



June 10th 2019

To: Director,

AREI – Independent Delivery Unit

CC,

- Board members and Observers of AREI
- Chairman, Africa Union
- Coordinator of CAHOSCC
- President, AfDB
- Chairman, AMCEN

Dear Ms Alzouma Nouhou,

As African CSOs following and engaged in AREI since its conception, we would like to share our views and concerns on the initiative and its relation with civil society. AREI could be of immense importance for our future. Hence, since your recruitment, we have looked forward to working closely with you and hoped for opportunity to build good relations between the IDU and civil society, in alignment with the intentions at the heart of AREI. However, a lack of communication and a number of missed opportunities make us increasingly concerned. We have therefore been keen to find opportunity to meet in person and lay the ground for close and respectful interaction and genuine collaboration for the years to come. Yet, 8 months into your directorship, we have not yet been granted the opportunity to either meet you in person or virtually.

With this letter, we ask you again to meet with civil society and discuss how to work together on AREI.

We wish to register the following concerns in relation to civil society participation and AREI:

1. **Lack of communication with civil society stakeholders:** Our repeated efforts to reach out and engage over the past 8 months have generally been met with either silence or casual response from the IDU.
 - On 16th October 2018, we wrote to the IDU Director and the Namibian focal point to express our desire and request to have CSOs from the Southern African Region participate in the consultation in Windhoek. While the Focal Point responded we received no response from the IDU.

- On 15th of January 2019, while at the AfDB for another meeting, Mr. Augustine Njamnshi, ACSEA Coordinator, wrote to request for a brief courtesy meeting with the IDU. You briefly replied you were not in the country but did not suggest anyone else to meet at the IDU.
- On 17th of January 2019, we sent a letter to the Board (through you as IDU Director) expressing our concern that the Northern and Southern African consultations ignored the participation of CSOs. There was no response to our letter and neither a confirmation that you forwarded it to the Board.
- On 17th January 2019, we enquired about the West African Consultation with a request to participate. We did not received a reply to this request either.
- On the 6th of February 2019 we extended an invitation to share your vision of AREI at a UNECA/CSO organized side event during the AU summit. We also asked for facilitation of our participation in the seventh Board meeting as observers in accordance with the AREI governance instrument and rules of procedure. This correspondence was met with silence.
- On 29th of April, we extended an invitation to participate in a Panel that was dedicated to AREI during the AfDB/CSO Forum in Abidjan where we wanted you to share your vision with CSOs on how you intend to move AREI forward. We received a minimal reply that you would not be around. Our follow up letter asking for a nomination of an alternative person that could speak on behalf of AREI was met with silence.
- On the 16th of May, we invited you to join our biannual AREI CSO meeting during the SB50 in Bonn. Unfortunately, we did not receive a positive answer, not even to participate through skype or to have another person representing the IDU.

2. **Lack of civil society participation in Regional consultations:**

The Nairobi consultation which took place before your appointment was a highly successful example of civil society-government interaction where our nominated participants engaged fully. This is also clear from the report of the consultation.

In the following Cairo consultation, the IDU told (last minute) all our nominated representatives that they were denied participation, without any satisfactory reasons and despite Egypt as host country having made major efforts to ensure our representatives were granted visas. This incident has seriously damaged the view of AREI among civil society in the region.

Civil society was likewise denied participation in the Namibia consultation. Our letter of 16th October 2018 was met with complete silence from your part, despite the Namibian government welcoming our participation and asking the IDU to facilitate the practicalities for our participation. The lack of response made our participation impossible.

There was likewise no effort to grant us access to the West Africa Consultations.

Hence, despite the statement in the Consultation concept notes that “The consultations shall ensure broad-based participation in alignment with the AREI Framework and the approved work plan” and that participation should include “Civil society (women, energy, environment, climate etc.)” our participation has only been possible at the consultation taking place before you took office.

3. Unconstitutional conduction of Board meetings with no civil society or stakeholder presence

The Governing Instrument paragraph 29 (f) states that one of the roles of the IDU is “communicating and engaging with stakeholders and strategic partners on behalf of the Initiative” and paragraph 65 of the Rules of Procedure stipulates that “Representatives from relevant stakeholders including African civil society (covering e.g. environment, energy and development spheres), private sector, youth, and women, will be invited to participate in the proceedings of the Board as observers.”

In spite of this, there has been no civil society participation in the Board meetings. There was no response to our letter for Board members that was sent via the IDU, requesting invitation and facilitation of accreditation to the previous Board meeting. Our representatives travelled to Addis Ababa hoping to attend the meeting but had to leave since your office made no efforts to facilitate their participation. Furthermore, while in accordance with paragraph 36 of the rules of procedure, all board documents should have been publicly available and posted on the website, we have as of yet not been officially granted access to any documents. We have also just learned that there indeed appears to be an extraordinary Board and other meetings scheduled for mid-June that we should have been invited to.

4 Drastic downgrading of work area 7 (Multi-stakeholder participation)

The drastic downgrading of Work area 7 in the proposed work plan and budget for 2019/2020 confirms our increasing concerns, As is clear from all AREI documentation, stakeholder engagement is at the very core of the vision of AREI: Integral to the goals of universal access and transformation to renewables is a vision of new engagement models for close government-civil society interaction. We expect the IDU will announce a significantly scaled up budget for work area 7 in the revised and more detailed budget at the next Board meeting.

We treasure the vision and stated intentions of AREI, and would like to emphasize our deep and sincere willingness to engage in the most constructive and collaborative manner. We therefore expect to be invited to the upcoming Board meetings and other AREI meetings and consultations, in accordance with the AREI rules.

We write this letter in the earnest hope, that you will agree with us that participation of civil society is a core principle of this noble initiative that has brought a lot of hope to the African masses and that you will begin to work with us for the energy future of Africa.

Thank you for your attention to this letter.

On Behalf AREI CSOs

Augustine B NJAMNSHI

Coordinator

African Coalition for Sustainable Energy and Access (ACSEA)

For any follow up or question please contact Augustine B Njamnshi at ACSEA,

Email abnjamnshi@yahoo.com.

Tel +237677765230