Early readout of the New President's strategic directions

Following the announcement of resignation by Mr. David Malpass as President of the WBG, Mr. Ajay Banga was nominated by the United States Administration, as the 14th President of the Group. Subsequently, Mr. Banga was confirmed as the new President of the WBG after an interview by World Bank Groups’ (WBG) Executive Directors, as a sole nominee for the position.

The Executive Directors expressed their interest in working with Mr. Banga on the WBG’s ambition and reform efforts aimed at addressing the development challenges facing the world’s developing economies. When Mr. Banga assumed office on June 2, the WBG was already undergoing a transformation led by shareholders to update its vision and mission, operational policies, and financial model in order to respond better to global development challenges. The direction and expected results of the evolution process is outlined in the WBG Evolution Roadmap endorsed by Governors during the April 2023 Spring Meetings.

In his initial remarks after assuming office, Mr. Banga expressed his desire to engage in a systematic dialogue with WBG Executive Directors and staff to enhance the WBG’s delivery and impact. To double development and climate efforts and achieve more impact and enhance the results of the institution, the President committed to appoint an advisory committee that would focus on innovative ideas to deliver on its mission and catalyze private sector capital, over the next five years. The following issues were emphasized by Mr. Banga to achieve the Bank’s ambition.
As the discussions with shareholders on the future of the WBG role continue, the Bank would focus on both crisis response and long-term development and continue to lean forward to help countries regain momentum to achieve a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive development. Mr. Banga asserts: “we are poised to usher in a new chapter in the history of the Bank.” The WB will decisively scale up and optimize to help countries in their quest for social protection, digital infrastructure, global debt management, building global knowledge; leveraging partnerships with multilateral institutions, civil societies, and the private sector, and intensifying outcome orientation. Tackling this challenge will require all the Group’s institutions —IBRD, IDA, IFC, MIGA, ICSID— to work together as one WBG with all clients to deliver what the mission requires.

Finally, to address the concern of slow loan approval and disbursement, the President stressed that, the Bank must maintain very high standards and scrutiny to make projects more effective, sustainable, and efficient. He highlighted that the reform process would be effective if it addresses lengthy operational procedures during projects’ preparations and implementation which often lead to frustrating delays for recipient countries.

2023 Africa Group 1 Constituency Annual Ambassadors' Lunch

The Office of the Executive Director (OED) hosted the 2023 Africa Group 1 Constituency Annual Ambassadors' Lunch on March 29, 2023, at the World Bank Group (WBG) Headquarters in Washington, DC. The event provided an opportunity for the Executive Director’s Office to update Ambassadors of Constituency countries based in the United States on various policy and operational developments shaping the WBG’s engagement with their respective countries.

The Executive Director opened the event by welcoming the Ambassadors and expressing appreciation for the continued partnership and support extended to the OED. Dr. Floribert Ngaruko briefed the Ambassadors on the OED’s Midterm Strategy, which guides the work program of the OED during his tenure. The event featured two presentations, the first focusing on World Bank Groups’ operations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 (delivered by Mr. Fisseha Kidane, Senior Advisor to the ED), and a second presentation on the ongoing World Bank Evolution discussions (delivered by Ms. Naomi Rono, Senior Advisor to the ED).
FY22 WBG Operations:
During FY22, IDA new resources commitment reached US$37.7 billion, of which 72% was provided to Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) countries. Constituency countries received US$10.3 billion of the above amount to finance 22 projects. During the period, net disbursement to Constituency countries was US$3.7 billion. On IBRD, the presentation highlighted that FY22 total new loan commitment was US$33.1 billion, of which US$367 million went to finance three projects in Constituency countries. IFC total financing (both own-resources and mobilization) during FY22 was US$32.8 billion, with US$8.2 directed to Africa. IFC approved 10 projects for Constituency countries with a total financing size of US$16 billion. In FY22, MIGA issued guarantees valued at US$4.94 billion, including 10 IDA-PSW supported guarantees in Constituency countries.

Another highlight of the lunch discussion was a reflection on the US - Africa Leaders’ Summit held in December 2022. Ambassador Hilda Suka-Mafudze, the African Union Ambassador to the United States, provided an update on the summit’s outcomes and discussed the implications for African countries. Her reflections underscored the importance of continued coordination among the African constituencies in advocating for African countries.

WBG Evolution Roadmap:
The presentation highlighted the institution’s commitment to adapting to the changing global landscape to better respond to global challenges while supporting countries to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The roadmap rests on three main pillars: the WBG’s mission and vision, the operating model and financial models. The aim is to help the World Bank Group reposition itself as a global leader by adapting and innovating its operations to remain relevant and effective in addressing the evolving needs of its clients.

The presentation highlighted Sub-Saharan Africa’s priorities in the Evolution Roadmap. It emphasized the need to align the continent’s unique challenges and opportunities with the proposed changes to the vision and mission, operational framework, and financing model of the WBG. The following main messages were discussed to frame SSA’s priorities; the need for stronger ambition and resolve to address extreme poverty, the importance of economic growth and resilience in addressing extreme poverty, a call for investment in growth enablers such as food security, energy, water access, and digitalization, along with financing climate adaptation to build resilience to climate-related challenges.

In conclusion, the 2023 Africa Group 1 Constituency Annual Ambassadors’ Lunch was a successful event that provided a platform for exchange of views between the Office of the Executive Directors and Ambassador of Constituency countries based in the United States of America.


The Office of the World Bank Vice President for Eastern and Southern Africa organized a dialogue on Africa Agricultural Leadership, which was hosted by the Republic of Zambia, on June 1-2, in Lusaka, Zambia. The Office of the Executive Director was represented by the Alternate Executive Director, Dr. Zarau W. Kibwe accompanied by Advisor Ms. Ndapiwa Segole
The objective of the dialogue was to discuss African agri-food policy actions amid the growing global economic integration of agri-food systems. Key players, including prominent global and African policy and industry leaders, came together to share relevant experiences and showcased innovative practices. The dialogue also benefitted from agriculture policy research institutions which shared evidence on reform impacts. Agribusiness leaders discussed reforms needed to increase private sector financing. The forum facilitated discussions on policy reforms that would unlock investment financing opportunities for the transformation of African food systems through three strategic pillars (Incentives, Innovation, and Investments) for improved food security, resilience, and jobs.

On the first day, the Minister of Finance and Planning for Zambia and Governor of the World Bank Group, Dr. Situmbeko Musokotwane, delivered a keynote address on behalf of the President of the Republic of Zambia. Following the opening, three sessions and a roundtable for Ministers were held. The second day was open to delegates to hold bilateral and multilateral follow-up conversations to cultivate and foster partnerships.

Key messages from the discussion were the following: (i) The need to transform macroeconomic policy and agricultural policy systems to facilitate the economic transformation of the continent, (ii) Policymakers should shape the agricultural sector in Africa to reflect successes seen around other continents. Policymakers and leaders should remain focused on recent impediments within the agriculture sector to identify long-run initiatives to transform the sector with modern policies and institutions, (iii) The need to fund research to increase and enhance innovation systems. Policymakers were urged to strengthen partnerships with the private sector for investments to augment public sector fundings. Public resources are needed to de-risk agriculture, and (iv) The current macro environment and its impact on food-systems offered an opportunity to modernize agriculture policies to tackle challenges. The forum offered policymakers a chance to reaffirm commitments made to accelerate agriculture development as captured in the Malabo declaration.
Session 1: Incentives: Repurposing Agricultural Support Policies and Programs.

The session discussed the urgent need for food systems transformation and required changes in incentives, finance, and investment in key areas. Delegates, especially policymakers were encouraged to repurpose support for policies and programs by adapting general objectives that are localized or specific. The inclusion of key stakeholders during the process was emphasized. Policymakers expressed support to strengthening public-private linkages and reinforcement, focusing on the food system and also forming coalitions to change the economic, technical, political and social reforms.

Session 2: Policies to Leverage Innovations for Agri-food Systems Transformation

The second session focused on leveraging technologies to transform and strengthen food systems required to strengthen policy ecosystems and institutional change. Additionally, promoting smallholder farmers’ adaptation and resilience to climate change and developing carbon markets to incentivize climate adaptation was identified as key measure. The discussion also highlighted a need to strengthen private-sector partnerships and de-risk private-sector investment in agriculture by using Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) and innovative “smart” subsidies.

Session 3: Investment and Trade: Integrating Agri-Food System Transformation

The session discussed a pipeline of investment opportunities under development that were considered based on agricultural fundamentals, alignment with national strategic priorities, population, macroeconomic indicators, Global Food Security Index (GFSI) rankings & investment criteria. The session discussed and recommended policies and regulatory environment developments that were needed to spur private investments. These include: (i) Improving land rights & tenure community-based land schemes (cooperatives, trust schemes, etc.) (ii) Transferring idle/technically insolvent assets into national priority food security initiatives; (iii) Environmental and social governance standards; (iv) Enhance agro-industrial competitiveness, value-addition, policies to minimize excessive off-shoring of primary produce; (v) Establish predictable tax incentives and policies as well as prudent import duty policies; (vi) Avoid export restrictions within AfCFTA and; (vii) Reduce reliance/remove production subsidies.
Highlights of the Alternate Executive Director’s Mission to Malawi April 27-29, 2023

The Alternate Executive Director, Dr. Zarau Wendeline Kibwe, accompanied by Advisor, Mr. Josef Halwoodi, undertook a mission to the Republic of Malawi on behalf of the Africa Group I Constituency from April 26 to 29, 2023. The visit was coordinated with the first country mission of Ms. Anna Bjerde, the World Bank Group Managing Director for Operations, in her new role, as well as Ms. Victoria Kwakwa, Regional Vice President for Eastern & Southern Africa.

The visit provided an opportunity to observe the consequences of the rainfall and landslide impacts of Tropical Cyclone Freddy in Blantyre and to talk to the city authorities. Visual surveys during the visit confirmed the mudslide’s effect on Soche Hill settlements and damage to the infrastructure caused by cyclone-induced flooding. During the mission, Dr. Kibwe visited the Mudi Dam/catchment, an important water source for Blantyre, where he met with the Commissioner of Disaster Management Affairs.

On April 15, 2023, the Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DODMA) completed the Post Disaster Needs Assessment, which was undertaken with the support from the World Bank, United Nations, and European Union. The assessment led to the signing of the new Malawi Water & Sanitation Project, amounting to a $145 million grant by the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs of Malawi, Hon. Sosten Gwengwe, and WBG Managing Director Operation, Ms. Anna Bjerde at Ryalls Hotel in Blantyre, Malawi.

The WBG Delegation also paid a courtesy call to H.E. Dr. Lazarus Chakwera, President of the Republic of Malawi. The Managing Director commended the Government’s efforts in implementing Agricultural Commercialization Project, which, once fully executed, has the potential to increase food supply, generate income, and address unemployment, especially among the nation’s youth. Ms. Bjerde also emphasized that Malawi should diversify its economy to reduce overdependence on a single sector, suggesting that mining could be a potential sector for consideration.
Ms. Bjerde further emphasized that Malawi needs to build capacity to support private sector development for economic transformation and job creation to reduce poverty. Additionally, Ms. Bjerde stressed that the WBG has reprogrammed $80 million for cyclone relief and allocated additional $100 million under the Crisis Response Window to support Malawi.

Addressing the WBG delegation, His Excellency, Dr. Lazarus Chakwera, President of the Republic of Malawi, welcomed the Bank’s support and emphasized that strengthening partnership between Malawi and the WBG aligns with the Malawi’s development strategies. He further stressed that WBG support will assist Malawi to achieve its long-term vision (Malawi Vision 2063).

**Highlights of the Executive Director’s Mission to Malawi, May 8-9, 2023**

The Executive Director (ED), Dr. Floribert Ngaruko undertook an official mission during May 8-9, 2023 to consult with the government of the Republic of Malawi on the country’s development challenges and to discuss ways in which the relationship between Malawi and the World Bank Group could be strengthened. The ED met with dignitaries and senior government officials as well as leadership and staff of the WBG Country Office.

During his meeting with Hon. Sosten Gwengwe, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, the ED expressed the Office’s condolences to the government and people of Malawi for the devastating impact and loss of lives caused by Tropical Cyclone Freddy. The ED briefed the Minister on the ongoing WBG evolution discussions.

The discussion included the need for Malawi to build more resilience to address disaster and pandemics that continue to impact its economic performance. The ED reiterated the Office’s commitment to assist Malawi in strengthening its partnership with the WBG. The ED further indicated that the Office of the Executive Director (OED) in partnership with the WBG Community Connection Campaigns and UNICEF had launched a Disaster Relief Drive contributions on April 26, 2023, to raise some funds towards the recovery effort from Cyclone Freddy.
During the mission to Malawi, the ED also met with Hon. Dr. Michael Usl, Minister of Natural Resources and Climate Change, Hon. Sam Kawale, Minister of Agriculture, and the Minister of Education, Hon. Madalitso Wirima Kambauwa. The ED also met with WBG Country Manager, Mr. Hugh Riddell and the staff to understand their concerns pertaining to their employment conditions.

At the conclusion of the official mission, the ED visited the Dedza One Stop Border Post Project (OSBP) constructed under the Southern Africa Trade and Transport Connectivity Project and the Dedza Hospital Trauma Centre and Dedza District Hospital.
Visit of Executive Director Dr. Floribert Ngaruko to the Kingdom of Eswatini

Executive Director, Dr. Floribert Ngaruko, accompanied by his Senior Advisor, Ms. Lonkhululeko Magagula, visited the Kingdom of Eswatini, from May 11-12, 2023. The Executive Director met the Right Honourable Prime Minister, Cleopas Sipho Dlamini; Minister of Finance, Senator Neal Rijkenburg, the Alternate Governor of the WBG and Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Planning & Development, Ms. Thabsile Mlangezi and other Senior Officials in the Ministries of Economic Planning & Development and Finance; Minister of Health, Senator Lizzy Nkosi and Senior Officials in the Ministries of Health and Education; Senior Officials of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy, the Managing Director of the Eswatini Electricity Company, Mr. Ernest Mkhonta, and representative of the Eswatini Water Services Corporation; and the World Bank Country Office Staff.

The purpose of the visit was to consult with the authorities in Eswatini on the country’s development challenges as well as the implementation of the new Country Partnership Framework and opportunities for strengthening Eswatini’s relationship with the World Bank Group (WBG). The ED also took the opportunity to discuss the WBG Evolution and the prospects for Eswatini to mobilize concessional financing to address global challenges. The mission ended with site visits to the Eswatini Water Supply and Sanitation Access and the Eswatini Network Enhancement and Access Projects in the, the most poverty-stricken region of Shiselweni.
Highlights of the Executive Director’s Mission to Namibia, May 15 -16, 2023

The Executive Director, Dr. Floribert Ngaruko visited the Republic of Namibia from May 15-16, 2023, to consult with the Government of the Republic of Namibia on development challenges and opportunities, reforms, and economic recovery plans and to explore ways to strengthen the partnership between Namibia and WBG.

The ED met Hon. Ipumbu Shiimi, WBG Governor and Minister of Finance and Public Enterprises of the Republic of Namibia to discuss the economic situation and development challenges and opportunities facing the country. The ED appreciated the efforts the Government is undertaking on the economic recovery plans to stabilize the economy, amid the negative impact of the Covid-19. The ED updated the Minister about the ongoing WBG Evolution discussions. Hon. Shiimi articulated the efforts of the government and highlighted the fiscal policy stance of the Government over the medium term.

The ED also met with Hon. Schlettwein, Minister of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform to discuss potential WBG support for the development of the Namibia agriculture sector particularly the beef value chain. The ED met Mr. Ebson Uanguta, Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Namibia to discuss the economic situation and explore ways how the WBG can support financial sector development in Namibia.
The ED met with Mr. James Mnyupe, Economic Advisor to the President to discuss and explore opportunities on strengthening WBG and cooperation with the Republic of Namibia, particularly in the areas of the green hydrogen development.

Another meeting undertaken during the mission was a discussion with Mr. Bryan Eiseb, Acting Executive Director in the Ministry of Mines and Energy to discuss energy sector development and further role for the WBG Support.

The ED further held discussions with Mr. Sokongo Haihambo, Executive Director in the Ministry of Industrialization and Trade, to appreciate the Government’s industrialization and job creation strategy, private sector development as well as efforts for economic diversification to support the regional integration initiatives.

**Highlights of the African Human Capital Summit, Tanzania**

The African Human Capital Summit held in Dar Es Salaam from July 25th to 26th, 2023 brought together Heads of State to foster technical deliberation, share the latest knowledge on human capital and conclude with concrete commitments and next steps. The Summit was hosted by Tanzania, thanks to Her Excellency Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania and her commitment to championing this cause and investing in the people of the Sub-Saharan nations. It was also supported by the World Bank & other development partners supporting the implementation of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want and Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development.

The objective of the summit was to link investments in human capital to economic growth by addressing poverty and skill gaps, especially for youth and women. The two-day program brought a bottom-up demand to human capital prioritization and investments through technical workshops in all Sub-Saharan countries, by discussing challenges and bottlenecks to human capital accumulation along with identifying priorities and drivers of growth. The workshops were led by country Human Capital Focal Points and the outcomes were used to inform high-level Heads of State summit interventions.
At the Summit, the Heads of State welcomed the World Bank Group’s engagement model for promoting collaboration to better support national strategies through financing instruments adapted to their needs. They also acknowledged the negative impacts caused by Climate Change, Covid-19 pandemic, Russian-Ukraine war on the development of human capital and noted its disproportionate effects particularly in African countries. Further they appreciated and recognized efforts made by African Governments, in improving human development, including increasing budgetary allocation to education, health, food security and nutrition, despite these challenges. Against this backdrop, the Heads of State agreed to prioritize government and development partner’s interventions in the coming years on Human Capital Development by:

- **Recognizing** that priorities on investing in and protecting human capital will be critical to rebuilding a high-productivity, inclusive, and more resilient economy.

- **Affirming**, that human capital includes inter alia assets such as education, skills, health, nutrition, clean and safe water, and gender equality which are crucial for development in African countries and play a pivotal role in the transformation of African economies.

- **Acknowledging**, that investment in people is critical for building sustainable, resilient, and inclusive growth in Africa, and that investments in human capital for improved social and economic outcomes in future through quality education, skills and jobs, health care, and nutrition are vital to ending extreme poverty and creating more inclusive societies.

- **Recognizing**, that sub-Saharan Africa scores the lowest of all the world’s regions on the World Bank’s Human Capital Index, a measurement that quantifies the contribution of health and education to the productivity of the next generation of workers.

- **Further recognizing**, that although there are improved results in households’ access to health care, school enrolment, amenities, and tools to enhance quality of life - the goal of human capital and quality of life still lags significantly behind, especially in the context of multi-crisis facing the world.

- **Appreciating** that developing human capital in Africa requires massive, coordinated planning and financing as well as resolute effort to strengthen the quantity, efficiency, and impact of investments in people.

- **Being Mindful** of the urgent need to address development policy reforms and institutional innovation with an emphasis on stronger implementation, that would enable Africa’s young people to grow up with optimal health and equipped with the right knowledge, skills, and competence to compete in the digital global economy.

- **Thus, noting** the need to increase financing for implementation of regional and country-tailored policy action plans and cross-country learning.

- **Acknowledging**, the importance of tackling problems related to human capital development to improve the capability of the continent, address human capital development challenges, and leverage the opportunities they present.
To that end, the Heads of State Committed to Pursue the Africa Union 2063 Agenda, with a renewed emphasis on harnessing the demographic dividend through specific focus on Education, Decent Work and Jobs, Social Security and Protection, Health and Nutrition, as well as Women and Youth empowerment. Specifically, they pledged to:

a) **Prioritize Education and Skills Development**: Committing to increasing accessibility, affordability and to ensure quality education as well as reducing learning poverty in countries at least by a quarter by 2030 and improving literacy rates to reach 75% by 2030.

b) **Enhance Health and Well-Being**: By 2030, Committing countries to achieve 90% immunization coverage, reducing maternal mortality to 70 per 100,000 live births, under 5 child mortality to 25 per 1000 live births and stunting by 40%.

c) **Empower Women and Girls**: Committing to increasing access of secondary and tertiary education to at least 20 million additional adolescent girls in the continent by 2030, to cover 40% of girls aged 15 years to receive the recommended doses of HPV vaccine by 2025, and to reduce teenage pregnancies by half by 2030.

d) **Promote Job Creation and Economic Opportunities**: Committing to providing training on skills to an additional 19 million to acquire digital skills for jobs by 2030 and aiming for a Gross Enrollment Ratio for tertiary education of 20%.

e) **Ensure Social Protection and Inclusion**: Committing that all countries in the continent will have an operational social registry by 2030.

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**Upcoming Events**

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<td>September 4-6, 2023</td>
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<td>October 9-15, 2023</td>
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<td>IDA Mid-Term Review</td>
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Africa Group 1 Constituency Staff

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<td>Floribert Ngaruko</td>
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<td>Zarau Wendeline Kibwe</td>
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<td>Fisseha Aberra Kidane</td>
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<td>Azhari Gasim Ahmed Elamin</td>
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<td>Sam Morris Aruna</td>
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