

AFRICA INITIATIVE GROUP

Stemming from Europe / Africa Conferences of the ASPEN Institute, France

Recommendations of the Yamoussoukro Conference

Second International Conference on Africa:

“How to Strengthen the Effectiveness of the State in Africa”?

Yamoussoukro 16/17/18 November 2012

I - State and Society

1.1) A Harsh Evaluation

The general observation by the conference regarding the quality of the relationship between the African State and its Citizens was particularly **harsh and non complacent** - although significant variations appeared amongst countries – evaluation revolved around **three main issues**:

1.1.1) The Government is not responsive to its citizens

Electoral promises exist essentially to **obtain power** and are quickly put aside. In certain cases one can even speak of the **"thoughtlessness and lightness" of political actors** with real problems of "casting". (High level political responsibilities are not meant for everyone, despite what may be suggested by the upsurge of so many parties and ambitions).

Even when the will exists to anticipate and respond and there is a plan supposed to answer the needs of the population, **the population is not consulted** in the process.

Finally, particularly when it comes to youth, the State is a regularly "absent": Main economic achievements of African origin which have succeeded at the global level, such as Nollywood, for example, have been fully realized without any public involvement, and take into account the preoccupations, aspirations and values of the young population.

1.1.2) The State is generally inefficient and even counter-productive

Focusing much more on its "ruling" function, rather than addressing the fundamental needs of its people (living in security, not being hungry, enjoying good health, getting education and employment), the State has generally failed on the essential which is the economic plan. **The elites have also faltered** while instead of spearheading the State at the head of development, they took advantage of it for their personal needs, maintaining it above everything; even if it meant destroying the power of individuals, and despite slogans in favor of the private sector, destroying the entrepreneur as well

(especially the native African private sector, which is even more dependent on the government), which makes the State largely responsible for the economic failure of many countries. (On the contrary, as shown by the spectacular growth of international banking which is allowed to evolve pretty much outside of the local administrations!)

1.1.3) The State is not Impartial, in a Society where Corruption is Increasingly Taking Hold

Impartiality on which should rest the general interest is often absent. We even witness a kind of privatization of the state through **corruption which appears as being "normal"**, along with its private arrangements which have become the norm and tarnish the quality of people involved. This conception synonymous with "mediocracy" is unfit to drive necessary modernization and hampers development. It deepens the injustices, on the other hand, and undermines the normal trust necessary to adhere to "the idea of Nation."

In conclusion, **Institutions exist everywhere, but do not really "function properly"**. This to a varying degree, depending on the country and **much is far more pronounced in Francophone countries**. Countries should perceive the progression of **specific markers** (elections, justice, the constitution, the award of public contracts, level of unemployment, etc.) **so as to be able anticipate** foreseeable changes that could be brutal (as in the case of Mali) and beware of **"false calm"** in others. As a general rule in our global context where the role of the State is considered as being crucial in the process of development (developmental state) and in adapting to globalization, the noted weaknesses of the institutions need to be seriously analyzed and **the slogans blotted out so as to really reconstruct the State**, which is so essential to achieve real development.

1.2) The Profound Reasons why "the State cannot be taken for granted "

This has to do with the history of these States in Africa. There existed during 12 centuries before colonization, kinds of "professional bureaucracies" such as kingdoms and empires that were taken over by colonial regimes, which by definition reigned over "subjects" rather than "citizens." At independence, not wanting to re-install kingdoms, **existing systems were carried over without having been inventoried, or without any questioning of memories or local practices** (for instance the Senegalese constitution in its article concerning changes of power, doesn't mention the principle of "consensus" which is widely used in traditional Africa...).

Imported constitutions do not reflect local cultural values and do not relate to the citizen, who lives in a kind of ambiguity (e.g. the Wolof term used to translate the word President is "owner of the country"). The State is often viewed by the population as being **a foreign entity**. Many of its representatives or officials extort privileges on behalf of the State. It does not embody genuine values of the people, and lacks the legitimacy to establish the **concept of Nation** which is a slow building process of "living together" that relies heavily on "affect". Sometimes, in certain circumstances, it even helps to explode it.

The reconstruction of the State and its institutions is therefore the **main task at hand**, which is the foundation of any meaningful development and which must begin with an analysis thorough enough to allow properly adapted changes to take place.

1.3) Practical recommendations to revitalize the legitimacy of the institutions

Five axis of intervention were identified:

1.3.1) Put citizenship at the heart of the process

Not in the texts (as it is already there), but in practice. **Its place at the center of the State and the paradigm of the problematic should be restored**, well before the notions of leadership or governance, and considered to be the basis of all legitimacy, "the citizen is more important than the President, because he is the one who makes the President!", thus the importance of the ballot and the significance of equality. **It is citizenship which gives content to the Institutions**, which are none other than the organized and permanent representation of citizenship. With as corollary the notion of responsibility and accountability, and also with a notion of citizenship that surpasses the 'individual' by incorporating the appropriate qualifiers: educated, informed, demanding....

1.3.2) Put in place a process for reclaiming citizenship at the grassroots.

This necessary exercise has been undertaken with some success through the **National Conferences, Reconciliation Commissions** and recently through the interesting example of the **Senegalese National Platform**: an extensive participatory consultation begun in 2007, based on a bottom-up dialogue process which included all the components of society, in the different regions right to the capital, complemented by cross commissions examining closely the "sick patient State", the "sick Society" to prescribe remedies that take into account all the concerns of the population, with specific objectives and benchmarks. The results were captured in a national **Governance Charter**, signed by all the stakeholders and more recently by the new President of the Republic between the two rounds of elections.

1.3.3) Re-interrogate Scientifically without any Hang-ups "History, Memories and Practices."

The time has come **to dust off ideas**, especially with regard to the logical arithmetic of Western democracy, while refraining from all angelic and *primitivist* temptations, in order to **revisit constitutions**. Should be taken into account in this study, **whatever is a producer of value**, from the central unit (the family), as well as secondary circles that also are producers of values (schools and businesses ...).

This re-appropriation should be done without taboo, emphasizing for instance the importance of "taking into consideration" **positive determining elements**, in the African context such as "**faith**" and the contributions from religions or "African solidarity" deeply encrusted in tradition.

1.3.4) The fight against "ordinary" corruption

Beyond the vast corruption, against which the struggle has necessarily an exemplary value, the most important is **the gradual eradication of "ordinary" corruption**. In effect this system which functions as a system of give-and-take and private arrangements creates a genuine network of sub-solidarity. It "holds society" because

the role model of the State does not, and therefore appears as a kind of **"normality" very difficult to fight against**.

Only a long-term action, **short, determined awareness campaigns highlighting in a targeted manner the major malfunctions that corruption can cause** (ie. the collapse of the military in Mali or the failure of education and health systems), can have **enough impact on the consciousness of the people for them to take decisions**. This is also the case for all the other aforementioned issues that **need to be addressed vigorously**, where actions at the cultural level can help shake the "self-doubt" which is at the origin of the sense of inevitability of this general system of private arrangements. The profound effect of **theater** (as Kotéba in Mali for example) should be emphasized and built on, as well as **the fundamental issue of raising the quality of television programming and other media**.

1.3.5) Improving Operational Efficiency of the State.

a) Giving Priority to the Economic Dimension

This is what touches the most the citizen of today. While the State no longer has the same means as before, it must find its way in a world that is more open and for this, regional integration should be taken as the only paradigm likely to extend its action as well as understanding that it is essential to understand the role of the private sector in Africa.

b) Be a vehicle for change.

There is no need to remain hostage of its legacy. The quality of the State's performance must be **its ability to innovate**. The cornerstone should be **the "promotion of talent"** both inside or outside the administration. The right talent in the right places. The problem of "casting" is fundamental and must integrate the notions of professional qualifications and experience strengthened with integrity.

The discretionary power of choosing those responsible in high positions must be followed by procedures defining the eligibility criteria, and establishing lists, from which the final selection will be made. Of course, this practice of promoting talent must be consistent with the capacity to attract resources to the public sector with appropriate remuneration.

c) Accept Being Challenged by the Population.

This **proximity with the population**, whereby it is easy for citizens to address their leaders directly is more frequent in the English speaking world than in the Francophone countries, where it is practically taboo. Remedying this situation would help to restore "a trusting society" essential for its development.

II - State and Defense

The same causes at the root of the weakness of the State can be found at the level of defense and the military. They are at the origin of the worrisome degradation of security in some countries, the magnitude of which goes well beyond national borders and the African framework itself, **to potentially extend to the neighboring continent, Europe.**

There is need for a new global awareness along with the implementation of a real collective defense strategy to match new challenges.

2.1) African armies to reverse their vocation

The army theoretically the most important organized force among the Institutions and **symbol of the credibility of the State** became in many countries its "**Achilles Heel.**" Unable ensure the defense with respect to external threat it tends to become a real vector of internal insecurity. Supposed to be the symbol and source of social cohesion it is outrageously politicized. There is **urgency to engage in reforms inseparable from rebuilding the state.**

2.2) Mali, a Change of Security Paradigm.

The deteriorating situation in Mali was **the result of a combination of several factors:** a geographical area characterized by a structural weakness of the State, under administered, under-equipped, with a long tradition of traffic, a new hybrid threat of terrorist and mafia in full expansion (moving 30% of the European consumption of cocaine, 45 kidnappings since 2009) and the tipping point inked to the Libyan crisis with the emergence of genuine well trained constituted units with heavy weaponry.

In defense of the Malian authorities, it should be noted that **the international community has remained deaf to its requests since 2007** for the organization of a summit of Sahelian countries on trans-boundary threats in the Sahara, such as to the warnings of the African Union on the risks of regional destabilization associated with the war in Libya. On the other hand the payment of ransoms for the release of Western hostages helped to build the capacity of warlords, active in all kinds of trafficking.

This increasing criminalization has transformed these places over the years in **real lawless cross border territories, which now linked to terrorism changes the paradigm, in the same way as did September 11**, introducing a new global threat. This calls for genuine reforms, and collective security systems at all levels, national, regional and international, which should be conducted simultaneously.

2.3) Engaging Reforms at the National Level.

The army must be kept away from the political field and put back in its defense role. Ownership cannot be that of a clan or a portion of the population, it must be national. There is no simple way to achieve this. **It requires real political courage** to

engage important reforms be it amongst civilians or the military and must be an integral part of rebuilding of the state.

We mustn't let the military address these issues alone amongst themselves. **Defense issues need to be “de-sacralized” and brought out into the open in a “holistic” approach which takes into account all the other domains:** human rights (otherwise there is no security or peace), ending impunity; gender (**women in particular play an important role in mediation**) ; judicial reform ; intelligence ; the rehabilitation of barracks and prisons, etc.

Ethics must once again be at the heart of military training with the principle of absolute obedience to civilian rule as a point of honor, as well as the core essence of their mission, which is to protect the people.

Looking beyond the immediate task at hand, we should develop **a positive vision and a revalorization of what the military should represent:** a source of social cohesion; a symbol of peace; engaged in development using its capabilities (training youth - especially in areas of technology – the civil service, creating ties with the population etc.).

Thought should be given on how to dissociate the military service (sort of civil service to strengthen ties with the population) and the professional army which implies a high level of professionalism. Finally, the concept of **security needs to be redefined in a “sustainable” perspective** (as with sustainable development) **and global** (human safety, the fight against poverty and unemployment, which are the best antidotes to dangerous excesses).

2.4) Regional level: The inevitable course of action

The territorial expansion of conflict and the need to share resources requires **collective solutions at regional level**. This can strengthen the regional synergy within the African agenda. This sharing creates other problems linked to coordination and management which along with the costs of operations and the magnitude of the issues at hand for the entire region, **requires a strategic vision developed by Africans**, for Africans. This approach would lay the groundwork for the creation of:

- An **African strategic think tank** focusing on prospection
- **Local manufacturing** of certain categories of **military equipment**
- A military school with a regional dimension to address new technological challenges.

2.5) International Involvement:

The world is getting increasingly interdependent and Europe as the closest Continent would be blind if it were to minimize the need to strengthen its strategic defense agreements with Africa. Considering Europe's economic slowdown, it is more than ever before important for to associate strategic partners in mutual sharing of efforts:

- To share the same threat assessments (prevention is always less costly than the conflict).
- To build the capacity to put in place cooperative mechanisms (joint exercises in areas of collective security, regional brigades etc.).

- To finance the reforms which are expensive.
- To fight against money laundering which is at the root of all forms of trafficking.

It seems the time has come to organize under the auspices of Africa, a major Conference on Global Security which would bring together all the stakeholders.

III - State and Development

3.1) Two major challenges for the African state

The state is facing two extremely serious problems, **two real "time bombs": The problem of food self-sufficiency**, and that of **youth employment**. The numbers speak for themselves:

- Africa which represents 17% and soon 22% of the world's population, today supplies only 1.7% of the global agricultural production.
- The population will soon double (two billion in 2040) and young people under 25 will count for 50%, with only a very small portion which has a salaried employment.

These problems of food self-sufficiency and employment, for which the African states are in the forefront are **by virtue of their dimension, becoming potential problems on a global scale**. They can only find a solution if there is a real surge to face the important challenges related to the effectiveness of the States; and that will not be sufficient without a special mobilization on the part of the population.

3.2) Addressing the challenge of food self-sufficiency

The expected growth potential in this area is huge because beyond fixing critical agricultural populations, it is a whole economic system that will emerge: food processing locally, electrification programs, development of interregional trade etc.

For this purpose **the involvement of the State is fundamental because it would reverse the current trend where Africa consumes what it does not produce and produces what it does not consume!** However, it requires long term investments (with a lack of appropriate financial resources), large investments (as the entire chain of production / logistics / distribution must be controlled) requiring the development of infrastructure and implementation of **a genuine agricultural development policy**:

- **Strategic**: By effectively putting agriculture in the highest priorities, at the budget level (for example, today, it represents only 2% of the overall budget of Côte d'Ivoire), the quality of governmental teams and international cooperation.
- **Constant**: It is necessarily a long-term policy.
- **Courageous**: Reverse current trends and manage price fluctuations which could likely trigger hunger riots, potentially very dangerous and not an easy task. This will require enlightened direction and a truly visible policy that can justify the efforts required as well as their equitable distribution.
- **Innovative**: To solve the problems related to a situation where financing is adapted in such a way that those who have the competence do not have the funding and vice versa, and where the interest rates are very high, it is imperative **to find ways to mobilize savings** (review regulations regarding

insurance and retirement plans; develop capital markets, make a better use of external reserves with the French Treasury, reap the benefits of triple-A of the ADB etc.). **Remain competitive** (break the rigidity of the very high current exchange rates) and have a real "**agricultural SME approach** "

- **Collaborative:** Agriculture is a favored area for public/private partnerships: the State must "accompany" the development of private agribusiness and constructive consultation (notably through a **better use of Social and Economic Councils**) must enable the State to manage the programme effectively.
- **Sub-regional and international:** Complementarity within the regions with regards to agriculture (which requires industrial arbitration) and the multiplication of dialogue in a sector regulated at the global level, imply a constant presence of African policymakers amongst these decision making platforms.

3.3) Addressing the Challenges of Youth Employment.

By 2040, Africa will have 2 billion inhabitants, with 50% of young people under 25, **including a female component** which has more and more legitimate demands, autonomy and representativeness.

The issue around **youth employment is therefore becoming a real security concern** more that could be far more devastating than the Arab Springs, unless the State changes the way it considers youth. Because today there exists a **frightening gap between the energy of young people, their creativity and the use being made of this potential**. Youth constitute a major asset for the Continent and not only for the Continent ... (need to design a coherent migration policy).

This entails a **particularly innovative employment policy targeting young people and inclusive**, with the goal of creating a middle class that is sorely lacking today with the following main axes:

- **Priority to local production and the transformation of raw materials** with the aim of creating local jobs, because when "we export raw materials, we export the workforce as well ..."
- **Attention on the development of SMEs, natural breeding ground for youth employment.** Business creation must be easy, free from all the current hassles. Inspiration of a proactive policy in this area could come from **foreign examples** such as the "small business act" in the USA, the Korean model or the effective indigenization policy companies as carried out in Tunisia etc. . . .
- **Understanding the profile of the entrepreneur who is above all a creator** and there are many in Africa (many potential Bill Gates in this large number ...) and the right combination to exploit talents (business incubators). Take a fresh look and without complexes at everything related to creativity that could contribute to the burgeoning of a sector, such as the food sector for example.
- **Develop the start-up spirit** (at the basis of 15% of the growth in France and the largest capitalization stocks in the USA): award bonuses for innovation, do not be afraid of the legal vacuums of these virgin sectors, create frameworks for young sprouts, Avoid taxing heavy loads at startup time, highlight "success stories" which make young people dream, encourage banks including international banks to support this sector, break paralyzing monopolies, support private research.
- **"Fostering champions"** (best emerging entrepreneurs) in strategic sectors (support from regional banks, sovereign funds etc.). Overall, call upon financial institutions to adjust to these "development guidelines."

- **Be very strong on the necessary "transfer of skills"** that must accompany all foreign investments (see the example of China).
- **Consider the field of art and culture**, in which the State has levers of action, its "locomotive effect" on youth employment as well as its contribution to building a much needed "self esteem" for the entire population.
- **Envisioning television and broadcasting as a key sector** at the service of development, emphasizing on "content" and encouraging regulated liberalization.
- **Rethinking the education system** in which the State has a major responsibility in the existing flaws (1500 psychology students in Abidjan for example). Diversify a teaching that remains too exclusively theoretical, to put it in adequacy with the country's needs and growth poles. Promote vocational training, which is the foundation for the future, and fight against a certain snobbishness with regards to manual trades. Consider education as a "determining factor for change" and a way out of chronic assistantship, without inhibition. Explaining that "work must be created ..."

3.4) The Fundamental Character of "values" to Overcome the Challenges

Recognizing the highly negative and resistant forces (corruption) which will oppose these changes, **the concepts of empathy, "love"** (of others, neighbors, the country) which also **imply self-love** should not be a taboo subject, and should be mentioned, because they are critical success factors of **these mutations**. The site of Yamoussoukro has been conducive to the introspection needed to reflect on these values. Recalling **the trend to inverse them**, remembering the heated controversy over the cost of the Yamoussokoro Basilica (while no voices speak out today when arms or private jests are purchased!). Introspection which led to an understanding of the concept of "service" ("civil service" as opposed to "self service") and the importance of the "vision." We must fight against mental degradation and cultivate moral values, build a mindset that goes beyond the mere economic and military issues, where man remains at the center. Taken in this sense, this topic deeply connected to the one previously mentioned concerning the reconstruction of the State. Furthermore, **the vision and accurate assessment of the challenges** and ways to overcome them is essential if we want to mobilize the population and reinforce the needed "self-confidence" because, as historian Ki-Zerbo said: **"We do not develop our countries, we develop ourselves."**

3.5) Conditions for the Implementation of these Policies.

To succeed in conducting such an innovative, courageous, consistent policy capable of stimulating real change requires:

- **Long-term vision** to win the "battle" of development is long-term that needs: work, discipline, efficient consistency and continuous monitoring to assess where we stand in the process. Hence the need for **the Plan**.
- **A strategic vision which must be shared** through a consultative process and "inclusive" (including the private sector, considered a privileged partner).
- **A democratic State**, not authoritarian but **"directive"**, able to assess what is important and make the necessary choices for the creation of a "coherence and expansion framework" of initiatives (which in certain cases might begin with a "reconciliation" framework...).
- **Credibility on the part of government teams** that could be the driving force of change. This is why it is crucial to identify "talents", choosing profiles that

have experience in the relevant field, coming possibly from the private sector (in a spirit of fair compensation which also takes addresses the importance of exemplarity in the fight against corruption ...).

- **The ability to recreate a trustworthy society** which is the most important factor of success and to instill trust among populations by showing visible progress within the coherence framework. Communication on actual indicators of hope, beyond the efforts needed, is possible; **because this capacity of succeeding, using new developments** has already been proven by certain countries such as Kenya (the internet sector), Nigeria and Ethiopia (the agricultural sector); and the growth rate in these countries (between 7% and 10%) compared to those in Europe (0,4 to 0,5%) already illustrate **the exceptional leeway available for improvement, if these two challenges are addressed.**

IV - State and International Cooperation

Interdependence at the planetary level and rapid economic and political transformations make international cooperation **a key area for State action, where in-depth reforms are needed**. This offers **very interesting perspectives**, under three conditions:

4.1) Strengthening the Capacity to Negotiate

Today Africa is **kept at the periphery of international** platforms such as the G7 and the G20 and does not really have a voice at the United Nations. Heads of State trips abroad seldom include business leaders; the signing of agreements often lack African expertise; delegations attending major international forums are mostly composed of civil servants, in short **Africa does not value enough its human resources**, and cannot keep them.

There is a need to:

- **Improve the "credibility" of African positions**: institutional strengthening, improved control of the quality of the leaders and the design of a shared long term vision, should enable a better understanding and **expression of what we want** on the international stage and increase "recognition".
- **Undergo an in-depth reform of "diplomacy"** which is at the source of globalization teachings and improved integration, by integrating it in the reconstruction and talent identification context, focusing towards a **"total" diplomacy** (which takes into account economic, defense and security issues) serving the interests of the country and its citizens.
- **Increase "coordination" at the level of African integration** to avoid that the weaknesses of the small States be taken advantage of. We need to create **"frameworks of convergence"** where States can develop the habit of working together and a better understanding of their common destiny within a broader political space.

4.2) Manage Foreign Aid Efficiently

All countries need assistance because there is little margin in public budgetary savings (even China benefited from aid until very recently!). The important thing is to orient it well and make good use of it. International Institutions cannot accomplish development in place of the States, but are likely to sustain and consolidate it; hence the importance of the vision and determination of African options. In this sense two priorities for cooperation seem obvious today:

- **The field of security and of military cooperation** on a regional basis.

- **The agricultural sector oriented towards food self sufficiency**, in priority in northern Sahel, where the military response, in order to bring lasting peace, must lead to a large-scale development programme. **These potentialities exist** (a Marshall Plan for the Sahel?) but require a **"convergence" of efforts from different partners and a "reorientation" of Aid**; because the "Millennium Objectives", forgot to consider rural development...

4.3) Reassessing the Negotiating Position of Africa.

In a world globally dominated by the notion of interest, Africa must first rely on itself. But it can do so today in an uninhibited fashion and with a **certain confidence that the balance of power and interest is evolving in its favor.**

If it can control its governance and create a trusting society which is essential for development, it **possesses real power because it holds the raw materials** (and "that which holds the raw materials, holds the world") and a humongous reserve of growth given the size of its population. In an open and realistic perspective, **Africa's partners are able to understand that everyone has an interest in Africa succeeding**, apart from the risks of terrorism spreading, which are visible today, "putting money in the pockets of the people of Africa" will contribute to resolving the global crisis and promote growth, exports and investments of developed countries. This is the "piece of World cake" that will increase everyone's benefits. **Hence the need for massive investments beginning with Africans themselves**, who by showing that they believe in themselves above all and that they love their continent, will for sure create a strong "desire for Africa "especially among youth.