North Africa, Southern Africa, East Africa, Central Africa West Africa

FORUM ON GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA

organised by the African Union Commission

and the Alliance for Rebuilding Governance in Africa

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REPORT

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I – Introduction

The African Union Commission (AUC) and the Alliance for Rebuilding Governance in Africa jointly organised a Forum on Governance in Africa, which was held in Addis Ababa from 24 to 26 November 2005.

Forum Issues

Since the 1980s, Africa has experienced profound changes in its economic, political and social environment (democratisation, withdrawal and decentralisation of the state; emergence of civil society etc.). On a regional and sub-regional level, integration efforts have been undertaken. In addition, the creation of the African Union has made the desire to build a united Africa to face up to the challenges and issues of its development a reality, and made it possible to make progress in the development of an African citizenship as well as to renegotiate the conditions for a new partnership with the rest of the world (for example through NEPAD). In general, the people would like greater democracy, more transparency, more justice and greater room for initiative.

Paradoxically, this slow but sure awakening of African social consciences, which can be seen by the increased call for democracy, is not being accompanied by a similar drive in economic, political, social and cultural reforms. Instead, the continent is plunging into poverty, insecurity and institutional instability. Africa is facing a governance crisis, reflected by the lack of public institution legitimacy in the eyes of the African people, and the lack of relevancy and efficiency of these institutions' work.

Rebuilding governance is thus a major issue for Africa. But how can it be achieved? It is not simply a question of proclaiming new laws or drawing up action plans based on good analyses. Building governance in Africa requires much more drastic changes in attitudes and players' abilities, with a view to elaborating new ways of managing public affairs, based on values, references and principles that are known, recognised and agreed on by all players in society.

The November 2005 Forum was held against this background. Its objective was to associate the work on governance being carried out by the African Union with the many innovative initiatives and experiments on governance being carried out and implemented by different groups of players (governments, local authorities, civil society, the private sector and regional organisations). It constituted a first step towards a pan-African alliance to transform governance.

Added value

The topic of governance has been at the heart of several debates, conferences and studies. Particular examples of this can be seen in the work on governance carried out by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)[1] as well as that of the "Dialogues on Governance in Africa" Network[2]. For the Forum, the Alliance sponsored five regional studies on the state of governance in North Africa, Southern Africa, West Africa, East Africa and Central Africa. The Forum aimed to look at these studies in order to ascertain four added values:

1 Following intensive research and consultation, the work coordinated by the ECA resulted in various regional analyses on the situation of governance; regional action plans and summary reports on the challenges facing governance in Africa.

2 See, in particular, the document entitled "Let's change Africa: 15 ways to start"

Establishment of connections and synergies between the different groups of players.

Several pioneering initiatives on governance are currently under way in Africa, but they are not always known about or inter-connected. The Forum aimed to link the players and the promising initiatives from the five regions, with a view to creating common governance agendas.

Focusing on the processes which leverage the different experiences of the groups of public players.

Despite the abundance of literature on the subject of governance in Africa and in the world, there is a lack of intellectual social debate on the process of governance. There is a general misconception of the concept, the norms and the values, principles and social experiences on which these norms are based. The Forum aimed to show the interest and relevance of the methods which can be used to leverage the knowledge and words of the different groups of players, and which have the means to connect the different levels of governance (local, national, regional) and the territories.

Associating institutional processes and grassroots society.

It is clear that there is a divide between institutional and social processes. Thus, many of the governance initiatives which are drawn up in the field do not impact the modes of regulating public affairs. On the other hand, the institutions have very little power over the people, the vast majority of whom do not even know they exist. The Forum was a place for dialogue between all players in society and the institutions. Everyone had a chance to air their views and this sharing of ideas and plans resulted in a common agenda and, more importantly, in a long-term commitment to foster dialogue on governance in Africa between social and institutional players.

Making implementation a priority.

A great number of governance reform plans have been drawn up, but they are rarely seen through to implementation. The Forum paid particular attention to this issue and attempted to identify the potential and levers which would enable new forms of governance to be implemented.

Background to the Forum

Interest in holding such a meeting between the Alliance and the African Union was first shown in Pretoria in April 2003, at an inter-African Conference on Democracy and Free Elections which was organised jointly by the African Union and the network of African Independent Electoral Commissions. At the time, the people responsible and the partners of the Dialogue on Governance in Africa network (Ousmane Sy, Pierre Calame, Claire Mandouze) had already met with Mr. Saïd Djinnit, then AU Commissioner for Peace and Security. Discussions had been based on a shared interest between the Alliance and the AU to "contribute towards giving substance to African governance at a time when formal democracy was reaching its limits".

But it was not until two years later that the first AU-Alliance Forum on Governance in Africa was actually held. In the meantime, the Dialogue on Governance in Africa network became the Alliance for Rebuilding Governance in Africa, whose objective, *inter alia*, was to help to bridge the gap between the various initiatives on governance in Africa. The AU, for its part, set up a Political Affairs Commission responsible for governance in Africa. The Commissioner, Julie Joiner, sought to open debate on governance with other players in the public sphere, in particular in civil society. In March 2005, a meeting between the Alliance and the Political Affairs Commission

led to an agreement in principle on the formation of a partnership to address the issue of governance in Africa. The decision was thus made to co-organise a continental Forum to serve as a starting point to identify the details of such a partnership, i.e. the programmes it will be based on and the form it will take.

The objectives and expected results from the Forum: *Dialoguing and acting towards governance*

The Forum was to serve as a starting point for the processes, with the four following objectives:

1. Identify the limits and structural obstacles to governance in Africa, and reach agreement on the priority initiatives to strengthen governance;

2. Agree on a common platform for priority topics and specific initiatives;

3. Encourage African and non-African players to commit themselves to support a new cooperation framework and to participate in the initiatives to promote dialogue on governance in Africa, in partnership with the AU Commission;

4. Improve coordination and collaboration between partners and players to help strengthen governance in Africa.

And with the aim to:

1. Come up with an blueprint of the main topics for consideration and suggestions for an alternative governance plan for Africa
2. Draw up common agendas for initiatives to rebuild governance in Africa.
3. Explore the scope for the forming of coalitions between the different initiatives and players involved in rebuilding governance in Africa, in partnership with the AU Commission.

II. The Forum proceedings, a general overview and prospects

The Addis Ababa Forum brought together 60 participants from 25 African countries from various regions. The participants came from a wide range of professional backgrounds (civil society, researchers, traditional authorities, the private sector, local authorities, pan-African networks, public institutions, regional organisations, and from bilateral and multilateral cooperation groups). 10 Europeans representing development partners were also present as observers and, upon request from other participants, they were also included in the discussions.

This meeting, bringing together state and non-state players, is an example of the marked changes which are occurring within the African Union. Indeed, the AU's agreement to organise such an event together with the Alliance is a significant step, or a "major innovation" according to the Final Declaration, insofar as it helps to develop skills of listening and sharing information between institutional players and society.

The Forum proceedings

This Forum was extremely original on several accounts: it was jointly organised by the African Union and an inter-African network of civil society, both placed on an equal footing; it associated the geo-cultural and professional diversity of participants who were there to represent themselves as individuals; it allowed for fundamental debate on the nature of the crises in Africa and the stakes of governance, going far beyond institutional formalism; it also constituted a starting point for long-term partnerships.

Following the official opening, the Forum began with a presentation on the state of thinking and progress on governance in the various regions of Africa. This assessment of the situation, largely founded on the observation systems set up by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), was mostly based on the notions of formal democracy and the rule of law. This highly worthwhile overview made it possible, both by what was said or not said on a certain number of issues, to introduce the next step of the workshops, inviting them to extend their field of vision to encompass all aspects of public management.

After the presentations in the plenary session, there followed two long workshop sessions for which the participants were divided into four groups of about twenty, giving them the chance to express themselves freely on the various facets of the African governance crisis and revealing the key areas and common principles of a rebuilt African governance.

On the last day, the work produced within these groups, reliably depicted for each of them in the form of diagrams, was used to produce an enlightening summary. The contributions from each participant in each workshop, when all put together created a fresco of what an African governance plan could be. This plan identifies six major principles:

- legitimate and deep-rooted governance;
- effective democracy;
- relevant and efficient public services;
- governance founded on cooperation between different players;
- governance which takes diversity into account, communicates between the different levels of territory and can be rebuilt starting from local level;
- an inter-African system to share experiences, enabling an ongoing rebuilding and learning process about governance.

A general overview

The Final Declaration and action plan

The quality of the work from the groups, the scope of the views expressed and the clarity of the summary which resulted from the above, all inspired the Final Declaration and the action plan, both of which represent a new lease of life and renewed enthusiasm for the cause.

Quotes taken from the Declaration to assess its impact:

- "*Governance is the crux of the difficulties affecting African societies and constitutes a major source of the current crisis situations and conflicts.*"
- *"African states must collectively envisage and implement a form of governance in which the different players recognise one another and which fulfils their aspirations. This requires a long-term process of dialogue and negotiation between the various African players, with a view to generating new means of public management, based on values, specific practices and realities, and principles which are known, recognised and agreed on by all players."*
- *"The local level should become the strategic level to rebuild governance in Africa (…) the local level is also the key to improving people's living conditions as well as preventing conflicts."*

This new lease of life shows that the joint organisers (the African Union and the Alliance for Rebuilding Governance in Africa) and the participants hoped to witness the starting point of a long-term process within the context of this unique Forum:

- "*Dialogue and partnerships, involving all players, are essential for a successful process of rebuilding governance in Africa.*"
- *"Dialogue opened as a result of the Forum and the formation of a coalition of governance players in partnership with the African Union and its various bodies."*
- *"The main aim of the Forum is to connect the numerous innovative governance initiatives which are currently being carried out in Africa."*

The action plan sets out the initial steps and the direction to be taken:

- "*to hold such an inter-African Forum at regular intervals, jointly organised by the African Union and the Alliance*" in order to combine the various initiatives and evaluate the progress made in the implementation of an African governance plan, following the various strategic lines as defined in the workshops;
- "*this inter-African Forum should then be organised into regional and sub-regional workshops, following the same working method to ensure mutual enrichment and in-depth analysis.*" Each regional or sub-regional workshop could both produce a clear vision on governance for their region and evoke a more in-depth thematic approach based on the common principles on governance;
- Confirmation of the need to start rebuilding governance from a local level naturally leads to the "*recommendation of improved representation of local government associations within the African Union*". The meeting between African Mayors, to be held in Nairobi in September 2006, will also be an opportunity to closely examine the founding principles of an African governance plan, as set out in the present Forum;
- In addition, the emphasis placed on partnerships between players encourages "*greater inclusion of the private sector,*

including the informal sector, in the conception and implementation of public action";

- The close link between governance, conflicts and peace, as highlighted in the Declaration, suggests that cooperation between the African Union and the Alliance, also involving all organisations in civil society, could, beyond the necessary measures to maintain order, also lead to *original views on building peace based on a more legitimate, deeper-rooted governance which is more capable of taking diversity into account*;
- Finally, to complement the work of the inter-African network for the sharing of experiences, with the Final Declaration as its starting point, *an inter-African network of research institutes* could form the intellectual, collective backbone for *a form of governance which could rediscover the nourishment that could be drawn from the many traditions of governance in Africa.*

The Prospects

All this naturally constitutes an agenda for the AU, the Alliance, the participants and the development partners invited to this meeting. The action plan and recommendations ensuing from the three-day meetings resulted in eight partnership projects.

Eight projects in partnership with the African Union

Project 1. A permanent dialogue platform

Continue and extend the process instigated in Addis Ababa of implementing a permanent and open platform for dialogue and consideration for all players involved in governance in Africa initiatives.

It was suggested that this Forum become a regular fixture by setting a timeframe and defining the mechanisms for the follow-up and evaluation of the common agendas drawn up between two meetings. The formalisation of such a permanent body for dialogue on governance would be highly advantageous for the forming of relations between the AU and the various initiatives on governance in Africa.

Project 2. Focus the debate on regional and sub-regional levels

Organise regional or sub-regional workshops on governance with various players (regional organisations, governments, civil society, local authorities, the private sector, traditional authorities etc.).

The aim of the Forum, as well as drawing up a common agenda on governance in Africa, was to help identify the individual governance issues for each of the five regions of the continent, whilst creating dialogue platforms on governance at both continental and regional level. The idea of organising regional workshops is to validate, contextualise and enrich the governance issues identified at the Forum, and confer them to regional platforms. The Alliance's interest in such a process was to be able to set up new regional Alliance groups, similar to the one already operating in West Africa and the one being set up Central Africa.

Project 3. The local level and the African Charter on Democracy

Bolster the AU project with an African Charter on Democracy, particularly by motivating players at local level and taking into account the specific governance issues at this level.

This proposal confirms the Forum participants' conviction that Africa should reinvent itself starting from local level. The present draft of the African Charter on Democracy is suffering from a lack of acknowledgement of local authority matters and the specific governance problems at this level. Based on the collective formulation of proposals as tested by the Alliance when drawing up the document entitled: "Let's change Africa: 15 ways to start...", it would be

necessary to organise large-scale and diversified communication between the dialogue of the local players i.e. local authorities, grassroots organisations, religious and traditional authorities, and other relevant players at this level.

Project 4. Representation of local government associations

Ensure representation of local government associations within the AU using the appropriate mechanism

This idea, which, together with the previous project, was also borne out of the Forum participant's conviction that the Nation States in Africa should reinvent themselves from the local level upwards. Despite there being an AU Parliament, there is still a lack of **representation of local authorities.**

Project 5. Governance and the private and informal sectors

Initiate dialogue and consideration on the link between governance and the private sector, including the informal sector.

This proposal is part and parcel of a wider debate on "governance, politics, economics and poverty in Africa". The dramatic impact of economic factors on the process of impoverishment requires us to consider the idea of "economic governance". The current withdrawal of certain economic functions by the state places the private sector in pole position. This sector has gained an increased role in defining choices on economic policies and, at the same time, exogenous factors linked to globalisation have afforded it favourable ground. It is undeniably true that the private sector impacts the structure of national economies today, but this influence cannot go beyond the purely economic domain. Private entrepreneurs have not yet developed a general culture of economic development. In the context of African economies, where the informal sub-sector constitutes the largest and most dynamic segment of the economic sector, the issues of governance linked to the social acceptance of modes of economic regulation require urgent attention. These are complex questions which will require economic and social research, holding debates, drawing up proposals and carrying out experiments.

Project 6. Peace initiatives at local and regional level

Create and strengthen links between peace and stability initiatives at local and regional level in order to encourage and strengthen the Peace and Security Council. in particular through ECOSOCC.

This proposal aims to strengthen African skills at conflict prevention and management. The objective is to link, at institutional level, the players' skills which are being consolidated in this area with existing or potential skills. As things stand, in all conflict zones there are civil society organisations which have been present for some time and which intervene, often demonstrating much creative flair for the peaceful management of actual or potential conflicts. Their extensive knowledge on the dynamics of such conflicts and their presence in the field would, ideally, provide a good relay for the AU or other specialised regional organisations. The Alliance would like to discuss with the AU the option of setting up an inter-regional thematic initiative group on the prevention and management of conflicts. This group would be responsible for gathering thoughts and proposals and holding mutual learning sessions on the different conflict situations in Africa (in West Africa around the Mano river area and in the Ivory Coast; in the Great Lakes region; in the Horn of Africa; in the Sahara etc.). This mobilisation and relay framework would support the political mediation initiatives already in place, particularly those of the AU.

Project 7. Modes of governance in Africa

Set up an inter-African research group on the modes of governance in Africa.

The Forum organisers already had this idea in mind when inviting researchers, and in particular those within research institutes, to the

Forum. The complexity of governance issues requires the establishment of background, social and cultural references on all the situations analysed. Moreover, governance is an operative concept. Research should make it possible to go from the recurrence of the situations observed (the establishment of knowledge) to the conceptualisation and generalisation of them.

Project 8. Governance and policies on partnerships for development

Create a platform for Euro-African dialogue on governance.

The political choices, values and principles which guide strategies and practices in terms of a partnership for development have an impact on the methods of managing public affairs in Africa. Public decision-makers from Africa and from bilateral or multilateral cooperation initiatives are aware of the present need to rethink the terms of their partnership. How can the partnership be used to help development? The vast majority of the answers to this question lie, in particular, within the aspects of governance linked to the conception, management and follow-up of programmes to support development. The Forum organisers hope to fulfil a request from the development partners for a platform for Euro-African dialogue on "governance and partnerships for development". The meeting in Brussels to discuss the outcome of the Forum will provide a basis on which we can build such a platform.

Guidelines for an alternative legitimate governance project

The workshops (cf. diagrams of workshop outcomes – appendix 2) led to the identification of 14 trains of thought and proposals upon which various dialogue, research and experiment initiatives could be based and launched, in partnership with the AU and/or the development partners. Certain recurring themes seem, implicitly, to illustrate the fundamental lines of development for an alternative project on governance in Africa.

In particular, there was unanimous recognition of the importance of **rebuilding governance in Africa at local level - it being the strategic level.** There was talk of "starting at local level to restore state credibility in Africa". This evolution was included in the Declaration as well as the action plan, which, on the one hand encourages reworking the Draft Charter on Elections, Democracy and Governance by incorporating the local dimension into it and easing its "socialisation"; and, on the other hand suggests representing associations from local authorities within the African Union. **This is one of the results achieved** by the Forum insofar as the regional integration process, on an institutional level, had previously had little to do with local governance and in particular with decentralisation.

The Forum also called for the establishment of governance systems which **combine legality and legitimacy.** Considering formal legality alone has often, in Africa, led to the setting up of institutions which are far removed from the systems to which the majority of populations refer. Legitimacy is intended to produce greater efficiency and tends naturally to forge the conditions for institutions to be better anchored in society. This presupposes, for example, "basing governance on an

ethic which is recognised by all", "creating institutions which are adapted to the objectives being pursued" and "establishing governance legitimacy".

In addition, the Forum supported inclusive approaches and processes which lead to ways of managing the public sphere which can **accommodate both unity and diversity**, especially in Africa, where more than elsewhere, there are multiple societies and where the states have been colonised, parcelled out and spread over various sociological territories. The desired mode of governance should "take diversity into account" and "associate the territories", yet these processes should also be able to "collectively produce a vision of governance and a strategy for change" to gradually give meaning to "the shared desire to live together".

Furthermore, reforming public action should lead to a redistribution of power which allows **more room for creativity and expression for all players in the public field.** Other ideas were to "promote and institutionalise the partnership between public and private players"; to "train public service agents and citizens in accordance with the objectives on governance"; but also to "give priority to dialogue, negotiation and peaceful conflict management", and to "learn to build consensus". All this should be underpinned by an "effective democracy and responsible and accountable leaders".

Finally, and on a more general note, beyond identifying the issues central to the refounding of governance, the Forum also constituted **a major test for the credibility of the initial alternative proposals for governance in Africa, developed by the Alliance.** They were given a positive reception by various social groups, particularly in West Africa, during the Forum. According to the players from other African regions, it eventually came to light that the problems and recommended solutions contained within the document **"Let's change Africa: 15 ways to start"**, despite their national and regional specific features, need to be looked at in more depth throughout the entire continent.

The situations and draft proposals stemming from the 14 trains of thought, divided into six fundamental thematic lines of development

- The legitimacy of governance and its establishment

Basing governance on an ethic which is recognised by all

Situation

The values and principles on which the way in which society is regulated should be draw up on the basis of moral and philosophical points of reference which are known and recognised by the people. The current state of affairs shows a marked lack of connection between the administrative governance processes and the debate on values and principles. Beyond the formal legalities, what forms the "shared desire to live together" is the legitimacy of institutions and the regulations which govern public management.

Proposals

- set forth the shared values which are seen as representative and legitimate;
- root governance in ethics and values;
- lead debates on value issues by closing the gap between traditional and modern values.

Establishing governance legitimacy

Situation

The fundamental issue on the legitimacy of public players is closely linked to the credibility of the institutions and the quality of the services they provide for the people. The problem lies in the divide between the legality of exercising power and the legitimacy afforded to the enforcement of public power. Currently, the bodies of rules ordained without any attempt to understand local sociological realities, by little-known institutions, are simply ignored by the people who refer to each other or develop other means of arbitration or regulation. Informality reigns and gains hold whilst the state, without its sociological basis, becomes increasingly incapable of acting in society unless through violence. The citizens do not see themselves accounted for in the public institutions that they often do not even know exist, and which do not correspond to their cultural and social representations, whether past or present, which, at any rate have very little control over their daily lives. The main aim in rebuilding governance in Africa is to narrow the divide between legality and legitimacy. Modern institutions function according to rules based on legality, but they also need legitimacy to establish a foothold in society in the long-term.

Proposals

- adapt the traditional values which are positive for governance to the modern forms of regulation;
- encourage synergies between the legal and formal structures of the modern state and the traditional structures (e.g. Kwa Zulu);
- encourage improved consideration for non-elected legitimacies;
- translate the word governance into the language and into the people's language;
- foster political determination for the conception and taking on board of governance processes and instruments.

Form a collective vision of governance and a strategy for change

Situation

For governance to be legitimate and efficient it should be based on inclusive processes. For this to be possible, it is essential that the methods on which values, principles and rules are based leverage the knowledge and thoughts of the different groups of players, and that they have the intelligence to communicate between the different levels of government (local, national, regional) and territories. Is it possible to agree on the very notion of governance: what do we mean by governance? Is it acceptable to define the criteria for "good governance" and lay them down for all? Who has the right to establish such norms? On which values, principles and social experiences should these norms be based? Save the odd initiative here and there, there is a lack of substantial debate on governance processes in society.

Proposals

- include the notion of legitimacy in the issue of governance;
- initiate debate on the draft African Charter on Democracy with a view to its inclusion of the concerns linked to local issues and to decentralisation processes.

- Building an effective democracy

An effective democracy with responsible and accountable leaders

Situation

Africa has a contrastive political mapping with a democratic system based on three main criteria: political multipartism; regular organisation of peaceful elections; the security of goods and people. At the beginning of the 1980s, a wave of democratisation swept over the continent and appeared to be able to wash away all the totalitarian regimes. In fact, most countries embraced a multipartism regime. Recently, successful experiences of alternating democracy, e.g. in Benin, Mali, Senegal etc., have represented innovative advances within the irreversible process of strengthening democracy in Africa. Experience has shown that multipartism has been established without the reflexes and practices of a single party having been lost. Presidents who were forced to stand down have come back into the picture on the strength of weapons. Constitutions are happily manipulated so that the regimes which were banned by the people can continue *in perpetuum*. The political disputes give rise to conflicts and end up provoking civil wars all over which are costly in both human and material terms. One of the fundamental principles of democratic systems is the delegation of power. This is achieved by the citizens' entrusting a public player (either an individual or institution) with the responsibility of making decisions on their behalf. This delegation of responsibility is carried out according to various ways (voting, appointment etc.) and means, one of the main requirements of which should be the citizen's right to question, at any moment, the officials on their use of the powers which have been conferred upon them. The current weakness of civil societies as counter-powers reduces the citizens' chances of participating in public management. How can we ensure that the citizens' control is effective and continued and that it may be carried out in conditions of efficiency and reliability which pertain to the acceptable principles and rules of democracy? What machinery can be developed at local, national and international level to guarantee balanced power on the basis of social equity and justice for all?

Proposals

- identify local accountability systems which are effective in nurturing and rebuilding control and monitoring bodies at all levels;
- strengthen the role of the media;
- create public areas to question public representatives with a view to conforming public action to the law.

- The relevance and efficiency of public services

Establish institutions which are properly adapted to the objectives pursued

Situation

In Africa there is an abundance of institutions, many of which have the same objectives, targets and areas of intervention. Often their creation is more a knee-jerk reaction to the obligation to meet the needs and conditionality of those commissioning them. The result is that there is a discrepancy between the objectives pursued and the actual fulfilment of local, national or regional demands.

Proposals

- reconcile the institutions and regulations with African realities and values;
- place the provision of effective and sustainable services at the centre of the governance process (health, education, security etc.);
- search for a balance between the people's basic service needs and the option of privatising public services;
- strengthen the management capacity of local

authorities in order to guarantee a successful decentralisation process;

- adapt the arsenal of rules and cooperation procedures to the aspirations of the beneficiaries and make the various institutional initiatives coherent.
- move away from institutional reform policies with strict rules on "good governance"

Train public service agents and citizens in accordance with governance objectives

Situation

Public services are generally failing in terms of **administration** to the detriment of the users of these services i.e. the **citizens**. On the one hand, the weak control of administrative acts and the fragility of the rule of law, leaving much room for arbitrariness, are grounds for the people's rejection of the state. On the other hand, the weak foothold of the state in society means there is a lack of republican culture and citizenship. Respecting public goods is something which is rarely observed in Africa. The changes in attitude and behaviour which are necessary to promote an administration in tune with the people's needs and to incite a culture of active citizenship amongst these people requires long-term investments in education, training and information.

Proposals

- adapt education and training to suit the contexts and needs of African societies;
- train/inform citizens on their rights and duties;
- train local players on the principles and rules of governing public administration.

Offer a service for all, avoiding exclusion

Situation

Access to basic socio-economic services such as health, education, transport etc. is a moral requirement, essential for any society hoping for harmonious development. The disastrous effects of structural adjustment policies (PAS) on poverty indications have proven that the state could not fulfil its responsibility to provide such services. In addition, the state, in the countries where decentralisation experiments are carried out, should continue to support the local authorities in order to acquire the means to provide vital services such as health, education, drinking water, security, communication etc. for the people. The present divergence between the institutions and society poses a fundamental problem for the orientation and defining of the action of public services. The desire for a plurinational state requires administration to reintegrate society. The prospect of renewing governance in Africa, founded on principles of plurality, diversity and autonomy, requires the state, and particularly its means of intervention, to embrace these same ideas in terms of values and organisation. This should lead to greater proximity of public services and greater attention to the people's needs, with specific account taken of the most vulnerable groups. If the people gain a recognised legitimacy, hold and purpose in society, public services will be in a position to lead to the necessary changes for the development of society, avoiding exclusion.

Proposals

- promote fairness and social justice policies;
- encourage policies to support vulnerable groups.

- Partnership and cooperation

Give priority to dialogue, negotiation and peaceful conflict management

Situation

Solutions to escape violent crises always hold within them the seeds of re-emergence of the same conflicts. It is much harder to maintain peace than wage war. And yet, sustainable peace can be achieved at the moment when conflicts are resolved. From this viewpoint, the participants recalled that African social and political traditions are brimming with invaluable gems for conflict prevention and management. But these are not accounted for in modern methods of dealing with conflicts, which often thwart the positive results that have been obtained in the field. Dialogue and negotiation form the crux of peaceful conflict management methods.

Proposals

- instigate studies on the traditional methods for crisis mediation and check their "transferability" to the modern institutional level;
- promote social dialogue as a means for conflict management;
- identify more restrictive conditions for accession to the AU, particularly on the issue of human rights;

Promote and institutionalise the partnership between the public and the non-state players

Situation

Based on the model of a centralised, authoritarian and omnipotent state, African states have, for a long time, merely administered their populations instead of trying to enter into dialogue with them. The crises in the 1970s and the series of changes made since the 1980s – against the backdrop of the increased call for democracy and platforms for initiatives and expression amongst the people – have had a profound effect on relations with the state. Other public players (within regional organisations, governments, civil societies, local government, or traditional local authorities) are also asserting their legitimacy and calling for new roles and responsibilities in the management of public affairs. The current objective is to reconstruct a different type of public-private partnership; one that is not based on mistrust and the restrictions of conditionalities enforced from the outside, but on a considered division of roles and responsibilities highlighting the skills of everyone. But how can this crisis of confidence between the state and other public players be resolved? How can each partner's skills to dialogue with the other public players be strengthened?

Proposals

- organise sub-regional governance workshops for the various players from regional organisations, governments, civil societies, local governments and traditional local authorities;
- strengthen policy acceptance at local level by grassroots players;
- bolster public and private leaders' skills in social mediation techniques and strategies;
- encourage the emergence of an organised civil society;
- encourage the formation of multi-player partnerships between civil society, the private sector and traditional society.

Learn to build consensus

Situation

Traditionally, methods of regulating African societies placed consensus at the heart of decision-making process. Conflicts between social groups can be better resolved by negotiation and arbitration thanks to affinities between ethnic and cultural alliances. The emerging popular urban culture tends to see these forms of mediation as inefficient. Nowadays, our modern means of drawing up and making decisions seem generally incapable of finding viable alternatives to the majority rule, regardless of their declinations. What can we do so that the means of regulating and arbitrating do not themselves create the conditions for the re-emergence of conflicts? How can the appropriate skills for non-violent prevention of conflicts or potential conflicts be institutionalised within the state and society?

Proposals

- establish mechanisms and institutions which can ease tensions and implement a culture of negotiating interests whilst making clear and effective decisions;
- promote consensus as a means of decision-making at local level;
- encourage the creation of public deliberation platforms.

- Taking diversity into account

Associate the different levels of territory

Situation

Issues of governance are often analysed by looking at local, national and regional levels separately. This distorted view of the close interaction which occurs between the different levels of regulating public spaces explains, for many, the poor performance of integration policies, whether at national or regional level. There is an obvious lack of organisation between the different levels of governance, with an absence of checks and balances between the three levels of powers (local, national and regional). How can territorial planning take into account the continuity of geographical, social, economic and political issues at local, national and regional level? How can the different and sometimes divergent interests of the different public players be conciliated and surpassed? How can a balance be struck between the legal powers of the local authorities and those of the grassroots communities.

Proposals

- include different levels of government in analysis and when drawing up development strategies and policies;
- build regional integration starting from local level, particularly when organising the sharing of basic services;
- organise local government representation within the Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM);
- use cooperation for development to help decentralisation efforts.

Start at local level to restore state credibility in Africa

Situation

Decentralisation policies, by recreating the best conditions for the participation of all population groups in public management, give meaning to the state. Paradoxically, what may appear to be a process of turning away from the central state, actually leads to a different relationship with the state, giving it more legitimacy. Forum participants believed that in the particular context of the crisis of nation states in Africa, any attempt to rebuild these states should give priority to local level to reinvent/rediscover the methods of managing the public sphere, based on experiences carried out in African societies, but which are compatible with the demands of modern society.

Proposals

- Start local to rebuild governance;
- Promote integration from the bottom up.

Take diversity into account, build bridges

Situation

The public sphere is an area of complex, often conflictual, relations. This is particularly the case in Africa, due to the co-existence of diverse community identities and the simultaneity of tradition and modernity, which are often conflictual, in the methods of regulating public affairs. The state model, inspired by Judaism and Christianity, and handed down from times of colonisation, has striven, without success, to patch up the differences, and ignore them when establishing institutions of the Republic and when drawing up the principles and regulations which form the basis of regulation methods. On the contrary, the plan for legitimate governance aims to reconcile diversity and unity. Principally, governance aims to resolve two problems: to plan territories in their diversity and to deal with relations between and within the different groups of society. It is in this respect that governance poses a communication problem between local, national and regional levels. Thus, policies on deconcentration, decentralisation and regional integration come into play to support development policies. However, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that where interests coexist, conflicts can arise. In this respect, governance is also called on to introduce standards, institutions and machinery to regulate interests and manage conflicts. All this requires consideration and the building of bridges at all stages of the process, as well as establishing methods to share out responsibilities between the different levels to prompt combined action.

Proposals

- change the borders of dividing lines into joining lines;
- promote legal pluralism with a view to strengthening the legitimacy of constitutions and states.

- Sharing experiences

Sharing experiences between players in the field

Situation

It can be observed that various different experiences in the field are being carried out independently and that there is a lack of mediation between the grassroots initiatives and the institutions. Our institutions are not "learning organisations" and the isolation and dispersal of the initiatives reduce the latter's ability to bring about the desired changes in the ideas and practices of governance on the continent. It is precisely on this lack of sharing and synergy between the different initiatives on governance in Africa that the Alliance is working, amongst other things.

Proposals

- draw up databases on successful experiences in terms of innovative modes of governance;
- promote the sharing of successful governance experiences.

III – APPENDICES

1 – A joint Declaration laying down the foundations of a partnership between the AU and the Alliance, giving the latter the specific task of following up the Forum outcome

2 – Diagrams depicting the outcome of the workshops

3 – A list of participants

4 – An outline of the work on governance to be carried out in June 2006

DECLARATION ON THE FORUM ON GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA

Addis Ababa, 26 November 2005

Organised as a joint initiative of the African Union Commission (AUC) and the « Alliance pour la réfondation de la gouvernance en Afrique », the Forum on Governance in Africa took place in Addis Ababa from 24 to 26 November 2005. It brought together participants from different sectors of society (including local authorities, public institutions, regional organisations, civil society, trade unions, pan African networks, the private sector, researchers and traditional authorities), different institutions from the African Union as well as development partners and international organisations.

The main objectives of the Forum were to identify the limits and structural bottlenecks for governance in Africa; to agree upon priority actions needed to improve governance, particularly in the framework of the African Union governance agendas and ongoing programmes; and to build commitment among African and non-African actors to support ongoing and possible new frameworks for dialogue and concerted action, in partnership with the AUC. The Forum understood the notion of governance in line with the key governance principles included in AU governance declarations (i.e. the rule of law, democracy, participation, accountability).

The debates, organised alternatively in plenary and working group sessions, focused on:

- the governance situation in Africa, which led the African Union Commission and the Alliance to initiate an innovative process of dialogue and exchange of experiences on governance in Africa in the form of a Forum;
- a diagnosis of the key governance challenges in Africa, including an analysis of regional perspectives on governance as well as of the diversity of actors involved;
- the identification of priority actions by level of governance (local, national, regional and continental);
- the governance agenda of the African Union, and more specifically the programmes of the different departments of the African Union Commission, of the Economic, Social and Cultural Committee (ECOSOCC) and of the NEPAD.

A consensus emerged on the following points:

- Governance is at the heart of the difficulties that affect African societies and is a major source of prevailing crisis situations (including poverty levels) as well as conflicts.
- Africa needs to collectively conceive and put in place a system of governance in which the different actors can recognise themselves and that responds to their aspirations. It requires a process of dialogue and negotiation between different actors, over a longer period of time, so as to elaborate new ways of managing public affairs, based on values, references and principles that are known, recognised and agreed upon by all players in society.
- The need to ensure that the process of renewing governance takes place at different levels (from the local to the continental level), includes the different actors and links up with existing initiatives.
- The local level should be the key strategic level to renew governance in Africa. Building on an effective decentralisation, the local level provides a suitable environment to invent and apply new ways of managing public affairs and promoting local development. The local level is also key for improving the living conditions of the people and for the prevention and resolution of conflicts. In recognition of this, there is a need to ensure the representation of local government associations at the level of the AU through appropriate mechanisms and to integrate local governance in the Draft Charter on democracy, elections and governance.
- At the national level, the major challenge is to ensure that_States are based on the principles of respect for human rights, democracy and governance as well as on effective public action -as these are the pillars for the legitimacy of government. This implies a strengthening of the capacity of the State to regulate, to ensure social dialogue and to create an enabling environment for economic growth and for the informal sector, on which many people depend for their survival.
- The renewal of governance at the regional level can be promoted by ensuring that the integration process rests more strongly on local actors and spatial dynamics (including cross-border initiatives) and by a targeted delegation of responsibilities to regional organisations, which should be reinforced at the institutional level.

- At the continental level, participants took stock of the mission and vision of the African Union, as well as of its commitments to promote governance, including through a host of implementation instruments (the Constitutive Act, the Durban Declaration on Elections, Democracy and Governance; the NEPAD Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance; the Protocol on the Rights of Women; the Lomé Declaration on unconstitutional changes of government; the African Common Position on the review of the MDGs). In this context, it was recognised that the African Union is an essential trigger for renewing governance in Africa. The Union has fundamental assets for playing this role, including a clear political mandate; the Regional Economic Communities (as pillars of the Union); organs that allow for participation of African citizens (ECOSOCC and the Pan African Parliament) as well a strategic instrument such as the Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). However, to realise its full potential, it will be necessary to consolidate the institutional and financial basis of the Union and to reinforce its implementation, monitoring and evaluation capacity.

Building on this consensus, Forum participants:

- Consider that dialogue and partnerships, involving the different actors, are essential conditions for a successful process of renewing governance in Africa.
- Agree on the need to continue the process started by the Forum and to build a coalition of governance actors in partnership with the African Union and its different organs (the Pan African Parliament, the ECOSOCC).
- Call for the effective participation of governance actors in the programmes of the African Union -- in conformity with the vision of the African Union of "a peaceful, integrated and prosperous Africa, driven by its people".
- Consider that the main roles of the Forum consist in connecting the multitude of innovative initiatives on governance that are taking place all over Africa as well as in establishing mechanisms that allow for a systematic exchange of experiences ; a progressive harmonisation of governance agendas as well as the effective application of new modes of governance.
- Invite the stakeholders of the Forum to give a concrete substance to the partnership with the African Union, including by supporting the ratification of key Conventions (e.g. the AU Convention on preventing and combating corruption or the Protocol on the Rights of Women). It also implies ensuring the participation of civil society (at local and regional level) in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, as foreseen in the Protocol relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the Union (article 20).

- Acknowledge the need to develop and support alliances of public, private and civil society actors
- Insist on the need to strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations, community-based organisations and the media to participate in governance processes. This should also help to ensure a better access to information and adequate communication on governance and African Union programmes at all levels -so as to facilitate effective cooperation with the African Union.
- Call on the development partners of Africa to engage in an enlarged dialogue with all relevant stakeholders on the challenges and modalities for renewing governance; to support promising African initiatives; and to examine in a critical way the adequacy of current aid practices with regard to governance in Africa.
- Engage themselves to pursue the dialogue on the renewal of governance. To this end, it is proposed to institutionalise the Forum under the leadership of the African Union while ensuring coherence with existing frameworks for consultation (such as ECOSOCC); to hold regular Forum meetings; and to organise multi-stakeholder meetings on governance at the (sub-) regional level.
- Express gratitude to the African Union Commission for having hosted this Forum, which reflects a major innovation in the participation and dialogue between civil society and the African Union.
- Express gratitude for the development partners that have been willing to support this process, both financially and through their involvement.

Addis Ababa, November 26th 2005

African Union, Mr Emile OGNIMBA

Alliance, Mr Ousmane SY

Appendix 2: diagrams depicting the outcome of the workshops

The methodological approach

Most of the **group work** took place in four workshops, each focussing on the different levels of governance, i.e. local, national, regional and continental. The aim was to identify the issues on governance, the levers for change and the course of action to be taken to rebuild governance systems.

In a system which is generally divided, both in terms of administration and donors, where dialogue is rarely entered into and conclusions are hardly ever reached, this group work constituted a rare opportunity for players to learn from **each other, thanks to the work carried out within each workshop.**

It was thus important to implement "cross-cutting analysis" of the different workshops to see to what extent the challenges faced were similar, despite appearing to be very different. The idea was to see of this confrontation and cross-cutting analysis could form the basis of a **common list of specifications for all.**

What is meant here by specifications is a certain number of general principles or "obligations to achieve a certain result", common to all, with respect being the proven key condition for success in public policies.

For this cross-cutting analysis and the drawing up of general principles to be possible, for them to reap the benefit not only of the studies of the cases put forward but also of the workshop discussions, and also to enable the Forum participants to benefit in real time from the initial outcome of this work, it is essential to implement **suitable working methods and plans.** This was the Alliance's premise for using the methodology of the concept diagrams, developed jointly by the Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation and the company Exemole.

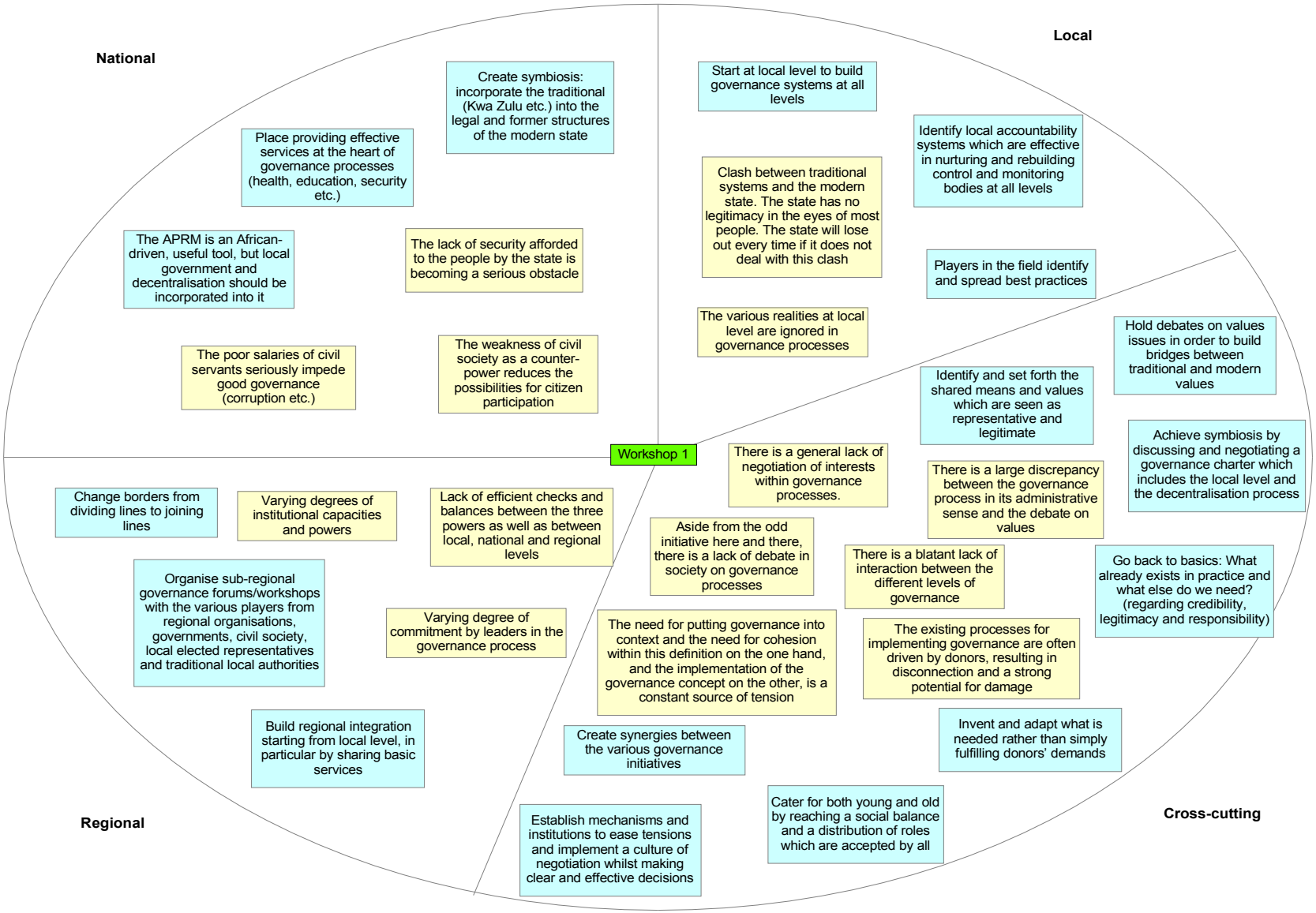
The idea is simple. Two Alliance members were present in each workshop, and their role was to seize the essence of the debates and depict it on a diagram featuring all the dialogues, either what was said in terms of challenges faced or of proposals, one being almost the opposite of the other.

In the second phase, the Alliance members were asked to sum up the main ideas of each workshop on a single diagram, whilst maintaining the main lines of the dialogue on the challenges or proposals, so that the summary remained close to the specific cases thus avoiding the common problem with summaries, in which ideas lose their substance the more they become generalised.

The third phase, also carried out during the Forum, was to put together the conclusions drawn from the different workshops to see if the challenges and proposals mentioned within them contained any analogies which could, in different forms depending on the subject, reveal common principles.

Anyone having dealt with the problems of governance and this kind of intellectual tool knows that the results often reveal such similarities, and that we soon realize that the difficulties faced in each of the areas and the different levels of governance have an uncanny likeness. This likeness is by no means a coincidence. It is precisely so because of the structural characteristics of governance, the type of institution that we have created, the culture of the local officials, the inter-connecting relations between the different levels of governance as well as the very logic of donors etc. The same causes produce the same effects. The similarity between the effects very soon enables one to come back to the causes.

WORKSHOP No. 1 - diagram No. 1: by level of governance



WORKSHOP No. 1 - diagram No. 1

Governance is a process for regulating "tensions": this is the main message that emerged from this workshop. If the current systems have been proven inapt to manage public affairs and areas, this is because they do not take the full extent of these "tensions" into account when drawing up common society projects. **Disconnection** neatly sums up the obstacles facing all levels of governance. There is disconnection between the institutions' visions and social and cultural representation values; between the interests of the various players; between the models often held by donors and local realities; between the approach which we would like to be coherent and the different contexts, and finally between the different levels of governance themselves.

The main reason for this disarray lies within the single fact that there is a lack of debate in society on governance issues. The obvious consequence thereof is the lack of legitimacy of governance systems. Because of this, the problem of conflicting systems arises frequently at national and local level. The state, for example, cannot be legitimate and thus accepted and recognised, because on the one hand, it does not "communicate" with societies and on the other, it is unable to meet their needs, particularly in terms of security.

At regional level, some specific difficulties come to the fore: a lack of political will, failing institutions and unbalanced systems which neither cultivate a balanced distribution of powers nor any complementarity with local and national levels.

To overcome these obstacles, this diagram shows that **regulating these tensions is an art which requires clearly defined objectives and strategies**. **The art** is in gradually building up a common governance project which draws on two sources. The first is the ability of players, of all players, to **negotiate** in order to listen to each other and agree on the traditional and modern values on which governance systems should be based, and, on the other hand, to conciliate their initiatives and interests. The second is the setting up of a **mutual learning** process, in order to identify and share the practices and experiences deemed positive.

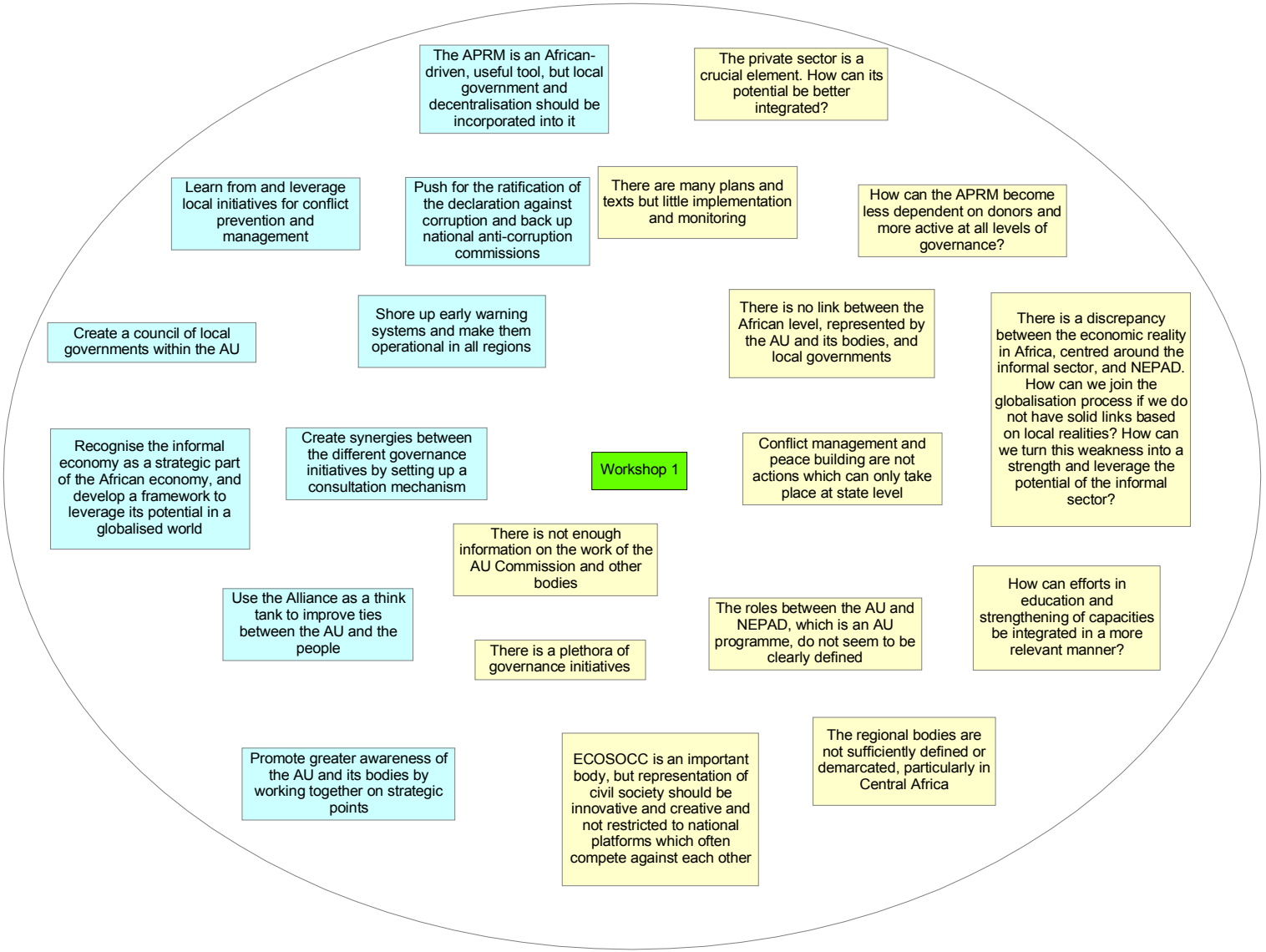
The **objectives** pursued are on the one hand **legitimacy**, especially of the institutional and formal mechanisms which should become established within society in a balanced and controlled manner, and **efficiency** of governance systems which must be capable of responding to people's hopes and requirements.

The strategy depends on the importance given to local level as the essential level for renewing governance. Associating the different levels first requires acknowledgement of the local level's influence on the pursual of governance objectives. It is the level at which the people's needs can be met, and at which the management of public affairs can be tracked most effectively, hence the necessity to incorporate it into the Peer Evaluation Mechanism. It could even form the hitherto neglected basis of regional integration, not only because it could introduce a positive approach to the question of borders being considered as joining lines and not dividing lines, but also and especially because it could be a level wherein the basic services offered to the citizens are shared by all.

In conclusion, the creation of a project determining the methods of action and the common objectives and strategy could be achieved with a legal instrument which is accepted, recognised and respected by all players. **i.e. a governance charter.**

WORKSHOP No. 1 - diagram No. 2: Pan-African level

Pan-African



WORKSHOP No. 1 - diagram No. 2

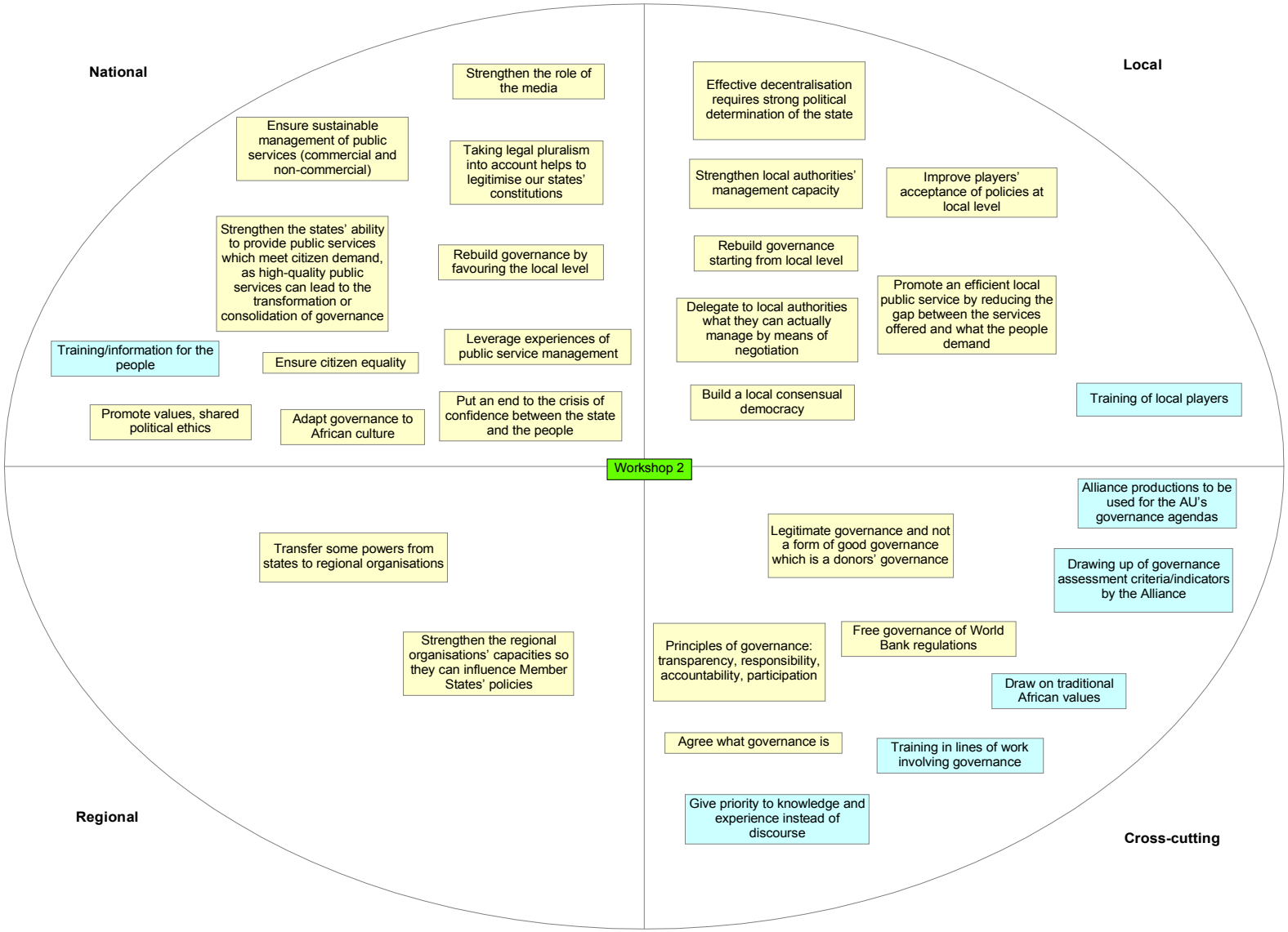
This diagram shows that the AU is addressed in two ways: by its socialisation and its acceptance within African societies on the one hand, and its strength in exercising its powers on the other. On each of these points the workshop identified the weak points which prevent the institution from playing a full role at continental level, and suggested various lines of action to improve the situation.

Most of the difficulties mentioned were, in some way or another, intrinsic to the institution itself. Firstly, it does not offer a clear global vision or an efficient strategy for governance issues. The plethora of initiatives, plans and texts on governance rather create an impression of chaos. Furthermore, these initiatives are not interconnected in any obvious manner. This **lack of interconnection** is exemplified by NEPAD, a Union programme whose conception, mechanisms and bodies nevertheless seem removed from the institution. In addition, despite the diversity of plans and texts there is a definite lack of implementation and monitoring. (For example, the Convention on Corruption was adopted by Member States, who then hesitated in ratifying it due to a lack of political determination). The situation is as such because the Union, first of all, strategically rests on the regions, whereas the regional institutions have not undergone any streamlining. Moreover, it has not incorporated **local governance as a strategic pillar for the renewal of governance at continental level**. This is why two proposals have been made to satisfy this demand: **firstly, for the representation of local governments in the Union's institutional system and secondly, for the Peer Evaluation Mechanism to take decentralisation into account.** Furthermore, it has not yet fulfilled its real potential in communicating effectively on the important work carried out by the Commission and the other bodies.

Secondly, the AU is suffering from shortcomings in certain significant, specific domains. In terms of **conflict management and peace building,** it seems to adopt an approach with deals exclusively at state level, whereas there are also local, extra-state initiatives in development which could also be emphasised and provide an additional or even alternative side to this approach, e.g. by means of **early warning systems at regional level to prevent, manage and resolve certain crises.** In economic terms, although the private sector is one of the essential sectors for the development of the continent, **its potential is not given sufficient value,** which is reflected in NEPAD's current difficulties. **The informal sector**, an undeniable reality of African societies, is simply not taken into account in the strategy for **economic development**, although it could constitute one of the opportunities of being included in a globalised economy. Furthermore, the **negative effects of corruption** on economic development explain why particular attention was given to the ratification of the Convention on Corruption and to the strengthening of national structures in the fight against this blight. The workshop also pointed out that strengthening **human capital** should be one of the key aspects of **African integration**. The Union should help to integrate the states' efforts in terms of education and increasing citizens' abilities.

The second issue addressed on this diagram is the socialisation of the AU and its programmes. **The institution is not spared the typical problem faced by integration organisations** of combining the institutional dimension with social dynamics in order to form an integration process which is led by the people. The only means of representing civil society at present is via ECOSOCC, but this organisation naturally suffers from a lack of representation and legitimacy due to the way in which the organisations are chosen and the fact that the selection criteria are still not clearly defined. Beyond the representation of civil society, **a more important challenge is to discover the mechanisms for consulting the people**. With this in mind, the Alliance for Rebuilding Governance in Africa has developed principles, methods and an action plan from which the AU could benefit to reach out to those players it does not usually reach.

WORKSHOP No. 2 - diagram No. 1: by level of governance



WORKSHOP No. 2 - diagram No. 1

This workshop also looked at the issue of **legitimacy as a central aspect to the process of renewing governance in Africa**. The issue is both a conceptual and practical one. The notion of governance as conceived by the donors is insufficient and is not adapted to the realities of Africa even if the principles that it advocates can be considered as **universal (transparency, accountability, responsibility, participation). Africa should build its own vision and its own project based on the concept of legitimate governance,** expressed in two key ideas: **establishing legitimacy for African values and a shared political ethic; the recognition of diversity** by accepting a pluralism guaranteeing effective citizen equality. Africa should be able to carry out this project by its own governance criteria and indicators.

The theoretical issue is backed up with practical challenges which affect the regaining of confidence between the institutions and the people, and particularly between the state and the people. **The first challenge,** identifiable at local and national level, is that of **satisfying the needs and aspirations of the people.** It is closely linked to the state's and authorities' ability to offer high quality, sustainable and adequate public services to meet the people's demand.

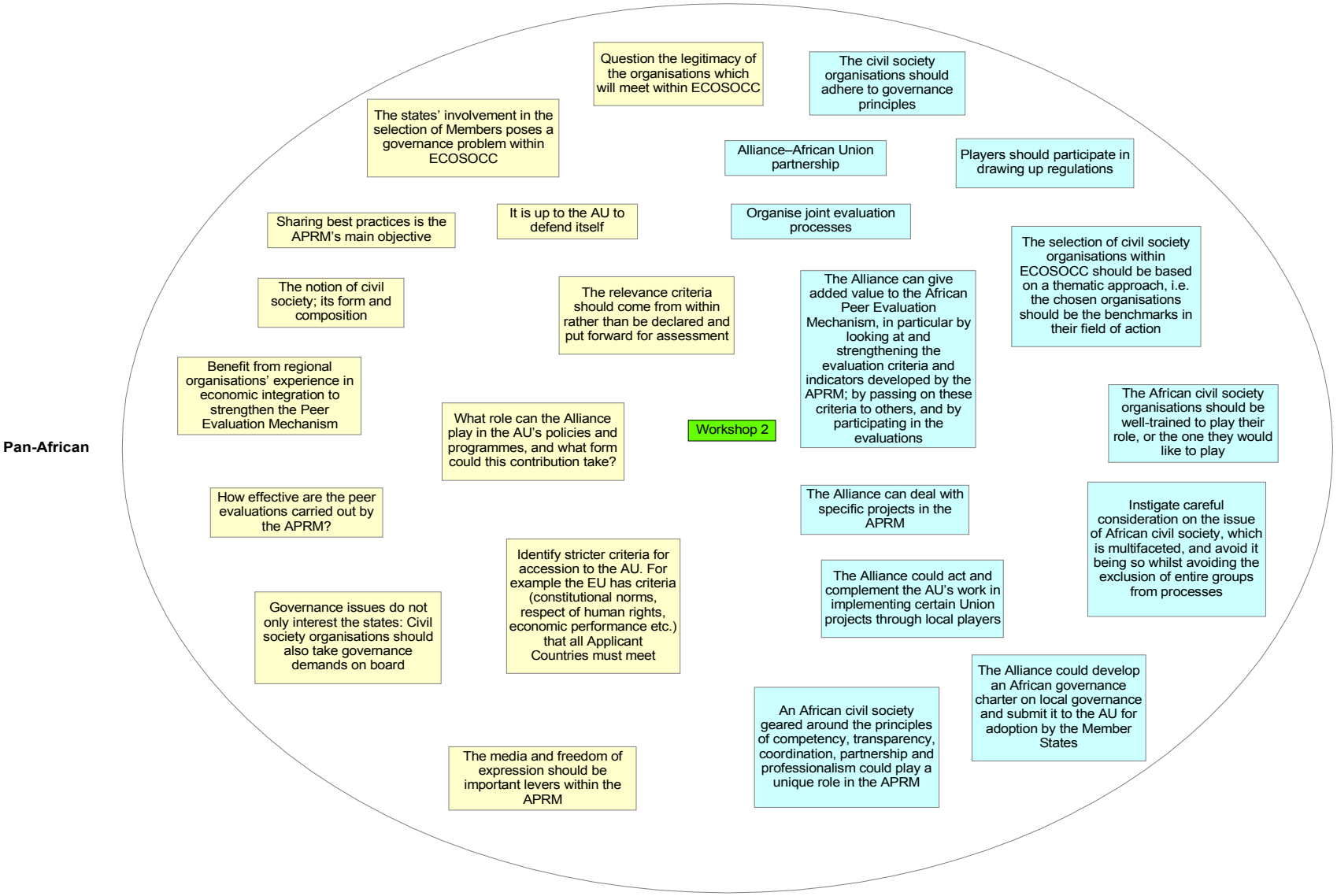
The second challenge is political and is based on the need to **form consensus as a means of democracy,** especially at local level. It is one of the conditions for the people's approval of policies.

The third challenge is that of **rebuilding the state.** This lies strategically within the **strengthening of the decentralisation and local governance processes as well as within regional integration.** But this workshop showed **just how much rebuilding the state from local and regional levels depends on the state** itself. Firstly because the recognition of a process of renewal starting from local level initially requires a strong political will. This will should also lead to powers being handed over to local authorities. Although these are usually determined unilaterally by the state, the workshop suggested that the transferral of powers should be negotiated between state representatives and local players.

Regional integration also requires powers to be handed over from the state to the integration organisations. For this to be a success, the regional organisations need to be strengthened, so that they can influence state policies. At present, the state is often very protective of its prerogatives and strongly attached to the principle of national sovereignty.

The workshop also stressed the importance of **training local players and the people and of sharing knowledge and experiences as part of the process of renewing governance**, and thus giving an essential role to the media.

WORKSHOP No. 2 - diagram No. 2: Pan-African level



WORKSHOP No. 2 - diagram No. 2

Workshop No. 2, on a pan-African level, stressed three fundamental points: **the socialisation of integration processes** and more particularly the role that civil society organisations should play within them; secondly, **the importance of evaluating public policies,** particularly by means of a peer evaluation mechanism, and thirdly, from a strategic point of view, the **development of a partnership with the Alliance** for Rebuilding Governance in Africa.

Two problems were raised concerning the **involvement of civil society organisations in the institutional integration process.** The first is inherent in civil society itself, as we find it difficult to pinpoint the notion, contents and form it should be given. In fact, the institutions which are part of civil society are faced with serious difficulties in terms of governance linked to non-orthodox practices which go against the principles they are meant to be defending. This results in the need to think carefully on the issue of African civil society. The objectives of this thought are, on the one hand, to include diversity within it, and, on the other hand, to implement inclusive mechanisms to link all the elements involved in the current governance process. This is largely dependent on the strengthening of their abilities according to their roles.

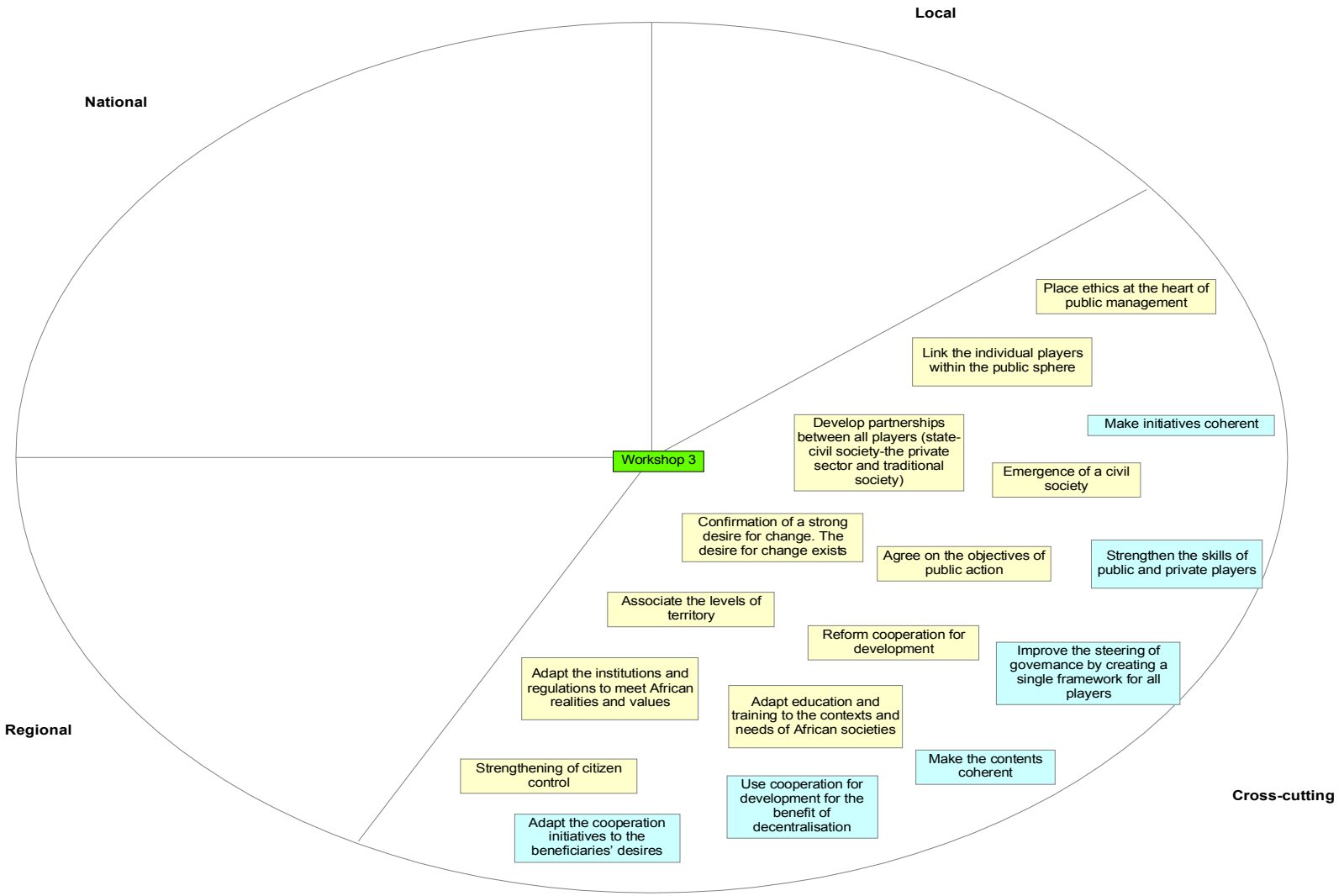
The second problem is related to the **current system of representing civil society organisations within the Union through ECOSOCC**. This representation system should meet the double challenge of the legitimacy of the organisations in session within the body, and their independence regarding the states which could influence their selection. For this to be possible, the selection criteria should be defined according to a thematic approach which takes into account both the area of intervention for each organisation and its credibility, particularly with regard to the respect of governance principles.

This diagram also shows **the fundamental importance of evaluation** in a comprehensive system of monitoring public policies. Beyond the need to define more stringent criteria for accession to the African Union, it is also essential to draw on the **Peer Evaluation Mechanism** which not only enables evaluation to take place, but also the sharing of best governance practices. But this mechanism most certainly needs to be examined further. Does a peer evaluation system not run the risk of inefficiency? Are the assessment criteria based on the internal governance systems or are they simply a formality? Have the experiences of regional integration organisations been sufficiently taken into account to strengthen the mechanism? Are the media and freedom of expression considered as fundamental evaluation levers?

It would seem that the means of improving the current mechanism could be improved, the main idea being to organise **joint evaluation processes.** It would be wise to officially and effectively include civil society both when defining and strengthening the criteria and indicators and when implementing the processes. The Alliance could play a role in this undertaking in the form of a partnership to be developed with the African Union.

The third main idea of this diagram is precisely this partnership between the Alliance and the AU. It could be used to make up for the lack of socialisation of the Union policies and programmes, the defence of which is not effectively ensured. The Alliance could specifically contribute by **mediating between the organisations and local players and could aid the integration of local governance as a strategic level for renewing regional governance** by means of a charter on local governance, which the Union could put forward to the states.

WORKSHOP No. 3 - diagram No. 1: by level of governance



WORKSHOP No. 3 - diagram No. 1

This workshop led to a cross-cutting analysis of the **issues of governance, and the levers and lines of action to bring about the necessary changes for renewal**. Once again we came across practically the same issues as those raised in the other workshops. There were six main ideas. **The first** is linked to the need to **establish governance systems**. These should meet the challenge of adapting the institutions and governance regulations to fit African realities and values.

The second idea complements the first insofar as the definition of clear rules that are recognised and accepted is not exclusively a legal affair. **In addition to legitimacy and legality, the management of public affairs should also be based on ethics**. This starts where legality ends. The development of current governance systems clearly shows the shortcomings of law as a means of regulating societies. This can be shown by considering, *inter alia,* the sometimes repeated rigging of constitutions and the inefficiency of institutional machinery in the fight against corruption.

The third involves reaching agreement on the objectives of public action. Very often, players do not develop the same ideas or pursue ideas which are compatible. A collectively defined common governance project is dependent on the conciliation of these diverging and potentially conflictual interests. Conciliating and taking into account these differences are both closely linked to the **forming of a shared vision of the objectives pursued in public affairs management.**

The fourth idea is that of **associating the different levels of territories.** The latter have almost exclusively been envisaged in isolation, regardless of the connections between them and the influence they have on each other. We have already shown how important local governance and regional integration is for the process of rebuilding the state and vice versa. There is a sort of circular causality between the levels. Moreover, associating these levels is based on a vision of territory as the keystone to governance.

The fifth issue identified by the workshop is that which could counteract the isolation of players within the public sphere. Governance processes are marked by a **fundamental need to connect players** whose taking account of all interests is a feature for the legitimacy of public action. The goals of the above can only be recognised and accepted when they are maintained within **an inclusive process.**

Finally, balanced modes of regulation and of preserving the regulations in place are guaranteed by the development of significant counter-powers, whether institutional or not. **Strengthening citizen control** becomes, in this respect, a substantial challenge to counteract the abuse of power and ensure conformity between management methods and methods for implementing initiatives jointly decided upon.

Once these issues are understood, the task of identifying the **routes for change** remains. The workshop came up with at least five routes. **The first**, which would seem to be prerequisite, is the **confirmation of a great need for change**. Changing the methods of regulating society can only occur if there is true determination to do so. The players are aware that continuing with the current systems can by no means meet the individuals' needs nor the demands for a peaceful collective life, capable of putting paid to the potential sources of social conflict which tend to spread over the entire continent.

Once this initial step has been achieved, **the role of education becomes crucial**. The defining and implementation of **a legitimate African governance project should be adopted by way of education and training systems adapted to the contexts and needs of African societies.** School, a place for gaining knowledge and skills, is also the ideal basis for the formation of intellectual autonomy for the continent and of the necessary human skills to push for its development and its

inclusion in the globalisation process.

The third lever for change lies in the emergence of an African civil society with the skills required to play a role in the **qualitative improvement of the modes of governance** and which will have overcome the obstacles facing its development (see workshop No. 2).

The fourth route towards renewal is the discovery and development of **cooperation and partnership relations including all players** (state-civil society-private sector-traditional societies). It consists of a new relationship founded on a different view which includes all players who recognise and respect each other, and with the necessary legitimacy to participate in public management.

Change could also occur by **defining new relations between Africa and the rest of the world**. An essential feature of these relations is cooperation for development. The initiatives for change will only bear fruit if they complement and are compatible with the partners' conception of the ways and rhythms with which the continent can resolve its problems.

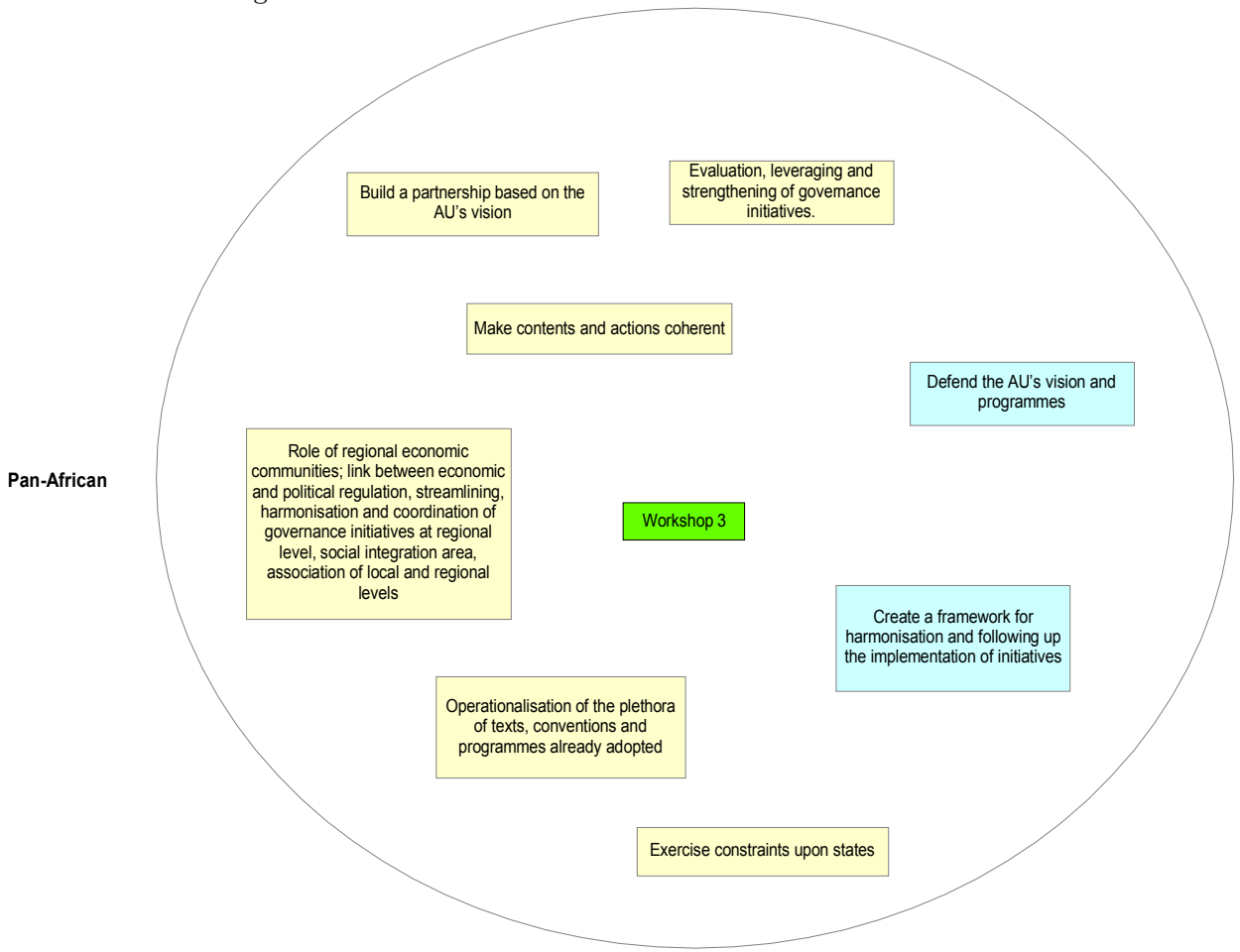
The action proposals which resulted from this workshop lay great emphasis on the **need for coherence.** Firstly, if it is admitted that governance should be adapted to different contexts, it is necessary to apply this to the vision and contents so that the action methods can be shared. The different approaches towards the notion of governance were revealed. That of the donors does not necessarily correspond to that of African societies, and even between these societies it is not necessarily the case that everyone perceives public management the same way.

Naturally, a shared vision alone does not suffice. An improvement in steering governance is also essential. Creating a single framework for all players is the best means of streamlining public management and making it effective. It would guarantee the complementarity of interventions and direct all initiatives towards the same goal, i.e. **satisfying all the interests that come into play.**

Then, to **guarantee the players' participation in the regulation of societies**, they must be given the skills to do so. Both public and private players are confronted with the impossibility of adequately handling their loads and their roles due to serious weaknesses in dealing with the social, economic, cultural and political changes sweeping across Africa and the world.

Finally, this cooperation needs to undergo two radical paradigm transformations. The first is that **it should no longer have the sole objective of meeting the aspirations of its beneficiaries**. The second is that it should be **more associated with decentralisation and local development processes,** with regard to the strategic importance of this level of governance.

WORKSHOP No. 3 - diagram No. 2: Pan-African level

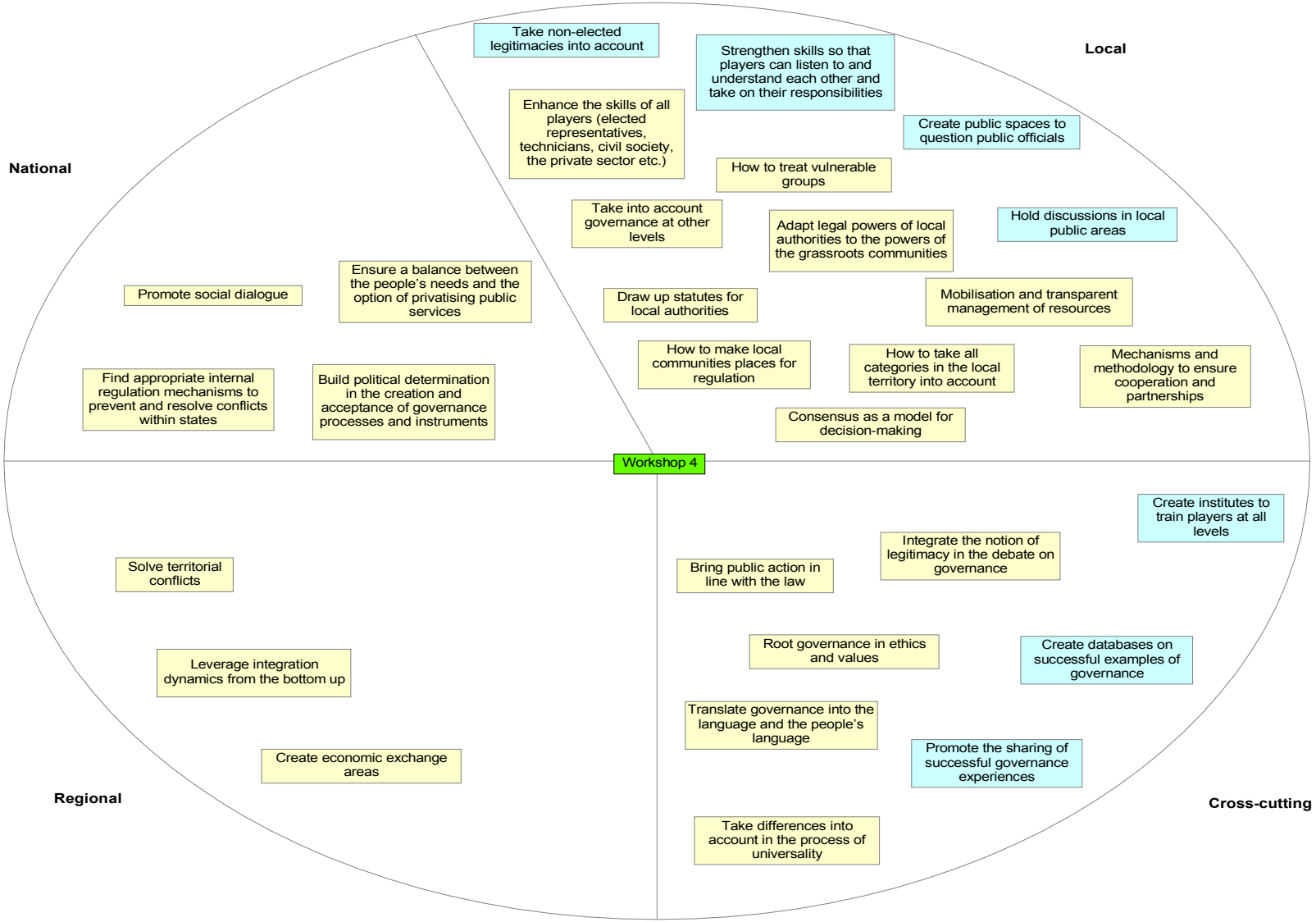


This diagram is one of confirmation. It confirms first of all the observations of the other workshops as regards the obstacles to the flourishing of **the African Union, considered as the most relevant institution to steer public affairs at pan-African level.** These obstacles are the lack of powers to restrain the states; the weaknesses in enforcing all the texts, conventions and programmes already adopted, as well as a lack of coherence in their content and in the governance initiatives.

This diagram also confirms the **relevance of the Union strategy which leans on regional economic communities**. The regions are **the level at which links between economic and political regulation** can best be made. They are also the main level for streamlining, coordinating and harmonising governance initiatives. They are, more generally, **keystones to social integration**, the aim of which is to establish **integration led by the people**. They also constitute the level at which **connections with the local leve**l can be made.

Thirdly, this diagram confirms the **emergencies to which the AU must respond**: it needs to evaluate, capitalise on and strengthen the governance initiatives of all players; to create a harmonisation and follow-up framework for all these initiatives; communicate its vision and programmes by means of a plea to local players; and create partnerships with these players based on its own vision.

WORKSHOP No. 4 - diagram No. 1: by level of governance



WORKSHOP No. 4 - diagram No. 1

The principles of governance which are common to all levels of public management are identical to those set out in workshop No. 3. Once again, we see the **legitimacy-legality-ethics trio.** The principle of **establishing modes of governance** is, however, dealt with in the specific aspect of its **inclusion in the language and the people's language**. Indeed these modes are only institutionalised when they "hit home" - language being not only a means of communication but also a system of cultural, psychological, historical and social representations. The final challenge is to conciliate the differences inherent in societies by implementing a universal process.

These challenges are backed up by **three proposals: the creation of institutions to train players at all levels, the drawing up of a database on successful governance experiences, and the promotion of an exchange of experiences.**

As regards the specific issues and proposals for each level, this diagram shows th**e importance that this workshop granted to the local level.** Here, there are numerous issues, eight in total, some of which have also been developed in other workshops' summaries: **interaction with other levels, factoring in of all categories of players, consensus as a means of decision-making, cooperation and partnerships between players, and taking authorities into account as a means of regulation.** However, we also noticed some further issues at this level, e.g. **involvement and transparent management of resources, paying particular attention to vulnerable groups, and conciliating the local authorities' legal powers and the powers of grassroots communities.** The latter deserves further explanation. Experience has shown that the transferral of powers as part of decentralisation processes does not always correspond to the concerns of the communities. For example, attributing powers in terms of education does not "directly affect" a specific community of players, whereas in terms of fishing, transferring powers enables them to be exercised by a specific category of players, namely the fishermen.

Five proposals to renew local governance were made with the aim of meeting **three obligations: firstly, accountability, particularly with the creation of public areas in which officials may be questioned; secondly, enabling players to take on their responsibilities and thirdly, including non-elected legitimacies in the governance process.**

At national level, the question of public services was raised once again (see workshops 1 and 2), but it was looked at with regard to the privatisation process that is emerging in most of the countries. The failure of public management of certain services (water, electricity, communication etc.) has resulted in asserting, whether rightly or wrongly, that meeting demands for healthy and transparent management is incompatible with public action. Although the privatisation phenomenon is considered as irreversible, it is still important to ensure that it does not disrupt the balance between the people's needs and the options of private management.

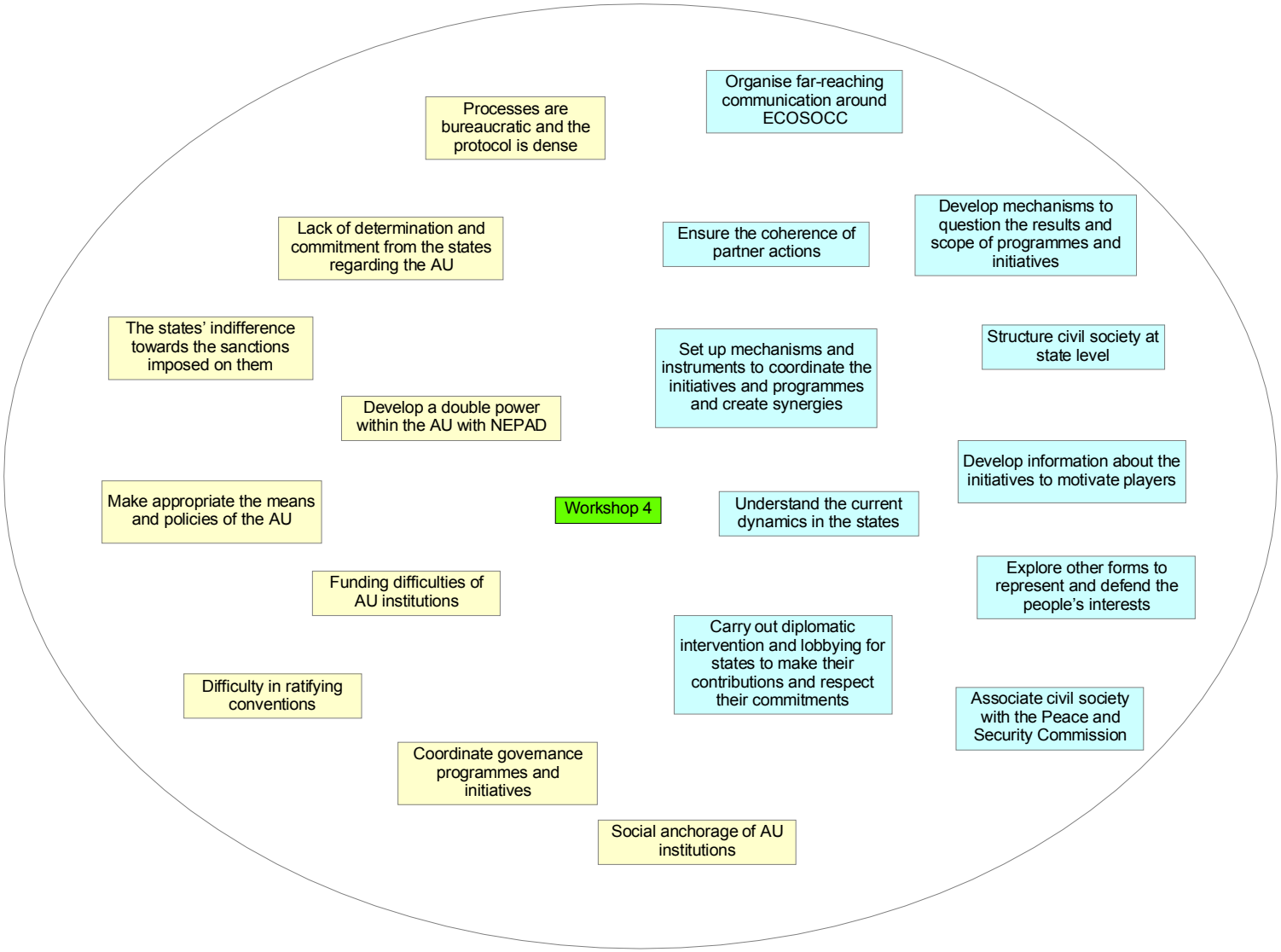
Furthermore, the **art of governing** should be given **particular attention in social dialogue** as a means of conciliation and protection of all interests, particularly those of the weakest players.

Finally, **peace building** by means of internal mechanisms constitutes a major challenge that the states should take note of, as they owe a security obligation to the people.

As regards **regional integration**, the same issues were raised: **resolving territorial conflicts, establishing economic areas for trade and leveraging integration dynamics from the bottom up.**

WORKSHOP No. 4 - diagram No. 2: Pan-African level

Pan-African



WORKSHOP No. 4 - diagram No. 2

This workshop highlighted **four types of obstacles to the efficient execution of AU missions**. The first involves its **relations with its Member States.** The latter were accused in particular of a lack of enthusiasm vis-à-vis the institution, starting with the integration process. Two examples illustrate this obstacle: the lengthy ratification process for certain conventions (e.g. on corruption), and the lack of financial contributions. It is unfortunate that the Union can impose sanctions on states which fail to meet their obligations, yet the latter are indifferent about these sanctions.

The second type of obstacles is related to the very **functioning of the organisation**. Its lack of financial autonomy means it is dependant on its Member States and donors' contributions. Its political ambition seems to be out of line with its means. Its procedures are bureaucratic and its protocol extremely dense.

The two other types of obstacles have already been mentioned in other workshops: **the difficulty of coordinating governance programmes and initiatives** (the example of NEPAD thus creates a double power within the Union), and the fact that the organisation's institutions do not have a social footing.

The latter difficulty was met with several **action proposals** geared towards civil society (the same difficulties were raised on this subject: structuring within the states, communicating about ECOSOCC). This workshop's contribution was based on the **role that civil society should play in building peace and resolving conflicts**. Civil society could thus become part of the Peace and Security Commission with a view to boosting the successful local initiatives in this field that have not been leveraged by the Union.

In addition, the **Union should explore other forms of representation and ways of defending the people's interests** and should lean on a communication strategy designed to encourage players to take such initiatives.

The second series of proposals concerns the **streamlining of Union action as well as its functioning**, particularly in terms of its relations with Member States. The most specific proposals are related to the setting up of questioning mechanisms within the institutions, in order to force the programmes to be accountable and obliged to achieve a certain result; to defining a coherent framework of donor action; and finally to the possibility of carrying out diplomatic and lobbying activities to encourage the states to make their contributions and respect their commitments.

Appendix 3: List of Forum participants

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Appendix 4: An outline of the work on governance to be carried out in June 2006

I – GENERAL INTRODUCTION

- General context of governance in Africa
- The African Union and the issue of governance in Africa
- The Alliance and the issue of governance in Africa
- The Addis Ababa Forum: conception, organisation, objectives, outcome etc.

II – FORM A JOINT VISION OF GOVERNANCE

- Agree on the notion of governance: what is it?
- Agree on the aims of public action

A – Establish governance legitimacy

- Include the notion of legitimacy in the issue of governance;
- Non-elected legitimacies;
- The language of governance;
- Taking African culture into account in governance;
- Adequacy of governance processes and instruments

B – Build governance on an ethic recognised by all

- Promote the values of a shared ethical policy
- Place ethics at the heart of public management

C – Take diversity into account, and build bridges

- How to take differences into account in a process of "universality"?
- Legal pluralism
- Borders: from dividing lines to joining lines

D – Associate the levels of governance

- Associate the territorial levels;
- Tighten the criteria for accession to the African Union;
- Strengthen the abilities of regional organisations;
- Strengthen the powers of regional organisations;

E – Start from local level

- Build and strengthen governance systems at all levels starting from local level;
- Emphasize integration from the bottom

III – FORM A COLLECTIVE STRATEGY FOR CHANGE

A – create institutions which are adapted to the objectives being pursued

- Sustainable management of public trading or non-trading services;
- Public services which meet public demand;
- An efficient and high-quality public service;
- Offer services to all: ensure inclusion;
- Take vulnerable groups into account

B – An effective democracy with responsible and accountable leaders

- Principles of governance: transparency, responsibility, accountability, participation;
- Conform public action with the law;
- Strengthen the role of the media;
- Strengthen citizen control;
- Mobilisation and transparent management of resources;

- Draw up statutes for local authorities

C – Train public service agents and citizens in accordance with the governance objectives

- Adapt education and training to the context and needs of African societies;
- Strengthen players' abilities to enable them to listen to and understand each other and take on their responsibilities;

D – Exchange experiences amongst players in the field

- Give priority to knowledge and experience rather than discourse;
- Leverage experiences in managing public services;
- Encourage the sharing of successful experiences;
- Draw up a database of successful examples of governance;
- Identify and circulate best practices;

E – Learn to build consensus

- Consensus as a means of decision-making for a "consensual" local democracy;
- Find internal mechanisms for the regulation, prevention and resolution of conflicts within states;
- Establish mechanisms and institutions which alleviate tensions by a culture of negotiating interests, whilst making clear and effective decisions;

F – Promote dialogue, negotiation and peaceful conflict management

- Promote social dialogue;
- Create training institutions for players at all levels;

G – Promote and institutionalise partnerships between public and private players

- Link up individual players within the public sphere;
- Improve the steering of governance by creating a single framework for all players;
- Mechanisms and a methodology for cooperation and partnerships;
- Strengthen the skills of public and private players.

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The Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation for Human Progress

The King Baudouin Foundation

The Trust Africa Foundation

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The West Africa Rural Foundation

The European Centre for Development Policy Management

EXEMOLE