Workshop 3 synthesis:

JAGA

Rebuilding postcolonial State through decentralization and regional integration

Context and problem

Viewed from its geographical location (in the different sub regions) in the continent or its administrative culture (francophone, portuguese, arabspeaking, english), the African postcolonial state is **lacking legitimacy** proven by its real struggle to ensure cohesion and stability and people irreducible needs. This leads to a gap between state institutional realities and societies dynamics. This state crisis finds its source in many causes especially in the fact that:

➢ postcolonial state is an imported model which implementation in Africa has very often ignored the need for an imperative adaptation to societies sociocultural personality et people participation to its construction ;

➢ postcolonial state has been monopolized and perverted by political elites who have emptied the imported model form its substance, by misusing the spirit and sense, by highjacking its purpose and powers with a type of patrimonial management of public affairs ;

➢ postcolonial state is caught in a longing economic crisis that has been deepen in the 70s and is considerably limiting its intervention capabilities toward social demand and development;

➢ The postcolonial state has been set in an ideological and financial dependency, in such a tenacious and pernicious dependency vis-à-vis foreign countries. Addressing its internal difficulties, the postcolonial state has given favor to foreign solutions(international financial institutions, former colonial powers, liberal doctrine) to the detriment of populations mobilization and endogenous solutions search ;

➢ The postcolonial state has changed to become an hermetic system(formal democracy, and partisan approach) who has very often only coercitive tools and violence as means for action when assessing populations aspirations and claims.

Today the relationships between the postcolonial state and African societies seem to enter into a third stage (hope within independences era, reject within crisis, renewed interest within "democratization wind" and the "Arab spring"). To enhance this tendency, **the state should be rebuilt to be :**

> **A visionary and smart State**. it should be capable of having a vision, which to enable itself to get out of the short term and logic of emergency and provide itself with a collective project, inclusive in the long term, while ensuring its action's coherence;

> **A state capable of managing and resolving** social, economic and ecological **crises** through regulation modes rooted in African societies values and mechanisms while at the same time integrating universal values and international mechanisms of crisis resolution;

> **state capable of addressing populations needs** and who can provide them with perspectives and scientific, cultural, socio-economical development opportunities etc. ;

> **An inclusive state** who will involve all social categories in decision making and whose action will be profitable to all, without any exclusive ;

> **A state that is functioning on the basis of fundamental principles** such as consensus, solidarity, equity and transparency.

This state construction should be fueled by a truly prospective dynamic and permanent thinking-with « think tank » or « ideas enterprises institution- which should go far beyond short terms of political mandates and their objectives of maintaining power.

It should also be done through two essential pillars: decentralization and regional integration.

Rebuilding postcolonial state through decentralization

In the state rebuilding undertaking, decentralization should be in the heart of the process. Though in other parts of the world, states have been built through centralization before decentralizing a few centuries later, it seems that in Africa, states under construction-which centralization has increased difficulties-should though try to build themselves starting **from the local level**.

However if decentralization should come to the rescue, it will only happen when it is conceived as a project for a new society with a collective vision and a shared understanding of related stakes, a highly collective, inclusive and prospective project :

> that includes **all society components** through its conception and implementation(overcoming then administrative and technicist decentralization as practiced today), from the state to individuals ;

- targeting **deepen changes** in a social, political, economical, cultural and environmental framework etc.(not limited to a simple transfer of competencies and resources between state and local collectivities) ;

- acting **as a real territorial policy and local economic development lever** (convergence between state, local collectivities and private sector for huge investments and structuring equipments);

- thinking and impacting the **rebuilt state new role** with actors, territories and resources of all types(not leading to civil servants and politicians resistances whose power is threatened in one side and local collectivities « under perfusion » in the other side ;

- that should be a **multi-level decentralization**(local collectivities at the grassroots level, and intermediate local collectivities, between them and the state) taking into account the pertinence at every level and being aware of pertinent cooperation and efficient complementarities between them ;

- That should not be **a model to duplicated** in all countries, but every state should accomplish hits own decentralization through its own realities and specific objectives.

Obviously, current decentralization processes in most countries in the continent are going nowhere, because of not being able to change relationships and dynamics between central state , local collectivities and societies, unable to change relationships between centre and periphery, unable to impulse territories socioeconomic development and governance in general(regulation, religious and traditional leaders involvement, participative democracy etc.)

If decentralization is lacking in contributing to better populations well being and improving relationships between different categories of actors, i twill appear soon as a useless policy. Moreover, a recentralization of public affairs management could be on the agenda, as it is already insidiously practiced through some central tools and mechanisms of financing decentralization and local development. Ultimately, recentralized states should probably face perpetual social and political conflicts, even dislocation risks.

Today, Africa has strong assets to rebuild in his turn decentralization policies especially:

- **Diverse decentralization experiences** with diverse inspirations and variable progress level. These experiences could be capitalized, shared and diffused, allowing then every country to learn from success and failures;

➢ **a civil society dynamism and populations awareness,** showing more and more interest toward public affairs management and requesting for bigger participation ;

➢ **formalized proclamation** (especially within constitutions) and a **declared commitment of governments** for a decentralized type of organization;

➢ **a greater awareness of integration institutions regarding interest for local affairs** and decentralization policies (UA with the local governance charter and African convention on cross borders cooperation, UEMOA with territorial collectivities platform etc.)

Based on the vision and assets described below, the following **strategic objectives** could be targeted :

1. **BUILDING INCLUSIVE DECENTRALIZATION POLICIES THAT ARE CAPABLE OF HOLDING OBJECTIVES FOR CHANGE WITHIN AFRICAN SOCIETIES**:

   ➢ the dismantling of all resistances and misunderstanding regarding decentralization(founding of a collective vision and a shared understanding of decentralization ; an independent steering of processes ;

   ➢ national langages integration into decentralization institutional arrangements, conception and implementation;

   ➢ participative democracy deepening inside local territories(spaces and mechanisms implemented for exchange between local collectivities and different categories of actors ; and regulation and management modes that create confidence between all actors);

2. **IMPROVING INSTITUTIONAL ENGINEERING AND DECENTRALIZATION PROCESSES STEERING**:

   ➢ state capabilities of action and strategic resources strengthening to initiate et produce decentralization processes (political will, strategy, agenda, funding);

   ➢ local collectivities capabilities of action and strategic resources strengthening (political, judiciary, financial (tax reform, equalization), and administrative autonomy for local collectivities ;

   ➢ local collectivities effective participation in national policies for socioeconomic development elaboration process through state institutions (specific institution or parliament)

3. **PROMOTE A DECENTRALIZATION THAT IMPULSES SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF TERRITORIES**:

> ➢ local private sector involvement in the development stakes definition and realization ;

> ➢ local Small and Medium Enterprises/Small and Medium Industries and local entrepreneurs development to hold development;

Rebuilding postcolonial state through regional integration

Regional integration is a major policy to implement in order to rebuild African postcolonial state. Based on world dynamics and new directions given by its partners, **Africa has to choose between « desired integration" and "dictated integration".** In a context of globalization and dominating liberalism, lacking integration will expose African states to jeopardize their sovereignty and condemn them to confront foreign powers and large groups of countries in other continents.

Firstly at the development level, national economies weakness and internal markets small scale do not enable to face stakes and challenges. In a short term, these two cumulated incapacities could lead to Africa « recolonisation » through foreign armies presence-forced to intervene in Africa to ensure their remote state security- and productive sectors and natural resources monopolization by foreign powers.

Therefore, Africans should take initiative to conceive and implement **a true sub regional and regional integration simultaneously built from the « top » and the « bottom » and being**:

> ➢ **a development factor**(with more efficient integration institutions and whose interventions will have positive outcomes for populations living) ;

> ➢ **a peace and security factor** (with institutions capable of getting out states of armed confrontation logic and managing crises through dialogue and mediation) ;

> ➢ **a state strengthening factor** (economies of scale, complementarities and pooling of resources, co-management of shared resources) ;

> ➢ **an integration factor** into the world(a negotiation and propositions force vis-à-vis the rest of the world) ;

> ➢ An integration in **which populations and African societies** will recognize themselves (institutions and integration policies known and accepted by the populations who know how profitable they are and who participate in their elaboration and implementation).

In this project, despite hurdles experienced since community construction process launching, Africa still holds considerable advantages, especially:

➢ **social and cultural links** that transcend inherited colonial frontiers;

➢ African **populations mobility**, especially in cross borders areas ;

➢ **Exchanges dynamism** even though informal on both sides of frontiers (trade, services, employment etc.);

➢ **diverse integration experiences** in different sub regions and the AU path are given lessons for considering the future ;

➢ **integration experiences in other parts of the world** that can enrich the continent and different sub regions integration project;

➢ the states **declared commitment and its formalized application –** especially into the constitutions- to realize sub regional and regional integration.

In the integration project to implement harmonized and efficient groups, and rebuilding postcolonial state, it is crucial to reach following **strategic objectives**:

1. **IMPROVE PERCEPTIONS SUB REGIONAL AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION STRATEGIES THROUGH:**

➢ a « re-conceptualization » of notions such as state and integration based on new vision and integration objectives (getting out of conception such as « state=government, and « integration » = institutions and instruments for a state and an integration referring to folks);

➢ community and integration policies territorialization (provide sense and life to the strong link existing between decentralization and regional integration) ;

➢ socialization of processes and sub regional and regional integration institutions democratization (parliaments election, different categories of actors representation) ;

➢ integration culture building (schools program including problematic, secondary and university level mobility) ;

➢ Transparency in integration implementation and sub regional and regional organizations functioning through a tailored communication and ongoing information regarding processes, projects and achievements.

2. **STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL ENGINEERING AND SUB REGIONAL AND REGIONAL STEERING THROUGH:**

   ➢ sub regional and regional organizations means of actions and strategic resources strengthening to lead integration policies and processes;

   ➢ state means of actions and strategic resources strengthening to join and participate sub regional and regional integration policies and processes;

   ➢ Socioprofessional and thematically spaces and networks implementation to be connected to territories and sub regional, regional and national institutions (private sector, university, political parties).

3. **achieve regional and sub regional integration focused on the continent and territories development especially through :**

   ➢ structuring equipments and territorial projects development in favor of a harmonized and balanced development profitable to all;

   ➢ Cross borders cooperation development and basic public services delivery improvement in these areas.

Roles and responsabilities

➢ **state** should initiate, steer, facilitate and endorse change processes desired by all actors ;

➢ **private sector** should continue to do business while contributing to address public policies stakes by integrating financing issues related to these policies in its « doing business » manner;

➢ **intellectual elites** should stand as « think tank » for an ongoing prospective and thinking on stakes and challenges Africa is facing and elaborate propositions to address them;

➢ **civil society** should ensure populations awareness and stand as a monitoring, controlling and questioning force also making propositions ;

➢ **religious and traditional authorities** should ensure regulation, mediation and awareness ;

➢ **political parties** should integrate integration and decentralization topics in their project and sensitize their fellows;

➢ Sub regional and regional **integration organizations** should ease and steer integration processes in compliance with desired change by all actors.