



AFRODAD AFRICAN ADVOCACY WEBINAR SERIES

NATIONAL PARTNERS ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION: CONNECTING NATIONAL, REGIONAL, AND GLOBAL LEVEL ADVOCACY PROCESSES ON DEBT AND DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

LOCATION: ZOOM

A. Background

Africa's indebtedness has topped the agenda of many high-level meetings and conferences recently with many calling for an urgent need to address this challenge if the continent is to achieve any of its sustainable development goals or Agenda 2063 aspirations. There is general recognition across these forums that the current lending system is not responsive to Africa's circumstances and needs and has failed to deliver resources at scale to meet the continent's financing needs for structural transformation. Neither the public nor private sector currently has been able to transfer enough resources to address Africa's development financing needs¹ Compared to other world regions, Africa's public debt is lower with 49 out of the 54 African countries having debt-to-GDP ratios lower than the US at 122%, Japan 258.2%, or Greece at 166% as of 2023²Africa's default rate is even lower at 5.5% compared to Asia's at 8.5% and Latin America's at 13%. Despite this, access to development financing for African countries is expensive and cumbersome, driven by international investors' perceptions of risks influenced by subjective credit ratings.

Additionally, existing debt relief initiatives in the face of the current debt crisis following the COVID-19 pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis fuelled by geopolitical tensions such as the Ukraine-Russia war, climatic-change-related disasters, and the tightening of global financial conditions which has pushed an estimated 62million Africans into extreme poverty, reversing more than two decades of progress in poverty reduction have done little to alleviate African economies. In the case of [The G20 Common Framework](#) which was intended to address debt sustainability concerns in low-income countries through rescheduling and debt relief has been slow, marred with bureaucratic hurdles of sporadic treatment of different creditors with some being protected for example through IMF's arrears policies(for private sector), non-inclusion of multilaterals and in some cases, the inclusion of domestic creditors at later stages causing extreme slow negotiations and which has exerted in the case of [Zambia](#) extreme domestic pressures including being part of the IMF programs that demand austerity measures.

African civil society organisations have long championed reforms of the global financial architecture and the institutions of economic governance within it. The [Harare Declaration 2021](#), for example, adopted by over 100 CSOs details the need to mobilise, organise and reawaken advocacy on debt and influence policymakers at country and regional levels on the need to push for a transformation of the International Financial architecture that is more transparent, fairer and just. The success of these calls can objectively materialise through the political will of African countries to demand better representation

While African governments at the national level continue to pursue better debt management mechanisms with the support of civil society organisations as key stakeholders, they must also be aware of the operations and nuances of global financial institutions and how it affects their

¹ [AfDB, The African Economic Outlook 2024 Report](#)

² [2023 Mo Ibrahim Forum Report](#)



development financing aspirations. Processes such as the African Union Meetings, Africa and G20, informal Groupings like Paris Club, and groupings such as BRICS, OECD Spring and Annual Meetings, United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), and UN processes such as Financing for Development (FfD) serve as important platforms for policy discussions that shape global debt processes and therefore a vital opportunity to advance common African positions on issues of debt, tax, and trade, that are synonymous to development financing. These spaces

Against this contextual background and to better align advocacy efforts with relevant decision-making processes at continental and regional levels, AFRODAD will host a series of webinar discussions with national and regional civil society organisations, members of parliaments, and relevant Government officials on connecting national, and regional and global level policy spaces and processes key in reforming economic governance from the current status quo to an equitable, fairer, just and responsive international financial architecture that places Africa at the decision table.

B. Aim and Objectives of AFRODAD And Partners Webinar Series;

The webinars will be a four-part series outlining target intergovernmental processes at regional continental and global levels and the relevant pathways of advocacy building from national-level advocacy efforts. AFRODAD and partners will work closely to curate messages and products that can be used at the appropriate levels of influence for more impactful advocacy efforts:

The webinars will be scheduled as follows:

Session 1: Global Level: IMF/World Bank Annual Meetings 2024-**18th October 2024**

Session 2: Global Engagements: Leveraging G20 and UN platforms to bring African perspectives on the Financing for Development ahead of the 4th FfD Conference and supporting S. Africa's G20 Presidency 2025- **29th October 2024**

Session 3: Continental Level: African agency: Advocating for a coordinated African approach to dealing with debt and the Global Financial Architecture through the African Union, AfDB, and the Pan-African Parliament -**18th November 2024**

Session 4: Regional Level: Promoting Regional Convergence through RECs for Common Development Financing Aspirations-**5th November 2024**

C. Session Descriptions

Session 1: Global Level – IMF/World Bank Annual and Spring Meetings

Objective of the Session:

The objective of this session is to understand the IMF/World Bank meetings (Annual and Spring) attended by Government officials, Civil Society Organisations, private sector and open to the public that are held every year to discuss international economic development and finance issues.

- **Why engage:** To share knowledge and information and policy positions of the IMF and World Bank as it relates to development finance including the IMF Quota System of SDR allocation, Debt Sustainability Methodologies, IMF Lending programs (short-termism and conditionalities), World Bank IDA 21 Replenishment and other reform asks
- **Messaging Balance:** Advocate for fairer lending practices while considering the unique circumstances of African nations.
- **Menu of Options for Intervention:**



- The Annual and Spring IMF/WB meetings-upcoming Annual meeting in October 2024
- Engaging IMF staff during mission visits at the national level and presenting policy alternatives that align with the reform agenda
- Organize workshops with Ministry of Finance staff on alternative DSA methodologies that can advise better lending terms
- **Mapping Actors and Influencers:**
- Identify influential members within parliament, Ministry of Finance (Budget departments), Debt management offices, Central Bank

Session 2: Global Forum Engagement – G20 Common Framework + SA Presidency and the UN-Financing For Development IV (FfD4)

The objective of this session will be a deep dive into how the AU can leverage its permanent status to push key positions within the G20 which accounts for 80% of the global economy that can facilitate better development financing for African countries, and restructure the Common Framework to offer sufficient and sustainable debt relief for developing countries. South African presidency in the next year can help shape Africa’s voice in this highly influential forum. The session will also unpack the push for a legal debt framework under the auspices of the United Nations at the fourth financing for the development conference coming in 2025

- **Why engage:** Leverage G20 platforms to bring African perspectives to global economic discussions and clamor for the United Nations as the only democratic space for decisions on economic governance to be made.
- **Messaging Balance:** Address national economic needs while positioning Africa as a key player in global dialogues.
- **Menu of Options for Intervention:**
 - Financing for development Preparatory meetings in New York and Mexico
 - G20 Summit, Brazil 17th-20th November
 - United Nations Annual General Assemblies
 - Create a joint position paper outlining Africa’s demand on debt relief and present it to Heads of State and Governments of AU member states

Mapping Actors and Influencers:

- Engage with South African officials and G20 negotiators
- Build networks with regional and continental civil society organisations

Session 3: Continental Level - African Union (AU), African Development Bank (AfDB), Pan-African Parliament (PAP)

The objective of this session will be to emphasise the need for African agencies by regional institutions like the AU, AfDB, and PAP in global financial discussions to address sustainable and transformative national-level development financing needs and develop a common front in dealing with debt.

- **Why Engage:** Align national debt strategies with continental frameworks promoted by AU, AfDB, and PAP and advocate for a coordinated African approach to dealing with debt and reform of the global financial architecture. **Messaging Balance:**
 - Emphasize the need for African agencies in global financial discussions while addressing local issues.



- Mobilise political support for the establishment of AU-led initiatives such as the African Union Monetary Fund, African Central Bank, and African Monetary Institute, African Investment Bank as levers of negotiation on behalf of the continent concerning the cost of financing
- Support the establishment of processes establishing continental institutions e.g. the Abuja declaration.
- Enhance collaboration with AfDB for funding local projects.
- **Menu of Options for Intervention:**
 - AfDB Annual Meetings
 - AU Specialised Technical Committee meetings
 - AU Summit
- **Mapping Actors and Influencers:**
 - Connect with AU and AfDB leadership
 - Collaborate with parliamentarians in PAP to influence policy.

Session 4: Regional Economic Communities (RECs) - EAC, ECOWAS, and SADC

The objective of this session will be to highlight the strength of regional coordination through the RECs which are the building blocs of the African Economic Community, in common development financing aspirations including cost and means of debt contraction;

- **Why engage:** The success of sustainable management of debt in Africa can be effectively driven by promoting regional convergence; for example, national financing and investment policies align with EAC, SADC, and ECOWAS protocols or regional coordinated approach in negotiating debt contracts, especially natural resource-backed loans. The key is to focus on grassroots movements that connect with national governments to influence REC policies.
- **Messaging Balance:** Highlight national debt issues while linking them to regional stability and economic integration by pushing for harmonized policies.
- **Menu of Options for Intervention:**
 - Build coalitions with civil society organizations (CSOs) within RECs.
 - Leverage regional summits to push for a unified debt negotiation strategy.
- **Mapping Actors and Influencers:**
 - Engage with regional parliaments e.g. SADC PF, East Africa Legislative Assembly (EALA)
 - Engage regional CSOs and think tanks to amplify advocacy messages.

D. Format

- ❖ The webinars will be held on Zoom with panel expert presentations followed by open discussions from attendees and panellists. French-English translation will be provided