ENGAGING CIVIL SOCIETY TO ACCELERATE REGIONAL INTEGRATION FOR AFRICA’S ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

GENERAL REPORT
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We express our warmest gratitude to the participants of the tenth edition of the Civil Society Forum. In participating to this special edition, 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 came from all over the continent and the world to share their insights and voice their opinions on how we may all work better together words our common goal of enhancing the conditions of living of Africa’s populations.

Our thanks also go to the place of 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. We express our special gratitude to the Vice-Presidents, Directors, Managers, staff and consultants who participated in the preparation, organization and holding of this event. We are also grateful to fellow representatives of Multilateral Development Banks who saw the opportunity in using the Forum as a platform to promote the development institutions’ agenda with civil society.

This tenth edition was marked by the launch of the advocacy and social mobilization campaign for the replenishment of the African Development Fund and we owe the success of this launch to your presence and commitment to highlight the social impact that the African Development Bank has been responsible for at the grassroots level.

As African countries are adopting a strategy towards an efficient regional and continent-level integration (the Continental Free Trade Area is entering into effect on May 30th), the Forum has confirmed the pivotal role that civil society organizations will play in the implementation of this strategy. We look forward to turning our fruitful discussions into concrete actions that will be beneficial to all on our continent.
Introduction

The Civil Society Forum celebrated its tenth anniversary under the theme "Engaging Civil Society in Regional Integration for Africa’s Economic Prosperity". This edition followed the second Statutory meeting of the African Development Bank - Civil Society Committee held on May 6th 2019. For three days, the meeting served as an enabling platform for a dialogue where one common objective was defined: Accelerate efforts to voice the priorities of citizens in the African Development Bank’s work. The Forum enabled development stakeholders – namely, AfDB, civil society organizations (CSOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and social entrepreneurs – to voice the priorities of citizens and to discuss civil society’s role in implementing the “Integrate Africa” priority of the High-5 Strategy.

Since the beginning of his mandate, President Akinwumi Adesina, has stressed the importance of engaging with civil society in achieving the Bank’s top priorities for Africa’s development. The African public space has evolved into a more open-spaced society in which no single actor can effectively and qualitatively transform the lives of African communities alone. It is only through a participatory and multi-stakeholder approach that the AfDB ten-year strategy 2013-2022 can be ensured.

Consistent with the global shift in terms of technology, globalization, geopolitics, and emerging markets, the roles and responsibilities of civil society in Africa have expanded. In the quest to efficiently address pressing issues, CSOs are increasingly seen not only as advocates or service deliverers but also as enablers for change, policy influencers, project incubators, experts and implementing partners. It has become a development stakeholder, acting on the international scene as a key partner.

On the sidelines of this tenth anniversary, which confirmed the long-term engagement of AfDB towards the collaboration with CSOs, AfDB’s Civil Society and Community Engagement division made a call to action to CSOs for the support of the African Development Fund's replenishment. The call was well received by CSOs representatives who committed to advocating for the Fund’s replenishment, seeing it as instrumental for the betterment of the lives of local communities that they support through their activities. The 10th edition of the Civil Society Forum served as a milestone for the relationship between institutional and civil society stakeholders of African development and the promotion of their common agenda.
Inaugural Session

MODERATOR: Gilles ATAYI, Founder of “Afrique Consciente”

SPEAKERS
Alma OUMAROU, Minister – Special Advisor of the President, Niger (Champion of the Continental Free Trade Area - CFTA – African Union)

Khaled F. SHERIF, Vice-President Regional Development, Integration and Business De-livery (AfDB)

Cheikh Tidiane DIEYE, Executive Director, African Centre for Trade, Integration and Development

The opening address of the 10th Civil Society forum stressed the importance of regional integration for African economic prosperity, highlighting it as a top priority. The moderator welcomed the participants by acknowledging the importance of the CSOs in meeting AfDB’s replenishment efforts. The Bank wished to provide more transparency and accountability of their work and encouraged the participants to be part of the inclusive development of the continent.

The moderator began by presenting the actual conditions of intra-regional trade in Africa. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AICTA) agreement, signed in May 2018 and ratified by 22 countries should come into force on May 30th, 2019. As of 2018, Intra-African trade represented 15% of overall trade. These figures lie behind compared to well-integrated regions such as Asia (54%) and Europe (70%). Africa should trade more among itself and to do so, there must be improvements in infrastructure, telecoms, communication, etc. By 2025, the goal is to achieve 23% of Intra-regional trade. The enrolment and inclusion of CSOs are key; as the work of AfDB grows, it is imperative to ensure ownership and to anchor this process to the needs of the African population.

The panel highlighted that achieving regional integration is one of the biggest challenges for the development of the continent. In order to do so, the main issue is to change the attitude and opinions of fragmented economies.
The following key points have been raised in order to push forward the regional integration agenda with the support of CSOs:

1. The importance to coordinate action between the different stakeholders: Instead of acting on opposite sides, the States and the CSOs must act as partners in order to protect the mutual interest. Thus, there should be a collective effort between countries to include CSOs in trade negotiations.

2. The need to involve local communities in cross-border projects: CSOs must promote community voices in the decision-making processes to ensure that they benefit the communities. With their special position as emissaries of the communities, CSOs and AfDB should work hand-in-hand in order to make the difference for the people in the ground.

3. An emphasis was made on helping SMEs trade, which remains inferior to informal trade. A strategy that covers the informal sector is needed. The CSOs are the best channel to ensure the protection of these traders’ interests.

4. Women traders spend a long time across borders where they are exposed to risks such as gender-based violence. Having a gender approach and set up a trade information desk in the borders so that women can access official information and reduce their exposure to risks is a top priority.

5. The first step towards economic integration is the eradication of conflict and the consolidation of peace. AfDB must prioritize its efforts in its operations by providing conflict prevention and economic support to countries affected by the conflict.
Session 1: Induction Session on the African Development Bank

In order to increase accountability and transparency, this session was dedicated to the presentation of the AfDB group and its various institutional components. The panel's intention was to present AfDB's strategies towards the High 5 priorities and to illustrate the linkages of the Bank's to regional integration.

Ms. Zéneb Touré opened the panel by emphasizing the importance of creating the Civil Society and Community Engagement Division. It has been a tool to systematically collaborate with civil society when formulating policies, country strategies and implementing Bank operations. The panelists, who represented various AfDB departments, exchanged on their work stream and how their divisions integrate the civil society from the conception of a project, through its development and to its achievement.

Participants learned about the structuring of the programs in the different divisions and how the Bank leverages engagement with civil societies to promote inclusiveness and increase impact. The panelists shared the procedure of monitoring and evaluation conducted to each project, which is based on an independent, objective and transparent process.

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

- Concerns were raised on the criteria for selecting beneficiary countries of AfDB loans and grants as well as on the effectiveness of the monitoring and evaluation procedures.

- 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 AfDB's work.

- Participants encouraged AfDB 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 representatives have the impression that there is no measurable impact on the communities.

At the end of the session, civil society representatives 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.
Session 2:
AfDB’s Regional Integration strategy

This session provided the platform to present AfDB’s regional integration strategy. An emphasis was put in the direct footprint of regional and economic integration. This year’s annual meetings will be centered in information sharing about the regional agenda in the continent. The panelists got the opportunity to discuss the challenges and opportunities that local communities face as they engage in trade and communication across national borders. Civil society plays an important role as a spokesperson for the implementation of the Bank’s regional integration and policy agenda.

Ms. Mupotola presented the Bank’s new Regional Integration Strategic Framework (RISF), 2018-2025 and introduced the three (3) main pillars of the strategy:

1. Connectivity and regional infrastructure development: The panelists emphasized on the necessity to focus on strengthening regional connectivity and cross-border investment and trade through integrated regional power pools, transport and ICT infrastructure.

2. Trade and investment: The panelists pointed out that the fragmentation of markets presents as a huge opportunity. An organized agenda should be defined to standardize policy in different industries for stronger regional value chains, to strengthen market integration and to encourage FDI.

3. Financial integration: There must be an increased effort to encourage payments across borders, to provide uniformity in regulation for remittances and to develop the private sector across the continent in order to foster domestic resource mobilization.

The panelists then provided their shared vision on the opportunities and advantages of regional inte-
Regional integration identifying the following key points:

• Regional integration contributes to facilitating cross-border movements of persons and goods, with an impact on prices, investments, social and cultural connections.

• Regional integration allows a better management of cross-border crime and for the resolving of peace & security issues. If the freedom of movement is harmonized, issues such as human trafficking could be better addressed.

• Regional integration is unavoidable. Following the comparative advantage theory, natural resources are traded across borders. African countries have to work together and integrate to face current challenges.

To date, there have been success stories from which the continent should learn. The AfCFTA is a major proof that there is a political will for regional integration; in less than one year the agreement came into force and AfDB approved a 5 million USD grant to support the implementation of the framework. In the mining industry, for example, CSOs pushed governments to agree on an African mining policy. As well, the panel highlighted the efforts of the FIARA, an international event for agriculture and animal resources promoted by civil societies. Such initiatives highlight the importance of the free movement of goods and people.

The panel concluded on how to best associate CSOs to the Bank’s regional integration strategy. On this matter, the following opportunities were highlighted:

1. Access to information: CSOs are recognized as best positioned to collect information from local communities and advocate on their behalf to institutional stakeholders. Meanwhile, CSOs can also advocate on behalf of institutional stakeholders such as AfDB to promote the regional integration agenda. Bringing unlikely partners together should be a priority for AfDB; the CSOs are key in creating a dialogue between the local communities and institutional stakeholders.

2. Access to decision-making processes: AfDB can facilitate access to governments for civil society representatives and vouch for the participation of these representatives in strategic meetings and task forces. For instance, AfDB could open the participation to the development of country strategic papers (CSPs) to CSOs.
Session 3: The 15th African Development Fund replenishment (ADF-15)

The AfDB group is composed of three institutions: The African Development Bank in itself, the Nigerian Trust Fund and the African Development Fund (ADF). The ADF is the concessional arm of AfDB that contributes to promoting social and economic development in the 37 least developed African countries by financing the implementation of projects and providing technical assistance to reinforce capacities. This session’s intention was to promote the role of ADF to CSOs and inform them of the ongoing replenishment process and how they may be involved in supporting the AfDB group’s in convincing multilateral donors.

AfDB is a multilateral institution focused on funding structural changes that enable private investment. For example, the whole funding for the Senegalese-Gambian bridge was pure grant money donated by AfDB at a moment of much tensions between the two countries. Members of the panel stressed that most of the people do not realize that much of the infrastructure developments in the continent have been facilitated by AfDB.

To reduce the misinformation gaps, the Bcould mobilize CSOs to help spread information. On one hand, CSOs could help promoting AfDB’s work at the grass-root level. On the other hand, the CSOs could help AfDB’s decision-making process by reaching local communities that AfDB does not have access to and share these communities’ most pressing needs.

A special attention was payed to the fact that Africa has been receiving its funding from abroad but not from African countries. There is a profound worry about the conditions that foreign donations and loans imply. The CSOs representatives were very critical of some African economies that have the financial capacity to fund the ADF and do not do so. These concerns were shared by the panelists. They insisted on the fact that AfDB, being a financial institution, has its political limitations and cannot demand from governments how to prioritize their development program. The panelists went on to explain how AfDB chooses to finance some country’s development projects along with the performance-based allocation, the country performance and institutional assessment processes that support these decisions.

Towards the end of the session, the participants found a common ground to fight for; the well-being of African people. CSOs representatives in the room committed to supporting AfDB for the ADF-15. In return, AfDB ensured to work hand-in-hand with CSOs to effectively implement the 2063 agenda and to deliver prosperity to the continent as a whole.

During this session, CSOs representatives voices their concerns about AfDB’s investor portfolio.
The 10th Civil Society Forum created a space between different MDBs to interact with CSOs representatives. Representatives from the World Bank Group (WBG), and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), joined ADB representatives on stage to give an overall view of their institution’s framework of engagement with CSOs. The session also allowed an exchange on best practices and knowledge-sharing between the civil society and MDBs to strengthen synergies and foster collaboration.

Ms Cieslik underlined that the WBG is made of several institutions who share two main strategic goals: Fighting to end poverty by 2040 and promoting shared prosperity so that the economic growth trickles down to the lower 40% of the world’s population. To do so, the WBG stresses on the need to engage the private sector as there are not enough public funds to face the enormous challenges that lie ahead. The International Finance Cooperation (IFC), the private sector arm of the WBG, focuses on private sector and on how to attract investors to development projects. Mr Rosenberg shared the challenges the IFC faced on the African continent. He mainly discussed the risk-aversion of major investors towards the continent due to the fragility, post-conflict environment and climate risks.

The WBG acknowledges that in order to accomplish the 2040 goal, it is imperative to win the fight against poverty in Africa. For this, the continent’s team is focusing on five major areas: (i) Women empowerment, to build a healthier human capital; (ii) digital economy, a special channel that enables Africa to leapfrog; (iii) climate change, to reduce the impact of CO2 emissions in a continent that is the low-emitter but that suffers the most; (iv) conflict and fragile areas, ensuring better public governance; (v) maximizing the economies of scale and enabling shared prosperity. The CSOs play an important role in each of these areas due to their direct relation with the WBG’s strategy beneficiaries. The WBG has a CSO team that works closely on how to create an impact at the grassroots level.

The Islamic Development Bank promotes comprehensive human development: promoting education, improving health and alleviating poverty. The 2015-2025 strategy of the IsDB focuses in achieving human development through 3 strategic pillars: (i) Inclusiveness, through a strong focus on women empowerment and youth; (ii) connectivity, promoting regional integration and cooperation; (iii) social development, to have a sustainable growth.

The IsDB operates in a South-South cooperation framework, strengthening the relation between the developing regions of the world. The IsDB has partnered since the beginning with CSOs to tackle economic empowerment of the local communities.

The Civil Society and Community Engagement Division has developed tools to engage CSOs in ADB’s work in the conception of project and policies. At the corporate level, ADB provides a platform for discussion, consultation and guidance on how it engages with CSOs. At a country level, ADB partners with CSOs in country strategic papers to ensure that the development is meaningful; it has created CSO open days for constructive criticism and feedback from the ground. At a project-level, ADB acknowledges the urgency of including CSO from the design of the project up to the evaluation of the same. In its communication strategy, ADB would like the CSOs to be the bearer of ADB’s policy.

The participants received positively the information provided by the MDBs but expressed their concern of the lack of clear impact on local communities. Much attention is paid to the diversion of funds and a great concern is upraised towards the real needs of the population. The participants also addressed the lack of follow-up of the projects where CSOs are involved. CSOs proposed their help to better define the axes of action and to ensure the projects are improving the well-being of the population.
Session 5: Social mobilization and advocacy campaign in support to the ADF-15 replenishment

The session invited representatives of CSOs and entrepreneurs to share their engagement for the promotion of ADF’s work and the ADF-15 replenishment. This session was instrumental in AfDB’s Civil Society and Community Engagement Division’s announcement of the social mobilization and advocacy campaign in support of ADF-15 replenishment. The campaign will see the Division work alongside CSOs through the AfDB-CSO committee, to support the endeavors of AfDB’s Ressources Mobilization and Partnerships Department in convincing multilateral donors of the relevance of ADF’s work for African populations.

Each speaker was given time to deliver their address and to share their experience. The following highlights summarize the essence of their remarks:

1. Asalfo, the lead singer of the world-famous Ivorian music band, Magic System, and President of the Magic System Foundation delivered a passionate speech on his childhood and growing up in poverty. He insisted on the importance of providing Africa’s youth with the opportunities that he and his fellow bandmates did not have especially the access to education. To him, education is the base of development and where democracy and economic prosperity can truly exist. He expressed his unconditional support to the ADF-15 replenishment and called on CSOs representatives to do the same.

2. Patricia Zoundi Yao, a social entrepreneur, advocates for the empowerment of women. Through Canaan, she has fought against deforestation and worked for the development of rural activities. During her allocation, she reminded that 90% of consumed goods are produced by women on the African continent. She shared her convictions that the ADF’s replenishment would allow for more women to become autonomous and encourage shared prosperity.

3. In her remarks, Ms. Ben Rejeb shared her vision of the African continent, ten years from now. According to her, thanks to the ADF, the continent would become more prosperous and integrated. To her, advocating for the ADF-15 because is relevant because of ADF’s expertise and influence on leaders from the continent and abroad. As a representative of a share of the population that is completely concerned by the High 5, she declared it to be her duty to lobby so that the world she envisions becomes a reality, especially for rural communities.

4. Ms Keita fights against extreme poverty in Africa. With more than nine million members in her organization she and One Campaign work on social mobilization to achieve the SDGs. To her, the ADF-15 is an opportunity to accomplish the goals that are set in the 2063 agenda. CSOs have the capacity to mobilize the communities in order to convince multilateral donors ADF’s positive impact.

5. The panel was closed by the presence of the 2018 Alternative Nobel Prize. For forty years he has sown more than 40 hectares of soil in the desert to fight against climate change. In his remarks, he explained that supporting the replenishment of ADF was in line with safeguarding the continent and its population from climate change.
Session 6: Social entrepreneurship and innovation for Africa’s integration

During this session, the participants explored the role of social enterprises in creating bridges between African countries and regions. The session also explored how social enterprises can facilitate the movement of goods, people and services across the continent. Social enterprises in Africa are playing significant roles in driving change, increasing access to social services, growing private sector and economies and providing stable societies especially in fragile states. Their involvement has become critical in the face of scarce national resources and dwindling international aid. The Bank is continuously exploring innovative ways to transform Africa. Throughout the session, the panelists highlighted the following challenges and recommendations social enterprises face in Africa:

1. Financial institutions do not understand the needs of social enterprises. Social enterprises goals differ from traditional enterprises as we know them. Therefore, when financing a social enterprise, the evaluation standards should be different. AfDB should leverage financial institutions and governments to create new models and financial products adapted to social entrepreneurs.

2. Mainly focused on looking for social skills to enhance the impact of their action, there is a lack of managerial skills in growing the enterprise. A call is made for competent people to understand the attractiveness and importance of social enterprises. The Bank could help by attracting impact investment.

3. In Africa, there is an unfavorable business environment and policy space. Governments should implement policies that help the establishment and growth of these. Regulation must improve in order to provide better access to markets. For example, by creating a networking platform, social entrepreneurs can share information, scale their business and create a common African market.

4. Social enterprises lack support from local governments. AfDB should create guidelines for governments seeking credit from the Bank to demonstrate integration of social innovators in the value chain of the projects they seek funding for.

As a whole, the Bank needs to be a catalyzer of social enterprise in Africa. Social enterprise and impact investment is critical to Africa’s development in the face of dwindling international aid. Social entrepreneurs have a role to play in creating a paradigm shift in financing development in Africa.

MODERATOR:
Binta TOURÉ, Director, AfriKa Tomorrow

SPEAKERS
Selorm BRANTTIE, Global Strategy Director, mPedigree,
Mouhammadou DOSSO, Secretary General, African Community of Young Entrepreneurs (CAJE)
Ndye Binta HOUMA, Director Africa Ecosystem Research, Ashoka
This session allowed networking between CSO experts with AfDB’s key sectorial departments and established a ground to create synergies between both. The main question was how to directly involve CSOs in key thematic issues related to AfDB work such as climate change, social and environmental safeguard and mediation. Two main examples emerged:

- Participants were given an overview of the Natural Resources Center: a center of excellence that promotes the generation of knowledge through research on topics such as water, forestry and extractive minerals. The center advocates for good governance by reinforcing transparency and accountability and works on policy dialogue in many countries to provide an alternative view of African development.
- A presentation was made on the AfDB Social and Environmental Safeguard Policy, a tool used by the Bank to enhance humans & environment protection during project design, implementation and monitoring. The policy aims at guaranteeing the protection of human rights, health and climate issues.

The main message to come out of this session was that AfDB acknowledges the invaluable and critical role CSOs can play to raise awareness, fill the gaps and deliver outcomes that the government cannot. AfDB 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. AfDB encourages CSOs to organize themselves, build their capacity with the support of AfDB and play a third-party role for intervention through CSOs to serve as relay on the ground, especially in areas of security threats.
Networking lunch: bloggers and digital advocates’ engagement

Throughout the lunch, digital influencers brought up the perspective of their peers and discussed how digital communications have allowed a new form of engagement and commitment from the youth. All the panelists believed in their capacity to create an impact because of the size of the online community that they belong to. Their online actions are a strong communication mean and they all shared their experience of using it to denounce political mismanagements and misconducts in their countries and beyond. It is a new space where people can give out their opinions without fear of being threatened.

As well, digital advocacy provides a faster way to spread information and strengthen the link between the communities.

The panelists made the following outstanding points in regards with the AfDB efforts to engage more with their peers to promote the institution’s work at grassroots level by leveraging the power of digital communications:

1. AfDB should identify bloggers and influencers who share interests with the institution’s work. AfDB could reach far more people online through digital advocacy than the people it can gather in a forum. AfDB’s Communication and External Relations Department could have a larger reach by partnering with bloggers and influencers. In its communication strategy, AfDB can give access to training for bloggers and influencers to make them true ambassadors of AfDB’s projects.

2. AfDB should engage in projects that make internet more accessible to people. So far, access to internet is restrained in most parts of the continent. Giving more people access to internet resources will have a direct positive impact in the development of local communities.

3. Awareness and guidelines should be created around internet use. Concerns surrounding the fake news were raised by participants. An effort has to be put in schools towards good practices of internet use.

MODERATOR:
Nnenna NWAKANMA, World Wide Web Foundation

SPEAKERS
Japhet OMOJUWA, Writer, campaigner, award-winning blogger
Cheikh FALL, Blogger, President of Africtivist
Amélie GUE, Blogger, Journalist, multimedia strategist
Fonou N’Guessan Rosine KAKOU, President of Ivorian Bloggers’ Association
Networking lunch: Women engagement in regional integration

The networking lunch gave the participants the opportunity to discuss relevant issues on gender equality and women's empowerment in regional integration in Africa from the perspective of women in informal cross border trade.

The session allowed to high-light the challenges faced and the opportunities to improve that lay ahead:

1. Women lack awareness on their rights and laws on customs tax is used as a leverage by some custom officers for corruptive purposes which might even put in danger the health of these women. The panel highlighted the need to improve security at the borders and to create a framework that protect women's security.

2. Women's informal cross-border trade lacks visibility. Yet, they represent an important share of the economic activity at the border between countries. An effort has to be put in reducing cumbersome procedures to formalize this segment of trade and therefore improving the welfare and life of women in these communities.

3. Customs tax and trade policy vary between countries. There is a policy frame-work that regulates SMEs activities but the informal cross-border trade is misunderstood and not circumscribed. It is imperative to simplify information and payment procedures of customs tax. African countries should meet in a single, comprehen-

4. There is a lack of information about the economic activities pursued by these economic actors. In order to improve the policy environment, it is important to track the data on ICBT. This can be achieved by the establishment of trade information desks on every border to provide and collect information about the traders.

Throughout the session a focus was made on the critical role that CSOs can play in the improvement of informal cross-border trade and the way it affects women entrepreneurs. Having a privileged access to grassroots communities, CSOs have the ability of raising awareness on the aspects of AfDB's regional integration agenda that will not benefit the local communities.
CSO LED SESSIONS
(See more details in annexes)

The 10th edition of the Civil Society Forum opened the space for sessions organized by CSOs. This was the opportunity to promote local ideas and activities to AfDB. It is a special occasion in which the CSOs had complete control of the theme, format and conduct of the meetings. The selection process was participatory and transparent. Particular attention was paid to proposals that aligned with the theme of the Forum, with a necessary account for gender balance, geographical representation and diversity. The following proposals were approved:

- The place and role of civil society in sustainable development accelerating regional integration for the economic prosperity of Africa. Hosted by REDDA - NESDA
- Voix Collective des Femmes. Hosted by CARE International and the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI)
- Tackling Climate-Induced Migration Through Resilience Building For Effective Africa’s Regional Integration. Hosted by PACJA
- Maximizing productive use benefits of decentralized renewable energy systems for last mile electrification and women’s economic empowerment. Hosted by OXFAM

These sessions enable rich exchanges between different CSOs and was the opportunity to share best practices and opinions over subjects affecting the continent as a whole. 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 AfDB’s High-5 strategy.
Conclusion

During three days of intense discussions, participants were able to address the role and responsibility of civil society towards achieving Africa’s regional integration and giving their opinion on how the African Development Bank may best engage with CSOs to achieve this common goal.

Final Recommendations

1. Regional economic integration is key to achieving competitiveness and growth in Africa. Yet regional integration on the continent faces persistent regulatory, institutional and infrastructure challenges, hindering the ability to create larger, more attractive markets, link landlocked countries to international markets and boost intra-African trade;

2. For AfDB, integrating Africa means integrating markets by building infrastructure such as transport, energy and telecommunications that connect more people across the continent. Regional Integration is also establishing policies that make regional integration possible.

3. Engaging civil society ensures that the voices and concerns of citizens of the continent are heard and included in the formulation of AfDB’s policies and projects. Collaborating with civil society in the delivery of the Bank’s results guarantees inclusion and participation but could also foster transparency, accountability and appropriation.

4. A strong support was given to the African Development Fund Replenishment. Attaining the replenishment goals is fundamental because it means the people of Africa will continue to receive improved infrastructure, social services and improved quality of life. In the absence of an ADF replenishment, it would be a challenge to consolidate and scale up these gains.

5. A study will be launched to capitalize the experience of the civil society forum ten years of practice.
Opening Remarks by Vice-President of AfDB - CSO Committee, Augustine Njamshi

Thank you for this honor and the special place given to the African civil society with the holding of this forum. Let me begin by acknowledging the distinguished dignitaries present here today:

Vice President Blanke
Vice President Khaled
Honorable Minister Oumarou from Niger
Director Moungar
Executive Director Dieye

It is indeed an honor for me to share this platform with all of you. It is exactly a decade since the Bank started organising this event and this is therefore a forum with a difference. This is a testament of our collective commitment to an integrated and prosperous Africa; and a recognition of the role that the civil society must play in this project.

Dear Colleagues of the African Civil Society, Dear partners of Africa and the African Civil Society Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, The Pan-African consciousness has always sought to strengthen the bonds that tie us as descendants of this great continent. Wherever we find ourselves, the pan-Africanism doctrine prompts us to recognize and celebrate our shared heritage and values as a people. More importantly, it rallies us around a common destiny of togetherness and prosperity.

The case for a united Africa has been stated over the decades, most times by people more gifted in these matters than I. But no one – in my humble opinion – captures its pertinence more than the author Thabiso Daniel Monkoe, who once said: “The reason why lions hunt successfully as a pride, is reason enough for Africans to unite.” That means if pride were the only reason we must unite, then we are duty-bound to do so. Pan-Africanism and African unity and integration are all central to the thematic issues we will be discussing at this gathering. I dare to argue that an integrated and prosperous Africa is unattainable without first uniting its peoples and transcending the boundaries that have been carved for use by others. Yes, by boundaries, I mean those carved for us, and without us in Berlin in 1884. We must realize, more than ever before, that the forces militating against our collective good are many, strong and unremitting. Some are from outside. The consequences of the colonial and neo colonial agenda still trap Africa in dependency. Some are from within. We are yet to accept ourselves as brothers and sisters. The spate of xenophobia in countries like South Africa is counter-productive to the unity we seek. It is unimaginable that as we talk integration, thou-sands of my own countrymen and women are beaten and thrown out of their homes and workplaces almost every year in places like Gabon and Equatorial Guinea. Being a “foreign African” has become an undesirable status in many African countries. Colleagues, sometimes we over blame the Berlin conference that partitioned Africa. Surely the physical boundaries of Africa were determined there in Berlin and there is nothing we can now do about that. The good news is that our minds were not partitioned there as well.

“Integration and economic prosperity” is not a goal that can be achieved without first overcoming these forces. It is not something that can be gotten through institutional and policy arrangements only. We must transcend big politics and begin to build in Africans a sense of belonging. The pangs of hunger, disease, natural calamities and deprivation are all too strong, and we cannot to these add disunity, the lack of solidarity and outright hate for each other. When Nigerian, a Zambian, a Zimbabwean, a Malawian is taken out of his home and mercilessly beaten in South Africa; when a Cameroonian or a Senegalese is taken and sold as a slave in Libya for less than $400, it is not foreign forces that are doing that. It is us!

Ladies and gentlemen,

The welfare of the African, irrespective of age, sex or creed, should guide our actions. What are roads, bridges, power lines, large farms and an accumulation of wealth if they do not contribute to the collective good and instill a sense of being in the African citizen. May I take this opportunity, to express my personal gratitude and that of the civil society to the leadership of African Development Bank, for its proactive and timely action it took in assisting some countries of the southern African region that were hard hit by cyclones and floods.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am the first to admit that the work that needs to be done to achieve an integrated and prosperous Africa is enormous. Governments on their own will not succeed. That is why it is useful that all actors put their hands on the plough. The African civil society is ready to play its role. More than ever before, it is capable of tackling most of the many challenges facing this continent. Over the last decades, the African Civil Society landscape has undergone tremendous transformation and is rich in experience and expertise. Use us. Use us well beyond consultative roles.

This partnership is bound to produce wins for both governmental and non-governmental organizations. Above all, it is bound to propel Africa forward and help us all attain the future we desire. Let me again note that the African civil society is willing and capable of building an integrated and prosperous Africa. USE US.

Thanks for your kind attention.
Civil Society Representatives
Development Partners,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I am delighted to welcome you all here, in the Headquarters of the African Development Bank in Abidjan, on the occasion of our Civil Society Forum. It is also my honor to welcome the Minister, Special Advisor to the President of the Republic of Niger, African Union Champion for the Continental Free Trade Area, His Excellency, Mr. Alma Oumarou, who is with us today to take part in our Inaugural Panel. It is also my privilege to welcome Mr. Yacouba Savadogo, 2018 Alternative Nobel Prize for his efforts to reverse desertification, who will take part in our special session around Social Mobilization for ADF-15.

2. Civil society engagement in the African Development Bank’s work has gone a long way: from the African Development Bank’s first consultative meeting with non-governmental organizations in the early 1990s - to the organization of the first CSO Forum in 2009 - to the creation of the Civil Society and Community Engagement Division - to the launch of the AfDB-Civil Society Committee in May 2018, to our Forum this year. All these steps support the firm conviction of the African Development Bank that the ambitious development goals for Africa can only be achieved through the active engagement, consultation and participation of civil society.

3. This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Forum. Ten years of exchanges, ten years of constructive dialogue, to strengthen collaboration between civil society and the African Development Bank. Ten years during which civil society engagement increased, ten years during which civil society went beyond its traditional role and proved to be an enabler for change, a policy influencer and an implementing partner. Ten years that convinced us of civil society’s crucial role in Africa’s social and economic transformation. Reaching our High Fives can only be done with Civil Society involvement.

4. This year’s theme “Regional Integration for Africa’s Economic Prosperity” gives us the opportunity, all together, to explore the entry points for civil society organizations to achieve this top priority. How does civil society contribute to creating the next global market? How do civil society and populations in Africa benefit from Regional integration? What are the practical and sustainable ways to achieve this High Five priority? This forum aims at addressing these questions, and I am sure that these three days will lead to fruitful conclusions and impactful recommendations for our continent.

5. In closing, I wish to take this opportunity to thank you all for your interest in this key partnership and for supporting our efforts to mainstream civil society engagement in the African Development Bank’s work. I would also like to extend my deep appreciation to His Excellency, Mr. Alma Oumarou, and to Mr. Yacouba Savadogo, for taking their valuable time to be here with us, as well as all of you, moderators, panelists and participants.

Thank you.
Opening Remarks by Vice-President, Agriculture, Human and Social Development, Jennifer Blanke

It is my honor and pleasure to welcome you to the 2019 Civil Society Forum. This year’s meeting marks the tenth anniversary of the annual meetings between the African Development Bank (AfDB) and Civil Society and is the second to be held separately from the Bank’s Annual Meetings following that of 2018. The 2019 Forum will focus on the role and responsibility of civil society towards achieving Africa’s regional integration and underscores the importance the African Development Bank attaches to engagement with civil society in the achievement of its regional integration priority.

Civil society has a diverse role to play in Africa’s social and economic transformation and over the past decades, their roles and responsibilities have expanded. In response, the AfDB Civil Society Forum organised each year has become a platform for dialogue between Bank and Civil Society. This year, under the theme “Regional Integration for Africa’s Economic Prosperity” the Forum will among other things, explore the role of civil society in enhancing regional integration and in strengthening country and regional mechanisms and institutional capacities.

Africa remains the continent of the future with enormous potentials and challenges that require a comprehensive and concerted approach to transforming the economic and social landscape in order to ensure a more sustainable and inclusive development trajectory. To meet the expectations of citizens of the continent, the Bank has identified five key areas which have become commonly known as the Hif5s:

Light up; Power Africa; Feed Africa; Industrialize Africa; Integrate Africa, and Improve the Quality of Life for the People of Africa.

This year, the Bank is highlighting one of the Hif5 priorities: Integrate Africa. Africa’s regional integration challenges are well known. Intra-African trade is the lowest globally – approximately 15 percent compared to 54 percent in the North America Free Trade Area, 70 percent within the European Union and 60 percent in Asia. The continent’s difficult physical landscape makes connection between communities, countries, and even entire regions challenging. There is also very limited integration of regional markets for infrastructure services, particularly in power, energy, water and sanitation. Weak regional economic communities (RECs) that lack capacity and are poorly structured to make or even attract necessary regional investments further complicate this.

Regional economic integration is key to achieving competitiveness and growth in Africa. It affects what and how people can buy, the variety of what is on offer at the market, how easily citizens travel between countries, where people can choose to study or work, and where investments can move. Yet regional integration on the continent faces persistent regulatory, institutional and infrastructure challenges, hindering the ability to create larger, more attractive markets, link landlocked countries to international markets and boost intra-African trade.

For the Bank, integrating Africa means integrating markets by building infrastructure such as transport, energy and telecommunications that connect more people across the continent. Regional Integration is also establishing policies that make regional integration possible.

The Bank’s objective by 2025 is to increase the percentage of intra African trade to at least 23% from the current 15%; the number of countries with liberal visas from the 13 presently to 54; cross border roads constructed or rehabilitated to 9,830 kilometres and cross-border electricity transmission to 3,600 Kms.

In order to guide its priorities in addressing the fundamental challenges of Africa, the Bank needs the input of civil society in the conception, design and implementation of development programs and projects. Over the last ten years, the AfDB Group has been engaging civil society and connecting citizens to development institutions and policy-makers. However, achieving the Bank’s Regional Integration targets and inclusive and sustainable growth requires enhanced dialogue with civil society, to make full use of the continent’s potential for transformation and innovation. In this light, AfDB is currently working to ensure the effective mainstreaming of civil society engagement in Bank policies and operations as well as its institutionalization. Apart from the Annual Civil Society Forum, the AfDB-CSO Committee has been meeting regularly since 2018 to discuss progress made on civil society engagement by the Bank and CSO Open Days are being organized in Regional Member Countries to foster dialogue and participation at country level.

Henceforth, the preparation of Country Strategy Papers and the preparation, implementation and monitoring of projects shall include the participation and contribution of civil society. Engaging civil society will ensure that the voices and concerns of citizens of the continent are heard and included in the formulation of Bank policies and projects.

Collaborating with civil society in the delivery of the Bank’s results guarantees inclusion and participation but could also foster transparency, accountability and appropriation.

I look forward to the outcomes of the Forum, because we continue to believe at the African Development Bank that civil society remains a reliable and valued partner in achieving Africa’s transformational agenda.

Thank you.
Closing Remarks by Vice-President, Private Sector, Infrastructure and Industrialization, Pierre Guislain

Dear Civil Society Representatives from all around Africa, Diaspora and overseas,

Guest from international organizations and sister Multilateral Development Banks,

Dear Partners attending the Forum, Dear Colleagues,

You would like to join me in recognizing and acclaiming a successful forum held this year as you celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Civil Society Forum at the African Development Bank!

It is my honor and pleasure to join you even for this last session. From what is reported about these three fertile days, you focused on the role and responsibility of civil society towards achieving Africa’s regional integration and stressed the importance the African Development Bank is attaching to engagement with civil society in the achievement of its regional integration priority;

1. This year, the Bank is highlighting one of the Hi5 priorities: “Integrate Africa”. Africa’s regional integration challenges are well known. Intra-African trade is the lowest globally – approximately 15 percent compared to 54 percent in the North America Free Trade Area, 70 percent within the European Union and 60 percent in Asia. The continent’s difficult physical landscape makes connection between communities, countries, and even entire regions challenging. There is also very limited integration of regional markets for infrastructure services, particularly in power, energy, water and sanitation. Weak regional economic communities (RECs) that lack capacity and are poorly structured to make or even attract necessary regional investments further complicate this;

2. I’m delighted you concluded that regional economic integration is key to achieving competitiveness and growth in Africa. It affects what and how people can buy, the variety of what is on offer at the market, how easily citizens travel between countries, where people can choose to study or work, and where investments can move. Yet regional integration on the continent faces persistent regulatory, institutional and infrastructure challenges, hindering the ability to create larger, more attractive markets, link landlocked countries to international markets and boost intra-African trade;

3. For the Bank, integrating Africa means integrating markets by building infrastructure such as transport, energy and telecommunications that connect more people across the continent. Regional Integration is also establishing policies that make regional integration possible. The Bank’s objective by 2025 is to increase the percentage of intra African trade to at least 23% from the current 15%; the number of countries with liberal visas from the 13 presently to 54; cross border roads constructed or rehabilitated to 9,830 kilometres and cross border electricity transmission to 3,600 Km;

4. The relevant and accurate inputs you provided during these working days will be taken into account in our programs and projects addressing the fundamental challenges of Africa. Engaging civil society ensures that the voices and concerns of citizens of the continent are heard and included in the formulation of Bank’s policies and projects. Collaborating with civil society in the delivery of the Bank’s results guarantees inclusion and participation but could also foster transparency, accountability and appropriation;

5. I also noted that you launched a campaign in support to the African Development Fund Replenishment. Thank you very much as we believe that ADF replenishment is a critical event because it means the people of Africa will continue to receive improved infrastructure, social services and improved quality of life. In the absence of an ADF replenishment, it would be a challenge to consolidate and scale up these gains.

With the African Development Fund replenishment and your increasing notoriety, the support and role of grassroots communities in the replenishment process will be cardinal.

As we move together – with Civil Society Organizations in Africa – in our partnership – we’ll keep on marching for more resources to transform Africa. The high level of the participants, the expertise of the speakers and the joint engagement for building today a better Africa, made our outcomes successful.

On this note of hope, I solemnly declare closed the civil society forum in its 10th anniversary and wish you again a safe return back home.

Thank you so much for your kind attention.
Accelerating the development pace:
Civil society's call for replenishment of the African Development Fund (ADF-15)
Abidjan, 9 may 2019

1.0 Preamble
Mindful of our inherent mandate as representatives of the most marginalized African citizens,

Recognizing our catalytic role of fostering strategic partnerships with governments, businesses donors at regional and continental levels;

Cherishing the indispensable role we play together with other like-minded continental bodies in Africa’s social and economic transformation

Capitalizing on great gains already made through lobbying and policy advocacy at the global level and continental level in achieving developmental frameworks such as Sustainable Developmental Goals and Paris Agreement on Climate Change among others, and the development of global voluntary standards for industry, among others;

Appreciative of the African Development Bank’s commitment to enhancing its engagement and collaboration with Civil Society in delivering its High 5 priorities,

Convinced of the African Development Fund (ADF) significant impact through its financing of to low income Regional Member Countries with concessional loans and grants, towards projects that spur poverty reduction and economic development, Encouraged by the numerous and untold success stories and impact that ADF-funded projects are making in transforming economies, creating new linkages to promote regional integration, commercial exchanges, and enhancing food security,

We, Civil Society Organizations meeting from 7 to 9 May in Abidjan at the African Development Bank Headquarters, for the AfDB-CSO Annual Forum, under the theme: “Engaging Civil Society to Accelerate Regional Integration for Africa’s Economic Prosperity”, hereby declare our full support for the replenishment of the African Development Fund.

2.0 Rationale of Our Support
Our support as Civil Society Organizations towards the African Development Fund’s replenishment process is based on the following parameters: Cardina/ Role of the AfDB in the Continents Socio-Economic Development: As CSOs, we are undoubtedly aware of the AfDB’s role as a key continental institution that contributes to the economic development and social progress of African people. AfDB Group has a responsibility to ensure effective development with lasting impact on the lives of the people it serves. Through a well replenished ADF, such is a role is poised towards better results:

Incredible Success Stories and Transformation of Lives by the ADF So Far: In our everyday engagement with AfDB and ADF, we have exercised our obligation in tracking down the progress of ADF in all the 58 countries have come to the conclusion that meaningful impact has been registered on peoples’ lives through social and infrastructural projects. A well replenished ADF stands a better chance to do more.

AfDB’s Paradigm Shift Towards More Engagement with CSOs: Unlike before, we are more convinced that a well replenished ADF will serve its desired purpose largely due to the increased monitoring role that AfDB has entrusted to CSOs. The Banks trust in CSO as partners in development is now being visibly depicted through the Civil Society Forum which is a platform for dialogue between the African Development Bank (AfDB) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and the AfDB-Civil Society Committee which is Serving as an advisory body for the Bank and holding it accountable for the implementation of the AfDB Civil Society Engagement.

Africa’s development targets: It is beyond doubt that without the support of the ADF, Africa’s efforts towards meeting the SDGs and the targets set by Africa’s 2063 development goals will not be achieved. The well-being and dignity of millions of African lives depends on the support to their countries, through the ADF. Its replenishment is vital.

3.0 Conditions of Our Support
Our support for the replenishment of ADF is based on the following assumptions and conditions which we trust will be met in the replacement and usage process of ADF:

That the AfDB will strengthen and enhance its transparency and accountability processes in its engagement with its client member countries to ensure that the programmes and projects funded by the AfDB truly benefit its people.

That African countries will be engaged by the AfDB, with civil society’s support, to finance their own development by contributing to the ADF.

That civil society will be an integral partner in ensuring that the AfDB meets the needs of the peoples of Africa through its funded programmes with client member countries and that structured forms of engagement will be instituted at country and regional level to enable civil society’s participation in the AfDB’s processes.

That the AfDB will strongly urge its client member countries to engage civil society in their countries on the projects. That the AfDB will make concrete efforts towards supporting civil society’s role in these processes with the needed technical, material and financial support.

The 10th Anniversary Civil Society Forum’s Participants,
The African Development Bank — Civil Society Committee, Abidjan, 9 Mai 2019
West Africa Civil Society Institute-CSO Led Session
Moving Regional Integration Beyond Rhetoric in West Africa: Leveraging on the Strength of Engaged Civil Society

Session leaders

Session Chair:
Nana Asantewa Afadzinu, Executive Director, WACSI

Panelists:
Ms. Adaku Ufere-Awoonor, Energy, Gender and Development Attorney, Nigeria
Mr. Komi Abitor, Board Chair, REPACO, Togo
Ms. Benedicte Joan, CEO, Train and Travel, Côte d’Ivoire
Mr. Aziz Bala-Gaye, Senior Economist from the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment, the Gambia

Introduction

The WACSI-led session at the tenth edition of African Development Bank’s (AfDB) civil society forum was themed: “Moving Regional Integration Beyond Rhetoric: Leveraging on the Strength of Engaged Civil Society”, anchored on one of the Bank’s High 5 Strategy for Africa ‘Integrate Africa’, and aligned with the 2019 Annual Meetings theme: “Engaging Civil Society in Regional Integration for Africa’s Economic Prosperity.”

Questions raised/Subjects covered

Some of the questions asked to the panelists include:

- What is Regional integration? In your view, is it a realistic or idealistic term? In which areas can we achieve regional integration?
- How can these specific areas contribute to regional integration?
- What are the challenges? And how do we address them?

Recommendations/Outcomes:

Here are a few of the recommendations that came out from this session:

The African Development Bank (AIDB) should:

- Strengthen CSOs capacities to monitor the Bank’s commissioned projects in member countries;
- Provide relevant information to CSOs on project timelines, milestones, funding and key performance indicators for effective monitoring and impact measurement;
- Expand access to funding and incubation services for women-owned businesses to thrive.

National government should:

- Create national endowments funds that would support women-owned businesses to operate across country borders and neighboring countries;
- Engage regional CSOs such as the Borderless Alliance and WANEP to provide essential social services such as educational facilities, employment opportunities, peace and security information, and health facilities;
- Organize inter-country trade and tourism expositions for African businesses;
- Set-up open-up business and commerce opportunities for local businesses to access external markets in neighboring countries;
- Collaborate and ensure that their efforts and policies towards transparency, anti-corruption and access to information across country borders are harmonized and implemented at all levels.

Civil Society Organisations and Actors (CSO/As) should:

- Collaborate with national governments to provide essential social services across country borders;
- Advocate to governments to organize inter-country trade and tourism expositions for African businesses to expand their market base especially private businesses and SMEs;
- Provide information to national and international security agencies to pre-empt possible security concerns;
- Advocate to national governments to create an enabling environment for private sector participation in regional integration.

ECOWAS should:

- Collaborate and leverage on the knowledge and expertise of CSOs (such as Borderless Alliance) to monitor and report country border challenges
- Commission research to document relevant information about barriers that hinder easy movement of goods and services across member states and carry border policy reforms where necessary; and
- Gather security intelligence information collected from the community to assist in eliminate potential forced migration situation and eventually prevent civil wars;

Private Sector should:

- Ensure that private businesses and SMEs embrace diversity by employing African expatriate employees for competitive advantage;
- Ensure multilaterals (specifically) such as the telecommunications, mining and oil and gas companies recruit employees across neighboring countries to promote competitive jobs creation for youth and others.
CARE International and the West African Civil Society Institute (WACSI) join session Collective Voices of Women

Session leaders

Moderators:
Omolara Balogun
Aisha Rahamatali

Panelists/People supporting the session
Nana Afadzinu
Honorine Koffi
Alasdair Charnock
Jacob Niamien
Simon Snoxell
Omolara Balogun
Benedicte Joan
Dorcas Taylor Tucker
Assetou Camara
Ama Bartimeus
Fatou Ndiaye

Introduction

There are around 3 million members of savings groups in West Africa. Yet most of these groups exist independently of each other, therefore there is a huge potential for these groups to be interconnected and networked with other civil society actors and organizations at a national and regional level, to mobilize and advocate for cross-border issues that are affecting the lives of women and girls.

When women are able to come together in safe spaces, they can use their collective power and voice to bring about change for a more equitable world. The saving group model (MMD / VSLA) offers such as space for women to be individually empowered (to build their agency) while strengthening their collective leadership (to change their relations and influence their structure). Indeed, the Mata Masu Dubara (MMD) model in Niger has demonstrated that networks of savings groups are a powerful force for social and economic change. These networks provide groups the legitimacy and credibility for developing strategic alliances with local and national civil society organizations to raise women’s voices and fight for gender and economic justice.

The session presented existing examples of how this approach is working, and also presented ideas of how this can be taken to scale to support wider regional integration for economic prosperity.

Questions raised/Subjects covered

“The role of savings groups and civil society in influencing the enabling environment, through strengthened capacity of grassroots women leaders” was presented by Assetou Camara – Saving Group Member and Entrepreneur from Bouake, Cote d’Ivoire, who gave an inspiring testimony of how her membership of a savings group allowed her to grow and to break down unequal power relations with men. Her advice was “Don’t wait for someone to help you, help yourself!” Dorcas Taylor Tucker, an entrepreneur from Sierra Leone, also shared her experience on growing her business in a unwoman friendly environment, and is now providing mentorship to other women business leaders.

Recommendations/Outcome

Concluding remarks from Nana Afadzinu (Executive Director, WACSI); Benedicte Joan (Founder Train and Travel for Women in Africa) and Simon Snoxell – Global Affairs Canada reflected on “how can we connect savings groups and CSOs from the local to national to regional levels?” And the untapped potential that exists to strengthen the savings groups-CSO foundation and platform for regional integration, economic opportunities and women’s rights.

The outcome of the session was having 30 audience participants sign up to the “Women’s Voice Collective” or “Voix Collective des Femmes”. This is one step towards reinforcing women’s voice through savings group participation and connection with civil society in West Africa.

Oxfam Pan Africa Programme- CSO Led Session

Maximising productive use of benefits of decentralised renewable energy systems for last mile electrification and women’s economic empowerment

Session leaders

Moderator:
Mr. Zephaniah Mikwa Kivungi, Programme Manager Africa Sustainability, Kenya

Panelists:
Mr. Hyton Lefu, Programme Coordinator – Livelihood Resilience – Oxfam, Malawi
Ms. Maimuna Kabatesi, Programme Manager – Sustainable Energy for All – Hivos
Ms. Jacqueline Kimeu, Coordinator – ACCESS

Introduction

The session involved three panelists who shared their experience with productive use of renewable energy. Oxfam’s work in Malawi led to farmers using renewable energy to do irrigation...
activities where they have been growing vegetables and maize, doing value addition of agricultural products e.g. producing peanut butter from groundnuts, soy flour from soybeans; establishing small business enterprises e.g. opening barber shops, charging phones, video shows among others. These interventions have gone a long way in supporting 3,000 rural households in Mchinji, Lilongwe and Rumphi districts in Malawi. This experience was shared during the CSO-led session.

Questions raised/Subjects covered

The discussions were around impact assessments that have been conducted for this intervention and that have shown that there has been differences in terms of income, food and social cohesion between those households that participated in the project and those that did not and also even comparing the same beneficiaries that participated in the project their situation before and after the project. Hivos presented their experience with energy social labs in Tanzania while ACCESS shared their work on using clean and efficient energy for cooking for women in Ghana.

Recommendations/Outcomes:

These discussions and experiences these led to Oxfam advancing the following requests to the Bank on maximizing the use of renewable energy;

- The Bank should provide sufficient resources to enable member countries initiate such off-grid programmes to allow the rural poor masses especially women benefit.
- Lobby with governments to promote conducive environment to allow adoption of renewable energy with a focus on productive uses by making it affordable to the poor (removing duties, V.A.T where they are still charged)
- Promote holistic integrated energy plans within ADB country strategy processes that are open and transparent to full CSO participation. Specifically, such plans should work across different relevant government ministries (agriculture, health etc).
- Include support for specific disaggregated gender-sensitive targeting in project design and post-project evaluation, to identify and account for inherent gender inequalities and bias.

Center for Development of the Tensift Region-CSO Led Session

Engaging Youth Civil Society to Accelerate Regional Integration for Africa's Economic Prosperity

Session leaders

Moderator:
Mr. Jean Philippe Lohoury, President, Association REVILA, Côte d'Ivoire

Panelists:
Prof. Legrouiri Ahmed, Vice President, International University of Grand Bassam, Côte d'Ivoire
Pr. Ahmed Chehbouni, President, Center for Development of the Tensift Region

Introduction

The objective of this session was to raise awareness on the role of young people in accelerating Africa's regional integration and the need for capacity building through exchanges in these regions through the sharing of good practices.

Questions raised/Subjects covered

The discussions were around the fact that the future of an integrated Africa is promising. Its oil, gas and mineral wealth and especially its youth are considerable assets. To play their role in the integration of Africa, the young people of the civil society must be first well trained and secondly, they have to work in regional networks for the achievement of development projects.

Recommendations/Outcomes

Finally, participants welcomed the Center’s initiative to organize universities for young leaders of civil society and appealed to the leaders of the Bad to support such a youth integration initiative.
Network for Environment and Sustainable Development in Africa (NESDA)-CSO Led Session
The place and role of civil society in sustainable development accelerating regional integration for the economic prosperity of Africa

Session leaders

Moderator:
Germaine Boni

Panelists:
Abraham Denis, NESDA
Gustave Aboua, NESDA

Introduction

The purpose of the session was to inform and raise awareness among Civil Society on Sustainable Development on their role and the opportunities they have in accelerating regional integration for Africa’s economic prosperity. The objective was also to predefine a preliminary roadmap for specific projects or activities (NESDA / Civil Society and Community Engagement Division) in the specific case of a partnership linked to the acceleration of regional integration for Africa’s economic prosperity.

Questions raised/Subjects covered

The remarks were focused on the undeniable role of civil society in terms of sustainable development in accelerating regional integration for Africa’s economic prosperity. Civil Society has a role of social auditor and is a key player in sustainable development. This is why civil society must be able to help promote cultural uniqueness. However, Civil Society has weaknesses, namely in terms of capacity building.

Recommendations/Outcome
Participants were informed and sensitized on the role of CSOs in accelerating regional integration for Africa’s economic prosperity. In terms of perspective, specific project or activity ideas have been set out in order to contribute to the acceleration of regional integration for Africa’s economic prosperity. We can mention among other things “the improvement of access to information for grassroots communities in support of women’s empowerment in rural areas (West Africa).

Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) - CSO Led Session
An assessment of African education system towards integration and economic prosperity of youth

Session leaders

Moderator:
Juliet Kimotho, Advocacy Officer, FAWE

Panelists:
Martha Muhwezi, Executive Director FAWE
Beyan Flomo Pewee, Executive Director YOCEL

Introduction

The session sought to shed light on the status and capacity of education systems in Africa to address the preparedness of youth to participate in the economic prosperity on the continent. The session will sought to enhance a shared understanding of the role of CSOs and governments in enhancing the capacity of youth to meet the demands of the century about education and entrepreneurship and the underlying contribution to Africa’s economic prosperity.

Questions raised/Subjects covered

Status of education in Africa
In line with the new global 2030 roadmap and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) approved by UN Member States, the African Union has AU has put in place strategies and mechanisms to guide Africa’s education system. SDG Target 4.4 calls for a substantial increase in the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship. Under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a new education-monitoring framework has been established, replacing the framework set up under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This new system now uses a much richer set of information sources than the one it replaced, casting its net wider and aiming to match the ambition of the SDG targets.

Aspiration number 6 of the AU’s Agenda 2063 speaks of the need to invest in the peoples of Africa as its most precious resource. It goes ahead to spell out the areas of investment to include their nutrition and health, their access to shelter, water and sanitation, expanding quality education and strengthening science, technology, innovation and research.

Other frameworks put in place include the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25), the Gender Equality Strategy for CESA 16-25 that addresses gender gaps in the CESA, the TVET strategy and the Science,
Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024 (STISA 2024).

The African Virtual University (AVU), a pan-African effort to create an open and affordable distance learning institution to serve the African continent, is another important milestone achieved by the AU. Established in 1997, this Malawi-based institution is today the largest distance and eLearning network in over 27 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and has produced more than 40,000 graduates. The university hosts 219 open educational modules ranging from mathematics and science, teacher education, and ICT skills and these courses are all available in English, French and Portuguese free of charge.

Many African States recognize the importance of providing free basic education and many such as Kenya for example, have successfully implemented the policy since 2003. Besides its recognition as a human right, free basic education is also seen as a poverty reduction strategy that improves the living standards of the citizenry, enhances the political, social and economic circumstances by eliminating illiteracy, reduces the gap between the rich and the poor and promotes upward mobility for the economic and social development of a country.

Africa has witnessed a significant increase in the number of enrolments from primary to secondary schools. In sub-Saharan Africa overall, enrolment rates for children of primary school age increased from 58 per cent to 76 per cent between 1999 and 2010, according to the Millennium Development Goals Report 2012, prepared by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Several countries in the region have also succeeded in reducing their relatively high out-of-school rates, even as their primary-school-age populations are growing. But like Burundi, many of these countries are facing major challenges.

According to data from the GPE Financing Conference held in Dakar in 2018, there has been an increasing interest by African countries to allocate more funding to education. In total, 53 developing countries among them 36 African countries pledged to increase their public expenditures to education for the 2018-2020 period to a total of $110 billion, up from the $80 billion pledged during the previous funding cycle. This is indeed a major development for education in Africa.

Digital technologies have spread across the African continent at an inexorable pace. Widely cited data on adoption rates suggest that digital technologies are making their way into every facet of life in African societies. Education has not been left behind and there has been an equally significant increase in the use of technology in education. An example is in Kenya where the education ministry issued a directive that all students should be registered with the National Education Management Information System (NEMIS) in order to manage the inconsistencies of Kenya’s vast and complex education sector that serves millions of students in about 120,000 learning institutions. The system produces unique identification numbers for registered students that will track their performance from primary school, high school and tertiary levels. The tracking is vital because it will help the government formulate better plans and policies to heighten offerings of the education sector.

Issues/ questions raised

- African girls are still missing out on education. According to the UNESCO UIS data of 2018, 9 million girls across the Africa region between the ages of about 6 and 11 will never go to school at all. This is compared to 6 million boys who will suffer the same fate. The girls’ disadvantage starts early where 23% of girls are out of primary school compared to 19% of boys. By the time they become adolescents, the exclusion rate for girls is 36% compared to 32% for boys.
- There are less girls completing secondary school and accessing tertiary education and there is low participation of young women in STEM subjects and careers.
- Does the current Africa education system enable African youth to be competitive with students from other continents? Africa seems to have disaggregated curricula that does not prepare the youth adequately to compete in the international sphere.
- At a structural level, many African governments are not investing enough resources in research and scientific innovation in Africa while most African curricula are theory-based instead of competency based.
- The number and intensity of violent conflicts has increased in the past decade with Africa experiencing 18 state-based conflicts 2017. Displaced youth have more problems accessing education than younger children, and refugee enrolment in secondary school globally drops to 36% compared to 76% in primary school. Since situations of displacement often last many years, young people are likely to experience ‘developmental gaps’ as a result of interrupted education, lack of opportunities to learn appropriate and safe livelihood skills, and to develop important social and cognitive skills.
- Is Africa producing enough of what it consumes?
- Is there a mechanism by donors, AfDB and AU to vet the education system and see what can and is not working?
- How can the AfDB ensure that the youth who have never attended school have their capacity built in business, employment and entrepreneurship? This considering the fact that most of them may not be able to communicate in foreign and sometimes adopted national languages such as English.

Recommendations/Outcomes:

- The AfDB should consider financing out-of-school youth initiatives through either TVET or special programmes that are tailored to address the needs of this special group. This is because the exclusion of young people from mainstream secondary and tertiary education means that the only option available to the is vocational training.
• The bank should consider supporting national coalitions of all education stakeholders that will facilitate and support initiatives arising from the implementation of GES4CESA and CESA 16-25. A directorate of education stakeholders including gender-oriented organizations could play an advisory and technical role in the implementation.

• Invest in competence-based curricula that seeks to reinforce practical skills for the youth that are needed in the job market and entrepreneurship.

• The AfDB support the Africa Girls Education Fund (AGEF) that is hosted by FAWE as it seeks to create educational opportunities for disadvantaged girls on the continent.

• AFDB needs to support the unification of the curriculum in the continent.

• There is need to train children with soft skills such as communication so that they are able to express themselves and the ideas that linger their minds throughout their youthful life.

• The AfDB needs to involve youth and civil society in the design and execution of education and entrepreneurship programs.

• Adopting a more realistic, reliable and passionate driven approach in battling youth unemployment.

• Invest in a value system for youth's growth including empowering them to create local solutions for their communities.

• Investing in a conducive environment to retain the youthful talent pool that often gets poached by global organizations and hereby robbing Africa’s great minds.

• Make agriculture appealing for youth to enhance Africa’s food security.

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• Adopting a more realistic, reliable and passionate driven approach in battling youth unemployment.

Innovative Approaches For Accelerating The Implementation of AREI for Economic Prosperity and Regional Integration in Africa

Session leaders

Moderator:
Augustine B. Njamnshi, Coordinator, African Coalition for Sustainable Energy and Access (ACSEA)

Panelists:
Dr. Daniel Schroth, Ag. Director, Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency & Advisor to the Vice President in charge of Power, Energy, Climate and Green Growth - AfDB

Benson Irieri, Africa Lead, Energy Access - World Resources Institute (WRI)

Thuli Makama, Africa Senior Advisor, Oil Change International (OCI)

Jacqueline Kimeu, Coordinator, Alliance Of Civil Society Organisations for Clean Energy Access

Maimuna Kabatesi, Advocacy Officer, Hivos

Background

Africa’s energy landscape presents both challenges and opportunities for low carbon development. Multiple programmes aimed at addressing the challenges exist, but the most notable being the African Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI). AREI recognizes that energy is a fundamental requirement to drive the productive sectors in both local and national contexts. This means addressing the needs of enterprises of all scales, both in terms of quantity and quality of access. At the same time, the SE4ALL envisions Decentralized Renewable Energy (DRE) systems as most effective for delivery of development benefits to the most unserved and underserved populations. As such, localizing AREI to ensure that it delivers the intended development benefits will thus require high levels of planning and execution. Additionally, effective financing, as well as informed decision making, particularly regarding where to allocate such investments will need to be given prominence if last mile populations are to benefit, and more if AREI is to deliver meaningful development where it is needed most. Energy Access Explorer (EAE) - an online geospatial energy access platform, would effectively help in such levels of planning.

Subjects covered

The aim of this session was to seek to achieve the following:

• Present an overview of AREI, the role of stakeholders in advancing its objectives, as well as practical opportunities for localizing its delivery.

• Explore how AREI can be harnessed to deliver socio-economic development in Africa’s most unserved & underserved regions.

• Present an analysis of current trends in renewable energy financing in Africa (with a particular emphasis on AREI).

• Present the Energy Access Explorer (EAE) - an online regional geospatial energy access plat-
form, and explore how it can be used to bring regional integration in planning for delivery of AREI

- Develop & agree on recommendations to the AREI through the Independent Delivery Unit (IDU)

Questions raised

After a general overview of AREI was given by the moderator, the different panelists addressed the various topics, participants raised a couple questions. These ranged from what is holding Africa back from leapfrogging into a low carbon economy in spite of the enormous renewable endowment. Participants also wanted to know the kind of Leadership AfDB has provided for RE in general and AREI in particular to pick up in Africa.

Outcomes/recommendations

The following key recommendations were made:

1. There is a need to debunk the myth that mini-grids cannot bring economic development to Africa.
2. African partners should join their efforts and make sure investment in RE goes into priority areas that meet the needs of the majority of the population.
3. AREI’s principles, guidelines and governing instruments should be strictly observed so that it will deliver on its promise to Africa.
4. That the term decentralized energy systems should not be limited to the localization of RE equipment and projects, but that it should also mean decentralization in decision making.
5. Africa should do everything to stop the influx of substandard RE equipment into the continent.
6. That AREI Focal points should be appointed in all African countries and not only in the Board member countries as it is the case now. This will help raise the profile of AREI across the whole continent.

ACRONYMS

AfDB: African Development Bank
AfCTA: African Continental Free Trade Agreement
CARE: Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe
DAI: Disclosure and Access to Information Unit of the African Development Bank
IDEV: Independent Development Evaluation Unit at the African Development Bank
IRPAD: Research and Promotion Institute on Development Alternatives in Africa
ISDB: Islamic Development Bank
IFC: International Finance Corporation
OXFAM: Oxford Committee for Famine Relief
PACJA: Pan African Climate Justice Alliance
REDDA-NESDA: Network for Environment and Sustainable Development
WACSI: West Africa Civil Society Institute
WBG: World Bank Group