

Journées Annuelles sur la Gouvernance en Afrique
Conférence « L'Afrique réinvente sa Gouvernance »

Discours à la Cérémonie de clôture Monsieur David Keller
Directeur de l'African Innovation Foundation (AIF)

Monsieur le Président de l'Assemblée nationale de Cape Verde,

Monsieur le Maire de Praia,

Monsieur le Président de la Fondation Amilcar Cabral,

*Monsieur le Représentant de la Alliance pour la Refondation de la
Gouvernance en Afrique,*

Monsieur l'Ambassadeur de la France,

Mesdames et Messieurs Députés de l'Assemblée nationale de Cap Verde,

Mesdames et Messieurs les Ambassadeurs,

*Chères Participantes et chers Participants de la conférence « Africa
reinventa a sua governação »,*

Chers Collègues,

On behalf of the African Innovation Foundation, I would like to thank the national authorities for hosting this important conference in Cape Verde and for your generous support. Knowing that Public Governance in Cap Verde is a model for the African Continent and beyond, we very much appreciate the fact that this first ARGA conference could take place in Praia. We are very much aware also of the personal support of the President of the National Assembly of Cape Verde and of the Mayor of Praia.

My colleagues at AIF and myself are highly impressed with the process and the outcomes of this conference. I was personally fascinated by the quality of the debates, the sharpness of the analysis of both the governance challenges and opportunities that the continent faces, and the decisive

willingness of all the participants to give the governance agenda in Africa a new direction.

The diversity of the participants that attended this conference is most convincing, both in terms of regional diversity - participants from West, East, South and North Africa - the sectorial diversity - Academia, Civil Society, the Public Sector and the Security Sector, and the diversity of different personal backgrounds and professions. Despite all this diversity, and the controversies that are the natural product of it, the mutual respect of the participants was absolutely tangible during these days.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the **African Innovation Foundation is proud to be a Partner of the “Alliance pour le Refondement de la Gouvernance en Afrique” and to be a Contributor to this conference.** I was asked, who is the AIF, why do we contribute? The answer is simple. AIF is a Foundation in Zürich founded by African entrepreneurs and private equity investors, chaired by the former Director General of the Swiss Development Cooperation, Amb. Walter Fust. We are committed to foster innovative approaches in the continent and mobilize African innovators - and ecosystems for African innovators. For example, we have a partnership with the UN-Economic Commission for Africa to give Awards to African Innovators of US\$ 150'000 for breakthrough solutions and technologies, that can change the reality of Africans through market based approaches. We are going into the second year with the Innovation Prize for Africa, which was launched last week. So if you know innovators with new solutions, new products and promising business models in your country or your thematic domain, please encourage them to apply.

I have participated in the second atelier, where the topic, as you know, was the recognition and the “valorisation” of the customary law, the traditional rules and regulations - as well as those institutions linked to the exercise of the traditional law. One of the structural actions that was defined in the atelier was to enable **“access of all Africans to the “pluralism juridique”** in their countries”; another was the necessary investment into **comparative and interdisciplinary research** for the elaboration of the **“common grounds”** of the African customary law. In this context, I would like to mention a new program that the African Innovation Foundation will launch next year: **the e-library of African law and governance.** The purpose is to provide Africans with free access to the law, to the court decisions and to secondary literature and research about the existing written and non-written law in all African countries. We hope to contribute to an interdisciplinary movement of African researchers, law practitioners, NGOs, businesses, the public sector and the general public as a whole. And we hope that this free access e-library will contribute to the establishment of this common ground of traditional African law. In this context, we will rely very much on local networks who can participate in posting the stock of documents that they have built - to establish this e-library as joint African learning platform.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to express my special gratitude to the "Alliance pour le refondement de la Gouvernance en Afrique", and specifically to Mr. Assane Mbaye, in his role as a bright and patient facilitator of this process. And most of all, I would like to thank all the Participants of this conference. You must and will be successful in re-inventing the African governance and "take the destiny in your hands". We are proud and honored to be a partner to Arga and modest contributor in this crucial endeavor.

Thank you.