**AFRICAN UNION OF THE BLIND (AFUB) Presidential Report: November 2023-July 2025**

**Presented by: Mohamed Ez-aoui, President of AFUB**

**Venue: World Blind Union General Assembly, Brazil, September 2025**

**Opening Remarks**

Dear President of the World Blind Union, distinguished colleagues, members of the Executive Committee, esteemed delegates, partners, and friends, On behalf of the African Union of the Blind (AFUB), I bring you warm greetings from Africa. It is both an honor and a privilege to stand before you today and to present this consolidated report on behalf of our membership, covering the period from November 2023 to July 2025.

Allow me first to express my sincere appreciation to the leadership of the World Blind Union for providing this platform for us to come together as one global movement of blind and partially sighted persons. I also wish to extend heartfelt thanks to our development partners, governments, and member organizations whose commitment, sacrifice, and solidarity continue to sustain our work in Africa. This report is not merely an account of activities; it is a testimony of resilience, partnership, and progress despite the many challenges that our continent faces. It reflects the determination of blind and partially sighted Africans to claim their rightful place in society, to push forward the human rights agenda, and to build stronger institutions capable of serving our community effectively. As I present this report, I do so with humility, knowing that it is the collective effort of our Secretariat, our Board, our membership across 53 African states, and our partners who have made these achievements possible.

**Introduction**

This report highlights AFUB’s work since the 10th General Assembly in Morocco (October 2023), when I was entrusted with the responsibility to serve as President for the 2024–2027 term. It covers the period November 2023 to July 2025, presenting our activities, advocacy achievements, challenges encountered, and institutional transitions. At its heart, the report captures AFUB’s progress under the 2022–2026 Strategic Framework, while also documenting a historic milestone—the relocation of our Secretariat from Nairobi, Kenya, to Rabat, Morocco.

**Background of AFUB**

AFUB was established in 1987 in Tunis, Tunisia, under the auspices of the OAU (now the African Union). It is one of the six regional bodies of the World Blind Union and currently has 60 national organizations across 53 African countries as members. AFUB holds observer status at both the African Union and the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, and enjoys semi-consular recognition in Morocco. The vision of AFUB is a continent where blind and partially sighted persons enjoy equal rights, social inclusion, and full participation in development. Its mission is to strengthen member organizations and foster unity of purpose through capacity building and advocacy in partnership with governments, international agencies, and other stakeholders.

**Vision**: A continent where blind and partially sighted persons enjoy equal rights, social inclusion, and full participation in development.

**Mission:** To strengthen member organizations and foster unity of purpose through capacity building and advocacy in partnership with governments, international agencies, and other stakeholders.

**3. Strategic Progress and Advocacy**

3.1 African Disability Protocol (ADP) Between 2023 and 2025, continuous advocacy efforts have resulted in seventeen countries, two more than the 15 required AU Member States ratifying the African Disability Protocol, bringing it into force. AFUB, together with partners such as NABP, SRF, and national organizations, played a key role in this achievement. While AFUB continues to work to encourage other African countries to ratify the ADP, focus is now also on domestication and effective implementation of the ADP at the national level.

3.2 Other Advocacy Areas

AFUB promoted the Marrakesh Treaty to improve access to published works for persons with visual impairment. The Union contributed to the AU expert meeting on political participation of persons with disabilities in March 2025, emphasizing the need for tactile and Braille ballots. AFUB also advanced the sexual and reproductive health rights of blind and partially sighted persons in seven countries.

**4. Project Highlights**

4.1 Human Rights Project (Supported by SRF)

The Human Rights Project was implemented in Botswana, Ethiopia, and The Gambia between 2023 and 2025. In Botswana, awareness was raised on the new Persons with Disabilities Act and governance training was provided for Botswana Association of Blind and Partially sighted (BABPS) board and staff. In Ethiopia, the Ethiopian National Association of the Blind (ENAB) contributed to disability law drafting locally and engaged AU institutions in Addis Ababa. In The Gambia, the Gambian Organisation of the Visually Impaired GOVI conducted village awareness campaigns and promoted inclusive education. At the regional level, staff were trained on advocacy through UN and AU mechanisms. With support from the Moroccan government, a Blind Women’s Conference was held in Marrakech in June 2024, focusing on leadership, entrepreneurship, and digital inclusion.

4.2 Advocacy Project (Supported by NABP)

The project facilitated the ratification of the African Disability Protocol in Malawi, Angola, Kenya, and the Republic of Congo, while also securing commitments in Togo, Cape Verde, and São Tomé & Príncipe. In Ghana, the ADP was integrated into the national disability law. In Cape Verde, a Braille voting matrix was adopted for elections. In São Tomé & Príncipe, blind citizens were granted free health consultations. In Congo-Brazzaville and Lesotho, accessibility of clinics and service attitudes were improved.

**5. Membership Strengthening**

Capacity-building workshops held in The Gambia, Ethiopia, and other regions. - 14 member organizations shortlisted for future interventions in human rights, advocacy, inclusive education, SRHR, women and youth empowerment, employment, and agriculture. - Ongoing peer-learning and networking fostered across AFUB’s membership.

**6. Organizational Development**

During the reporting period, AFUB successfully relocated its Secretariat to Rabat, Morocco. The Nairobi office was officially closed, and the Government of Morocco is providing a fixed amount annually, being support towards administration cost. AFUB has fully equipped offices where it does not pay rent thereby enhancing sustainability. This relocation was endorsed by the AFUB Board and formally ratified by Morocco’s Ministerial Council headed by his majesty the king Mohamed VI.

To strengthen internal capacity, board and staff members participated in training on corporate governance, negotiation, and leadership.

In addition, AFUB continued to uphold accountability through regular board meetings, monthly staff performance reviews, and annual audited financial reports.

**7. Challenges**

AFUB encountered a number of challenges during this period. The most pressing was funding constraints. The SRF project ended in June 2025, with closure finalized by August, while the NABP project concluded in December 2024, with only a short extension up to September 2025.

Economic instability across the continent also affected project implementation, as currency fluctuations significantly reduced the value of available funds.

In addition, AFUB continues to grapple with the mismatch between its broad continental mandate and the limited financial and human resources at its disposal. With 60 member organizations spread across Africa, it remains a major challenge to effectively reach and serve the entire membership given the financial limitations.

**8. Priorities 2024–2027**

Looking ahead, AFUB will intensify resource mobilization to secure long-term organizational sustainability. A key focus will be supporting the domestication and implementation of both the African Disability Protocol and the Marrakesh Treaty across member states.

Expanding the participation of women and youth will remain a central commitment, together with efforts to support blind and partially sighted persons living in conflict zones.

The Union will also promote Braille literacy, digital technology adoption, and sports for the blind as vital avenues of empowerment and inclusion.

In addition, AFUB aims to strengthen multilingual communication by extending beyond English, French, and Arabic to also include Portuguese and Spanish.

**9. Conclusion**

Distinguished colleagues, as this report demonstrates, AFUB has made remarkable progress—from securing the ratification of the African Disability Protocol, to strengthening member organizations, to relocating our Secretariat to Morocco for greater sustainability. Yet, significant challenges remain, particularly in mobilizing resources and securing institutional leadership. Nevertheless, we move forward with confidence and unity of purpose.

With the unwavering support of our partners, member organizations, and the global blindness movement, AFUB will continue to champion the rights, dignity, and full inclusion of blind and partially sighted persons across Africa.

I thank you all for your solidarity and partnership.

 Presented by:

 Mr. Mohamed Ez-aoui President,

 **African Union of the Blind (AFUB)**