



African Development Bank Civil Society Engagement

# Newsletter

“Voices of Citizens in Africa”

Issue 01 January 2019

Special edition:  
The African  
Development  
Bank-Civil Society  
Committee

## Editorial from Vanessa Moungar, Director, Gender, Women and Civil Society Department



We are delighted to present the first issue of the Civil Society Newsletter. This newsletter, published quarterly, will provide a continental forum for the African Development Bank to engage with Civil Society by sharing information on activities, providing opportunities for strategic partnership, as well as increasing transparency on its work.

This launch reflects our continued commitment to working with Civil Society

organizations in the delivery of Africa’s development agenda, in a year that saw the completion of a number of milestones: a very successful Civil Society Forum, the launch and full functioning of the AfDB-Civil Society Committee, the expansion of the Division with four new staff, consultations with Civil Society in country dialogue (Country Strategy Papers) and the organization of internal awareness consultation workshops with Bank’s Staff on Civil Society engagement in the work of the Bank.

It is only logical for us to work more closely with Civil Society to improve lives. Africa is going through significant changes, - be they demographic, social or economic – and is recognized as the beacon of hope. Its potential for socio-economic progress is huge. Yet, the continent continues to face major challenges that require concerted effort from all actors. This is only possible if we break the silos of knowledge, expertise and action. **Civil Society has been at the forefront of community systems’ strengthening and has enabled major**



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ENGAGING WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

**breakthroughs by connecting citizens to development institutions and policy makers.** Therefore, we can only have more impact by working together and making full use of the continent’s potential for innovation.

We hope that this newsletter will contribute to this by fostering fruitful interactions, best practices and knowledge exchange, so we can overcome boundaries and identify more efficient and effective methods to accelerate inclusive growth on our dear continent.

Vanessa Moungar



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## Note from Zéneb Touré, Manager, Civil Society and Community Engagement Division



What a year!

Yes, what a challenging, innovative and productive 2018 Year. And what a way to start 2019: Launching the first edition of a newsletter for the African Development Bank Civil Society Engagement. After all of last year's accomplishments, it is quite naturally that we came up with the idea of updating you, readers, on the Civil Society landscape in Africa and on the actions of our Division.

Last year, our Civil Society and Community Engagement Division significantly grew, thus creating a stronger team with one common aim: Strengthening Civil Society engagement in Africa. The 2018 African Development Bank Civil Society Forum, the organization of awareness workshops in the regional hubs and in the Bank's headquarters; all these activities have enabled the Civil Society stakeholders to gather and reflect on impactful actions for

the continent.

One of our greatest accomplishment is the launch of the AfDB-Civil Society Committee. The first edition of the newsletter is a special one focusing on this Committee. Eleven (11) Civil Society Organizations with sectorial expertise in the Bank's High 5 priorities (Light up and power Africa, Feed Africa, Industrialize Africa, Integrate Africa and Improve the quality of life for the people of Africa) and respectively representing the five sub-regions of the continent, all gathered in one committee with one mandate: Building stronger partnerships with the Civil Society community in Africa by strengthening the communication and awareness on the Bank's work.

The creation of such Committee paves the way towards achieving the Bank's High 5 priorities through Civil Society engagement. This committee reinforces my belief that unity is strength. Together, we can and we

will accomplish great things for the benefit of populations in Africa and will progressively overcome the existing challenges.

I am more than confident that Voice and Accountability will generate positive impact. Indeed, believe in the power of a group of thoughtful, committed Citizens and their ability to change the continent. The time has come to consolidate partnership and support a strong, proactive and vibrant Civil Society in Africa.

I wish you all an insightful reading and look forward to greater accomplishments!

**Zéneb Touré**

## About the AfDB-Civil Society Committee

In 2000, the African Development Bank established a Bank-Civil Society Committee to advise and facilitate the Bank's collaboration with Civil Society organizations (CSOs). The Committee serves as an advisory body that guides the Bank in its' engagement with Civil Society. It also guides the Bank on forging stronger relations and partnerships with the Civil Society community, and helps hold the Bank accountable for the implementation of the refreshed Civil Society Engagement Framework.

The Committee comprises of 11 members with sectorial expertise in the Bank's High 5 priorities and representing the five sub-regions of the continent, the agriculture and energy sector as well as international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) active in Africa.

## Insights from the AfDB-Civil Society Committee members



From left to right: Fatma Ben Rejeb, Benson Ileri, Hélène Gnionsahe, Nana Asantewa Afadzinu, Mantopi Martina de Porres Lebofa, Ahmed Chehbouni

**Fatma Ben Rejeb, Chief Executive Officer, Pan-African Farmers' Organization (PAFO), on the role of Civil Society in Africa and its' importance:** "In Africa, Civil Society is the awareness of the community it represents and of which it aims to the collective interest. It has a monitoring role concerning the economic and social measures that policies undertake. Civil Society can thus support these measures, if it has been consulted. Civil society in Africa is a torch in the hands of power. If it is used wisely, it illuminates the actions undertaken,

and contrariwise, if it is indignant, it is able to irritate those who abuse it".

**Benson Ileri, Senior Policy Officer for Africa, Christian Aid, on the Committee's support to the Bank's work in Africa:** "The Civil Society Committee is strategically positioned to promote accountability and play the watchdog role of the Bank's projects at the community level. Further, in order to increase ownership, the Civil Society Committee should provide the link between the Bank and the community on the former's

work at the country, and the community level. Additionally, the Civil Society Committee members should play the ambassador role of the Bank. This will include providing updates to the Civil Society Organizations on the Bank's agenda and priority areas, as well as also providing the Bank with updates from what Civil Society Organizations' perceptions and issues are as far as the Bank's interventions are concerned".

**Hélène Gnionsahe, National Coordinator, Ivorian Civil Society Convention (CSCI), on the Civil Society landscape/challenges/opportunities in Côte d'Ivoire:** "The legal framework of Civil Society Organizations in Côte d'Ivoire needs to be improved, and collaboration with Civil Society Organizations in the sub region needs to be strengthened. Resources need to be mobilized to ensure the autonomy of Civil Society Organizations. However, there are of course opportunities: Civil Society can influence public policies in favor of the populations and, I believe, contribute to the political dialogue on national reconciliation and peace".

**Nana Asantewa Afadzina, Executive Director, West Africa Civil Society**

**Institute (WACSI), on how constituencies can engage with the Bank on both country and regional level:** "The different Civil Society constituencies can engage effectively and efficiently if they are well informed on the Bank's operations and programs in their respective countries and at regional level. Also, clear, structured modes and modalities such as regular meetings and fora, as well as through the use of virtual means such as WhatsApp and through their already established networks, are essential for engagement. The AfDB-CSO Committee members work closely together to mobilize the Civil Society Organizations in the region (regional and national level) and coordinate Civil Society representation on different issues with the AfDB. The members need to act as excellent conduits (back and forth)".

**Mantopi Martina de Porres Lebofa, Founder and Director, Technologies for Economic Development, on how the Committee can improve visibility and create awareness on the Bank's work:** "From the perspective of my region, the Southern African Development Community, we need to identify Councils of NGOs/Networks of NGOs (umbrella

organizations) in countries through our AfDB-CSOs Representatives liaising with member NGOs in the countries. In most cases, the Councils/Networks at country level have annual forums where they bring their entire NGO members together and this is where AfDB-CSO Representatives should target, by having a slot to create awareness and improve visibility of the Bank's work".

**Ahmed Chehbouni, President, Tensift Region Development Centre, on how the Committee can support the Bank's work in Africa:** "The Committee, in collaboration with relevant and independent networks of NGOs of the continent, will provide a reasoned and independent opinion that highlights and voices the concerns of the populations on the Country Strategy Papers in each region. The Committee will also independently participate in the monitoring of the achievements of different projects of the African Development Bank and report to the AfDB the various challenges. At last, it will participate in the assessment of social and environmental impacts of the Bank's main projects in coordination with AfDB's independent review mechanism".

## Civil Society Engagement: from actions to impact



### About the internal awareness consultation workshops and Civil Society engagement

The African Development Bank Civil Society and Community Engagement Division organized a series of consultation workshops conducted in each of the Bank's regional offices. These workshops aimed at highlighting the need for the Bank to engage Civil Society in its' work through raising greater awareness among Bank Staff around Civil Society engagement in the Bank's operations and projects.

### What was said during the internal awareness consultation workshops

"Civil Society in its' diversity is endowed with proven expertise being a comparative advantage to play a key leveraging role

through projects implementation. It is more a question of finding the way to mainstream engagement with Civil Society at each project level, and identifying actions that make things change such as country dialogues. I strongly believe that some solutions lie often in the details, because through such details, we

confer substance to the concept of inclusion".  
—Yacine Fal, Deputy Director, North Africa Regional Hub Office (RDGN)

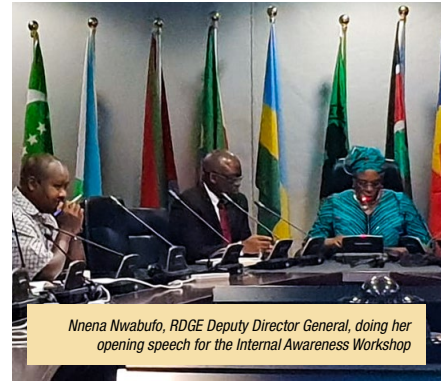
"Our commitment to Civil Society is irrevocable. In our subregion, we have more and more dedicated citizens who are committed to common causes around development issues such as climate change, energy, environment, agriculture, which are our development priorities. Today, we need to reflect together on how, what approach and tools we need to use for citizen participation to maximize our development impact". —Zéneb Touré, Manager, Civil Society and Community Engagement Division



RDNG Internal Awareness Consultations workshops



RDGS Internal Awareness Workshop



Nnenna Nwabufo, RDGE Deputy Director General, doing her opening speech for the Internal Awareness Workshop

"It is a sad reality that Civil Society organizations are limited at the national level in Nigeria. There is a need to develop capacity of Civil Society Organizations in order to fill the gap left at community level, and to reinforce unity and networking amongst different Civil Society Organizations. This will enhance their operations, boost the success of participation and collaborations, and then build trust in them". — **Gregory Osubor**, Social Sector Expert, Nigeria Country Department (RDNG)

"This is a welcome initiative towards our engagement with civil society organizations. By ensuring we are all involved, it offers us a comparative advantage to harness the local network and knowledge, which can help the Bank improve on the

design of projects based on real needs that ultimately maximize development impact". — **Nnenna Nwabufo**, Deputy Director General, Eastern Africa Regional Development and Business Delivery Office (RDGE)

"When it comes to the African Development Bank, there really are allies out there, let's capitalize on that. Let us involve civil society organizations in our upcoming Country Strategy Papers for more impact in the region's operations". — **Kapil Kapoor**, Director General, Regional Development, Integration and Business Delivery - South (RDGS)



AfDB-CSO Session held during the Lesotho NGO Week – December 10, 2018



**The AfDB Civil Society Team hopes you had an insightful reading!**

*Fiacre Sovegnon, Database Consultant; Aissatou Dosso, Civil Society Engagement Consultant; François Traoré, Senior Civil Society Officer; Marie-Josée Kouassi, Division Assistant; Zéneb Touré, Division Manager; Luther Yameogo, Principal Civil Society Engagement Advocacy Officer; Najade Lindsay, Events Consultant; Sydney Hushie, Social Innovation Consultant. Njeri Martha Kinyoho, Senior Civil Society Officer; Edward Mzeka Nsobe, Senior Civil Society Engagement Capacity Building Officer are missing from this photo.*



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