

**THE OFFICIAL LAUNCHING OF  
THE AFRICA MICROFINANCE ACTION FORUM  
AND  
THE AFRICA MICROFINANCE STRATEGY INITIATIVE**

A JOINT WORKSHOP OF  
THE AFRICA MICROFINANCE ACTION FORUM AND  
WOMEN'S WORLD BANKING

CASABLANCA, MOROCCO  
APRIL 5 – 6, 2007

## Table of Contents

1	Introduction .....	1
2	Objectives of the Meeting.....	1
3	Summary of conclusions of the meeting.....	1
4	Next steps .....	5
Annexe 1	Meeting agenda .....	6
Annexe 2	Participants' List .....	7

## **1. Introduction**

From April 5 to 6, 2007, the Africa Microfinance Action Forum and Women's World Banking convened a joint meeting of African microfinance practitioners and development partners that support the microfinance sector in Africa. The meeting was held at the Idou Anfa Hotel in Casablanca, Morocco. The goal of the meeting was to officially launch the Africa Microfinance Action Forum and the Africa Microfinance Strategy Initiative. Opening remarks were presented by Mr. Fouad Abdelmoumni of Association Al Amana in Morocco, host of the meeting, Dr. Jennifer Riria, Chairperson of the Africa Microfinance Action Forum, and Ms. Mary Ellen Iskenderian, President of Women's World Banking.

There were 20 participants, including microfinance leaders from 11 African countries. Participants worked in plenary and in small groups to discuss the agenda items and agree on the key elements related to the objectives of the meeting.

The meeting agenda is attached as annex 1 and the list of participants as annex 2.

## **2. Objectives of the Meeting**

- a. To build consensus on the key elements of the Africa Microfinance Action Forum (AMAF) and the Africa Microfinance Strategy Initiative.
- b. To promote synergy with other regional initiatives in Africa.
- c. To agree on the objectives and methodology for the diagnostic and inventory of microfinance in Africa.
- d. To develop the framework for organizing a multi-stakeholders' conference on the Africa Microfinance Strategy Initiative.

## **3. Summary of Conclusions of the Meeting**

- a. **Increased buy-in and ownership of AMAF and the Africa Microfinance Strategy Initiative.**
  - o In March 2006, eight individuals from the Women's World Banking (WWB) network pledged to form AMAF and to sustain their vision of microfinance solutions for Africa that are grounded on African realities. By the end of the Casablanca meeting of April 2007, twenty African leaders from microfinance institutions, networks, development and policy making organizations had signed up as members and champions of AMAF and the Africa Microfinance Strategy Initiative.
  - o Five development partners participated in the Casablanca meeting, in addition to WWB: the African Development Bank (AfDB), Appui au Developpement Autonome (ADA-Luxembourg), TrustAfrica, Care USA, and UNCDF Regional Office for Central, East and Southern Africa.

- Participants reviewed and finalized the principal conceptual documents on AMAF and the Africa Microfinance Strategy Initiative, including the vision for AMAF and the mission of the Africa Microfinance Strategy Initiative.
  - WWB was confirmed as the anchor for the Africa Microfinance Strategy Initiative. WWB will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with AMAF, defining the scope and guiding principles of the relationship, and the roles and responsibilities of each party. The MOU is expected to be in effect until March 2008, with the possibility of an extension.
- b. AMAF organizational principles defined and agreed upon.**
- AMAF is a voluntary forum and think tank. As such, it will leverage the structure and institutional resources of its partners and members in order to achieve its objectives.
  - Total AMAF membership will be limited to 30 African individuals from a wide range of professional backgrounds, including: microfinance institutions, policy making organizations, development organizations, the private sector, youth, and entrepreneurs. An inventory of current members will be conducted to determine gaps that need to be filled. Additional membership will be by invitation only. Membership may not be permanent, but will depend on the interest and relevance of a member's contributions to the AMAF's vision.
  - AMAF will appoint a small leadership team of up to 3 members, led by the Chairperson.
  - AMAF members will sign a "Statement of Beliefs and Commitment".
  - AMAF's existence, relevance and organizational form will be reviewed periodically.
- c. Key elements of the diagnostic and inventory of microfinance in Africa.**
- The diagnostic and inventory will focus on the low income people as users of microfinance services. Its objectives will be:
    - To understand the growth trends and major challenges in the sector in order to inform strategic decisions for future growth.
    - To eliminate information bias and create an accurate picture of the nature and status of microfinance in Africa.
    - To assess gaps in information about microfinance in Africa
  - Results of the diagnostic will be validated at country and regional levels to ensure ownership of the strategy.
  - A Steering Committee has been set up to supervise the diagnostic and inventory. The members are Jennifer Riria of KWFT, Wolday Amha of AEMFI and Luc Van deWeerd of ADA. WWB will coordinate the work of the Committee.

#### **d. Linkages and strategic partnerships**

- AMAF will use the opportunity of major microfinance-related events organized in Africa to convene its members and supporters, and for advocacy about the Africa Microfinance Strategy Initiative. These will include meetings of AFMIN, AFRACA, the Africa Microfinance Conference, and the AfDB.
- The AfDB confirmed its status of strategic partner. This includes the use of the Bank's name in communications about AMAF and the Africa Microfinance Strategy Initiative.
- AMAF will request its strategic partners to issue a "Letter of Intent" pledging their support for the AMAF vision and the Africa Microfinance Strategy Initiative. This will complement MOUs that funding partners will sign with WWB as the anchor for the Initiative.
- The UNCDF Building Inclusive Financial Sectors in Africa (BIFSA) program will offer data from its country diagnostics in order to minimize duplication. AMAF will request to contribute to the design of such studies to ensure consistency with its own vision.
- A partnership with the Dakar Declaration Steering Committee, coordinated by the UNCDF, will be proposed for advocacy on the AMAF vision and the Africa Microfinance Strategy Initiative.
- The relevance of other initiatives in Africa will be considered and appropriate actions taken to promote linkages and synergy. These include "Making Finance Work for Africa" of the World Bank and the "African Microfinance Forum for Performance Evaluation" chaired by Mr. Kimanthi Mutua of KREP Bank and coordinated by ADA.

#### **4. Multi-Stakeholders Conference**

- Participants agreed that it was premature to discuss preparations for the Multi-Stakeholders' Conference, considering that the diagnostic and inventory exercise had not been launched.
- The AfDB offered to host a presentation on the Africa Microfinance Strategy Initiative at its Annual Economic Forum, which will be held in November 2007.

#### **5. Resource Mobilization**

- The preparatory phase in the formation of AMAF and the development of the conceptual framework for the Africa Microfinance Strategy Initiative was financed by WWB. This phase includes the first meeting of the group held in Nairobi in March 2006, fundraising activities and the Casablanca meeting.
- WWB has conducted extensive fundraising for the Initiative based on an estimated budget of US\$550,000 out of which it has succeeded in raising €100,000 through a contribution from ADA-Luxembourg. The budget includes the cost of the activities listed below:
  - Consulting services for the diagnostic and inventory.

- Meeting of AMAF to review results of the diagnostic and inventory and identify key strategic actions.
- Multi-stakeholders' Conference to approve the Africa Microfinance Strategy.
- An extended budget needs to be developed to take account of financial and in-kind contributions from AMAF members.
- AMAF will set up a Fundraising Committee.
- Mr. Late Lawson-Lartego of Care USA pledged to provide financial support for the diagnostic and inventory, the amount to be confirmed.

## 6. Next Steps

Actions	Who is responsible	When
Review the AMAF “Statement of Beliefs and Commitment” and the AMAF/WWB Memorandum of Understanding to ensure that their legal implications are clear.	Lydia Ochieng-Obbo, Uganda	April 30
Sign AMAF/WWB Memorandum of Understanding	Jennifer Riria (AMAF Chair) and Mary Ellen Iskenderian (WWB President)	May 4
Circulate final version of core documents to AMAF members and partners	Jennifer Riria (AMAF Chair) Mariama Ashcroft (WWB Facilitator)	May 4
Sign WWB/ADA Memorandum of Understanding	Mary Ellen Iskenderian (WWB President) Véronique Faber (ADA)	April 27
Sign AMAF “Statement of Beliefs and Commitment”	Jennifer Riria (AMAF Chair) AMAF members	
Press release about AMAF and the Africa Microfinance Strategy Initiative	Jennifer Riria Mary Ellen Iskenderian	May 4
Diagnostic and Inventory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Finalize the TOR for the diagnostic and inventory</li> <li>○ Recruit consultant for the diagnostic and inventory</li> <li>○ Supervise diagnostic and inventory</li> </ul>	Steering Committee Mariama Ashcroft (WWB Facilitator)	April to September 2007
Continue fundraising <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Update budget and funding proposals</li> <li>○ Follow up on funding requests already submitted</li> <li>○ Explore new funding opportunities</li> </ul>	AMAF Fundraising Committee Mariama Ashcroft (WWB) Carola Saba (WWB)	April onwards
AMAF workshop to review results of diagnostic and inventory	Steering Committee Mariama Ashcroft (WWB Facilitator)	October 2007

## Annex 1.

## Workshop Agenda

<b>Thursday, April 5</b>	
<b>09:00 – 09:30</b>	<b>Welcome address by Mr. Fouad Abdelmoumni, Managing Director of Al Amana</b> <b>Welcome address by Dr. Jennifer Riria, Chairperson of AMAF</b> <b>Welcome address by Ms. Mary Ellen Iskenderian, President of WWB</b>
<b>09:30 – 10:30</b>	<b>The Africa Microfinance Strategy Initiative</b> <b>Moderator: Dr. Jennifer Riria</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Background</li> <li>• Key actions</li> </ul>
<b>10:30 – 13:00</b>	<b>Small group discussion and report back</b> Vision, objectives and institutional framework for implementation of the Africa Microfinance Strategy Initiative <b>Q &amp; A</b>
<b>13:00 – 14:30</b>	<b>Lunch break</b>
<b>14:30 – 15:30</b>	<b>The diagnostic and inventory of microfinance in Africa</b> <b>Moderator: Dr. Wolday Amha</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rationale and objectives</li> <li>• Key issues</li> </ul>
<b>15:30 – 17:00</b>	<b>Small group discussion and report back</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scope, methodology</li> <li>• Terms of reference and recruitment of consultant</li> <li>• Oversight and supervision</li> </ul> <b>Q &amp; A</b>
<b>Friday, April 6</b>	
<b>09:00 – 11:00</b>	<b>Linkages with other initiatives in Africa</b> <b>Moderator: Ms. Mariama Ashcroft</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Africa Microfinance Network</li> <li>• Dakar Declaration Steering Committee</li> <li>• TrustAfrica</li> <li>• Regional Solidarity Bank</li> <li>• African Microfinance Conference</li> <li>• Making Finance Work for Africa</li> </ul>
<b>11:00 – 12:30</b>	<b>Resource Mobilization for the Africa Microfinance Strategy Initiative</b> <b>Moderator: Mr. Fouad Abdelmoumni</b>
<b>12:30 – 14:00</b>	<b>Lunch break</b>
<b>14:00 – 16:00</b>	<b>Organization of the Multi-Stakeholders Conference</b> <b>Moderator: Mr. Rene Abouo Nguessan</b>
<b>16:00 – 17:00</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AMAF Memorandum of Understanding</li> <li>• AMAF/WWB Memorandum of Understanding</li> <li>• Way forward</li> </ul> <b>Moderator: Ms. Lydia Ochieng-Obbo</b>

## Annex 2

## Participants list

Name	Organization	Job designation	Country of Origin
Mr. Fouad Abdelmoumni	Association AlAmana, Morocco	Managing Director	Morocco
Mr. Tafsir Amadou Mbaye	Min. of Microfinance & Small Enterprises, Senegal	Director of Microfinance	Senegal
Mr. René Abouo Nguessan	AFMIN	Chairperson	Cote d'Ivoire
Mrs. Mandas Marikanda	ZAMFI, Zimbabwe	Chairperson	Zimbabwe
Ms. Mariama O. Ashcroft	WWB, USA	Policy and Industry Impact Manager	Gambia
Ms. Marissa Pretto	WWB, USA	Intern	USA
Mr. Late Lawson Lartego	Care USA	Senior Economic Advisor	Togo
Dr. Amha Wolday	AEMFI, Ethiopia	Executive Director	Ethiopia
Mr. David Baguma	AMFIU, Uganda	Executive Director	Uganda
Dr. Jennifer Riria	KWFT, Kenya	Managing Director	Kenya
Ms. Lydia Ochieng-Obbo	UFT, Uganda	Vice Chair	Uganda
Ms. Ida Wanendeya	UFT, Uganda	Chairperson	Uganda
Mrs. Mary Nandazi	AFRACA, Kenya	Secretary General	Zambia
Mr. Fodé Ndiaye	UNCDF, Regional Office for East, Central and Southern Africa	Regional Director	Senegal
Mr. Clement Wonou	PASNAM, UNDP/Togo	Senior Technical Advisor	Togo
Ms. Véronique Faber	ADA, Luxembourg	Luxembourg	Luxembourg
Ms Chantal Uwimana	TrustAfrica, Senegal	Program Director	Burundi
Ms. Carola Saba	WWB, USA	Development Manager	Italy
Mr. Luc Vanderweerd	ADA, Luxembourg	Luxembourg	Luxembourg
Ms. Mary Ellen Iskenderian	WWB, USA	President	USA
Ms. Helene Sow Dahou	ADB, Tunisia	Microfinance Expert	Senegal