



## AGI Fridays: “Reform of the Security Sector and Reform of the State in Africa.”

As part of its activities on Dialogue, Political Advocacy and Operational Reflection for the implementation of the principles of Developmental Governance, the Africa Governance Institute held in Dakar, **Friday, September 30, 2011, from 9:30am to 12:30pm, a session of its ‘AGI Fridays’ program on ‘the Reform of the Security Sector and the Reform of the State in Africa.’**

Bringing together some fifty high-level participants including members of the diplomatic corps (Ambassadors, representatives and Defense Attachés of foreign countries accredited to Senegal), representatives of international organizations (UNOWA, UNIOGBIS, IDEP, UNDP), of research centers and think-tanks (IDRC, CODESRIA, AfriMAP, ICG), of the university (Partners Senegal, UCAD) and of civil society (Network of African Women Leaders for Peace and Development, WARC), the meeting was held within the context of the increasingly important role of the issue of the reform of the security sector on the African governance agenda which is characterized by three elements. One is the fact that this issue no longer only concerns post-conflict countries; the recent social, political and post-election crises experienced across the continent as well as the violence involving security forces who have often accompanied it have deepened its occurrence and have expanded the number of states concerned. Another is the observation that even in the seemingly 'stable' countries, political leaders are facing recurring citizen demands for the democratization and reconfiguration of defense and security forces in relation to other national priorities in order to achieve effective development in an environment of peace and security. Finally, and more generally, is the fact that such reform also questions the conditions for the possibility of building a capable developmental state in post- or in- conflict countries.

Co-chaired by **Professor Thierno Bah** (representing **General Lamine Cissé**, President of the Governing Board of Partners Senegal) and **Mr. Boubacar Kane** (Director of Political Affairs at UNOWA, representing **Ambassador Said Djinnit** - Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for West Africa), the session aimed to allow participants to respond to three main questions: how can we analyze the broadening of the issue of RSS? Can we think the reform of security sector reform without simultaneously thinking of the state? How do we combine the two processes in order to create the conditions for state capacity building in post- or in- conflict countries?

In his opening remarks, and after having presented the regrets of **General Lamine Cissé’s** inability to attend the meeting, **Prof. Thierno Bah** welcomed the initiative taken by the AGI to convene and then emphasized two points. First, that state reform should be viewed in a holistic perspective taking into account the failings of the colonial state, the necessary adaptation of government mechanisms (administration and public service) and regulation systems (human rights, business Law, ...) as well as frameworks that ensure an environment of peace and security for citizens. From this first observation, **Prof. Thierno Bah** concluded that there can be no contradiction between the reform of the security sector and the reform of the state because both are part of the same logic: the governance of peace and development. **He** then pointed out that to understand the present questioning of the congruence of the reform of the security sector and the state in Africa, this question must be situated within a diachronic perspective by recalling the historicity of the states and societies of Africa. Thus, to **Prof. Thierno Bah**, the congruence of the two is not so much about their synchronicity but about the ontological necessity for any society which wishes to rethink and reclaim its future to question logically the issues of its security and that of its citizens.



After having thanked the AGI for associating UNOWA with the meeting, **Mr. Boubacar Kane**, in his opening remarks, carried out a genealogy of the concept of reform of the security system and a summary of its components. **Mr. Boubacar Kane** deduced from these that we have progressively reached a comprehensive approach to a reform of the security system, which puts the citizen more than the state at the heart of the processes and components, and in which priority is given to human rights as well as governance. **Mr. Boubacar Kane** subsequently drew attention to three major issues inferred by this dynamic: the democratization of the military and political control of the armed forces (the relationship between the politician and the soldier); the institutional aspects-consolidation of security in the prioritization of the axes of development; the role of the security system in the construction of a capable developmental state in Africa. **Mr. Boubacar Kane** also encouraged the AGI to pursue its work on operational reflection on these issues which are far from simple and reaffirmed the availability of UNOWA to support the Institute in this work.

In his intervention, **Mr. Nicolas Guinard** of UNOWA first observed that the concept of RSS is still evolving ("alive") and that the contours remain ("continuously debated and sometimes elastic, depending on the context where we wish to apply it. He noted that the Report of the UNSG on the role of the UN in the support of the reform of the security sector (January 2008), however, allowed the establishment of a certain consensus around the concept, if only because it emphasizes its evolving nature while providing a framework for action around a common vision to establish a viable security system for the state and the citizen. **Mr. Nicolas Guinard** then raised the question of the widening of the issue of the reform of the security sector and proposed several inputs in response: the scope in time of RSS (from post-conflict situations to situations of apparent stability to contexts of fragility and/or structural uncertainty); the range of relevant actors (institutional, but also non-state); and the understanding of RSS based on a globally coordinated security approach. **Mr. Nicolas Guinard** concluded his remarks by reiterating that the reform of security sector reform is inseparable from the state and by hoping that the stakeholders involved in the related processes bear in mind the highly political nature of reform security sector. He also encouraged the stakeholders, notably the international partners, to overcome the overly technical and sectorized approach that characterizes their mobilization in this process in favor of a comprehensive approach.

**Prof. Ndioro Ndiaye**, Former Minister and Chair of the Network of African Women Leaders for Peace and Development, shared the same sentiments in her intervention. Also reiterating the importance of the session for all African countries and their partners, she situated the issue in the necessity of placing the security of the population at the heart of the redefinition of the state/society. **Prof. Ndioro Ndiaye** later noted that the purpose of such a meeting is not to try to make ready recipes and unique linkages between reform of security sector reform and the State, even if the topic compels us to do it. To **Prof. Ndioro Ndiaye**, this meeting allows us to look retroactively and proactively at the articulation of the two processes in order to identify pre-conditions for sustainable human security and developmental governance in an environment of peace and justice for citizens. She then cites three preconditions: the need for a comprehensive and holistic approach to the reform of the state, which necessarily includes the question of security; multi-actor mobilization (paying particular attention to gender) as well as taking into account the specificities of the configurations and contexts in which the issues arise; the need for a thorough



and comprehensive evaluation of the needs in matters of security; and last but not least, the need for ownership of the reforms of the security sector as well as those of the State by the population and the citizens. **Prof. Ndioro Ndiaye** concluded by observing that the two processes questioned induce a paradigm shift regarding the role of state in Africa, since the expectations of its citizens are becoming more numerous and interrelated in matters of the reduction of uncertainty. The reform of the state includes that of all development sectors including security and helps to build capable states, which are what Africa needs most at this moment.

**Dr. Pascal Kambale** of AfriMAP presented the first case study to complement the preceding conceptual interventions. Focusing his remarks on the DRC, he identified three lessons/pieces of evidence from the reform of the security system in this country. **Dr. Pascal Kambale** began first by underlining the importance of the problem posed by impunity in the reform of the security system, highlighting the need for dialectic sanction/reconciliation for sustainable, effective and appropriate human security. This initial observation led him to advocate the integration of judicial reform (particularly military justice in the case of the DRC) in the reflection on the reform of the security system. **He** then stressed the fundamentally political nature of the reform of the security system, noting first that a solely technical point of view (including by certain development partners as is the case in the DRC) necessarily impacts the effectiveness of the security system reform and simultaneously hampers any chance of an effective reform of the state and its operations. **Dr. Pascal Kambale** finally stressed the importance of coordination between international agencies and development partners for an efficient and effective reform of the security system; an organic and operational coordination that fits within the broader context of state reform.

**Mrs. Jacqueline Seck** of UNIOGBIS presented the second case study on Guinea-Bissau. After recalling the holistic approach which serves as the benchmark for UNIOGBIS's work, **Mrs. Jacqueline Seck** then indicated the various components of the reform of the security system in Guinea Bissau (DDR, pensions, infrastructure, legal framework that integrates questions of impunity and ownership, ...). **She** underlined the specificity of the Guinea Bissau context in the implementation of these different components as well as the diversity of stakeholders involved (both at the national and international level and with development partners). **Mrs. Jacqueline Seck** observed that the resulting political dialogue among the actors was rendered possible by the reform of the security sector. **Mrs. Jacqueline Seck** then concluded her remarks by noting that in Guinea Bissau, it is the reform of the security system that is a priority above the reform of the state and not the other way around.

A result of these interventions, all participants had access to the floor for questions/comments. For example, **H.E.Mr. Ambassador of Liberia** reported the experience of his country in the reform of the security system, saying it was only made possible by a combination of strong political will in reforming the state. Similarly, **H.E.Mrs. Ambassador of Zimbabwe** raised the issue of the impunity/amnesty dilemma in reforming the security system and the state in post-conflict situations. **Dr. Gilles Yabi** of the International Crisis Group returned to the issue of the order of priority between the reform of the security sector and the reform of the state (noting the operational homology between the two concepts of security and state) and stressed the issue of legitimacy of political leaders



in the eyes of the population and the citizens (and not only to international agencies or development partners) in processes of reforming the security system and the state. **Mrs. Rama Thioune** of IDRC addressed the issue of reparation and pardon in the reform of security systems and desired that the initiated discussions are continued and deepened at the levels of other think tanks, at the universities and at civil society organizations. **Prof. Thierno Bah** stressed the importance of ethics and of the civic education of the armed forces. **Lieutenant-Colonel Mbaye Cissé** of the Research Division at the General Army Chief of Staff of the Republic of Senegal noted that the key challenge is the construction of a developmental state because if we have a democratic, responsible and accountable state which is able to meet the demands and expectations of its citizens, then we have a security sector that works. He later alerted vigilantly in three points the contributions that the reform of the security system can make to the state: the recruitment of soldiers and security personnel, training (notably the integration of ethics and human rights) and the process of the professionalization of the armed forces in the service of development.

The session ended with the consensus of participants on these three ideas:

- **Construction of the developmental state is inseparable from the question of the reform of the army and of security;**
- **The reform of the security system is inherently political and should be subject to a holistic and integrated approach;**
- **The reform of the security system is a central issue in governance for developmental governance.**