



ADAPTATION FUND

## **New Adaptation Fund Board Chair Aims to Build on AF Achievements, Expand AF Revenue Sources and Country Funding Opportunities**

*New Chair Mr. Ibila Djibril of Benin Has Represented African Countries on Board Since 2017*

Washington, D.C. (April 2, 2020) -- The Adaptation Fund Board held its annual change of leadership in a virtual manner today, as Mr. **Ibila Djibril** of Benin officially became the new Chair of the Board.

The decision was made among a series of procedural moves by the Board in a scaled down [virtual meeting](#) held on April 2 aimed at swearing in new members. The full 35<sup>th</sup> Board meeting scheduled for March 31-April 3 in Bonn was [postponed](#) in early March until a tentative June 23-26 date, due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Certain eligible project proposals may be reviewed intersessionally by the Board through email vote in the coming days.

Djibril served as Vice-Chair for the past year and has represented African countries on the Board since March 2017. Mr. **Mattias Broman**, of Sweden, who has represented Annex I Parties on the Board, became the new Vice-Chair.

Djibril and Broman were elected to their new posts at the 34<sup>th</sup> Board meeting last October, and assumed the one-year posts this week. Djibril takes over for previous Board Chair Ms. **Sylviane Bilgischer**, of Belgium, who served as Chair for the last year presiding over the Fund's robust [activities at COP 25](#) in Madrid in December that resulted in [new resources mobilized](#) and [solidifying](#) the Fund's long-term institutional arrangements which contribute to smoothly serving the Paris Agreement.

The Board Chair and Vice-Chair positions rotate between developing and developed country representation each year.

Djibril brings a wealth of knowledge and experience as a specialist and researcher in environmental management, sustainable development, environmental standards and analyzing adaptation vulnerabilities and impacts. He further holds Master's degrees in business law and taxation, and an advanced studies diploma in environmental management.

Djibril has served in several prominent climate positions for Benin. He was General Director of Climate Change for the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, and the national Focal Point for UNFCCC. He also served as Acting General Director of Climate Change Management, national director of an integrated adaptation project to address agriculture and food security, Director of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Projects, and senior environmental technical officer, among others. Additionally, he was Benin's National Designated Authority to the



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Adaptation Fund (AF) from 2011 to 2017 and also for the Green Climate Fund, from March 2016 to February 2017, and a long-time member and vice-chair of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group on Climate Change supporting vulnerable countries to elaborate and implement their national adaptation plans.

Currently Djibril serves as Coordinator of a large national project, “Building core capacity for implementation, monitoring and reporting of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and relevant sustainable development goals in Benin,” funded by the GEF.

In an online interview, the Adaptation Fund Board Secretariat recently discussed with Mr. Djibril his thoughts on the Fund’s latest achievements and ongoing work, as well as his vision and hopes for the Fund over the next year:

***[AF]: COP 25 in Madrid was challenging overall in terms of accelerating climate action, but the Adaptation Fund (AF) made great progress, raising nearly US\$ 90 million in new pledges from a record 11 contributors in 2019, including two first-time donors and its first ever multi-year pledge. It solidified its institutional arrangements to help serve the Paris Agreement smoothly. While conversations continue related to Article 6 of the Agreement and a financial support mechanism, what was your reaction to AF’s achievements?***

**[Ibila DJIBRIL]:** I’m proud of AF’s achievements at COP 25 particularly for raising almost US\$ 90 million, despite the difficult context for many countries. I would take this opportunity to really thank developed country donors for their clear and great interest in the AF and their high confidence in this Fund. At COP 25 and the end of 2019, the AF produced remarkable activities with real impact such as:

- The launch of a brand new US\$ 10 million [Innovation Programme](#) to further foster innovation in countries, including through NGOs, the private sector, governments and youth; and
- The launch of a new interactive [knowledge programme](#) to improve access to climate finance among developing countries.

All of these new grants and tools are offered to countries in addition to AF’s regular [concrete project](#) funding channels. They will help reach even more communities in vulnerable developing countries, and help speed up needed action to serve the adaptation goals of the Paris Agreement.

I can say with satisfaction that AF is a highly functioning fund that attained a milestone in 2018 when Parties [decided](#) that it shall formally serve the Paris Agreement and it has been doing so for more than a year now, which is a clear signal of the effectiveness and relevance of its work. It has been in record demand for several years, receiving a consistent stream of record numbers of project proposals. The Board approved a record US\$ 188 million in new projects last year



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alone. This continual [high demand](#) reflects the urgency of climate change and the high trust in AF's work.

Last year AF also reached the milestone of 100 concrete projects on the ground, while surpassing 30 accredited national implementing entities through its pioneering [Direct Access](#) modality that builds country ownership in adaptation. These results would not have been achieved without the effectiveness of the AF Secretariat team and all bodies involved in the work of AF.

### ***What would you like to see the Fund improve upon, or do more of in 2020?***

AF is in an ascending dynamic, particularly since 2018 with the decision by the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA) that the Fund shall serve the Paris Agreement under the guidance of the CMA with respect to all matters relating to the Agreement, effective January 1, 2019. To effectively serve this Agreement, it has solidified some of its institutional arrangements such as its rules of procedure.

For 2020, I would be very happy to see the rules and tools of implementation of article 6.2 and article 6.4 of the [Paris Agreement](#) adopted by COP 26 and approved by CMA 3 and operationalized with the technical contribution of the AF. These moves would establish a sustainable development financial support mechanism, similar to the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism under which the Fund [receives](#) a percentage of proceeds from the sale of certified emission reduction credits. The Fund could apply that experience to the new mechanism, which would potentially be a new source of revenue.

Secondly, it would be interesting to [mobilize](#) more financial resources with the view to increase the country funding cap of projects funded by the AF. The cap is currently US\$ 10 million for single country projects. Increasing the cap would require a Board decision, but would have greater impact for many vulnerable countries and people to help them face and address the adverse effects of climate change.

Thirdly, it would be a great achievement to further reinforce implementation of AF's [Medium-Term Strategy](#) which is bringing new adaptation [tools](#) to bear for countries through its strategic pillars of Action, Innovation, and Learning and Sharing.

Finally, it would be great to enhance the participation of multilateral, regional and national implementing entities in the work of the different committees of the AF [Board](#). This will be very important for the Board's Project and Programme Review Committee (PPRC) tasks because of diversity and technicality of projects, which necessitates some clear and additional explanations in order to improve the understanding of projects for relevant decisions to be taken by the Board.

***Having represented Africa on the Board for the last few years and also having served as the Vice Chair for the past year, is it particularly rewarding to see AF***



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### ***firsthand supporting some of the most vulnerable communities and countries to climate change?***

This is an interesting question and some figures can show how encouraging the balance of the Fund is for developing countries, particularly least developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS). In all, AF has committed US\$ 720 million and is active in more than 90 countries, half of which are in LDCs or SIDS, reflecting the Fund's focus on the most vulnerable.

In addition to its concrete actions on the ground, the Fund has growing innovation and learning pillars. Its climate finance [readiness programme](#) has supported 37 technical assistance, south to south cooperation and readiness grants to enhance capacity of countries to access and manage climate finance. The Fund's [knowledge programme](#) is producing valuable case studies and e-learning tools to support this.

I'm from Africa, which has 33 LDCs of a total 54 countries. That means an overwhelming majority of African countries have high expectations from AF. Therefore, it's with a strong commitment that I work inside of the AF Board and PPRC. I'm very happy to see a majority of projects funded by AF come from Africa and 12 national implementing entities in Africa (nearly 40% of AF's NIEs) have successfully built their capacities to develop national adaptation projects. So far about US\$ 283 million, or close to 40 per cent of AF's project investments, are in Africa. Of course, there are remarkable performances but African countries have to continue to improve upon these results in the coming years.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to all African countries and the chairs of the African Group of Negotiators (AGN) for their trust in me. I extend this gratitude to all my Africa colleagues, to AF Board members representing both developing and developed countries, as well as the Fund's Secretariat staff. It is an honor to serve the Board for my country, Benin, beyond my simple person.

If I have one thing to highlight it is the real objectivity of each Board member, without consideration of being from developed or developing countries, in studying the different projects submitted to the AF. This frame of mind and approach to the work is very productive and exciting.

### ***Although Board members cannot participate in decision making that relates directly to their own countries, given that AF has 3 regional projects in Benin and a national implementing entity (NIE) in Benin under Direct Access, what does that mean to you given the high vulnerability to climate change that Benin is facing?***

First, let me express my full confidence in the work of Board members, of the AF Secretariat and Board committees (Ethics and Finance Committee, PPRC and Accreditation Panel). Even though it's not permitted for a Board member to take part in the consideration of a matter related to his



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or her own country in order to avoid a conflict of interest, there is a guarantee that the decision that will be taken will be just and objective. Simply because the Board operates on the basis of relevant technical and legal documents that ensure certainty and objectivity of its decisions.

Coming back to the question, it's well known that LDCs are among the most vulnerable countries to climate change. As an LDC, Benin is very vulnerable to climate change's adverse effects with the main climatic risks being floods, droughts, coastal erosion, advancing seas, and strong winds. Every year, it's registered floods in both the north and south of Benin with important social, economic and financial damages, and losses occurring for the population and government. This situation has contributed to raised awareness among policymakers on climate change issues. Benin's National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) elaborated in 2007 the most vulnerable sectors to climate change and adaptation priorities.

In 2011 Benin's [National Environment and Climate Fund](#) (FNEC) was accredited to the Adaptation Fund, making Benin the second francophone country in Africa to be accredited after Senegal. The fact Benin has an NIE demonstrates its clear will to have direct access to AF resources and build its national capacities to effectively adapt to climate change. This accreditation experience was a great milestone in Benin's efforts to increase its capacity in this area. One direct benefit was that we leveraged this accreditation to AF to accredit the same national fund to the **Green Climate Fund** last year in 2019 with financial support of the Federal Government of **Germany**. Benin is progressing in adaptation project development. It has set up local initiatives in many municipalities with the contribution of national resources from FNEC. Furthermore, through AF funding Benin is already benefitting from three concrete regional adaptation projects on the ground. These include:

- [Integrating](#) climate change adaptation measures in the concerted management of the WAP transboundary complex in Benin, Burkina Faso and Niger, implemented by the Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS) with US\$ 11.5 million in AF funding.
- Integrating flood and drought management and early warning in the [Volta Basin](#) in Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali and Togo, implemented by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) with US\$ 7.9 million in AF funding.
- [Promoting](#) climate-smart agriculture in West Africa in Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Niger and Togo, implemented by the West African Development Bank (BOAD) with US\$ 14 million in AF funds.

A potential fourth regional project to scale up climate-resilient rice production in West Africa (in Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo) is being proposed through a [pre-concept note](#) by OSS for US\$ 14 million.

Benin is also actively preparing to develop its own national Direct Access project through FNEC, which was reaccredited by AF in March 2020. In sum, I can affirm that Benin is in an interesting



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and very promising dynamic to more fully develop concrete adaptation projects and access climate finance.

***Can you comment about your own experience working on the Board and with other Board members and country representatives until now, and also representing the Board in regional settings and speaking panels at times?***

I would like to start by expressing my sincere thanks to my constituency, African countries that appointed me to be a Board member, to my colleagues of the Board and to the AF Secretariat.

I can say I have had new interesting experiences on climate finance issues through reviewing many adaptation projects. I met respectful professionals in many areas who have enriched my own expertise. I hope also I brought to them some valuable experiences and contributions. By nature, I like to learn a lot in order to be able to deliver for the good of my constituency and colleagues of the Board. This has allowed me to gain the trust of my colleagues who felt that I can effectively chair the Board. Again, I'm very grateful to them.

In my work at the Board, I have had the necessary time to objectively appreciate the huge and excellent work of the AF Secretariat. They have all my esteem. On many occasions, their technical support has been very important in my role as Vice-Chair and when I have had to speak during AGN meetings and the events organized by AF for parties and observers, particularly at the SB 50 climate conference in Bonn and COP 25 in Madrid last year. This experience was exciting and formative. For a French speaker whose English is not of a high level, it's not an easy task. But I adapted to face some of these challenges and now I'm happy to see the level of my English has progressively improved because of the challenges I have had to take on. Based on my experience, I would like to call upon my French-speaking colleagues to dare to take on more responsibilities in this climate change process and to work hard to improve their English. This will be their own achievement and pride.

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### ABOUT the ADAPTATION FUND

Since 2010, the Adaptation Fund has committed about US\$ 720 million for climate change adaptation and resilience projects and programmes, including 100 concrete localized adaptation projects in the most vulnerable communities of developing countries around the world with more than 8 million direct beneficiaries. It also pioneered Direct Access, empowering countries to access funding and develop projects directly through accredited national implementing entities.

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