

Mr. Ronald Justin CAFRINE –

Executive Director

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**Date:** 02/20/2026

Dear Executive Director

Seychelles, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania

**Subject: Fostering Partnership for Inclusive and Sustainable Development in Africa**

On behalf of the diverse network of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) working across the African continent and in partnership with the African Development Bank Group, the AfDB CSO Working Group extends our warmest congratulations and a genuine welcome as you take on your critical role in the Bank's governance. We recognize the immense responsibility you hold in overseeing the Bank's strategy, operations, and accountability to its member countries and, most importantly, to the citizens of Africa.

CSOs are united by a common commitment to the transformative development of Africa—a vision fully aligned with the Bank's "High 5" priorities. Our work on the ground provides invaluable real-world knowledge, community insights, and crucial feedback on the efficacy and impact of Bank-funded projects. We see ourselves not just as partners in implementation, but as essential pillars of accountability and inclusivity, ensuring that development is people-centred, equitable, and sustainable.

Our working group brings together over 70 organizations from across Africa and the world. We closely monitor AfDB-financed projects and policies, while promoting constructive dialogue on issues such as transparency, accountability, human rights, gender, climate resilience, disability inclusion and a just energy transition..

As we look forward to establishing a robust and ongoing dialogue with your office, we wish to highlight key areas where CSO partnership and the Executive Directors' oversight will be most vital:

1. **Climate Justice and a Just Energy Transition:** We urge the Board to exercise strong oversight of the Bank's climate finance to ensure it delivers measurable benefits to vulnerable and marginalized communities across Africa. Climate investments should prioritize adaptation, resilience, and affordable access to clean energy, while supporting a clear and time bound shift away from fossil fuels. This transition must protect

livelihoods, safeguard public revenues, and strengthen African economies through locally grounded renewable solutions, inclusive planning, and accountable financing.

2. **Stronger Board oversight over Projects performance and implementation of the Integrated Safeguards System (ISS):** We urge the Board to exercise robust and proactive oversight of project performance and the implementation of the ISS to ensure that AfDB-financed operations deliver their intended development outcomes without causing harm. Closely scrutinize performance data, compliance and CSO reports, and lessons emerging from supervision missions and accountability mechanisms to address implementation gaps, and ensure that environmental, social, and governance risks are identified early and managed consistently throughout the project cycle.
3. **Accountability and Remedy:** We advocate for the strengthening of the Independent Recourse Mechanism (IRM) ) and the AfDB's commitment to accountability and remedy. Board engagement with the work of the IRM is crucial for ensuring that unintended negative project impacts, which harm communities and undermine sustainable development, are addressed and remedied. The IRM's policy revision process will start this year, and we are calling for no regression or dilution from the current policy. The IRM has lacked a permanent director since late 2024, and this position should be filled as soon as possible through a robust selection process that includes civil society participation.
4. **Transparency:** We insist on greater transparency in project planning, procurement, and environmental and social impact assessments (ESIA). Community engagement must be early, meaningful, and continuous.
5. **Debt Sustainability and Resource Mobilisation:** Given the ongoing debt crisis, we encourage the Board to champion strategies that prioritise debt relief, enhance domestic resource mobilisation, and ensure that new concessional financing is channeled effectively to human development priorities, including Renewable energy health and education. This should be complemented by a stronger shift towards grant financed projects rather than loans for climate related interventions and a clear shift to community centered solutions.
6. **Gender Equity and Social Inclusion:** We stress the necessity of mainstreaming gender equality and social inclusion throughout all Bank operations, moving beyond policy statements to measurable outcomes that empower women, youth, and marginalised groups in project design and economic benefit sharing. Supported by gender responsive project implementation at the local level, ensuring meaningful participation in decision

making and equitable access to project benefits backed by clear accountability mechanisms, and adequate resourcing to ensure impacts.

7. **CSO Engagement:** We call on the Bank to reinstate a substantive, interactive CSO forum at the Annual Meetings based on practices set by peer institutions including the World Bank and Asian Development Bank. The forum should be planned and organized in partnership with civil society organizations. Selection among proposals for CSO-led sessions should extend beyond Bank-funded CSOs to embrace other groups offering critical and independent perspectives on the AfDB's work. Additionally the Bank should open the CSO roundtable discussions with AfDB Executive Directors to all registered civil society participants at the Annual Meetings. Allocating dedicated time for CSOs to engage with the AfDB's Executive Directors as key decision makers and representatives of the member governments, of which CSOs are constituents, is paramount. This interaction should aim to highlight community concerns, provide space for information sharing and dialogue on Bank priorities and plans, and explore avenues for collaboration.

We stand ready to support your work by providing technical expertise, indigenous knowledge, local context, and the voice of the people the AfDB is mandated to serve. We believe that regular, structured, and open engagement between the Board of Directors and CSOs is fundamental to enhancing the Bank's effectiveness and achieving lasting, positive change.

We look forward to the opportunity for productive dialogue and a renewed partnership under your leadership.

Sincerely,

**AfDB CSO Working Group**