



## AGI's Fridays: Implementation of Development Policies

The second session of 'AGI's Fridays' took place on July, 23, 2010 at the Institute Headquarters, chaired by **Ms. Ingrid Cyimana**, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative in Senegal. Bringing together around twenty participants (representatives from international organizations and partners in development, experienced academics and researchers, civil society members, experts attached to Think-Tanks, and students), this session was about 'Implementation of Development Policies'.

I. The choice of this theme was a continuation of the 'AGI's Fridays' session devoted to African questioning of the political economy notion of 'Fragile State' as a potentially relevant context operating in developmental governance. One of the ideas which emerged from this meeting was to engage in in-depth operational thinking on the 'implementation of development policies' (conceived empirically both as public policies and action, but also as governmental action programmes resulting from local, national and international engagement). Indeed, it had been established that the classic pattern observed in the life-cycle of a development policy in African countries, whatever the context characterizing them, generally rests on one alternative: either it is adopted, but not applied; or effort to apply it is undertaken and this is limited by numerous gaps and shortcomings that in the end compromise the sense and impact of this policy.

A further element which strengthened AGI's resolve in tackling this issue: the organization in September 2010 of the UN Summit on the Millennium Development Goals, in which one of the themes of discussion will be in fact, the challenges and stakes of implementing development policies in the light of realizing MDG objectives by 2015. On similar lines, the African Union Permanent Representatives Committee of Member States met in Kampala on July, 19-20 also considered this as a priority issue in terms of 'Maternal, Infant and Child Health' (Theme of the African Union XVth Ordinary Summit of Heads Of States and Government in Kampala) and in more general, in evaluating MDG achievements. It shows how much AGI was expecting a lot of discussion from this second 'AGI's Fridays' session: to come up with some **elements of thinking on Africa, for Africa and by Africans, with partners in development** likely to contribute to thinking and discussion on MDGs. Saying this does not mean, however, that such an approach had never existed. Quite the opposite, there was as part of sectoral public policies (policies to combat HIV/AIDS, policies to combat poverty, transparency in the extractive industries, strengthening human security, etc.), arrangements for African public action (such as the APRM and AfDB), and was led by different partners in multilateral (particularly UNDP and UNECA) and bilateral development within different think-tanks, based on second-generation 'Africanist' academic work, etc. **The innovative approach to this session lay in the cross-fertilisation of minds in one space and a moment shared in order to produce a collective rationale/body of knowledge, endogenous and legitimate in 'Implementation of Development Policies.**



II. Three main conclusions can be drawn from this exchange between participants at this second 'AGI's Fridays' session.

- a. On the one hand, 'implementation' is not just a technical act, which could be reduced to an approach in terms of sequence, application of imported models or quality. It is above all, an endogenous political process that participates in (re)creating the social link, establishing and/or restoring trust between citizens and their state leaders, and producing political order in the context of developmental governance. In this sense, 'implementation' is a central element in restructuring the State in Africa.
- b. On the other hand, three pre-conditions have been identified as likely to enable effective and optimal implementation of development policies:
  - The existence of real political determination (including the quality of political leadership);
  - Citizen participation from formulating development policies (incorporating their appropriation by citizens, gender, their potential trans-sectoriality, making evaluation and accountability routine, articulating levels of action, and strengthening interaction between the top/down perspective and the bottom/up model);
  - The existence of implementation capacity not only at 'top' level (administration, public officials, etc.) but also 'at the bottom' (civil society, local players, etc.); coupled preferably by partners in development (multilateral and bilateral) for development/strengthening of this capacity rather than substituting or returning to a unbalanced relationship (and a deceptive partnership) justified by the new demands of the current economic and financial crisis, whose origins are not African.
- c. The combination and effectiveness of these three pre-conditions, including with the support of partners in development, has finally been considered as a new paradigm enabling developmental governance to specify different models of regulating the public space (good governance, democratic governance, etc.) which preceded it. These pre-conditions are absolutely essential elements of African 'common values' which the African Union has chosen as the theme of its next Heads of State and government summit.

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