



Arab Watch Coalition's 2025 Annual Report

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----------|
| I. Introduction..... | 1 |
| II. Campaigns, Advocacy & IFI Policy Developments..... | 2 |
| III. Participation in WBG & IMF Spring and Annual Meetings 2025..... | 10 |
| IV. Research, Publications & Knowledge Outputs..... | 12 |
| V Member Engagement & Working Groups..... | 16 |
| VI Institutional Development..... | 18 |

I. Introduction

In 2025, AWC engaged extensively within the World Bank Group (WBG) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Throughout the year, the coalition led and contributed to a range of campaigns and advocacy engagements aimed at influencing institutional policies, frameworks, and development outcomes across the two Bretton Woods institutions.

Beyond these institutional engagements, AWC worked extensively with its member organizations across Lebanon, Tunisia, Egypt, and Jordan on project-level monitoring initiatives. Through this work, members gained hands-on experience and practical knowledge of World Bank policies and operational frameworks in practice. This field-based engagement not only strengthened their technical understanding, but also contributed to tangible, positive impacts at the community level. In the process, member organizations were able to identify gaps and challenges in policy implementation.

AWC also remained committed to monitoring and sharing key institutional and policy updates, ensuring that members, partners, and communities are informed and equipped to engage with evolving policy updates and IFIs reforms. This monitoring and knowledge sharing work is captured and reflected across the present Annual Report.

The report is organized to reflect AWC's work across multiple levels — from advocacy and engagement to influence policies within the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund, to participation in international meetings, research and knowledge production, member engagement and capacity building through working groups, and institutional development.

II. Campaigns, Advocacy & IFI Policy Developments

This section outlines AWC’s advocacy campaigns, project-based monitoring and country engagements, alongside its engagement in key institutional reforms and policy processes within the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund.

Country & Project-Based Advocacy

Through the “*Towards Sustainable Agriculture Policies and Practices in the MENA Region*” project (July 2024 – January 2026), AWC worked in close collaboration with member organizations to advance project-level advocacy and monitoring. The initiative focused on World Bank–financed agriculture programs in Lebanon, Tunisia, Egypt, and Jordan, addressing gaps in transparency, stakeholder engagement, and accountability.

- *Lebanon — The Green Agri-food Transformation for Economic Recovery (GATE)*

AWC and its Lebanese partners — TERRE Liban, Lebanon Eco Mouvement, and the Lebanese Union for Physically Disabled Persons — jointly monitored the GATE project. This engagement included direct advocacy with the World Bank and the Lebanese Parliament and facilitated the registration of over 3,000 farmers to access project benefits.

Complementing this monitoring work, the Lebanese member organizations collectively prepared seven analytical and position papers addressing institutions involved in the project’s implementation. Developed through a consultative process and grounded in a review of project documentation, the papers were shared with national and institutional stakeholders, including the Lebanese Parliament, the World Bank Country Office, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Council for Development and Reconstruction, the Ministry of Environment, the Green Plan, and the Directorate of Cooperatives.

- *Jordan — Agriculture Resilience, Value Chain Development, and Innovation Program (ARDI)*

AWC and its Jordanian partners — Phenix Center for Economic Studies, Al Hayat Rased, and Dibeen Association — jointly monitored the ARDI program. Through this work, they conducted an independent evaluation that identified gaps between central-level policy alignment and local implementation capacity, particularly in relation to environmental and social safeguards.

In parallel, the partners carried out stakeholder awareness and policy dialogue activities. They organized three community awareness sessions in targeted regions, engaging farmers, environmental organizations, and local communities. Dibeen Association also led a [social media awareness campaign](#). Advocacy efforts further included a policy discussion session with the

Environment and Climate Change Committee in the Jordanian Parliament, attended by six parliamentarians.

- *Tunisia — Support to Economic Recovery and Job Creation in the Agri-Food Sector and Rural Areas (TRACE)*

AWC and its Tunisian partners — Onshor and L'Association Tunisienne de Droit du Développement (ATDD) — monitored the TRACE program and conducted an independent evaluation of its implementation. The evaluation identified a number of implementation gaps beyond quantitative performance indicators. While job-creation targets were often met, grievance redress mechanisms remained underutilized. It further found that, although environmental and social safeguard instruments were formally in place, beneficiary awareness of related environmental obligations and occupational health and safety standards was uneven.

The evaluation incorporated beneficiary perspectives and generated evidence-based observations and recommendations to inform future programming. In parallel, partners engaged stakeholders to strengthen understanding of accountability processes and environmental compliance requirements, while building civil society capacity to conduct structured evaluations of IFI-supported rural development programs.

Egypt

AWC and its Egyptian partners — the Egyptian Association for Collective Rights, Shamseya, and the Social Justice Platform — were set to monitor a World Bank–supported agriculture project. However, following the postponement of the primary target project, they redirected their work toward capacity development and public awareness.

Partners organized consultative workshops with civil society actors and professional syndicates, alongside outreach sessions with grassroots farmers' organizations across Cairo, Giza, Fayoum, and Beni-Sweif, and developed training materials to support community engagement. They also produced four public awareness [videos explaining the World Bank's](#) financing model, accountability systems, and grievance mechanisms, in addition to two analytical papers [examining the Bank's role in Egypt](#), with a focus on agriculture, rural livelihoods, and socio-economic policy impacts.

IFC Sustainability Framework Update & Related Advocacy

The International Finance Corporation (IFC) is undergoing a significant institutional reform process through the update of its Sustainability Framework. The current version of the Framework was adopted in 2006 and later updated in 2012. Since then, it has been adopted by over 150 other institutions, underscoring both its global relevance and the added responsibility associated with its revision.

At its core, the Framework comprises three key policy instruments: [the Environmental and Social \(E&S\) Policy](#), which sets out IFC's roles and commitments; [the Performance Standards](#), which define requirements for IFC clients at the project level; and [the Access to Information Policy \(AIP\)](#), which governs how and when information is disclosed.

The update process is taking place in two major phases. The first phase — [the Dialogue Phase](#) — spans approximately 9 to 12 months (April 2025 to March 2026), this phase focuses on co-developing the consultation approach with stakeholders across thematic and environmental and social (E&S) priority areas. Feedback gathered during this stage will inform the first draft of the updated Sustainability Framework. At the conclusion of Phase I, IFC will disclose a summary of outcomes from the Dialogue Phase alongside a refined stakeholder consultation plan.

The second phase — [the Public Consultation Phase](#) — will run between 12 and 24 months (April 2026 to March 2028). During this stage, the first draft of the updated Sustainability Framework will be released for global public consultation. The process will include two consultation rounds, with timelines defined in the Stakeholder Consultation Plan developed during Phase I. At the end of this phase, the updated Sustainability Framework will be published together with a summary of comments received during the consultation process.

For further details on the proposed roadmap, methodology, and overall approach to the update, please refer to the [Approach Paper](#) and [Stakeholder Consultation Framework](#).

AWC participated in information sessions hosted by IFC during both the Spring and Annual Meetings. The 2025 Spring Meetings CSO Information Session provided an overview of the planned update process. The presentation is available through [this link](#).

The 2025 Annual Meetings CSO Information Session provided updates on the IFC/MIGA Sustainability Framework review, summarizing civil society engagements held between April and October 2025, presenting high-level feedback from Phase I dialogues, and outlining next steps. The presentation is available through [this link](#).

AWC is also part of a global civil society network engaging in the Sustainability Framework update through thematic working groups covering areas such as Agriculture, Land, Labour, Climate and Pollution, Biodiversity, and Financial Intermediaries. Within this structure, AWC's engagement has focused specifically on **IFC's Access to Information Policy (AIP)**, in collaboration with several partner organizations.

As part of this work, AWC and partner organizations sent a detailed policy submission to IFC outlining priority areas where the AIP — both in policy design and implementation — requires strengthening to better align with international right-to-information standards and comparative practices across other international financial institutions. The submission also provides concrete recommendations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of information disclosure. The paper is available through [this link](#).

In parallel, AWC has been advocating for the establishment of a sanctions system applicable to IFC clients that repeatedly violate Performance Standards. This advocacy is reflected in the article titled "[*Why do MDBs punish financial fraud but look the other way on environmental and social harm?*](#)"

The piece highlights a key accountability gap within IFC: while clients involved in financial misconduct are subject to strict sanctions including debarment, those responsible for serious environmental and social violations often continue to receive financing without consequence. It calls for the development of a sanctions mechanism to hold clients accountable, particularly in cases of repeated breaches that place communities and ecosystems at risk.

AWC's sustained advocacy on this issue led to a meeting with the Senior Vice President and General Counsel of the World Bank Group. Discussions indicated internal openness to strengthening accountability measures, though not necessarily through a formal debarment list, with IFC exploring alternative legal avenues to address repeat violations.

IAMs Merger

The World Bank Group is undergoing another significant potential reform process centered on the possible integration of its Independent Accountability Mechanisms (IAMs). These mechanisms include the Inspection Panel and the Dispute Resolution Service, which handle complaints related to World Bank–financed projects, as well as the Compliance Advisor/Ombudsman (CAO), which addresses complaints concerning the International Finance Corporation (IFC) investments and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) guarantees.

The Boards of the World Bank, IFC, and MIGA have established a Task Force mandated to develop options and recommendations regarding the potential integration of the WBG’s IAMs. This process carries notable risks and complexities, particularly given the distinct mandates of the mechanisms and the critical role they play as recourse avenues for communities harmed by development projects. Integration would involve aligning accountability systems that span both public- and private-sector arms of the World Bank Group.

To guide the process, the Boards have set out a series of principles for the Task Force. These include improving the effectiveness of IAMs in serving project-affected communities, borrowers and clients, and the World Bank Group; ensuring no regression in policies or mandates while preserving the comparative strengths of each mechanism; safeguarding the independence of IAMs; enhancing their field-level leadership and accessibility; and ensuring adequate resourcing alongside cost-effectiveness.

Key questions remain under discussion, including the extent to which integration should proceed and what form it should ultimately take. Multiple structural and operational options are currently under consideration. AWC and its partner civil society organizations are closely following the integration process and engaging throughout its consultation stages.

The indicative timeline for this process is outlined below.

- September–November 2025: Stakeholder input gathering
- November–December 2025: Development of integration options
- January–February 2026: Draft report for Board consideration
- March–April 2026: Public consultations
- May 2026: Final report issued

For further details, please refer to the [Task Force Approach Paper summary](#)

Remedy Framework Adoption

In a related accountability development, IFC and MIGA adopted their first-ever [Remedy Framework](#). This marks the first formal policy within the World Bank Group that sets out how these institutions will contribute to remedy for communities harmed by projects they finance. The adoption of the Remedy Action Framework (RAF) follows years of sustained advocacy by civil society organizations and affected communities.

Approved on April 3, 2025, the RAF establishes a structured approach to addressing environmental and social harm through prevention, preparedness, access to remedy, and remedial support. While clients retain primary responsibility, IFC and MIGA acknowledge a role within a broader remedial ecosystem.

Their contribution may include financial leverage, technical assistance, fact-finding, and support for remedial actions — especially in fragile contexts — on a discretionary, case-by-case basis.

For further information on the RAF and its adoption, please refer to the following resources:

- [AWC article on the Remedy Framework adoption](#)
- [Civil society joint statement on the adoption of the Remedy Framework](#)
- [AWC explainer on the Remedy Framework](#)

World Bank Group's New Country Engagement Approach

The World Bank Group is renewing the way it engages with countries through its Country Partnership Framework (CPF). The CPF serves as the core strategy guiding the WBG's engagement with a member country, outlining key objectives and development outcomes that shape its support. It provides the operational framework through which the WBG assists countries in advancing development priorities over the implementation period.

The renewal was motivated by institutional reflections that the existing CPF model had become overly broad, often attempting to address too many priorities simultaneously, which diluted impact and effectiveness. The proposed approach therefore seeks to sharpen strategic focus, strengthen implementation, and enhance the use of global knowledge and institutional expertise.

As part of this reform process, the World Bank conducted stakeholder consultations between January and March 2025. AWC participated in the in-person MENA consultation held in Rabat on March 11, 2025. A summary of the consultation can be accessed via [this link](#) and a recording of the consultation session is [available here](#).

The World Bank Group is rolling out the new Country Engagement Approach in phases throughout 2025 and 2026.

For further details, please refer to AWC's article: [*AWC's Comments and Recommendations on the World Bank Group's Proposed New Country Engagement Approach*](#).

Citizen and Civic Engagement

Another significant policy development in 2025 was the World Bank Group’s renewal of its approach to **Citizen and Civic Engagement (CCE)**, intended to strengthen citizen and CSO participation in development processes. The review “[Citizens at the Center](#)” found that while existing Citizen Engagement and Social Accountability (CESA) efforts meet basic requirements, they often fall short of enabling meaningful participation and genuine influence over decision-making. It identified priority areas for improvement, including project-level engagement, enabling conditions, country systems, and institutional support. A new “Quality of Civic/Citizen Engagement” indicator is also being introduced in the WBG Corporate Scorecard to track engagement across projects and portfolios.

AWC and its MENA partners contributed recommendations, stressing that meaningful engagement requires assessing the broader civic space. Without addressing restrictive laws and shrinking civic freedoms, engagement efforts risk remaining superficial.

For more details, and to read AWC and its partners’ recommendations, see: [*Understanding the World Bank’s Updated CCE Framework and New Monitoring Indicator*](#).

III. Participation in WBG & IMF Spring and Annual Meetings 2025

World Bank & IMF Spring Meetings 2025

AWC released a special edition documenting its participation in the 2025 World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) Spring Meetings, held from April 21–26 in Washington, DC. The meetings marked an important moment for institutional reform discussions, policy updates, and dialogue on recovery and reconstruction in fragile contexts, including Lebanon and Syria.

Throughout the meetings, AWC engaged in consultations, roundtables, and dialogues addressing key institutional processes — including sustainability framework updates and the potential integration of the World Bank Group’s Independent Accountability Mechanisms (IAMs). AWC also co-sponsored multiple sessions during the meetings. A summary of AWC’s engagements, including all co-sponsored sessions, is available in the special edition here:

<https://arabwatchcoalition.org/?na=view&id=78>

World Bank & IMF Annual Meetings 2025

During The 2025 Annual Meetings of the World Bank Group and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) held from October 13 to Saturday, October 18 in Washington, DC. AWC, alongside Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (TIMEP), met with IMF Executive Directors from the UK, Germany, Canada, and France to discuss the stalled reform process in Lebanon. AWC highlighted the shrinking window for meaningful structural reform and warned against ongoing attempts by the banking sector and the Central Bank to shift crisis losses onto the state. The coalition urged the IMF to hold firm on its red lines, particularly on banking sector loss recognition, rejection of fictitious liabilities, and protection of public assets such as gold reserves. AWC also raised concerns over front-loaded austerity and regressive taxation, stressing the need for fiscally and socially sustainable alternatives. AWC also encouraged broader IMF engagement with reform-oriented political actors and clearer public communication of program requirements to counter obstruction and advance accountability.

During the Civil Society Policy Forum held during AWC — together with its regional and global CSO partners — organized two sessions:

- **Transparency as a Twin Engine: Driving Community Ownership, Development Effectiveness, and Investment Efficiency at the IFC**

The session explored how limited transparency and access to information within IFC operations affect community participation and project effectiveness, and presented policy recommendations to strengthen the Access to Information framework.

➤ Watch here: https://youtu.be/7zPtqRYa7xs?si=2yjEms475_LlboNz

- **Who Owns Reconstruction? Rethinking IFI-Led Reconstruction Finance in Conflict-Affected States**

This discussion examined how World Bank and IMF financing tools shape reconstruction and early recovery in fragile contexts, raising questions of ownership, governance, and inclusive recovery pathways.

➤ Watch here:

<https://www.imf.org/en/videos/view/6382759053112?sort=mostrecent&page=1>

IV. Research, Publications & Knowledge Outputs

Studies & Blogs (In Partnership with Members)

Throughout 2025, AWC and its member CSOs jointly developed a range of research and policy outputs, including papers and blogs.

1. **“Tunisia’s IMF Journey: Unveiling the Successes, Failures, and Ongoing Challenges:** This paper examines IMF policies and programs in Tunisia, assessing their impact across areas such as tax policy, structural and public sector reforms, and debt. It analyzes the economic and social implications of these interventions and explores alternative policy approaches to address ongoing challenges and support equitable economic stability. [Read the full paper here.](#)
2. **A Mess of Pottage: Cash and Kind:** This paper examines Egypt’s transition from its long-standing subsidized goods system (Tamween) to cash-based assistance. It compares cash and in-kind subsidy models, assessing their effectiveness in protecting vulnerable populations, particularly in the context of inflation, poverty, and economic shocks. [Read the full paper here](#)
3. **Private Sector Acquisition of the Public Healthcare Sector: Context, Implications & Alternatives to Private-Sector-Led Growth as per the IMF Key Goals in Egypt – A Primer:** This paper examines Egypt’s healthcare privatization reforms, focusing on the transfer of management and operation of public health facilities to private actors. It analyzes implications for accessibility, affordability, and labor rights, situating these reforms within broader IMF-supported privatization and public sector restructuring agendas. [Read the full paper here.](#)
4. **Proactive Preparation: The Key to Civil Society Organizations’ Success in Engaging with the International Monetary Fund:** This blog outlines practical tools and strategies for civil society organizations to strengthen their engagement with the IMF, highlighting the importance of evidence-based research, coordinated advocacy, and alliance-building in shaping policy influence. [Read the blog here](#)

5. **Strengthening the Role of Civil Society: Effective Strategies for Navigating IMF Negotiations:** This piece explores how civil society organizations can more effectively engage in IMF negotiation processes, offering concrete approaches to policy input, direct institutional engagement, coalition-building, and strategic advocacy. [Read the full piece here.](#)

6. **Arab Watch Coalition Members' Participation in the 2025 OECD Watch Global Meeting :** This blog documents AWC member organizations participation in the 2025 OECD Watch Global Meeting in Istanbul, where Board representatives Ms. Sihem Bouazza and Mr. Ahmed Chehbouni engaged in discussions on corporate accountability and civil society advocacy, highlighting AWC's work on IFC performance standards and private sector transparency. [Read the full blog here.](#)

Reconstruction & Recovery Policy Work in Lebanon

In 2025, AWC produced policy outputs examining reconstruction and recovery processes in Lebanon..

1. Reconstruction Priorities in Post-War Lebanon and the Imperative for Accountable, Equitable Recovery — A Primer

This article examines the legal, institutional, and financial frameworks shaping Lebanon's post-war reconstruction. It highlights the importance of transparency, public accountability, and meaningful participation of affected communities in recovery processes. [Read the full article here](#)

2. The Lebanese Government Is Formed — Nine Urgent Priorities for Economic Recovery

This piece outlines nine priority reforms following the formation of Lebanon's government and the anticipated resumption of IMF negotiations, focusing on accountability, social protection, and equitable economic recovery. [Read the full article here](#)

Toolkits produced in 2025

AWC continues to support its member CSOs and inform communities by providing tools and resources to deepen their understanding of international financial institutions' (IFIs) mandates and policies and enhance their ability to engage effectively. AWC produced the following toolkits in 2025.

1. Understanding and Engaging with the IMF: A Toolkit for Arab Civil Society Organizations

This toolkit provides an overview of the IMF's structure, processes, and decision-making spaces, offering practical strategies for civil society engagement. It outlines key advocacy entry points, who to engage with, and how CSOs can effectively influence IMF policies and programs. [Read the toolkit here.](#)

2. Understanding and Leveraging the World Bank's Environmental & Social Framework: A Toolkit for MENA CSOs

This guide supports civil society organizations in understanding and engaging with the World Bank's Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) and its ten Environmental and Social Standards (ESSs). It provides practical guidance on project monitoring, compliance assessment, and advocacy strategies to strengthen accountability and safeguard community and environmental rights. [Read the toolkit here.](#)

V Member Engagement & Working Groups

Working groups

[2024](#) focused on laying the groundwork for member engagement through the development of a questionnaire to capture the interests and expertise of member organizations, followed by a series of country-level consultations. During this period, AWC also designed a working group pilot framework outlining how the groups would operate and defining their thematic areas of focus. Building on this foundation, 2025 marked the activation of Member Organizations' roles and the strengthening of Working Group engagement.

Social protection and inclusion working group

The Social Protection and Inclusion Working Group brought together member organizations from across the region, including Wedyan for Society Development (Yemen), the Tunisian Association for Local Governance, Shamseya (Egypt), the Phenix Center for Economic and Informatics Studies (Jordan), the Lebanese Union for People with Physical Disabilities, the Women and Child Organization (Iraq), and the Tunisian Association for Development Law.

Through this working group, members strengthened their capacities on how to search for and monitor projects related to social protection, inclusion, and job creation within World Bank–financed programs. The group built practical skills in reviewing project documentation, identifying relevant policy commitments, and tracking how these translate into implementation, including through a practical application using a Tunisia-based project focused on supporting small investors and farmers in agro-industry and employment creation for marginalized groups. The group's goal is to produce shared monitoring tools and knowledge resources to strengthen civil society oversight.

The Environment and Climate Change Working Group

The Environment and Climate Change Working Group includes member organizations from across the region, including Terre Liban, Lebanon Eco Movement, Dibeem Association for Environmental Development (Jordan), the Yemen Organization for Promoting Integrity, Association Talasemtane pour l'Environnement et le Développement (Morocco), Centre de Développement de la Région Tensift Marrakech (Morocco), the Tunisian Association for Development Law, the Tunisian Association for Fiscal Governance, and the Egyptian Association for Collective Rights.

Through this working group, members coordinated joint advocacy and knowledge production on climate and environmental policy processes. The group drafted and published a joint statement

on climate finance ahead of COP30, issued in both [Arabic](#) and [English](#). Participation in global climate spaces was also strengthened, with Hala Mourad from Dibeen Association for Environmental Development attending COP30 and sharing insights and lessons learned with other working group members.

In addition, members are currently developing a joint article analyzing the World Bank's carbon pricing report. The working group is also in the process of finalizing its SMART objectives and priority focus areas to guide its future work.

Economic Justice Working group

The Economic Justice Working Group includes member organizations from across the region, including The Economic Justice Working Group includes member organizations from across the region, including the Yemeni Observatory for Human Rights, Phenix Center, the Tunisian Association for the Right to Development (ATDD), and the Tunisian Association for Governance and Local Democracy (ATGL). The group is hoping to expand to new members.

The Economic Justice Working Group brought together member organizations to build a shared foundation for collective engagement on tax justice. Through this working group, members focused on understanding power relations, institutional actors, and decision-making spaces shaping tax policy. A central activity was tax power mapping, which identified key government institutions, political actors, private-sector stakeholders, and entry points for civil society influence at national and regional levels.

In parallel, the group worked on translating complex tax policy issues into clear, evidence-based messages that link tax justice to social justice, public services, and fiscal accountability, making them more accessible to policymakers and the wider public. This preparatory phase also included analytical briefings and presentations that helped align members around shared priorities and advocacy framing. The group's goal is to move from analysis to organized advocacy through a regional tax campaign.

VI Institutional Development

In early 2025, the AWC's General Assembly approved some amendments to the Coalition's bylaws to ensure continuity and knowledge transfer.

Under the newly adopted amendments, board members are elected for three-year terms, with a maximum limit of two consecutive terms. To ensure organizational stability, the coalition has implemented a staggered renewal process where one-third of the seven-member board is elected annually (following a 3-2-2 rotation). The transition began in 2025 with the election of three seats, to be followed by two seats in 2026 and the final two in 2027. By 2028, the rotation will be fully cycle-complete. Additionally, if a member withdraws before their term ends, a replacement is elected only for the remainder of that term, and this partial service does not count toward the new member's two-term limit.

In 2025, three Board members were elected: Paul Abi Rashed/Terre Liban to represent the member organizations in Lebanon, Ammar Saleh/ Wedian for Community Development to represent the member organizations in Yemen, and Abdelmawla Ismail/ Egyptian Association for Collective Rights to represent the member organizations in Egypt. As part of its institutional development work, AWC also began developing a new organizational strategy and conducted a membership survey to gather input and help shape future priorities.