. This virtual exhibition enabled fruitful exchanges between the selected CSOs and the audience and highlighted how responsive civil society organizations were during this pandemic. "We were extremely excited to present this innovative work Yiya AirScience is doing in Northern Uganda and to highlight the impact we are having on rural youth" said Samson Wambuzi, Director of Operations and Co-Founder of Yiya Engineering Solutions.

Below are brief descriptions of each presented projects as well as the links to the project videos.

Communication and Information / Youth

https://vimeo.com/497903165

Mrs Lumuno Mweemba Chongo

Programs Director, ***Amos Youth Centre*** *(AYC), Zambia*

The Amos Youth Centre (AYC) created the COVID-19 Emergency Relief Family Fund in response to the pandemic that hit Kafue, Zambia in mid-March.

The project targets over 400 young people: Young Learners (age 5 to 10 years), secondary students as well as high school graduates and college students. These young people come from a community of orphaned and vulnerable children and youth, out-of-school youth, in-school youth who do not have access to quality education, women and girls (age 5 to 25), special needs children and youth, children and youth who are affected by or suffering from HIV/AIDS.

The project's objective is to create a system of community workers making regular phone calls to community members to:

The project's objective is to create a system of community workers making regular phone calls to community members to:

- Regularly disseminate easily understandable COVID-19 health and safety information in local languages
- Track health of beneficiaries and their families.
- Monitor increased rate of gender-based violence.
- Make data available in real time through a technological platform to inform community responses. (AYC is currently working with a developer on a custom platform.)

AYC's current health check-in calls are made to 200 families.

Education

https://vimeo.com/497922389

Mr Samson Wambuzi

Director of operations and Co-founder, ***YIYA Engineering Solutions,*** *Uganda*

According to the UNPF and UNICEF, Uganda has 12 million youth aged 10-19 years old. 24.6% of them are enrolled in secondary school. To solve this problem, the Yiya Engineering Solutions team designed a remote offline school that youth can access using a keypad phone and a radio.

Educational content via robocalls and text messages are sent. The combination of audio and text keeps the model inclusive of low literacy learners (adult literacy level in Uganda was 76.5% in 2018).

The team follows up with live lessons distributed remotely via a daily radio broadcast. During the radio lessons, the teacher asks questions and assigns homework. The learner submits answers to questions in real-time via unstructured supplementary service data

(USSD) codes, a communication protocol used by GSM cell phones to communicate with the mobile network operator's computers. Learners also submit homework and complete quizzes via USSD. Responses feed into an online database, tracking user participation. This database sends feedback to users via SMS on how many responses they get correct. Educational content is recorded into two local languages for the pilot.

The target of the team is to reach 25% of Ugandan youth by the end of the first year, to demonstrate that their model can reach at least as many young people as the current education system.

Gender

https://vimeo.com/498312714

Ms Carol Gwatiringa,
Communication officer, ***Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA)****, Present in 7 countries*

The project will be implemented in 7 countries where WLSA is operating (Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zimbabwe and Zambia). A foundational element of the proposed initiative is the 2030 Agenda principle of "leave no one behind." This means reaching the most marginalized women and girls, including those with disabilities, the elderly, from ethnic minority or indigenous groups, those living in poverty or with HIV/AIDS, women and girls in rural areas, women in detention, and survivors of violence or harmful practices.

The project aims at:

- Ensuring gender data are available, analyzed and actionable;
- Providing comprehensive gender-based violence (GBV) services such as training sessions on gender equality and Gender Based Violence;
- Ensuring community engagement with and for women and girls, in order to hear women and girls' voices to understand the impact of the epidemic and be able to meet the needs of affected populations effectively;
- Mitigating the impact of the outbreak and supporting families to recover and build resilience for future shocks via cash transfers for example.

Health

https://vimeo.com/497919715

Dr Moumini Niaone,
Executive director, ***Pull for progress****, Burkina Faso*

Burkina Faso has been going through a critical security crisis these past 4 years. Thousands of people are affected with more than 800,000 internally displaced and hundreds of dead victims of terrorist attacks. Moreover, insecurity is affecting almost two million people. In addition to all this, Burkina Faso recorded on March 9, 2020, its first case of COVID-19. The pandemic hit all sectors of activities and as always, the most vulnerable people were the hardest hit.

The populations of the outlying districts of the cities of Ouagadougou and Bobo Dioulasso, of the villages of the commune of Boussouma and Bondigui are the project's primary target with a particular emphasis on women's associations.

Specifically, the project aims at:

- Recruiting doctors: About 10 doctors trained volunteers via ZOOM, WhatsApp and face-to-face in small groups;
- Recruiting and training 2,000 young volunteers: A call for volunteers was launched through social networks and a local radio station;
- Supporting the official response team against the pandemic: The team managed to have 200 students in health sciences support the 24-hour call center, 40 nurses support the rapid intervention team, and around 20 doctors support the team dedicated to referral hospitals;
- Raising awareness in rural communities;
- Strengthening the capacities of existing associations: Training to women associations in the manufacture of hydroalcoholic liquid and gel soap was provided;
- Fighting against fake news on social networks and in public opinion: The team moderated an important number of discussions both in the media and on social networks with volunteers to fight misinformation;
- Distributing protective equipment.

Information Technology

https://vimeo.com/497906969

Mr George Wasonga,
Chief Executive Officer, ***Civil Society Urban Development Platform****, Kenya*

The goal of the project is to strengthen evidence-based approach to COVID-19 primary and secondary responses in seven Kisumu informal settlements.

The project primarily targets the informal settlement inhabitants in the seven informal settlements of Kisumu. According to the recent studies (2019) on development of Local Area Development Plans (LADP) for Kisumu, the seven informal settlements are identified as Bandani, Manyatta A and B, Kaloleni/Shaurimoyo, Nyawitta, Obunga and Nyalenda with a population of 94,000.

The intended outcomes of the project are as follows:

- A formal Kisumu County institutional framework for multi-agency coordination of COVID-19 action in informal settlement is established;
- Mapping and digital interface for real time appraisal of COVID-19 response efforts in the seven informal settlements of Kisumu are established;
- Sustainable innovations for present and post-COVID-19 repair and recovery are established;
- Awareness creation and monitoring of behavioral change in the community are sustained.

Access to Food and Nutrition

https://vimeo.com/497923510

Mr Mba Limbingo Ngakeu

Coordinator, Committee for the Integrated Development of Grassroots Communities (CODICOM), Central African Republic

Central African Republic is marked by armed conflicts. The entire population has been hit hard by the dysfunction of essential services and reduced economic opportunities. Humanitarian assistance has become one of the means to overcome certain limits of the government and alleviate the suffering of the populations.

To this difficult humanitarian situation was added the COVID-19 pandemic, the first case of which was confirmed in Bangui on March 14, 2020 and which has spread exponentially across the country.

This project was carried out on three sites of internally displaced persons (IDP) of armed conflicts which each host more than 3,000 people living in indescribable precariousness. These are the IDP sites of Bambari, Alindao, and Pombolo. These sites lack essential social services such as drinking water points, latrines, equipped garbage cans and the displaced people often live in crowded conditions. Inside their huts, there is a high level of humidity that could favor other more vicious viral pathologies. The project aims at raising information by communicating essential information on the pandemic via heads of households and community radios. It also aims at distributing health kits.

SESSION 3:

INDUCTION SESSION

The African Development Bank Engagement with Civil Society



This session was an opportunity for the Bank's Departments to take stock of the Bank's engagement with Civil Society and to interact with civil society organizations on the initiatives underway to strengthen the partnership.

This session allowed networking between CSO experts with The Bank's key sectorial departments and established a ground to create synergies between both. The main question was how the Bank's is engaging with civil society organizations and how to directly involve CSOs in key thematic issues related to The Bank work such as integrity and anti-corruption and also handling complaints and accountability.

Florence Freda-Dennis presented the role of the Integrity and Anti-corruption Department and insisted that the Bank should strengthen its engagement with civil society on anti-corruption efforts on projects.

As President Adesina stated in the opening session, the Bank is a transparent organization and was ranked last year as the 4th most transparent organization in the world. The Bank has zero tolerance for corruption and welcomes the civil society to partner with our independent anti-corruption department.

Ensuring transparency is critical in this COVID-19 time and this priority must be at the center of concerns: the protection of open, inclusive and responsible governance, with accountability mechanisms. This pandemic might be seen by some as an opportunity to take advantage of the emergency to abuse their power for private gain. In this unique circumstance, it is important that corruption not be ignored. It is important to keep involving CSOs in monitoring health outcomes and procurement systems, to track budget spending, financial & social accountability, corruption prevention and provide user feedback. As the pandemic affects women and men differently, a gender-lens should be applied and scrutinized as well. CSOs are demanding for transparency and are requesting that information on COVID-19 is not hidden; CSOs including investigative journalists are calling on the government to make a timely report to the public of all resources galvanized and spent toward the COVID-19 fight in order to enhance accountability and transparency.

Putting accountability at the heart of the response to the pandemic will help pave the way for the restoration of trust between governments and populations and head to an inclusive reconstruction process where the role of civil society is indorsed. Florence Freda-Dennis concluded that protecting open, inclusive and responsible governance with accountability mechanisms but also with the active participation of civil society is the will of the Bank and will remain active through the Civil Society and Community Engagement Division.

Frederic Bambara introduced the Independent Review Mechanism (IRM) as one of the major accountability mechanisms of the African Development Bank Group.

It was established through a resolution of the Boards of Directors of the African Development Bank Group in 2004. The Resolution establishing the IRM was amended by the Boards in 2010 and 2015 respectively during the first and second review of the performance of the IRM. The Compliance Review and Mediation Unit (BCRM) is the focal organization unit that administers the Bank's Independent Review Mechanism.

The IRM was established by the Bank as a recourse instrument for people who are or are likely to be adversely affected by projects financed by the Bank. Its mandate is therefore to handle registered complaints filed by Project Affected People (PAPs) and to ensure that the African Development Bank Group has complied with the relevant policies and procedures in relation to projects.

Luther Yameogo also emphasized that the African Development Bank is convinced that the ambitious development goals set for Africa can only be achieved through the active engagement, regular consultation and enhanced participation of Civil Society. Important milestones were reached in the engagement with civil society as a key stakeholder and partner in the delivery of the Bank's High 5s priorities, along the priority areas identified in our Civil Society Engagement Framework.

Evidence confirms that engaging with civil society in development projects can help produce **inclusive**, improved and better sustained development results. Civil society organizations play multiple roles. They are an important source of information for both citizens and government. They monitor government policies and actions and hold government accountable. They engage in advocacy and offer alternative policies for government, the private sector, and other institutions. They deliver services, especially to the poor and underserved. CSOs have the grassroot knowledge and the responsibility of identifying vulnerable groups and prioritizing their social needs in order to help design effective assistance programs; CSOs are also seen as vehicles for maximizing the effectiveness of international funds as they have access to the populations at the base of the pyramid where majority of the African population sits. Since the creation of a civil society engagement department in 2017, important milestones have been reached in the Bank's engagement with civil society. The Division coordinates, monitors and reports on Bank-wide engagement with Civil Society to ensure that Civil Society Engagement (CSE) is an integral part of the Bank's procedures and policies. HE presented how the Bank's civil society engagement remains at the core of its high5s and the Bank's new approach to mainstream civil society engagement.

Figure 1



Figure 2



Civil Society Engagement (CSE) has an important role to play in the design, implementation, monitoring and appraisal of Bank funded projects. Engagement with civil society from the start/inception of a project could help mitigate/minimize the risks of complaints that they forward to the Bank, by ensuring that timely and adequate information is provided to civil society about projects and that the views, expectations and concerns of beneficiary communities are taken into consideration from project conception to finalization. Community/ CSO/Beneficiary participation in the entire project cycle is thus critical.

During this induction session, participants learned about how the bank leverages engagement with civil societies to promote inclusiveness and increase impact.

The participants welcomed the effort of the bank in increasing accountability and transparency with regard to CSOs. The Bank provided a more comprehensive and complete presentation in how the bank strives to have an impact on the beneficiary populations:

- A call was made for the bank to strengthen its presence in local communities and to provide them with information and opportunities on how to engage with the Bank's work;
- Participants encouraged the Bank to increase its presence in sectors such as education and health where the communities can measure the real impact. By focusing on mega-infrastructure projects such as the creation of high-way corridors, some civil society members have the impression that there is no measurable impact on the communities.

At the end of the session, civil society members felt that they had been given the information needed to exercise their right of scrutiny over the Bank's strategic decisions. As well, both the panelist and the participants agreed there is much to profit from the synergy between the Bank's mission and the intervention areas of the CSOs. This highlighted the need to establish enduring strategic partnerships in achieving the High 5 priorities.

The Bank encourages CSOs to outreach country offices with the support of HQs in order to maintain a constant and constructive collaboration. Involvement of local communities is key in preparing programs. CSOs participation is imperative to represent populations and better voice community needs. The Bank encourages CSOs to organize themselves, build their capacity with the support of The Bank and play a third-party role for intervention through CSOs to serve as relay on the ground, especially in areas of security threats. The renewed Bank-Civil Society Committee shall play an important role on this.

SESSION 4:

CSOs LED SESSIONS

Post COVID-19 priorities and Civil Society Engagement

The civil society organizations led sessions are parallel meetings they lead and manage. These sessions provide a space for grassroots innovative ideas and enhanced partnerships with CSOs through a greater ownership of the sessions. Roadmaps are elaborated for each session in collaboration and engagement from participating CSOs to contribute to their implementation.

These sessions are also an opportunity to promote local ideas and activities to the Bank. It is a special occasion in which the CSOs had complete control of the theme, format and conduct of the meetings. The selection process is participatory and transparent. Particular attention is paid to proposals that aligned with the theme of the Forum, with a necessary account for gender balance, geographical representation and diversity.

The following sessions were organized for this 2020 edition:



1. Health systems during the post COVID 19 pandemic in Africa

Hosted by WATHI THINK TANK

Report :
https://bit.ly/3a6wQt7

Meeting Recording:
https://afdb.zoom.us/rec/share/6bMHNCz9SI3ml6qug6Km3JB6oeKRaXPvyjMY4HyrujpkqnKwm_9-9PoWiHOFVkbG.0_dvAinifnUALwM-

Access Passcode: T?1y4bHL

This session mainly consisted in presenting the 5 recommendations made by WATHI to improve the functioning of the health sector in West Africa. The recommendations resulted from a 3-month citizen debate organized by WATHI with contributions from simple citizens involved in health sector or interested in the question to high level experts all around the sub-region.

In addition to that, WATHI shared the actions planned to conduct a strong communication campaign around already available set of recommendations and additional recommendations from WATHI's ongoing work on the implications of and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in West Africa.
Besides the two previous aspects above-mentioned, the session also served as a brainstorming one, aiming to, define together with other CSOs, the most impactful ways of conducting strong and meaningful join advocacy actions in order to see these 5 key recommendations taken into consideration at the highest levels when elaborating policies and then implemented.

2. Reviewing African Development Bank AGN Resolutions Patterning to Renewable Energy and Sustainable Food Systems

Hosted by Panafrican Alliance for Climate Justice in Africa -PACJA / ACSEA)

Meeting Recording:
https://afdb.zoom.us/rec/share/4O5wQCwm4ZO1TGetJWeGFPz4OWUZVoPDRFsHFJSZ2VjlGpriatfaUOWcgPRDOsIB.UD8EgxNs3uhIBc9L

Access Passcode: +xd==qs5

According to PACJA/ACSEA, COVID-19 triggered an increase in inflation on the continent, in some cases by more than 5 per cent, in the first quarter of 2020 (Africa Economic Outlook 2020 (Supplement) Amid COVID-19). This was mainly the result of disruptions in the supply chain of food and energy, the bulk of which are imported. For some countries, however, the drastic fall in aggregate demand due to the lockdown and other containment measures has eased inflationary pressures, especially among non- resource-intensive economies. Overall, although headline inflation which includes food and basic energy prices, would be expected to rise, core inflation might remain stable until demand picks up after the pandemic.

With this outlook in mind, the African Coalition for Sustainable Energy and Access (ACSEA), the African civil society organizations members and allies of the Big Shift Global Campaign working on energy and climate change in Africa recommended to the African Development Bank the prioritization of renewable energy access and resilient food systems in its post-COVID Recovery Strategy. Specifically, CSOs sent recommendations to the Bank ahead of its Annual General Meeting for 2020 to ensure that.

- Sustainable, renewable energy access receives priority in the Bank COVID-19 Recovery Strategy.
- Recovery plans are aligned with the Paris Agreement climate goals and show a clear commitment to renewable energy.
- And, recovery strategy and plans strengthen resilient food systems in Africa

During this session, participants reflected on how the key resolutions of the African Development Bank AGN spoke to CSO recommendations and how they should be operationalized.

Speakers presented short presentations on the impact of COVID-19 on Energy and Food Systems in Africa, CSO recommendations to the Bank, and were followed by deliberations focusing on the identification of gains and gaps in the Bank's resolutions and the development of strategies for fostering stronger energy access and resilient food systems in Africa.

3. Tracking of COVID-19 Financing and Affected Communities' Access to Information

Hosted by International Accountability Project (IAP)

Meeting Recording:
https://afdb.zoom.us/rec/share/GIIGE02CtPk_Ibix2APESuTdlnqufdk4_M_DWVNkIDoSfOZWtuj8ZbaKI5GI4_Yd.oEPZjGeUTefsOkIC

Access Passcode: j@.2G#CK

International Accountability Project is an environmental and human rights advocacy organization that works to support community-led development. They work with communities affected by development projects to ensure that community priorities lead the development process. The session was arranged around the following:

- Share EWS COVID-19 tracker
- Discuss how CSOs and communities can monitor DFIs' COVID-19 financing
- Discuss how DFIs can incorporate community priorities in their COVID-19 financing

The EWS COVID-19 Tracker is an interactive map that aggregates project-level investments disclosed by 15 development banks monitored by the Early Warning System.

The two-hypertext links provides more details together with the meeting session recording link.

4. The role of CSOs in mitigating the Impacts of COVID-19 on Small scale cross-border trade in the East African Region

Hosted by East African Civil Society Forum (EACSOF)

Meeting Recording:
https://afdb.zoom.us/rec/share/y4JFdhp83jWLJe5fipC8TgnRBayde7NHmIVtgHrg2fmbwYS1IFsxRSECJjDBARmd.uEpOWHUJOeCW_hFF

Access Passcode: kjq9A=gE

Since the reporting of the first COVID-19 case in Kenya its extreme socio-economic and health impacts have been felt by all sections of the population. The disruption of cross border trade which was the main source of livelihoods for most border communities called for a critical evaluation and analysis of the situation and identify possible options to cushion the vulnerable groups especially women and young girls who were previously depending on cross border trade. EACSOF Kenya and its host Collaborative Centre for Gender and Development (CCGD) in partnership with the Ministry of East African Community and Regional Development (MEAC&RD) conducted a fact finding/ scoping mission in Kenya-Uganda and Kenya-Tanzania Border Counties and have been formulating and implementing recovery strategies. The proposed session complemented the recovery strategies and initiatives.

The session discussed the role of CSOs in mitigating the Impacts of COVID-19 on Small scale cross-border trade in the East African Region with the aim:

- To highlight best practices set up to help curb the effect and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the sources of livelihood especially for the marginalized communities in border counties
- To dialogue on CSOs innovative recovery strategies to reduce barriers to cross-border trade during COVID-19
- To harmonize Civil society advocacy efforts in ensuring that small scale traders effectively participate in National and Regional initiatives
- To Strengthen institutional and technical capacity of CSOs to effectively engage the Bank in the formulation and implementation of recovery strategies

The 4 parallel sessions enabled rich exchanges between different CSOs and was the opportunity to share best practices and opinions over subjects affecting the continent as a whole in the era of COVID-19. Participants played an active role in the discussion and welcomed the efforts done by their peers around the continent. CSO led session allowed civil society to get better acquainted with the views of African civil society on the issues, challenges and solutions pertaining to the Bank's High-5 strategy.

CONCLUSION

Closing ceremony

During two-days of rich and fruitful discussions, civil society organizations from across the continent, government representatives, institutional leaders, the Bank's senior management and staff were able to pursue and engage in constructive dialogue on how to build back a better Africa after COVID-19. The 2020 Civil society forum has provided opportunities to present the work of civil society organizations as well as share the Bank's efforts towards an inclusive and resilient recovery. The common understanding and agreement are strong: the response must be inclusive and involve all actors. The approach must be holistic, participatory and all-embracing.

The closing ceremony marked a strong moment of the forum with three major interventions and commitments made during the two-days of the forum: Luther Yameogo who presented the main outcomes, Zeneb Touré who presented and summed up the road map for the next months to be rolled out with all the parties concerned and Pr Gyimah-Boadi who gave the final closing word of the forum.

Some of the major take-aways are recalled here below:



▪ CSOs play a critical role in protecting the poor and vulnerable communities, particularly the rural and urban poor in times of crisis, improving the resilience of communities, supporting and growing the local economy, strengthening social cohesion and leading to speedy recovery. An effective and all-inclusive response to this pandemic has to be people centered and the various institutions involved in the response have to seize this opportunity to explore new ways of engagement. It can no longer be business as usual or intensification of efforts-but it can be an innovative approach to engagement which ensures the utmost reach to populations at the bottom of the pyramid. The efforts to combat this virus will not work unless the approach is holistic. Investing in and collaborating with civil society as a key development partner, is critical.

▪ Of the diverse new partnerships that must emerge in the post-pandemic period in order to reposition societies to be more successful against future shocks, the partnership between governments and civil society remains among the most indispensable. Governments and civil society actors have a responsibility to establish new relationships, identify innovative models for collaboration, and earn trust with one another in order to construct a new partnership that is mutually reinforcing and in the best interest of the public.

▪ Given that pandemics are a recurring phenomenon (the COVID-19 outbreak is but one example, albeit a particularly devastating one), and knowing that pandemics, like other emergencies, tend to disproportionately impact women and girls, it is imperative that policy makers at all levels put women and girls at the center of both emergency preparedness and long-term recovery planning. In other words, gender should be part and parcel of scenario planning in the response and recovery effort, as opposed to the

prevailing tendency to approach it as an add-on or afterthought Integrating gender at the heart of the response provides a platform to build resilience against future shocks.
As the COVID-19 outbreak eventually dies down and policymakers and the scientific community are able to embark on a forensic review the continent's response, a gendered perspective will be critical to the ability of policymakers to draw the necessary lessons to improve outcomes and saves lives during future outbreaks.

▪ The pandemic has brought into sharp relief the critical, and sometimes lifesaving, role that information and communications technology (ICT) can play in emergency situations where entire populations are confined in place. With restrictions on movement, assembly and personal contact, citizens have had to resort to ICT platforms to access vital public health information, commune with family and friends, order food and basic supplies, and organize work meetings. At the same time, these benefits have not been equally distributed within the population in many countries given structural barriers such as the high cost of internet connectivity and the insufficient internet coverage across national territories.
The experience of the COVID-19 outbreak must serve as a timely reminder to governments across the continent to invest extensively in ICT infrastructure, education and services and capacity building for CSOs for monitoring and ICT based accountability.

▪ COVID-19 has triggered a funding crisis for CSOS/NGOs when they are needed most. And yet the international humanitarian and development sector is itself rapidly facing a critical threat from this pandemic, due to funding constraints at the precise moment when CSOs work has become vitally important. Leaving CSOs aside now would be catastrophic to their ability to respond to both the immediate and long-term crisis forward. However, this is also an opportunity to design and develop new financing solutions.
A new Civil Society Engagement business model has never been more needed than now on the way from Emergency Response to Shaping a More Inclusive Future.

One of the key outcomes of the forum is the roadmap of the Bank's engagement with civil society set out by President Adesina at his opening remarks. His words were strong and still resonate:

"We must run 'people-centered programs. I have heard enough talk on civil society. I want to see clear actions, with outcomes that are measurable in our engagement with civil society".

The six commitments summed up as follows:

1. Develop a specific intervention that strengthens the institutional capacity of civil society organizations.
2. Support civil society organizations on advocacy work to promote Africa's development and the High 5.
3. Reinforce the Bank's engagement with civil society at the community level on projects to ensure that the intended impacts are being well monitored and achieved.
4. Support specifically civil society organizations that are working with women groups.
5. Increase the Bank's work with the civil society on ensuring there is compliance to social and environmental safeguards on all Bank projects
6. Strengthen the Bank's engagement with the civil society on anti-corruption efforts on projects.

The elaboration of this report was also the momentum for designing an implementation action plan of the President's directives.

The Forum has become an accelerator of partnerships, a networking event for the CSO community. The annual Civil Society Forum is now branded as the premier civil society event on the continent.

ANNEXES

ROADMAP - ACTION PLAN 2020-2021

CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT (CSE) COMMITMENTS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2021 ROADMAP

In his opening speech during the 2020 Virtual Civil Society Forum, the President stated that the Bank "should have bold engagements with the civil society" and work concretely with civil society organizations.
The President specified that Bank's approach for engaging civil society should shift from being process-driven to outcomes-driven over actionable programs.

The President calls for clear actions, with outcomes that are measurable in the Bank's engagement with the civil society envisioning to see at the next civil society organizations Forum: "civil society organizations on the platform sharing how they have worked with the Bank to deliver concrete outcomes".

President stressed on 6 major commitments here summarized:

1. The Bank should have a specific intervention that strengthens the institutional capacity of civil society organizations;
2. The Bank should support civil society organizations on advocacy work to promote Africa's development and the High5s in countries, to help accelerate the achievement of the SDGs and Agenda 2063;
3. The Bank should further strengthen its engagement with civil society at the community level on projects to ensure that the intended impacts are being well monitored and achieved;
4. The Bank should specifically support civil society organizations that are working with women groups, as we pursue our work to accelerate access to finance for women;
5. The Bank should further strengthen its work with the civil society on ensuring there is compliance to social and environmental safeguards on all Bank projects;
6. The Bank should strengthen its engagement with the civil society on anti-corruption efforts on projects.

The below draft action plan is recalling the 6 commitments of the President. It presents ongoing and new activities and proposes on the ground actions as quick wins. The timeline and resources are estimations and remain provisional.
The independent evaluation of the Bank's engagement with civil society yet to be submitted to the board also emphasized on the need to capture its contribution to inclusive and sustainable growth and improved quality of life for people in Africa through the implementation of a suggested theory of change shared below as well.

Civil Society Engagement long term pillars (global):

- Increased sustainability and inclusivity of Bank's results
- Enhanced quality and effectiveness of Bank's advise and support to RMCs
- Participatory governance and accountability at the RMCs and transparency of Bank's engagements with civil society

COMMITMENT 1:

The Bank should have a specific intervention that strengthens the institutional capacity of civil society organizations. The stronger the civil society organizations, the better they will be able to function as independent voices to inform our work and operations.

OUTCOMES	OUTPUTS	INSTITUTIONAL ACTIVITIES	PROPOSED ON THE GROUND ACTIVITIES	PARTNERS
Civil Society is capacitated and better equipped to ensure the achievement of the Bank's development agenda	Capacity Building Programme on Civil Society Engagement	Need assessment study on CSE both for CSOs and Bank staff (By Q4 2020) Design of CSE Capacity Building Programme aiming to strengthen internal Bank capacity on civil society engagement for a more effective civil society engagement in the implementation of Bank projects and programmes and also pertaining to strengthen CSOs capacity to support the implementation of the High5s (By Q2 2021) Upgrading of CSO database. The database is revamped into a digital E-Platform for interactive dialogue, systemic update and exchange of experiences (By Q2 2021) Position paper on "engaging Civil Society to improve the quality of life for the people in Africa" shared with AHVP (Done)	Strengthening the coordination and management capacity of the Panafrican Farmers Organizations (PAFO) to support the implementation of the Feed Africa Strategy. Develop modules on 'FEED Africa amid Covid19' Strengthen the coordination and management capacities of five sub regional farmers' entities (By Q4 2021)	INTERNAL AHGC AHAI AFFM ECAD FIRM EXTERNAL PAFO
			Building CSO Capacity on Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) Situation analysis of Hygiene and Sanitation in 2 pilot RMC communities Develop knowledge products, assessment tools and policy advocacy on CLTS Undertake Communication for Development on CLTS in 2 pilot RMC communities (By Q4 2021)	INTERNAL AHWS EXTERNAL Bank-CSO Committee
			Call for Proposals for the selection of CSOs in the framework of the ongoing CSO Empowerment Program with IsDB. Selected CSOs will participate in the 2021 capacity building program on fragility and resilience, (by Q2 2021) Call for Proposals for the selection of CSOs in the framework of the ongoing CSO Empowerment Program with IsDB. Selected CSOs will participate in the 2021 capacity building program on fragility and resilience, (by Q2 2021)	INTERNAL AHGC RDTS ECAD EXTERNAL IsDB

COMMITMENT 2:

The Bank should support civil society organizations on advocacy work to promote Africa's development and the High5s in countries, to help accelerate the achievement of the SDGs and Agenda 2063.

OUTCOMES	OUTPUTS	INSTITUTIONAL ACTIVITIES	PROPOSED ON THE GROUND ACTIVITIES	PARTNERS
Civil Society is better engaged in advocacy work in countries to promote the High5s for accelerating the SDGs agenda	Civil society voices are amplified across all Bank platforms	Organization of the Bank annual Civil Society Virtual Forum (by Q2 2021) Establishment of the Bloggers/Digital influencers Community to support the H5s (ongoing and completed by Q1 2021) Management of the Bank – Civil Society Committee to enhance the collaboration between Civil Society and the Bank (Ongoing – up to Q4 2022) Periodic Newsletter on Bank's engagement with civil society and stories of change from CSOS (periodic)	Social mobilization campaign with the GIMAC Network to Monitor the implementation of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA) in line with the Bank's Gender strategy: ▪ Awareness raising events; ▪ Co-organisation of the GIMAC ▪ 2021meeting in marge of the AU Summit Social mobilization campaign to adopt civil society roadmap towards COP26: ▪ Series of online consultations to identify the priorities (biodiversity, green growth, fossil fuels. . . .) ▪ Elaboration of a position paper and Identify climate investments that will be addressing vulnerability and fragility ▪ Support CSOs participation to the COP26 ▪ Advocacy Campaign during the Cop26 summit (By Q4 2021)	INTERNAL ▪ PCER ▪ AHGC ▪ PECG ▪ ECVP ▪ AHGC EXTERNAL ▪ Bank Civil Society Committee Bloggers community
			Interface Platform for Policy dialogue on CSE in 2 pilot RMCs ▪ Dissemination of the ESW/Report on CSE and inclusive growth ▪ Sep up committees comprising Governments-CSOs-Private Sector-Bank in 3 RMCs ▪ Organize capacity development of government and private sector on the add value of CSE in policy and operations (By Q4 2021)	INTERNAL ▪ ECCE ▪ ECVP ▪ AHGC ▪ CM ▪ Task Force EXTERNAL ▪ Bank Civil Society Committee Bloggers community
			Engaging African Artists and Athletes to support the Bank's High5s ▪ Recording of themed series individual video capsules with strong key messages for communication on High5s; ▪ Production and broadcasting of collaborative song "We are Africa!" ▪ Engage Artists and Athletes as Champions to communicate and advocate for Community Engagement across the Bank's High5s (By Q4 2021)	INTERNAL ▪ PCER ▪ AHGC ▪ AHGC EXTERNAL Artists and Athletes Youssou NDOUR Bloggers community

COMMITMENT 3:

The Bank should further strengthen its engagement with civil society at the community level on projects to ensure that the intended impacts are being well monitored and achieved.

OUTCOMES	OUTPUTS	INSTITUTIONAL ACTIVITIES	PROPOSED ON THE GROUND ACTIVITIES	PARTNERS
Civil Society is engaged in Bank projects at the national and community levels	Mainstreaming CSE in Bank operations and projects	Supporting CSO participation in Country dialogue and CSP Processes as well as in project cycle, (By Q4 2021) Integrating CSE in CSP/RISPs, (By Q4 2021) Integrating CSE in project cycle, (By Q4 2021) Hosting CSO Open Days in Regional host countries, (By Q4 2021) Mapping CSE financing mechanism within the Bank, (by Q1 2021) Economic Sector Work on the contribution of CSOs to inclusive growth to inform policy dialogue: The business case for engaging civil society in development programing & inclusive growth (By Q2 2021)	Support to Panafrican Farmers Organizations (PAFO) trough TAAT: Boosting the resilience of Africa food system over better regional integration of agricultural markets through enhanced technologies • Training session for Farmers Organizations on access and utilization of adapted technologies (based on TAAT framework) • Provide specific financial solutions to the weakened cooperatives, farmers-led SMEs (especially women and young people), commercial branches of FOs, to save the most vulnerable rural businesses amid COVID19 in 1 pilot RMC per Region • Engage PAFO on advocacy on the digitalization of agricultural markets in the Africa Continental Free Trade Area Agreement implementation plan (By Q4 2021)	INTERNAL • AHAI • PCER • AHHD2 • AHGC EXTERNAL • PAFO
		Capturing the best practices of CSE in rural communities and at the base of the pyramid (By Q2 2021) Integration of CSE in the results measurement framework of the Bank (By Q2 2021) Train bank staff on the CSE mainstreaming toolkit as soon as finalized (By Q2 2021) Train Country Economist on the Guidelines for CSE in CSPs as soon as they are validated (By Q2 2021)	Joint project with ICRC for the Economic empowerment of vulnerable Women in the Sahel Region. The project aims to improve women's access to economic resources and strengthen household's economic resilience in three pilot countries (Niger, Mali, and Chad) as an entry point for economic empowerment through income-generating activities ranging from agriculture and livestock-rearing to trade and crafts, capacity building and policy dialogue. The project is funded by TSF and implemented by ICRC as a civil society partner on 3 windows: • Capacity-building and revitalization of socio-economic activities Income-generating activities for households, especially female-headed households; • Policy dialogue and enabling environment to address gender gaps in access to economic resources. (By Q4 2021)	INTERNAL • RDTS • AHGC EXTERNAL • ICRC

COMMITMENT 4:

The Bank should specifically support civil society organizations that are working with women groups, as we pursue our work to accelerate access to finance for women.

OUTCOMES	OUTPUTS	INSTITUTIONAL ACTIVITIES	PROPOSED ON THE GROUND ACTIVITIES	PARTNERS
Women are capacitated and better equipped to access to finance	CSOs working on women economic empowerment are strategic partners on the implementation of AFAWA and other initiatives/flag ships on access to finance	Partnership with AFAWA for integration of Women Business Association in capacity building activities (ongoing)	Capacity Building of Women Business Association (WBAs) for SME's access to finance through AFAWA and GETF ▪ Supporting WBAs to strengthen the skills and wealth creating capacity of their members, innovative and effective change in the women's business culture; ▪ Mapping of Women Business Association on the continent is ongoing and will help identify the ones with immediate capacity to support PFIs benefiting from the AFAWA guarantees as well as better understand their specific needs ▪ Creating a platform for strategic alliances and market access, as well as advocate for and influence policy reform ▪ Leverage the GETF to support the institutional capacity building of these organizations to support Women entrepreneur access to finance; leverage business opportunities for Women; sharing learning experiences and mentoring ▪ Support Women association advocacy for an enabling environment for financial inclusion (By Q4 2021)	INTERNAL ▪ AFAWA ▪ PIFD ▪ FIRM EXTERNAL ▪ Women Business Associations

COMMITMENT 5:

The Bank should further strengthen its work with the civil society on ensuring there is compliance to social and environmental safeguards on all Bank projects. As a Bank, we are committed to supporting projects that are socially and environmentally accountable.

OUTCOMES	OUTPUTS	INSTITUTIONAL ACTIVITIES	PROPOSED ON THE GROUND ACTIVITIES	PARTNERS
Compliance to environmental and social safeguards is enhanced through engagement with civil society	The Bank's operations comply with social and environmental safeguards	Building capacity of CSOs on social and environmental safeguard: Awareness raising and experiences of projects that are socially and environmentally accountable (by Q3 2021)	CSOs lead community participation in project-level grievance and redress mechanisms ▪ Design and adapt training module on Integrated Safeguard system (ISS) ▪ Pilot the training of CSOs on the ISS ▪ CSOs take part in project planning and implementation and ensure voices and concerns of affected people are heard and addressed. (by Q3 2021)	INTERNAL ▪ SNSC EXTERNAL ▪ TBD

COMMITMENT 6:

The Bank should strengthen its engagement with the civil society on anti-corruption efforts on projects. The Bank is a transparent organization and was ranked last year as the 4th most transparent organization in the world. The Bank has zero tolerance for corruption and welcomes the civil society to partner with our independent anti-corruption department.

OUTCOMES	OUTPUTS	INSTITUTIONAL ACTIVITIES	PROPOSED ON THE GROUND ACTIVITIES	PARTNERS
Civil Society is engaged on transparency, anti-corruption and accountability on Bank projects	The Bank is partnering with Civil Society on Strenghening accountability in the Bank operations in RMCs	Ongoing survey on debt transparency and accountability with a sample of CSOs Webinars organized on "Promoting Accountability and Supporting a Transparent Recovery in the Context of COVID-19" with a session on Innovations and engaging citizens to reinforce accountability of the COVID-19 response (By Q4 2020)	ESW on Civil Society contribution to study on debt sustainability in Africa post COVID19 (ongoing) ▪ Baseline study and desk review ▪ Disseminate findings (By Q4 2021)	INTERNAL ▪ SNSP ▪ ECGF ▪ ECAD EXTERNAL ▪ Research Institutions ▪ AFRODAD
			Engaging CSOs on accountability on the CRF in 2 pilot Countries ▪ Training on demand-side governance: Modules on transparency, accountability, Integrity reviews and compliance with Bank's projects ▪ Monitoring of CRF projects by CSOs in 2 RMCs ▪ Leverage on the case of the CRF's project in Zimbabwe: documentation, lessons learnt and replicability ▪ CSOs participate and contribute to 2021 Integrity reviews and compliance on Bank Institutional Governance Sector Projects (By Q4 2021) (By Q4 2021)	INTERNAL ▪ PIAC ▪ ECGF ▪ DAI ▪ AHGC ▪ ECAD EXTERNAL ▪ Accountability Lab ▪ Bank CSO Committee

CONCEPT NOTE AND AGENDA

1. BACKGROUND

Over the past decades, civil society has played a critical role in Africa's socio-economic transformation. Civil society organizations (CSOs) have grown into a dynamic, innovative and influential ecosystem with increased power beyond their traditional role and sector. Consistent with the global shifts in technology, globalization and geopolitics, civil society's roles and responsibilities in Africa have expanded.

Indeed, CSOs are progressively involved in forging strategic partnerships with governments, businesses, donors, and are largely part of official consultative processes at regional and continental levels. In today's world, where we face multiple challenges in addressing pressing global development issues, CSOs are making strides to improving vulnerable livelihoods. They are gradually considered not only as advocates or community service providers but also as enablers for change, policy influencers, project incubators, experts and implementing partners.

In response to this increased civil society engagement, the African Development Bank Group (the Bank) organizes each year a Civil Society Forum. It serves as a platform for dialogue between the Bank and CSOs stakeholders. This year, the Forum will be held virtually under the



theme "Engaging Civil Society in building back better after COVID-19", which is aligned with the outcome of the Bank's Annual Meetings. Therefore, the forum will explore cost-effective strategies and reflect on best practices to continue to enhance collaboration between the Bank and civil society, and maximize joint contributions to the continent's response and recovery efforts.

2. RATIONALE

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted millions of people's livelihoods, disproportionately affecting poor households as well as small and informal businesses. The pandemic has exposed inequalities and vulnerabilities that have been in existence for many years. A global pandemic undoubtedly requires proactive responses, not only from governments, but from every stakeholder in society. A comprehensive, effective and all-inclusive response to this pandemic is driving a new thinking, bold multi-sectoral collaboration, building new collaboration and leveraging every stakeholder's competitive strength for a more resilient society.

Addressing COVID-19 should be people centered in ensuring we «leave no one behind». It can no longer be business as usual. Innovative approaches of engagement have to be sought for efficient public and private partnerships to address need of the people at the bottom of the pyramid. The various institutions involved in building COVID-19

responses have well understood this aspect and seized this opportunity to explore new ways of engagement. By remaining holistic, the combined efforts to curb this pandemic will yield better and more impactful results. Therefore, investing in human development and collaborating with civil society organizations as key development partners is critical.

Given the overwhelming nature of the emergency response and the inadequacy of national public health systems in many instances to reach every segment of the society, CSOs played the role of first responders as service providers and caregivers in the continent. At an early stage of the outbreak of COVID-19, CSOs were mobilized and reorganized to help communities deal with this pandemic.

The proximity CSOs have with communities creates avenues to raise public awareness, community outreach and citizens' education. This also enables disseminating timely and credible information and combatting fake news, organizing communities into networks, and creating synergies by sharing good practices and lessons.

Moreover, CSOs are initiating advocacy actions to engage with decision-makers, sometimes lobbying for fair power relations and are using channels of dialogue with authorities and financial partners to make their voice count. Along with governments, the private sector, technical and financial partners, CSOs have demonstrated the added value of rights-based approaches, showcasing their abilities to aggregate the concerns of citizens, their role in monitoring transparency, accountability and responsibility of the actors. Today, it becomes evidence that CSOs are taking active roles in transforming societies; and are recognized as a major player in governance sphere.

Responding to COVID-19 calls for rapid decision-making, coupled with innovative and effective solutions to address an evolving crisis. As a leading development finance institution of the continent, the Bank recognizes the ability and capacity of CSOs to position the interests of African citizens at the center of its inclusive growth agenda, one of the objectives of its Ten-Year Strategy (TYS 2013-2022) [1].

The African Development Bank has moved rapidly to provide flexible responses to lessen the severe economic and social impact of this pandemic on its Regional Member Countries (RMCs) and on Africa's private sector. The Bank created a dedicated COVID-19 Rapid Response Facility (CRF), providing up to USD 10 billion to help its RMCs alleviate the effects of the spread of COVID-19 on the continent and mitigate some of the immediate effects by maintaining essential government services in these extremely adverse circumstances.

The African Development Bank Annual Meetings has further analyzed this context imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to estimates by the Bank, Africa could lose $173.1 billion in GDP in 2020 and $236.7 billion in 2021 because of the pandemic. The restrictions and strict lockdown measures imposed at the beginning of the crisis, some of which are being gradually relaxed, have resulted in business closures especially SMEs resulting in millions of job losses. Addressing the audience, the African Development Bank President Akinwumi Adesina insisted that Africa's recovery will be long and difficult and stated, *"Now we must help Africa build back, boldly, but smartly, paying greater attention to quality growth: health, climate and the environment"*. The Annual Meetings outcomes also stressed that, while the Bank rightly puts great emphasis on helping Africa build capacity to deal with COVID-19 and its imminent far-reaching effects on economies in the immediate post COVID-19 era, *"it does not postpone other critical tasks such as supporting intra-Africa trade, agricultural transformation, infrastructure development, among others".*

[1]The Ten-Year Strategy stipulates that the "Bank Group would pay more attention to empowering non-state actors to engage in accountability mechanisms, and support citizen initiatives that hold governments and service providers accountable for better service delivery, strengthening the capacity and reach of CSO to play an oversight role in implementing the High 5s".

The Bank's role has never been more important. To its people-centered commitment, upward engagement with civil society shall be key alongside digitalization in this quest for building back better after COVID-19. Several initiatives aimed at strengthening the Bank's engagement with civil society and contributing to the fight against COVID-19 have been put in place, including:

- Developing tools and guidelines for mainstreaming civil society engagement in Country Strategy Papers (CSP) / Regional Integration Papers (RISPs) and guidelines for mainstreaming civil society engagement in projects including amidst COVID-19;
- A tool for capacity building on civil society engagement is currently being designed and shall strengthen the capacities of the Bank's staff and CSOs engagement in the Bank policies, programs and projects based on identified needs and gaps generated by COVID-19; and
- Awareness webinar series jointly initiated with the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union (AU-ECOSOCC) to raise awareness, sensitize and educate African citizens and civil society at large about the pandemic, the necessary measures to adopt during the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated public health guidance from the Africa Center for Diseases Control (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Building on lessons learned and past experiences, the 2020 Civil Society Virtual Forum will be the opportunity to present the work of CSOs' and share the Bank's efforts towards an inclusive, resilient recovery.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE VIRTUAL FORUM

The 2020 Civil Society Virtual Forum main objectives are to :

- Provide a platform for structured dialogue between the Bank and civil society on supporting the implementation of the Bank's post-pandemic agenda;
- Showcase and document CSOs actions and best practices on combatting the pandemic;
- Rally common areas of joint advocacy and social mobilization in support of the Bank's strategic objectives and agree upon concrete steps on how best the Bank and civil society can contribute to a more efficient and impactful response and post-pandemic recovery.

4. FORMAT OF THE VIRTUAL FORUM

The 2-day online forum will take place in the following format:

- Opening ceremony and Conversation with the Bank's officials and guests;
- Virtual exhibition to showcase solutions and initiatives launched by CSOs during the crisis that have helped the most vulnerable communities endure the pandemic and mitigate its effects on the economy and social life;
- Thematic CSO led sessions on post COVID-19 priorities and Civil Society engagement.

5. AGENDA

DAY I : Thursday 26 November 2020

1. Opening Ceremony

- Welcome Remarks: Vanessa Moungar, Director Gender, Women and Civil Society Department, AHGC, AfDB
- Address by: Wambui Gichuri, Acting Vice-President for Agriculture, Human and Social Development (AHVP)
- Address from Civil Society: Graça Machel, Chair of the Board of the Graça Machel Trust (GMT)
- Official statement: President of the African Development Bank Group
- High-Level Conversation with:
    - President of the African Development Bank Group, Dr Akinwumi Adesina
    - Youssou Ndour, Singer, Writer, Businessman, Former Minister of Culture of Senegal, Lead of the Worldwide Africa Network' (WAN) initiative against COVID-19.

2. Virtual exhibition – Citizens and Civil Society Initiatives against COVID-19

During the Forum, a virtual exhibition will showcase and document CSOs, social entrepreneurs and digital influencers' actions and best practices set up to help curb the effect and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on African populations and communities. The Bank has completed an inventory of CSOs innovative initiatives against COVID-19 and the best ones will be presented. Short videos will be displayed, and team leads will interact with identified partners to discuss challenges and ways to promote and scale them up. An online gallery will be created to present the CSOs experiences.

DAY II : Friday 27 November 2020

1. Update on the Bank's engagement with Civil Society

The Bank's Civil Society and Community Engagement Division will provide an update on the ongoing activities: Mainstreaming civil society engagement in the Bank's policies, programs and projects, Capacity building program on civil society engagement, partnerships and social mobilization initiatives, Financing civil society engagement, civil society engagement amid COVID-19, communication plan on civil society engagement, update on the Bank-Civil Society Committee.

2. CSOs led sessions on post COVID-19 priorities and Civil Society Engagement

CSOs will organize parallel sessions they shall lead and manage. These sessions will provide a space for grassroots innovative ideas and enhanced partnerships with CSOs through a greater ownership of the sessions. Roadmaps will be elaborated for each session in collaboration and engagement from participating CSOs to contribute to their implementation.

3. Conclusion of the Forum

Participants shall agree upon concrete steps before the official closing of the Forum.

MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA REPORTING





GALERY OF PHOTOS

https://www.flickr.com/photos/afdbgroup/albums/72157717062880106/with/50652348168/
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Thank you



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