Mission to West Africa

For the past two weeks, the ARC team has been travelling across West Africa to meet with Member States and partners in the region. In the last edition, we gave you a brief introduction to this visit, and as the tour is coming to an end, we look back with pride at the many meaningful engagements that we have had with our stakeholders. We are humbled by the warm reception we continue to receive during this tour and the enthusiasm shown towards building a more resilient Africa.

The tour has been an anticipated opportunity for that much needed face-to-face engagement and a meeting of the minds on key strategic issues. It was also a chance to share the ARC strategic direction and get the opinions of stakeholders. As the ARC programme is significantly enhanced by the contribution of partners, building innovative and smart partnerships with African institutions is a priority for the ARC Group. We are excited at the potential synergies that these discussions will yield. Notably, the engagements will go a long way to bring the ARC Group strategy to life and enhance the ARC offering.

Like the previous edition, this newsletter continues to share some of the exciting outcomes from this tour that will shape our service to Member States, showcasing our visit to each country.

Côte d’Ivoire: While in Côte d’Ivoire, we met with Amath Pathe Sene, Director a.i. Sub Regional Office for Coastal Countries, West and Central Africa at the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) and his team as we progressively escalate our mutual collaboration towards making Africa more food secure. ARC and IFAD share the common understanding that with the necessary technical assistance and coverage against predictable natural disaster risks, lives and livelihoods of rural farmers will be protected, resulting in resilient rural communities.

We also met with Solomon Adegbe-Jaquyn, VP Private Sector, Infrastructure & Industrialization Complex, and his team. This is part of our efforts to strengthen our relationship with the African Development Bank Group at all levels to enable better programme coordination. Premium financing is critical to enabling African countries participate in our risk pools. As we diversify our product offering to provide coverage against risks beyond drought, we count on the continuing support of strategic regional partners, particularly the AfDB, to promote member states’ access to available disaster risk-bearing instruments.

Togo: In Togo, we had the privilege to meet with Hon. Lekpa Antoine Gbegbeni, Togolese Minister of Agriculture as well as Hon. Sani Yaya, Togolese Finance and Economy Minister, who showed themselves to be true ARC champions. Our discussions focused on ARC’s product diversification plan, particularly the flood model that is currently at advanced stages of development and of interest to the country. The Republic of Togo is a long-standing Member of ARC; and in line with our new strategic direction, we are resourcefully working with our partners to assist the Government in mitigating natural disaster risks and boosting resilience.

We also had promising discussions with the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID) and the West African Development Bank (BOAD). Together, we explored ways in which our organisations could collaborate to help make vulnerable populations more resilient and food secure, strengthen disaster risk management in the region and build national capacities for climate risk mitigation, adaptation and resilience.

Senegal: In Dakar, Senegal, we had very fruitful discussions with Oulimata Sarr, Regional Director West and Central Africa UN Women and her team. Gender matters are an important consideration for our organisation and under the Group’s refreshed strategy, ARC is progressively working with Member States and other partners to ensure that its DRM interventions address gender differences; and systemically contribute to closing existing gaps in the equal access of women and men to its adaptation and resilience solutions. Achieving this will go a long way towards realising the objectives of the ARC Gender Strategy.

This meeting was in line with our commitment to building smart partnerships and demand-driven response to disaster risks. Given its strategic role in promoting economic development and especially, resilient agriculture for women in the Sahel, a potential collaboration with UN Women will help build broader community resilience and contribute to disaster risk adaptation in the region.

The ARC Gender Strategy is designed to institutionalise gender as a critical component of all DRM interventions; build capacity for knowledge development; promote policy dialogue and advocacy; and facilitate resource mobilisation under the Gender Transformational Fund (GTF).

See the tour in pictures at the end of this newsletter. In the meantime, work continues in the background to ensure that the commitments made during this visit are followed through and can be operationalised.
PREPARING FOR COP 21

All hands are on deck as we prepare for 10th Session of the Conference of the Parties (CoP) which will be held on the 7th and 8th April. Needless to say, this year’s session will be held virtually, given the current pandemic and subsequent travel restrictions.

To give you some background, the CoP is the supreme decision-making organ of ARC Agency with powers to adopt critical plans such as the budget, the year’s Programme of Work and the group strategy. Other key functions include determining the organisation’s headquarters, establishing affiliates when necessary and amending the Treaty, amongst others. It is composed of duly accredited representatives of the parties to the Treaty. The first day of the CoP is planned for the senior government officials who will be responsible for preparing the ministerial session that is planned for the second day.

As you can imagine, this is an important convening for the ARC Group as our work centres around the decisions that come from this forum. We will certainly give you a detailed report of the outcome in the next edition.

UPDATE FROM ARC LTD’s ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

On March 31st, ARC Ltd held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) with a strong attendance from the Class A and Class C members, and chaired by the ARC Ltd board chair, Mr. Abdoulie Janneh. In his opening remarks, the chairman highlighted Ltd’s performance and its financial recovery during the reporting period, and further commended the Ltd CEO, Lesley Ndlovu, and his team for a successful year. He also acknowledged the close alignment with the ARC Group Director General in implementing the Group strategy, thereby contributing to the Group’s sustainability.

During the meeting, Ltd management took the opportunity to present strategic, underwriting and operational updates to members. Similarly, members raised their concerns, emphasising the need for increased visibility in all member countries and reaffirming their expectation for the launch of the flood product, taking the opportunity to remind management of its prior commitment to launch the product in 2020. With the development challenges of the product now behind us, launch of this product is now expected by end of 2021.

Other key outcomes of the meeting included the reappointment of Mr. Abdoulie Janneh and Ms. Delphine Traore as Chairperson and Vice Chairperson respectively for a 3-year term. We extend our congratulations to them as they continue to lead this important component of ARC’s work! The 2022 audited financials were also adopted. The members approved the renewal of contracts for the external auditor (PWC), Insurance Manager (MARSH) and Reinsurance Broker (AON) for another year.

Overall, it was a very successful AGM and we thank the members for their continued support.
We are excited to announce that the Green Climate Fund (GCF) board has approved a USD 143 million grant for the Funding Proposal Package 162 (with 83 million of the contribution coming from the GCF) towards Climate Risk Financing Programme. This initiative is aimed at building the resilience of smallholder farmers to climate change impacts in seven countries in the Sahel region, namely: Burkina Faso, Chad, Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal.

The programme is the first ever regional programme which seeks to upgrade, strengthen, scale up and replicate current existing and fragmented climate risk management practices by improving climate risk preparedness (climate information and early warning systems), climate risk reduction (adaptation and mitigation) and climate risk transfer (micro and macro insurance). It will be executed by International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and African Development Bank (AfDB) Group while ARC and World Food Programme (WFP) will be project delivery partners.

Tapping from its years of experience, ARC will implement the programme under risk preparedness component by extending and scaling up its capacity building services in the countries. These include risk profiling, contingency planning, and the integration of Africa RiskView (ARC’s technical tool) in national early warning systems. Under risk transfer component, the programme will help countries to access premium financing for macro-insurance to complement the current funding model through the ADRiFi programme (an ARC/AfDB collaboration aimed at supporting insurance payments for participating countries).

In the prevailing COVID-19 context, this strategic partnership between IFAD, AfDB, ARC and WFP is especially important to build resilience of smallholder farmers to climate shocks while supporting the development of the agricultural industry in the Sahel. During the programme, ARC will be providing a narrative of activities and reporting to the regional coordination unit that will be established in the AfDB, which will in turn report to the Green Climate Fund.

This programme speaks to the very core of who we are as an organisation and will help us further drive our mandate forward. We look forward to the value that it will bring to the Member States that we serve. As the (word missing?) takes off, we will certainly provide updates on how it is shaping up.
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Photos: Photospeak: ARC GDG with H.E. Patrick Achi, Prime Minister of Côte d’Ivoire

Photos: Photospeak: Meeting with H.E. Adama Coulibaly, Minister of Economy and Finance (Côte d’Ivoire)

Photos: Photospeak: Meeting with H.E. Lekpa Antoine Gbegbeni, Togolese Minister of Agriculture

Photos: Photospeak: Meeting with Moustapha Ben Barka, VP West African Development Bank in Lomé (Togo)
Photospeak: Meeting with Dr Mabouba Diagne, VP, Finance & Corporate Services; and Abou Jallow, VP, Operations at ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID) Headquarters in Lomé (Togo)

Photospeak: Meeting with Sani Yaya, Honourable Minister, Economy & Finance, Republic of Togo

Photospeak: Meeting with Oulimata Sarr (left) Regional Director West and Central Africa UN Women and Pr Awa Marie Coll Seck (right), Senegal National EITI Committee President

Photospeak: Meeting with Honourable Minister of Agriculture of the Gambia, Amie Fabayreh (left) and Prof Jainaba M.L. Kah, DG of the Department of Strategic Policy Delivery