



AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP  
GROUPE DE LA BANQUE AFRICAINE  
DE DÉVELOPPEMENT



ENGAGEMENT AVEC LA SOCIÉTÉ CIVILE  
ENGAGING WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

## **Civil Society Forum 2019**

**Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 07 – 09 May 2019**

### ***"Engaging Civil Society to Accelerate Regional Integration for Africa's Economic Prosperity"***

#### **CONCEPT NOTE**

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are increasingly involved in forging strategic partnerships with governments, businesses donors, and are, to a large extent, engaged in official consultative processes at regional and continental levels. Indeed, civil society has a diverse role to play in Africa's social and economic transformation and over the past decades, civil society in emerging economies has grown into a dynamic, innovative and influential ecosystem with increased power beyond their traditional role and sector. 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 delivers but also as enablers for change, policy influencers, project incubators, experts and implementing partners. In response to this increased civil society engagement, the African Development Bank (AfDB) organizes each year the Civil Society Forum, which is a platform for dialogue between AfDB and Civil Society Organizations. This year, under the theme "Regional Integration for Africa's Economic Prosperity" the Forum will, among other things, explore devising strategies that would provide Civil Society Organizations support in AfDB's replenishment efforts.

#### **Theme: Engaging Civil Society to Accelerate Regional Integration for Africa's Economic Prosperity**

The Civil Society Forum will bring together at least 300 participants representing all five operational regions of the continent as well as different sectors and groups of people. These will include:

- CSOs and Social actors across Africa engaged in regional integration
- Government representatives
- Bank staff including Senior Management
- Regional Economic Communities (RECs) Representatives
- People around the world through the virtual forum, various social media and communication channels.

Fostering regional and economic integration on the continent is one of the African Development Bank's High 5 priorities. Since the beginning of his mandate, President Adesina has stressed the importance of engaging with civil society in achieving the top priorities. Regional economic integration aims to create larger, more attractive markets, link landlocked countries to international markets and support intra-African trade. The forum will explore practical and sustainable ways to achieve this. It will identify best practices and specific roles of CSOs in this process.

The 2019 Forum will provide an opportunity to define the roles and responsibilities of Civil Society towards achieving Africa's regional integration. It will demonstrate the significance of the African Development Bank's engagement with civil society in the achievement of the regional integration priority.

## **Objectives of the Forum**

The objectives of the forum include:

- Provide a platform and voice to civil society for a structured dialogue between the AfDB and African civil society to support the implementation of the African Development Bank's Regional integration Strategy;
- Familiarize civil society organizations with AfDB's Regional Integration Strategy;
- Launch the Social and Citizen Mobilization Campaign for the replenishment of the African Development Fund (ADF-15), the General Capital Increase (GCI), and the African Investment Forum (AIF).

## **Format of the Forum**

### **Thematic and Plenary sessions**

Thematic and Plenary sessions are conference sessions designed on thematic threads in order to foster constructive dialogue and best practices to support the African Development Bank in implementing the High 5 – Integrate Africa. They will facilitate open dialogue and participants' interaction through active discussions and peer sharing through panels.

### **Breakout sessions**

Breakout sessions are smaller groups that will discuss specific topics related to the Forum's agenda. Recommendations from these sessions will be validated during in plenary and shall be presented at the Annual Meetings for incorporation into AfDB's policies and projects.

### **CSO-led sessions**

Call for proposals were shared on the African Development Bank's website and on social media for effective reach to continental and global civil society organizations. Application forms were reviewed by AHGC and the AfDB-CSO committee, prioritizing the CSOs that best fit the general theme and to ensure balance in geographic representation and diversity in scope of mandate. The aim is to have specific sessions led and managed by CSOs which will provide a space for grassroots innovative ideas as well as enhanced partnership with CSOs through a greater ownership of the sessions.

### **Meet with AfDB Senior Management**

Dedicated desks/offices will be available for Civil Society representatives to meet directly with AfDB senior management across the Hi5. Forum participants will receive practical answers to their questions on the African Development Bank's projects and programs, as well as funding mechanisms. They will also be able to create synergies with current and future Bank's initiatives.

### **Virtual Forum and interactive sessions**

The Forum will be available on live streaming. Highlights of the event will simultaneously be reported through social media, pictures will be posted on Flickr and Instagram, and a podcast of the event, divided by session, will be available online after the event. The virtual audience, external participants and global civil society community will be able to interact with panelists and participants at the Forum by submitting their questions/remarks through social media.

### **Launch of the CSO Web based platform**

**Social mobilization campaign in support to the African Development Bank's 2019 strategic objectives: GCI-7, ADF-15, AIF-2.**