

Second Edition

Meaningful democracy presupposes the ability of all people to pull their limited resources, to form and develop ideas and programmes, put them on the political agenda, and act to support them. For it is in the learning life of associations, organisations and movements that common problems, which reverberate first in individual life histories are distilled and transmitted in amplified form to the public sphere.

**GTZ/UNECA PROGRAMME ON
CIVIL SOCIETY AND POLITICAL CONSENSUS BUILDING**

**Foundations, development, and potential of
CIVIL SOCIETY IN AFRICA:
AN ASSESSMENT AND STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE¹**

**Volume IV
ACCS AND STRATEGIC APPROACHES TO BUILDING
CAPACITY FOR OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE STATE FOR
DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION IN AFRICA**

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Assessment of Lessons Learned for Popular Participation in
Political Consensus Building and the Current State and Potential of CSOs in Africa:
Foundations of new Strategies and approaches

¹ This is a consultancy report presented to GTZ as part of a contractual fulfilment. It is made of four volumes: volume one is a theoretical construct for civil society development in Africa, volume two is the context of state-society relations, volume three is an analysis of the influence of the project on political transition in Africa, volume four is the strategic perspective and way ahead.

Volume IV

STRATEGIC APPROACHES TO BUILDING CAPACITY FOR DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION IN AFRICA

Introduction

The current dynamics of political change and opportunities for popular participation in governance in Africa are unprecedented. A significant challenge, however, is to place these dynamics in a coherent perspective and within the context of basic principles of democracy and good governance, and determine how, in the implementation of such principles, relevant capacity building targets can be ploughed in to the process. The initiative should aim at facilitating the definition of ideas and systems that embody and institutionalise good governance and political pluralism within the context of cultural traditions by promoting increased understanding of the process and requirements of democratic transition. While it is of fundamental importance that we define approaches to, and processes of, participation, democracy and good governance, it is also necessary that such approaches be synthesised with universal principles of democracy, which assure both political contestation and political participation. Without this, political transitions may well result in varying degrees of political liberalisation, but not functioning democracies.

From this perspective, the strategic agenda and capacity building targets will provide information, which will enable policy makers to identify the institutional gaps that inhibit a transition to democracy. They will then be faced with the challenge of identifying ways and means of helping to foster institutions which currently do not exist; reorienting institutions which have been diverted to non-democratic ends; and building in-country capacity for democratic governance on the basis of local demand and with a minimum of outside expertise. Although the initiation of a democratic transition is important, it is recognised that consolidation and sustainability are major issues.²

This paper is about strategic capacity building for democratic governance by strengthening civil society and institutions supporting and 'managing' it. It deals with historical, cultural and socio-economic human, organisational and institutional development issues of particular relevance to democratic governance; as the prospects, nature and outcomes of political transition depend on the configuration of political institutions, as manifest in political rules or organisations, in state and civil society. The key capacity building targets discussed in this paper are gleaned to underscore the endowment of political institutions that are conducive to democratic transition. It is assumed that the inception of transition signifies the end of a stable set of political rules that characterise the previous regime, and that the completion of the transition is marked by the establishment of a new regime and rule equilibrium.

² In this regard it is hoped that increased understanding of the processes, problems and requirements of democratic transition might also lead to increased awareness of such concerns as how political change might be sustained in a conflict-free environment. This will also underpin the need for mechanisms to lay the requisite basis to prevent relapse into old practices, how those democratic principles inherent in traditional societies might be drawn upon, and what socio-economic conditions are necessary for the process of political reform.

BY WAY OF PROBLEM ANALYSIS

I have elsewhere³ raised the notion of *naive realism* in the rhetorical over-simplification of the articulation of political transition process in the post-Cold War era. This has been invoked as the first conceptual mark of processes and strategies of transition to democracy that point to certain analytical shortcomings in current perspectives on political, economic and social reforms. These shortcomings can be seen as outcomes of more or less conscious attempts of the elite⁴ and their international backers to quickly get their hands on “urgent” or “practical” matters of democratisation of politics without worrying much about “abstract” theory. I start my introduction with this opening, as I believe it is the singular threat to democratic transition in African polities and many other societies that share similar features.

One manifestation of naive realism is the pre-emptive “socialisation” of democratic ideas and practices, as demonstrated, for example, by the dimensions and the implications of popular participation in the regional and local elections in many countries. A process, which often spawns an attendant rhetorical over simplification of difficult concepts, this socialisation is disabling as a method of both grasping democratic ideas and rules in all their openness and complexity, and making the ideas tractable to transparent and sustainable institutional practice. The naïve realist approach is also manifested in the simple equation of partisan elaboration of democratic ideology with the production of ideas, values, and goals in civil society. Here, our attention and thought are diverted from the critical distinction between,

- on the one hand, a system of abstract categories as a construct of an explicit rationalisation, a formal conceptualisation and design, and,
- broad and diverse domains of ideology and purposefulness in the plenitude of social experience, on the other.

We are discouraged from acknowledging the distance and tension between these two spheres of democratisation. Instead, one is led to believe that ideological construction in one sphere is reducible to ideological construction in the other. Making statements such as “the constitution must be a creation of the citizenry” and “the law should come from the populace rather than the palace” is simple for many politicians today. Nevertheless, this habit also suggests and even assumes the form of a putative attribution of authorial agency in the making of a democratic constitution to an “organisationally underdeveloped, democratically inexperienced and largely, to a civil society that has been deliberately rendered illiterate”. Still another expression of naive realism in existing perspectives and projects of transition to democracy in Africa is the common assumption that the proliferation of social organisations, mainly indigenous, civil society organisations, is in and of itself an index of democratisation. The assumption seems plausible. After all, what is more obvious in projects of democratic transition in Africa than the goal of increasing the number of social institution's that will build stronger civil societies that in turn spawns favourable conditions for the growth of democracy in Ethiopia? Nevertheless, the assumption is open to question.⁵

³ Costantinos, BT. Political transition in Africa. ALF/GCA study, IDDS Press 1994, Addis Abeba

⁴ At the outset, a transition to democracy as such provides an in-depth look into social and political processes that spawn people's empowerment and may result in articulating the problems of the transition much more than what the incumbent government or the opposition may be willing to admit.

⁵ NGOs as opposed to CSOs may be problematic in that, far from contributing to the strengthening of civil society vis-à-vis the state, they can function as instruments for the consolidation of technocratic elite within the non- governmental

Implicitly or explicitly, the Western liberal democratic model is often taken as the acme of democratic governance. The target that a host of other African countries set themselves in the process of democratisation is the attainment of institutions and practices that have been the basic ingredients of the Western democratic tradition. These include above all multi-partyism, separation of powers and independent judiciary, free press, and popular sovereignty expressed through the legislature. Nevertheless, keen observers have not been oblivious to the limits of this declared paragon of democracy. They point, on the one hand, to its formal character and, on the other hand, the struggle in recent decades of marginalised groups with an "alternative, participatory vision of democracy" to the empowerment of the common man.⁶ The strengthening of civil society that underpins the alternative vision of democracy is germane to the discussion of the democratisation process in Africa. For the ultimate hope to salvage the imperilled process seems to lie precisely in such strengthening of civil society.

To a continent that has not been able to attain even the formal aspects of democracy, limited as they might be, this groping for a deeper edition of it may sound as a bit of a luxury. Nevertheless, these are backgrounded against the relative weight of external and internal factors.

- To the former belong the collapse of the Communist order in Eastern Europe, the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and the Human Rights conditionality of Western governments, notably the US, and some donor organisations. The ripple effect of the collapse of the Eastern Bloc on Africa is bound to vary from country to country, with the maximum effect probably on countries, which were so closely tied with that bloc. The sponsors of SAPs were not particularly worried about the guaranteeing of democratic rights; as a matter of fact, initially, they tended to favour authoritarian regimes. SAPs, which antedated the democratisation process by almost a decade, incidentally rather than deliberately abetted the democratic struggle by undermining the legitimacy of the regimes that adopted it and whittling away the post-independence gains in social welfare.⁷ It is difficult to give much weight to the human rights conditionality argument, given in particular the cynical manipulation of that issue by the self-appointed defender of those rights.
- The latter pertain to the strength of the mass and popular movements for democratic reforms inside Africa itself. It may be necessary to the weight on the strength of the domestic forces, notably the vitality of the popular movements in countries like Mali, Zambia, Malawi, Togo, etc. A direct and participatory form of democracy is presumed to be the hallmark of the perceived African pre-colonial democratic tradition, more specifically of "village democracy". The pre-colonial past has been portrayed in

sector. The growing number and diversity of NGOs mean that the organisations have very uneven political and professional capabilities, and differing levels of commitment to processes of democratisation. They provide a range of social, humanitarian, and relief services of varying proximity and relevance to the ends and purposes of democratic reform. They do not function simply as instruments to those ends, but have their own inclinations, concerns and motivations, which democratisation of politics and societies must take into account. In addition, it appears that the proliferation of NGOs over the last decade has been more as outcome of funding by external donors than an indigenous "grassroots" phenomenon. Problems such as these constitute significant obstacles to the realisation of the democratic potential of African NGOs.

⁶This is brought out forcefully in Eboe Hutchful, 1992 "The International Dimensions of the Democratisation Process in Africa", CODESRIA, Senegal

⁷Mkandawire, T. 1992, "Adjustment, Political Conditionality and Democratisation in Africa", 1992, pp. 5-8, 12. Cf. Bathily, p. 17, who also sees the East European factor as "un facteur favorable et non le facteur initial déterminant".

diametrically opposite fashion: as an age of barbarism and arbitrary rule (by colonialists), and as one of egalitarianism (by African nationalists).⁸ Both positions apparently suffer from selective presentation of the facts. The former position needs not detain us here. The latter we have to address. It is obvious that the idea of a uniform Pan-African egalitarian socio-political system throughout pre-colonial Africa is an untenable position. In the first place, Africa has seen empires (Mali, Songhay, Aksum) and military dictatorships (Shaka Zulu, Dahomey) as well as village democracies in pre-colonial times. Secondly, even the so-called village democracies either had an unmistakable stamp of gerontocracy about them or were quite often disrupted by the intervention of powerful individuals or groups relying on military prowess or invoking spiritual powers.⁹

Ultimately, one is also forced to question the relevance of a pre-colonial and post-Cold War socio-political organisation to the contemporary African reality. For it is inconceivable that Africa can go back to its past, however idyllic it may be imagined to be. One writer has even gone so far as to say that all attempts to relate the contemporary question of democratisation to pre-colonial African society smacks either of naiveté or of ideological manipulation.¹⁰ At any rate, it is self-evident that Africa in the today is a much different proposition than the Africa of the 1890s or earlier. So much has changed in territorial configuration, social and economic differentiation and the international alignment of forces. Contemporary Africa can only build on the cumulative legacy of its pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial experience.

In sum, naïve realism within existing perspectives and projects of democratisation emphasises the immediacies of institutional and political activity to the neglect of the constitutive and regulative concepts and norms that define, structure and validate democratic institutions and democratic practices. It attempts to establish a direct relation to social experience, largely by passing the intangible, yet no less significant, terrain of critical political thought. Its immediate turn to the practical tasks of inducing people to participate in ostensibly democratic activities such as elections, the full meaning of which is often beyond the grasp of the participants, tends to become a substitute for the making of transparent and open rules of political engagement.

Democratic transitions could only take place only when organisations in civil society and within the state act as independent centres of countervailing power¹¹ to check and balance the excessive use of executive authority.¹² How would one recognise that democratisation had occurred? Essentially, democratic norms and procedures would have to become fully assimilated by a majority of the players within the political system. There must be consensus on the rules of the game, whether these rule are embodied in legal texts or in less formal but no less real customs of politics as it is practised. Democratic rule

⁸ Abdoulaye Bathily, "Pouvoirs et dynamiques de changement politique en Afrique: de l'Ere pré-colonial aux Indépendances", paper presented at the Seventh General Assembly of CODESRIA, Dakar, 10-14 February 1992, pp. 2-4.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 4, 7-13; J.-F. Bayart, "La problématique de la démocratie en Afrique noire. 'La Baule, et puis après?'" , *Politique africaine*, no. 43 (October, 1991), p. 8.

¹⁰ Bayart, p. 9.

¹¹ Global Coalition for Africa / Africa Leadership Forum. (1993) "Transition to democracy in Africa: a cross national study" Research Design and Methodology. Paper prepared by Bratton M. and Nicholas van de Walle of Michigan State University and consultants to GCA

¹² Democratisation is seen here as a process of institutional learning, in which state and societal organisations develop a new and stable set of mechanisms to manage conflict peacefully. Historically, it is clear that few authoritarian regimes successfully achieve a transition to full democratic rule on their first attempt. In a majority of cases, several unsuccessful attempts have been necessary before a transition was actually consolidated and sustained for the long term.

institutionalises uncertainty. It can succeed if and when all the political actors accept this uncertainty as preferable to the rigidities of dictatorship.¹³

Section II

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR WHOM AND BY WHOM?

The complexities of the transition to democracy and the assumptions that are made on the basis of perceived necessities or demand of societies and states are well beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, it would be necessary to deal briefly in trying to identify capacity building targets, the modalities and sources of political transitions. Two aspects need to be considered.¹⁴ Political transitions are initiated at three levels: (1) state led transitions, (2) society led transitions, and (3) a combinations of state led and society led transitions. Three main strategic and processual issues are usually considered in the study and analysis of democratic transitions¹⁵:

- a) the presence of “objective conditions for political transition” in the socio-economic structures,¹⁶
- b) contingent political dynamics -- democracy is installed as a result of the conscious reform initiatives of individual leaders, elite factions and social movements¹⁷ and
- c) political rules and institutions, where democratisation depends upon the emergence of supportive set of political institutions. Institutions are recurrent and valued patterns of political behaviour that give shape and regularity to politics. They may be manifest as political rules (either legal or informal) or as political organisations (within the state or civil society). As the building blocks of democracy, certain combinations of political institutions must be extant or emergent if a democratic transition is to occur. Political institutions also include customary political norms and practices. The prospects for democracy partly depend on habitual attitudes and behaviour among the population at large. While important these aspects of political culture will not be included in the study. From this perspective, political culture (gleaned from public opinion surveys) best predicts the prospects for the consolidation of democracy, rather than the likelihood that pro-democracy social movements can arise and that the democratic tradition can occur.

¹³It succeeds, for example, when politicians are willing to compete in elections they may end up losing in exchange for the certainty that there will be subsequent elections in which they will be able to compete again, and that the rights of the losers will be protected. If, on the other hand, political actors enter into constitutional agreements or electoral contests for short term strategic reasons, but do not feel bound by subsequent disagreeable results, democratic rule is unlikely to last.

¹⁴ Global Coalition for Africa / Africa Leadership Forum. (1993). p. 9

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Certain "deep structures", which reflect long-term historical developments in the economy and society, determine whether there is a conducive environment for democratisation. Various structures have been proposed as preconditions for democracy such as the emergence of an independent middle class, the attainment of widespread literacy and education, or a shared sense among citizens of national unity and high average of per capita national income. An explanation of transitions to democracy in Africa according to an embedded set of socio-economic constraints in clearly inappropriate. According to this approach, the background conditions in most African countries would tend to preclude the emergence of pro democratic movements. Yet, popular protesters have used the idiom of democracy to oppose authoritarian rules across the continent. Perhaps the structuralist argument should be modified in the light of these recent events in Africa to permit the occurrence of democratic transitions in poor countries, even if democracy is subsequently extremely difficult to consolidate.

¹⁷ The trajectory of transitions is driven by the short-term calculations and immediate reactions of strategic actors. Outcomes are indeterminate because all these actors have incomplete information, make hurried reactions to unforeseen events, and must struggle against one another.

The trajectories of struggles over political rules can be summarised according to the predominance of one organisational sector or another.¹⁸ In state-led transitions, governing elite, and in particular the executive, take the lead in bringing about democratisation. *'Managing transition is at root an attempt to minimise its impact. The ruler's ability to manage a viable coalition within the state and find allies within the opposition will largely determine ability to retain at least some power at the end of the transition process.* Society-led transitions progress despite the unrelenting resistance of governing elite and the executive.

The key characteristics of such transitions are the intransigence of the executive and the ability of opposition in civil society to gather enough organisational and ideological strength to force the executive into a series of concessions. This is where the paramount issue of capacity building comes up in relative terms to the explanatory factors that operate at different level of analysis. Here our thoughts are again focused on the institutional approach, locating the analysis at an intermediate (meso-) level between individuals and whole systems. Institutions draw attention to the regularities rather than the quirks of individual behaviour. Hence, political institutions are proximate to transition dynamics than “deep” socio-economic structures and contingent actions of individual political actors. In this regard, the main aim of the capacity building targets is to identify the key issues in the transition process and with the objective of understanding whether transition occurs at all; how it occurs; and the extent or outcome of transition. It should focus the process of regime transition, zeroing in the formal and informal political rules and organisations that promote democratic governance. The following capacity building targets are suggested for possible consideration in capacity building for democracy.

- a) Political rules and political culture
 - i) The relevant rules are those that promote democracy (political competition and political participation) and governance (administrative accountability, transparency, and predictability). When formalised, rules are codified at three levels: constitutional rules, legislated rules, and administrative rules. In addition to formal rules, there are effective political practices that actually determine who gets what, and when.
 - ii) Required regulatory and administrative procedures to facilitate pluralistic expression and mobilisation, especially by institutions of civil society and non-governmental organisations;
 - iii) the need for, and nature of, electoral codes, and the role of international monitoring prior to and during elections; and financial constraints and considerations, including funding of electoral processes, national conferences, political parties and political campaigns;
 - iv) constitutional reform and legislative requirements, including provisions and legislation to improve the quality of governance and reduce opportunities for corruption;
 - v) Cultural and traditional dynamics, and the development of a political culture which takes cultural and traditional factors into account; and the origin and nature

¹⁸ The classification of the 'Trajectories of Political Transition' has been taken from ALF/GCA. "Research Design and Methodology". Paper prepared by Bratton, M. and van de Walle.

of the process of change and attitudes of political leadership, and consequent implications for the negotiation, design and management of the transition process;

- b) Political institutions
- i) The role of organised groups in civil society such as trade unions, the opposition, the military, and security forces during political transition and democratic societies, and peasant associations.
 - ii) The role of the public sector, civil society, business, and government during the process of transition, and how such entities can further or impede such process;
 - iii) The role and contribution of specific groups and segments of society, such as the press and media, the private sector, and women, in bringing about and supporting political and social change;
 - iv) The role, if any, of external bilateral, multilateral, private sector and civil society agencies and organisations in supporting or constraining the process of democratic change needs to be established. The potential role of donor agencies and the international community in supporting institutional development conducive to greater participation and responsible, and responsive, governance; and the role, function, and capacity of existing institutions in mobilising support for change, particularly in regard to enhancing accountability, openness and adherence to the rule of law is also important.
 - v) Institutional requirements for enhancing and sustaining future democratic practices, especially in the areas of accountability, openness, and predictability; and capacity of existing systems, such as courts, arbitrators, legislatures and election procedures, for negotiation and peaceful resolution of problems.
 - vi) The general internal and external dynamics which affect political change in the post-World War II historical perspective against which political transition is occurring; and the impact of geopolitical location on political development and the transition to democracy.

In terms of capacity building, this approach stands to reason, because that the prospects for democratisation hinge on the existence of a system of supportive institutions. Democratic assistance programmes will be able to use this approach to recognise institutional gaps that inhibit a transition to democracy. Moving beyond tried and true methods of institution-building, which focus on technical assistance and personnel training, we will be challenged to think about three areas. These are helping to foster institutions which currently do not exist, reorienting institutions which have been diverted to non-democratic ends and building in-country capacity for democratic governance on the basis of local demand and with a minimum of outside expertise. This approach promises a policy-relevant account of political transitions that is simultaneously comprehensive, manageable, and plausible; and because the analysis is conducted at a meso-level, it enables ready reference to other factors if and when institutional factors fail to provide an adequate explanation.

Section III

VISION, MISSION AND TARGETS FOR DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

The founding documents of ACCS states that "... the Economic Commission for Africa, in collaboration with African Governments, Civil Society Organisations, and other partner agencies, proposes to set up the African Centre for Civil Society that will be led by an international board of trustees. The Board of Trustees consists of civil society organisation, national and international NGOs, NGO networks, bilateral and multilateral institutions, and governments. To this end it proposes to develop and implement- with African Governments, Civil Society Organisations, and other partner agencies-a comprehensive programme to promote popular participation, strengthen the role and effectiveness of popular civil society organisations. Furthermore, it harnesses the full potential of these organisations for conflict management, peace building, and democratic consolidation. In the next three years, ECA's proposed programmes would concentrate on: establishing the African Centre for Civil Society and the institutional development, capacity building of NGOs as well as CSOs in Africa, enhancing co-operation between African governments and civil society organisations towards the creation of an enabling environment, building civil society's capacity to develop innovative techniques for the prevention of conflict and strengthening of peaceful, pluralistic democracy". In its founding memoranda, the ACCS programme was supposed to concentrate on the following objectives:

1. Establishing the African Centre for Civil Society (ACCS), the institutional development and capacity building of NGOs and CSOs in Africa,
2. ACCS would aim at enhancing co-operation between African governments and civil society organisations, by encouraging governments to institute a regulatory environment conducive to the growth of indigenous NGOs and the broadening of their economic, political, and social activity through the work of the ACCS, and
3. ACCS will support building civil society's capacity to develop innovative techniques for the prevention of conflict and strengthening of peaceful, pluralistic democracy and peaceful resolution of disputes.

The Centre was planned to address the critical issue of how NGOs and CSOs could play a more active and effective role as intermediaries, promoting the interest and priorities of their grassroots constituencies. Working in tandem with national NGO consortia and regional NGO support organisations, the Centre would develop and offer core programmes to train African civil society leaders and on-going technical advisory services in such essential areas as organisation and management of NGOs and CSOs, forging effective policy and programme based linkages with donors, working with government policy makers- at local and national levels, networking with other NGOs, at regional, national and international levels and information management, including dissemination and analysis. In its first three years of operation, the African Centre for Civil Society would be expected to produce: needs assessment, national-level training workshops, sub-regional workshops on resource management, regional workshop, newsletter, studies, and NGO data base. The African Centre for Civil Society will serve as the hub of think tanks. In its first three years of operation, the African Centre for Civil Society would be expected to produce: needs assessment, national-level training workshops, sub-regional workshops on resource management, regional workshop, newsletter, Studies, and NGO data base. Again as stated in the founding documents, the African Centre for Civil Society will have served as the hub of think tanks.

1. Enhancing government and civil society co-operation: As civil societies become more influential and visible in recent years, their relation with the state sector has also

grown. Some governments, suspicious of the motives of such organisations, have sought to limit their influence by imposing prohibitively complex registration requirements and administrative regulations. In turn many NGOs and POs have grown more mistrustful of governments, and have therefore sought to avoid working within the system. Yet this culture of mutual distrust has only served to harm both parties.¹⁹

2. Helping civil society to build and keep the peace: Under the then proposal, the ECA would build the capacity of three sub-regional conflict management centres to work Africa-wide. These centres would serve as regional "specialised nodes" effectively carrying-out their mandate of helping societies peacefully resolve national, communal, and religious tensions and disputes. This part of the proposal meets a direct need identified by the UN's System-wide Special Initiative for Africa, which cites civil society in Africa as potentially effective agents for keeping the peace.²⁰

Today, the capacity building needs for democracy targets the ultimate goal of building a regime in which the authority to exercise power derives from the will of the people. At minimum, a democratic regime maximises opportunities for both political contestation and political participation. Political contestation refers to open rivalry and competition among diverse political interests. Political participation refers to the entitlement of citizens, considered as political equals, to be involved in choosing²¹ governmental leaders and policies. Democratisation refers a more complex process of rule making in which citizens obtain opportunities for political contestation and political participation. While no single set of rules by itself defines democracy, there is a procedural minimum, which participants can agree upon as necessary elements.²² Onset of democratisation, as opposed to mere political liberalisation and governance reform, is distinguished when the incumbent government calls competitive elections of genuinely uncertain outcome. Capacity for good governance refers to a conscious management of regimes with the aim of enhancing the effectiveness of political authority. Governance can be thought of as the applied realm of politics, in which political actors seek mechanisms to convert political preferences into concrete outcomes. Good governance involves improvements in the technical competence and efficiency of the public sector as well as measures to make public policy more accountable, transparent, and predictable to society at large.

¹⁹ Under this proposal, the ECA envisaged to play a catalytic role by assisting civil society institutions to deal more effectively with the state sector, while also educating bureaucracies and political leadership of the need to understand and support civil society institutions. The ECA would seek to establish a healthy collaboration based on the fact that both governments and civil society institutions want to further the cause for Africa's development. The ECA therefore proposes to develop a co-operative working relationship between government and civil society and enhance NGOs' role in the formulation and implementation of national policy and programmes, develop national means of communication and consultative mechanism to facilitate interaction between governments and civil society, train civil society organisations and encourage government to enact enabling legislation and policies conducive to the formation and free operation of popularly based organisations.

²⁰ The UN initiative notes that an informed and organised civil society could play a major role complementary to that of officialdom-in reducing violence and resolving disputes. Under the present proposal, the ECA would bring to bear innovative and collaborative approaches to the task of conflict prevention and resolution. It would introduce key players in both government and civil society to state of the art mediation techniques. It would take steps to strengthen the effectiveness and impact of existing conflict management centres within their regions. It would provide training and skills upgrading to personnel, and support research on alternative conflict prevention and peace building strategies. Through this project, the ECA would seek to increase gender parity in African civil society. It would support civil organisations working to resolve conflict and promote peace by supporting studies of potential areas of conflict, conflict management techniques, educating the public, educating policy makers, enhancing the UN's Conflict Early Warning System, mobilising public opinion, establishing a regional conflict resolution database

²¹ A popular means of expression conducted for the formation of the Constituent Assembly or of central or regional organs of state power and their corresponding substitutes;

²² These include regular elections with universal adult suffrage, partisan competition and a secret ballot, as well as procedures for ensuring popular participation and executive accountability between election.

The purpose of the capacity building strategy is to contribute to the current efforts of African nations and civil societies to build greater self-reliance, as well as an effective and sustainable institutional capacity for democratic development. We believe that a process is needed to enable Africa to reduce its present over-dependence on its external partners. While aware of the valuable contribution of external support, it is equally conscious of the need for African development partners to secure the *crucial capacity for self-reliance*, without which they will be ill-prepared to empower local communities, and to help them meet the development challenges of the new millennia. The endeavour addresses issues of concern to African nations and civil societies in the following areas:

1. **Over-dependence:** Over-dependence on external funding sources remains a major constraint to the development of a self-reliant capacity by civil societies. One of the consequences of this over-dependence is a lack of self-assertion, without which, it is difficult for to be taken seriously. The competition for external funds also greatly erodes the capacity and commitment of civil societies to mobilise and achieve consensus around issues of common interest for their autonomous development.
2. **Commitment to grassroots empowerment:** Securing self-reliance by civil societies should be closely linked to the issue of empowerment. As animators of development at the grassroots, CSOs in particular needs to be more alive to its role as a channel of empowerment of the communities and local constituencies it serves. The pursuit of self-reliance and dependency-reduction should be reflected in CSOs' relationships with local communities in their countries. Linking their goal of self-reliance with grassroots empowerment will ultimately assist civil societies to achieve enhanced legitimacy and relevance in their work.
3. **Capacity building and institutional strengthening:** civil societies are often constrained in their pursuit of self-reliance by a lack of adequate institutional capacity, which in turn compromises clarity and the potential for sustainability in their programmes. The rigidities and pressures which civil societies experience in their search for funds are partly a result of their own institutional weakness and a poor capacity for effective advocacy. One can ask what CSOs' professed objectives of capacity building can contribute to this goal.

The following vision, mission and capacity building targets in large measure represent generic and specific objectives, outputs and activities for democratisation and good governance.

Vision:

THE VISION OF THE ACCS IS TO BE A CONTINENTAL THINK TANK CENTRE PROVIDING ENABLING CIVIL SOCIETIES TO PLAY THEIR HISTORICAL ROLE IN POLITICS AND SOCIETY.

Mission:

ACCS WILL FOCUS IN DEVELOPING THE PARTICIPATORY TOOLS AND SOCIAL TECHNOLOGY TO ARM AFRICAN CIVIL SOCIETIES WITH THE REQUISITE BASIS FOR SELF DEVELOPMENT IN LINE WITH THE CAPACITY BUILDING TARGETS IDENTIFIED

Section IV

SUGGESTED CAPACITY BUILDING TARGETS, STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES, OUTPUTS, ACTIVITIES AND BENCHMARKS FOR CSO DEVELOPMENT

CAPACITY BUILDING TARGET I PARTICIPATION, COMMUNICATION, OPENNESS AND TOLERANCE

Objective I: Capacity building for advocacy for civil society organisations and institutions to legally exist free from governmental control

Output 1: civil society organisations are legally allowed to exist, and are there no restrictions placed upon them and the state encourages their formation of civil society entities and seek their opinion on key issues.

Activity 1: develop legislation and supporting policies enabling the smooth registration of CSOs.

Activity 2: institutionalise self-regulating mechanisms in State to protect CSOs from undue interference.

Activity 3: develop institutions, mechanisms, and procedures that undertake public opinion surveys, plebiscites, and referenda to involve CSOs in decision-making.

Activity 4: undertake civic education training as key component of local, district, and national development programmes.

| Benchmarks for 20 countries | Duration | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------|---|---|--------|---|---|--------|---|---|---|
| | Year 1 | | | Year 2 | | | Year 3 | | | |
| Develop legislation in 20 countries | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | | | | |
| Self-regulating mechanisms in 20 states | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | | | | |
| Public opinion surveys, referenda in 20 states | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ |
| Civic education training in 20 countries | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ |

Output 2: civil society organisations will act as intermediaries between the government and their members.

Activity 1: to develop the organisational capacity referring to effectiveness of the organisation at achieving its stated objectives.

Activity 2: build the human and material resources of the organisation vis-à-vis membership, technical skills, and enough budgets.

Activity 3: develop organisational complexity referring to the bureaucratisation of an organisation's internal structure.²³

Activity 4: Engender organisational cohesion: the sharing of common values, goals, and organisational culture among an organisation's leaders and members.

| Benchmarks for 500 Pilot NGOs | Duration | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------|---|---|--------|---|---|--------|---|---|---|
| | Year 1 | | | Year 2 | | | Year 3 | | | |
| Organisational capacity referring to effectiveness | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | | | | |
| Membership, technical skills, and enough budgets. | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ | █ |

²³ An organisation with a professional staff and specialised sub-units (in an internal structure that is stratified both vertically and horizontally) is more complex than an organisation run by generalist members who participate in all organisational tasks

Sub-activity 1: undertake workshops, seminars, and consultative meetings for Government officials to evolve new norms of engagement with CSOs

Sub-activity 1: undertake Training of Trainers (ToTs) for local officials to educate them on the need to support CSOs and understand the legislation and norms developed in sub-activity 1 above.

| Benchmarks for 2000 participants | Duration | | |
|---|----------|--------|--------|
| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 |
| Develop legislation for CSOs | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Government subvention | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| New norms of engagement | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Educate local officials on the need to support CSOs | ■ | ■ | ■ |

Output 2: legislation permitting civil society organisations to be self- financing, earn revenue, collect membership contributions, or receive donations from public or local and foreign institutions exists?

Activity 1: undertake desk study of all legislation on CSO self financing and national and international support

Activity 2: draft legislation for CSOs to receive support from local and international sources

Activity 3: develop fund raising strategies for CSOs to be self-financing

| Benchmarks for 1000 Pilot CSOs | Duration | | |
|--|----------|--------|--------|
| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 |
| Desk study of all legislation on CSO | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Draft legislation for CSOs | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Develop fund raising strategies for CSOs | ■ | ■ | ■ |

Objective IV: Capacity building for processes for popular participation

Output 1: there are established and recognised ways and means for the public to voice concern or express opinion to policy makers – such as opinion polls or attitude surveys.

Activity 1: establish and maintain opinion polls

Activity 2: develop participatory methods for attitude surveys

Activity 3: strengthen the media to air popular views that may lead to establish the need for this opinion surveys

| Benchmarks for 25 countries | Duration | | |
|--|----------|--------|--------|
| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 |
| Establish and maintain opinion polls | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Participatory methods for attitude surveys | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Strengthen the media to air popular views | ■ | ■ | ■ |

Output 2: there are means by which communities can express their development priorities at the local level.

- Activity 1: training in participatory methods of development needs assessment such as RRA, PRA, PLA, CBTP, PAPDD²⁴, etc. that are understood by communities undertaken
- Activity 2: needs assessment using the above tools undertaken

| Benchmarks for 10 countries | Duration | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------|--|--|--------|--|--|--------|--|--|
| | Year 1 | | | Year 2 | | | Year 3 | | |
| Training in participatory methods | | | | | | | | | |
| Needs assessment | | | | | | | | | |

Output 3: local government officials are elected

- Activity 1: support for undertaking free and fair elections at the local levels
- Activity 2: develop institutions and rules that foster election monitoring and observation

| Benchmarks for 500 CSOs | Duration | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------|--|--|--------|--|--|--------|--|--|
| | Year 1 | | | Year 2 | | | Year 3 | | |
| Free and fair elections at the local levels | | | | | | | | | |
| Foster election monitoring and observation | | | | | | | | | |

Objective V: to build capacity for an elected legislature to make it responsible to the electorate; these include the fact that

Output 1: members of the legislature are elected through open ballot

- Activity 1: support and administer free and fair elections undertaken at the local levels
- Activity 2: develop institutions and rules that foster election monitoring and observation

| Benchmarks | Duration | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------|--|--|--------|--|--|--------|--|--|
| | Year 1 | | | Year 2 | | | Year 3 | | |
| Support and administer free and fair elections | | | | | | | | | |
| Develop institutions and rules that foster election monitoring | | | | | | | | | |

Output 2: the legislature understands its role

- Activity 1: training in democratic governance, good governance, the legislative process, and rules of parliament, lobbying, formulation and observance of codes of conduct, and legislators visit other countries to observe and share experiences with other legislators.²⁵
- Activity 2: develop a training course that would upgrade the skills of legislators in the functions outlined above.
- Activity 3: develop awareness for elected officials spend a minimum amount of time in their electoral district.

| Benchmarks for at least 10 countries | Duration | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------|--|--|--------|--|--|--------|--|--|
| | Year 1 | | | Year 2 | | | Year 3 | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |

²⁴ PAPDD - Participatory Assessment and planning for democratic development

²⁵ It is preferable that these visits be done on a south-to south basis because the imbalance in the resources and support services available in northern countries limits the practical educational values of such visits.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Training in democratic governance | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Upgrade the skills of legislators | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Elected officials spend a minimum amount of time in their electoral district | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Objective VI: Capacity building for the legislature to have oversight over governmental policy

Output 1: members of the legislature have sufficient access to information and technical resources to enable them to make informed decisions

- Activity 1: provide a database containing reference material to parliamentarians.
- Activity 2: develop systems in place whereby public opinion can be made known to members of the legislature.
- Activity 3: develop a library for parliamentarians
- Activity 4: develop capacity for legislature to draft legislation
- Activity 5: develop procedures and provisions for individual members of the legislature to introduce new legislation or amendments to existing legislation on specific subjects

| Benchmarks for 20 countries | Duration | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------|--|--|--------|--|--|--------|--|--|
| | Year 1 | | | Year 2 | | | Year 3 | | |
| Database for parliamentarians in | | | | | | | | | |
| Public opinion can be made known to legislature | | | | | | | | | |
| Develop a library for parliamentarians | | | | | | | | | |
| Legislature has capacity to draft legislation | | | | | | | | | |
| Members of the legislature introduce new legislation | | | | | | | | | |

Objective VII: Capacity building for opposition groups to have legitimacy, and to play a role in the political process.

Output 1: the opposition and the public understand the concept of a “loyal opposition”.

- Activity 1: training in democratic governance, good governance, the legislative process and rules of parliament, lobbying, formulation and observance of codes of conduct and the role of opposition parties the wider political public and the opposition
- Activity 2: develop a training course that would upgrade the skills of opposition leaders in the functions outlined above.
- Activity 3: opposition groups visit other countries to observe and share experiences with other opposition groups.
- Activity 4: develop awareness for opposition leaders to spend a minimum amount of time in their electoral district.
- Activity 5: develop provision for opposition groups to be involved in the political process
- Activity 6: opposition parties have clearly articulated political platforms, not to be dominated by individuals.

| Benchmarks for ten countries | Duration | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------|--|--|--------|--|--|--------|--|--|
| | Year 1 | | | Year 2 | | | Year 3 | | |
| Training in democratic governance | | | | | | | | | |
| Upgrade the skills of opposition leaders | | | | | | | | | |
| Opposition groups visit other countries | | | | | | | | | |
| Opposition leaders spend time in their electoral district | | | | | | | | | |
| Opposition groups involved in the political process | | | | | | | | | |

Objective I: Capacity building for legal protection of constitutionally defined rights to ensure that

Output 1: fundamental rights are enshrined in a constitution

Activity 1: develop mechanisms for the entrenchment of the bill of rights in the constitution

Activity 2: evolve legislation that protecting and enforcing such rights is outside of the control of the executive branch

| Benchmarks for 12 countries | Duration | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------|--|--|--------|--|--|--------|--|--|--|
| | Year 1 | | | Year 2 | | | Year 3 | | | |
| Entrenchment of the bill of rights in the constitution | | | | | | | | | | |
| Legislation that protecting and enforcing such rights is outside of the control of the executive branch | | | | | | | | | | |

Objective II: Capacity building for the independence of the judiciary, with a range of legal expertise, to ensure that

Output 1: the legal profession actively promotes its independence,

Activity 1: develop mechanisms for judges to collectively defend their roles in state and government

Activity 2: assist the development of independent bar associations

Activity 3: undertake public meetings, workshops, and symposia to create awareness on the above

Activity 4: regulations or legislation protecting the independence of the judiciary is promulgated.

Activity 5: create mechanisms that ensure that career structure for members of the judiciary is based on merit.

Activity 6: develop criteria for remuneration to be is commensurate with the qualifications required,

Activity 7: training opportunities are commensurate with the need,

Activity 8: train adequate number of legal professionals in required aspects of the law.

| Benchmarks for 12 countries | Duration | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------|--|--|--------|--|--|--------|--|--|--|
| | Year 1 | | | Year 2 | | | Year 3 | | | |
| Mechanisms for judges to collectively defend their roles | | | | | | | | | | |
| Assist the development of independent bar associations | | | | | | | | | | |
| Public meetings to create awareness on the above | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ensure that career structure for members of the judiciary | | | | | | | | | | |
| Remuneration is commensurate with the qualifications | | | | | | | | | | |
| Training opportunities are commensurate with the need | | | | | | | | | | |
| Train adequate number of legal professionals in required aspects of the law | | | | | | | | | | |

Objective III: Capacity building for a system of civil security

Output 1: a system of civil security is put in place

Activity 1: develop institutional mechanisms, rules, and norms to extend to civil security for all citizens.

Activity 2: train and engage a professional, politically neutral force with career structure.

Activity 3: draft and enact legislation to provide means of redress for citizens who suffer such abuse or harassment

| Benchmarks for 12 countries | Duration | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------|--|--|--------|--|--|--------|--|--|
| | Year 1 | | | Year 2 | | | Year 3 | | |
| Mechanisms, rules, and norms to extend to civil security | | | | | | | | | |
| Professional, politically neutral force | | | | | | | | | |

Objective V: Capacity building for informing people of their rights and have access to the legal system

Output 1: multi-track communication systems enhanced by popularising tools for informing people of their rights and have access to the legal system

Activity 1: develop inputs for the multi-track communication systems on information about rights to be generally available in an easy to understand fashion.

Activity 2: advice centres or other civic institutions staffed by paralegals to use the inputs for the multi-track communication systems for information dissemination

Activity 3: develop inputs for the multi-track communication systems so that there are means by which citizens can obtain information about their rights.

Activity 4: develop a system of legal aid in which poor people can obtain legal services.

Activity 5: develop legal and institutional mechanisms for customary / traditional rights to correspond to legal rights, particularly in the case of women.

| Benchmarks for 12 countries | Duration | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------|--|--|--------|--|--|--------|--|--|
| | Year 1 | | | Year 2 | | | Year 3 | | |
| Information about rights disseminated | | | | | | | | | |
| Advice centres or other civic institutions | | | | | | | | | |
| Develop inputs for the MTCS | | | | | | | | | |
| A system of legal aid | | | | | | | | | |
| Legal and institutional mechanisms for customary rights | | | | | | | | | |

Objective VI: Capacity building for legal and regulatory frameworks to control grand corruption and graft to ensure that

Output 1: there are laws and bureaucratic norms against corruption

Activity 1: the three branches of state develop administrative norms to control grand corruption and graft

Activity 2: develop regulations in governmental departments to make corruption more difficult

Activity 3: there is a system of checks and balances to ensure that such regulations are adequately enforced,

Activity 4: public education to fight corruption

Activity 5: developing media awareness to fight corruption and graft

Activity 6: develop a code of practice for management professionals

| Benchmarks for 12 countries | Duration | | |
|-----------------------------|----------|--------|--------|
| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 |
| | | | |

Output 1: provision made in the constitution and administrative norms developed that are conducive to private investment.

- Activity 1: sensitising and educating the bureaucracy, that private investment is the key to capital formation and accumulation.
- Activity 2: provide legislation so that private investment permitted in all sectors.
- Activity 3: provide regulatory environment conducive to small-scale business, the informal sector, and women entrepreneurs.
- Activity 4: develop multi-track communication and information systems about investment options that will be readily available
- Activity 5: develop a tax structure that is conducive to small-scale private investment.
- Activity 6: evolve legislation, which ensure that credit is available to both men and women in rural as well as urban areas through a variety of mechanisms.

| Benchmarks for 12 countries | Duration | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------|--|--|--------|--|--|--------|--|--|
| | Year 1 | | | Year 2 | | | Year 3 | | |
| Sensitising and educating the bureaucracy | | | | | | | | | |
| Provide legislation so that private investment permitted | | | | | | | | | |
| Environment conducive to small-scale business | | | | | | | | | |
| Develop information systems about investment options | | | | | | | | | |
| Develop a tax structure that is conducive to small-scale private investment | | | | | | | | | |
| Evolve legislation, which ensure that credit is available to both men and women in rural as well as urban areas | | | | | | | | | |

CAPACITY BUILDING TARGET III
ADMINISTRATIVE RULES AND BUREAUCRATIC CONSISTENCY

Objective I: Building capacities for administrative rules that enhances political contestation and participation. Public officials may also enjoy considerable discretion to make and apply rules pertaining to election campaigns and the administration of elections.²⁶ In this regard, the capacity building will focus on ensuring that there

Output 1: is a civil service, with appointments based on merit, with minimum entry requirements and clear system of promotion based on merit, with checks and balances to ensure that this is implemented.

- Activity 1: define and delineate chain of commands and specific functions clearly in the civil service
- Activity 2: develop procedures, norms, and legislation that make governmental officials subject to the rule of law, including regulations prohibiting acceptance of bribes or kickbacks.
- Activity 3: install legal mechanisms that compensate civil servants comparable to that of other sectors (salary paid to civil servants is similar to that which they could earn in other sectors).
- Activity 4: develop alternative employment opportunities for civil servants
- Activity 5: develop benefits and access to government structures

²⁶ Administrative rules are particularly important in addressing governance issues in the pre- and post-transition periods. Between elections, political accountability can only be guaranteed if there are procedures to allow oversight of executive decisions. In addition, political transparency requires rules to ensure public access to information and free and balanced expression in the media.

- Activity 6: develop an efficient civil service that affords significant attractions and civil service career development is independent of the executive branch or political party in power.
- Activity 7: institutionalise a system of political appointment at all levels of the civil service, and ensure that such a system is publicly known and acknowledged.

| Benchmarks for 12 countries | Duration | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------|--|--|--------|--|--|--------|--|--|
| | Year 1 | | | Year 2 | | | Year 3 | | |
| Define and delineate chain of commands and specific functions clearly in the civil service | | | | | | | | | |
| Develop procedures, norms, and legislation that make governmental officials subject to the rule of law | | | | | | | | | |
| Install legal mechanisms that compensate civil servants comparable to that of other sectors | | | | | | | | | |
| Develop benefits and access to government structures | | | | | | | | | |
| An efficient civil service that affords significant attractions and civil service career development | | | | | | | | | |
| Institutionalise a system of political appointment at all levels of the civil service | | | | | | | | | |

Objective II: Capacity building to identify and define stakeholders in multi-track communications.

Output I: mapping stakeholders

- Activity 1: identify and list all stakeholders
- Activity 2: describe their stakes in democratisation capacity building
- Activity 3: map how they relate to each other identifying areas of co-operation, dependency, service, and conflict.

| Benchmarks for 12 countries | Duration | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------|--|--|--------|--|--|--------|--|--|
| | Year 1 | | | Year 2 | | | Year 3 | | |
| Identify and list all stakeholders | | | | | | | | | |
| Describe their stakes in democratisation capacity | | | | | | | | | |
| Map how they relate to each other identifying areas of co-operation, dependency, service, and conflict | | | | | | | | | |

Objective III: articulate stakeholder messages that need to be communicated to other stakeholders clearly.

Output II: clear and unambiguous information on sustainable livelihoods articulated among stakeholders.

- Activity 1: Using PAPDD tools and helping stakeholder to articulate democratisation and define their priorities,
- Activity 2: Use workshops and seminars to help evolve and ground the democratisation concept in local cultures, languages, metaphors and popular plays,
- Activity 3: Undertake training of trainers for PAPDD to disseminate the percept and construct of democratisation.
- Activity 4: Culturally and gender-sensitive curriculum development for civic education.
- Activity 5: Culturally and gender sensitive civic education training on sustainable livelihoods in each village of implementation.

Sub-activity 1: Develop culturally and gender-sensitive rural radio messages in each village of implementation.

Sub-activity 2: Culturally and gender-sensitive messages developed in each village of implementation to enhance development aspirations of the community.

Activity 6: Develop village level MTCS resource centres in each village of implementation.

Activity 7: Draw a programme of action to strengthen traditional communication channels in each village of implementation (church choir, drums, drama, and funerals) and draw a programme of action revitalise extension system in each village of implementation.

| Benchmarks for 12 countries | Duration | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------|--|--|--------|--|--|--------|--|--|
| | Year 1 | | | Year 2 | | | Year 3 | | |
| Stakeholder to articulate democratisation and define their priorities | | | | | | | | | |
| Ground the democratisation concept in local cultures, languages, metaphors and popular plays | | | | | | | | | |
| Training of trainers for PAPDD | | | | | | | | | |
| Culturally and gender-sensitive curriculum development for civic education | | | | | | | | | |
| Culturally and gender sensitive civic education training | | | | | | | | | |
| Village level MTCS resource centres | | | | | | | | | |
| Programme of action to strengthen traditional communication channels in each village of implementation | | | | | | | | | |

Objective IV: establish the levels of stakeholder information entitlement.

Output I: inventory of communication media available to all stakeholders mapped out.

Activity 1: traditional communicational channels, media, tools, and games identified.

Activity 2: community meeting places, rules, and participants of the meeting identified at different times.

Activity 3: identify gaps and omissions in the information entitlement chart mapped out in the above output.

| Benchmarks for 12 countries | Duration | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------|--|--|--------|--|--|--------|--|--|
| | Year 1 | | | Year 2 | | | Year 3 | | |
| Traditional communicational channels, media, tools, and games identified | | | | | | | | | |
| Community meeting places, rules, and participants of the meeting identified at different times | | | | | | | | | |
| Identify gaps and omissions in the information entitlement chart mapped out in the above output | | | | | | | | | |

Section V

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR CSOs

CSOs are assuming increasingly important roles as agents of democratic expression and citizen innovation contributing to the search of more just, sustainable, and inclusive approaches to national development. It is important and timely that statal policies and regulations relating to their formation and function be re-examined and revised within the framework of universally accepted human rights principles.

These guidelines should be applied in the relations of states and those civil institutions involved in service delivery, community development, advocacy, and civic education. It is clear from these guide lines that CSOs should be expected to exercise self-regulation and that the freedoms and rights of People's organisations go with the responsibilities of good behaviour and proper conduct of their business within the law. National NGO councils would be the formal point of contact between the state and the CSOs community in each continent. Alternatively, a representative council of elected CSOs' leaders and state officials representing different ministries could be constituted as the formal point of contact and interface between the state and the sector.

It should be carefully stressed that each CSO must have the right before the law, to represent its interest and defend itself or seek redress in a court of law. A formal point of contact between state and people's organisations can, however, serve also as forum for information exchange (especially important for CSOs to access technical information more readily available to state). **Both states and CSOs must realise that they are two sides of the same coin** and that to the extent that they are able to maintain healthy relationships, they will be better set to cope with the changing priorities of donors - the one dominant external force that is shaping the future of African states.

Civil society participation is now considered to be one of the principal instruments for democratic governance and development through popular participation in decision-making. Participation in decision-making is important in achieving sustainable development, and yet, emerging democracies in Africa have to establish pertinent and equitable mechanisms for guaranteeing appropriate scarce resource allocation. There is an incredibly visible parallel between sustainable livelihood, security, human rights, and publicly accountable governance on the one hand and economic development on the other.

It is central to evolving a broad based consensus on availing a third alternative, a third dimension to state and commercial initiatives in the transformation to democracy and, hence, peace and development. Grassroots organisations are being widely debated as a distinctly functional alternative to highly centralised forms of Statal interventions. Their task is to evolve development models that are not only relevant to local conditions but also enhance traditional community recourse management capabilities. The aim is to attain some form of allocative efficiency in the use of scarce resources that are being rendered even more scarce. These resources for development are the prime targets of African Grass roots.

African People's organisations must play an active part in the resolution of African national or international conflicts, or of neutral observers in the process of

democratisation, which is on course in Africa. The premises for people-centred development, however, may have to be seen within the framework of far reaching grassroots empowerment objectives and hence the role of African indigenous people's organisations in (Excerpts from ASDAG, 1993. A Code of Practice for African NGOs)

- (a) Develop an indigenous institutional presence and work to attain increased institutional efficiency and clarity in designing managing their operations.
- (b) Work towards closer regional and sub-regional rapprochement to evolve oneness and unity of purpose among themselves that will bear the bond of their common position in national and regional issues of peace and security. There is a legitimate role for African People's organisations in creating a national and regional genuine dialogue for peace and security;
- (c) Initiate a process for participatory monitoring and evaluation, which takes into account values of the beneficiaries, unintended effects, and issues in sustainability, information dissemination and the articulation of people's achievements into comprehensible reports;
- (d) Give their public support to participatory democracy by supporting emerging democratic and peace movements and support scholars and institutions engaged in economic development policy research, humanitarian law and military affairs;
- (e) Sensitise their constituencies and states on the need for a free media that would compete for delivering accurate and reliable information to the public upon which its credibility and survival as a peddler of information is guaranteed; actively work and raise resources towards the promotion of research in public policy; public education in participatory democracy to endure majority rule, seasoned with consideration for indigenous peoples' minority survival rights. (Costantinos, 1990)
- (f) Voice firm commitment to full constitutional guarantee to ascertain the rights of women to property and opportunities for education leading to cessation of abuse, manipulation and anonymity of their contribution. This will not only give appropriate credentials to more than half of Africa's internal development resources but ensure inter- generational transfer of skills and coping mechanism; since women as mothers are the prime carriers of the civilisation and survival, especially in Africa where formal education is not designed to include such vital information in its curriculum.
- (g) In connection with this African people's organisations have a decisive role in initiating mass action towards stabilising the rapid population growth to national carrying capacities of the economy.
- (h) As part of the process of self assertion that civil society is going through, NGOs and peoples organisations should form a commission on Peace,

Democratisation, Security and Development at the continental level that will have the primary task of initiating and monitoring advocacy of CSOs activities in peace, democratisation, security and self-reliant development.

- (i) This includes the strengthening of local capacities of already existing indigenous grassroots groups, assist in the formation of new ones through CSOs capital funds that will be managed by a body formed among all concerned parties.
- (j) In relevant operational and background documents, African groups must state precisely their commitment to empowerment at the grassroots or community-level, taking trouble to mention some of the areas in which their intended work would increase self-reliance at that level, including how it could be done. In their internal operations, African People's organisations must endeavour to promote participation and, as much as possible, must establish a democratic process for in-house decision-making on programmes and projects²⁷.
- (k) African groups must actively support states to mobilise all collaborative efforts for the establishment of a People's Capital Fund:
- (l) As a first step in promoting self-assertion and upholding their own development vision and objectives, every African group must decide on a number of institutional goals and values which must be upheld as non-negotiable in any financial or programme partnership.
- (m) When entering into long-term relationships with state, people's organisations must discuss and agree with their prospective external partners an appropriate mechanism for mutual assessment to monitor the effectiveness, orientation and long-term objective of the collaboration. Such mutual assessments can be undertaken once every two years, or in accordance with any other time-scale agreed between the two parties.
- (n) In their requirements for technical assistance or other input of a specialised nature, African voluntary groups must prioritise the use of locally available expert resources from State and other groups,

In addition to their other important functions, national CSOs consortia must carry out regular advocacy activities on behalf of their members. National consortia must undertake the task of promoting CSO sector as a channel for supplementing official development efforts, and not as an antagonist or competitor with state. To do that, they must engage in advocacy and dialogue with relevant national authorities to secure CSOs access to the national media. Such access will be vital for publicising the sector's contribution to national development and promoting its image as a useful development partner of state. National networks must work to establish a functional link between the technical assistance needs of their members and the technical expertise available within their countries. In addition, they must develop their own

²⁷ These notes on a Code of Practice for African NGO have been put here as they are highly relevant to this paper in their original form with permission from the African Self-reliant Development and Advocacy Group.

technical assistance capacity, or otherwise be able to assist in locally mobilising needed technical input on behalf of their members as and when required.

Monitoring and observance: It is expected that inter-CSOs communication and other formal and informal channels will play a role in highlighting cases of State/people's organisation failure to deliver their promises. A channel specifically advised for monitoring observance is the report of people's organisations. It will also be useful to promote observance of the code by making periodic evaluations of how they are contributing to the goal of self-reliance people's and community based organisation of self-reliance.

Conclusion: African States must pro-actively reinforce people's organisations ' contribution to the region's development process by creating an enabling environment for voluntary sector initiatives to thrive, so that they can effectively supplement official development programmes.

African people's organisations should assure states of their sincerity of purpose as contributors to national development. That they will not work against the interest of their people and of their countries. They should be committed to supplementing the development efforts through socio-political empowerment of grassroots populations. The common goal should be reiterated over and again - improved quality of life for the most vulnerable and deprived people and communities in our countries. We believe that a participatory and democratic approach is best for achieving that goal in a sustainable way. States should show willingness to open up their national media to the CSOs, so that they can use them to disseminate adequate information on their work, and as a channel for enabling local communities to share useful experiences on how their daily work contributes to improvements in their livelihood conditions and to national development.

Peace is crucial for a people-centred development. In view of this, there is a call on African States to promote the evolution of a pluralistic society - a necessary condition for development. When the creative energies of civil society are released in a democratic environment, substantial 'peace dividends' will no doubt be available to society at large. Africa surely needs the benefits to be derived from avoiding internal conflicts and instability. The prevalence of peace and freedom will amount to non-quantifiable but crucially necessary resources for reinforcing the pace of development of the Africa region. Finally, African states must grant tax, import-duty and other essential concessions required to facilitate the voluntary sector's contribution to the region's development. It is noted that multinational interests, whose ultimate objective is to export funds and resources from our countries, sometimes enjoy these concessions.