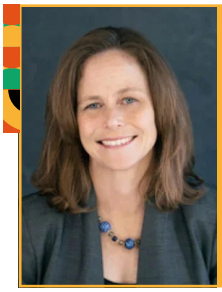
AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT

CSO Civil Society Société Civile

Newsletter

"Voice of Citizens in Africa" February 2025 | Issue 14

60 Years of the African Development Bank: Civil Society's Contributions to Africa's Development Journey.



Beth Dunford
Vice President for Agriculture, Human and Social Development, African Development Bank Group

Celebrating our journey

As we commemorate the 60th anniversary of the African Development Bank from September 2024 to April 2025, we celebrate decades of remarkable progress and transformation across Africa, as well as a legacy of collaboration, resilience, and vision. It is a time to reflect on the milestones we've reached, honor our achievements, and renew our commitment to shaping a brighter future for Africa.

Civil society organizations are at the heart of Africa's transformation. With their deep understanding of local challenges, they are the voices of the most vulnerable and the architects of innovative solutions. In line with this vision, during this anniversary year the Bank launched initiatives such as the mapping project of women entrepreneur associations, a flagship endeavor designed to deepen our understanding of these civil society challenges and opportunities. Our Civil Society Open Days, a half-dozen sessions in 2024 that were designed for Bank staff and leadership to meet in person or virtually with civil society organization representatives across the continent, have strengthened relationships and fostered deeper engagement.

This anniversary-themed, 14th issue of "Voices of Citizens in Africa" aims to showcase how we are strengthening and expanding these partnerships. Enjoy, and be sure to reach out to us with your feedback – let us know how we're doing, and your ideas to better engage with civil societies our next 60 years.

Pan African Farmers Organization and the Bank: a partnership that feeds Africa's future

In the words of an African proverb, "The farmer who grows the seed never eats alone." This sentiment perfectly describes the collaboration between the Pan African Farmers Organization and the African Development Bank, a strategic partnership where every farmer's voice counts, and every action has the power to nourish an entire continent.

The Pan African Farmers Organization has been instrumental in advocating for policies that empower local farmers and to foster deeper connections between governments, development partners, and rural communities. Based on its vast network representing millions of farmers across the continent, the Bank and the Pan African Farmers Organization signed a Memorandum of Understanding in October 2023 that seeks to ensure that Africa's agricultural transformation is both inclusive and sustainable.

Together with the Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation the Bank and the Pan African Farmers Organization are leveraging their combined comparative advantages to cultivate a flourishing agricultural landscape that will feed generations to come. Since 2017, these initiatives have benefited over one million farmers, enhancing productivity and livelihoods.

In the spirit of the Bank's 60 years, "we are not just growing crops; we are growing hope." The journey towards a food-secure Africa, where agriculture drives economic growth and job creation, is already underway, and with the continuous support of the Bank, the Pan African Farmers Organization, and farmers, it will go a long way enhancing participation and ownership by famers, promote local solutions, increase sustainability and maximize impact in the delivery of the Bank's Feed Africa Strategy.

The Pan African Farmers Organization wishes the Bank a happy celebration of 60 years of service to Africa's agriculture and farmers, and looks forward to continued collaboration and partnership for food and nutritional security in Africa.



Ibrahima Coulibaly
President, Pan African Farmers Organization



Babafemi Oyewole
Chief Executive Officer, Pan African Farmers Organization

Bank-Civil Society Coalition: Driving climate and energy solutions for Africa's future

Reflecting on the African Development Bank's remarkable journey over six decades, it's clear that impactful partnerships, particularly with the Bank-Civil Society Coalition on Climate and Energy, have played a pivotal role in shaping Africa's development. One of the key players in this coalition is the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance, which has been at the forefront of advocating for climate justice and ensuring that the voices of African communities are heard in global climate discussions.

Through our partnership with the Bank, we have organized influential Civil Society Organizations Event during COP27, COP28, and COP29. These events have facilitated valuable dialogues between civil society, governments, and development partners, aligning efforts to address the climate and energy challenges we face. In doing so, we have ensured that the concerns of communities are reflected in the Bank's policies and operations, pushing for a more inclusive and sustainable approach.

The Pan African Climate Justice Alliance's work with the Bank goes beyond mere collaboration; it is about empowering communities to take the lead in climate action and energy solutions. Through this partnership, we have seen tangible results–creating policies that are not only responsive to the needs of the people but also effective in driving long-term change.

As we continue this journey together, we celebrate our shared successes and the strong foundation we have built. With the Bank's unwavering support and the Pan African Climate Justice Alliance's dedication, we are proud to contribute to Africa's transition toward a greener, more resilient future. Together, we will ensure that the voices of African communities remain central in shaping our continent's climate and energy future.



Augustine Njamnshi

Co-Founder and Chair of Political and Technical Affairs, Pan African Climate Justice Alliance, and Chair of African Development Bank-Civil Society Coalition on Climate and Energy

African Development Bank and Civil Society Organizations coming from far

The core of civil society organization coordination is empowering key stakeholders–especially women, youth, and community organizations–to actively shape programs that impact their lives. Early in my career, I served as the Africa Region Program Coordinator at the United Nations Population Fund. My role involved high-level dialogue with governments and development partners on national development plans, integrating health and population indicators into global agendas like the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and the 2063 Africa Union Agenda.

At that time, civil society engagement in decision-making was minimal, but the African Development Bank presented a unique opportunity to shift this paradigm. The African Development Bank's approach, consistent with its High 5 principle to "Improve the quality of life for the people of Africa," highlighted the importance of community-driven development and the active involvement of civil society organizations in its operations.

The Bank and civil society organizations collaboration began with its first meeting in February 1999, followed by the adoption of a civil society organization policy and guidelines in 2000. The creation of the Bank-Civil Society Organization Committee in 2002 further strengthened this partnership. During my tenure as Civil Society Organization Coordinator (2007-2009), I led the revision of the civil society organization policy, aligning it with the Bank's 2008-2012 Medium-Term Strategy and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

One key achievement was the operationalization of "Walking the Talk", involving training for Bank staff, civil society organization experts, and communities. This collaborative approach led to better stakeholder involvement in country strategies, poverty reduction plans, and project evaluations, enhancing the Bank's operations and improving its ratings.

Looking ahead, I propose: (i) empowering civil society organization focal points for more effective dialogue with governments and development partners, and (ii) reviewing the Bank's procurement and funding frameworks to support regional, women, and youth-centered projects like reforestation in the Sahel and the Congo Basin Carbon Fund.



Prosper Poukouta

Former Non-Governmental Organization / Civil Society Organization Coordinator, Retired Ag. Director Corporate Human Resource, African Development Bank Group

60 Years of the Bank: harnessing the power of civil society for Africa's transformation

Since 1964, the African Development Bank has been pivotal in Africa's socio-economic transformation, with civil society organizations bridging institutional objectives and grassroots needs. Over six decades, the partnership has evolved significantly.

Civil society organizations have achieved significant results in livelihoods, gender equity, environmental stewardship, and social inclusion. One of the prime examples is the Stand for Vulnerable Organization in Ethiopia, a Bank-Civil Society Organization Committee member (2018–2021). By aligning with the Bank's High 5 agenda, Stand for Vulnerable Organization launched Eagle Social Enterprise, encompassing ventures like a bakery, soap factory, dairy production, guesthouses, etc. This innovative approach reduced donor dependency, fostered resilience, and demonstrated how civil society organizations can achieve financial independence while addressing community needs. Through its partnership with the Bank, Stand for Vulnerable Organization has become among the leading income-generating civil society organizations in Ethiopia, exemplifying sustainable development and self-sufficiency, which provides scalable models for others.

Looking ahead, the Bank and civil society organizations partnership must evolve into a global model of collaboration. African civil society organizations should drive innovation and transformation with autonomy and resources to address development challenges effectively. Enhanced dialogue, shared responsibility, and robust partnerships can amplify their impact, ensuring that vulnerable voices are heard, and solutions are sustainable.

As the Bank celebrates 60 years, the civil society organization partnership remains central to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063, unlocking Africa's full potential and advancing inclusive development for future generations.



Misganaw Eticha Dubie (MA)
Executive Director, Stand for Vulnerable Organization-Ethiopia

Empowering civil society for stronger impact in West Africa

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." This timeless African proverb perfectly encapsulates the essence of the partnership between the West African Civil Society Institute and the African Development Bank.

Since 2016, the West African Civil Society Institute has maintained a strategic partnership with the Bank to strengthen civil society engagement in development initiatives. This relationship solidified with the West African Civil Society Institute's official membership on the Bank-Civil Society Organization Committee for two consecutive terms, 2018-2020 and 2020-2022. Through this platform, and in line with its mission to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations and empower local voices to actively participate in the development process, the West African Civil Society Institute provided strategic guidance for the development and implementation of the Bank's civil society organization engagement strategy, monitored Bank's performance from citizen perspectives, facilitated the exchange of information and experiences, and acted as a liaison between the Bank and the broader civil society organization community in the Economic Community of West African States region.

In December 2023, this partnership reached new heights with the signing of a five-year Memorandum of Understanding. This agreement underscores a joint commitment to mobilize, build, and strengthen civil society organization capacities to effectively engage with the Bank. Currently, the West African Civil Society Institute and the Bank are implementing a five-year plan aimed at empowering civil society organizations, particularly in fragile regions like the Sahel, through capacity building and knowledge generation for advocacy and policy influence. This collaboration exemplifies the shared vision of ensuring that sustainable development is community-driven, reinforcing the vital role of civil society in shaping Africa's development trajectory.

Sixty years of the Bank's progress wouldn't be complete without acknowledging the critical role of civil society. The partnership between the West African Civil Society Institute and the Bank is striving to ensure that the path to sustainable development is one that communities are actively shaping through capacity building and knowledge generation.



Nana Asantewa Afadzinu
Executive Director, West African Civil Society Institute.

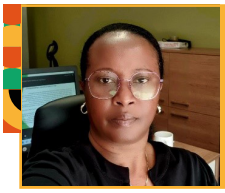


Luther YAMEOGO
Principal Civil Society Organization Engagement Advocacy Officer, African Development Bank Group

Civil society organizations are the heartbeat of Africa's development, fueling progress and partnerships over six decades of the Bank's journey.

Bringing the Bank closer to the people in Southern Africa

Civil society engagement is a cornerstone of the African Development Bank's strategy in Southern Africa. Since 2018 all the thirteen Regional Member Countries have received concrete input from or on civil society organization as they develop new Country Strategy Papers, review the status of their implementation or review their performance at the end of the Country Strategy Papers period. The region has hosted six Civil Society Organizations Open Days in six countries (Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Sao Tome and Principe, South Africa and Zambia). The aim of the Civil Society Organization Open Day is to strengthen civil society engagement in country dialogue by creating awareness of the Bank's operations in Regional Member Countries, receive feedback on the Bank's performance from the perspective of the civil society organizations and explore opportunities and areas of mutual collaboration in the implementation of the Bank's operations and projects. Two Regional Civil Society Organizations Forums have been held. There has been significant success in partnering with civil society organization projects e.g. the Gender Transformative Climate Resilience Initiatives for Malawi and Mozambique; the Zimbabwe Arrears Clearance and Economic Governance and the Mozambique Snytropic Agriculture Project as strategy to foster resilience to name a few. I look forward to continue working with colleagues and all the key development stakeholders, including civil society organization partners in driving positive change in the region.



Njeri Kinyoho
Principal Civil Society Organizations Officer for Soutern Africa, African Development Bank Group

Civil society organizations are key allies in Zimbabwe's debt resolution

Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development has become a pivotal partner for the African Development Bank in Zimbabwe's journey toward economic stability and growth. Through their ongoing collaboration, the Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development plays an active role in helping the country clear public debt arrears and resolve debt sustainability challenges.

As a member of the Structured Dialogue Platform Forum and the Economic Growth and Stability Reform Sector Working Group, the Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development engages with the Bank in high-level discussions on key topics such as economic performance, public finance management, debt management, and civic participation. The collaboration has been crucial in shaping Zimbabwe's debt resolution roadmap, garnering strong support from both bilateral and multilateral creditors.

Additionally, the Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development contributes to Bank-supported projects, such as an independent national corruption perception survey. It was also instrumental in conceptualizing the current debt resolution process, which began in 2022. Key principles from this process include enhanced transparency, depoliticized sovereign debt, and creating space for civic engagement in national debt dialogues.

This partnership with the Bank has helped Zimbabwe chart a sustainable recovery path, drawing significant buy-in from international stakeholders.



John P. Maketo
Executive Director, Zimbabwe Coalition on Debt and Development

The Bank and civil society organizations together for change in East Africa

In East Africa, the story of civil society engagement has been a testimony of remarkable growth, and strategic focus, promoting innovations and collaboration. Through civil society organization Open Days, dialogues during project design and strategy development, we have deepened connections between the Bank, civil society organizations, and local communities, fostering collaborations and addressing challenges. Transitioning from virtual to in-person meetings has enhanced collaboration, as well as increased government participation in the Bank's civil society engagement activities has added more value to our work. We have had successful project designs and implementations this year. The South Sudan-Uganda Power Interconnection Project exemplifies how actions, like awareness sessions, drive inclusivity and impact. Together, we continue to pave the way for a more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Africa.



Ezeigbo Chikanne
Civil Society Expert for East Africa, African Development Bank Group

The Bank empowering voices of women with disabilities in climate action

As Africa confronts climate change challenges, the Strengthening the Voices of Women with Disabilities project stands as a testament to transformative inclusion. Funded by the African Development Bank through the Africa Climate Change Fund, this three-year initiative empowers women with disabilities across 12 Eastern African countries to shape climate policies.

Climate change disproportionately affects women with disabilities, yet their perspectives are often overlooked. Strengthening the Voices of Women with Disabilities, co-implemented by the Centre for Minority Rights Development and Inclusive Climate Change for Sustainable Africa, addresses this gap through capacity building and advocacy.

"Before this project, I didn't believe my voice could influence policy. Now, I am actively contributing to national climate plans," shares Judy Nagol from Kenya's Ogiek community. Similarly, Dorcus Chelain, from Uganda talks about the challenges that Ugandan women with disabilities face: "Women with disabilities are the most affected by climate change impacts like floods and drought. However, their voices are not in climate change primarily because most of them are illiterate. After participating in the Strengthening the Voices of Women with Disabilities activities, I feel empowered. It is the first time I have engaged in a project like this, and I am now ready to empower my fellow women and girls with disabilities to shape decisions that affect them. I really want to thank those who came up with this project because it will lift the voices of many women with disabilities from our marginalised communities"

The project's impact reached new heights at COP29, where participants contributed to a breakthrough achievement–the formal recognition of the Disability Constituency under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change framework. This historic step ensures representation for people with disabilities in global climate negotiations.

The project has established the African Alliance for Women with Disabilities in Climate Action, creating a network for knowledge-sharing and collaboration. The project also launched a disability-friendly online platform, making climate information accessible to all.

As we celebrate 60 years of the Bank's dedication to Africa's progress, the Strengthening the Voices of Women with Disabilities project exemplifies the Bank's commitment to leaving no one behind. The project stands as more than an initiative–it's a blueprint for equity in climate justice, proving that inclusive action is essential for building a sustainable future for all Africans.



Nyang'ori Ohenjo
Team Lead, Center for Minority Rights Development



Wambui Muchaba
Programs Director, Inclusive Climate Change Adaptation for a Sustainable Africa

Civil society driving sustainable change in West Africa

Since January 2024, under Civil Society and Community Engagement Division's leadership, I've focused on strengthening collaboration with key civil society organizations in West Africa. Over 20 new civil society organizations have been engaged, contributing to our programs and increasing the visibility of the Bank's work. In May 2024, a mission to Accra deepened strategic partnerships with organizations like West African Civil Society Institute and West African Peacebuilding Network, leading to a 2 million Unity of Account grant for projects in Burkina Faso and Mali. The partnership was further solidified by a Civil Society Organizations Open Day in The Gambia, fostering dialogue. With continued collaboration, we are shaping more inclusive and impactful development in West Africa.



Minemba Traore
Senior Civil Society Officer for West Africa, African Development Bank Group



Transforming lives of women in fragile contexts: civil society organizations and the Bank leading change

In a world where rural women are often overlooked, the "Coopérative des Productrices de beurre de Karité de Zantiébougou" stands out as an inspiring example of transformation and empowerment. With the support of the African Development Bank, the "Coopérative des Productrices de beurre de Karité de Zantiébougou" has not only boosted its production capacity but has also expanded its impact, transforming lives and communities.

Innovation doesn't stop there: the cooperative is now embarking on shea reforestation projects and waste-to-bioenergy initiatives, contributing both to the empowerment of women and environmental protection.

The Bank's support through programs like the Women's Empowerment in the Shea Value Chain Program has been a key driver in this process. Through this partnership, the

"Coopérative des Productrices de beurre de Karité de Zantiébougou" received crucial support in terms of equipment, materials, and infrastructure, which enhanced its production capacity and environmental sustainability efforts. By extending its model to other cooperatives, such as the Union Si Yriwa of Dioïla and the Sabali Cooperative of Zeta, the "Coopérative des Productrices de beurre de Karité de Zantiébougou" highlights the vital role that civil society organizations play in driving inclusive and sustainable growth.

These support initiatives have positioned the "Coopérative des Productrices de beurre de Karité de Zantiébougou" as a key player in the shea industry, with positive outcomes not only for the women involved but also for rural communities as a whole. The impact of the Bank is tangible, paving the way for a development model that deserves to be replicated across the continent.

Bringing together 1,562 women from the rural commune of Zantiébougou in Bougouni, this shea cooperative goes beyond producing shea butter; it exemplifies the future of sustainable development in Africa, empowering women while promoting environmental sustainability. With Bank's support, the "Coopérative des Productrices de beurre de Karité de Zantiébougou" is not only transforming lives but setting a replicable model for inclusive growth across the continent.



Mariko Mah Koné
President of the "Coopérative des Productrices de beurre de Karité de Zantiébougou"

Empowering civil society in the energy sector

In the heart of Mali, a civil society organization is revolutionizing the energy approach with an idea as simple as it is ingenious: a stove capable of recovering lost heat during cooking to transform it into electricity. Green Energy Mali doesn't stop there - the organization has also committed to converting waste into bioenergy, producing green charcoal, pellets, and briquettes, bringing a holistic solution to the country's energy challenges.

Like many nascent organizations, we quickly encountered obstacles. Despite our innovative concept, we lacked visibility and solid structures to develop in the Malian market.

A turning point occurred when a friend discovered our work on social media and directed us to the African Development Bank. Thanks to the African Development Bank's "Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Development Support Project", we benefited from essential training on digitalizing our processes and improving our communication.

This support not only allowed us to structure our organization but also connected us to a network of institutional and private actors, considerably strengthening our credibility.

Although funding challenges persist for our expansion, the African Development Bank's support has transformed our trajectory. This collaboration perfectly illustrates how supporting civil society organizations can catalyze local innovation and contribute to solutions adapted to the specific needs of our communities.

Behind this innovation lies my personal journey. After several years in the international oil industry where I developed expertise in residual heat recovery, I decided to return to Mali in 2020 to put my knowledge at the service of my community.



Souare Abdoulaye
Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Green Energy Mali

Building a strong foundation for civil society engagement

Being a pathfinder isn't always what anyone wishes for but at times destiny can put us in situations we least expected. Looking back over the last six years, I can only be proud of having been part of this challenging and inspiring journey and contributing to the Bank's achievements as it celebrates 60 years.

It is an honor to be part of the team that is molding and laying the building blocks of the civil society engagement edifice of the African Development Bank. As Officer in charge of capacity building, this has entailed conceiving and rolling out civil society engagement capacity building initiatives and programmes including the training of Bank staff, knowledge sessions for civil society organizations on Bank policies and procedures and induction sessions for new staff. A civil society engagement Community of Practice has been established to enhance collaboration, knowledge sharing, and capacity building among stakeholders and foster a culture of collaboration, inclusiveness, and learning. Resources are also being mobilized to support civil society empowerment especially in peace and resilience building with special attention on the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin through partnerships with the West African Peacebuilding Network and the Lake Chad Basin Commission respectively.

May these initiatives help in bringing about a more transparent, inclusive and resilient continent where no one is left behind.



Edward Mzeka Nsobe
Senior Capacity Building Officer, Civil Society and Community Engagement Division, African Development Bank Group

Empowering civil society: driving change in North and Central Africa

Since 2022, I have been dedicated to integrating civil society engagement into various projects across North and Central Africa through multiple approaches. At the strategy level, civil society engagement has been mainstreamed into Country Strategy Papers and Regional Integration Strategy Papers for Egypt, Libya, and Mauritania. This engagement is demonstrated through key projects such as the Economic and Social Reform Consolidation Support Program-Phase II in Central African Republic, which enhances local community participation, and the Strengthening rural resilience in Mauritania through the management and development of productive water resources for domestic and ecosystem purposes project in Mauritania, which improves water resource management. To strengthen stakeholder engagement, regional forums were organized in Cameroon and Egypt in 2023, followed by Civil Society Organization Open Days in Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, and Mauritania in 2024, all contributing to more inclusive development and community ownership across the region.



Hisseine Mahamat
Civil Society Expert for Central and North Africa, African Development Bank Group

Civil society organizations revive livestock in Central African Republic

In the Central African Republic, livestock has always been a cornerstone of our economy and culture. The National Federation of Central African Livestock Farmers, established to defend the interests of livestock farmers and represent them to the authorities, was long considered a model of organization in the subregion. However, in 2013, armed conflicts devastated our country, destroying not only lives but also the vital structures of our community. The National Federation of Central African Livestock Farmers was shattered, its headquarters looted, and its members were forced to flee, seeking refuge in neighboring countries. The national economic fabric lay in ruins, and with it, hope seemed distant.

Today, thanks to the invaluable support of our partners, particularly the African Development Bank, our federation is rising from the ashes. This partnership, which took shape in December 2019 through the Savannah-Based Agricultural Value Chains Development Support Project, has been a catalyst for our recovery. It is not just material aid; it is a support to rebuild our dignity and our future.

With the Bank's help, we have been able to reorganize and reinvigorate our activities. The results are tangible: veterinary pharmacies have been rehabilitated, livestock markets have been created, and over 6,000 farmers have returned to areas supported by the Bank. The project has allowed us to train both farmers and women farmers, strengthening local capacities and providing sustainable solutions to improve agropastoral land management.

We have also received essential tools for our activities: motorcycles, laptops, and even artisanal processing units, such as a cheese factory. Every action, every gesture has contributed to the reconstruction of our sector. We have breathed new life into women's groups and restored hope to an entire community.

Today, thanks to this partnership with the Bank, our future looks brighter. The National Federation of Central African Livestock Farmers is no longer a symbol of destruction, but an example of resilience. We continue to rebuild, to train, to transform. We sincerely thank the Bank and hope that its support will continue, not only to consolidate these achievements but also to expand these development dynamics to neighboring prefectures.



Ousman Shehou
Secretary General of the National Federation of Central African Livestock Farmers

Civil society driving Africa's transformation

As we commemorate the 60th anniversary of the African Development Bank Group, it is important to highlight the pivotal role that civil society organizations have played in this transformative journey.

I am extremely proud of our Gender, Women and Civil Society Department's continuous support for initiatives that advance gender equality, women's economic empowerment, and community engagement across the continent. Our experience has demonstrated that genuine and lasting transformation to improve the lives of the people of Africa, which is our High Five Pillar 5, cannot occur without the active participation of civil society. This is why, in our day-to-day work, we prioritize solutions that address the real needs of the people and communities we serve.

Through strategic partnerships with civil society, we have successfully designed and implemented programs that focus on uplifting marginalized groups, ensuring that their voices are heard, and empowering them to lead their own development. This collaboration is essential for ensuring that the development agenda is not only inclusive but truly reflective of the diverse needs of African communities.

As we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the African Development Bank Group, it is time to celebrate our successes and to build on the opportunities to solidify our commitment to collaborating with civil society organizations. Together, we will continue to strive for a continent where equality, inclusivity, and shared prosperity serve as the cornerstone of Africa's sustainable development.



Martha T.M. Phiri
Director, Human Capital, Youth and Skills Development Department, Acting Director Gender, Women and Civil Society Department, African Development Bank Group

A journey of empowerment and change

The African Development Bank made a significant and strategic decision by establishing in 2017 the Civil Society and Community Engagement Division responsible for leading and coordinating civil society engagement in the Bank and providing overall guidance on participation and inclusivity in the Bank policies and operations. This decision marked a pivotal moment in the Bank's engagement with civil society in the continent.

I have had the honor and privilege of spearheading its evolution and transformation over the years.

The journey has not been devoid of challenges. Establishing the foundation for such an ambitious initiative necessitated overcoming numerous obstacles; however, each challenge reinforced our belief that civil society engagement transcends merely being a passive observer in development; it serves as an essential driving force for positive change. Through collaborative efforts with civil society organizations, the Bank is effectively ensuring that the aspirations of the people it serves are heard, recognized, and considered in shaping policies and programs that directly impact their lives. This transformational shift was achievable because we acknowledged that inclusivity is not just a desirable goal but rather an indispensable requirement for equitable and sustainable development.

As the Bank commemorates its 60th anniversary, it is increasingly imperative to strengthen our partnership with civil society. By maintaining a strong connection with the realities on the field, we can ensure that every initiative is grounded in the needs of communities. Together, we can foster a more sovereign, just, and prosperous Africa with no one being left behind and where every voice counts in shaping the future of the continent.



Zéneb Touré
Manager, Civil Society and Community Engagement Division, African Development Bank Group