

Towards legitimate governance

A contribution to the debate
on governance in Africa

Forum on Governance,
Addis Ababa
24 – 26 November 2005



Towards legitimate governance

A contribution to the debate on governance in Africa

Based on work carried out by the Alliance
and the Forum on Governance,
organised jointly with the African Union,
Addis Ababa, 24-26 November 2005

Teamwork coordinated by Falilou Mbacké Cissé
assisted by Momar Lissa Dieng and Karine Goasmat
Alliance for Rebuilding Governance in Africa

Paper No. 2007-03

Distribution: Available on the Alliance resource Web site:
www.afrique-gouvernance.net

Preface

Since the beginning of the 1980s, the continent of Africa, as a whole, has experienced huge developments in political, institutional, economic and social spheres. A great number of countries have turned towards the building of pluralist democracy, with a policy of withdrawal of states from the production sector and decentralisation of public management. In all countries, civil society is emerging, increasingly seeking to assert itself as a significant regulator of processes that transform society. Across the continent, the transformation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) into the African Union (AU) has turned the ambition of Heads of State to progress towards the construction of a shared future for all the peoples of our continent into a reality. The African peoples aspire increasingly to recognition as the masters of their own fate. They aspire to more justice, more room for initiative and the right to mobility.

Echoing this situation, which may be deemed positive, many African countries are turning into "powder kegs" because their social fabric has been undermined by poverty, youth unemployment, exodus, emigration and disease. In many places, hotbeds are being ignited, kindled and stoked, jeopardizing the existence of tens of millions of men, women and children. Another visible sign of the crisis is that many basic public

services are failing, in spite of ongoing and renewed support from the international community. Africa has thus plunged into a downward spiral of crises, the causes of which beggar questions about the methods used to regulate social, political and economic affairs.

The concomitant nature of these two developments that *a priori* contradict each other - recurrent crises as well as the awakening of African social consciences - is probably indicative of the fact that African societies are in a transitional phase. They thus have to iron out the difficulties and contradictions arising from the construction of post-colonial Nation-States, while agreeing to shoulder the in-depth overhauls necessary for management methods in the public sphere.

For the Alliance, this calls for rebuilding of governance on social and cultural foundations that have been renegotiated with the people and drawn up in light of the experiences of each society. In Africa, there is such a gulf between institutional dynamics and constructions, and socio-cultural experiences that the legitimacy of public institutions and their initiatives deserve to be called into question today. There is no legal basis for

public action unless there is legitimacy which is supposed to provide its foundations, rooting it firmly in social organisation. Africans are now facing up to the challenge of inventing modes of governance enabling them to draw up specific responses to complex issues to be addressed by all of humankind. Looking beyond partial and sector-based reforms, beyond the grafting of institutional models which create more problems than they resolve, the process of transforming state and society in Africa calls for the in-depth rebuilding of modes of governance at all levels (from local to continental) across the continent. Unanimity seems today to have been achieved as to the decisive role played by "bad governance" in all the problems encountered by Africa. This is an indication not only of the scale of the challenge, but also the necessity of setting up a continent-wide dynamic to provide added value to all existing initiatives.

As soon as it was set up, the African Union adopted a vision of the continent's future which consisted in *"building an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, propelled by its citizens and acting as a dynamic force on the global scene"*. With this perspective, the AU Commission has committed to various projects for the building of common governance instruments in Africa, with, in particular, a draft Convention on the prevention and fight against corruption and, above all, a draft African charter on governance.

The decision to organise the Forum in Addis Ababa arose from the convergence of analyses from the African Union Commission and the Alliance for Rebuilding Governance in Africa,

according to which the strategies for transforming the public arena and managing public affairs are very long-term projects. The Forum draws on the idea that African societies are in a position to rebuild competent states, within a context of large, viable groups, capable of guaranteeing the expression of diversity of societies in Africa and to foster the necessary convergences in order to take up the challenges of developments in the world, together.

Rebuilding governance in Africa is not merely a matter of stating practices and rules, generally drawn from the experience of other continents which are apparently the indisputable models for "good governance". Rebuilding requires the drawing up and implementation of new practices in public management, rooted in values, with references and principles that are understood, recognised and accepted by all players in African societies. This thus requires all the players in the African public sphere to show determination and the capacity to open up to others, while keeping firm roots in one's own culture. Which makes it possible to enhance it with ideas from elsewhere and to reshape it according to the needs of today and the demands of tomorrow.

The aim of this Forum was thus three-fold:

- 1) identify the major governance issues in Africa,
- 2) commit African and non-African players to support and participate in an initiative for dialogue on governance in Africa
- 3) share an approach and methods to build an alliance and support the initiative for dialogue on governance throughout the continent.

This document is the product of three days of discussions on governance issues in Africa. Its sole ambition is to broaden the debate and share the viewpoints and questions on the rebuilding of

the public arena in Africa. An Africa, which in spite of its great diversity, deserves to reclaim the initiative, draw up a shared project, regain unity in action, and foster genuine dialogue with the rest of the world.

In this, the Forum in Addis Ababa (cf. the report on the Forum, also available on the Alliance's resource Web site) is shining proof that Africans from the five regions can discuss the issues they face together without at any time factoring in special features of African countries or regions.

All the allied organisations for Rebuilding governance in Africa join with me as Coordinator to thank those who made it possible to hold this Forum.



Ousmane Sy

Member of the initiative group and
Coordinator of the Alliance
for Rebuilding Governance in Africa

Sommaire

PREFACE.....	5
INTRODUCTION.....	11
AN AFRICAN GOVERNANCE INITIATIVE TO CONFRONT THE CONTINENT'S DIFFICULTIES.....	11
GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA: WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?.....	12
GOVERNANCE ISSUES.....	15
CURRENT GOVERNANCE CONCEPTIONS AND PRACTICES ARE SIMPLISTIC AND UNSUITABLE.....	15
<i>Governance which focuses on the function of state institutions paying no heed to whether they are suitable for the societies.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Governance focussing on its legal basis and omitting all questioning as to legitimacy.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Governance inspired by external models, imposed as a condition for international aid and assessed using a set of indicators that are not discussed.....</i>	<i>17</i>
TOWARDS THE BUILDING OF LEGITIMATE GOVERNANCE.....	19
<i>To establish the legitimacy of governance, it needs firm foundations.....</i>	<i>20</i>
Reconciling state and society.....	20
Credible African thinking on past and present: the challenge of the inter-African research group on modes of governance in Africa.....	20
Institutions established in Africa and open to the world.....	21
<i>An inclusive, dynamic approach for all players and the creation of public arenas for deliberation and co-management at all levels of governance</i>	<i>22</i>
Participation: the corollary and corrector of representative democracy	22
Public arenas in which to learn to foster consensus.....	23
Public arenas to allow for the sharing of experiences and education of players.....	24
<i>The appropriation of governance processes and instruments: languages, the language of governance and African intellectual independence.....</i>	<i>25</i>
Governance should be conceived and expressed in the languages used by players.....	25
The development of intellectual independence is a challenge closely related to the use of national languages ...	26
<i>Governance should also be founded on ethics which are recognised and respected by all.....</i>	<i>28</i>

<i>It is also a question of converging unity and diversity.....</i>	29
National unity and community diversity.....	30
<i>Levels of governance and levels of territory. Building and consolidating governance systems at all levels and adopting the local level as a strategic level for rebuilding</i>	31
Starting at local level to rebuild governance.....	32
The local level: a strategic level to respond to the legitimacy crisis of the state.....	32
Local level: a strategic level for boosting regional integration	34
Stepping up territorial integration processes.....	35
ESTABLISHING STATES FOUNDED ON THE RULE OF LAW WHICH ARE CAPABLE OF TAKING UP THE CHALLENGES OF DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT	37
<i>Establishing genuinely democratic states.....</i>	37
<i>The meaning and purposes of democracy: reclaiming politics in society.....</i>	38
<i>Boosting the role of the media so that citizens receive accurate and relevant information.....</i>	40
<i>Establishing states which comply with the principles of the rule of law and human dignity.....</i>	41
<i>States capable of designing and implementing public action for development.....</i>	42
Transparent management and optimum use of resources.....	42
The development of basic socio-economic services to meet the needs and hopes of the populations.....	43
CONSOLIDATING THE AFRICAN UNION AND SUB-REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS.....	45
<i>The African Union must be supported by a real and explicit political determination from states.....</i>	46
Step up the evaluation and monitoring of Community public policies.....	47
<i>The African Union must have genuine powers, assumed effectively.....</i>	48
Powers in line with the integration objectives.....	48
Opening up to improve efficiency.....	48
The essential thought on civil society to be incorporated into bodies and mechanisms.....	49
<i>The African Union must develop capacities for performance purposes.....</i>	50
TO CONCLUDE.....	53

An African governance initiative to confront the continent's difficulties

The Alliance for Rebuilding Governance is an initiative to ponder the dramatic crisis in public action in Africa and to suggest leads to solutions. It is a public inter-African arena for thinking and proposals to draw up and establish the principles and practices of governance tailored to African reality and to the challenges of the 21st century.

The Alliance came into being further to the observation that current governance approaches have not made it possible to resolve the crises shaking Africa. On the contrary, as the debates on governance are stepped up and initiatives are teeming, Africa is sinking further into poverty, insecurity and institutional instability. This observation has led to the diagnosis that Africa is facing a crisis in governance, reflected in the lack of legitimacy of public institutions vis-à-vis the people.

Subsequently, the Alliance's ambition is to search for an appropriate solution to wrest Africa from the vicious circle of diverse multifaceted crises. Taking action on governance systems thus becomes a key issue. What form of governance is needed to wrest the continent from this crisis which is

hindering its development? Considering the paltry effects of "touch-up" reforms, the proliferation of rules, structures and plans of action, there is a need to convince ourselves that governance in Africa requires an in-depth transformation of conceptions, approaches and practices in the management of public affairs. This is the angle from which it would be appropriate to discuss the rebuilding of governance in Africa.

The first step in the rebuilding process is to raise awareness among players of the causal ties between the crisis in Africa and modes of governance. Next, it is necessary for them to agree on the major governance issues. Lastly, they are called on to profile and implement major projects for proposals which are fundamentally innovative, laying the foundations for relevant conceptions and actions to give structure to the reinforcement and renewal of governance in Africa.

This African project for governance implies a process of dialogue and negotiation between the various players to draw up new means of managing public affairs. It is in this spirit that the Alliance drew up and published this document to

contribute to the broadening and deepening of the debate on governance in Africa. Its sole aim is to explore new ideas and innovative initiatives for governance with the capacity to wrest the continent from its crisis.

Indeed, while everybody agrees that the governance factor contributes in a multitude of ways to explaining the African crisis, it seems that, basically, a pause for analysis is necessary to discuss governance conceptions and approaches. The meaning and content of governance should be called into question once more. What exactly are we talking about when we address this topic? It is certainly not a matter of designing a project for "African governance", but of putting together an African project for governance.

Africa is a component of the world and as such, faces the same challenges as the rest of humankind. Consequently, the African project for governance cannot recommend withdrawal into isolation, nor ignore the universal principles of governance. It presupposes that the Africans themselves, while remaining open to the rest of the world, take the initiative and drive a process for the emergence and the implementation of new modes of governance that are acknowledged and accepted by African societies in all their diversity. It is not at all a fallacy or pretentious to say that the continent could no doubt make a decisive contribution to the rest of the world, which is having to contend with the same burning question.

Governance in Africa: what are we talking about?

Throughout the world, the third millennium has ushered in a major governance crisis. Institutional models are experiencing great difficulties in coming up with satisfactory and sustainable solutions to the new issues and strategic challenges for our time. The almost overriding triumph of economic affairs, the loss of meaning in politics, the decline of social ties, the mutual distrust between civilisations and between religions, the dangers of the environment, the renewed outbreaks of force and terror, the glaring

gulf between rich and poor¹, the significant advance of poverty, ignorance and hate are plunging humankind as a whole into total insecurity.

This global crisis in governance nevertheless takes on specific forms in Africa where it is expressed in a particular way. Post-colonial states are undergoing far-reaching structural crises, traditional approaches to social regulation have been undermined, and societies are experiencing great difficulties in coping with the transformations

¹ Between states and within them

of a reconfiguration process which is however inevitable. **Governance is indisputably the main decisive factor behind the difficulties affecting African societies. It is the major source of existing crisis situations.**

The crisis has sharpened to the point that in Africa, governance has become a fashionable topic in the past few years. Everybody acknowledges that its development is a condition for success for all other efforts towards development. Consequently, initiatives are multiplying², but with different, even contradictory conceptions, of the nature of governance and a strategy that would be capable of transforming it. The link between these initiatives and significant progress in the situation of the Black Continent remains a hypothesis to this day.

The necessity of clarifying and conceptualising governance has thus become obvious. Current conceptions and practices in governance are simplistic and inappropriate.

Broadly inspired by international development agencies, they put forward an onlooker's view of African realities, as if the continent were to renounce the possibility of making its own choices for the future. These out-of-step conceptions should be discarded in favour of legitimate governance implying African appropriation of the universal principles of governance.

² At all levels, from local to continental

Current governance conceptions and practices are simplistic and unsuitable

Hitherto dominant, exogenous governance conceptions and practices, the principles of which Africa has endeavoured to take on board, are proving to be restrictive in many ways. It is a form of governance which focuses on the function of state institutions paying no heed to whether they are suitable for the societies; governance focussed on its legal basis yet which omits all questioning as to legitimacy; finally governance with imported models which ignore African realities, but which absolutely have to be applied in order to win favour from the international community. As such, this form of governance is imposed as a condition for international aid, and attempts are made to evaluate it using a set of indicators.

Governance which focuses on the function of state institutions paying no heed to whether they are suitable for the societies

Nowadays, the governance crisis in Africa is commonly assimilated with the state crisis. Indeed, in this frame of thought, the management of public affairs is almost exclusively the responsibility of the state. The public sphere is reserved for national and international institutions, and building modes of governance is the responsibility of political and intellectual elites, or else cooperation organisations³.

This vision of governance centred on the state, however, only focuses on its own methods of intervention. Whereas it is clear that the crisis affecting it mainly impacts its sociological foundations. The state does not correspond to the peoples' representations of power. Nor does it fulfil their aspirations. It neither listens to them nor comprehends them, and rarely seeks to involve them in decision-making. At the same time, societies are turning away from the state in favour of other methods of regulation and other powers such as traditional or religious authorities.

³ Bilateral or multilateral cooperation

The divorce between states and societies is very real. However, current thinking on governance seems to disregard this. Has our logic not failed when we hypothesize that improvement to the functioning of state institutions as they are configured today will be enough to wrest Africa from the difficulties it is experiencing?

The crisis of the state is thus not a mere failure in how institutions function. More than this, it impacts its very foundations, and calls its legitimacy into question. In this sense, if a governance project only focuses on how the state functions and intervenes, it will perpetuate the marginalisation of peoples and communities, all the while weakening their interest in public institutions.

Moreover, while it is obvious that the conditions in which the post-colonial states came into being, as

well as their methods of organisation and functioning, broadly account for Africa's difficulties, the fact nevertheless remains that African societies themselves are in a state of crisis. Family solidarity, dignity, ethics, which were the main values upholding traditional African society are today in a restructuring phase to the advantage of "materialistic" systems which moreover are difficult to control.

The Africa crisis is thus a multifaceted crisis of society, encompassing more than just the state. It is the values, projects, representations, structures, processes and institutions around which African societies are organised which are being called into question. This is why an alternative governance project simply has to address the "way of being and doing" of state, society and citizens as well as the various links between them.

THE DIVORCE BETWEEN STATES AND SOCIETIES IS VERY REAL.

Governance focussing on its legal basis and omitting all questioning as to legitimacy

Focussing on the state, current conceptions of governance in Africa mainly address the formal legality of institutions and regulations. In short, the governance issue boils down to the single question of the existence or not of the "rule of law". That is to say a set of institutions which are the product of elections, governed by a set of laws and assessed mechanically on the basis of a certain number of criteria that are totally foreign to the citizens.

Indeed, this approach places the organisation of elections at the core of the democratic process, and thus of governance. It makes it a necessary and, very often, sufficient condition, regardless of how much these institutions are actually recognised by the citizens. This conception obscures the way in which these institutions make and apply laws, including those governing elections.

Considering mere formal legality has thus led, in Africa, to the setting up of institutions theoretically rooted in the principle of separation of powers, but mostly out of step with the societies.

This simplistic vision of governance has produced a slew of ineffective institutions and laws that are wholly divorced from reality. The structures and rules of governance are defined according to the trend of the moment and partisan interests, isolated or incidental preoccupations, and above all in response to conditions set out by external partners.

There is no doubt that democracy and the rule of law are dearly cherished aspirations and legitimate requirements in an Africa in which armed violence,

terror and rigged elections are common ways in which to accede to and remain in power. However, electoral rules should themselves be legitimate. Legality should be taken at face value, that is to say a set of rules governing a joint governance project.

Thus, governance from the sole standpoint of legality does not provide answers to basic issues such as ethics, the "people's will" and how to live together for societies and states made up of multiple, diverse communities. Nor does it respond to the inclusivity requirement of approaches and systems of governance when the institutions and languages used are inaccessible to the vast majority of players. Lastly, it ignores the necessity of associating the levels of governance that are at once autonomous and interdependent.

Governance inspired by external models, imposed as a condition for international aid and assessed using a set of indicators that are not discussed

Current conceptions of governance leave little room for initiative to Africa, whose performance is measured to all intents and purposes by its capacity to assimilate theoretical models of governance. These models, most often concocted in the offices of international cooperation agencies, aim to respond to ready-made sets of standardised, technical rules, and to take part in isolated, homeopathic "theme-based initiatives" such as the fight against corruption, achieving the


Millennium Development Goals or the fight against poverty.

The current debate on governance does respond to a legitimate source of worry, especially for states and donors, to set out and promote rules of public management that are at once effective and mindful of appropriate use of the resources allocated, measured by indicators of good governance.

But, this debate should be put back into perspective. **The definition of measuring and monitoring instruments cannot be a substitute for the prior identification of changes and transformations desired by the protagonists.**

Once the challenges of changing attitudes and practices have been identified and approved with

those affected, it will then be possible to define the strategies and methods used to take them up. It is then crucial to use indicators or progress markers to chart the changes desired, and thus, assess the relevance and effectiveness of the strategies deployed to this end. Such an approach would have the additional benefit of giving all players the means to track and steer the progress recorded towards the achievement of shared challenges.



Towards the building of legitimate governance

Legitimate governance as recommended by the Alliance implies that the countries of Africa should jointly design and set up a form of governance which recognises the various players and fulfils their aspirations. It thus presupposes that all should agree to a system of governance making it possible, furthermore, to satisfy the material and immaterial needs of the people.

This groundbreaking vision of the Alliance suggests severance from the current trend of thinking and practices relative to the management of public affairs. Thus, legitimacy is not to be confused with democracy, and the vision of governance to be built extends far beyond the state, legality and resources. It calls for shared values and a specific joint project making it possible to fulfil everybody's various aspirations.

All in all, it is a matter of building legitimate governance, which is the art of handling and associating public affairs at all territorial levels, and to exercise power to serve the Common Weal, backed and monitored by those over whom the power is exercised. Thus, the Alliance is putting forward systems of governance combining legality and legitimacy.

It is thus important for Africa to develop its own vision of governance. Complying with the universal principles shared by all humankind, it should come up with methods of organisation and functioning tailored to its realities, rooted in its culture but open to contributions from the rest of the world.

The fundamental question of the legitimacy of governance is very closely tied to the acknowledgement by the citizens and African societies of the methods of regulation and public institutions. The problem lies in the gulf separating the post-colonial state and society. Public powers are instituted and regulations down without any effort to understand socio-cultural realities. Consequently, they are simply ignored by the citizens who develop other means of arbitration and regulation. What are commonly referred to as "informal" channels develop and are reinforced, while the state becomes divorced from its sociological base, becoming increasingly incapable of acting on society, other than by violence. The people do not identify with the public institutions and the regulations they draw up, precisely because they mean nothing to them. This means that these institutions have little control over citizens' daily lives insofar as they do not correspond to their socio-cultural representations both past and present.

Reconciling state and society

The fundamental issue of rebuilding governance in Africa is to reconcile state and society by ensuring that institutions and governance regulations are appropriate to the realities of African societies and culture.

This involves revisiting the African socio-cultural heritage to take up challenges such as ensuring that governance includes the metaphor of the "talking tree" with reference to the meaning of dialogue, the African principle of consensus to counter the deviations of majority rule, and traditional measures for conflict prevention and management based more on social mediation than on armed confrontation.

Credible African thinking on past and present: the challenge of the inter-African research group on modes of governance in Africa

An African project for legitimate governance that factors in the values and realities of Africa, based on the experiences and practices of all categories of players, should take up a certain number of challenges in order to be successful. While the project should be conceived by and for Africa, African research workers should be able to build credible thinking on past and current methods of regulation in the various societies.

If to be legitimate, modes of governance should factor in African realities, a perfect grasp of these realities and the related practices is also necessary. Do these still have the same meaning, content and relevance today? Are they compatible

with the values and universal principles of governance to which the contemporary world refers? Can they enable Africans to make a relevant contribution to the global debate on governance?

If, lastly, the modes of governance should factor in players' practices and tangible experiences, it is also necessary for these to be recorded in all their diversity, in order to draw up shared principles that are applicable and acknowledged by all.

These challenges reveal a constant substantial requirement when embarking on the rebuilding of governance in Africa: knowledge. To succeed, the setting up of an inter-African research group on modes of governance in Africa seems imperative and urgent.

Institutions established in Africa and open to the world

In the last two decades, many African states have committed to reforms aiming especially to improve efficiency. Despite this, the governance crisis seems to be worsening more each day, rather than being alleviated. Because once again, as for the beginnings of the post-colonial state, these reforms have to a large extent been inspired by

Western countries, the institutions of which are still perceived as benchmarks.

It is thus necessary to consider that even if Africa shares values and principles of governance with the rest of the world, modes of organisation and management of public affairs should still be closely correlated to socio-cultural realities, symbolic representations and shared projects of each society. All in all, each society, based on its specific realities, develops its own system of political regulation.

It is thus important for institutions to be conceived with a view to tailored governance, in that it integrates the benchmarks as well as the actual methods of organisation and functioning of societies. From this viewpoint, research on traditional modes of governance and the expression of modern visions of societies should be combined to define the meaning and architecture of the institutions of legitimate governance. Thus, institutions should come to symbolise modes of governance as blueprinted by all players in society. To achieve this, these institutions should be imagined and designed based on inclusive public arenas to integrate the referents and socio-cultural roots of the citizens and societies to whom they are addressed.

To achieve legitimacy, all modes of governance should be rooted in inclusive processes. There is no point in having an Ark if everybody isn't on board. It is thus essential to sever the concept of governance from the technocratic ghetto of international institutions. Precisely because governance is not the exclusive domain of institutions and elites.

Participation: the corollary and corrector of representative democracy

Participative democracies under way in African states reveal glaring contradictions between their trumpeted desire to build national unity with active citizenship and the systems they set up to achieve this. This is particularly noticeable with respect to procedures whereby institutions and public policies are drawn up and implemented.

Indeed, the representative system, as practised, is based on elections which become an aim rather than a means and method. They are considered to confer absolute and exclusive legitimacy, giving elected representatives *carte blanche* for their term of office. Voters have no choice other than to let these new "monarchs" of democracy handle public affairs as they see fit until the next elections.

Under the pretence of representative democracy, current modes of governance are actually revealed to be more the monopolisation of institutions by a minority. They thus thwart any notion of participation.

Objectively, Africa cannot afford not to ponder the meaning and purpose of elections, and thus representative democracy. All the more so because citizens do not have a sound grasp either of the foundations nor the rules of the game. Almost everywhere, constitutions and electoral systems are blithely manipulated with a view to remaining in power, while the aftermath of elections unfortunately all too often winds up as violent and costly conflicts, resulting even in death. Representative democracy is thus a mockery, and citizens participate less and less. The meaning behind a term of office, the electoral process and its underlying principles have been perverted. Elections have been reduced to a ritual, in which the chief players are motivated purely by partisan, even personal aims.

Even had it been properly implemented, the representative system would certainly not have enabled a positive response to the aim of legitimising states via active citizenship. Indeed, this system seems insufficient to organise a mode of governance in which the African citizens and

societies could both designate their representatives, exercising a free, discerning choice all the while participating effectively on a daily basis in the management of public affairs.

It goes without saying that governance, to achieve legitimacy, cannot allow for any form of exclusion. Societies and the types of legitimacy they generate, the organisations and representatives they pick, the political parties and leaders they choose, the state and the institutions it sets up and each individual who so wishes, should be able to express themselves and to take an active part in public affairs, and thus participate actively in the definition and execution of the shared project.

Finally, in truly legitimate governance, all players are acknowledged and involved in the organisation and management of affairs in society via public arenas in which everybody can gain recognition and forge links. These public arenas are places for recognition, consecration and promotion of the skills and aspirations of each individual. Given their inclusive nature, they allow for both the regulation of interests and the creation of a community of vision geared around shared values and the joint project for society. The public arenas thus drive the mode of governance and ongoing changes. They create and integrate the formal institutions for political organisation and are the necessary corollary to representative democracy.

IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING
THAT TO ACHIEVE
LEGITIMACY, GOVERNANCE
CANNOT ALLOW FOR ANY
FORM OF EXCLUSION

The building of public arenas is necessary at all levels of governance.

Public arenas in which to learn to foster consensus

A striking feature of the crisis in governance is that representative democracy is proving to be increasingly unsuitable to handle the needs for increasingly complex social regulation, at all levels. It is obvious that the dynamics of social, political and economic reconstruction in connection with globalisation, processes of integration and decentralisation, cannot be content with the simple principle of majority rule. Modern democracies generally seem incapable of coming up with a viable alternative to majority rule, in whatever configuration.

Seeking a majority, as a means for decision-making, thus becomes an ongoing, overriding quest to the detriment of negotiation between the protagonists in public affairs. Decision-making bodies seek less and less to unite all players around a shared vision. Majority rule is applied in a mechanical, set manner, disregarding any discernable minority position, however relevant it might be from the viewpoint of general interest.

Based on this logic, recourse to mediation and consensus is the exception. It is obvious that this kind of system generates misunderstanding and

frustration, leading to tension and clashes. Far from smoothing over crises, majority rule stokes and perpetuates them.

And yet, according to traditional methods of regulation in African societies, consensus used to be a core feature of decision-making processes. Even better, obligatory participation and the fostering of citizenship, as well as the requirement of bestowing legitimacy on public action, call for the broadening of the public sphere and the acknowledgement of divergent interests, of all interests via public arenas.

The process of rebuilding governance should thus be defined while constantly striving to restrict exclusion and the factors of conflict within these public arenas. For many diverse players to join together in a shared project, on a relevant and coherent scale, consensus-seeking should be preferred to majority-seeking, insofar as consensus is a condition and a guarantee for the accomplishment of legitimate governance issues.

With consensus as a way to achieve negotiated management of issues and aspirations, everybody should be able to identify with decisions taken and feel jointly responsible for their implications. It is probably the price to be paid for citizenship which is so sorely lacking today, in spite of it being an essential condition to legitimise public action. Restoring the principle of "consensus" as a core

feature in the legitimisation process in modern African societies is today a major governance issue.

Public arenas to allow for the sharing of experiences and education of players

To guarantee the effective and relevant participation of players in the regulation of societies, it is necessary to ensure that they have the required capacities. This requirement covers at least three major preoccupations: the consolidation of players in their own sphere of competency, learning about partnership and cooperation among diverse players, the training of players in their role with respect to governance.

EXPLORING
INNOVATIVE ACTION
ENABLING THE
EFFECTIVE SHARING
OF KNOWLEDGE AND
EXPERIENCES

Public and private players alike often come up against very real difficulties when trying to cope properly with their role and responsibilities. Three factors explain such a situation. First of all, glaring weaknesses have been observed in training and educational systems. Next, players have an insufficient grasp of social, economic, cultural and political transformations on the continent. Lastly, the lack of information and knowledge considerably restricts player performance.

Thus, there is no doubt that direct, ongoing involvement of many, diverse players in governance requires mutual acknowledgement

and acceptance, as well as constant solidarity and cooperation across the board. However, the type of disposition required for this kind of partnership does not come naturally to players who have long existed and worked within a system based on the partitioning of players and sectors, initiatives and experiences.

Lastly, players should also be prepared and consolidated in the specific functions incumbent to them as participants in the management of public affairs.

All these challenges show the full importance of training for local players and citizens in the process of rebuilding governance. To meet this need, it would be necessary to explore innovative action enabling the effective sharing of knowledge and experiences, in particular via the setting up of institutes to train players at all levels, by setting up "databases" on successful experiments in governance and by promoting the sharing of these experiences.

The appropriation of governance processes and instruments: languages, the language of governance and African intellectual independence

It goes without saying that the two previous points contribute to the appropriation of governance. However, the decisive factor is first and foremost the question of languages and the language of governance. Including players and their contributions in promoting and taking into account the African socio-cultural heritage, and their acceptance of the resulting modes of governance depend to a large extent on their understanding of "the things to say" and "how to put it", but also on their capacity to say for themselves "where they want to go and how to get there",

Governance should be conceived and expressed in the languages used by players

Aside from economic dependence, the illusion of political sovereignty and the grafting of foreign models, governance processes are especially extroverted by the African states' use of foreign languages which, *de facto*, exclude the majority of people. The state communicates to the people in a language they have no grasp of, and which is probably not suitable to express their views and understanding of the world properly.

Some 50 years on from independence, over 70% of African people are illiterate in their official state languages. An analysis of the education and

training policies and systems across the continent, as well as of how the people perceive school, show that foreign languages will for a long time to come remain the prerogative of a tiny minority. From this viewpoint, it is difficult to place any hope in full literacy of societies in the languages of the former colonizing countries.

But looking beyond the African states' incapacity to ensure the education of all citizens in the official languages, the question of meaning has to be raised. Language is not a mere instrument of transmission in the military sense. It is much more, it is a socio-cultural tool which conveys perceptions and specific, deep sensitivity of the societies using it. In this sense, legitimate governance is necessarily anchored in the grasp and precision of the players' language. The relevance and effectiveness of a governance system thus necessarily implies the use of the national languages.

Better, language is a pivot for development. Consequently, the development possibilities of African societies are still hampered by the exclusion of national languages from the spheres of modern science, institutions and modern technology.

Lastly, the use of national languages would certainly bolster African confidence, given that citizens would realise that all knowledge and universal concepts of use to the continent can be expressed in their own language. Beyond the

question of universal access to education in the language of the coloniser, the true challenge for Africa is to forge its intellectual independence and to train, in their language, the human resources capable of participating in governance, driving and inspiring the development of the continent. In this sense, the use of African languages as well as the definition and harmonisation of truly African content are vital, guaranteeing the appropriation of processes and instruments of governance.

The development of intellectual independence is a challenge closely related to the use of national languages

LEGITIMATE
GOVERNANCE IS
NECESSARILY
ANCHORED IN THE
GRASP AND
APPROPRIATENESS OF
THE PLAYERS'
LANGUAGE

The language issue having been raised, the educational system should be re-examined. To put it plainly, players do not often grasp the issues of the use of national languages and intellectual independence throughout the continent. This is why it is essential to bear in mind the conception and approach of former colonisers that most post-colonial states have been perpetuating since independence.

Enthusiastically outlining their educational doctrine, the colonisers stated that: *"In Sudan, now that we have conquered the people militarily, our aim is to conquer them intellectually and morally. So we have to attempt to bring them closer to us, to successively model each of them, to take hold of their spirit, impose our mark, our particular features. The compulsory instrument of*

transformation is naturally language. We have to teach the natives our language."

However it was not to be taught to everybody since "people do not naturally learn the language of others and at any rate never completely abandon their own", and our resources were simply too paltry. So we should carefully select the pupils in order not to waste efforts and resources and for schools to achieve their dual objective: "While it is right and natural to expect schools to provide... immediate benefits, that is to say if we were able, thanks to them, to find the necessary employees for the various state departments, commerce and industry, it would be a mistake to believe that this is the main goal to aim at. In reality, as we have seen, schools are set up to spread our civilisation, educate the natives about individual rights in society, reveal to some the splendours of philosophy, science and history, and inspire respect and love for our wonderful nation in them all."

With respect to the difficulties encountered, the coloniser declared that "if the natives are recalcitrant about the benefits of the civilisation we are bringing to them, it's because their prejudices have prevented them from realising the benefits they could enjoy. These prejudices are fuelled by the vestiges of their former state, their beliefs, institutions and languages. Let us do away with these remains of a past that's over and done with. If this generation is too inveterate, let us address future generations via education. Let us teach the

children our language, inculcate our ideas, and our nation will soon boast millions of perhaps not new citizens, but at least faithful and grateful subjects."

If Africans have thus lost sight of the meaning and purpose of national languages and educational systems, this reminder of the colonisation project is enough to bring to light the real issues inherent in the use of African languages and correlated to a system of education that's firmly anchored in society.

This is why the definition and implementation of an African project for legitimate governance should be propelled by educational and training systems tailored to the contexts and needs of African societies. As places for the acquisition of knowledge and skills, schools are also the ideal setting for the fostering of intellectual independence within the continent and the constitution of human capacities to drive its development and integration into globalisation.

Education must not only serve the acquisition of knowledge, but also foster independent thinking. Especially in Africa, Africans should regain control of their lives, necessarily by favouring educational methods of harnessing learning, questioning and an education in thinking to help present and future generations to re-inject meaning into social life which is not the expression of neo-colonialism. In this sphere, it is important for school to regain its rightful place within society, for educational content to reincorporate the values of African culture, for

EDUCATION MUST NOT ONLY
SERVE THE ACQUISITION OF
KNOWLEDGE, BUT ALSO
FOSTER INDEPENDENT
THINKING.

them to reflect the real preoccupations of the people.

Governance should also be founded on ethics which are recognised and respected by all...

The Alliance stresses that ethics must be placed at the heart of governance. Therefore, the methods of regulating society and managing public affairs must be based on moral and philosophical referents that are known, recognised and respected by all. And yet, as things stand, it would appear that in current conceptions of governance there is a profound disjuncture between governance centred on administration on the one hand, and debate on the values and principles to which it should adhere on the other.

This issue of ethics within legitimate governance extends beyond legal matters. Ethics begins where law leaves off, even though very often in Africa legality clashes with elementary values. To realise this, one simply has to call to mind the formally legitimate "fiddling" of constitutions to allow regimes to maintain power even though the regulations thus violated were based on consensus. The ongoing denial of political players without ideals, quick to pledge their allegiance to someone or to follow the swing of the pendulum to receive privileges and "honours", proves the little respect shown for ethics. The lack of consideration for human dignity,

DEBATE ON VALUES IS
PRESSING AND INEVITABLE,
SINCE COUNTERVALUES
ARE BEGINING TO BECOME
ESTABLISHED AS
"GOVERNMENT NORMS"

the patrimonial management of assets and public resources, amnesty laws to consolidate impunity, and the untimely intrusions by leaders' family members in the running of the state also bear witness to the lack of ethics in political circles.

Debate on values is pressing and inevitable, since countervalues are beginning to become established as "government norms". They exacerbate the populations' dissatisfaction with politics and undermine the little credit the state has. They extol individual interests, and their impact on the development process is immeasurable, as proven by the inefficiency of institutional machinery in the fight against corruption.

In all, ethics primarily raises the question of the relationship with power in Africa. What motivates political commitment? Why and how should we work in politics? Why do we hold power and to what ends? How do we exercise power when legality has reached its limits? As the state is the seat of power, what kind of display should it put on in poor societies? Should it continue to be a purveyor of privileges, wealth and

honour for leaders who claim to act in the interests of their citizens?

Furthermore, ***the debate on values has a fundamental impact on societies themselves.***

The crisis of values is a social fact established in societies whose only benchmarks today appear to be enjoyment of power and of material wealth. As a result, countervalues already have "positive externalities" in the eyes of these societies.

This being so, how should societies conceive modes of governance and upon which values should they be based?

Dignity, integrity, a sense of honour, solidarity, commitment to serving the whole community,

courage in the face of an ordeal, forbearance in the face of incompressible needs are the many values which are crucial for the proper management of public affairs. Unfortunately they are relegated to the sidelines today.

The crisis of societies and the state most certainly makes it necessary, but also difficult, to build a legitimate governance project which postulates that public affairs and powers must be for the benefit of the common Good. At the very least, ethics should find expression in the awareness that institutional players, individuals and communities have of their rights and obligations vis-à-vis local authorities, but also in the determination they show to effectively convey this awareness in all public acts.

It is also a question of converging unity and diversity

Governance is a process of regulating tensions in connection with the complexity of the world, which is far from being an impenetrable juxtaposition of mutually independent, isolated realities. These tensions are thus inherent to the diversity of the players and the initiatives they carry out, the regions and their dynamics and also the communities and societies which form them. Everything is interconnected in this complex reality: everyone contends for the same aspirations and everyone is confronted with the same governance challenges. This being so, regulation becomes necessary. It expresses the inevitable

link between acknowledging and expressing diversity and building cohesion of a whole.

However, governance today is more focussed on separation, division or even the negation of these various realities. Thus, players, communities and regions exist side by side without "meeting", thus sustaining the inefficiency and discrepancy between governance systems.

In its quest for legitimate governance, the Alliance has made the convergence of unity

and diversity a key challenge of governance in Africa. It is thus calling for change not only to institutions, regulations and powers, but also for change which is even more focussed on the relationships, associations and "interfaces" between the various realities of an ever complex world.

From the players' point of view, the inclusive approach of public arenas is a tangible proposal acting as a bridge linking players and initiatives. As for societies, it is necessary to reconcile the requirements of building national unity and the consecration of community diversity. As for regions, it is crucial to rebuild governance in Africa at all levels, with the local level playing a strategic role.

National unity and community diversity

In this issue, the discrepancy between governance systems and social dynamics in Africa shows through clearly. Indeed it is obvious that all Africans identify, first and foremost, with their community, becoming deeply attached to it, as culture remains a decisive socio-economic and even political factor for African populations. Furthermore, these communities have been strengthened by the crisis of the post-colonial state. **The fact is that on behalf of national unity, constitutions which claim to found post-colonial states are exclusively devoted to the nation and the individual.** In doing so, they

ignore a strong and vital link within African societies, i.e. communities. This state of affairs has immeasurable consequences on the cohesion and stability of states, the full blossoming of the populations, mobilisation for development and the very credibility of states.

It would thus appear, once again, that adapting the institutions and the regulations which they establish and to which they are subject raises questions as to the conceptions and means with which governance reconciles unity and diversity. This is particularly true in Africa, where, more than anywhere else, the states are made up of multiple communities and very often straddle several sociological territories. Most African states still ignore this community reality and are afraid of it. Under the guise of the search for social peace and national unity, they tend to gloss over diversity. Yet the state should take the complexity of African societies into account. In this respect, the modes of governance pertaining to institutions and regulations should also be adapted to these African socio-cultural realities.

Building the foundations of a diverse society upon legitimate governance would lead to the recognition of legal pluralism combining the citizens' belonging to a nation and their deep-rooted attachment to their communities. In Africa, this is particularly so as a result of the very often conflictual co-existence of various community identities, or indeed of tradition and modernity. The

BUILDING THE
FOUNDATIONS OF A
DIVERSE SOCIETY UPON
LEGITIMATE
GOVERNANCE WOULD
LEAD TO THE
RECOGNITION OF LEGAL
PLURALISM

state model bestowed by colonisation did its best, without succeeding, of glossing over and ignoring these differences when building institutions and formulating the principles and regulations which govern public life.

Any project for legitimate governance must seek to reconcile unity and diversity by managing the relationship between the various constituents of the nation, in order to preserve the diverse character whilst unifying the whole.

Levels of governance and levels of territory. Building and consolidating governance systems at all levels and adopting the local level as a strategic level for rebuilding

From local to global, the various territories make up different levels of governance. Even if all the levels may be acknowledged and accepted today, there is a serious danger in considering them separately. Although each level of governance is specific and autonomous, they nevertheless have close links, whether these are accepted or not, with the other levels since social, political, economic and environmental links transcend these often artificial boundaries. And yet, today, there is an obvious lack of association between the different levels of governance, with an absence of effective checks and balances between the three levels of powers.

However, the interdependencies between the different levels of governance have a major consequence: a problem in an economic, social or institutional field cannot be dealt with at a single territorial level, such as local or national. On the contrary, it is essential to foster association, and therefore cooperation, amongst the players of the various levels in order to achieve congruity in their

visions, initiatives, approaches and procedures in this field. In other words, it is not simply a question of pigeonholing the levels according to a hierarchical organisation. The different levels need to interact and share their skills, that way everyone can convey their visions and make their own contributions to the management of public affairs.

Governance players are thus located and operate at different levels, each one corresponding to a level of governance. It is important, first of all, to explore and highlight the interdependencies of these levels and then to recognise and give value to the specific features of each of them. This approach to legitimate governance is essential as it helps to transcend the situation in which each level of governance, whether vertical or horizontal, corresponds to an exclusive level dealing with a certain number of affairs. The fact that associating these levels is very often only an optional requirement, leads to tensions and inefficiency. However, it is essential to realise that everything is interrelated and therefore these links should be

identified and accepted in a spirit of solidarity. At the same time, each level of governance remains responsible for a certain number of its own specific affairs.

Starting at local level to rebuild governance

Traditionally, governance issues are analysed separately at each different level. The lack of a proper approach towards the close interrelations between these different levels of public management explains, for many, the weak performance of integration policies, whether at national or regional level. We now need a change of perspective: **The local level should enable the national and regional levels to handle the social, political and economic challenges which call upon them.** It is with this in mind that the Alliance has defined the local level as the strategic level for rebuilding governance in Africa, as it has the potential to legitimise and link up the means and systems of managing public affairs. It can thus provide a response to the legitimacy crisis of the post-colonial state and bolster regional integration.

The local level: a strategic level to respond to the legitimacy crisis of the state

In the broad pursuit of improving the management of public affairs, the local level is currently presented as the territorial link for renewing and spurring the political and economic governance of

African societies, by means of decentralisation policies and reviving local development.

As regards political governance, it is a matter of bridging the gap between the African post-colonial state and society. Decentralisation as a solution to the Nation-State crisis rests on a simple hypothesis: **proximity is a factor which encourages local democracy insofar as it enables direct involvement of citizens in the formulation and running of local affairs.** This active involvement of citizens makes it possible to

LOCAL TERRITORIES CAN BE DEFINED AS THE "CORNERSTONES" OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

aply define a specific local interest, then put it into direct contact with the relevant local public initiative. Thus, by its efficiency, this legitimate public initiative will have proven the capacity of local authorities, improved their credibility and legitimised their leadership. Its relationship with the local public institutions having thus found a real purpose, citizens will acknowledge the public authorities and identify first of all with the local level, then the national.

As regards economic governance, it is necessary to meet the economic development goals of the post-colonial African state. A legitimate state is also a project that responds to citizen aspirations. Today, the state needs to freely inspire the significance and direction of such a project, and above all, to base it essentially on its own capacities. Thus, the state should have the awareness and determination to define its own development project (significance, direction), starting with endogenous realities, especially

regarding its "capacity to develop itself", which raises the question of its potential, and of its "capacity for self-development", which pertains to the resources which are immediately deployable and to the strategy to enable this potential to be harnessed.

The local level thus has a vital and irreplaceable role in the far-reaching qualitative changes expected in the field of economic governance. Local territories can be defined as the "cornerstones" of socio-economic development.

The local level is credited with the virtue of rebuilding the post-colonial state by means of local democracy and territorial economic development. This certainly accounts for the fact that with different itineraries and for different reasons, most African countries launched administrative reforms in the mid 1990s, focussing on decentralisation policies and local development.

It is true that real progress has been made, particularly with regard to asserting the principle of decentralisation, the implementation of an institutional mechanism, particularly involving local authorities. However, despite this assertion and the constant reminders of these hypotheses from all players, the decentralisation process does not seem to have been definitively accomplished. On top of this, the institutions and the practices they have generated are still inappropriate for implementing legitimate local governance. In all, the reforms seem to be experiencing some misgivings and a number of setbacks.

Of the major observations, we can highlight the following:

- Decentralisation models are very often copies of external models. Local governance remains fundamentally institutional and means of local debate offer little guarantee that people will be able to participate and that diversity will be taken into account at local level;
- Guided by considerations which focus more on wheeling and dealing than politics, the configuration of local territories rarely enables the emergence of economic development zones or the consolidation of relevant socio-cultural areas;
- There is a real lack of dialogue and exchange between local territories at national, sub-regional and pan-African levels, whereas decentralised cooperation with poorly defined content is developing with local authorities in Northern countries;
- The chronic, widespread fragility of local resources is an established fact. It is not so much due to their scarcity as to the perceptions and practices of governance players. Furthermore, this fragility stands out with the scope and number of missions entrusted to local authorities;
- The powers delegated to local level rarely correspond to the actual aptitudes of the populations and local communities. They mainly involve professions in which the local public authorities have no proper expertise;

- The issue of the means and instruments of decentralisation is closely linked to that of governance. This accounts for the fact that public service culture very often reverts back to a power-oriented perception of specific local interest which focuses on a demagogical distribution of privileges. It follows that the public service remains unprepared, cut off from society and counterproductive, and the crisis has become radically manifest in the failure of a good number of basic public services.

Local level: a strategic level for boosting regional integration

Alongside the rebuilding of the post-colonial state, the local level could boost regional integration, on the one hand by enabling the acceleration and consolidation of its building process, and on the other, by mobilising the dynamics "at the bottom" to serve the ideals of integration such as economic development or even the prevention and management of conflicts. These challenges for the local level could be achieved by acknowledging of its function as described above and by associating it with the regional level. But they can also be achieved by defining and making judicious use of the practice of integrated economies and of the concept of "border-countries".

Socialising integration processes by taking into account the local level and the social dynamics "at the bottom"

Obviously, the regional and sub-regional institutions that the states have equipped themselves with and which serve as the framework for the formulation and implementation of community policies, whilst symbolising them at the same time, must be closer (connected) to the African peoples. This is not exactly the case and for this reason, despite significant advances, especially in the fields of the free circulation of goods, as well as business and currency law, African public opinion still maintains that regional and sub-regional institutions are costly and inefficient disembodied structures without a hold on reality.

Such a perception shows that, essentially, community institutions face a problem of legitimacy as a result of several factors. The weak points of these institutions include the lack of players' involvement in their creation and operation dominated by bureaucratic tendencies (which are increasingly entangled in red tape), their closed attitude and the absence of communication and information policy, their weak influence on global affairs, and the difficulty of perceiving the outcome of their work.

The establishment of regional integration should be part of an inclusive and open approach. Therefore it should not simply involve the determination and action of the states alone. Citizens and social organisations should also play an essential role in the process of unifying Africa. Regional integration is established simultaneously and conjointly from the "*top*" and the "*bottom*".

Aside from the fact that integration requires broad-based support from players at all levels and solid foundations of legitimacy in order to be viable and sustainable, it must be noted that peoples and social organisations have already appropriated many sectors of public community space. Indeed, social, economic, cultural and sporting activities are increasingly being run by non-institutional players, organised in official or non-official regional areas. These include professional organisations, all kinds of networks, NGOs and citizen movements rooted in the local level.

This process of integration from "the bottom up" must therefore focus on the interaction of institutional players and contribute to legitimate, effective rebuilding throughout Africa. Local dynamics and the removal of barriers between sectors are essential for Africa's integration project.

Stepping up territorial integration processes

Stepping up territorial integration processes involves acknowledging and making discerning use of the concept of cross-border zones or "border countries". The fact is that cross-border zones are areas where peoples from neighbouring countries develop their business and initiatives, invent knowledge and strategies seamlessly, without being constrained by belonging to different states. Here, it is a matter of developing trade with international markets, sharing natural resources such as forests and watering places, and

organising events that foster cultural unity within communities. This territorial process of integrating peoples can be marshalled to the benefit of Africa's integration project in at least two directions.

Firstly, it could strengthen cooperation between neighbouring countries which, in turn, could put the notions of sovereignty and borders into greater perspective. **By taking into account these processes with "territorial boundaries", states could introduce common development policies by means of public services and shared equipment, harmonised urbanisation policies and joint initiatives in terms of security or transport organisation.** This cross-border cooperation between states could benefit regional integration by forming a concentric circle, and a context of construction and consolidation.

Secondly, marshalling this territorial process may contribute to preventing conflicts and consolidating peace across the continent. Indeed, the conflicts linked to border oppressions or demands between neighbouring countries could thereby be avoided.

The crux of the challenge is thus to turn cross-border areas into joining lines rather than dividing lines between states. The development of the concept of "border countries" would play a definite role in strengthening the African Union and sub-regional organisations which would become more efficient in their assignments.

TURN CROSS-
BORDER AREAS
INTO JOINING LINES



Establishing states founded on the rule of law which are capable of taking up the challenges of democracy and development

The states born out of independence movements have had trouble achieving legitimacy because they have been just as incapable of producing and leading development policies as ensuring the long-term well-being and security of their citizens. To a very large extent, **the state itself has been the main obstacle to the blossoming and security of societies and African citizens**. It has implemented authoritarian regimes which have mistaken public action with the repression of the masses. Furthermore, post-colonial states have established the pillaging and wasting of national assets as a government system, infringing basic freedoms and harming the lives of citizens.

This is why rebuilding the state has to factor in the hopes, dynamics and constraints of the people. This is true on a political scale and calls for the establishment of genuinely democratic states which comply with the principles of the rule of law and human dignity. It is also true in terms of well-being and presupposes states which are capable of implementing public development initiatives.

Establishing genuinely democratic states

The crisis of representative democracy is undoubtedly one of the fundamental aspects of the even greater crisis of governance in modern societies. Incapable of breaking the vicious circle of generating political, social and economic exclusion, representative democracy has shown its obvious limits in establishing "*government of the people, by the people and for the people*".

Modernising the state, however, requires both the modernisation of the structures and procedures of democracy and the ongoing adaptation to changes in society.

It is evident that in many cases, **the electoral process has lost its meaning**. Most of the counter-powers which should limit power have been neutralised. The dividing up of decision-

making bodies where public policies are defined and administered has ended up leading to a marked gulf between the objectives and ways of managing public affairs on the one hand, and the needs and expectations of the populations on the

other. It is also becoming paramount to question the meaning of terms of office once again and to forge new relations between those in office, constituents and authority.

The meaning and purposes of democracy: reclaiming politics in society

In Africa, democracy is very often summed up under three main politico-legal headings: the consecration of a multi-party system, the liberalisation of the media and the organisation of elections. This is certainly a response to a single ideology, single-party regimes and the "leaders who do not see their successors". Almost two decades later, nothing has changed, neither in theory nor in practice. While political parties "proliferate" in all countries and very often only have a legal existence, the elections themselves continue to fuel conflicts. Africa, in most cases, is still incapable of organising regular, transparent and peaceful elections. Each election gives rise to supervisory bodies which discredit the state administration whilst taking stock of the immaturity of democratic processes and political players. What is worse, the holding of a supposedly democratic election, guaranteed by observers and the international community, often leads to unprecedented violence. It is therefore without doubt that even the

DEMOCRACY IS AN ONGOING PROCESS OF BUILDING AN INDIVIDUAL AND SHARED CULTURE

conception of democracy currently being put forward in Africa has not proven itself.

The hypothesis of democracy is that each individual has the chance to express himself and to act, creating greater social cohesion and opportunities for immaterial and material wealth for himself and the community. Democracy is a human gamble. It presupposes that people share common interests - as individuals, social groups or nations - and are capable of making choices independently, based on common sense and balance ratios that are constantly renegotiated between all sectors of society.

More than a mere form of government or institutional model, democracy is an ongoing process of building an individual and shared culture of accepting contradictions, involving the ongoing search for dynamic compromises.

Democracy is a shared and individual project of autonomy. It requires solidarity within communities and amongst groups founded on genuine and local values and alliances to focus on the fundamental principle of citizenship.

In the democratisation process, the state draws on support from individuals and open grassroots communities. It cannot be built on the basis of ethnic, religious or regionalist crystallisations. The participation of individuals and social organisations in political decision-making processes and the management of public affairs at the level of districts, cities and villages gives rise to new forms of solidarity and gives citizens more room for freedom and initiative.

Furthermore, the normal functioning of democracy implies that all terms of office come *ipso facto* with responsibility which logically requires accountability. This is a vital factor for all individuals and all institutions which exercise particular assignments or functions on behalf of general interest. Accountability is an ongoing requirement throughout the term of office, either because particular circumstances make it necessary and the representatives are called to question (request from constituents, challenges to the representatives' responsibility, accomplishment of an assignment etc.) or because the set time has expired.

The delegation of responsibility works according to various means, one of the primary requirements of which must be the citizens' right to question, at any

moment, those in office on their use of the powers which have been conferred upon them. The office must be exercised in complete transparency so that all players can find out about public action at all times, without any obstacles, and check whether this action conforms to the shared debate and rules of the game.

However, building societies in which powers are shared, transparent, monitored and sanctioned must not be a mere magic formula. It must address specific concerns regarding the contents of the principles of genuine democracy, the definition and adaptation of the implementation mechanisms and procedures at the various levels of governance and the fulfilment of the necessary conditions for the efficacy of the laws and obligations relating to these principles.

While the content of the aforementioned principles needs no comment, implementation is nevertheless trickier. The diversity of approaches reveals the difficulties in defining the nature and extent of association of citizens and social organisations with public monitoring and management processes. From consulting to joint management, from simply sharing responsibilities to a real partnership, from calling matters into question to the power of revocation of the offices, it would appear that the possible scenarios are extremely diverse.

Lastly, asserting these principles and defining the implementation mechanisms and procedures are not sufficient in themselves to ensure their

effectiveness. Two support measures are crucial for this: establishing lasting conditions which are conducive to accessing information, and developing the capacities to turn citizens and

social organisations into credible negotiating partners for public authorities, capable of taking up the responsibilities conferred to them by democracy.

Boosting the role of the media so that citizens receive accurate and relevant information

Since the late 1980s, we have witnessed the birth of the private media in Africa. Nevertheless, in many countries, the media are still manipulated. The state media still have a strong presence and are often used as propaganda tools even though they are deemed to be a public service. The private press is struggling to develop the appropriate levels of professionalism. However, the media can turn out to be decisive players in consolidating stable societies.

In comparison with the Western media, the African media still have a long way to go before they achieve the same degree of autonomy and the same level of professionalism. Nonetheless, they are playing an increasingly important role in supporting and especially in giving impetus to major social, political and economic transformations in Africa. The media hold a core position in the process of forming public opinion in Africa, in the same vein as civil society.

The boom of the written press and radio and the gradual liberalisation of the audiovisual scene, which has encouraged the emergence of private channels, offer excellent possibilities for expressing individual and shared views. In fact, they are involved in the fight against corruption, promoting a public forum for questions and encouraging the development of democracy.

It is vital, in these conditions, to enable the press to enjoy more room for manoeuvre and independence. It is by doing so that the media will become one of the levers of a public arena where well-informed citizens are able to take up their responsibilities.

In exchange, exercising the profession implies that the roles of informing and communicating are accompanied by the best possible code of ethics capable of banishing partisan drift, which is the source of invasions of privacy and of general conflicts.

Establishing states which comply with the principles of the rule of law and human dignity

Submitting the state to a hierarchical legal order is one of the fundamental pillars of the rule of law. It implies that exercising state authority is controlled according to regulations, the breach of which is punished.

The rule of law guarantees the protection of citizens against arbitrary decisions and abuses of power. It also plays a role in the necessary regulation between general and individual interests and shores up democracy. Formally, African constitutions and legislation recognise the importance of regulating powers by law. This principle is asserted and often backed up with administrative and jurisdictional control mechanisms. The reality, however, is a far cry from the proclaimed principles.

The endogenous construction of a state is based on power which is often authoritarian, solitary and predatory. On the one hand, the state considers politics to be a means for personal upward mobility and on the other hand, to achieve this, it manipulates resources, public burdens and even the law. This situation ends up discrediting and thus disqualifying the state's social and economic regulatory functions. The collusion between politicians who distribute privileges demagogically in order to remain in power, civil servants and businessmen has ended up generalising a

mediocre conception of the ethics of public action and citizenship. The most obvious example of this is the reign of corruption and impunity.

Moreover, the strict separation of powers presupposed by the rule of law is also set out in the texts. Nevertheless, in line with the logic of manipulation and the shortcomings of representative democracy, the legislative and judiciary are the vassals of the executive. It is almost illusory to make legislative assemblies play the role of a counter-power, as their composition and partisan links with the executive necessarily enslaves them.

It is just as illusory to assign this role to the judiciary while magistrates' status only confers them nominal protection in states which pay little heed to the law. The magistrates themselves only have a vague idea of their responsibilities in achieving fair and equitable societies. The search for material goods and wealth very often leads them to give in to compromise or to corruption. It is both symptomatic and worrying that the judiciary refuses even to vest the small scope for freedom and initiative which it is granted by the law, or, even worse still, that is commanded of it by conscience. This shows that there are fundamental issues which depend on the quality of human resources.

THE CHALLENGE IS
THUS TO PROMOTE
MODES OF
GOVERNANCE WHICH
ALLOW FOR BALANCED
INTERACTION BETWEEN
PLAYERS

This is how the situation continues. It is as though the judiciary were in the position of a slave who has the right and the possibility to free himself but who voluntarily shackles himself to his master just because he is content with a servile position, or because he is afraid of freedom.

The challenge is thus to promote modes of governance which allow for balanced interaction

between players and yield hoped-for results in terms of models of society, procedures for generating and sharing wealth, and of regulating and peacefully managing potentially contentious interests. The nature of such a public arena and the rules of the game which govern it and their transparency are closely correlated to public decision conformity to the prescribed rules.

States capable of designing and implementing public action for development

Democracy is only effective if its political dimension is backed up with economic and social standards. The democratic system must ensure the best possible conditions to create wealth and distribute it fairly i.e. improving solidarity and social justice. As things stand, whether it is a question of creating or bolstering public services or encouraging development, public action depends on accessible natural or financial resources.

Transparent management and optimum use of resources

Rare and insufficiently mobilised, resources also often lack security and are used badly, or even earmarked for conspicuous consumption. They are unfairly distributed thus giving rise to violent conflicts, hence the need to manage resources

clearly. For this, two sizeable obstacles must be overcome.

The first is corruption which weakens the rule of law by causing a collapse of the rules and values that govern the relations between individuals, resources, activities and purposes of public action on the one hand and assure the morality of public life on the other. It eats away at the foundations of the economy by corrupting the standards which organise it. The fight against corruption is therefore not simply a legal and institutional issue. It should rather be part of a fight against countervalues, promoting the founding values of public life and human dignity, i.e. ethics, republican culture, sense of the common good, adherence to public management, a working ethos, honesty etc.

The second obstacle, beyond the defining of rules to which players are subject, involves the

breakdown of public and social mechanisms that monitor public action. On the one hand, the separation of powers and especially the independence of the judiciary - as guarantor of the normal game of states abiding by the rule of law - are far from being an effective reality on the continent. On the other, we are witnessing the overriding and deterioration of the counter-powers and social levers which are supposed to help ensure that public action complies with moral and legal requirements: the role of the press, families, schools, communities and civil society organisations, in particular, must be questioned once again vis-à-vis their relationship with power and the way public affairs are managed.

The development of basic socio-economic services to meet the needs and hopes of the populations

Citizens' access to basic socio-economic services such as health, education, transport etc. is a right, moral requirement, essential for any society hoping for harmonious development. In this respect, the development of public services is a *sine qua non* condition for establishing or restoring confidence between institutions, and more particularly the state and citizens. It is thus important to meet the needs and hopes of citizens at local and national level. For this to be possible, the state and local authorities need to develop the

necessary capacities to offer good and sustainable public services to all, in line with popular demand.

The development of these services highlights an urgent priority, since structural adjustment plans have led to an increase in poverty and inequality by reducing state intervention in delivering basic social services. It is true that recently, programmes aiming to fight poverty have become quite fashionable in Africa, and fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals has become the "rallying cry" of national and international institutions. However, it must be underlined once again that to meet needs in terms of delivering social services it is not a simple question of consensus within the international community, marshalling resources, defining a range of indicators and setting a deadline of 2015.

IT IS NOT A SIMPLE QUESTION OF CONSENSUS WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, MARSHALLING RESOURCES, DEFINING A RANGE OF INDICATORS AND SETTING A DEADLINE OF 2015.

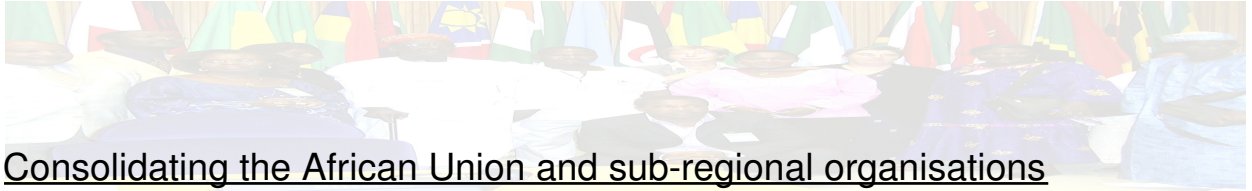
In reality, these public service difficulties are closely connected to those of the state. It is a governance crisis that must be resolved first of all, in order to make public action efficient and to come up with services and wealth from which everyone can benefit. Indeed, whatever the projects and programmes implemented, serious constraints will continue to compromise the delivery of basic services. This is particularly due to the lack of a public service culture, all sorts of inequalities and disparities as regards access to public services, a lack of credibility and skills amongst public service officials, the political manipulation of the public service etc.

Ultimately, the impetus in reconciling the state and society must translate into a broader offering of public services that factors in the proximity of demand and the action required and that ensures that the most vulnerable groups are paid special attention.

Delivering efficient basic public services is a condition of the legitimacy of the states in that it forges and gives meaning to relations between public authorities and citizens.

In view of this, delivering these services must involve significant participation from the beneficiaries of public action, cooperation from public players at all levels and a partnership between the private and public sectors.

In this way, public services need to be tailored to the economic, social, cultural and technical realities of the populations. Their organisation, functioning and services need to correspond to the aspirations and actual possibilities of Africa and evolve at the pace of the societies for which they are intended.



Consolidating the African Union and sub-regional organisations

Regional integration is an ideal to be achieved for the development of the continent, for peace and stability and further for an improved global position for Africa.

First of all, isolated national development is suicidal. The competition engendered by liberalisation and globalisation in shortage economies certainly lends itself to a certain amount of progress, but also to tensions, persistent inequalities, social relations which are often violent, social disparity, "uncontrolled" mobility and generally the extroversion of national economies. In point of fact, the regional market is the strongest source of potential for future business. The boom in regional trade can also subscribe to regional demographic perspectives in the long term. The interplay of economic complementarity and healthy competition on national markets constitute a powerful catalyst for the development of the African economy. The regional level must be able to offer a controlled framework to the societies, which are still weak, with a view to generating wealth and sharing goods and services.

Furthermore, Africa very often conveys the image of a continent where conflicts and poverty interpenetrate and alternate in a complex relationship of cause and effect. Wars, violence and insecurity remain rife on the continent. And yet, Africa is interpellated by means of numerous challenges such as internal development and participation in global affairs on an external level. To rise to these challenges, Africa must first manage to achieve peace, stability, security and tolerance. It seems that these objectives could be fulfilled by coming together as a balanced and harmonious, coherent and competitive whole, thanks to regional integration. Conflicts and regional integration are part of a dialectic; a reciprocal power struggle which needs to be resolved through peace and security.

Finally, since their accession to sovereignty, the African states, as a whole, have not managed to position themselves and become significantly involved in the running of international and global affairs. To face up to this situation and become fully-fledged members of the international community, African states need to come closer and join forces by means of a genuine integration policy. Indeed, a strong and integrated African community could constitute a negotiating force in the world and should allow the continent to participate in the new system by bearing upon global relations.

Such a process - so long to implement, so costly in terms of efforts and above all so demanding in terms of vision and strategy - requires strong technical and institutional machinery founded on a genuine political project of regional governance. It is in this way and for this reason that the African Union must be supported by a real and explicit political determination. It must have genuine powers that are assumed efficiently. For this to be possible its capacities must be highly operative.

The African Union must be supported by a real and explicit political determination from states

This pan-African organisation is currently faced with enormous constraints, the most important of which is undoubtedly the states' weak commitment to the institution, starting with regional integration. Beyond the official creation of integration structures, beyond the speeches, the declarations of intent and the attendance at AU meetings and sessions, the states generally fail to meet their obligations to the African Union time and again. The best indication of this is the AU's difficulty in gathering the 15 ratifications necessary for the entry into force of the Convention on the Prevention and Fight against Corruption, despite the major declarations and legal and institutional arsenals of the states.

This lack of interest is also blatantly obvious in various other areas, especially the delegation of sovereignty, the payment of contributions, the ratification of Community legal instruments, the communication on pan-African projects and the forthright and effective participation in their implementation. This state of affairs is all the more worrying as these states show total indifference

towards the possible sanctions which are, or may be, imposed on them. Besides the fact that the African Union has no real powers of constraint vis-à-vis the states, it would appear that the latter are more concerned about the sanctions set out by international organisations such as the UN, the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund.

African states therefore appear to subscribe to "two-tier" commitments, and such duplicity mainly calls into question the political determination of the states to establish a strong and credible pan-African institution to serve regional integration.

Since the process of building "large groups" of states is a "win-win" situation, it is important to step up the membership rules and accession criteria with which all Member States or applicant countries must comply.

Furthermore, ***the strategy of socialising the integration process could be a means of defence against the flagging political determination of states and the non-fulfilment***

of their obligations. For this, it is necessary for national public opinion and civil society to be involved in defining and monitoring the commitments of their respective states. This being so, they could set up internal forces for questioning and sanctioning.

According to this mindset, international opinion should not be outdone. The fact is, the aforementioned "two-tier" commitment clearly shows that African states are more concerned with international organisation and external partners.

It is vital, in every instance, to improve the rapprochement between the African Union and the peoples and to make a plea on African integration and the need to shore up the pan-African organisation. In sum, the existing sanctions against failing states must be stepped up, by combining them with other sanctions, in this instance of a political, social and diplomatic nature.

Step up the evaluation and monitoring of Community public policies

Beyond the need to define stricter criteria for accession to the African Union, there is also the issue of evaluating regional integration by means of a global system for monitoring Community public policies. Above all, it is of paramount importance to build on the African Peer Review

Mechanism (APRM), which not only helps to review but also to share good governance practices.

The APRM can be a useful and suitable tool. It is the AU's self-assessment mechanism, which Member States can sign up to if they wish. Its main objective is to encourage the adoption of policies, standards and practices with a view to fostering political stability, high economic growth, sustainable development and accelerated continental and economic integration.

Nevertheless, the mechanism most certainly needs to be reviewed. Does a peer review mechanism not run the risk of being inefficient? Are the monitoring criteria based on internal dynamics of governance systems or are they merely a formality? Have we sufficiently taken account of the experiences of regional integration organisations to strengthen this mechanism? Are the media and freedom of expression considered to be fundamental levers of the review process?

It would seem that the means of improving the current mechanism should be explored, the main aim being to organise joint review processes. These call for the official and effective involvement of civil society as much in the defining and tightening of criteria and indicators as in their implementation.

Regional integration must not be a simple slogan born out of fashion. Nor must it be a slogan that is brandished to satisfy the people's desire for integration, particularly that of young Africans resolutely convinced that this is the road to salvation. As a result, regional integration must have the means to take up the challenges of development, peace and Africa's influence throughout the world. For this reason, it is crucial that we take a vested interest in the powers of the African Union to meet these challenges, and the way in which these powers are assumed.

Powers in line with the integration objectives

The amount and type of powers that states should cede to the pan-African organisation are closely connected with the regional integration objectives. Thus, serious thought must go into deciding which are the relevant powers to delegate to the African Union and to the questioning and accountability mechanisms.

At the very least, key questions could be drawn up to foreshadow the number and type of assignments to be delegated to the African Union. First of all, what are the powers and what is the economic thrust of African integration regarding global, sustainable, endogenous and harmonious development? What are the relevant prerogatives,

fields and times to enable the pan-African organisation to prevent and manage conflicts? Lastly, which fields and institutions should be invested in to develop a relevant African vision and position, and to then have a decisive influence in the world.

Although here, once again, the states' apprehension of signing away illusory sovereignties may turn out to be an enormous constraint so long as the issues of political determination and the integrative vision remain unresolved.

Opening up to improve efficiency

The efficiency with which the African Union should deal with the assignments conferred to it must be a matter for serious consideration. The Union may be able to achieve efficiency if it opens up more, particularly to non-state players and if it makes use of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM).

The African Union's socialisation project does not simply contribute to the legitimisation of the African Union and to the raising of awareness about African integration. It also helps to improve the efficiency and quality of the assignments carried out by the institution by marshalling the skills and initiatives of the citizens and their organisations.

Thus, in the field of peace management and conflict prevention, civil society and the citizens could be invited, by the Peace and Security Council, either to reorganise and capitalise on successful local initiatives, or to join forces with the Council to search for sustainable solutions to maintain peace and alleviate tensions. It is thus a question of taking advantage of the invaluable gems for conflict prevention and peaceful management of tensions that are rooted in African social and political traditions, but which are sadly ignored or sometimes even thwarted by institutional approaches. All these initiatives must be backed up with an early warning system.

In terms of the economy, the African Union should open up in at least two directions: the private sector and the so-called "informal" sector. Economic development is an urgent, top-priority task on the African continent. As things stand at present, the capacities, powers and possibilities of the private sector have not been harnessed to their full potential. This perspective must be overturned. As part of its economic development assignment, the African Union must forge a partnership with the private sector. Furthermore, it must take the "informal" sector into account, as it is an integral aspect of African economies. Not only does this sector lend itself to wealth, but it also stands to develop in the future.

The essential thought on civil society to be incorporated into bodies and mechanisms

The APRM also contributes to reviewing the African Union's assignments. In this respect, it is also faced with the challenge of opening up to civil society. There is, however, a step to be taken prior to this opening: the accurate definition of an African civil society and a relevant means of representing it within the African Union. These two problems do indeed pose a threat to the efficient involvement of civil society organisations in institutional integration processes.

The first problem is inherent to the concept of civil society itself, as we often have trouble pinpointing the outlines, contents and form that it should be given. Moreover, the organisations which comprise it are themselves faced with serious governance difficulties due to questionable practices which go against the principles they are meant to uphold. This brings to light the need to instigate in-depth and systematised thinking into the issue of African civil society. The objectives of such thought are on the one hand to grasp its diversity and on the other, to set up inclusive mechanisms in order to integrate all aspects of civil society in the current governance process. This is dependent on the stepping up of their capacities with a view to the role they are to play.

The second problem relates to the current system of representing civil society organisations within the Union, via ECOSOCC, the AU's Economic, Social and Cultural Council. This representation

system must overcome the double hurdle of the legitimacy of the organisations which should have seats within the body and of their independence vis-à-vis the states that may influence their selection. For this to be possible, the definition of

selection criteria could be founded on a thematic approach which takes into account both the field of intervention of each organisation and its credibility, particularly as regards compliance with governance principles.

The African Union must develop capacities for performance purposes

The efficiency with which the African Union fulfills its assignments is largely dependent on its internal management and the strengthening of its capacities. In practice, however, the pan-African institution is confronted with real organisation, operation and communication difficulties.

The very functioning of the organisation stumbles across enormous obstacles. The lack of financial autonomy makes it dependent on states and support from donors. Its political ambition does not seem to match its means. Its procedures are bureaucratic and its protocol very cumbersome.

On top of this, there is a lack of consistency among the governance-related contents and initiatives. Indeed, the Union faces dysfunctions linked to the plethora of texts, initiatives and programmes that it is responsible for and that the consistency of which is difficult to achieve. A classic example of this difficulty in coordinating governance programmes and initiatives can be

observed in the evolution and management of NEPAD, which has created a real double power within the Union. In addition, the operationalism of this plethora of texts, conventions, initiatives and programmes is not even guaranteed. As a result, some form of institutional engineering should be defined and strictly implemented, based on the principles of congruity, relevance and efficiency.

THE REGIONAL LEVEL IS
NATURALLY WHERE POLITICAL,
ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL
LINKS ARE THE TIGHTEST

In general, the African Union has a blinkered view of non-institutional players and the governance initiatives they shoulder. This inevitably leads to a cacophony in this field. It is therefore paramount to identify, evaluate, capitalise on and strengthen the governance initiatives of all players but also, and above all, to create a harmonisation and follow-up framework for all these initiatives.

It is obvious that ***to be stronger, the pan-African institution needs to find credible and stable links to all the other levels of governance.*** From this point of view, the Union's strategy of building

on regional economic communities is highly relevant. The regional level is naturally where political, economic, social and cultural links are the tightest. Regions should also be the main level for streamlining, coordinating and harmonising governance initiatives. They are essentially one of the keystones of social integration, the purpose of which is to establish integration led by the peoples. They should also be a base for forging connections with the local level.

It is also for this reason that it would be a distinct advantage to socialise the African Union plus its programmes and projects, even if the institution is not spared the classic difficulty experienced by integration organisations of combining the social processes with the institutional dimension with a view to setting up integration led by the peoples.

ECOSOCC is the only mechanism for representing civil society today, and it is naturally suffering from a lack of representative character and legitimacy as a result of the way in which the organisations are chosen and the fact that the selection criteria are still not clearly defined. But beyond the representation of civil society, the real challenge to be taken up is to develop machinery for consulting citizens.

Finally, the pan-African organisation is experiencing great difficulty in communicating with the peoples on the significant work already carried out. Therefore it is necessary and urgent to guarantee the communication of its vision and programmes by means of a plea to the peoples and citizens, with the ultimate aim of informing them to help them understand, accept and participate in the Community system.

To conclude

To conclude but by no means close the debate, this contribution puts forward lines of development which could lead to joint historical and political requirements: renewing governance in Africa, complying with citizens' expectations and setting up a process of integration led by the peoples.

The challenges are enormous and require sustained and ongoing commitments from all players. The state (whose configuration and assignments are to be called into question in light of its own assessment and current requirements) the Community institutions, civil society, the private sector and local authorities: the various groups within society are currently subject to a renewal process which must not be put on hold. Against the backdrop of globalisation, which has set the pace of strong competition on an international scale, Africa is facing up to requirements and emergencies: providing proof of its political capacity to reinvent a better future for Africa, to offer its people a place of freedom and well-being, to form synergies to make its mark on the international stage.

These requirements and emergencies thus inspired this contribution, the main ambition of which is to question all players in order to prompt thinking to fuel action which can lead to a means of governance which complies with the rule of law, democracy and human dignity, guaranteeing peace and security within a unified and strong continent, capable of lending its voice to the chorus of nations.

It is therefore not a question of raising yet another complaint, for the time has passed for victim rhetoric. It is rather the time for a wake-up call, for new commitments to remedy the errors of the past and present, put forward solutions for the new constraints and establish new free areas where shared views present their own vision of the future of our continent.

Paper No. 2007-03

Distribution: Available on the Alliance resource Web site:

www.afrique-gouvernance.net



Towards legitimate governance

A contribution to the debate on governance in Africa

Based on the work of the Alliance for Rebuilding Governance in Africa and the Forum on Governance in Africa organised jointly with the African Union Commission - November 2005

This document is the product of three days of discussions on governance issues in Africa. Its sole ambition is to broaden the debate and share the viewpoints and questions on the rebuilding of the public arena in Africa. An Africa, which in spite of its great diversity, deserves to reclaim the initiative, draw up a shared project, regain unity in action, and foster genuine dialogue with the rest of the world.

The Alliance for Rebuilding Governance in Africa brings together African and non-African players committed to action and thought, anxious to promote dialogue on the management of public affairs in Africa both amongst the Africans themselves and throughout the rest of the world.



Direction générale
de la Coopération internationale
et du Développement

DgCiD

With support from

The Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DGICD) - MAE France



fph | Fondation Charles Léopold Mayer
pour le Progrès de l'Homme

The Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation for Human Progress (FPH)