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April 30, 2024

IDA21 STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND UPDATES ON BETTER BANK

The first regional IDA Forum on IDA21 Strategic Directions and Updates on the Better Bank took place on April 30 hosted by Kenya. Other countries joined online – Burundi, Botswana, Comoros, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda – with close to 160 participants.

The aim of the forum was to inform civil societies about the proposed IDA21 strategic directions and obtain feedback and any input from them to feed into IDA's policy dialogue, as well as update them on the progress the Bank is making in its evolution towards a better bank. To this end, the Development Finance Vice President Akihiko Nishio made a presentation on the proposed [IDA21 Strategic Directions](#), while IDA Director Dirk Reinermann presented on the Better Bank. These were the basis for discussion.

The IDA Borrower Representative (Burundi) Amb. Liberat Mfumukeko representing countries in the AFE region in IDA Replenishment Meetings made remarks in the opening session, while the Mr. Sheku Sambadeen Sesay the IDA21 Independent Co-Chair gave [closing remarks](#). The event was moderated by Ms. Ruth Kagia, an international development consultant.

After the two presentations, participants shared their views and suggestions of areas IDA21 could include. Overall, there was agreement with the proposed IDA21 [focus areas](#) of People, Planet, Prosperity, Infrastructure and Digitalization. Some suggestions also fell under the proposed [lenses](#) of More and better jobs; Gender; Fragility; and Private investments.

Following are the inputs made:

FOCUS AREAS

PEOPLE: Noting that there will be no success without investing in education, suggestions included improvement of **education and health** systems; skilling youth, inclusion of people with disabilities.

PLANET: Resilience in view of the various crises and investing in strong institutions to deal with these situations; plus pandemics as part of debt clauses.

PROSPERITY: Governance – enhance capacity of institutions to manage corruption; strengthen public participation throughout project cycle for accountability; and availability of information on projects. The Bank be firm in ensuring resources are not invested in areas that are oppressive. Also consider transition to more budget support. **Graduation** mindset change should be key so countries target to reduce dependence on IDA.

INFRASTRUCTURE: **Energy** – renewable energy, clean cooking, also needed for a healthier life. **Public infrastructure** investments and issues of housing.

DIGITALIZATION: Especially to enable financial inclusion for women, cashless economy, and job creation for youth.

LENSES

More and Better Jobs: for youth and women. Importance of jobs for the increasing youth population, and recognition of that young people are a very heterogenous group with different needs and capacities. For women, engagement in procurement important too.

Gender: Continued **gender mainstreaming** in all efforts and transformative approaches that view gender beyond just numbers – stimulating jobs for women and prioritizing their market access.

Fragility: **FCV** envelope – extend to repatriation and coping mechanisms.

Private investments: **Agro-processing** and various aspects of manufacturing industries – duty free-zones; and wealth creation; and improving PSW. Also issues of viability of private sector. All these important to drive growth, create jobs, and reduce dependence.

BETTER BANK

Scorecard – several points on indicators:

- How do we ensure what is being measured is what is actually on the ground; indicators on electricity – how to track off-grid supplies.
- Avoid indicators that lump everything together, e.g., millions of people with access to health, nutrition, and population services – it's too vague – making it difficult to see progress towards SDGs.
- What about family-centered indicators?

OTHER ISSUES RAISED

- **Achievement of results** was seen as important with several voices speaking to the role of CSOs in accountability of IDA funds and monitoring delivery of project results by local CSOs. CSO financing to track and pay attention to how IDA resources are utilized was seen as an impediment, and therefore asked IDA to fund local CSOs to strengthen their oversight capacity. They also urged IDA to find other modalities of engaging CSOs; involve CSOs in operations at various levels including project negotiations.
- **Special note from ONE Campaign** - want to have regular conversation with partners and will be pulling these together with or without the Bank. We are telling the world what Africa wants.

Bank management provided overall management response to various issues raised, complemented by the IDA Borrower representative especially on access to project information and how IDA ensures borrower and donor voices are equal.