Founding Charter

of the

Alliance for Rebuilding Governance in Africa

September 2006

Introduction

The '*Dialogues on Governance in Africa*' Network was created at the beginning of the year 2000 on the basis of a strong intuition shared by a number of persons with varied and significant experience inside and outside established institutions: **if Africa and its people are to survive, prosper and play their part in the world, they cannot content themselves with a patchwork of sectoral plans, unsuccessful emergency measures and imported models.** These persons felt it was important not only to **reform but also to rebuild governance**; that a new vision of the world, a new way of thinking was required; that **the meaning and values guiding human activities had to be rediscovered;** that we needed **to link rather than separate, to use reality and experience--not dogma--as a foundation.**

The main objective of the initial Network phase was to develop **an African voice** to contribute its own proposals and working methods to the project to rebuild governance—a vital step for peace, development and democracy.

While working towards this objective, the Network became aware of the fact that the governance crisis manifests itself in two ways:

- **Crisis of the Nation-State principle** as a means of organising societies. States are simultaneously too distant to provide integrated management of societal problems and too small and weak to constitute a community of destiny and a space for exchanges in an increasingly globalised world.
- **Multifaceted crisis of society** that goes well beyond the State. Relationships between individuals, within the family and in public spaces are all touched and weakened by this crisis. What is involved, at heart, are the **forms of representation, structures, processes and institutions** on which contemporary African societies base the ways they manage power, share public resources, and provide mediation between various individual and group interests.

It also became clear that the crisis in governance could not be overcome with a ready-to-use 'kit' of uniform rules. In the field of governance as in the field of development, Africans needed to **develop their own vision of the future and enter into a dialogue with the rest of the world to meet shared challenges.**

Activities carried out within the network yielded their first tangible, shareable fruits. Little by little, nine motivated West and Central African countries constructed their own vision of governance. Proposals for rebuilding governance were made and methods of dialogue were set up so that these proposals could be discussed. Partnerships were also created so that avenues to and means of rebuilding governance in Africa could be designed and tested.

The creation of an *Alliance for Rebuilding Governance in Africa* is the Network's next phase. This alliance, built on a foundation of shared convictions and visions, hopes to **mobilise the forces for change to elaborate on proposals, strengthen their legitimacy and translate them into action.**

Our vision is based on the need for an **African project for legitimate governance** that meets three minimum requirements. It should be **shared**, so it must be the result of dialogue and sharing of experiences and ideas on governance amongst all actors. It must be **global**, not a juxtaposition of partial institutional reforms whose weaknesses have been clearly demonstrated. And it should be **anchored in African realities while also meeting requirements imposed by modernity and the world at large**, not an imitation of recipes for governance imposed by or inspired by outside sources.

To meet these requirements, an innovative approach—tested by the Network since its creation—should be implemented. This approach is based on four building blocks: **use the concrete experience** of actors, not dogma, as a foundation; set up a **continuous 'back-and-forth' movement between experience and reflection** to establish diagnoses and make proposals; **link--rather than isolate**—levels of governance (from the local to the global), problems, milieus, local innovation and global policies, Africa and the rest of the world; **articulate unity and diversity**, showing the diversity of situations, viewpoints and experiences in different social milieus (colleges) and territories (countries).

Objectives of the alliance

This alliance is being set up to:

- construct a public inter-African space for dialogue and reflection on governance,
- design proposals to change the management of public affairs in African, and encourage discussion of these proposals,
- mobilise State and non-State actors in initiatives for **effective rebuilding** of governance in Africa,
- participate in discussions concerning governance in Africa and the world.

Shared values and principles

Collective action can be conducted in the long-term and with the necessary transparency only if a number of shared values and principles govern relationships between all parties.

An alliance can work only if members adhere to certain ethical criteria that constitute a 'mindset' and govern behaviour:

- Members define their membership in the Alliance through actual commitment to the shared project, and agree to give up their membership if this commitment should disappear;
- Members agree to share their experience with other members;
- Members use the Alliance as a space for pooling knowledge, links and initiatives;
- Members are responsible for making the Alliance thrive--by maintaining links with other members, making the Alliance more well known, and diffusing its work and conclusions;
- Members recognise that they always have something to learn from others;
- Members respect the diversity of viewpoints and convictions expressed while maintaining a commitment to discover shared perspectives;
- Members shall not form reductive visions of problems, but shall strive continuously to enrich their understanding of the world and their contributions to the search for solutions;
- Members participate in efforts to design and implement proposals;
- Members seek to translate proposals into their own actions;
- Members adhere to jointly adopted working methods and respect shared deadlines;
- Members agree to respect ethical criteria when using the Alliance's name, and to do so only after consulting the other members;
- Members agree to make the Alliance an open space where others feel welcome;

- Members agree to maintain a tranquil, cooperative atmosphere; conflicts within the Alliance shall be managed peacefully, and if possible used as an opportunity for group progress.
- Members agree to have their participation in the Alliance made public;
- Members agree to respect any jointly defined rules of confidentiality even after their participation in the Alliance has come to an end.

Working method

In keeping with our idea of governance for society, we have based the '**governance of the Alliance'** on principles and values set out in the *'draft charter for legitimate governance in Africa'*.

Thus the governance of the Alliance is not built on an illusory representative democracy that places voting at the centre of all delegation, deliberation and decision-making processes. **The Alliance implements a participative approach based on deliberation, recognition of pluralism (diversity) and the primacy of consensus (unity).**

The Alliance uses a working method with several components to carry out its activities.

Allies

The Alliance works toward convergence of the ideas and actions of people and organisations. These 'allies' are chosen according to three main criteria:

- they are the depositaries of the interests, aspirations and ideas of a social category, recognised as such in their milieu, and dynamic elements of their societies,
- they are actively involved in the construction of a 'different world' and they belong to the forces of change,
- they share, for the most part, the objectives, values and working modes jointly defined in the framework of the Alliance.

Allies' participation in the Alliance's work (exchange of experience, reflection, initiatives) is active, regular and long-term. They belong to colleges. They receive no payment for their participation.

They are the very substance of the Alliance, which is only as good as its allies.

The Alliance's Council

The Council of the Alliance was initially made up of its founders. It then grew by co-optation. Its strength lies in the moral authority and legitimacy of its members. New members are not chosen by virtue of their titles but on the basis of their **actions, convictions and commitment —along with their respect for regional diversity.**

Council members receive no payment for their participation:

- The Council watches over the Alliance's spirit and ethics.
- It makes sure the Alliance's strategic directions are defined by consensus, and is the decision-maker of last resort in case of serious divergences;
- It puts its 'stamp of approval' on initiatives conducted by the Alliance.

The Alliance's information system should make the Council's activity perfectly transparent by placing it where all can see. Thus the Council allows itself to be the first instance judged with regard to its legitimacy, which is based on its respect for the Alliance's founding principles.

The Council, presided over by a respected leader, entrusts its secretarial duties to the Coordinator and defines its own internal rules of procedure.

Members agree to contribute to the dynamics of the Alliance according to their capacities and competencies. They agree to respect joint values.

Pan-African coordination

Coordination on the pan-African level is provided by a Coordinator and a Resource Center.

- **The Coordinator**

The Council designates a Coordinator to coordinate implementation of the Alliance's strategic directions. The Coordinator is paid for his or her work. He or she is appointed to the position for a limited, renewable term.

A procedural document defines the functions of the Coordinator.

The Coordinator is assisted by secretarial staff.

- **RESOURCE CENTER**

The Resource Centre is responsible for providing the '**joint functions'** (information system, coordination, technical support) the Alliance needs to operate properly.

A procedural document defines the Resource Center's rights, obligations and attributions.

The group of persons responsible for each function is appointed for a limited, renewable term. The end of each term provides an opportunity to evaluate and improve the working method and call for candidatures to add new members to or replace the group responsible for the function.

The authority of these groups is based entirely on their respect for the spirit of the Alliance, the strength of their commitment and how they help implement the working method.

Regional magnet centers

The Alliance may move toward autonomous magnet centers linked on the pan-African level.

National mediation

On the national level resource persons are responsible for **supporting the construction of the Alliance**:

- by identifying and contacting organisations and persons capable of and interested in participating in the Alliance's work
- by developing various partnerships on the national or regional level
- by keeping the Alliance's directory up to date

Mediators' missions are clearly indicated in a letter describing their participation in detail. Mediators are appointed for limited, renewable terms.

Mediators' authority is based entirely on their respect for the spirit of the Alliance, the strength of their commitment and how they help implement the working method.

Financial partners

The Alliance's ongoing, long-term activities require significant financing from both inside and outside sources. Funds may be provided by national or international, public or private, bi-lateral or multi-lateral partners. They may be used directly by the Alliance, or for the Alliance's account, by an ally or group of allies.

The Alliance seeks out three types of financing:

- Funds from one-off partnerships with individuals or companies/organisations that have decided to support an initiative taken within the framework of the Alliance, but are not otherwise involved in the Alliance.
- Funds from long-term partnerships: these are strategic partners that share the Alliance's vision, are involved in its dynamics and provide on-going financial support. These strategic partners develop and promote with the Alliance relationships that are completely outside the realm of typical 'donor-beneficiary' rapport.
- Funds from Allies that contribute to joint activities