

Africa Takes Control of its Destiny

What does Africa want to be and to become? How does it want to govern itself?

24 points for discussion

Conference in conjunction with the commemoration of fifty years of independence

- June 2011 -

Alliance for Rebuilding Governance in Africa

I/ Context: a continent that has not yet taken control of its destiny, after fifty years of independence

In the year 2010, most African countries will be celebrating fifty years of independence. **This symbolic moment is an opportunity to assess political, economic and social changes on the continent.** Clearly, each country has followed its own specific trajectory. But while, overall, progress has been made in the political arena, results in terms of economic and social development have been disappointing. In general, Africa has not been the true master of its destiny. Throughout the cold war, the continent was torn between opposing political blocks—in some case practically made a ward of one block or the other—and forced to adhere to certain political and economic doctrines. Today, however, Africa plays only a marginal role in the process of globalisation; the continent is in a position of submitting to the new world order rather than shaping it.

Yet Africa is not a hopeless continent. It has energetic young people and the natural, cultural and intellectual resources it needs to emerge in the 21st century with its own world view, its own conception of governance and its own path for development. That is why the symbolic moment marking fifty years of African independence should not be used to mourn over the mediocre results of the past, but to **build a project for the next fifty years**. It is now time to delineate the concrete perspectives of that project.

The **Alliance for Rebuilding Governance in Africa (ARGA)** plans to kick-off reflection on the project in June 2011, the first year of the second half-century, by organising a major conference on “The second half-century of independence: Africa takes control of its destiny”.

II/ Content: 24 points to draft a project for the next half-century

The conference will be structured around three requirements vital to the future of the African continent:

1/ Africa must invent its governance, i.e., its way of managing its affairs, to guarantee cohesion and well-being within Africa, security with regards to outside forces and environmental equilibrium. Until now, all that African countries have done is reproduce the systems of colonising States. Africa has implemented or submitted to recommendations and injunctions from the outside, buffeted by passing fashions or the requirements of 'guardian' States or international institutions. Africa's so-called 'modern' institutions, often juxtaposed on thriving traditional methods of management, remain a suffocating veneer—they have not been truly integrated in society. To create a truly African project for governance, proposals will be organised around ten discussion points expressed in the form of proposed goals: 1. put values back at the heart of the political project and adopt an African charter of responsibilities; 2. draft new basic principles for managing society; 3. take the best from traditional and modern methods, recognising legal pluralism; 4. reconstruct States from the local level up and base governance on the principle of active subsidiarity; 5. encourage and energise the project for regional integration in Africa; 6. involve all actors in society in the management of public affairs; 7. invent another way of practising politics; 8. use active civil society as a basis for equitable public management; 9. train civil servants who are at the service of society; 10. construct conditions to provide security for all and lasting peace.

2/ Africa must invent its economy: The word 'oeconomy' comes from the Greek nomos—rules of the game—and oikos—managing the shared house. Africa needs an oeconomy: a system of production and trade that allows it, along with the rest of the world, to benefit from the advantages of globalisation, but that also allows Africa to set down its own rules—rules that allow the continent to preserve its ecosystem, gradually develop its own skills and its own productive system and design its own sustainable development. To develop an African vision of the oeconomy, which is considered a major branch of governance, the conference will address nine points: 1. state new rules of governance for natural resources; 2. adapt the regime of land governance to the realities of African societies; 3. encourage best practices that facilitate the provision of basic services; 4. encourage integrated and equitable management of water resources and coastlines; 5. support the creation of stable and sustainable agribusiness sectors; 6. develop a new vision of currency and energy as vectors of territorial development; 7. renew partnership rules with foreign companies; 8. use development in the informal sector to energise local economies; 9. encourage a management culture and a company culture suited to African realities and needs.

3/ Africa must renegotiate its place in the world: it has become urgent, at the beginning of the second half-century of independence, to begin discussing conditions for renewing relationships between Africa and other continents and countries across

the world. Africa must, while reinforcing win-win partnerships with countries and major regions, free itself of dependency and make its voice heard. To do so, five points will be proposed for discussion and debate: 1. redefine new paradigms that give meaning to international cooperation based on solidarity and partnership—vital to peace and justice in a globalised world; 2. build the foundations of dialogue between actors in African society and actors on other continents (Europe-Asia-Latin America) so that mutually advantageous cooperation can be established; 3. encourage integration of the continent's major regions in terms of production and trade of goods and services; 4. make the voice of a united Africa better heard in international instances calling for just and responsible world governance; 5. create regional universities and training and scientific research centres to give the continent human resources capable of hoisting it to the level of performance needed to compete globally.

III/ Method

1/ Preparations for the meeting

Preparations for the meeting consist primarily in selecting participants and creating a dossier for each discussion point.

- **Participants shall be chosen on the basis of two criteria: legitimacy and representativeness.** Legitimacy will be based on reputation (experience, competence, contributions to the definition and implementation of the project, etc.). Representativeness will be guaranteed by the presence of all African regions and all social and professional categories for each of the 24 points indicated above. In territorial terms, Africa is divided into **six sub-regions**: five regions corresponding to sub-regional institutions and the sixth to the African community outside the continent. **Each sub-region shall be represented by three participants for each point** (i.e., there will be 72 participants from each sub-region) so there will be a total of **432 conference participants**. The 72 participants from each sub-region should meet socio-professional criteria by belonging to the following 12 categories: leaders, farmers and fishermen; women (women's organisations); young people; employees of small informal sector companies; employees of medium- and large-scale companies; government workers and members of the armed forces; local authorities and local government workers; university professors, scientists and think-tank consultants; people in the media; NGO workers; traditional leaders; religious leaders. **Each sub-region should have 6 participants from each socio-professional category.**
- **A dossier shall be created for each of the 24 points to be discussed.** There will be three phases in the creation of the dossiers. In the first phase, a special section dedicated to conference preparation will be opened on the ARGA resource site, which already includes many pertinent documents collected over the past ten years. In the second phase, the site will be enriched with documents from each of the six sub-regions by 'informers' who will have a database at their disposal. Finally, prior to the conference, each participant selected agrees to provide responses to three questions concerning his or her

discussion point: **What are the major questions raised by this point? What are the most significant experiences? What does the participant propose?**

2/ Organisation of the meeting

The meeting will last one week. There will be three phases.

The first three days will be devoted to a workshop for each point of discussion: the 24 workshops will be held simultaneously. 'Simple grid' software will be used for each point. The eighteen participants in each workshop (3 from each sub-region) will work to produce summary responses to the following questions: **What are the major questions raised? Which significant experiences can serve as a source of inspiration? What are the proposals? What commitments can be made or what first steps taken to continue the work of the conference?**

The second phase, beginning on day four, will focus on concentrating proposals from the workshops in the three 'vital requirements' sections: Africa must invent its governance, Africa must invent its economy, Africa must renegotiate its place in the world. There will be ten groups in the first section (180 participants), nine in the second (162 participants) and five in the third (90 participants). The method will be further adapted within the sections so that a maximum of 40 persons work together.

Desmodo software and transversal cards will be used within each group so that in the end five to seven main questions and proposals emerge from each section.

Finally, a **reporting group** will be given the task of writing summary proposals from the conference. This group will be composed of an ARGA member who acts as group reporter, and one representative from each sub-region noted for his or her abilities in works of collective intelligence.

Website resources for the Alliance : www.afrique-gouvernance.net