

Welcome Note & Framing — Prof. Fadel Ndiamé, PASGR Executive Director *Pre-Conference Side Event: “From Lessons to Best-Fit Approaches in Evidence-Informed Decision-Making in Africa” | ISSER Center, University of Ghana | ~5 min*

Opening Good morning, colleagues. To ISSER, to ICED, to the University of Ghana for hosting us — thank you for making Accra the place where this conversation begins. And to everyone who has travelled to be in this room: you are not here as an audience. Over these two days, you are co-authors of what we hope becomes a shared agenda for Africa’s evidence-to-action ecosystem.

The frame We’ve called this gathering “**From Lessons to Best-Fit Approaches.**” That title is deliberate. We are not convening to admire evidence systems in the abstract — we are convening to ask a harder question: **what has actually worked, for whom, and under what conditions, across our own continent’s programmes?**

This sits inside a larger shift. For too long, the evidence-to-policy pipeline ran one direction — data extracted from Africa, analysed elsewhere, returned as recommendation. That model has run its course. **Africa-led evidence systems mean African institutions design the questions, hold the data, and govern how findings become policy** — not merely supply the field sites for someone else’s conclusions.

Why PASGR can make this claim I say this not as aspiration but as a track record. **For a decade, our Utafiti Sera model has built collaborative knowledge production between researchers, policymakers, and communities across Urban Governance, Universal Health Coverage, Food Systems, and Youth Employment.**

Our AYPS programme runs in ten countries — Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, Benin, Togo, Côte d’Ivoire — centred deliberately on rural young women, refugees, persons with disabilities, and youth in informal work, because an evidence system that doesn’t reach the margins isn’t really a system. Accountability for Water has spent six years proving what works in water governance, country by country. And *va ce* through **the African Cities Research Consortium**, PASGR leads the uptake and impact agenda across thirteen cities.

This is what it means to **be a Pan-African institution on this agenda** — not a convening assembled for the moment, but infrastructure built over years, now ready to be tested, challenged, and improved by the room.

What these two days are for Today and tomorrow, **we take stock honestly** — what worked, what didn’t, and why — across our own portfolio and our partners’. We strengthen evidence that is inclusive and locally grounded, especially from voices usually left out of the room. And we dig into the harder question underneath all of this: how does evidence actually move institutions, incentives, and decisions — not just publications?

The bridge to E2A This side event is also a **deliberate on-ramp to the main Evidence to Action Conference beginning this afternoon**. What we surface here — the honest lessons, the uncomfortable gaps — should travel with us into that larger room and shape the agenda Africa sets for itself there.

Close So my ask is simple: treat the next two days as **working sessions, not a showcase**. Where something hasn't worked, say so plainly — **that is more valuable to this room than another success story**. Africa doesn't lack data. It lacks systems that let its own institutions hold, govern, and act on that data at speed. **That is the work in front of us. Let's begin.**