



AWC Annual Report 2024

This annual report highlights Arab Watch Coalition's key activities and achievements in 2024, aligned with our [transitional strategy](#). It showcases progress across three strategic pillars that aim to enhance the coalition's effectiveness and long-term sustainability:

1. Activating the Role of Member Organizations

Empowering our members by launching working groups and enhancing their capacities.

2. Institutional Development

Strengthening AWC's organizational foundation by developing new policies and updating existing ones to ensure institutional growth and resilience.

3. Campaigns

Advancing advocacy and engagement efforts with a focus on the World Bank Group (WBG) and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

World Bank and IMF Spring and Annual Meetings 2024

Recognizing the importance of the World Bank Group (WBG) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) Spring and Annual Meetings as critical platforms for civil society organizations (CSOs) to directly engage with these institutions, AWC actively participated in both events in 2024. These meetings provided an essential opportunity to raise key issues relevant to our region, particularly given the restrictive civic space in our region, which limits their ability to effectively engage with International Financial Institutions (IFIs).

AWC attended the 2024 Spring Meetings, held from April 15 to 20 in Washington, D.C. During these meetings, AWC co-sponsored sessions within the Civil Society Policy Forum (CSPF) and on its sidelines. For more details on these sessions, refer to our [2024 newsletter](#), which highlights key activities from the first six months of the year.

Similarly, AWC took part in the 2024 Annual Meetings, held from October 21 to 26 in Washington, D.C. During this event, AWC engaged with diverse stakeholders, including WBG and IMF staff, Independent Accountability Mechanisms (IAMs), and other civil society organizations. Instead of focusing solely on the sessions we co-sponsored, **AWC produced and distributed a comprehensive report** capturing discussions from these meetings, including insights from closed-door sessions to ensure our members are informed.



The report delves into key discussions on topics such as citizen engagement, collaboration between IAMs and CSOs for effective dispute resolution, updates on Environmental and Social Framework implementation, and upcoming review processes for IFI frameworks. You can access the full report [here](#). Following its release, a newsletter was published, highlighting key activities and milestones from the last six months of 2024. You can read the newsletter [here](#).

Detailed Overview of AWC's Direct Engagement with the World Bank, IMF, and Key Stakeholders

Engagement with the World Bank

- During the 2024 Spring Meetings, AWC met with the two Executive Directors representing MENA countries on the World Bank Board to introduce the AWC's mission and work and to establish a relationship that we can build on for our future work.
- At the 2024 Annual Meetings, AWC participated in a Civil Society Roundtable with the World Bank Group Board of Directors, where it engaged with the U.S. Alternate Executive Director. During the discussion, AWC highlighted the challenges faced by CSOs in the region, including severe crackdowns in several countries.
- In September 2024, AWC met with the World Bank team in Rabat, Morocco, to discuss engagement with Moroccan CSOs and explore the potential for organizing a workshop on the World Bank's portfolio in Morocco, including an explanation of its various lending instruments.

Collaboration with Other Key Stakeholders

- AWC held productive meetings with various key stakeholders, including the Compliance Advisor Ombudsman (CAO), the Inspection Panel, and Independent Accountability Mechanisms (IAMs) from different International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and senior social development specialists at the World Bank, alongside regional & international partner CSOs.

Engagement with the IMF

- At the 2024 Spring Meetings, AWC engaged with IMF mission teams for Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, and Lebanon to discuss country-specific economic challenges, the impacts of restricted civic space, and opportunities for enhanced CSO engagement with the IMF.



- Recognizing the risks for CSOs in restrictive environments, AWC facilitated safe, off-the-record meetings between Egyptian CSOs and the IMF's Senior Resident Representative and Chief Mission Representative in July 2024.

Engagement with the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO)

- AWC began engaging with the IMF's Independent Evaluation Office (IEO), following the release of its report identifying [gaps in the IMF's approach to CSO engagement](#). On October 23, 2024, AWC participated in a meeting hosted by the IEO with CSOs to discuss upcoming evaluations and exchange insights. Building on this dialogue, AWC plans to co-host a webinar with the IEO in 2025.

Campaigns and Advocacy

Global Campaigns on World Bank Accountability

AWC has actively participated in global campaigns aimed at improving civil society and citizens engagement with the World Bank, strengthening accountability mechanisms, and promoting human rights in World Bank-funded projects.

Responsible Exit Policy: In October 2024, the IFC released its long-awaited [Responsible Exit approach](#), outlining principles for withdrawing from ongoing investments. AWC contributed to this achievement through [sustained advocacy](#) in collaboration with international partners.

Upcoming Sustainability Framework Review: The IFC is set to review its Sustainability Framework, including its Performance Standards and Access to Information Policy. AWC has taken a leading role in drafting a [proposal](#) to influence this process.

Accountability Mechanism Review: During the World Bank's review of its policies and the structure of its Accountability Mechanism, AWC provided input on a policy review paper commissioned by the World Bank Board and prepared by external experts. To involve as many regional members and partners as possible in this technical policy dialogue, we shared simplified and accessible information about the review process, which can be found [here](#).

Monitoring Sustainable Agriculture Projects

- In collaboration with member organizations, AWC has kickstarted efforts to monitor World Bank-funded agricultural projects in the region:



Egypt and Jordan: AWC coordinated efforts with three member organizations in Egypt and four in Jordan to monitor and report on World Bank-funded sustainable agriculture projects in both Egypt and Jordan. To view the project brief for Egypt please visit [this page](#). To view the project brief for [Jordan](#), please visit this page.

Expansion Plans: Similar monitoring initiatives will be launched in Lebanon and Tunisia

Campaigns Related to the IMF

AWC remains committed to analyzing and addressing the challenges of engagement between the IMF and civil society in the Arab region, which is often marked by inconsistent interactions, and restrictions on civic space. These civic space conditions frequently determine whether meaningful engagement with the IMF can occur. We are actively advocating for the IMF to adopt a mandatory engagement policy with CSOs, moving beyond the current reliance on [guidelines](#).

AWC kickstarted this effort on February 12, 2024, along with Oxfam we co-organized a [webinar](#) to assess IMF-CSO engagement in Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Lebanon, and Jordan. Over 30 CSOs participated, sharing experiences and strategies for improved collaboration.

- Building on the webinar, AWC published two key policy articles:

- ["Re-Constructing IMF-Civil Society Engagement in the Arab Region"](#) (April 20, 2024), which consolidated insights from the webinar into a critical advocacy toolkit, providing a critical analysis of IMF-CSO engagement, via the civil society lens.

- ["The Mirage of Engagement: Unraveling the IMF Lip Service to Arab Civil Society"](#) (July 2, 2024), which critiqued the IMF's inconsistent engagement efforts and called for more rigorous, Board-approved guidelines / mandates.

- A targeted analysis, ["From Loans to Letdowns: Why the IMF's Egypt Strategy is Coming Up Short"](#) (August 28, 2024), which explored the IMF's economic reforms in Egypt, highlighting challenges such as rising debt, regressive taxation, and inadequate social protections.

At the 2024 Annual Meetings, IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva [promised](#) a **mid-2025 review of CSO engagement**. AWC will continue advocating to ensure civil society and community voices are genuinely heard and included in this process.

Building our Members' Capacities and Informing Communities

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.



- Published toolkits in 2024:

1. [Understanding World Bank Financial Instruments](#) (May 29, 2024): A guide to the financial instruments used by the World Bank and the policies applicable to each.
2. [Navigating the World Bank's Website for Project Information](#) (October 8, 2024): A toolkit explaining how to locate project documents and understand the information they contain.
3. [Understanding the IMF's Core Functions and Loan Types](#) (November 12, 2024): A resource detailing the IMF's mandate, loan types, and the concept of conditionality, aimed at helping CSOs understand the IMF's influence on national policies.
4. **High-Risk Project list:** We disseminated a [list](#) of high-risk IFI-funded projects in our member's countries, detailing potential social and environmental risks to help members monitor them if desired.

- Working Groups

To kickstart the working groups, we developed a [questionnaire](#) to capture the interests and expertise of our member organizations, followed by a series of country-level consultations. We also developed a [working group pilot](#) which covers how these working groups will operate as well as the thematic focuses of each working group.

Member Organizations Meetings

In addition to engagements in Jordan and Egypt, we met with three Moroccan member organizations to discuss areas of collaboration, including women's empowerment, financial inclusion, and environmental sustainability.

AWC also facilitated a meeting between the Arab Forum for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (AFRPD)'s Moroccan member organization and the World Bank office in Rabat to discuss the inclusion of people with disabilities in the social protection programs funded by the Bank.

Board Meeting in Jordan

On December 6-7, 2024, AWC convened its board members in Jordan to:

- Review progress towards 2024 strategic objectives.
- Outline planned activities for 2025.
- Discuss the communication strategy and the development of new strategic plans.
- Evaluate the coalition's budget and financial standing.
- Assess the progress of member working groups.
- Discuss the new members as well as board elections
- Present options for the new logo



Institutional Development

- AWC Updated and developed operational policies, including bylaws, employee handbooks, safeguards policies, a travel policy, and a salary scale for the organization.
- AWC Hired a new staff member, Lamah, as the Environment Program Coordinator.
- AWC participated in the Spring Financial Innovation and Resilience (FIRE) Program for a few months in 2024. This program aims to strengthen financial sustainability through training on strategic finance, resource mobilization, and purposeful communication.