AFUB Strategic Plan 2022-2026

Approved on: 28/10/2021

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ACRONYMS

ACHPR	African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
ADP	African Disability Protocol
AFUB	African Union of the Blind
AU	African Union
BPS	Blind and Partially Sighted
CBR	Community Based Rehabilitation
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
EAC	East African Commission
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
GDS	Global Disability Summit
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WSSQ	Washington Short Set of Questions

On behalf of the Board and staff of the African Union of the Blind (AFUB), I am pleased to present the revised AFUB Strategic Plan 2022-2026. My Board was elected in October 2019 during the AFUB 9th General Assembly held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Upon assumption of office, the Board embarked on the successful completion of the implementation of the AFUB Strategic Plan 2017-2020 on also spearheaded the development of this new strategy. During the implementation period, AFUB realized that the strategic goal was not fully achieved. To achieve this, an action plan for 2020-2021 was developed.

Before its development, an appraisal was undertaken to measure the performance of the previous Strategy. Areas that did not perform well were considered for this new Strategy and areas that performed well were either left out or their scope enhanced. The Strategy outlines the strategic direction that AFUB will take over the next five years building on three strategic pillars: advocacy, membership strengthening and organizational development. Each strategic objective is anchored by strategies and corresponding outputs. The strategy has developed an integrated implementation framework for easy monitoring and accountability. It has been developed with the future in mind - allowing for the development of activities from the wider strategies and outputs aligned in a horizontal logic.

The process of Strategy development was highly participatory, though the Board, due to travel limitations, instructed the Secretariat to undertake the assignment while consulting the Board. Several participatory engagements were held. The first one was a one-day review meeting in Mombasa in June for the Board, Secretariat and members which concluded that a new Strategy was needed. This was followed by a participatory three-day workshop by members of the secretariat supported by two consultants in September 2021. The third engagement was with the Board where the draft Strategy was presented virtually which led to the finalization of the Strategy. Lastly, the Strategy was approved by the Board in October 2021, marking its inception.

Sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed in diverse ways to this effort and to all whose input helped us shape this Strategy. Special gratitude to Wisena Consultancy, led by Nathaniel Muthomi and Dennis Moogi for providing technical guidance to the process.

Ishumael Zhou

AFUB President

1.1. Introduction

This Chapter recalls our historical and constitutional mandate, the basis for our impetus as well as our geographical and beneficiary scope.

1.2. Historical Background of AFUB

The African Union of the Blind (AFUB) was established in October 1987, in Tunis, Tunisia, under the auspices of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), now African Union (AU). The founding assembly registered an initial membership of 23 member countries. The motivation for the formation of AFUB was the need to provide a collective voice for blind and partially sighted persons through advocacy and the creation of national organizations of blind and partially sighted persons in Africa. It was also to provide a regional umbrella for the World Blind Union (WBU).

The African Union of the Blind (AFUB) enjoys observer status in the African Union under Resolution CM/Res.944 (XL) and holds a semi consular status in Kenya, according to the 'Headquarters Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Kenya and the African Union of the Blind'.

1.3. Current Thematic Areas

AFUB work is anchored on safeguarding the **human rights** of blind and partially sighted persons. The key human rights advocacy sub-themes that dominate our advocacy agenda are:

- Access to inclusive education
- Employment
- Access to justice

During this strategic period, we look forward to integrating other themes into our human rights advocacy agenda including protection of children and youth, and access to the highest standards of health care and services.

1.4. Our Vision

Our vision is of a continent where blind and partially sighted persons enjoy equal rights, social inclusion and full participation in development.

1.5. Mission

Our mission is to strengthen members and create unity of purpose among them through capacity building and advocacy in partnership with governments, international agencies and other stakeholders.

1.6. Objectives
a) To promote the human rights of blind and partially sighted people in Africa;
b) To strengthen national associations of the blind to enable them to safeguard and promote the rights of blind people within their countries; and
c) To strengthen the self-awareness of blind and partially sighted persons, to develop their personality, self-respect and sense of responsibility.

1.7. Values
We believe in and practice the following values:
a) Commitment and loyalty
b) Transparency and accountability
c) Gender equity diversity and inclusion
d) Change and innovation
e) Efficiency and effectiveness

1.7.   Operational Principles
In pursuance of our vision, we operate against a background of the following operational principles:
a) All persons are equal regardless of gender, age, race, religion and disability;
b) All persons have a right to independent living, representation, social justice, primary health care, access to information and reasonable standards of living; and that;
c) All persons have a right to quality and inclusive education and training, family and a life free of neglect and abuse.

1.8. Organizational Structure
AFUB is a membership organization constituted primarily by ordinary members who are national member organizations of blind and partially sighted persons in Africa. The membership is currently organized into five regions namely, Central Africa, East Africa, North Africa, Southern Africa and West Africa. Other members include international members and honorary life members.

Each region has a regional assembly that meets at least six months before the Union's general assembly. Part of its agenda is to elect a regional chair that will later be a member of the AFUB Board. AFUB has regional women and youth leagues/committees from where one youth and woman is elected to sit on the Board.

A General Assembly consisting of delegates from the member organizations, the members of the outgoing board, international and honorary life members and observers meets every four years to review the policies and progress of the Union. In addition, the General Assembly elects and confirms the President, Vice President, the chairperson of the women's committee,

the chairperson of the youth committee and other members of the Board for a term of four years. A special General Assembly may be called upon for special purposes.

A nine-member Board of Officers meets regularly by teleconference and at least once face-to-face every year to transact business on behalf of the General Assembly. The Board of Officers consists of five regional representatives, the chairperson of the women's committee and the chairperson of the youth committee. Out of this, the President and Vice President are elected, an Honorary Treasurer, and the Executive Director who serves as an ex-officio secretary to the Board. The Board may establish subcommittees as per the constitution or as it may deem expedient.

A Table of Officers consisting of the President, Vice President, the Executive Director, the women and the youth representatives meets and consults regularly to review progress in implementing the policies of the Board and to make executive decisions. A Secretariat headed by the Executive Director implements the policies and programs of the union.

1.9. Geographical Coverage

AFUB's work cuts across the whole of the African continent. Currently, we have national organizations of and for the blind and partially sighted persons from 53 African countries and run programs in all these countries indiscriminately.

1.10. Target Beneficiaries

AFUB's programs principally target the millions of blind and partially sighted persons in Africa irrespective of gender, age, race, sex, religion and disability. In addition, AFUB provides technical assistance and advice to partners such as governments, international development organizations, organizations for disabled persons (ODPs), civil society organizations and other stakeholders in development work who share our vision. In this strategic period, we intend to deliberately include the marginalized subgroups of BPS including women, youth, children, the elderly, the caregivers and/or parents of BPS, and persons with albinism and those with HIV/AIDS.

1.11. Affiliations

AFUB enjoys observer status with the African Union, the African Commission on Human Rights (ACHPR) and the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC). AFUB is affiliated with other international agencies such as World Blind Union and plays an important role in their work in Africa.

### 1.12. Overview of the 2017-2021 Strategic Period

The AFUB 2017-2021 Strategic Framework consisted of two phases, a three-year 2017-2019 Strategic Plan and an additional two-year extension 2020-2021 Plan. The first phase, the three-year 2017-2019 Strategic Plan, was developed following the implementation and review of the 2013-2016 Strategic Plan as well as an 18-month Bridging Plan that had been adopted by the

AFUB Board to address pertinent organizational development challenges that the organization had been facing. The new Plan sought to reorganize the work of AFUB into three key result areas with clear strategic objectives and expected outcomes that were in line with these key result areas.

The second phase of the Strategic Framework was adopted by the AFUB Board following a review of the 2017-2019 Strategic Plan and the lessons learned from its implementation. In particular, it had been noted that most of the organizational development indicators had not been fully realized, hence the need for a two-year extension. This extension was in the form of an action plan developed around the goals, objectives and outcomes of the 2017-2019 Plan.

A review of the 2017-2019 Strategic Framework implementation and the Bridging Plan done by AFUB staff, found that AFUB's performance was above average, with a cumulative aggregate of 60.7%. In terms of Key Result Areas, Organizational Strengthening recorded the highest performance at 84.6%, followed by Advocacy at 60.0% while Membership Development registered the lowest performance at 37.6%. A considerable number of deliverables recorded scores of 100%, having attained or surpassed the desired targets while few had a zero score or a less than 20% score.
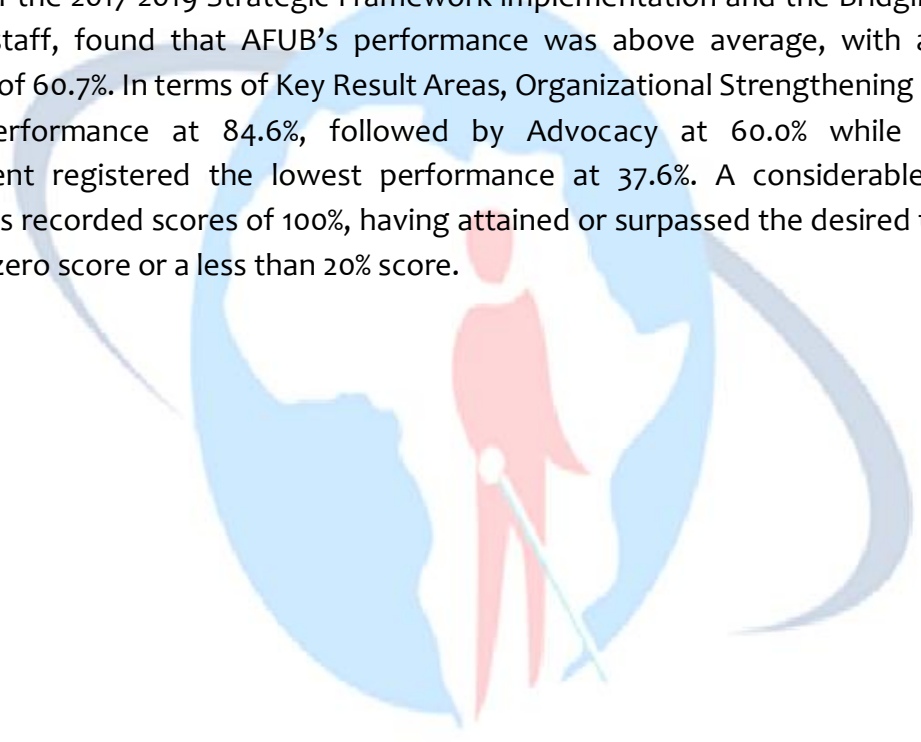
2.1. Introduction

This chapter considers the key achievements, challenges experienced over the past strategic period, pestle environment, related sectorial trends within which AFUB operates and their impact on the strategic direction of AFUB. The Chapter also highlights internal factors that will impact AFUB's work in the next strategic period. The contextual analysis provides a background perspective against which strategic choices for the next strategic period are made.

2.2. Key Achievements

Overall, the review of the AFUB Strategic Framework 2017-2021 demonstrated substantial success in its implementation and the realization of the strategic objectives for the period. There was an increase in the number and operationalization of policies that guarantee the rights and inclusion of blind and partially sighted persons in Africa; strengthened capacity and role of national member organizations in promoting the rights of blind and partially sighted persons in their countries; and, enhanced capacity of AFUB to effectively deliver on its advocacy and coordinative roles in Africa. All these have contributed towards the goal of AFUB - a continent where blind and partially sighted persons enjoy equal rights, social inclusion and full participation in development. Some of the national members that have been active countries during the period include Nigeria, Rwanda, Togo, Lesotho, Equatoria Guinea, Namibia, Ghana, Cape Verde, Sao Tome and Principe, Congo Brazzaville, Liberia, Malawi, Djibouti among others.

2.3. General Challenges over the 2017-2021 Strategic Period

Some of the challenges faced during the strategic period and that negatively affected the implementation of the plan include;

- Low level of interest in the African Disability Protocol by African governments. They do not seem to recognize the importance of the ADP once they have ratified the UNCRPD.
- Weak communication with members. Despite efforts by the AFUB Secretariat to disseminate and collect information from the members, their response was always very slow and in many cases, no information was received at all.
- The COVID-19 pandemic caused many funding agencies to shift their funding towards the mitigation of the pandemic.
- Non-payment of membership fees by members and unstable funding due to over-dependence on donor funding
- COVID-19 pandemic restriction measures and lockdowns affected operations
- Lack of a substantive Execute Director to run the secretariat, inadequate staff capacity and high staff turnover

2.4. Global Perspective of Visual Impairment and Trends

According to the World Health Organization World Report on Vision (2019), globally, at least 2.2 billion people have a near or distance vision impairment. In at least 1 billion – or almost half – of these cases, vision impairment could have been prevented or has yet to be addressed. These one billion people include those with moderate or severe distance vision impairment or blindness due to unaddressed refractive error (88.4 million), cataract (94 million), glaucoma (7.7 million), corneal opacities (4.2 million), diabetic retinopathy (3.9 million), and trachoma (2 million), as well as near vision impairment caused by unaddressed presbyopia (826 million).

In terms of regional differences, the prevalence of distance vision impairment in low- and middle-income regions is estimated to be four times higher than in high-income regions. With regards to near vision, rates of unaddressed near vision impairment are estimated to be greater than 80% in western, eastern and central sub-Saharan Africa, while comparative rates in high-income regions of North America, Australia, Asia, Western Europe, and Asia-Pacific are reported to be lower than 10%. More accurate and reliable data on the met and unmet eye care needs is required for planning.

The burden of eye conditions and vision impairment is not borne equally. The burden tends to be greater in low and middle-income countries and underserved populations, such as women, migrants, indigenous peoples, persons with certain kinds of disabilities, and in rural communities. Population growth and ageing, along with behavioural and lifestyle changes, and urbanization, will dramatically increase the number of people with eye conditions, vision impairment, and blindness in the coming decades.

A life without a clear vision often becomes a life devoid of freedom, independence, and dignity. For a person in the developing world, it can be catastrophic. Mothers and fathers who lose their sight often lose their ability to provide for their families. Children with impaired vision are forced to drop out of school and often face bullying. Older family members lose their independence and require extra care from their younger relatives.

Concerted action during the past 30 years has yielded many successes: global advocacy efforts have been launched; World Health Assembly resolutions adopted, and actions plans implemented. Recent scientific and technological developments promise to further accelerate these advances. Nonetheless, progress is not keeping pace with population eye care needs. Major challenges lie ahead. Firstly, eye care needs globally will rise sharply due to changes in demographics and lifestyle. Secondly, data are often lacking and health information systems weak, thus hampering planning. Thirdly, eye care is frequently poorly integrated into health systems, for example, in national health strategic plans and health information systems; and the eye care workforce is poorly coordinated.

In advancing Universal Health Coverage (UHC), making eye care integral to UHC will contribute to reaching SDG target 3.8. "Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicine and vaccines for all." For this to happen quality eye care services need to be provided according to population needs and the cost of priority eye care interventions cannot expose the user to catastrophic expenditures. In this respect, integrated people-centred eye care (IPCEC) can help address the significant eye care challenges that many countries face. IPCEC adopts a health system perspective with four strategies:

(i)   engaging and empowering people and communities;
(ii) reorienting the model of care based on strong primary care;
(iii) coordinating services within and across sectors; and
(iv) creating an enabling environment, specifically the inclusion of eye care in national health strategic plans, the integration of relevant eye care relevant data within health information systems, and the planning of the eye care workforce according to population needs.

2.5.   PESTEL Analysis

2.5.1.   Economic Environment

Statistics show a slight improvement in Gross National Income per Capita (GNI) between 2012 and 2018 with more African countries like Kenya shifting from low income to lower middle income and Seychelles transiting to high income from upper middle income. Despite this progress, the bulk of African countries representing over 70% of persons are still earning below $4,035 per year or $ 336.25 per month. It is also important to note that it is only countries from the African continent that do not provide information on their economic status including GNI. These are notably Somalia and Eritrea in 2018. This situation is attributed to civic and political unrests that until today continue to be experienced especially in Somalia and Eritrea among other African countries that struggle to make submissions on economic progress. This demonstrates that AFUB works within a continent among the poorest population in the world.

Faced with these challenges and in response to the growing economic globalization, Africa's regional economic blocks are strengthening their operations and roles in promoting trade and economic growth within their member states. Such regional economic blocks like the East African Community, (EAC) the Southern Africa Development Community (SADEC), the Common Markets for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have gone further to establish legislative organs and to invest in social development. Therefore, this is an opportunity for AFUB to align its regional structures and to develop a working relationship with the economic blocks to strengthen its

regional presence within countries to promote its advocacy for inclusion in respective legislative systems and frameworks.

2.5.2. Policy Environment

The World Bank research programs on governance show that good governance is key for political stability, growth and development. The rule of law is a key indicator of good governance. The rule of law is the *legal* principle that law should govern a nation, as opposed to being governed by arbitrary decisions of individual government officials.

Corruption remains a huge challenge to development in Africa. This vice undermines democracy and good governance by flouting or even subverting formal processes. Corruption remains the single most important challenge to the eradication of poverty and general socio-economic development in Africa. The Worldwide Governance reports of 2013 -2015 place only one country from Africa as being in the 75-90th percentile, meaning that over 90% of countries in the continent are corrupt.

Government effectiveness and the quality of policy formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies are key to creating a stable political environment for growth. The picture is also grim for Africa in this area. Only 4 countries out of the 40 that reported scored in the 50-75th percentile.

Going by these indicators, the overall governance picture for Africa is one of consistent failure, presenting a challenging situation that has a direct impact on the work of AFUB and that of its member organizations.

AFUB works with the AU and its agencies to advocate for inclusive programmes and processes at the regional level. We believe that the adoption of the African disability Protocol on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by the Head of Member States in the African Union in January 2018 will guarantee equal protection of economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights to persons with disabilities. This, we count as a recipe for good governance for all including blind and partially sighted persons in the continent.

The Africa Union Disability Strategic Policy Framework of 2019 has been drafted to succeed the Policy Framework to the Continental Plan of Action for the Second African Decade of Persons with Disabilities 2010-2019. It is aimed to catalyse action that shall accelerate the achievement of the continental vision of an inclusive society that ensures, promotes and upholds the rights of all persons with disabilities in Africa. It envisions a positive and sustainable change in the lives of all persons with disabilities and their families on the African continent, especially those living in poverty, through verifiable economic, social, cultural and political measures, which address social exclusion, and poverty, to enhance human rights, participation, empowerment and inclusion.

2.5.3. Technological Environment

Though the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and other professional bodies in ICT do not provide exclusive statistics and indicators on disability and ICT, minimal and slow inclusion of persons with disabilities in various sectors of development including health, education, accessibility and employment is an indication of slow consumption of ICT by persons with disabilities including the blind and partially sighted. Though numerous technology solutions have been developed for the blind and partially sighted, which is a positive aspect, the challenge lies in their reachability or accessibility as well as high acquisition and maintenance costs. With technology becoming increasingly central to the way people communicate, relate and access information AFUB and partners alike need to create ways of increasing access and use of ICT among the blind and partially sighted people in Africa.

2.5.4. Social Environment

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a universal call to action to build a healthier world for the entire population and the environment by 2030. The 17 SDGs and 169 targets are integrated which means they recognize that action in one area will affect outcomes in the others.

Vision makes an important contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and cuts across many of the Sustainable Development Goals; from poverty reduction to economic growth and employment to education, gender and reducing inequalities. It is therefore critical that countries adopt a whole-of-government approach to vision and include eye health in their implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals at the national level. AFUB will actively work with its members and stakeholders to promote the inclusion of eye health within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and support the development of partnerships with sectors beyond health, such as education, gender and economic development.

a) COVID -19 Pandemic and Persons with Visual Impairment

Persons with visual impairment face tremendous challenges in the COVID- 19 pandemic. Some basic hygiene measures like handwashing, social distancing, avoid touching surfaces are a challenge to blind persons to adhere to. Blind people need assistance to do certain tasks, sometimes being held by hands, making it a challenge to maintain social distance, or to avoid touching things to obtain necessary information. The onset of COVID-19 disease made many facilities reduce eye care services to only critical cases leaving out the essential continuous support that other patients were getting from the facilities. AFUB envisage advocating for the right of blind people to access the right information about COVID-19 disease and access to vaccination to protect the lives of blind people and their families. During the development of this strategic plan, about 4.57% of the African Population was fully vaccinated[1]. This is a

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[1] https://africacdc.org/covid-19-vaccination/

significantly low proportion which calls for more to be done to ensure that BPS can work without a threat of being infected.

b) Mental Health amongst Persons with Visual Impairment

Psychological distress in vision impairments and blindness is a complex issue and a major public health concern. Sudden adjustments in routine lifestyle and career aspirations in such persons culminate in and/or aggravate their level of stress. Yet, psychological distress in persons with visual difficulties and vision loss is poorly understood. Therefore, comprehensive psychological care is needed for patients with eye disease or vision difficulties. AFUB will seek to work closely with governments and stakeholders to advocate mental health issues and care for all blind and partially sighted persons in the member countries. Through such partnerships, it will be essential to develop more effective interventions and expand access to services to improve the detection and treatment of mental health problems amongst the BPSP population.

c) Gender Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Globally, and in Africa, women are about 1.4 times more likely to be blind than men. While women generally live longer than men, the lack of accessibility to and use of services is likely the most important reason for excess blindness in women in Africa. The Global Disability commitments and the SDGs on women can be achieved in Africa, but investment is needed in a variety of strategies that will ensure that eye care services are affordable, accessible, and acceptable to women and girls. AFUB will champion gender equity for blind and partially sighted women and girls.

d) Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience

In situations of emergency and disasters, persons with disabilities have the same rights and basic needs as others and face the same challenges. However, they face numerous additional barriers. They face particular protection risks, including a heightened risk of violence, exploitation and abuse, and high levels of stigma. They have difficulties accessing humanitarian assistance, education, livelihoods, health care and other services. They may be denied certain legal rights, and are often excluded from decision-making processes and leadership opportunities.

Article 11 of the CRPD – Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies states that nations must take "all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters." The New guidance on national CRPD reporting for Article 11 on situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies provides persons with disabilities, OPDs and other civil society organizations with practical support to analyse and report on the implementation of Article 11 of the CRPD at the national level. It also provides a horizon scanning of legal frameworks applying at the international level and other relevant reporting mechanisms. During this strategic plan period, AFUB will endeavour to

build capacity and advocate for the rights of the blind and partially sighted during emergencies.

2.6. Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

2.6.1. Strengths

We are proud of a set of strengths that will be the foundational building blocks in planning and delivering our work over the next five years. Key among these include the following:

- AFUB was formulated through a resolution of the African Union. This is AFUB's source of strength to negotiate with the African Union, governments and other international agencies.
- AFUB draws its mandate from its membership. With a current membership of 53 out of 55 African states, AFUB enjoys unrivalled legitimacy and authority to represent and articulate issues relating to blind and partially sighted persons in Africa.
- AFUB has well-established governance and administrative structures defined within a stable constitution and tested over a period of more than thirty years. The democratic nature of AFUB's governance system is a testament to its members' ownership and involvement in the organization.
- AFUB has a stable management system characterized by a secretariat that is hosted in a country where AFUB enjoys semi-consular status; the secretariat is endowed by personnel and other resources to facilitate program delivery and coordination.
- AFUB has a long and rich history with its development partners, which testifies to its credibility. This remains to be an important asset in negotiating for new partnerships and funding.
- AFUB possesses a clearly defined vision, mission, goals, geographical coverage and target beneficiaries of its work all of which facilitate focused planning and delivery of programs and advocacy work.
- AFUB is strong in engaging with AU and its blocks to influence public policies and practices governing employment, education, health, sports and recreation and other related human rights of blind and partially sighted persons in Africa.
- AFUB has a track record in building the capacity of our member organizations in engaging with their governments to put systems in place/or enact laws in favour of blind and partially sighted persons in their respective countries.

2.6.2. Weaknesses

Some of the weaknesses that we shall seek to address during the upcoming period include the following:

- AFUB has not had a substantive executive director since 2019something that has significantly affected its governance and resource mobilization efforts.

- The rented office premise hosting the secretariat consumes a significant proportion of AFUB administrative costs.
- Poor communication with and feedback from the member organizations
- Over-reliance on membership subscription payments to build the unrestricted funds
- Slow operationalization of the resource mobilization strategy
- Poor visibility of AFUB outside its membership.
- Weak documentation and sharing of lessons learned and achievements
- Slow effort to build new partnerships with corporate and other philanthropy organizations to complement grants from our traditional donors
- Weak leadership and governance structure within the member organizations characterised by absence of clear chain of responsibilities, poor corporate governance practices among other governance challenges

2.6.3. Opportunities

We recognize several external factors relevant to our work and which offer us great opportunities to advance our mission over the next five years. They include the following:

- Through the national members, AFUB's penetration into African states provides it with great opportunities to work with African governments towards specific state-level advocacy or lobbying for continental-wide advocacy issues relating to blind and partially sighted persons.
- With a membership drawn from national member organizations of blind people in their respective countries, AFUB has a rich volunteer resource within these countries that would provide cost-effective opportunities to expand its work within the continent. Building the capacity of these member organizations will therefore be a major priority in seeking to harness this volunteer resource.
- There is an increasing trend towards corporate social responsibility, a trend through which profit-making companies are investing in non-profit work. With a clear mandate and target beneficiary, AFUB has a great opportunity to develop partnerships with corporate agencies to facilitate access to resources to undertake mutual initiatives. This further provides AFUB with the opportunity to diversify its sources of funding.
- Today, over 50 out of 55 African states have ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Convention requires state parties to prepare and submit progress reports on its implementation while likewise providing civil society with the opportunity to prepare parallel reports for consideration together with the state reports. Working with its national members, AFUB has a brilliant opportunity to contribute to the full implementation of the Convention through facilitating the involvement of its member organization in the domestication of the Convention within their countries and parallel reporting.

- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in 2015 present more open space and avenues of involvement for AFUB. The Agenda contains particular targets and indicators on disability. To achieve the intentions of the SDGs, similar to the CRPD, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in countries together with their governments are required to prepare voluntary reports to the UN. As a CSO, AFUB through its member organizations has a brilliant opportunity to present into the report needs and concerns on behalf of blind and partially sighted persons.
- The Diplomatic Conference of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) sitting in Marrakesh, Morocco in 2013 adopted the Marrakesh Treaty. Ratification and implementation of the Treaty by the African States present an opportunity that will facilitate access to published works by visually impaired persons and persons with print disabilities.
- AFUB enjoys observer status in the AU under Resolution CM/Res.944 (XL) and holds a semi-consular status in the Republic of Kenya, an AU Member State, where its secretariat sits. Furthermore, AFUB and the AU share a common geographical location. This provides a strategic opportunity to participate and contribute to the majority of key AU continental decisions, policies, and laws related to human rights and disability, including the African Disability Protocol.
- In recent years, new Pan-African disability organizations like the African Disability Alliance (ADA) and the African Disability Forum (ADF) have emerged. Working together with AFUB and other relevant players in the sector, the advocacy voice for articulation and representation of the disability agenda including that of blind and partially sighted persons on the continent is louder.
- As a result of our work around Africa, many blind and partially sighted persons have received access to education, employment and healthcare. We will use these beneficiaries as role models, advocates and resource persons in our work in the countries.

2.6.4. Threats

Some of the external situations that will pose a challenge to our work in the next strategic period include the following:

- Reduction of income from development partners. The donor fatigue and reduction of development funding due to the shift of funding to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to result in the scaling down of the work of AFUB in the region.
- The emerging Pan-African umbrella organizations pose competition for donor funding, partnerships with national governments, etc.
- Development partners are diversifying their funding recipients to include organisations working across multiple disabilities. AFUB as a blindness organization might be required to devise a strategy of working with other stakeholders across other disabilities to remain attractive to such donors.

- Civil and political instability resulting from post-election violence, military coups, terror attacks, etc continue to pose a security threat to AFUB operations and hinder access to project locations.
- Weak corporate governance and leadership within AFUB membership.

2.7. Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholders are key in promoting the work of AFUB. It is acknowledged that there are six major categories of stakeholders that AFUB intends to work with. Some of them are continental, cross-sectoral, quasi-governmental, governmental and non-governmental. The six categories identified include:

a) National member organizations
b) Intercontinental and continental Peer organizations- World blind union, European blind union, African disability alliance, African Disability forum
c) Regional Economic Community (EAC, IGAD, SADC, ECOWAS, etc.)
d) African Union and affiliates organizations (ACHPR, ACRWC)
e) Relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs)
f) Donors and Development partners – USAID and UN agencies

Table 1 below highlights how the key stakeholders will be engaged during the strategy period.
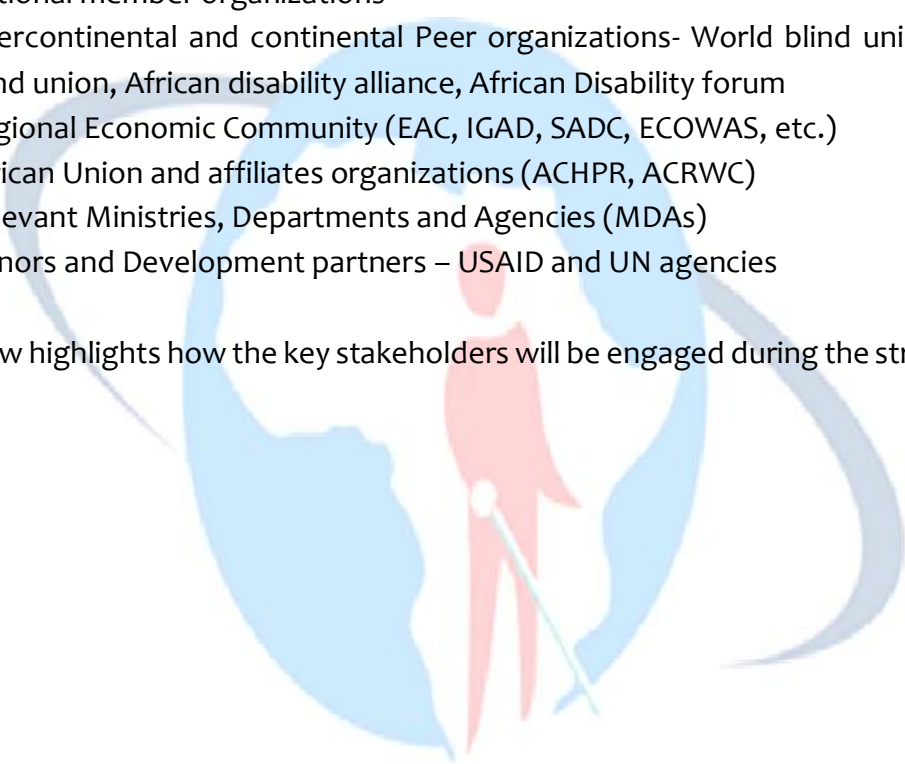
Table 1: Stakeholder Matrix

Strategic stakeholder	Geographical scope	Type of stakeholder	Key sector of focus	Influence AFUB mandate
National member organizations	Member countries in Africa	NGO	Cross thematic	High
Intercontinental and continental Peer organizations- World blind union, European blind union, African disability alliance, African Disability forum	Pan- African, intercontinental and regional	INGO	Cross thematic Human rights	Medium
Regional Economic Community (EAC, IGAD, SADC, ECOWAS etc)	Regional	Regional	Cross thematic human rights	Human rig advocacy
African Union and affiliates organizations (ACHPR, ACRWC)	Africa	Continental union	Human Rights	High
Relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs)	National	Governments	Policy development	High
Donors and Development partners - USAID, UN	Global	Multinational government agencies	Human rights advocacy	High
Private companies and Corporates - Safaricom MTN	Africa wide	Private sector	Human rights	Medium

2.8. Risk Analysis

It is appreciated that risks are part of any organizational operations. AFUB seeks to identify and put in place necessary measures to mitigate the challenges that might affect its operations. Table 2 below highlights the key risks and provides mitigation strategies.

Table 2: Risk Analysis Matrix

Possible risk	Likelihood	Impact to AFUB	Mitigation strategy
The upsurge of COVID-19 infections and movement restriction protocols	High	• Slow implementation of activities • Difficult to access project locations	Promote access to COVID-19 prevention information and vaccination
Technology safety risks	High	• Ineffective operations and programmes	• Adopt the use of secure technologies to support office operations and the implementation of programme activities. • Improve ICT infrastructure at the secretariat and the member level
Increased competition by peers and country organizations	Medium	Reduced resources	• Develop strategic resource mobilization business units e.g., eye-care • Adopt consortium models for fundraising
Disenfranchisement of subgroups among BPS	Medium	Discrimination of the very targeted beneficiaries	Include the disenfranchised subgroups in programming such as children, youth, women and, members in the least developed countries
Low continental visibility	Medium	Reduced ability to lobby for BPS issues	• Increased branding and visibility • Participation in continental and international advocacy platforms
Weak governance systems and leadership in	High	Weakened trust and confidence in member organisations	• Implement decentralization policy

member organisations			• Build internal capacity of members to implement targeted interventions

3.1. Introduction

The AFUB 2022-2026 Strategic Framework was developed through a participatory process, involving the AFUB Board and the secretariat. However, due to travel limitations, the Board members were consulted virtually. The process also included analysis of current AFUB strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as well as a consideration of the political, economic, social and technological environments within which AFUB is working.

3.2. Theory of Change

AFUB is desirous for a paradigm shift to position itself as one of the major disability advocacy players in Africa through locating its influences and initiatives through the AU and its five economic blocks. In its advocacy work, it will work closely with the African Union to influence the ratification of legal instruments by member states. AFUB will seek to decentralize its operations at the regional and sub-regional levels through member strengthening while responding to their evolving needs. To achieve advocacy and member strengthening, AFUB will build its internal capacity to respond to the needs of its members.

3.3. Strategic Objective

During the 2022-2026 strategic period, AFUB will continue to protect and promote the human rights of the blind and partially sighted people in Africa through advocating for inclusive continental policies, membership support and internal organizational capacity strengthening.

3.4. Strategic Outcomes

By December 2026, AFUB is expected to achieve the following outcomes:

a) Policies that guarantee the rights and inclusion of BPS persons in Africa are developed and implemented by members
b) Strengthened capacity and role of national member organizations in promoting the rights of BPS persons in their countries through widening its scope of operations.
c) The internal capacity of AFUB is strengthened to effectively deliver on its advocacy and coordinating role in Africa.

3.5. Key Result Areas

To realize our expected outcomes, over the next strategic period, we shall focus on three key result areas, namely;
a) Inclusive advocacy;
b) Membership development;
c) Internal organizational strengthening.

3.6. Implementation Strategies

3.6.1. Inclusive Advocacy

Under this key result area, AFUB will advocate for policies and practices that guarantee the rights and promote the inclusion of blind and partially sighted persons at national and international levels. The following strategies will be employed to achieve an inclusive advocacy agenda.

- Support processes for signing, ratification, domestication, implementation and monitoring of international and regional human rights instruments
- Promote research and dissemination of information to inform policy and programme interventions on persons who are Blind and Partially Sighted in Africa
- Integrate disaster risk and resilience in programming
- Engage with the AU and regional economic communities to influence the prioritization of BPS issues in the agenda of African governments
- Work with the member organizations to advocate national governments for the improvement of the lives of the BPS persons in Africa
- Promote documentation and dissemination of information on the situation of human rights of BPS persons in Africa

3.6.2. Membership Development

During the period, we shall strengthen the capacity and role of national member organizations in promoting the rights of blind and partially sighted persons in their countries.

To achieve membership development, the following strategies will be implemented:

- Strengthen governance, management and operational capacity of member organizations to effectively deliver on their programs
- Promote access to COVID-19 prevention information and vaccination
- Build capacity of member organizations to apply the principles of the CRPD, SDGs, ADP and national disability instruments to advocate for the rights and interests of BPS in Africa
- implement the decentralisation policy of AFUB
- Strengthen member organization communication infrastructure and capacity
- Engage in a wider disability space such as working with refugees, Portuguese and Spanish countries and the least developed countries where national associations are the weakest.

3.6.3. Organizational Strengthening

During the period, we shall seek to enhance our operational capacity to effectively deliver on our advocacy and coordinative roles in Africa.

- Strengthen administrative and governance structures
- Recruit an Executive Director and other key staff positions that are vacant

- Enhance communication and visibility mechanisms within the organization
- Broaden resource mobilization
- Increase resilience and adaptability of AFUB to work in changing context

3.7. Cross-cutting Issues

We recognize certain issues that are pertinent in the promotion of our cause and which cut across the various areas and levels of our work. These issues shall not only be core to our work but will also serve as important performance indicators. They include the following:

3.7.1. COVID-19

COVID-19 is a global pandemic that distracted how things are usually done. AFUB was equally not spared. Most of the activities were halted for about a year. This was until COVID-19 protocols were relaxed when staff were able to continue with activities that required physical meetings. AFUB made effort to adapt to the situation in different ways such as working and meeting virtually. to achieve more results, AFUB needs to build internal resilience to such unexpected distractions. AFUB also needs to promote access to COVID-19 prevention information and vaccination among its members.

3.7.2. Inclusion and Diversity

Achieving inclusion during this strategic period means working with a variety of beneficiaries such as youth with visual impairment, the refugees, Portuguese and Spanish countries, weak national member associations and reaching the most underdeveloped countries and communities.

Inclusion will equally play a part in the advocacy agenda continentally while working with cross-disability organizations. AFUB recognizes that the enactment of laws and policies, and provision of services does not promote equity and dignity unless they are set within inclusive settings. AFUB shall therefore promote non-segregation and inclusive approaches in policy formulation and provision of services to blind and partially sighted persons within our work at the regional and national levels.

3.7.3. Human Dignity and Integrity

During this strategic period, we shall emphasize the promotion of the dignity of people who are blind and partially sighted in our work and relation with the various persons, agencies and institutions. We shall seek to ensure that all processes within which we are involved uphold the dignity and integrity of people who are blind or partially sighted.

3.7.4. Gender Equity

We believe that all men and women have equal rights and equal opportunities to services and self-development. We shall therefore promote appropriate provisions for gender equity within our advocacy work, provide gender equity guidelines in the implementation of projects initiated by AFUB with our national members and observe gender equity principles within our governance and management operations.

4.1. Introduction

To realize the objectives of this Strategic Plan, the following strategies will be implemented.

4.2. Fundraising

We will continuously build our internal capacity to fundraise for more resources. For example, we shall seek to venture into sustainable alternatives of resource mobilization such as establishing strategic business units e.g., eye-care by partnering with member countries. This will not only fundraise for AFUB but also provide health intervention to the members, at a subsidized cost.

4.3. Decentralized Coordination

We shall endeavour to strengthen the role of country coordinators to reduce overheads and increase our presence and relevance among our country members. This will also help in enhancing the coordination of country activities. As part of the decentralization process, in harnessing the contribution by members to our work, we shall seek the use of facilities and resources of our national members for the implementation and coordination of our programmes and activities at the regional level. This may include office space, utilities and human resources.

4.4. Human Resourcing

In line with the intended decentralization process, we shall carry out a human resource audit to establish optimal staffing capacity and work towards achieving it. The human resource audit will focus on areas of specialization, skills requirement and general staffing portfolio and shall be linked to the decentralization process. In addition, we shall prioritize staff professional development through short-term training, fellowships and other forms of knowledge and skills development to improve their performance. We shall further seek to maintain and enhance staff motivation through appropriate compensations, a conducive working environment and other professional incentives.

4.5. Partnership Strengthening and Networking

We shall endeavour to strengthen as well as create new working relationships with development partners. We shall maintain high-level transparency and accountability and sustain open communication. This shall be complemented through innovative and sustainable programming for BPS persons as well as people with other categories of disabilities in the program delivery. We shall also endeavour to work with cross-disability organizations with a regional presence. We will continuously review our stakeholder management plan to ensure we continuously provide for their needs and cultivate AFUB donor-specific relationships.

4.6.   Increased Networking

We shall be open and take advantage of country-level, regional, continental, or international networking and advocacy opportunities. Such opportunities may include but are not limited to Disability Summit, AU Conference among others.

4.7.   Use of Technical Resource Persons

We shall purpose to establish technical workgroups to consult and seek advice on specific strategic objectives. Members of such workgroups shall be experts drawn from the cadre of blind and partially sighted professionals within the continent as well as other non-visually impaired professionals with expertise in the various areas of our work.

4.8.   Increasing Adaptability and Resilience

COVID-19 protocol and restrictions have made us learn several ways that we can adapt. We need to support our members remain active in accessing services by sharing information on COVID-19 prevention including access to the vaccines. The secretariat will need to keep their communication active by continuously harnessing new and emerging technological opportunities. We shall continue strengthening our ICT infrastructure both at the secretariat and at the member level in line with the decentralization policy. We shall integrate ICT in all aspects of our work including collection and management of program data, financial management, human resources management. ICT will also play a key role in the advocacy agenda. We shall seek to adapt to the new way of doing things while seeking to create tailor-made solutions that fit us.

4.9.   Annual Planning

Towards the end of each year, annual work plans and budgeting for the subsequent year will be prepared and adopted by the Board. The annual plans and budgets shall be drawn against the AFUB's activities and informed by annual monitoring reports.

4.10.   Framework for Monitoring and Evaluating the Strategic Plan

An organizational monitoring and evaluation framework is in place. We shall implement and review our monitoring tools: both programmatic and financial to ensure they represent the current strategic priorities. We shall use the monitoring framework to assess the effectiveness of our interventions and report progress to our stakeholders as appropriate. We shall facilitate the participation and involvement of the various organs of AFUB in monitoring and evaluation processes. To this end, an implementation framework has been developed to inform the implementation of the strategies and activities. It provides horizontal logic, indicators and targets for each expected output. The indicators and targets will inform the progress of work towards achieving our intended actions. A review of the strategic plan will be conducted mid-way to track the progress of its implementation and inform the review if need be.

Table 3: Implementation and Monitoring Framework

Strategic Goal	Strategic Objectives	Strategies	Outputs	Indicators	Baseline	Target 2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
AFUB shall seek to protect and promote the human rights of the blind and partially sighted people in Africa	Influence development of policies and practices that guarantee the rights and inclusion of BPS persons in Africa	Support processes for signing, ratification, domestication, implementation and monitoring of human rights instruments	Human rights and legal instruments ratified	Number of countries ratifying human rights instruments	● Marrakesh – 11 ● ADP - 1	2	2	2	2	2
			Human rights instruments domesticated	Number of countries domesticating the human rights instruments	-		2	2	2	2	2
			Human rights instruments monitored and evaluated	Number of M&E reports	-		2	2	2	2	2
		Promote research and dissemination of information to inform interventions on persons	Data on BPS persons available	Number of research on BPS carried out	0	1	1	1	1	1
			Data disseminated in accessible formats	Information produced in	0	4	4	4	4	4

	who are Blind and Partially Sighted in Africa	(accessible PDF, audio, Braille and large print)	various accessible formats					
	Integrate resilience in programming	Programmes integrating resilience	Number of successful projects integrating resilience	0	1	1	1	1	1
	Increase AFUB engagement with the African Union to prioritize issues of blind and partially sighted persons in the agenda of African governments	10 countries in member organizations trained on ADP	Number of countries trained on ADP	0	2	2	2	2	2
	Engage with the AU and regional economic communities to influence the prioritization of BPS issues in the agenda of African governments	BPS issues discussed in African governments agenda	Type of BPS issues captured in the AU and REC resolutions.	0	1	1	1	1	1
		Meetings held with AU and regional economic communities	Number of meetings held with AU and REC	2	2	2	2	2	2

		Work with the member organizations to advocate national governments for the improvement of the lives of the BPS persons in Africa	Governments put in place appropriate policies, Legislation and initiatives for improving the well-being of BPS persons	The number of policies and legislation put in place by the national government promotes BPS rights.	10	2	2	2	2	2
		Promote dissemination of information on the situation of human rights of BPS persons in Africa	Information on the situation of BPS rights disseminated	The number of information dissemination forums done.	1	2	2	2	2	1
Strengthened capacity and role of national member organizations in promoting the rights of BPS persons in their countries.		Strengthen governance, management and operational capacity of member organizations to effectively deliver on their programs	The capacity of member organizations strengthened	Number of member organizations whose capacity has been strengthened	-	5	5	5	5	5
		Engage in cross-disability programming	New groups of BPS including refugees, Portuguese and Spanish countries and the least developed countries engaged	Number of new groups of BPS that AFUB is working with	-	1	1	1	1	1

Strategy	Activity	Output	Indicator	Baseline					
	Build capacity of member organizations to apply the principles of the CRPD, SDGs and ADP alongside other regional and international disability instruments to advocate for the rights and interests of BPS in Africa	Member organization articulate and use the CRPD, SDG's, ADP	The proportion of members organization able to articulate and apply the CRPD, SDGs, ADP for advocacy	20%	10%	100%	100%	10%	100%
	Strengthen decentralization of AFUB	Devolution policy operationalized	Number of devolution units in operation	0%	10%	100%	100%	10%	100%
	Strengthen member organization communication infrastructure and capacity	Members' communication infrastructure and capacity strengthened	Number of members with communication infrastructure	-	10%	100%	100%	10%	100%
	Promote access to COVID-19 related information on vaccination	Sensitization conducted to members	The proportion of BPS persons fully vaccinated	4.57%[2]	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%
Strengthen the capacity of		Recruit a substantive executive director	Number of EDs recruited	-		1			

[2] https://africacdc.org/covid-19-vaccination/

AFUB to effectively deliver on its advocacy and coordinative roles in Africa by December 2026.	Strengthen administrative and governance structures	Staffing needs assessment conducted	Number of assessments conducted	0	1	-	-	-	-
		Staffing done in accordance to staffing needs assessment	Number of staff recruited	6	-	-	-	-	-
		Staff skills and knowledge developed	Number of training conducted	3	1	1	1	1	1
			Staff performance (appraisal)	2	2	2	2	2	2
	Enhance communication and visibility mechanisms within the organization	Communication strategy implemented	Proportion of admin cost allocated to Communication	1%	2%	3%	4%	5%	6%
	Strengthening holistic resource mobilization approach	Resource mobilization alternatives in place - strategic business units e.g., eye-care	The proportion of resources contributed by alternatives	0%	4	4	4	4	4
		Consortium in Resource mobilization built	Number of successful consortia	0	1	1	1	1	1

		Purchase/construct own premises to host the secretariat	Construct/purchase office space	Number/size of office space acquired	0					1