

**Organisation Intergouvernementale
Panafricaine**

*Au service de l'innovation,
de la modernisation et de la construction
d'administrations pour
une Gouvernance Publique Responsable*

منظمة إفريقية بيحكومية



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**Pan African
Intergovernmental Organization**

*Serving innovation,
modernisation and establishment
of administrations for
Responsible Public Governance*

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59th Session of the Governing Board

Report of the 59th Session of the Governing Board

9 July 2024

Rabat (Kingdom of Morocco)

Report of the 59th Session of the Governing Board of CAFRAD Rabat (Kingdom of Morocco), 9 July 2024

Meeting of the Executive Committee

In preparation for the 59th ordinary session of the Governing Board, the Executive committee met on the morning of 9 July 2024, under the effective leadership of Her Excellency Mrs Ghita MEZZOUR, Minister delegate in charge of Digital Transition and Administrative Reform, acting in her dual capacity as both Chair of the Executive Committee and Chair of the CAFRAD Governing Board.

Indeed, in accordance with the provisions of Article 8 of the CAFRAD Establishment Agreement dated 1967, the Executive Committee is responsible for preparing the meetings of the Governing Board. It is composed of:

Morocco (host country), Chair;

Members

West Africa: Burkina Faso, The Gambia and Niger.

Central Africa: Central African Republic and Chad.

East Africa: Madagascar.

Southern Africa: Namibia.

North Africa: Morocco and Mauritania.

- 1) Adoption of the Agenda (Doc 1) ;
- 2) Adoption of the Report of the 58th Session of the Governing Board (Doc 2);
- 3) Report of the Executive Committee (Doc 3);
- 4) CAFRAD Activity Report, July 2023 – June 2024 (Doc 4);
- 5) Work Programme, July 2024 - June 2025 (Doc 5);
- 6) Review of the Executed Budget, July 2023 – 31 May 2024 (Doc 6);
- 7) Review of the Project Budget, July 2024 – June 2025 (Doc 7);
- 8) Report of the Auditor, July 2022 – June 2023 (Doc 8);
- 9) Election of the New Director General of CAFRAD ;
- 10) Relocation to CAFRAD's new headquarters in Rabat ;
- 11) Miscellaneous

Report of the Executive Committee and organisation of the ordinary sessions:

The recruitment process for the new Director General:

The vacancy for the position of Director General of CAFRAD was announced in all Member States and through all appropriate communication channels.

The position of Director General of CAFRAD has been vacant since 1st July 2022, following the end of the second term of the current Director General, Prof. Stéphane Monney MOUANDJO.

In accordance with Article 13 of the CAFRAD Establishment Agreement, CAFRAD Member States are invited to submit applications for this position. The eligibility requirements for candidates are detailed in the attached job description.

Application files must include the following documents:

- 1) A formal application letter from the candidate;
- 2) A detailed Curriculum Vitae;
- 3) An official letter of endorsement from the candidate's government.

Deadline for submission of applications: 30 November 2023.

The announcement of the vacancy for the position of Director General of CAFRAD is attached as Appendix 1.

Pre-selection process at the African level:

A total of 13 countries submitted candidates, and the Secretariat of the Chair of the Governing Board, held by the Minister Delegate to the Head of Government of the Kingdom of Morocco, in charge of Digital Transition and Administrative Reform, recorded 19 applications.

A list of candidates for the position of Director General of CAFRAD is attached as Appendix 2.

The selection committee established by the CAFRAD Governing Board carried out the preselection of applications in three (3) stages: the first screening excluded incomplete files or those received after the deadline; the second screening eliminated candidates who did not meet the required profile, leaving nine eligible candidates.

The third stage consisted of evaluating these nine applications against the required criteria:

N°	Criteria	Note
1	A university degree, preferably a Doctorate, in Public Administration, Political Science, Public Law, or International Law.	
2	At least 15 years of experience, including some in a leadership position within a Ministry Department, Diplomatic Representation, or other state institution, an international organisation, or a higher education or research institution.	
3	Proven experience in training, research, and consultancy in Africa and/or elsewhere.	

4	A strong contribution to the development of public administration and governance in Africa demonstrated through publications and other work aimed at advancing knowledge in administrative sciences and governance.	
5	A motivation and vision to serve the African continent and to fulfil its responsibilities with passion and integrity.	
	TOTAL	

After this third stage, the candidates were ranked by order of merit. Dr. Coffi Dieudonné ASSOUVI achieved an average score of 19 out of 20 and secured first place ahead of four other candidates from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, and The Gambia.

List of the five (5) preselected candidates in appendix n°3.

In this context, it was decided to summon the top five candidates to submit to the CAFRAD Chairmanship a document presenting the motivation, vision, and development project for CAFRAD covering the four-year term, to be presented in person before the Executive Committee and the Governing Board during their next meeting, scheduled for 9 July 2024, in Rabat.

At this stage, Dr Coffi Dieudonné ASSOUVI from Benin received 3 out of 7 votes, while the other candidates each received one vote.

The Executive Committee decided to exclude the Ministers from countries whose candidates were preselected, as well as the candidates themselves, from the room during the vote. The Committee then proceeded to vote and selected the three (3) best candidates by order of merit: **Benin, Cameroon, and The Gambia.**

Following the candidates' final oral presentations before the Executive Committee, Dr. Coffi Dieudonné ASSOUVI was declared elected ahead of the two other candidates from Cameroon and The Gambia.

Before hearing the preselected candidates, at the invitation of the Chair of the Executive Committee, Dr. Samir, the representative of the Selection Committee, explained the different stages of the recruitment process for the new Director General of CAFRAD. According to him, the criteria have been established for years, and the Governing Board has always used these criteria to recruit the Director General. The process was fully transparent and free from any shortcomings. After the initial review of the applications, candidates with incomplete files were invited to provide the missing documents. Only applications submitted after the deadline were rejected at this stage. The Selection Committee ensured that all candidates had complete dossiers within the deadline before beginning the evaluation. There was indeed communication with the candidates, and it was the Governments

of the Member States who presented the candidates through a fundamental document: **the government endorsement letter, giving its approval.**

The second stage involved the selection committee reviewing the applications against the required criteria. At this stage, five candidates were eliminated for not meeting the criteria.

In the third stage, the selection committee evaluated the applications by assigning a score to each criterion, with a maximum of 5 points per criterion. They produced a ranking table of candidates by order of merit: Benin, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, and The Gambia. This table, listing the preselected candidates and their scores, was displayed on a large screen in front of all members of the Executive Committee.

This preselection was submitted for approval to the Governing Board, composed of all the ministers from CAFRAD member states, who unexpectedly requested a new hearing for the three top-ranked candidates.

Dr. Coffi Dieudonné ASSOUVI from Benin impressed and convinced the Governing Board not only with his development project for CAFRAD but also, above all, with his strong communication and diplomatic skills. He was thus elected by an overwhelming majority, receiving 14 votes against 7 for the candidate from The Gambia, with 4 invalid ballots.

59th Ordinary Session of the Governing Board (GB)

The 59th meeting of the Governing Board was attended by representatives from 26 Member States (see the list of participants in Appendix 4).

Opening Session:

The CAFRAD 59th Session of the Governing Board was held in Rabat on the afternoon of 9 July 2024. The meeting was attended by 24 Member States and presided over by Her Excellency Ms Ghita MEZZOUR, Minister Delegate in charge of Digital Transition and Administrative Reform, acting as Chairwoman of the CAFRAD Governing Board.

In her opening address, Her Excellency Ms Ghita MEZZOUR warmly thanked the participants and the delegations present for honouring CAFRAD's invitation. She emphasised the essential role CAFRAD plays as a key actor in strengthening the capacities of public administrations in Africa.

The Minister highlighted CAFRAD's mission to become a hub of innovation within the framework of a new strategic approach to administrative reform. This dynamic reflects a commitment to consolidating institutional capacities and enhancing skills through the sharing of expertise, the development of partnerships, and the promotion of strengthened South-South cooperation.

His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God assist Him, has initiated cooperation efforts aimed at supporting national development and promoting major structural projects. These initiatives reflect His steadfast commitment to transforming public service, notably through the digitisation of services, intending to ensure a modern, efficient, and accessible administration for all.

The Minister expressed her gratitude to the outgoing Director General for the considerable efforts made during his mandate and extended her early congratulations to the future Director General, who will be elected from among the three candidates in contention. This transition marks a new chapter in CAFRAD's history, calling for essential reforms to ensure the institution's sustainability and prominence in service to the continent.

Speaking next, the outgoing Director General thanked the Minister for her warm words as well as the entire team that supported him throughout his mandate. He then presented the agenda for the meeting.

During this 59th Session, the following decisions were taken by the Governing Board:

ITEM 1: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA OF THE DAY

The Chairwoman of the CAFRAD Governing Board presented the items listed in the provisional agenda of the Governing Board, which consists of the following 11 items:

- 12) Adoption of the Agenda (Doc.1) ;
- 13) Adoption of the Report of the 58th Session of the Governing Board (Doc.2);
- 14) Report of the Executive Committee (Doc.3);
- 15) CAFRAD Activity Report, July 2023 – June 2024 (Doc.4);
- 16) Work Programme, July 2024 – June 2025 (Doc.5);
- 17) Review of the Executed Budget, July 2023 – 31 May 2024 (Doc.6);
- 18) Review of the Project Budget, July 2024 – June 2025 (Doc.7);
- 19) Report of the Auditor, July 2022 – June 2023 (Doc.8);
- 20) Election of the new Director General of CAFRAD;
- 21) Relocation to CAFRAD's new headquarters in Rabat ;
- 22) Miscellaneous

Decision 2024/1:

The Governing Board adopted the agenda as presented:

ITEM 2: REPORT OF THE 58th SESSION OF THE GOVERNING BOARD

6. Working Document No. 2, entitled “*Report of the 58th Session of the Governing Board,*” contains the decisions adopted by the Governing Board during its meeting held on 22 May 2024 in Rabat, Morocco.

Decision 2024/2:

The Governing Board adopted the report of the 58th Session of the Governing Board, held in Rabat (Morocco) on 22 May 2023.

ITEM 3: REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

8. Nine Member States took part in this Committee: Morocco, Burkina Faso, Niger, the Central African Republic, Chad, Madagascar, Mauritania, The Gambia, and Namibia.
9. The Chair officially opened the meeting, recalling that it was held in accordance with the rules of procedure of the CAFRAD Governing Board. She emphasised the central role of the Centre in the development of African countries, the importance of reflecting on new strategies for reform and capacity building, and the need to consolidate achievements and continue supporting African administrations in addressing current challenges.
10. The meeting agenda included the following items:
 - 1) Adoption of the agenda (**Doc 1**) ;
 - 2) Review of the Executed Budget;
 - 3) Approval of the budget for the financial year July 2024 – June 2025 ;
 - 4) Relocation of CAFRAD to Rabat
 - 5) Interviews of candidates for the position of DG of CAFRAD
 - 6) Other Questions.
11. The Director General briefly presented the executed budget, highlighting the ongoing negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly on the low recovery of Member States’ contributions and the limited implementation of certain activities due to a lack of resources. To date, only three countries (Cameroon, Cape Verde, and Morocco) are up to date with their contributions. The Committee recommended **structural reforms** to ensure CAFRAD’s sustainability and competitiveness, notably through the gradual revaluation of contributions and the adoption of more effective collection mechanisms.
12. The Executive Committee reviewed the draft budget for the financial year July 2024 – June 2025. Although some concerns were raised regarding its structure and alignment with CAFRAD’s ambitions and the vision

expected from the future Director-General, members agreed to adopt it on a **transitional basis** to avoid institutional gridlock. It was recommended that this **budget be revised and adjusted** by the new Director General, who will present an updated version during an Extraordinary Governing Board meeting, expected to be held virtually in September.

13. The Executive Committee took note of CAFRAD's invitation to **relocate to Rabat**, given the importance of its proximity to the city as well as to other public and diplomatic institutions, ministries, embassies, and various diplomatic representations.
14. A detailed presentation of the selection process for the new Director General was made, recalling the job criteria, eligibility conditions, and the timeline. Out of 19 applications received from 13 countries, 9 were retained after preselection and then ranked according to their profiles and eligibility. The top five candidates (Benin, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, and The Gambia) presented their vision and project for CAFRAD during the session. Representatives from countries with candidates withdrew during these presentations. After deliberations, which included remarks about the need to clarify procedures in the future, three candidates were selected by order of merit: Benin, Cameroon, and The Gambia.
11. At this point, the Chairperson of the Governing Board closed the proceedings of the Executive Committee, which preceded the 59th Session of the CAFRAD Governing Board.

Decision 2024/3 :

The Governing Board adopted the Report of the Executive Committee held in Rabat (Kingdom of Morocco) on the morning of 9 July 2024.

ITEM 4: CAFRAD'S ACTIVITY REPORT 2023-2024

12. The implementation of the work programme approved by the CAFRAD Governing Board in May 2023 was initiated but quickly hindered by the uncertainties caused by the pandemic and the delayed payment of contributions by several member countries.
13. The 2023-2024 financial year was marked by the renewed commitment of several countries eager to settle their annual contributions and actively participate in the execution of the activity programme. These efforts by countries such as Mauritania, Cameroon, and Cape Verde are to be encouraged and commended.

14. Despite the current challenges, notably the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 crisis, CAFRAD has continued its efforts to transform itself into an institution of excellence. Emphasis has been placed on strengthening its strategic vision, focused on Africa's contribution to the modernisation and efficiency of its governance systems and administrations.
15. The activities carried out by CAFRAD, both co-organised and those organised by partners in which CAFRAD participated, along with some peripheral activities, are briefly described below.

A. Capacity Building Activities Organised by CAFRAD

- Africa-China Governance Summit, under the theme: “The Transformation of Governance and the Improvement of Living Standards: How to Make Governance More Relevant through the Valorization of the Economic and Human Potential of African Countries,” scheduled to take place in Beijing (China), was postponed twice at the request of the Chinese side. We are awaiting the next date, which could be announced imminently.

B. Webinar Activities :

- On 30 November 2023 - Rationalisation of Staffing in the Public Service & Efficiency of Administrative Action.

C. Visits to CAFRAD by Partner Institutions

- As part of its institutional cooperation, CAFRAD has welcomed several official delegations to its headquarters, including those from Cape Verde, Cameroon, and Gabon. These meetings mainly focused on strengthening partnerships and improving communication channels with member countries. They allowed for the identification of more suitable collaboration methods, with encouraging initial results.

D. Projects with partners

16. CAFRAD continues to implement strategic projects with both traditional and new partners to strengthen institutional capacities and increase its visibility. Ongoing initiatives include the organisation of an African Conference on the Evaluation of Training Policies in National Schools of Administration, in partnership with ENAM Ouagadougou, as well as the Africa-China Governance Summit Forum with the Chinese province of Hainan, whose holding is pending confirmation after two postponements.

E. Peripheral Activities

- CAFRAD has continued its cooperation activities by strengthening its relations with national, regional, and international institutions, signing new partnerships, conducting working visits, and hosting interns.

- **Cooperation Activity :**

Over the course of the past financial year, CAFRAD maintained its cooperation with various countries and institutions.

a. CAFRAD's Participation in Partner Activities

- International Conference « Freedom, Democracy and Good Governance: A Perspective from Cabo Verde »; 8 -9 April 2024, Sal Island – Cabo Verde (Cape Verde) ;
- Participation in CEPA (Committee of Experts on Public Administration) of the United Nations, 18-19 April 2024 (New York) ;
- Second Edition of GITEX Africa Morocco, 29 -31 May 2024, Marrakech (Morocco) ;
- National Day of the United States of America, 12 June 2024, Rabat (Morocco).

b. Training / Internship

CAFRAD hosted, both in-person and remotely, several students from Moroccan universities as part of their end-of-study internships. It put in place the necessary mechanisms to provide them with quality supervision and support in their academic work.

c. UNPAN/Publications/Documentation

- CAFRAD's contribution to the UNPAN network has been maintained at a steady pace. CAFRAD continues to feed the database of this important information network.
- The “*African Administrative Studies*” (*Cahiers Africains d'Administration Publique*) has been published regularly. Issue No. 88 was released in March 2024.
- Furthermore, CAFRAD also continues to regularly share with its partners publications related to its field of activity.

Decision 2024/4:

The Governing Board adopted the CAFRAD activity report for the period July 2023 – June 2024.

ITEM 5: WORK PROGRAMME FOR JULY 2024-JUNE 2025

17. The Director General presented Working Document No. 5 entitled “CAFRAD Work Programme: July 2024 – June 2025.” This report provided an overview of upcoming activities:

A. SEMINARS, FORUMS AND CONFERENCES

18. The programme activities are briefly presented and will be the subject of detailed information sheets annexed to the invitation letters, in both English and French. Ad hoc activities may be added throughout the year. The activities currently planned for the ongoing financial year are as follows:

ACTIVITY 1: Efforts to transform African public administrations in a global context marked by the digital revolution;

ACTIVITY 2: Pan-African Conference of Secretaries General and Human Resources Directors of State Institutions: Human Resources Management in African Public Administrations in the Era of Major Global Transformations;

ACTIVITY 3: The realities of African universities in terms of quality training in the age of ethical and responsible artificial intelligence;

ACTIVITY 4: Conferences of National Schools of Administration: Evaluation of training policies to implement Responsible Public Governance in African countries;

ACTIVITY 5: Conference of Diplomatic Career Training Schools and Institutes: Assessment and challenges of training policies in African diplomatic training institutions and schools in the context of major international changes;

ACTIVITY 6: Pan-African Conference on Women in Africa: The role of African women in building and consolidating progress dynamics in light of the principles and values of responsible public governance and the pursuit of the SDGs;

ACTIVITY 7: Pan-African Conference of Presidents of Courts of Auditors: National strategies to prevent public wealth violations in Africa in light of the principles of Responsible Public Governance (RPG) and the pursuit of the SDGs;

ACTIVITY 8: 16th Pan-African Ministerial Forum on the Modernisation of Public Administration and State Institutions (Followed by the 60th Session of the CAFRAD Governing Board): The role of leadership in implementing Responsible Public Governance in light of the pursuit of the SDGs and the emergence of African countries ;

B. AD HOC SEMINARS

19. Throughout the year, CAFRAD may also organise joint activities with its partners, including those not listed in this document.

C. CERTIFICATION TRAINING:

Each training session will be conducted in French and/or English, with a duration of 5 days. Venues and dates will be determined at a later time, and participation is open to anyone interested in the following topics:

TRAINING 1: Civic responsibility and citizenship in public administrations;

TRAINING 2: Protocol practices;

TRAINING 3: Administrative writing and communication;

TRAINING 4: Principles and values in strategic workforce and skills planning;

TRAINING 5: Certificate of Competence in African and International Affairs Administration.

D. STUDIES / RESEARCH

The research will be conducted in collaboration with partners.

E. CONSULTATION / ADVICE

20. Since its establishment in 1964, CAFRAD has developed recognised expertise in administrative reform, responding to requests from States and partner institutions. Thanks to a broad network of experts at the continental and international levels, it can offer advisory and support services both for the design and the implementation of reforms and training programs for public administrations.

F. INFORMATION/PUBLICATIONS/DOCUMENTATION

21. CAFRAD will continue its efforts to digitise documentation, publish its work, and leverage information technologies to enhance the effectiveness of its activities. In addition to its regular journal, *Les Cahiers Africains d'Administration Publique*, a publication dedicated to the emerging concept of Responsible Public Governance (RPG) will also be launched. This initiative carried out in collaboration with African researchers and practitioners, aims

to deepen, disseminate, and enrich this concept both in academic and administrative circles.

G. PARTNERSHIP/COLLABORATION

22. CAFRAD will continue strengthening its partnerships with public and private institutions while focusing on improving its training offerings and exchanges for the benefit of States and local governments. It will also deepen its cooperation with regional institutions such as the ACBF and the AfDB, as well as other international partners, in order to support the development of more integrated, efficient, and dynamic African administrative systems in both the public and private sectors.

Decision 2024/5:

The Governing Board adopted the work programme for July 2024 – June 2025.

ITEM 6: REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTED BUDGET: July 2023 – May 2024

23. The Director General of CAFRAD presented the budget as a contrasted one: **heterogeneous/ unbalanced ;**

24. Following the review of the implemented budget (July 2023 – May 2024), it was noted that on the revenue side, there was a clear improvement in member state contributions—CAFRAD’s main source of funding—although collection remains a major challenge. On the other hand, no revenue was generated from service delivery during this financial year.

25. On the expenditure side, a slight increase was observed compared to the previous year, mainly due to a significant overrun of forecasts in the “debt settlement” category.

26. A large portion of the expenses incurred during the financial year could not be settled, resulting in an accumulation of debts towards staff and certain suppliers. It is therefore essential that member states fulfil their financial commitments to enable CAFRAD to fully carry out its missions.

27. As of 31 May 2024, only 2 out of 36 member states are up to date with their contributions. While 3 member states owe a single contribution, 4 owe two, and 6 have not paid any contributions since the 2008/2009 financial year. This situation severely compromises the functioning of CAFRAD, hence

the renewed call for member states to honour their financial commitments in order to allow the institution to effectively fulfil its missions.

28. During the last financial year, the rate of member-state participation in paying contributions remained very low. This situation plunged the Centre into a major financial crisis, despite the declared intentions of some countries to regularise their commitments. As a result, the budget showed an exceptionally low implementation rate.

29. Due to the low level of revenue collected during the financial year, the implementation of the scientific activity programme could only be carried out on a very limited scale. The Director General thanked the countries that hosted CAFRAD activities and called on the other member states to honour their commitments related to the joint organisation of the Centre's forums and events.

Decision 2024/6:

The Governing Board took note of the implemented budget: July 2023 – May 2024

ITEM 7: PROPOSED BUDGET: JULY 2024 – JUNE 2025

30. The Director General of CAFRAD presented Document No. 7: "Proposed Budget: July 2024 – June 2025".

31. The draft budget for 2024/2025 was developed with an increase compared to last year's budget, showing a difference of 132,876. This reflects the efforts made to improve revenues needed to enable CAFRAD to carry out its missions.

32. The members of the Governing Board expressed their willingness to support the Director General in the implementation of his roadmap.

33. A discussion was then initiated among the various delegations present on several issues:

The regularisation and review of the annual contributions of CAFRAD member states:

- The representative of Gabon announced that his country has taken the necessary steps to settle all of its outstanding contributions, thus marking Gabon's return to CAFRAD with a renewed commitment.

- The representative of Chad emphasised that the amount of the contribution was not, in itself, the issue; the real concern lies in the sustainability and visibility of CAFRAD. He stressed the need to adopt a common strategy aimed at regularising all arrears to move forward constructively.
- The representative of Burkina Faso, for his part, pointed out that the amount of the contribution could be a discouraging factor for some countries. He also raised several concerns and suggested involving embassies in the candidate selection process.
- **It is essential for CAFRAD to develop an effective resource mobilisation strategy to overcome the current crisis it is facing.**

The financial crisis facing CAFRAD:

- The representative of Zimbabwe emphasised that the COVID-19 pandemic period represented a pivotal moment. He questioned the Director General about the programme that had been put in place and the activities carried out during that time. While acknowledging the budgetary constraints, he considered that certain actions could have been undertaken without requiring significant funding.
- In response, the Director General clarified that efforts had been focused on cooperation and representation activities. He added that the Africa-China initiative could not take place due to scheduling constraints on the Chinese side, but a new date is currently awaited. He also emphasised the need to **rethink CAFRAD's governance model**, advocating for member states' contributions to be established on a fairer and more proportionate basis. He insisted on the importance of adopting a **provisional budget to avoid any institutional paralysis**.
- The representative of the Republic of Guinea recommended strengthening the CAFRAD Secretariat, notably by proposing that the Executive Committee's report be distributed in printed form as a summary. He also emphasised the importance of implementing activities within member countries to consolidate financing and governance mechanisms.

The Annual Budget:

- In this regard, the Chairwoman proposed to adopt the budget in its current form, while specifying that the **new Director General**, once in office, may submit a new budget along with his **strategic vision** for the institution in September. This would be done with the **support of the member states**, to develop a new roadmap for mobilising financial resources.
- For his part, the representative of the Malian delegation emphasised the need to present the **budget's logical framework**, supported by performance indicators. He stressed the importance of caution, given that an action plan, a budget, and a work program have been already established, while a new Director General will soon take office. It would be inappropriate to ask him to implement a budget that **was not validated** under his leadership. He, therefore, proposed the

development of a strategic budget accompanied by a clear work plan, structured around specific objectives, to serve as a roadmap. However, he also warned that this process might lead to institutional paralysis at CAFRAD. In response, the Executive Committee suggested initially validating the budget as presented and then organising a remote Governing Board meeting around September to adopt a revised, more detailed, coherent, relevant, and realistic version of the budget.

- The representative of Mali expressed reservations about the credibility of the proposed budget, deeming it unrealistic. However, he indicated that its adoption could be considered on the condition that, by September, a scientific document be produced to enable in-depth reflection on the future of CAFRAD. This document should include a five-year strategic plan aimed at defining a clear vision.

The recruitment process of the new Director General:

The Executive Committee's report on the recruitment process of the new Director General of CAFRAD was presented.

The shortlist of the three (3) top candidates (Benin, Cameroon, and The Gambia) was submitted for approval to the Governing Board composed of Ministers from all CAFRAD member states that, unexpectedly, requested a new hearing of the three (3) shortlisted candidates in order of merit.

-Indeed, the representative of Cameroon contested the recruitment criteria for the position of Director General of CAFRAD and called for the postponement of the election, requesting a broader dissemination of the vacancy announcement.

- The representative of Madagascar recalled that the Executive Committee had made several observations and recommendations concerning future recruitment processes. She emphasised that the selection criteria should be clearly defined by the Governing Board, stressing the need to ensure transparency at every stage: from the evaluation of applications to the processing of files and the final selection.
- The representative of Mali raised concerns about the selection procedures, pointing out a lack of communication on the matter. He recommended greater transparency and more accurate dissemination of information so that all member states have the same level of awareness, thus avoiding any form of discouragement or disengagement. Nevertheless, he acknowledged the validity and sincerity of the preselection results, which were announced and displayed on screen before the Governing Board, while questioning why the Malian candidate was ranked seventh.

It is crucial that before hearing the shortlisted candidates, at the invitation of the Chair of the Executive Committee, the representative of the Selection Committee, Dr Samir, explained the different stages of the recruitment process for the new Director General of CAFRAD. According to him, the criteria have been defined for years, and the Governing Board has always

used these criteria to recruit the Director General. The process was indeed transparent and did not suffer from any shortcomings. After the initial review of the applications, candidates with incomplete files were invited to complete the missing documents. Only the applications submitted after the deadline were rejected at that stage. The Selection Committee ensured that all candidates had submitted a complete file within the deadline before starting the evaluation of applications. There was indeed communication with the candidates, and it was the Governments of the Member States who submitted the candidates through a fundamental document: **the official letter of support from the government granting its approval.**

The second step involves the selection committee examining the applications according to the required criteria. At this stage, five candidates were eliminated due to not meeting the criteria.

In the third step, the selection committee evaluated the applications by assigning a score to each criterion, with a maximum of five points per criterion. A table was created ranking the candidates by order of merit: Benin, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, and Gambia. This table, along with the list of shortlisted candidates and their scores, was displayed on a large screen in front of all members of the Executive Committee.

- The representative of the Republic of Congo, who acknowledged the sincerity and technical quality of the work done by the selection committee and the Executive Committee, urged his colleagues to approve the vote. He believes that competence criteria prevailed in the process and that if the Governing Board intends to choose a qualified and competent candidate rather than a political Director General, to transform CAFRAD as the Board desires, it is important to accept the results as they are and to decide on the final choice. Furthermore, he proposed drafting a consolidated document compiling all procedures, in order to structure and enhance the work accomplished while improving the organisation of future meetings. He also emphasised the importance of including on the agenda of upcoming Boards the issue of the job description of the Director General, considering that this approach reflects the will expressed by the member states. He then highlighted the importance of strengthening training within universities, insisting on the need to pay particular attention to this aspect.
- The representative of the Central African Republic supported the statement of the Deputy Prime Minister in charge of the Civil Service of the Democratic Republic of Congo and urged the Governing Board to approve the list of the three shortlisted candidates for the approval vote. According to him, the process reflects the requirements of the Governing Board and there is no question of challenging such a clear and transparent process. He emphasised the importance of

strengthening the CAFRAD Secretariat's capacities. He insisted on the need to review the selection procedures in the future by establishing clear and fair rules — for example, that no Minister should leave the room, even if they are from the same country as the shortlisted candidate — in order to guarantee the integrity of the process.

- The representative of Senegal also supported the two previous speakers, emphasising the necessity to immediately elect the new Director General of CAFRAD to avoid further damage to the Organisation, which has already suffered two years of vacancy in this position. Indeed, since the expiration of the outgoing Director General's second term in July 2022, he has acted without any mandate from the Governing Board. It is out of the question to leave this meeting without electing a new Director General.
- The representative of Cameroon, after listening to his counterparts, reconsidered and withdrew the Cameroonian candidate.
- The Chairwoman, after hearing the report of the selection committee presented by Dr Samir BOUGGAR and the various interventions, summarised the discussions. She stressed that electing the new Director General of CAFRAD is imperative for the survival of the Organization. Postponing the election would be suicidal for the Centre. Therefore, she invited her peers to proceed with the approval vote for the two remaining candidates (Benin and The Gambia) following the withdrawal of the Cameroonian candidate. The Chairwoman clarified that the approval of the post occurs before the official appointment. She also proposed that, from now on, all eligible candidates be invited to participate in the process to enhance transparency and restore the confidence of member states.
- The election took place in the presence of the candidates and all attendees in the CAFRAD conference hall.
 - Dr. Coffi Dieudonné ASSOUVI from Benin made a strong impact and convinced the Governing Board not only with his development project for CAFRAD but also, above all, with his communication and diplomatic skills. He was therefore elected with an overwhelming majority of votes, receiving **14 votes** against 7 for the candidate from The Gambia, with 4 invalid ballots.
 - **Political Phase:** two major oral presentations followed by a vote:
 - **► First (1st)** oral presentation before the Executive Committee composed of Ministers from the five African subregions (East Africa, West Africa, Central Africa, North Africa, and Southern Africa), and the host country (Morocco); totalling 7 voters: he obtained 3 votes against 1 for each of the four other candidates and was declared first among the three finalists advancing to the final phase.

- ► **Second (2nd)** oral presentation before the Governing Board, composed of all Ministers of Public Service and/or Administrative Reform or Training and Administrative Research of the member states, with 26 present and voting: Dr. ASSOUVI obtained 14 votes against 7 for his Gambian challenger, 4 invalid ballots, and 1 abstention; the Cameroonian candidate, meanwhile withdrawn by his Minister, was ranked second.
- **Deliberation and Result:** Dr ASSOUVI was elected Director General of CAFRAD with an overall average score of 19 out of 20, following an approval vote by the Council of Ministers of the Member States.

Report of the Executive Committee and Organisation of the Ordinary Sessions:

- The Executive Committee worked on the job description, which has remained the same for years. It is now necessary to develop clearer manuals, and the Executive Committee took note of this remark as it reflects the will of the Member States. The Executive Committee is expected to revise and produce a written regulation based on the recommendations made.
- The Executive Committee examined the job description, which had not been updated in recent years. It is now necessary to create clearer reference documents. The Council took note of this observation, which reflects the intentions of the Member States. The Executive Committee is therefore expected to revise the procedures and produce a written regulation in line with the recommendations expressed.
- The representative of Sudan stated that the Executive Committee had already thoroughly reviewed these documents and that there was no need to go over them again. She recommended that future meetings should focus solely on the key clauses and main points discussed in the morning session, in order to avoid repetition and ensure more efficient discussions.
- The representative of the Nigerian delegation recalled that the issues raised had already been discussed during the morning session and that a summary of the exchanges had been provided. He proposed preparing a synthesis of the decisions and recommendations adopted. He also pointed out that, despite its 60 years of existence, CAFRAD does not yet fully reflect the maturity expected of such an institution. He stressed the need to address certain shortcomings and learn from past failures.
- The representative of Benin suggested that future sessions of the Governing Board be held over two days, in order to allow enough time for debate on the various items on the agenda.

The activity Program/action plan:

- The representative of Zimbabwe raised questions concerning the themes proposed in the training activity programme. He also brought up issues related to financing: who covers the costs, what portion is borne by CAFRAD, what are the tangible benefits for the member countries, and how do these actions serve them? He emphasised the need to present the budgets to the authorities of each member country.
- The representative of Guinea, for his part, raised concerns about the presentation of the documents, particularly with regard to the actions already carried out, those currently underway, and those still to be undertaken.
- The representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo stated that although the main points had been presented in the speeches, it was also essential to put forward concrete proposals and recommendations. He emphasised the need for a **clear action framework with defined objectives** to enable the effective implementation of the adopted policy.
- **The Minister of Madagascar**, for her part, stressed that the action plan must align with the expectations of the member states. She insisted on the importance of the Director General working closely with the national focal points to develop a consensual and relevant work plan.

Engagement of Member States, Work Organisation and Various Recommendations:

- The representative of Zimbabwe, for his part, welcomed the ongoing efforts to raise awareness among member countries about the importance of joining and supporting CAFRAD. He emphasised the need for strong arguments to convince their respective governments of the relevance of their active participation and contribution to the organisation's work.
- The representative of the Central African Republic stressed that the institution is currently going through a critical phase, comparable to a struggle for its survival. He insisted on the importance of responding concretely to priority needs by proposing to define only the main strategic directions. He recommended **developing a short-term recovery plan (3 to 6 months)**, taking into account available resources and the feasibility of the objectives.
- Supporting this assessment, other speakers expressed their willingness to strengthen the institution's actions and expand its scope. They insisted on the need to build the **action plan in synergy with the member states** and their focal points so that it truly responds to the training needs.
- The representative of Gabon, for his part, expressed concern over the absence of certain countries, notably Gabon itself during previous meetings. He pointed out that this lack of participation leads to a deficit in communication and coordination. He also highlighted an issue of unequal visibility and dissemination of CAFRAD's activities among the different member countries.
- **A proposal was made to establish an incentive mechanism aimed at encouraging member states to become more involved in CAFRAD's**

activities, by actively engaging them, notably by having them choose an activity to host on their territory.

- The representative of Senegal expressed the wish to receive working documents before meetings, in order to be able to formulate concrete and constructive proposals during the sessions.
- The representative of Zimbabwe, for his part, recommended not to wait until September to move forward. He suggested that the new Director General, once elected, rely on the existing budget to ensure a smooth and effective transition, in collaboration with the outgoing team.
- The Chairwoman intervened to highlight the lack of visibility of CAFRAD among member states. According to her, **this low notoriety justifies the need to implement concrete actions and strengthen** communication, notably through social networks and digital platforms. She specified that the issue does not lie solely in the amount of contributions, but in the added value perceived by each country, depending on its specific needs. She also insisted on the urgency of **a profound change within CAFRAD**: approving the proposed budget, strengthening presence on the ground, intensifying activities, and adopting a more collaborative approach. She finally called for increased use of digital tools and the formulation of innovative suggestions.
- The representative of the Republic of Guinea proposed enabling countries to take action, **suggesting that an awareness-raising tour to state members could be an option.** He also called for the development of an inclusive work plan to be approved. In-person activities present many limitations, whereas virtual innovations, functionalities, and the provision of necessary resources offer greater flexibility. Furthermore, documents should be sent several weeks in advance before the Governing Board meeting takes place.

In conclusion, the Director General indicated that this draft budget for 2023/2024, like previous budgets, continues to serve as a guide and foundational document for the work. Its implementation depends on the success of training and capacity-building activities, which are contingent on the availability of funds primarily generated from the annual contributions of the state members and the payments of debts owed to CAFRAD. He encouraged the state members to promote the participation of their officials in these various activities.

The Governing Board encouraged CAFRAD to further open up to **partnerships, fee-based activities**, and virtual activities, as well as to continue efforts aimed at recovering outstanding contributions in order to improve its revenues.

Decision 2024/7:

The Governing Board took note of the proposed budget for the period July 2024 to June 2025.

ITEM 8: REPORT OF THE AUDITOR, JULY 2022–JUNE 2023

The Auditor, Mr RHAUNI, presented working document No. 8 titled “Auditor’s Report: July 2022 – June 2023,” summarised in two parts:

- review and analysis of the accounts for the 2022/2023 financial year;
- assessment of the structure and analysis of the budget execution for July 2022 – 2023.

The analysis of the budget execution shows that the total contributions collected this year are low compared to the last four financial years, given that four countries have frozen their membership.

The contributions of the member states, fixed at \$10,080 since the creation of CAFRAD in 1964, no longer ensure the proper functioning of the Centre. This level of contribution, now insufficient, limits the achievement of budget objectives and worsens the debt owed to staff and suppliers. It therefore appears necessary to regularly revise these fees by aligning them with inflation, in order to meet the real needs of the Centre and guarantee the effective implementation of the annual programs. Otherwise, the established budgets will remain largely theoretical and difficult to apply.

The available data reveal an extremely critical financial situation within the Centre. Staff have not received salaries for twelve months, while allowances—particularly mission and end-of-service payments—have been accumulating since 2018. Furthermore, contributions owed to retirement and insurance organisations, including the CIMR, have remained unpaid for over four years, leading to the threat of account closure. Faced with this unprecedented situation in the Centre’s history, **urgent measures** are essential **to prevent institutional collapse**.

The net payable liabilities of CAFRAD have experienced an alarming increase over the past four years, rising by 226 per cent compared to the reference financial year. This deterioration is mainly linked to the weak recovery of contributions from member states, the absence of external funding, as well as the prolonged impact of the COVID-19 health crisis, which paralysed the Centre’s scientific activities and services. This situation has led to increased over-indebtedness toward suppliers and an accumulation of twelve months of salary arrears for staff, generating a deep climate of concern about the institution’s future.

The 2022/2023 financial year was marked by a worrying drop in contributions from member states, which account for more than 90 per cent of CAFRAD's resources. With revenues of only **211,508** dollars, a historically low level, and fixed expenses amounting to 319,138 dollars, the financial deficit adds to a cumulative debt nearing 550,000 dollars. This situation resulted in twelve months of salary and social charge arrears, as well as growing tensions with creditors, notably the CIMR, which threatens to terminate its collaboration due to an unpaid amount of 58,700 dollars accumulated over several years.

The examination of the auditor's report prompted several observations and comments as follows:

- The financial situation of the institution is concerning, and what are the strategies to have an organisation with added value without debt, what are the suggestions and the action plan to rectify the situation.
- Mr. RHOUNI, the auditor, specified that CAFRAD was created by the member states and for them, so the **survival of CAFRAD** depends on the contributions of the member states. Therefore, paid activities have been organised. I proposed that the VAT be recovered thanks to its international status in order to ease the situation.
- He specified that the budget constitutes an estimate that must tend towards a balance between revenues and expenditures, while taking into account a reasonable margin of about 10 to 15 per cent, given the uncertain nature of the income. Ideally, the collections made during a financial year should be projected to finance the activities of the following year. He emphasised that it is inappropriate to evaluate the **performance of an institution** that does not have the necessary resources, also recalling that the contributions of member states should be adjusted according to the inflation rate of the host country. He concluded by reminding that the budget is above all a technical and evolving document, likely to be modified and enriched by adding new items as needed.
- The Chairwoman expressed her concern about the critical situation facing CAFRAD. She stressed that it is difficult to find all the appropriate answers immediately, but warned about the real risk of a halt in activities if no solution is quickly engaged. She concluded by affirming that under no circumstances would she want to consider, let alone announce, the dissolution of the Centre.
- The representative of the Democratic Republic of Congo declared that his presence officially marked his country's return to CAFRAD. He assured that the Republic's contribution would be settled in **the coming days**, stressing on the importance of these contributions for the proper functioning of the institution. He also thanked the auditor for the quality of his report.
- Regarding the budget, it was highlighted that it is mainly divided between personnel costs and debt repayment. This configuration

raises questions about the governance of the institution. It was suggested to diversify revenue sources through income-generating activities or, failing that, to **consider a reduction** in staff.

- The representative of Zimbabwe, for his part, thanked the auditor and insisted on the necessity of reassessing the strategic value of CAFRAD in order to strengthen the adhesion and contributions of the member states. He called for concrete recommendations regarding debt management while praising the commitment of the delegations.
- The representative of Burkina Faso emphasised the importance of establishing an effective and relevant mechanism for collecting contributions, notably by mobilising representatives of the member states based in Morocco, organising extraordinary sessions, and promoting the reception of delegations. He praised the work accomplished while insisting on the **urgency of strengthening** the collection systems.
- The representative of Senegal pointed out that the recurring difficulties faced by CAFRAD are structural. He called on the new Director General to demonstrate strong commitment. According to him, the current budget does not meet the expectations of the state members and requires adjustments to align with international realities and challenges. He also suggested the development of a new, more sustainable financing model.
- For his part, the representative of the Republic of Guinea acknowledged the delay in paying contributions, while affirming that measures have been taken to address the issue. He reaffirmed his country's commitment to African institutions and emphasised that CAFRAD's visibility is a fundamental lever for mobilising resources and supporting the transformation of public administrations.
- The representative of Chad acknowledged the difficulties his country has encountered regarding the payment of contributions, explaining their absence from previous statutory meetings. However, he assured that all necessary arrangements will be made to honour these commitments, recalling that this pan-African institution must rely primarily on the own resources of the member states.
- The representative of Côte d'Ivoire expressed his concern about CAFRAD's worrisome situation. He stressed that such a **prestigious structure** if it continues to struggle to operate, risks losing its legitimacy in favour of competing initiatives, which could discourage states from contributing. He called for the establishment of a survival mechanism and strategic reflection, **noting that the Governing Board has the responsibility to develop a genuine action plan.**
- The representative of Burkina Faso emphasised the importance of promoting a strategic and coherent vision to strengthen the overall reflection around CAFRAD that the member states aim to build.
- The representative of Zimbabwe expressed his support for this direction. He noted that his country had already paid part of its contributions and that the competent minister would ensure full regularisation as soon as possible. He stressed the importance of

focusing on the institution's future and recommended that states settle their debts.

- The Chairwoman thanked the state members who have paid or are in the process of settling their arrears. She emphasised that the issue of contributions must be addressed comprehensively and that a clear revival strategy is essential to save the institution. She concluded by stressing the central role of cooperation among member states.

Recommendations addressed to the auditor:

- Consider cancelling certain debts deemed uncollectible;
- Lease a printing machine to meet operational needs;
- Cancel the debt related to EMI (Moroccan and International Editions), as the equipment concerned is out of order and any legal proceedings are considered lengthy and costly;
- It was recalled that the mission of the auditor is to assess the accuracy and integrity of the accounts, not to propose solutions to budgetary difficulties. The budget, considered a working document, must nonetheless comply with applicable rules.
- The representative of Mali confirmed that the role of the auditor is limited to analyzing the accounting data provided.
- The representative of the Republic of Congo proposed the establishment of a **sanctions mechanism for states** that do not fulfill their financial contributions.
- The Chairwoman concluded by approving the auditor's report (document No. 8 in appendix No. 5) and emphasized the need for the new Director General to propose a strategic plan to revitalize the institution.

Decision 2024/8:

The Governing Board adopted the Auditor's Report for the period July 2022 to June 2023.

ITEM 9: Election of the New Director General of CAFRAD

- Dr. Samir BOUGGAR recalled the election process and the results, listing the preselected candidates in order of merit. Dr. Coffi Dieudonné ASSOUVI, the candidate from Benin, received a score of 19 out of 20 and was ranked first among the five preselected candidates.
- Discussions were intense regarding the conduct of the electoral process, the transparency of the voting, and the selection of the shortlisted countries.

- The representative of Cameroon expressed concern about the risk of leaving the meeting more divided than before.
- The Chairperson questioned whether the preference was for a political or a scientific approach, a politician or a competent professional, at a time when two years of debt are weighing heavily on CAFRAD. She emphasized the need for a visionary leader, capable of making wise and well-informed decisions.
- The representative of Madagascar stated that the discussions surrounding the final choice reflect the importance of the candidate who will be selected. Her main concern was the withdrawal of Cameroon's candidacy.
- The representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo advocated for an honest electoral process to avoid worsening the current crisis. He stressed that the vote was conducted objectively, based solely on each candidate's vision presentation, and that it was not a political vote, but a purely **technical** evaluation based on a written and oral presentation.
- The representative of Burkina Faso congratulated Cameroon for its decision to withdraw its candidacy and emphasized the importance of involving ambassadors in the decision-making process regarding nominations.
- Additionally, the representative of Côte d'Ivoire noted that he would speak freely, as his country had no candidate in the race. He expressed Côte d'Ivoire's commitment to supporting the relaunch of CAFRAD.
- The representative of Namibia noted that five candidates had been shortlisted and that the process took place in several stages, including two rounds of voting. He stated that the procedure was fair.
- The representative of Senegal recalled that the process had lasted an entire year and argued that there was no justification for cancelling or challenging it at this stage.
- The representative of the Republic of Guinea affirmed that it was not possible to question decisions made by the Governing Board. He emphasized the need to take responsibility, move forward, and proceed with the election.

- The Chair announced that two candidates, Benin and The Gambia, would present their vision and strategy so that the vote would be based on their action plans rather than political affiliations.
- The Beninese candidate, Dr. Coffi Dieudonné ASSOUVI, holder of two doctorates in public law and political science and a graduate of the ENA in France, presented his candidacy as a commitment to driving a new dynamic within a transformative administration, based on an ambitious vision to make CAFRAD a true center of excellence. His approach is structured around four key pillars: strengthening CAFRAD's role in revitalizing the public service, promoting skills development, intensifying training, and leading a deep structural reform. He also aims to enhance the Center's visibility in order to encourage Member States to increase their contributions, diversify partnerships to address the funding gap, and establish an innovative strategic plan. Moreover, he emphasizes promoting training and scientific research aligned with real development needs, while fully integrating digitalization. The candidate stressed that Benin is undergoing a transformation, bringing fresh momentum for a resilient and dynamic administration that serves all African countries. At every technical stage, the Beninese candidate, Dr. ASSOUVI, was ranked first with an average score of 19 out of 20.
- The Gambian candidate, for his part, expressed his joy at being among the participants, citing a rich background of experiences. An economist by training, he shared his vision for CAFRAD, focused on renewed and effective resource mobilization to encourage Member States to honor their contributions. He proposed that CAFRAD actively engage in entrepreneurship by introducing a research program financed through dedicated funds. His vision also included the promotion of public policy advisory and consulting services, as well as strengthening cooperation within the public service.
- At the end of the vote, the Beninese candidate received 14 votes, while the Gambian candidate obtained 7, and 4 ballots were blank.
- The Chairwoman proclaimed the Beninese candidate's victory and officially announced the appointment of the new Director General, Dr. Coffi Dieudonné ASSOUVI, to a round of thunderous applause.

Decision 2024/9:

The Governing Board adopted the election of the new Director General of CAFRAD.

ITEM 10: Relocation to CAFRAD’s New Headquarters in Rabat

The Chairwoman clarified that the post of the new Director General will be based in Rabat, the capital city that hosts embassies, ministries, and major diplomatic representations. She emphasized the high expectations placed on the new leadership and invited the incoming Director General to present an action plan by September or early October 2024. She also recommended that he reach out to his predecessor to ensure a smooth transition.

The new Director General expressed his commitment and stated that he would need access to all institutional documents to become familiar with the organization.

Delegations warmly congratulated the new Director General, affirming that he now represents the entire African continent. The Minister of Benin called on the Member States to support and accompany the new Director General in fulfilling his mission. She also acknowledged the efforts of the outgoing Director General, extending her gratitude and best wishes for the future.

ITEM 11: MISCELLANEOUS

As no other item was listed on the agenda, the Chairwoman of the Governing Board gave the floor to the outgoing Director General, who in turn congratulated his successor and extended his best wishes for success in his new duties.

Closing Session

The members of the Governing Board, gathered as part of their 59th Session, unanimously expressed their deep gratitude to His Majesty King Mohammed VI, may God glorify Him, for the warm hospitality extended to them. They also conveyed their sincere appreciation for the continued support of His Majesty’s Government to CAFRAD.

Following the customary words of thanks, the Chairwoman of the Governing Board declared the 59th Session of the CAFRAD Governing Board officially closed at 8:05 PM.

Done in Rabat, 4 July 2024.

.....
The Chairwoman of the Governing Board

Signature

Ghita MEZZOUR,

Minister Delegate in Charge of Digital
Transition and Administrative Reform



The Incoming Director General

Countersignature

Dr. Coffi Dieudonné ASSOVI

