



CEO's Monthly Message

June 2025

Dear Team,

Warm greetings to each of you.

As we reach the midpoint of the year, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on our collective journey and express my sincere appreciation for your contributions. It has been a period of significant challenge, not to mention the funding crisis that has hit the humanitarian sector hard, causing disruptions in our program, services, and staffing. Yet I feel grateful and proud of what we've collectively accomplished. Your steadfast dedication has truly made a difference in the lives of refugees and host communities, and I sincerely appreciate each of you for your ongoing commitment. Sadly, this month brought a moment of deep sorrow. We lost one of our own, Alphonse Leko-Di-Kanda, affectionately known as Papa Mbuta, who served as the Chief Driver at the Coordination Office in Kinshasa. I offer heartfelt condolences to his family, friends, and especially to our colleagues in DRC.

World Refugee Day

June also marked our observance of World Refugee Day, a moment to reaffirm our solidarity with those we serve. I am highly appreciative of our teams in Uganda, Tanzania, Chad, Burkina Faso, and the DRC for your active participation in the celebrations. Your efforts produced powerful stories and images that helped elevate AIRD's visibility across our social media platforms, spreading awareness and strengthening our presence among key stakeholders, donors, and the public.

Navigating the Humanitarian and Funding Crisis

Like many humanitarian organizations, AIRD is navigating an increasingly difficult period marked by a severe funding crisis. Major donors, including the United States, have significantly reduced their aid budgets, impacting not only NGOs but also institutions including UN Agencies. This comes at a time when humanitarian needs are growing rapidly due to escalating conflicts, worsening food insecurity, the devastating effects of climate change, and mass displacement. In response to these challenges, AIRD has adopted a proactive and adaptive approach. We are raising awareness among our middle and senior managers about the shifting landscape and encouraging forward-thinking, innovative responses, including cost-cutting and effectiveness, delaying new initiatives, unnecessary travels, procurement, and retaining essential staff only.

Our teams are actively and aggressively exploring partnerships beyond traditional donors, including foundations, private corporations, and individual philanthropists. Additionally, AIRD is investing in the development of social enterprises and income-generating projects to help sustain operations. Strengthening engagement and dialogue with existing donors remains a priority, as we work together to find sustainable solutions amid this evolving crisis.

Focus: Second half of the Year

As we move into the second half of the year, we will be focussing on finalizing a formal evaluation for our 2021-2025 AIRD Corporate Strategy and build the lessons learnt into the 2026-2030 Corporate Strategy. Aggressively pursuing new funding territories, including foundations, private corporates and individual philanthropists, including through our USA liaison and fundraising office will continue to be a priority.

Upcoming event

In July, AIRD is proud to partner with the Office of the President in organizing the Urban Refugee Marathon, scheduled for July 20, 2025. Staff from both the Uganda Country Office and HQ will participate in this important initiative promoting social cohesion between refugee and host communities. With legislators, partners, and stakeholders also involved, this presents an excellent opportunity to further strengthen our visibility, build strategic partnerships, and explore new avenues for funding.

Recognition of staff

In Niger, humanitarian aid doesn't pause for weekends or holidays. Despite looming job cuts in 2025 due to funding shortages, AIRD teams remain committed, working day and night to support refugees and host communities. Among them are drivers like Oumarou Mahamane Laouali, always ready to respond despite insecurity and tough terrain. "At 4 a.m., I set out to deliver equipment for refugee registration. When my truck broke down en route, we quickly repaired it with the help of a colleague. I got back behind the wheel without hesitation, because this isn't just a job, it's a responsibility," he says.

Leadership Transitions

As you may be aware, two valuable members of our Headquarters team will be transitioning out of the organization by June 30:

- Mr. Oumar N'diaye, Director of Business Development and Strategic Partnerships
- Ms. Betty Nyachwo, Human Resources Manager

We deeply appreciate their dedication and significant contributions to AIRD's growth. We wish them every success as they embark on new chapters in their careers. In the meantime, Fiona Kaitei Gakwandi will support with any HR related issues and Agnes Oti-Mensah, and Marc Meyer will support with Business Development and strategic partnership, including the Mbarara Social Enterprise Income generation project.

As always, I remain incredibly proud to lead such a dedicated and resilient team. Let us continue to serve with purpose and unity as we move into the second half of the year.

Thank you once again for your tireless efforts.



In commemoration of World Refugee Day, AIRD staff in Burkina Faso's Sahel region joined hands to clean Wendou Health Center, distribute hygiene kits, and empower the community with eco-friendly charcoal production using burners, mixers, grinders, and improved stoves.



AIRD Tanzania staff joined refugees and the host community in a friendly football match to mark World Refugee Day as they celebrated unity, resilience and togetherness through sports.



Oumarou Mahamane Laouali

Fikru Abebe Abebe
CEO

Fikru

