



THE AFRICAN CAPACITY
BUILDING FOUNDATION

FONDATION POUR LE RENFORCEMENT
DES CAPACITES EN AFRIQUE

A specialized agency of the African Union

Une agence spécialisée de l'Union africaine

MINUTES OF THE 31st BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING



**31st Board of Governors Meeting
Hybrid**

23 May 2022



2 FAIRBAIRN DRIVE, MT. PLEASANT, HARARE, ZIMBABWE,
P.O. Box 1562 HARARE
Telephone: (+263-242) 304663, 304622, 332002, 332014
Cell: +263 772 185 308 - 10
Fax: (+263-242) 303071, E-mail: root@acbf-pact.org;
Web site: www.acbf-pact.org



1. The 31st Board of Governors Meeting of the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) was held in a hybrid format on 23 May 2022 in Accra, Ghana.
2. The meeting was attended by Governors or representatives of the following Member States: Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Chad, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Togo, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Representatives of the following Institutional members also participated in the meeting: the African Development Bank (AfDB), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the World Bank. The Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) participated as an invited observer.
3. There being a quorum, the meeting commenced at 15:00, Accra Time (GMT+00).

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

4. The Chair of the Board of Governors, H.E. Ken Ofori-Atta (Minister of Finance of Ghana), welcomed all participants and expressed his appreciation for their commitment to the Foundation. He extended a special welcome to Mr. Mamadou Biteye, the new Executive Secretary of ACBF, effective from May 1, 2022.
5. H.E. Ofori-Atta noted that although the COVID-19 pandemic had adversely impacted on ACBF's operations due to resource constraints, the Foundation proved to be resilient, anchored on strategic partnerships with critical pan-African institutions and other partners committed to the continent's development agenda. In this regard, the Foundation implemented various reforms to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in program implementation. These interventions include cost cutting measures but without loss of control and scaling up knowledge and learning activities.
6. Resultantly, the ACBF Strategy 2017 to 2022 concludes with an ACBF that is more agile and better prepared to respond to the changing and diverse demands of member countries. The agility to adjust to the shifting financing models while still delivering impactful results is a commendable achievement.
7. He urged all members and development partners to continue to support ACBF. The immediate and pressing task will be to develop a new strategy for the Foundation.
8. He concluded his remarks by thanking the African Member States for the strong continental ownership of the Foundation as evidenced by their financial support which recorded a historical high annual contribution in FY2021 (achieving 94% of their target). He called on the member states and partners with outstanding pledges to show their commitment by facilitating timely payment of their contributions to the Foundation to enable the Secretariat to conclude the remaining key activities under the current strategy and plan for the new strategy without resource constraints.

GOODWILL MESSAGES FROM PARTNERS

9. Representatives of the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the World Bank delivered goodwill messages.

10. Prof Kevin Urama (Acting Chief Economist and Vice President for the Economic Governance and Knowledge Management Complex) commended the interventions by ACBF on the continent, particularly the strategic engagement and partnership with ACBF on strengthening institutions, including Think Tanks across the continent, and enhancing capacity in public sector administration management.

Looking ahead, he highlighted the critical role and relevance of ACBF in addressing capacity development dimensions of tackling the triple challenges of COVID-19, geopolitics, and the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war.

Prof Urama reaffirmed AfDB's commitment to continue partnering with ACBF. In this regard, the AfDB considers ACBF a key partner in implementing its Capacity Development Strategy 2021-2025.

11. Mr. David Omozuafoh (Regional Governance and Rule of Law Advisor at UNDP Regional Service Centre for Africa) reaffirmed the commitment of UNDP to continue working with ACBF as the Foundation has proved to be a dependable and key partner in addressing some critical capacity challenges on the continent. To this end, Mr. Omozuafoh noted the work done by ACBF in supporting UNDP to reimagine governance and peacebuilding in Africa. This intervention was useful in convening key stakeholders in Africa to consult and shape the new UNDP Strategy.

Mr. Omozuafoh emphasized the strategic role of ACBF to contribute to addressing the capacity development challenges in connection with implementation of Agenda 2063.

12. Mr. Vijay Pillai (Interim Director, Regional Integration, Africa, Middle East, and North Africa Regions), applauded ACBF for the long-term contribution to Africa's development. He reaffirmed the commitment of the World Bank to continue working with ACBF on regional integration. More specifically, he envisages an important role for ACBF in building the capacities of regional institutions to deliver impactful results. The World Bank is also open to engaging the ACBF Secretariat on how to collaborate in supporting national institutions and regional organizations to enhance digitization to support development initiatives.

13. Dr. Tshepelayi Kabata (Technical Advisor to the Director-General at BADEA) highlighted that ACBF is considered a critical partner in implementing BADEA Strategy, particularly in respect of addressing the capacity development dimension of the strategy. To this end, BADEA and ACBF are already working together on interventions to support women and youth entrepreneurship.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA AND MINUTES OF 30th BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING

14. The Agenda for the 31st ACBF Board of Governors Meeting was adopted without amendment.

15. The draft Minutes of the 30th Board of Governors Meeting of ACBF were reviewed and adopted as a fair and accurate summary of the deliberations and decisions taken during the Meeting held virtually on 25 June 2021.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE 30th BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING OF ACBF

16. The Matrix of the Matters Arising from the 30th Board of Governors Meeting of ACBF (see Annex 1) was reviewed, and members took note of the clarifications and updates provided by the Executive Secretary.

CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF THE ANNUAL REPORT FY2021 OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

17. Mr. Jonas Aklesso Daou (Chair of the ACBF Finance and Human Resources Committee) presented the 2021 Annual Report of the Foundation on behalf of the Executive Board.
18. He informed the Governors that, ACBF has rebounded from the turbulence of COVID-19 with a recovery strategy anchored on resilience, internal reforms, and increasing efficiencies. This was achieved by optimizing human resource management capabilities and transitioning to automated and more efficient business processes.
19. He highlighted the strong support by African Member States which enabled the Secretariat to implement the approved Business Plan for the year under review. The resources were utilized on the backdrop of significant cost containment measures with a cost-to-disbursement ratio falling from 25.1% in 2020 to 16.2% in 2021.
20. Furthermore, the Secretariat has enhanced its ICT capabilities to improve efficiency in program implementation support across Africa.
21. Mr. Daou informed the Governors that the internal control environment at the Foundation remains strong. In this regard, the Financial Statement for FY2021 were unqualified.
22. The Annual Report and FY2021 financial statements were considered by the Governors and approved.

PRESENTATION OF OVERALL STATUS OF THE FOUNDATION

23. Mr. Mamadou Biteye, Executive Secretary of ACBF, presented a report on the overall status of the Foundation, highlighting some of the critical milestones and challenges encountered in the recent past, and the prospects ahead.
24. He reported that with US\$74 million mobilized during the Strategy 2017-2022, ACBF has been able to substantially implement several projects, with extreme selectivity, ensuring that focus was on areas where there was dire need, given the limited resource envelope. Key achievements include improved capacities of institutions in 24 member states to better contribute to policy implementation; support to develop business and trade policies, and industry competitiveness programs in partnership with COMESA Business Council and ECOWAS Business Association; publication of 2 Africa Capacity Reports on policy implementation in science, technology, and innovation; and support to 22 CSOs in 20 countries on evidence-based advocacy interventions.
25. For 2022, the Executive Secretary highlighted the importance of paying attention to improving organizational efficiency and effectiveness and increasing scope of activities to better respond to the pressing needs in member states. To this end, he proposed: increased country engagements; improving the business model to align to member country priorities thus demonstrating distinct value addition; enhancing resource mobilization for sustainable financing of the Foundation; and enhancing operational efficiency.
26. In developing the ACBF Strategy 2023-2027, Mr. Biteye identified some of the key issues for consideration as follows: how to transform the youth bulge into an opportunity for the Continent's growth, transformation, and prosperity; addressing access to energy for productive use; supporting member states' resilience to external and internal shocks; and building the

capacities of decentralized governments to meet the needs of its citizenry. Seizing the waves of rapid digitalization could be catalytic in tackling most of the issues highlighted above.

27. However, Mr. Biteye advised that the Secretariat will conduct a participatory and consultative process to ensure that member states' priorities and needs are reflected in how the ACBF strategy will be couched. The national, regional, and continental priorities identified by member states will inform the content of the strategy.
28. For the effective development and implementation of the new Strategy, Mr. Biteye called on member states to support unlocking financial resources from development partners. In this regard, African countries should be at the forefront of supporting the Foundation to demonstrate their confidence in homegrown and indigenously grounded institutions in Africa.
29. He urged Governors to continue the strong support to ACBF as capacity development is the most critical factor for Africa's socio-economic transformation. ACBF as a trusted partner can and will work with member countries and other partners to find innovative and sustainable solutions to member countries' capacity needs.

REPORT OF THE RESOURCE MOBILIZATION COMMITTEE

30. Mr. Beguedouwe PANETO, the representative of the Minister for Development Planning and Cooperation of Togo and Chair of the ACBF Resource Mobilization Committee, presented the report of the Committee.
31. The Committee acknowledged the emerging challenges in member countries because of the constraints arising from the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Still, it highlighted that these challenges had made the relevance of ACBF even more apparent as there is now increased demand to build capacity for resilience against such shocks.
32. The Committee reported that, overall, the Foundation is stable in terms of institutional costs. However, there is a need to mobilize outstanding pledges as these are needed to support several critical programmatic activities planned for under the current strategy and are much needed to deal with challenges confronting member countries.
33. The Committee made the following recommendations for consideration by the Governors:
 - Members of the Committee to lead by example and fully pay their pledges to the Foundation.
 - Governors to ramp up their support to the Foundation as strong continental ownership is necessary to catalyze the support of others in implementing the important and pressing capacity development initiatives being designed by the Secretariat.
 - Board of Governors and the Executive Board to enjoin AfDB to expedite the conclusion of the project proposal under consideration.
 - Board of Governors, under the leadership of the Chair, to re-engage the World Bank to follow up on the April 2019 commitment to collaborate with the ACBF based on the impactful results achieved in the past and at present.
 - African Union to honor the commitment made to implement the Commission's capacity development activities through ACBF and ensure that AU budget allocations are disbursed to the ACBF promptly.

- All Member States that have made pledges to ACBF to honor their commitments for the current fiscal year, taking advantage of the extension made in the implementation of the current strategy.
- The Secretariat to reach out to the private sector, philanthropic organizations, and Foundations to support initiatives that promote the developmental initiatives of member states.
- The Committee to convene a special session to discuss the next strategy and properly plan for the resource requirements and implications of that strategy.
- The Committee to reflect on how to strengthen the motivation for the establishment of a Trust Fund on capacity development to be managed by the Foundation.

34. The Governors noted the report and considered and approved the recommendations by the Committee.

FEEDBACK AND GUIDANCE BY THE GOVERNORS

Feedback from Governors

35. The Governors reaffirmed the relevance of ACBF and the centrality of capacity development in addressing Africa’s development challenges and building back better under the multiple crises associated with COVID-19 and the Russia-Ukraine war.
36. They expressed their appreciation to the Secretariat and Executive Board for the work done in ensuring that ACBF continues to support countries and institutions despite the COVID-19 pandemic and the financial constraints.
37. They committed to provide the necessary political and financial support to ACBF by primarily paying their contributions to ensure the Foundation remains sustainable and able to deliver effectively on its mandate, which is critical to socio-economic transformation of the continent.
38. They endorsed the roadmap proposed by the Executive Secretary to develop the ACBF Strategy 2023-2027.

ELECTION OF A NEW BUREAU

39. The Governors, by acclamation, extended for one year the term of the current Bureau, made of Ghana (as Chair), Cameroon (first Vice-Chair), and Kenya (2nd Vice-Chair).

DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

40. The Executive Board and Secretariat, under the leadership of the Executive Secretary, will consult with the Bureau of the BoG and propose a date and venue for the next Board of Governors Meeting.

COMMUNIQUE

41. ACBF Legal Counsel read the Communique, highlighting the key issues discussed and agreed upon during the Meeting and the recommendations made by Governors. The communique is attached as Annex 2.

CLOSING REMARK BY THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

42. H.E. Ken Ofori-Atta, Chair of the Board of Governors of ACBF, expressed his gratitude to all Governors for participating in the Meeting. He called on all Governors to continue supporting ACBF so that the Foundation can focus on building capacities for Africa's socio-economic transformation.
43. He requested all member states to honor their pledges for financial support and urged the Secretariat to fast-track the consultations and development of the new ACBF Strategy.
44. There being no other business, the Meeting was adjourned at 17:30 (Accra time).

Annex 1. Matters Arising from the 30th Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors held on 25 June 2021

AGENDA ITEMS	ISSUES ARISING	ACTION REQUIRED	ACTION TAKEN
To the Governors:			
Agenda Item 31	Vacancies on the Executive Board	i. Search Committee to convene on vacancies on the Executive Board and revert to the full Board with a recommendation for decision by 31 July.	Done. The members eligible for reappointment were reappointed. The Executive Board is now at full complement.
Agenda Item 32	Resource Mobilization	ii. Urged member states to pay their contribution as soon as possible.	8 countries, namely Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mali, Nigeria, Tanzania, Togo, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, have paid their pledges to ACBF since the last BOG meeting. 10 Countries, namely Chad, Comoros, Djibouti, Gabon, The Gambia, Guinea, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, and South Africa, have not made any payments to the Foundation but have pledged to the current strategy 2017-2022. 9 countries namely Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Togo, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, have fully paid their pledge.
		iii. Urged members of the Resource Mobilization Committee to honor their commitments in full so as to lead by example.	4 countries, namely Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, and Togo, out of the 8 in the Resource Mobilization Committee are leading by example, having paid their commitments to ACBF in full.
	iv. Engage the World Bank to honor the commitment made to ACBF in April 2019 and the AfDB to keep its promise as per the pledge for ACBF Strategy.	The Chair of the BOG, Minister Kenneth Ofori-Atta, has engaged both the World bank and the AfDB leadership on the matter, and both institutions have assured the Minister that they are committed to collaborating with the Foundation.	
	v. Seek support of member states so that the financial support of AUC to ACBF materializes without further delay as guided by AU Decisions.	The AUC made a disbursement of US\$124,032, in November 2021, out of the US\$1.2 million allocated to ACBF for the 2021 budget. In 2022, US\$165,000 has been disbursed so far out of a budget allocation of US\$1.2 million. These disbursements are strictly program funds.	
	vi. Establish an ACBF Trust Fund to ensure that capacity development is sustainably funded in the long term.	The Secretariat is working on how the Trust Fund could be structured and how this will relate to the Endowment Fund managed by the Secretariat. A decision on this matter will be taken after finalization of the new strategy and feedback from key stakeholders on their inclination to support the proposed Trust Fund.	
Agenda Item 35		vii. Urged all Governors to continue supporting ACBF so that the Foundation can focus in building capacity relating to the	The Foundation continues to work with partners, including Afreximbank, AfDB and the AfCFTA Secretariat, to develop specific projects in support of AfCFTA implementation.

AGENDA ITEMS	ISSUES ARISING	ACTION REQUIRED	ACTION TAKEN
		implementation of the AfCFTA which is critical to Africa's socio-economic transformation.	
Agenda Item 36		viii. Enjoined all member countries and development partners to use ACBF as preferred partner in implementing capacity development interventions on the continent and to honor their pledges for financial support.	The Secretariat has continued to use all opportunities for engagement with member States to explore ways of implementing this recommendation. Concrete results emerged at the AU February 2022 HoS&G Summit in Addis-Ababa, when through its Resolution 1160, the Executive Council called upon AUC to direct all its capacity development needs to ACBF as the Specialized Agency of the AU for Capacity Development.
To the Secretariat			
Agenda Item 28	Programmatic interventions	i. Recommended to the Secretariat to intensify and deepen partnerships with AfDB and other interested partners to support the public sector on the continent through capacity building interventions for civil servants on issues related to public sector management.	The Secretariat has remained engaged with AfDB and will continue to do so. Strong and deepened partnership with AfDB will enhance the Capacity Development agenda of the continent, as a crucial tool for Africa's transformation agenda.
Agenda Item 29	Diversifying funding base	ii. Urged AfDB and ACBF to work together in ensuring that the Foundation remains a key player and beneficiary of the African Knowledge and Capacity Development Fund and the AfDB Capacity Development Strategy (by contributing to their design and implementation).	The Secretariat remains engaged on the work being done by the AfDB on the African Knowledge and Capacity Development Fund and the AfDB Capacity Development Strategy. The Secretariat contributed to the design of these initiatives and participated in the Consultative Seminars organized by the AfDB. ACBF avails itself to support the implementation of these initiatives once the Bank has finalized and launched the Fund and the Strategy.
Agenda Item 30		iii. Encouraged the AfDB and the World Bank to expedite their project approval processes to ensure timely release of financial support to ACBF in the context of the projects that are under development.	The Project Appraisal Document finalized in 2021 is still undergoing internal approval process at AfDB. Latest information from the AfDB is that the approval process is almost complete. The Secretariat continues to follow up with the Bank on the matter to ensure that project implementation takes off this year. The World bank project is focusing on the African Union as the Continental window to support the project on digitization. The Secretariat is exploring way to engage both the AUC and WB on how to move the process forward.

Annex 2. Communique

WE, Governors of the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) and delegates representing Member States, Bilateral and multi-lateral Development Partners, Observers, and Special Guests, met in Accra, Ghana, on 23 May 2022 for the 31st Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of ACBF.

In concluding the Annual Meeting, **WE**:

1. **WELCOME** Mr. Mamadou Biteye as Executive Secretary of the Foundation. His vast experience and competencies in senior leadership roles will be key in steering ACBF into a new strategy and the future;
2. **NOTE** as the Foundation ends ACBF Strategy 2017-2022, it does so at the back of significant reforms that have made the organization more agile, and better prepared to respond to the changing and diverse demands of member countries;
3. **NOTE** the achievements by the Foundation in support of policy implementation for Member States and institutional strengthening of the capacity of civil society organizations to deliver results;
4. **ACKNOWLEDGE** the strong support by African member countries which has spurred other partners to continue engaging the Foundation, resulting in a successful implementation of the ACBF Strategy 2017-2022;
5. **MINDFUL** of the achievements in programmatic areas such as (1) strengthening capacity for issue-based quality legislation and policy implementation; (2) women and youth enterprise development; (3) strengthening capacity of key strategic institutions; (4) strengthening leadership for climate adaptation; and (5) enhancing monitoring and reporting functions of Agenda 2063 in member states;
6. **UNDESCORE** the need to sustain the story of ACBF as a well-managed and well-governed organization that is delivering impactful results;
7. **ENCOURAGED** by the 2021 Annual Report, including the unqualified opinion of the External Auditors on the financial statements of the Foundation as of 31 December 2021 presented by the Chair of the ACBF Executive Board; and
8. **EXPRESS** our deepest and sincere appreciation to member states and partners for the results achieved in 2021 – the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank), the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Moving forward, **WE**:

9. **WELCOME** the commitment made by Governors to galvanize their peers for increased support to the Foundation, in particular for their engagement and contribution to the institution;
10. **ENCOURAGE** the ACBF Secretariat to increase country engagements, improving and sustaining ACBF's efficiency and effectiveness, and enhancing resource mobilization efforts;
11. **URGE** the Secretariat to develop a new Strategy with the view to strengthen the capacities aimed at turning the youth bulge into an opportunity for Africa's growth, increasing access to energy for

productive use, addressing resilience to external and internal shocks, supporting efforts toward effective devolution and embracing digitization in addressing critical socio-economic challenges on the continent;

12. **CALL** on member states to provide the necessary technical and financial support for the formulation and implementation of the new ACBF Strategy covering the period 2023 to 2027, as its success will depend on the level of funding mobilized for the planned programs during the five-year planning period;
13. **COMMEND** and **NOTE** the preliminary thinking around seizing the waves of rapid digitalization; developing capacities to implement the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA); supporting the African Union in strengthening its capacities for Agendas 2063 implementation, coordination, monitoring and measurement; enhancing capacity for domestic and external resources mobilization; and building contracts negotiation capacities of member states;
14. **WELCOME** the commitment by ACBF partners, including the African Development Bank, BADEA, UNDP and the World Bank, to continue fostering and supporting ACBF and **ENCOURAGE** the Secretariat to engage these institutions in the design, development and delivery of ACBF new Strategy;
15. **CALL** on ACBF Governors to facilitate timely payment of all outstanding contributions to the Foundation so that the Secretariat can conclude the remaining key activities under the current strategy and to plan for the new strategy without constraints; and
16. **EXPRESS** our appreciation to the Republic of Ghana, under the leadership of Hon. Ken Ofori Atta, Minister of Finance and Chair of ACBF Board of Governors, for hosting this 31st Annual ACBF Board of Governors Meeting, and by acclamation, **EXTEND** for one year the term of the current Bureau.