



**Inaugural Workshop of the Africa
Governance Institute**

Rethinking Governance in Africa

3-4 November 2009 – Dakar –Méri dien Hotel

Final Report

Introduction

The inaugural workshop of the Africa Governance Institute (AGI) took place on 3 and 4 November 2009 in Dakar on the theme of “**Rethinking governance in Africa.**” On the occasion of this workshop, the book published by UNDP in 2008 and entitled “*L’Afrique et les Défis de la Gouvernance*” and prefaced by his Excellency Mr. Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal, was presented to the public.

The workshop had a double objective. In the first place, it was conceived to highlight from the outset one of the major activities of the AGI, namely, intellectual reflection and policy dialogue on governance in Africa. In the second place, the discussions around the main theme of the workshop were designed to provide a clear orientation for the future work of the Institute in the promotion of African thinking on all aspects of governance in Africa. In this regard, the workshop was meant to highlight the form and the approach of the AGI as a forum of high-level policy dialogue on democratic and developmental governance in Africa involving representatives of the public and private sectors, civil society leaders, academics and governance experts, with a view to finding the most appropriate solutions to the major challenges of governance facing the African continent.

Opening Ceremony

The opening session was chaired by His Excellency Mr. Souleymane Ndené Ndiaye, Prime Minister of Senegal. It allowed representatives of the African Union, the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to express and reaffirm their interest in governance issues and the modalities of dealing with them within different institutions. The speakers (see the list in the Annex) reaffirmed their support for the AGI, which is emerging to reinforce Africa’s voice, and pleaded the cause of this new instrument in calling upon other partners to support the Institute.

This opening session took place in the presence of members of government, ambassadors, representatives of international organizations and of civil society, academics, other invited guests, and the media. Approximately 300 persons were present. Mr. Ousmane Sy, Chair of the AGI Governing Board, took advantage of this occasion to pay tribute to Senegalese authorities for their support to the AGI, which has concretely manifested itself by the gift of a building for the Institute as well as its furnishings and office equipment, and by the headquarters’ agreement (currently being finalized). He also expressed gratitude for the support of UNDP, French Cooperation and the ECA. In fact, the AGI is profoundly grateful for the confidence that has been placed in it as a new instrument emerging in the African governance architecture.

Following the opening session, the workshop discussions were organized in two thematic sessions on “The Challenges of Governance in Africa” and “Rethinking Governance in Africa,” plus a roundtable on “The AGI: Objectives and Partners’ Expectations.” With

highly qualified academics and senior institutional representatives as panellists, all three sessions were organized in the form of plenary session, which allowed for the contribution of everyone and the mobilization of the expertise present in the meeting hall.

Session 1: The Challenges of Governance in Africa

Presided by His Excellency Mr. José Brito, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cape Verde, this first session of debates had as speakers three of the authors of the UNDP book mentioned above (Luc Grégoire, Maimouna Isabelle Dieng and Ahmed Rhazaoui) plus Ms. Fatou Mboup, Secretary General of the Union of Women Enterprise Chiefs of Senegal. In presentations that were extremely rich in their analyses of governance in Africa, each of the speakers chose to focus on a certain number of the challenges that Africa must deal with.

A senior UNDP employee, Luc Grégoire began his presentation by emphasizing the link that exists between governance and development in Africa. For him, governance is the subject of a new dynamic marked by reforms in public administration, the mobilization of civil society opinions, and the expression of parliamentarians' desire to better control governmental action. Moreover, the situation analysis of governance in Africa allows noting, among other instances of progress, the following:

- Fewer military coups d'état and authoritarian regimes in Africa, with the exception of a few countries in West Africa;
- An improvement in electoral processes marked by alternation of democratic regimes and the renewal of 70% of parliaments where at least five (5) opposition parties are represented.

However, important challenges remain related to:

- The need to improve the redistribution of wealth;
- Environmental governance ;
- The weakness of institutional capacity;
- The need to improve management of public finances;
- Internal conflicts in many countries arising after the proclamation of electoral results.

To face up to these challenges and create conditions to achieve MDGs, the governance situation in Africa should be strengthened, by assuring the promotion of partnerships and cohesion between the different levels of governance (world, national and local). Overall, economic, judicial, political and participative governance should be strengthened, by promoting the sharing of experience and good practices by different actors, especially the state, the private sector and civil society.

Secretary General of the Platform of Non State Actors for the Follow-up of the Cotonou Agreement, Ms. Isabelle Dieng referred herself to the experience of the platform since 2004 to reaffirm the need to rise up to the challenges of participative governance. More

specifically, she stressed the fact that non-state actors should be strongly involved in the process of formulating, implementing, monitoring and evaluating public policies. This participation can only work by:

- Strengthening the capacities of organization, analysis and proposal-making of non-state actors;
- Developing active and responsible citizenship;
- Developing citizenship education ;
- Strengthening the decentralisation and grassroots development processes.

Within this perspective, the issue is to put the citizen back at the heart of development. In this context, it is necessary to bring local government officials to respect the principle of accountability and to promote participative budgets that take into account the needs voiced by the people at the grassroots. Improving participative governance also implies the development of a model and responsible elite that inspires confidence. In the same way, it is important to bring justice closer to those subject to trial, to strengthen the fight against corruption and non-transparency and to promote a female élite so that women can play an important role in the development process.

University professor and a former UN official, Ahmed Rhazaoui then began his presentation by expressing satisfaction for the launching of the AGI, six years after the first consultation on the creation of the Institute. Alluding to the points made by Luc Grégoire, he recognized the progress realized in the area of governance in Africa, but he insisted on the new challenges to rise up to. These challenges are, in particular:

- The disparity in the division of wealth;
- The increasing ‘monarchization’ of certain presidential regimes;
- The ‘straitjacketing’ of some political systems, to prevent alternation;
- Corruption and non-transparency

Faced with these and other challenges, Rhazaoui argues, the AGI should focus on the following tasks:

- Make an ‘inventory’ of governance in Africa, in connection with the 50th anniversary of African independences in 2010;
- Assess Africa’s performance in human development;
- Broaden thinking on governance at the regional and global levels;
- Make a fifteen (15) year projection;
- Identify the most important choices for development.

Ms. Fatou Mboup, the last speaker on this panel, brought to the debate a private sector perspective. In this regard, she placed emphasis of issues of interest to this sector, particularly the following:

- Promoting a sound economic governance of enterprises;
- Strengthening legal and political reforms to make investments more secure;
- Creating a framework for dialogue between public administration and the private sector;
- Implementing harmonized texts on business law;
- Developing transparency in the management of enterprises;
- Promoting corporate social responsibility;
- Promoting the ethical enterprise;
- Curbing the phenomenon of “dead-at-birth” enterprises.

For her, the AGI should deal with the challenge of better communication between the different social actors, disseminating the best practices of good governance, and encouraging cooperation between the private and the public sectors.

Following the presentations, several participants spoke as part of a wider debate on the following main issues:

- Not to be limited to an institutional approach in terms of governance but to analyse social structures such as the family;
- To incorporate in the analysis of governance the constraints linked to demographic growth;
- To think about the contribution of democracy to economic and social development in Africa;
- To make an objective assessment of governance in Africa, by identifying the most probable causes of the reversal of democratic gains during the last decade;
- To strengthen decentralization and promote human rights;
- To develop access to knowledge by promoting basic education, professional training and monitoring by citizens;
- To strengthen the viability and credibility of established African institutions and in particular, the AGI;
- To promote policy evaluation;
- To empower civil society in the dissemination of the book *L’Afrique et les Défis de la Gouvernance*.

In summing up the discussions, the Chair of the session drew participants’ attention to important factors in the promotion of good governance. These include, in particular:

- The affirmation of an effective leadership with a clear definition of a shared vision;
- The development of education and training to create the conditions for an effective participatory governance;

- The systemization of policy evaluation;
- The development of an African perspective on governance taking into account the transformation of the modern world that cannot but disrupt certain traditional values.

Session 2: Rethinking Governance in Africa:

This second session on 3 November 2009 was devoted to the theme of “rethinking governance in Africa.” It was chaired by Guy Alexandre, AGI Board member. Presentations were made by five speakers.

The first speaker, Ousmane Sy, Chair of the AGI Board, focused his presentation on possible avenues for rethinking governance in Africa. He put forward four, namely:

1. Putting ethical and moral values at the heart of restructuring; which would enable governance to have greater legitimacy in Africa;
2. Starting from the experience of stakeholders in the process of restructuring. By starting with what people live daily, formulae of governance which are invented elsewhere and which do not take into account the realities on the ground can be avoided. This is even more so since governance must be based on the realities of people’s daily life;
3. Articulating unity and diversity. African societies are characterised by diversity. We should therefore make sure not to oppose unity and diversity, but rather to articulate the two;
4. Articulating the local and the national, then the national and the international. It is important to start with the local to rethink governance in Africa. What is local should also be in tune with the national. Moreover, rather than limiting ourselves to a national dimension, we must also take into account the fact that today no country can do without other countries in the world.

Based on these possibilities, we should arrive at a governance that enables us to face up to the great challenges of creating wealth and employment, in short, to make governance the chosen path for development in African countries.

The second paper was presented by Jean-Pierre Elong Mbassi, Executive Secretary of CGLUA (United Cities and Local Governments of Africa). He first explained that his organisation, set up by local governments in order for their voice to be heard, still advocates the taking into account of people’s interests at the grassroots. He then asked himself the question why there should be a rethinking of governance, and gave four reasons. The first reason concerns urbanisation. The current concentrating of the African population in cities will mean that in thirty years, Africa will be urban, while only thirty years before it was rural. This brings about important upheavals and behaviours which are far from being inconsequential, but are a new way of life for Africans. The second reason concerns globalization, which should not be considered as something short-term as it is here to stay. The consequences of globalisation, especially in the way political decision-makers have

harnessed this discourse, are already being felt. Indeed, as was the case with structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), political decision-makers are more concerned with winning approval from the Bretton Woods institutions than with keeping the promises that they have made to the people during electoral campaigns. Hence, the need to deconstruct this type of discourse and behaviour. The third reason concerns the globalisation of new information and communication technologies (ICT). Indeed, with ICT, whatever happens anywhere in Africa is known within minutes throughout the world. From now on, Africa will be seen according to what the media project onto it and based on this, what they think of Africa. The fourth reason concerns the environmental crisis, especially its consequences on climatic migrations, and water conflict which is looming on the horizon.

Elong Mbassi then proposed rethinking governance starting at the local level for five (5) reasons:

1. To benefit from this double legitimacy, both traditional and modern; a duality which remains very much alive in Africa.
2. Because the local level gives credibility to what has been started, given that we have to account for what is done to the people at this level.
3. Because all governance has development as its objective, and there is no sense in governance if there is no development at the local level.
4. Because the local level is where projects should be implemented, even if, sadly, current practices, including those of partners in development, tend to favor the national level or, as is often said, the macro level.
5. Because the local level is strategic for conflict prevention, inasmuch as it is true that many of today's conflicts have to do with communities within states, and not between states.

In concluding his remarks, Elong Mbassi recommended that the AGI contribute to reconstructing African society from its foundation, i.e. from the local level, and leave the African Union to do it from the top.

The third paper was presented by Ms. Aituaje Irene Pogoso, a lecturer in political science at the University of Ibadan. She concentrated on certain factors that should enable us to rethink governance in Africa. First, it is a question of having strong institutions in Africa, to which all individuals are subject and accountable to, whoever they might be. Then, there must be responsible and educated citizens, capable of understanding and questioning certain methods of governance as are currently practised; and capable too of grasping the validity of new governance options and of what they involve. Africa must also succeed in fighting poverty, as where there are poor, it is difficult to have good governance. It must also involve civil society in all the processes of reinventing governance in Africa. The most important of all, however, is to have good political leaders and others in Africa. For Ms. Pogoso, Africa continues to suffer from the same problems since the days of independence. Everything centres on leadership, for leaders are unable to face up to the numerous challenges the continent faces as they should. Hence the need to have credible leaders who are accountable to the people, thanks to the electoral process.

The fourth paper was presented by Joseph Mugore, policy adviser in charge of governance at the UNDP Africa Bureau. He feels first of all that there is a multiplicity of reasons for rethinking governance in Africa, and that it will be difficult perhaps to come to a consensus on all of these reasons. He also notes that several actors are involved in development in Africa: African governments, governments from other countries in the world, intellectuals, international advisors, civil society, the UNDP, etc. Thus, the question is to know who should rethink governance in Africa, and how? Mugore suggests drawing lessons from the past, from Africa's history, and from ongoing changes. He considers it imperative to take account of each other's interests, to see how to interact with the international community. For him, political governance has not had good results despite all attempts, so we should not be limited to that. On the contrary, he suggests concentrating on economic governance, which will enable poverty to be reduced. In fact, if governance does not think of producing wealth or of dividing it between the different classes in society, and so reduce poverty, it is difficult for this governance to be able to lead to development. The problem, however, is to know how to do this. Is it possible to take inspiration from the experience of some Asian countries that have been able to rise to the challenge in a short span of time? Mugore proposes a state apparatus and a political system that encourage this economic governance.

The fifth and final paper was presented by Okey Onyejekwe, Managing Director of the Center for Sustainable Development. Despite the different programs put in place since the Lagos Plan of Action, he argues, Africa is still suffering from its underdevelopment. He wonders if one of the problems is not in the conceptualisation of governance in Africa; if this conceptualisation takes into account the duality of African institutions and has found enough of a balance between research and development. Onyejekwe notes also that there is a kind of intellectual 'schizophrenia' leading to several ways of conceptualizing governance in Africa. Quantitative indicators to measure governance do not take into account the qualitative dimension of this phenomenon. He calls for the need to consider the African people, their problems and their values in any attempt to define and implement governance in Africa.

Session 3: The AGI: Objectives and Partners' Expectations

After the introduction by the Chair of the session, TRUSTAFRICA Executive Director Akwasi Aidoo, the participants in the roundtable on the AGI's objectives and partners' expectations heard a presentation by Professor Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, AGI Interim Director, on the activities program of the Institute as well as the reactions to this presentation by the representatives of the partner organizations present (see the list in the Annex). The representatives of eleven partners of the AGI who spoke on this occasion reaffirmed their desire to collaborate with the Institute in their respective areas of work on governance. Among the most recurrent themes in the statements made, the following deserve to be noted:

- The AGI must justify its legitimacy by working within the framework of the governance agenda of the African Union.
- The AGI must avoid simply being like others by committing itself to a culture of results through concrete realizations and follow-up.
- In response to the fragility of state institutions in Africa, the AGI must add its contribution to strengthening the capacities of states to fulfil their sovereign functions.
- The AGI must be owned by Africans in order to develop an African perspective and to become an intellectual forum on governance in Africa.
- The audience for the AGI should include the larger public, the media, other governance institutes and centers, and social movements.
- In summary, the four conditions for the success of the AGI are legitimacy, autonomy of thought, a culture of results, and ownership by African actors.

The hopes, wishes and desires expressed during the presentations can be summed up as questions around the three words making up the name of the Institute. Beginning with the word ‘African’, several speakers drew attention to the fact that it would be simply too risky to use it uncritically. For them, from the pan-African use of the word, it is vital to proceed to critically analysing the term particularly in connection with its epistemological and practical aspects. In other words, it is therefore important to deconstruct and reconstruct the term ‘African’ in a way to give it a unique sense which confers on it a perspective informed by a vision born of the challenges and real struggles to improve lives and strengthen self-respect on the continent.

What about the word ‘governance’? After 50 years of African independence and with all the resources put in, the fact that we are still talking about poverty reduction on the continent is an undeniable proof that there has been much bad governance in Africa. Hence, the need to mobilise efforts for better governance. This governance should be linked to pursuing and realising material promises and other hopes that have nourished and sustained the struggles for independence and democracy. And it is about governance that starts at the local level, that does not oppose the local to the regional or the national, and that rebuilds and improves the continent’s capacity from the African Union to the smallest of rural communities.

As for the word ‘institute’, the question is to ascertain what form we should give to the AGI in such a way as to make it credible, professional and characterized by a culture of results. For the smooth functioning and the success of the Institute, its ownership by Africa and the Africans is indispensable. Thus, a development strategy must be found that makes it possible that its financial autonomy be the result of African funding first, which will then make it credible in its attempts to mobilise funds among non-African partners. Finally, there is the question of what sort of relationships the AGI should establish with its partners in order not to lose its soul and be reduced to a simple provider of services.

Conclusions

The addresses of the opening ceremony and the results of the three discussion sessions have reinforced the conviction of those who support the AGI project since its origins that the Institute is an important addition to the African governance architecture. Its mission to rethink governance in order to promote an African perspective on the issue of governance in Africa has been endorsed by this workshop.

It is thus possible to pursue the work of the Institute around the following five focus areas, which emerged at the Workshop of AGI Thematic Anchors held in Dakar on 1 and 2 June 2007:

1. Conceptualize and promote democratic governance from an African perspective, one that calls into question the neoliberal and reductionist concept of governance and includes the following tasks: (a) inquiry into governance deficits; (b) development of tools and measurements of progress in governance; and (c) research and training on the development of a culture of democratic governance.
2. Promote democracy and human rights, with emphasis on the democratic deficits of states due to a large extent to the discordance between institutional mechanisms and the practice of power, and on the need for new types of state/citizen relations.
3. Promote peace and security, which cannot be long-lasting without social justice; with equal access to resources and an equitable distribution of income.
4. Re-appropriation of the debate on development, by contributing to efforts undertaken by African universities, think tanks and NGOs to deconstructing the dominant discourse and by revisiting the contributions of African social movements.
5. Act as a strategic monitor in order to anticipate events, scrutinise significant trends, and participate in forging a shared vision of the possible futures for Africa.

Acknowledgments

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Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja

Dakar, 5 January 2010

Annex**LIST OF SPEAKERS****Opening Ceremony**

His Excellency M. Souleymane Ndené Ndiaye, Prime Minister of the Republic of Senegal

Her Excellency Mrs. Julia Dolly Joiner, Commissioner for Political Affairs, African Union Commission

Mr. Akere Muna, President of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) of the African Union

Mr. Abdalla Hamdok, Director, Governance and Public Administration Division, UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)

Mr. Mohamed H'Midouche, Regional Representative of the African Development Bank (AfDB) in Senegal, Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde

Mr. Ebrima Sall, Executive Secretary of CODESRIA

Mr. Bouri Sanhouidi, UNDP Resident Representative in Senegal

Mr. Ousmane Sy, Chair of the AGI Governing Board

Ms. Nouria Benghabrit-Remaoun, Deputy Chair of the AGI Board

Session 1: The Challenges of Governance in Africa

His Excellency Mr. José Brito, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Communities of the Republic of Cape Verde

Mr. Luc Grégoire, Principal Economist, UNDP

Ms. Maimouna Isabelle Dieng, Permanent Secretary of the Platform of Non State Actors for the Follow-up of the Cotonou Agreement

Mr. Ahmed Rhazaoui, Professor at Akhawayn University (Ifrane, Morocco)

Ms. Fatou Mboup, Secretary General of the Union of Women Enterprise Chiefs of Senegal

Session 2 : Rethinking Governance in Africa

Mr. Guy Alexandre, Member of the AGI Governing Board

Mr. Ousmane Sy, Chair of the AGI Board

Mr. Jean-Pierre Elong Mbassi, Executive Secretary of CGLUA (United Cities and Local Governments of Africa)

Ms. Aituaje Irene Pogoso, Lecturer in Political Science, University of Ibadan (Nigeria)

Mr. Joseph Mugore, Senior Governance Adviser, UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa, New York

Mr. Okey Onyejekwe, Managing Director, Center for Sustainable Governance, Addis Ababa

Session 3: Roundtable on the AGI: Objectives and Partners' Expectations

Mr. Akwasi Aidoo, Executive Director of TRUSTAFRICA

Mr. Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, Interim Director, AGI

Ms. Fatou Danielle Diagne, Minister-Advisor in charge of Competitiveness and Good Governance in the Office of the President of the Republic of Senegal

Mr. Bouri Sanhouidi, UNDP Resident Representative in Senegal

Mr. Said Adejumobi, Chief of the Public Administration Section and Coordinator of the African Governance Report, ECA

Mr. Salim Latib, Governance Advisor, Department of Political Affairs, AU Commission

Mr. Lionel Vignacq, Head of Service, Democratic Governance and Local Development, General Directorate of Globalization, French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs

Mr. Ebrima Sall, Executive Secretary of CODESRIA

M. Jean Bossuyt, Head of Programme, ECDPM

Mr. Alfonso Pascual-Perez, Principal Administrator, Pan-African Issues and Institutions, General Directorate of Development, Commission of the European Union

Mr. Momar Lissa Dieng, Member of ARGA (Alliance for Rebuilding Governance in Africa)

Ms. Carolina Cordeiro, Chargé d'Affaires at the Embassy of Portugal in Senegal and West Africa Representative of the Vice President of the Africa-EU Partnership on Democratic Governance and Human Rights

Ms. Gnounka Touré Diouf, Minister-Advisor in charge of Economic Affairs in the Office of the President of the Republic of Senegal