



## AGI's Fridays: "Africa: Reaffirming our commitment"

The third session of the AGI programme entitled AGI Fridays was exceptionally held on Thursday 23 September 2010 from 9:00 to 12:30 at the AGI Headquarters in Dakar. Co-organised by CODESRIA and IDEP, the session focused on the presentation/discussion of the book *Africa: Reaffirming our Commitment* edited by Professors Adebayo Olukoshi and Jean Bernard Ouedraogo and Ebrima Sall. The objective of the Session was to enable the contribution of **high level African intellectuals to the reflection on "Shared Values"** that will be the theme of the African Union Summit of January 2011.

The Session was chaired by Pr. Ebrima Sall, Executive Secretary of CODESRIA with Pr. Aminata Diaw of CODESRIA as co-presenter and Pr. Babacar Gueye from UCAD as discussant. The session was attended by academics, researchers, members of think-tanks, representatives of civil society organisations and the media.

Pr Sall and Pr. Diaw explained the context in which the book was published and its main contributions. The debates of **remarkable density focused on the meaning of the notions of "commitment" and "values" for African intellectual and political elites**. Discussions then moved on to redefinition of the relationship between knowledge and power, for the necessary redefinition of "science as a vocation and politics as a vocation", to revive the desire to succeed and invent a new ideal for Africans.

Anchoring the debate in the perspective of a proactive and heuristic questioning of the thematic of the 2011 African Union Summit, the speakers and the participants proposed three main avenues:

- The need to differentiate between "shared values" and (African) culture;
- The fact that these "shared values" will have to be established and not serve to exhume a past often constrained and not necessary glorious;
- The mobilisation of these "values" as repository for the inclusive redefinition of a development agenda for Africa.

The Session ended with an invitation from **Pr Ebrima Sall asking African and their elites to "believe again in Africa"**.

See more on [www.iag-agi.org/spip/-Thematics-.html](http://www.iag-agi.org/spip/-Thematics-.html)

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*“What then happened ? How did Africa divert itself from its noble ambitions and its societal projects of yesterday to arrive at a situation where more than half of Africans live amidst violence (physical, structural and symbolic) and poverty? How can African countries restore the necessary conditions to the establishment of pacific, harmonious, just and equitable societies? [...]*

*Our Collective Duty To Bring About Hope*

*The Objective of the advanced policy dialogue was not to lament or to fingerpoint those who caused Africa’s ills, but rather to think of conditions and strategies to be used for a new social contract, and reflect on what we can do to free ourselves from poverty and oppression , and most importantly, identify the necessary investments to accelerate Africa’s development.[...]*

*The advanced policy dialogue tackled the main challenges posed by the reinvention of our identities, and by the redefinition of the economic, social, cultural, moral, ethical and institutional foundations of citizenship and belonging to national and local communities, but also of the foundation necessary for the establishment of a pan-African identity and of a status worthy of Africa within the international community. This would seem to be the only way to reverse the xenophobic tendency, as well as other social exclusionist tendencies that are manifest on the continent; this would help transform our countries and societies, as well as our continent into a safe peaceful place.*

*Framework of Dialogue*

1. *Living Together: Local and Pan-African Citizenship*

*Collective identities are constructed, not given. Our strength is based on our diversity, but also on the construction of inclusive societies. This implies the protection and promotion of individual and collective human rights for all, but also the sharing of our responsibilities, and also with the future generation of Africans. This implies the promotion of gender complementarity, as well as greater openness towards others.*

2. *Develop and Put our Economy and our Governance in the Service of all Africans: Towards a New Social Contract*

*The kind of relationships between elites and ordinary citizens, leaders and their people, between elected representatives and their voters, and the way the former delegate their responsibilities, constitute a determining element in the issue of democracy. We must promote our cultural values, those which have a universal appeal, pertaining in particular to solidarity, reciprocity and the sense of responsibility. These elements constitute the basis upon which are founded all forms of democratic and legitimate governance.*

3. *Our Future in a Global and Competitive Community*

*We, Africans, must reinvent our own future and renegotiate our place within the international community. Our vision of the future will determine the education and socialisation of our children, the conception of our schools and other institutions, the various types of policies we conceive and implement, but also our relationships with one another and the rest of the world. This means that we must “think with our own heads, according to our realities”, as mentioned by one great African leader. This also means that there is a need to invest in education, research and in the development of human resources, and also connect research to public policy and decision-making. Africa has the necessary resources, as well as the capacity to conceive and build a better future for itself, and contribute significantly to global development. [...]*

*Extracts from Olukoshi, A., Ouedraogo, J.B., Sall, E. 2010, « A Project for the Africa of Tomorrow », in Africa: Reaffirming our Commitment, Dakar Codesria, p.9-14*