

African Development Bank Group Att:  
Akinwumi Adesina, President Avenue  
Joseph Anoma 01 BP 1387 Abidjan 01  
Côte d'Ivoire

Brussels, 28.01.2023

## REGARDING AfDB AND WESTERN SAHARA

Western Sahara Resource Watch (WSRW) is privileged to write to you.

We refer to the letter we sent to your organisation on 3 May 2021. [https://vest-sahara.s3.amazonaws.com/wsrw/feature-images/File/182/60a22d7095d44\\_20210503WSRW-AfDB.pdf](https://vest-sahara.s3.amazonaws.com/wsrw/feature-images/File/182/60a22d7095d44_20210503WSRW-AfDB.pdf). We sent the letter again on 28 April 2022. Regretfully, we did not receive a response to the letters. We also refer to our letter to your Bank of 19 June 2015, which also remained unanswered.

Our request was regarding the information published on your website that AfDB had issued a loan to ONEE for the construction of a transmission line from Agadir (in Morocco) to Hagounia (in Western Sahara). We take note of clarifications that you made to one of your owners last year, that the work under this loan did *not* in fact cover the territory of Western Sahara. We also take note of your comment that your “Bank’s official practice is that it does not knowingly or consciously finance projects on the territory of the Western Sahara. Beyond this practice, the Bank does not have any official policy in this regard. Consequently, the AfDB has currently no project, investment or partnership in this territory”. We are about to write an article on our website regarding those clarifications issued by your bank.

Your clarifications shed light on 2 of our 7 questions in our previous correspondence.

Five questions of our previous letter remain, however, unanswered.

1. What is the scope of AfDB’s investments in the Moroccan Solar Plan? Does it include financing those parts of the Program that are carried out in Western Sahara?
2. Has AfDB provided the financing requested by ONEE for Morocco’s Integrated Wind Program? Does it include financing of the parts of the Program that are carried out in Western Sahara?
3. What is the official position of the AfDB with regard to investing – directly or indirectly - in projects in Western Sahara through Morocco? Will it issue a statement to make that position known to the public?

4. Will the AfDB install a policy or a transparent measure that ensures the early rejection of requests for investment in projects that are to be carried out in Western Sahara, as long as the political status of the territory remains unsettled?
5. Will the AfDB make the necessary changes to Morocco's country profile on its webpage, to accurately reflect the internationally recognized borders of the country and the political reality, in line with UN maps and in line with the position of the African Union?

We observe that your website still erroneously includes Western Sahara as part of Morocco, as communicated in our last letter.

We look forward to your answer to the above questions.

In addition, we wish to submit a sixth question, which is more of a general nature.

6. On a general level, is it compatible with the charter of the AfDB to support projects of a member outside of the national territory of the member state?

It is worth recalling, after all, the charter of the establishment of the African Development Bank from 1963, Article 14, states that "the Bank may provide or facilitate financing for any regional member [...] in the territory of any regional member".

[https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Legal-Documents/Agreement\\_establishing\\_the\\_African\\_development\\_bank\\_-\\_2016\\_edition.pdf](https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Legal-Documents/Agreement_establishing_the_African_development_bank_-_2016_edition.pdf)

We hope your organisation has given consideration to the landmark ruling the of the African Court for Human and Peoples' Rights on 22 September 2022 which concluded that Morocco's occupation of Western Sahara is a serious violation of the Saharawi people's right to self-determination and independence.

<https://wsrw.org/en/news/african-court-rules-for-saharawis>

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Kind regards

Erik Hagen

Western Sahara Resource Watch

[erik@wsrw.org](mailto:erik@wsrw.org)