



Deepening the Transition to Democratic Governance in Central Africa

International IDEA Policy Dialogue
14–15 December 2015
Libreville, Gabon

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Executive Summary

The Policy Dialogue on how to deepen the transition to democratic governance in Central Africa, the second in International IDEA's Africa and West Asia Regional Policy Dialogue Series, took place at the Meridien Re-Ndama Hotel in Libreville, Gabon, on 14–15 December 2015. The meeting took place against a background of growing signs of democratic regression, particularly in the past five years, as evidenced by numerous crises and the increasing socio-political tension facing all countries in the region.

The dialogue was structured as a two-day multi-stakeholder event designed to concentrate discussions on the structural preconditions for deepening the transition to democratic governance in Central Africa. The purpose was to identify the key reform issues that deserve urgent attention by all political leaders and other stakeholders in the region and constitute part of an agenda for work for the African Union (AU), regional economic communities (RECs) and other institutions such as International IDEA to develop effective measures to support efforts to deepen and sustain democratic governance in the region.

There were seven panel discussions with eminent panellist drawn from civil society organizations (CSOs), academia, former and present government officials, and senior officials from international organizations, such as the AU, RECs, International IDEA and others. The presentations and discussions that followed were frank, robust and constructive. The discussions were clustered around key areas identified as evidence of the democratic deficit in the region. The panellists contributed ideas designed to provide a better understanding of the root causes, effects and consequences of the democratic governance deficit and suggested ways in which these could be overcome. The main themes that formed the basis of the different panel discussions were as follows:

1. Democratic governance deficits in Central Africa

This session set the tone for the dialogue by identifying the main causes of the democratic governance deficit and the challenges that these pose for entrenching and consolidating the transition to democratic governance in the region.

2. The political and socio-economic impact of the democratic governance deficit in Central Africa

Because the socio-economic situation in a country is critical to deepening democratic governance, this panel looked at the various economic weaknesses that have constrained democratic governance in the region. The issues of rampant corruption, embezzlement of public funds and poor management of the abundant natural resources in the region came to the fore. The region lags behind in all the international good governance indicators, such as the Ibrahim Index of Governance and the Freedom House annual survey of the state of freedom in the world.

3. Overcoming democratic governance deficits in Central Africa: Options for regional organizations

It was noted that all the countries in the region are members of the AU as well as a number of overlapping RECs. The different ways in which the AU and the RECs could contribute to overcoming the democratic governance deficit in the region were examined.

There are many different ways in which the AU and the RECs could intervene not only to put pressure on countries to ratify and domestically transpose the numerous instruments that have been adopted to promote good governance, constitutionalism and respect for the rule of law, but also to monitor progress and advise on the corrective measures that need to be undertaken.

4. The political conditions for deepening the transition to democratic governance in Central Africa

The panel examined the challenges of leadership, representativeness and inclusiveness in governance. It was noted that the rise of extremist religious and ethnic secessionist groups is a direct result of the exclusion of many sections of society from political participation. The need for inclusive policies that enable the voice of opposition parties and marginalized groups, such as women, youth, and ethnic and religious minorities, to be heard is critical to promoting a sustainable democratic system.

5. The institutional conditions for deepening the transition to democratic governance in Central Africa

Many of the problems in the region are caused by weak or inadequate institutions. The need to adopt constitutions that entrench the universally accepted principles of constitutionalism, good governance and respect for the rule of law was considered critical. The need for an independent judiciary was underscored to ensure that the rule of law is respected by all. Independent and financially autonomous electoral management bodies (EMBs) were also considered necessary for promoting free and fair elections. Financial, political and administrative decentralization policies were considered necessary to give citizens a sense of participation in governance in the region.

6. The security conditions for deepening the transition to democratic governance in Central Africa

Adequate security is a prerequisite for all the institutions that are needed for a democratic system to function. Such security can only exist where inclusive policies discourage frustrated citizens from resorting to coups d'état, rebellion, armed resistance and other violent means to express themselves.

7. Deepening the transition to democratic governance and socio-economic transformation of Central Africa

It is now generally accepted that there is an inextricable link between democracy and socio-economic transformation. The two dimensions are complementary and, in the medium and long term, one cannot be achieved or sustained without the other.

The democratic transition was laid on weak foundations due to the economic crises African countries faced at the time. For there to be a strong and positive nexus between democratic transition and socio-economic transformation, African countries should develop autonomous economic policies adapted to their particular circumstances and contexts, proactively encourage ownership and control of natural resources by their citizens, and implement those policies in such a way that a country's assets and key instruments, including its currency, are under national control.

This brief outline is just an indication of the scope of the issues that were discussed. Neither this executive summary nor the more detailed summary that follows pretends or is even intended to capture in any depth the full presentations and rich discussion that took place.

Introduction

The Dialogue on how to deepen the transition to democratic governance in Central Africa, the second in International IDEA's Africa and West Asia Regional 2015 Policy Dialogue Series, took place in Libreville, Gabon on 14–15 December 2015. The dialogue took place against a background of growing signs of democratic regression, particularly in the past five years, as evidenced by numerous crises and the increasing socio-political tensions facing all countries in the region.

The dialogue was structured in a number of themes over a period of two days, giving various stakeholders and democracy actors across the different countries in the region an opportunity to reflect on what is needed to meet the challenges of democratic governance in the region. A concept paper (attached in the Annex) was distributed to participants before the meeting, setting out the overarching objective of the dialogue and its goal of deepening democratic governance in the region by:

1. Unpacking the complexities of the problem both nationally and regionally;
2. Assessing the responses which governments have tried to date;
3. Exploring avenues for deepening the nexus between democratic governance and development in the region;
4. Reflecting on the avenues and mechanisms by which Central African countries might move towards the goal of nurturing developmental democracies; and
5. Developing an agenda for further action by various democracy actors, including the areas in which a deeper knowledge of the dynamics at play would be required.

The participants in the dialogue were drawn from different tiers and arms of government, in particular the executive and legislature, and national, provincial and local administration, political parties, civil society and community organizations, the media, business groups and professional associations. They came from the different countries that make up the Central Africa region and represented a balanced gender and inter-generational mix, which allowed for an open exchange of experiences and perspectives.

The Dialogue was expected to contribute to a better understanding of the roots, effects and consequences of the democratic governance deficits facing the countries of Central Africa, while also identifying ways to encourage transformation of the socio-economic and political systems in the region. This report provides a summary of the different presentations that were made and of the ensuing discussions. The summary of the presentations, discussions and recommendations is not intended to be and should not be taken as a verbatim account, especially for purposes of attribution. While every effort has been made to present the recommendations in a manner that reflects the

discussions and consensus arrived at, in some instances, especially where the consensus was not always obvious, the position taken has been made as consistent as possible with that of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, which all the participants agreed, and all states in the region must ratify and domestically transpose as a matter of the utmost urgency.

Opening Session

Professor Abdoulaye Bathily: Chair

The opening session of the dialogue was chaired by Professor Abdoulaye Bathily, the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Representative in Central Africa. He made some brief opening remarks during which he thanked International IDEA for organizing the dialogue, giving people in the region an opportunity to reflect deeply on the challenges that face it, and try to avoid the tragedies unfolding in Burundi and the armed conflicts in the Central African Republic (CAR) and eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). He then invited Professor Adebayo Olukoshi, the Africa and West Asia Regional Director of International IDEA, to make his opening remarks. This was followed by goodwill messages from Ambassador Hamuli Baudouin, Director of Political Affairs and the Mechanism for Rapid Response, the Economic Community for Central African Countries (ECCAC), speaking on behalf of Ambassador Allam-Mi, the Secretary General of ECCAC, who could not attend due to other pressing commitments. The second goodwill message was delivered by a special guest, Ambassador Vijay Makhan, a former Organization of African Unity (OAU) Deputy Secretary General and an AU Special Envoy. The opening session ended with an opening statement from Professor Abdoulaye Bathily, who formally declared the dialogue open.

Professor Adebayo Olukoshi: Welcome Address

In his capacity as the Africa and West Asia Region Director of International IDEA and the convener of the dialogue, Professor Olukoshi thanked all the participants in the dialogue, especially the dignitaries who included former presidents, ministers (both present and former) and ambassadors, who had travelled long distances and sacrificed time at this very busy part of the year in order to take part. He pointed out that this was the second dialogue in the past six months. He said that International IDEA, which was established in 1995, is currently the only intergovernmental organization working on issues of democracy support. He emphasized that International IDEA works on the assumption that there is no perfect model and that every society must build its own democratic institutions based on established universally accepted principles but mindful of its history, particular needs and challenges. He pointed out that the impetus for establishing International IDEA came from the end of apartheid in South Africa in 1994 and the need to build on the surge of democratic revival that came with it. As International IDEA celebrates its 20th anniversary, which also coincides with 25 years of democratic revival in Africa, it is time to ask important questions about how far we have travelled, the nature of the road taken and the challenges that lie ahead.

Professor Olukoshi pointed out that this series of dialogues is designed to address certain critical questions, especially given that democracy is under pressure globally. He

noted that the threats are not only in Africa. He gave the example of some of the anti-democratic rhetoric coming from some of the US presidential hopefuls on the campaign trail to show that democracy is under pressure everywhere. He warned however that the threats in Africa generally, and in the Central Africa region in particular, are acute. The problem is to examine how we can get our people to freely and fully exercise their rights of citizenship. He expressed the hope that the dialogue will open up space for the start of an elite consensus. He underscored the fact that the purpose of the dialogue is not to put any individual or country on trial, but rather to give Africans an opportunity to take collective responsibility for transforming Africa by ourselves. He hoped that all the participants would take up the challenge and come up with constructive ideas to help lift the region from its present precarious position.

Ambassador Hamuli Baudouin: Goodwill Message

Ambassador Hamuli Baudouin, in his goodwill message pointed out that he was speaking on behalf of Allam-Mi, the Secretary General of the ECCAC who, due to previous commitments, was unable to attend. He started by paying tribute to the Government and people of Gabon for hosting and supporting the ECCAC secretariat and to International IDEA not only for organizing this important dialogue with a focus on the Central Africa region but also for choosing Libreville, which is the symbol for Central Africa regional integration, to host it.

In his presentation, he noted that there were three points that needed to be recognized about the process of democratization in Central Africa as well as three major challenges to establishing fully functional democratic systems of governance in the region. From these, he derived a number of recommendations. First, he pointed out that there is now a general consensus in all the countries of the region about the irreversible nature of the democratization process.

Second, he felt that it was normal to undertake a regular review of the progress being made with the democratization process in the region to assess the progress that has been made.

Third, he felt that the efforts towards democratization are constantly under threat from both internal and external actors who want to maintain their control and domination of the abundant natural resources of the region. He argued that the three main challenges to establishing a democratic system in the countries of the region were:

1. The fact that the attempts at democratization are taking place at a time and in a context where these countries are still struggling with the issue of finding a common national identity from diverse ethnic and religious communities.
2. The fact that the democratization efforts are taking place in the context of an economic crisis which limits the national resources that could be devoted to financing elections, civic education, decentralization, and so on.
3. The fact that efforts towards democratization are imperilled by national security threats, both internal and external. Examples include extremist religious groups who have their own agenda or armed groups who are not interested in dialogue.

In the light of these threats, he made the following recommendations:

- the need for all to respect the constitutions;
- the need to strengthen the capacity of states to fund electoral processes, possibly by establishing a regional mechanism for funding elections to limit dependence on foreign donors;
- the need to respect the right of each country to develop democratically at its own pace dictated by its own historical, social, political and cultural context without being forced to adopt foreign models; and
- the need to support the regional mechanisms to prevent crimes against humanity, genocide and other serious crimes.

Ambassador Vijay Makhan: Goodwill Message

In his remarks, Ambassador Vijay Makhan pointed out that the presence of so many dignitaries underscored the importance of the discussions over the two days being constructive and focused on addressing the real issues faced by the region, and not just an academic discussion. He noted that many of our heads of state have adopted several instruments that are a clear indication of their commitment to respect for human rights, peace and democracy [most notably the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (2003), the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (2007) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981)]. The sheer number of these instruments and the high standards especially on issues of good governance that they set should make other continents envious: but these instruments are not being implemented.

He stated that it is time for us to remove our coats of hypocrisy and have a frank and meaningful dialogue. Good governance should be the guiding principle in everything we do.

Professor Abdoulaye Bathily: Opening Statement

Before declaring the dialogue open, Professor Abdoulaye Bathily made a number of pertinent remarks partly reflecting what the other speakers had said, but in the main underscoring the importance of the dialogue. He pointed out that Central Africa is in the dock; and the processes of democratization are taking place at a particularly difficult period.

He observed that while we think about how to deepen democratization we cannot ignore the ravages and wanton killing of innocent people by armed groups such as the Lord's Resistance Army in eastern DRC, Boko Haram in Cameroon and the CAR, and so on. These are armed movements that are totally different from the national liberation movements that fought for our independence in the 1960s. The latter had a vision and were driven by values to unite the country and lead it towards development. He bemoaned the fact that the armed movements of today are founded on specific identities—religious, ethnic or territorial—with a programme of domination. Their

often-confused characteristics call into question the national unity the independence movements fought for and won at great cost. These armed movements question current governance models and the ideas of national reconstruction. He cautioned that we must go beyond just condemning these movements. They did not fall from the sky but are products of our societies and to a large extent reflect our failure to integrate. We cannot use these movements to build democracy when most of them are the very negation of democracy and the values of democracy.

Professor Bathily nonetheless pointed out that the problem of groups within our society resorting to violence as a way of expressing their political grievances or asserting their political rights is a matter that needs to be carefully considered. He also said that the phenomena of drug trafficking, trafficking in wild species and piracy are also important issues because the funds generated by these criminal activities ultimately find their way into the funds of armed movements. He invited the assembled group of great thinkers, policymakers, politicians and academics to come up with innovative ideas to help lift the region from the low point it had reached.

Before formally declaring the dialogue open, he thanked International IDEA for providing an opportunity for such a discussion to take place and the Government of Gabon for agreeing to host it. He expressed the hope that the participants would come up with important recommendations that would improve on current policy and practice.

1. Democratic Governance Deficits in Central Africa

Madeleine Mukumabano: Moderator

The first panel focused on the democratic governance deficits in Central Africa, particularly the challenges that have been encountered since the democratic transition began in the early 1990s. The panel was chaired by Madeleine Mukumabano. The Keynote speaker was Akere Muna, President of the International Anti-Corruption Conference and Sanctions Commissioner of the African Development Bank. The discussants were: Dieudonné Kombo-Yaya, a former minister and the former Chair of the National Elections Authority, CAR; Professor Charles Bowao, a former minister of the Republic of Congo Brazzaville; Professor Augustin Loada, a Minister in the Government of the Republic of Burkina Faso; and Acheikh Ibn Oumar, a former minister and former Special Representative of the Republic of Chad to the United Nations.

In her short introductory remarks, Madeleine Mukumabano bemoaned the fact that the prospects for Central Africa had once looked promising, but today the region looked more like a graveyard. The profile of the participants, in her opinion, underscored the importance of the issues to be discussed and the urgency of the action that needed to be taken. She concluded by stating that if we do not take decisive action now, nobody is going to do it for us and we have a sacred duty to arrest the decline that is taking place all over the region.

Akere Muna: Keynote Speaker

Akere Muna began his presentation by citing three statements reported at different periods as a reflection of Africa's dilemma. The first were statements attributed to the late President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, who suggested that if he died, his country would degenerate into chaos. President Nkrumah followed this up by introducing a Preventive Detention Law, which he used to imprison his opponents. The second statement reflected the tragedy that befell Nigeria shortly after independence, with eight changes of government before a democratic leader could be elected at the end of the 20th century. Finally, a quote from Raphael Lakpé expressed his despair about the situation in Côte d'Ivoire in 1993.

Akere Muna suggested that the problem in the region is that we focus too much on symptoms rather than the real problems. He provided some key indicators of the governance challenges. He listed a number of treaties that had been signed but not ratified, the most important of which, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections

and Governance, has been ratified by only three countries in the region (Cameroon, Chad and Rwanda). He also noted that while many countries have adhered to the African Peer Review Mechanism, none has subjected itself to the review process.

To address the governance deficit in the region and strengthen the transition to democratic governance, countries in the region must improve their electoral processes; ensure alternation of power; establish independent electoral commissions; constitutionalize institutions of accountability; and strengthen the African Peer Review Mechanism along the four main pillars of democracy and political governance, economic governance and management, corporate governance, and socio-economic governance. He also stressed that the civil service should be depoliticized. He concluded his presentation by reading certain newspaper accounts of the numerous cost-saving measures that the new President of Tanzania had implemented, and hoped that more African leaders could adopt such an approach.

Dieudonne Kombo-Yaya

Dieudonne Kombo-Yaya pointed out that, in spite of some advances, after more than two decades of democratic transition in Africa, numerous problems remain. He outlined three of the most pressing problems, which formed the basis of his recommendations.

The first problem he identified is that Africa is globally sick due to military dictatorships, coups d'état, civil wars and rebellions in various parts. His second observation was that Francophone Africa is sicker than Anglophone Africa. To support this assertion, he highlighted the fact that of the 95 coups d'état, 53 had been in Francophone Africa compared to 22 in Anglophone Africa. He went on to suggest that there is greater respect for democratic principles and human rights in Anglophone Africa than in Francophone Africa. For his third point, he argued that the Central Africa region is on the verge of evolving into a state of metastasis. The signs are there not only in the lack of respect for constitutional rules, but also in the fact that most states have removed presidential term limits from their constitutions. He argued that democratic governance and respect for the constitution are the best guarantee of sustainable development. He stressed that it is important for African leaders to know that there is life after the presidency, and gave as an example the presence at the dialogue of the former president of Burundi, Sylvestre Ntibantunganya.

In the light of the challenges he identified, Kombo-Yaya made three main recommendations: first, strong institutions are needed, such as independent EMBs and judiciaries, with strong men and women in charge; second, entrench a culture of democracy and peace; and, third, intensify the fight against corruption. He mentioned the case of Justice Fatoumata Bazeye, President of the Niger Constitutional Court, who resisted pressure from the President to approve his unconstitutional actions, and was dismissed but later reinstated by the new government.

Professor Charles Bowao

In his intervention, Professor Bowao identified several factors that in his opinion have contributed to the democracy deficit in the Central Africa region. These include the unwillingness of states to respect their commitments under the various treaties that

they have signed and ratified, and the fact that international organizations, such as the AU and the RECs, have not put sufficient pressure on states when they fail to honour their commitments, as in the tragedy unfolding in Burundi. He noted that during the national conferences that took place in the 1990s, many states agreed to certain principles such as the need for term limits, but in recent years they have questioned these principles. He also highlighted the fact that most political parties in the region are ethnic-based and often come into existence merely to contest elections. He recommended that for elections to be free and fair, there is a need to ensure that EMBs are independent and not subject to control or manipulation by any of the political parties. He also recommended that because of their crucial role in a democracy, the status of opposition parties and their rights and duties should be formally recognized and protected by law.

Professor Augustin Loada

Professor Loada pointed out that he was making his presentation in his capacity as an expert from Afrobarometer and would be reporting on a study carried out of 16 African countries, three of which are in the Central Africa region (Cameroon, Gabon, and Sao Tome and Principe). Afrobarometer is a series of national surveys that tries to assess public attitudes to democracy, governance, the economy, leadership and related questions. The goal is to enable the public to have a say in political decision making by providing policymakers, CSOs, academics, the media, investors and donors as well as ordinary citizens with important information on the state of governance.

From the results of the survey carried out, the majority of citizens in the 16 countries consider democracy to be the preferable model of governance. There is a general rejection in all the countries of the one-party system, and the results show support for democracy. However, support for democracy in Cameroon (67 per cent), Gabon (68 per cent) and Sao Tome and Principe (51 per cent) is below the African average. The African average level of satisfaction with the quality of democracy is 50 per cent, but in Cameroon it is 37 per cent, Gabon 30 per cent and Sao Tome and Principe 19 per cent. As regards satisfaction with elections, the survey shows the level of satisfaction in Cameroon at 58 per cent and Gabon 37 per cent, but Sao Tome and Principe at 83 per cent. On freedom of speech, the African average is 48 per cent, but for Cameroon it is 42 per cent, Gabon 20 per cent, and Sao Tome and Principe 60 per cent.

Two points stood out clearly from his analysis. First, people link the quality of elections with the level of democracy. Second, the economic performance of a country also affects the level of satisfaction of its citizens. He concluded that it is necessary for all stakeholders to take account of the opinions of ordinary citizens.

Acheickh Ibn Oumar

In his presentation, Acheickh Oumar touched on the issue of security and the military challenges that negatively affect democratic transition. He argued that security failure is caused by a persistent colonial mentality, and underscored the need for a rapid reorganization of security systems. He highlighted the need to redefine our military strategies to fill existing gaps due to the risks of recolonization by foreign intervention.

He also argued that the new governance paradigms that are regularly imposed on us, such as the structural adjustment programme of the 1990s and the current focus on climate change, divert our attention from the real issues that affect our lives. He suggested that the region was lagging behind because of its failure to develop common strategies to address its own problems. He cited the example of the problems of Lake Chad, which required collaboration between the states that border it.

Discussion

- The question was raised of why the states of Central Africa are lagging behind those of all the other regions on the continent. Some felt that it was linked to the fact that they are victims of their natural resources, which many foreign countries and their multinational corporations have taken control of and manipulate the governance system to protect their selfish interests.
- The issue of how to entrench a culture of democracy and a sense of citizenship was widely debated. Some felt there was a need for patriotic training, but the consensus was in favour of civic education with an emphasis on good governance and democracy in which NGOs and academia should play a leading role.
- The marginalization suffered by opposition parties was widely discussed. Members of opposition parties are usually treated as second class citizens and no respect is paid to the views which they represent. However, opposition parties have their own challenges that must be overcome. Lack of clear programmes, factionalism, blind ambition in too many parties, and each party leader wanting to become president creates its own problems. A political party legal framework must ensure that there is internal democracy in all parties. A political party that does not practice internal democracy can hardly be expected to act in a democratic manner if it comes to power.
- Institutions alone will not make democracy successful: it is the manner in which they are designed and those who are responsible for running them. All the participants agreed that the EMBs that manage elections must be genuinely independent. It was also recognized that there is a need to depoliticize the civil service in Francophone Africa, as is the case in Anglophone Africa.
- Although the issue of term limits was raised, it was noted that the main problem is really that of respect by all, including the leadership, for the constitution. If the constitution is fully respected by all, elections will probably be free and fair and there might not be any need for term limits to ensure alternation of power. In designing constitutions, there is also a need to avoid any ambiguity that can be exploited by politicians.
- The leadership deficit is a critical element in deepening democracy. Our societies must try to produce leaders who will put the national interest first, before their personal interest or that of their political parties.
- The fact that some African leaders establish presidential or republican guards who are loyal to them poses a great risk of instability in the region. There is no need to fragment the army and create the risk of conflicting loyalties.

- The AU and the RECs have an important role to play in insisting that leaders respect their constitutions. The Burkina Faso crisis was resolved speedily and peacefully because of the firm and decisive intervention of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the AU.

2. The Political and Socio-economic Impact of the Democratic Governance Deficit

Dr Cyrille Zogo Ondo: Moderator

The second panel was moderated by Cyrille Zogo Ondo, Representative of the OIF. The keynote presentation was made by Francois Ekoko, Regional Representative of the UN Office for South-South Cooperation. The discussants were President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, the former president of the Republic of Burundi; Professor Andre Mangu, Research Professor at the University of South Africa; Michika Tshishima Nadine, National Secretary of the Movement for the Liberation of Congo (DRC), in charge of electoral processes and relations with citizens' institutions; Serge Nzeza Maketa, Expert at the Conseil d'Appui au Développement Communautaire, DRC; and Florence Mukobwanana, Treasurer General and member of the central executive committee, Democratic Green Party of Rwanda.

In his introductory remarks, Cyrille Zogo Ondo pointed out that the socio-economic situation in a country is critical to deepening democracy. He noted that we tend to focus too much on elections and quickly adopt modern technology, such as biometrics, but wondered whether this really addresses the fundamental problems. For him, one of the biggest handicaps in the democratic governance deficit in Central African countries is the lack of respect for economic and social rights. The moderator also raised the issue of the necessary convergence or possible divergence between democracy and development in these countries.

Dr Francois Ekoko: Keynote Speaker

In his keynote address, Francois Ekoko highlighted three pillars critical to the foundation of an effective democratic governance system: transparency, participation within the rule of law and rationalization. Using the examples of Chile (before and after the military regime), South Korea and Singapore (at the early stages of their development), he noted that the experiences of these three countries provide a good basis for a comparative analysis of how the nexus between democratic transition and socio-economic transformation has played out in the past 40 years. To him, at least one of the three pillars of democratic governance was used by the three countries to achieve some socio-economic progress, even at a time when their regimes were not democratic. Consistently, the rationalization pillar was the most used by those regimes to pursue

their socio-economic agenda. From the experiences of those three countries, he drew three lessons for consideration by the countries of Central Africa:

1. With only one pillar of democratic governance, the democratic transition/socio-economic transformation nexus can be achieved if there is a balance between the leader's vision and commitment to the progress of his/her country and the quality of the institutions supporting the implementation of that vision.
2. Building strong institutions goes hand in hand with building the capacity to run those institutions. The level of investment in human resources in all three countries over time has been noticeable.
3. There seems to be a mechanical 'progression' between socio-economic progress, the emergence of a middle class, and increased claims from among the middle class for greater participation, as well as more and new rights that ultimately lead to 'genuine democracy'.

Dr Ekoko observed that in the case of Central African countries, not only are all the key pillars of democratic governance missing, but also the key characteristics of the nexus between democratic transition and socio-economic transformation. The consequences of these shortcomings are multifaceted. On the social front, there is an acute inability to deal with the vicious circle of poverty and inequality. At the political level, the sophistication of methods for controlling societies and conserving/keeping power is unprecedented. While the 'succession' of the ruling elite has been slow, reproduction of the system and the methods for hanging on to power have been perfected, as a consequence sending a subliminal message to other political players that force is the only option open. At the Security level, exclusion and frustration become the bedrock of violence in societies. The so-called excluded, in the form of exclusion and confiscation of power, will resort to indiscriminate acts of violence.

At the economic and financial levels, embezzlement of public funds for personal enrichment has become the norm for those with access to a country's assets. At the middle and lower echelons of the administration, corruption becomes both a means to complement 'meagre' salaries and an indirect way of getting some 'crumbs' of the national cake, while the upper echelon is taking the lion's share of the spoils. The true picture is complemented by the careless (deliberate or not) management of abundant natural resources, leading at times to the mortgaging of the country's natural resources.

At the political economy level, the balance of power between countries in the region and their external partners has led to the abandonment of economic sovereignty. Multinationals decide not only economic policies, but in some cases even political aspects such as the appointment of senior officials. The entire region has no say about its currencies, and therefore on monetary policy. The Bretton Woods institutions continue to influence the conduct of the economy in most of these countries, including their ability to borrow money from the market, while other partners have decided to make it difficult for them countries to industrialize meaningfully, by signing Economic Partnership Agreements and/or opening borders wide to cheap imports. Under the current dispensation, the outlook for the subregion is bleak and only a truly implemented democratic transition/socio-economic transformation nexus will help the region avoid chaos.

President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya

Sylvestre Ntibantunganya discussed the issue of leadership in Central Africa. He argued that we have the wealth that should help us develop and move Africa towards the 22nd century. He felt that it was time for the leadership to work not just for themselves but for the people and for future generations.

He outlined the different tragedies that had befallen Burundi in 1965, 1975, 1993 and again in 2005, and felt that the rest of Africa must learn the bitter lessons from these. He explained that in 1988, he was asked to address the issue of national unity in the country. He tried to show that the problems were coming from outside, mainly from the former colonial power. He admitted that the problem was not studied in depth and, once the transition started, they failed to deal with the real problems of the country.

He pointed out that although there are many political parties, they are constituted along ethnic lines and have no clear programmes for national reconstruction. He underlined that there is now a serious risk of ethnic conflict. Unless Burundians put the national interest first, the risk of a breakdown in law and order and a genuine calamity was real. Ntibantunganya concluded by pointing out that Burundians, like the citizens of the rest of the region, need democracy and development in an environment of peace and security.

Professor Andre Mangu

Professor Mangu started by pointing out that Central Africa has beaten all previous negative records on the continent with respect to democratic governance. He cited as examples:

- Regular elections that are neither free and fair, nor transparent leading to ‘people voting without choosing’, and to democratic elections with no choice;
- Non-respect for the basic principles of constitutionalism and the rule of law marked by unconstitutional changes of government, coups d’état, the absence of independent judiciaries, and so on;
- Corruption as a modus operandi of governance;
- Concentration of powers in the hands of presidents and an increasing tendency for the institutionalization of presidential monarchies; and
- The narrowing of political space to a few elites.

He questioned whether we can really talk of a democratic transition. In his view, it is more a question of one step forward and four steps back. The consequences of the democratic deficit are not only rampant corruption and frequent violations of human rights, but also increasing numbers of conflicts in the region. The socio-economic consequences have been increasing levels of poverty, and jobless growth that has only benefited the ruling elites. In his view, the situation can only improve if governments in the region, particularly political leaders, are obliged to respect their constitutions and the judiciary is allowed to operate independently as a watchdog for enforcing

constitutionalism and respect for the rule of law. Leaders need to accept the fact that there is life after the presidency and recognize the fact that no leader is indispensable.

Mishika Tshishima Nadine

Mishika Tshishima Nadine started her presentation by pointing out that although the transition to democratic systems of governance is okay in Central Africa, numerous challenges remain. She noted that according to the latest Ibrahim Index of Governance, the Central Africa region was lagging far behind every other region. She argued that a democratic transition clearly suggests a desire to move away from an authoritarian past towards a democratic and accountable system of governance. After two long decades, African countries, particularly those in this region, are still in a permanent state of transition, whereas it was supposed to be only a temporary situation. From the point of view of its democratic governance, the region is sick because in spite of attempts to hold free elections, the political culture has hardly changed.

Governance challenges manifest themselves in two ways. First, Central Africa has the longest serving presidents on the continent, who have become virtual dictators. Second, the region's enormous potential wealth from oil, diamonds, and so on, has attracted numerous multinational corporations, whose overriding goal is hegemonic control and exploitation of these natural resources with little concern about the welfare of the people. She argued that there can be no democracy when the region's wealth is enjoyed by only a few, when there are such high levels of unemployment, and when ordinary citizens lack access to good health care, schooling, and so on. The countries in the region must take serious steps to go beyond the seemingly endless transition and take concrete measures to install a real and sustainable democratic system of governance. She cited Pope Paul VI, who said that development was synonymous with peace, to argue that democracy is another name for integrated development.

In conclusion she said that all citizens as well as political leaders in the region must recognize the fact that the entrenchment of a democratic system of governance is imperative. All citizens must resist and oppose any leaders who want to monopolize and perpetuate their stay in power. The struggle against corruption and the institutionalization of a democratic culture based on respect for the rule of law require a collective effort by all.

Serges Nzeza Maketa

Like some of the previous speakers, Serges Nzeza Maketa argued that in terms of natural resources, the Central Africa region is among the richest in Africa. Democratic governance is the means to ensure that the nation's resources are used for the benefit of current and future generations. He analysed the political and socio-economic impact of the governance deficit in Central Africa from two perspectives. First, looking at the political impact, he identified:

- political instability and political crisis, often caused by armed and other forms of conflict;
- deep suspicion between the major political actors, especially between the leaders of

ruling parties and those of opposition parties;

- the collapse of the state; and
- an absence of peace.

From the perspective of the socio-economic impact, he identified:

- loss of foreign investment because investors have no confidence in the economy;
- a diminishing revenue base for the state;
- rising levels of corruption;
- misuse of natural resources by armed groups who sell these to fund their illegal activities;
- misappropriation of the investment budget, leaving government with little funds to promote investment;
- degradation of the educational and health systems; and
- environmental degradation.

He argued that governance requires a change of mentality in the manner in which public affairs are managed. Without a radical change in mentality, there will be no development. He concluded by stating that democratic governance reduces political and economic uncertainty and will attract the foreign investment that Africa needs to develop.

Florence Mukobwajana

Florence Mukobwajana pointed out that although there has been some progress towards democratic governance, numerous challenges remain. She drew particular attention to elections, which have become meaningless because they are regularly manipulated to achieve a certain outcome. She noted how the same people cling on to power. Another contributory factor to the democratic governance deficit in the region is the low level of political participation by women, many of whom, due to symbolic and/or explicit coercion, are too frightened to be associated with opposition parties.

She also noted that most parliaments in the region have become rubber stamp assemblies for government programmes, which easily approve any changes to the constitution. In some cases, oppositions are complicit and often fail to hold governments to account for their actions.

Discussion

- We sometimes conflate good governance with democracy and vice versa. Both are important and usually go hand in hand.

- Policies that exclude others from participation in governance often provoke extreme anti-democratic behaviour (e.g. rebellions, armed resistance or secessionist tendencies).
- Elections cost a lot of money that many African countries, especially those such as the CAR and the DRC which are struggling to suppress internal conflicts, do not have. Dependency on foreign financial support always carries the risk of eternal strings and conditions that may not be in the best interests of the country.
- The increasing risk of presidential monarchies in the region is becoming a reality. The way to avoid this is to insist on strict respect for the constitution and the need to ensure that no president is made to feel that he is indispensable for the survival of his country.
- There was a heated discussion about whether some elements of democracy can be sacrificed in order to achieve development. The examples of China and Singapore were cited. The general feeling was that asking people to choose democracy first and development next or vice versa was like asking them to choose between their mother or their father. Democracy and development go hand in hand; any democratic government would strive to promote development.

3. Overcoming Democratic Governance Deficits: Options for Regional Organizations

Marie Madeleine Kalala: Moderator

Marie Madeleine Kalala, Member of the Friends of the AU Panel of the Wise, acted as moderator for the third panel. The keynote address was given by Dr Frank Okuthe Ougui, the Executive Director of LMRCG/ICGLR. The discussants were Abraham Okoko Esseu, CEO of the Fondation pour l'Avenir, Republic of Congo Brazaville; Dieudonné Tshiyoyo, Regional Electoral Adviser, UNDP/RSCA, Addis Ababa; Hortense Nguema Okome, Head of AU Liaison office to ECCAS; and Ambassador Hamuli Baudouin, Director of Political Affairs and the Mechanism for Rapid Response, ECCAC.

Frank Okuthe Oyugui : Keynote Speaker

Frank Okuthe Oyugui pointed out that the Central Africa region faces a multitude of challenges in terms of democratic governance with multiple impacts on society, the community and individual countries. He noted that the region had many regional organizations, ECCAS, CEMAC and CEPGL, with COMESA, SADC and the EAC at the margins, as well as the Regional Certification Mechanisms of the ICGLR. He argued that these organizations can help the countries of the region address the challenges of the democratic governance deficit in two main ways.

First, by expanding the democratic governance space to combat the politics of poverty and conflict. In this respect, regional integration can be a catalyst for the promotion of values related to democratic governance through the development and application of regional norms. Second, by addressing the deficit through conflict prevention and the consolidation of gains to counter regression. This can be done by:

- Devising a framework and strategies for regular monitoring and evaluation of democratic governance processes and proposing appropriate policy options for strengthening democratic practice;
- Conducting regular analyses of the preparations and preparedness for elections in each country that plans to hold elections in order to identify gaps and propose options to address these in a timely manner;

- Pre-electoral consultations with key national and regional stakeholders on the status and challenges of electoral process in each member state that plans to hold elections;
- Sensitizing key stakeholders of member states on existing instruments related to democratic governance and the need to ratify/implement their commitments (including the AU Charter on Democracy and Elections and the ICGLR Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance);
- Regional strategic and regular high-level policy dialogues on democratic governance to provide a platform for assessing progress made and identify options with the participation of representatives from key stakeholders (e.g. governments, political parties, civil society and external partners); and
- Undertaking regular/periodic needs assessments and capacity building activities targeting specific institutions at the forefront of promoting democracy, such as civil society, parliamentary committees and EMBs.

He concluded his presentation by saying that we should go beyond just setting up institutions to ensuring that we give them the resources to perform their tasks and grant them enough autonomy to limit external manipulation. Finally, there is a need to ensure that we implement whatever decisions or recommendations are made and any sanctions that are imposed against those who fail to comply.

Ambassador Hamuli Baudouin

Ambassador Hamuli Baudouin started his presentation by recounting the numerous efforts that ECCAS has made to deal with the crises in the Central African Republic and in Burundi. In the latter case, he said, the envoys they sent to Burundi were not welcome, but they have continued to engage with the different parties in the country.

Ambassador Baudouin made several observations about the democratization process in Central Africa, raised three major challenges and ended with some specific recommendations for dealing with the situation in the region. His first point was that the transition to democracy is irreversible. He pointed out that there was no country in Central Africa that had not adopted many of the critical values and principles of democracy, such as multiparty, regular elections, the supremacy of the constitution and the involvement of citizens in making the decisions that affect their daily lives. The issue today was to assess how successful these initiatives have been. It is now necessary to undertake regularly evaluations of the evolution of democratic governance in the region to assess the progress that has been made. He pointed out that the democratization process started under very challenging political, economic and historical circumstances after the end of the Cold War and at the onset of an economic crisis. In addition, democratization efforts have been continually threatened by internal and external actors that want to maintain control and hegemonic domination of the process. That is why the responsibility for preventing any threats of democratic reversal is on all citizens, not just political leaders.

In his view, three main challenges have to be overcome. First, the attempts to establish a system of democratic governance are taking place in a context where the post-

independence efforts to construct a nation state out of diverse ethnic, religious and other identities are under threat. The exclusion of any segment of the population has not only given rise to frustration, but often led to civil wars and secessionist tendencies. Second, he pointed out that the establishment of democratic governments has been negatively affected by ongoing global economic crises. To finance the elections, decentralization, civic education and other measures necessary to promote democracy, states have had to rely on external funding, with all the risks that this entails. His third point was that the process has been subject to internal and external security threats. Some groups within society have refused to take part in political dialogue and instead resorted to the use of arms. In many countries in the region, the survival of the state is threatened by terrorist groups with agendas that have nothing to do with democracy. In the light of these challenges, he made the following recommendations:

- The need for all citizens to respect the constitution as well as the international and regional instruments that have been signed.
- The need to establish a viable and sustainable mechanism for financing elections, possibly through a regional mechanism, and allow foreign assistance merely to complement our own efforts.
- The need to recognize and respect the fact that each country has its own pace of democratic development dictated by its particular historical, cultural, social and political factors and dynamics; and
- The need to support the regional mechanisms for the prevention of atrocities such as genocide and war crime.

Abraham Okoko Essau

Abraham Okoko Essau pointed out that there are many overlapping RECs, such as ECCAS, SADC and COMESA, which can play an important role in deepening democratic governance in the region, depending on the powers they were given in the constitutive instruments that established them. This should be done in the context of their shared space and responsibilities. He noted that the main REC in the region, ECCAS, has fewer instruments compared to other RECs such as ECOWAS and SADC. Nonetheless, he argued that RECs should establish some standards of good governance and democracy based on AU and UN treaties and norms. RECs could play an important role in encouraging member states to ratify and domesticate all the existing instruments on good governance. He suggested that RECs should also develop mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of existing treaties and norms. Because Central Africa is lagging behind other regions, he suggested that ECCAS should try to adopt some of the principles contained in the AU's 2063 Agenda to put in place an implementation and monitoring mechanism on good governance and respect for the rule of law.

Dieudonne Tshiyoyo

Dieudonne Tshiyoyo started by pointing out that the nature of the intervention by an REC in a country will often depend on the political, social and other specific factors

in that country. The situation that led to the intervention of the AU and ECOWAS in Burkina Faso, for example, was very different from that in Burundi. In talking about elections he argued that each country should choose the type of EMB that suits its particular circumstances and needs. He also argued that the revision of constitutions is normal. The critical questions however are why and for whose benefit the revision is being undertaken. The whole issue of term limits must be looked at holistically. In his opinion, ECCAS could help to advise whether a president should stand for one or more terms. One of the problems he pointed out was the weakness of political parties. He concluded his presentation by suggesting that RECs should help to build the capacity of governance institutions in member states.

Hortense Nguema Okome

Hortense Nguema Okome began her presentation by citing the numerous instruments adopted by the OAU and the AU on good governance and democracy as well as those designed to combat corruption. She specifically referred to the Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and pointed out that of the 10 countries that make up the Central Africa region, only three have signed and ratified this instrument. This, in her opinion, shows quite clearly that the countries in the Central Africa region are lagging behind the rest of the continent. Why do our countries not ratify or transpose these instruments? Is it lack of political will?

In charting the way forward, she made a number of recommendations. ECCAC should take the initiative in the region to encourage its member states to ratify and transpose all the relevant instruments, particularly the African Charter. She pointed out that the AU had decided to create a sub-committee to undertake a study of all the existing instruments and make suggestions on how the existing normative framework can be harmonized and consolidated in a manner that will facilitate its adoption and implementation.

Discussion

- While there may be a need for states to democratize at their own pace and with due regard to their particular context, this must be based on the well-established and generally accepted universal principles of good governance, respect for the rule of law and respect for fundamental human rights.
- ECCAS is in the process of major reform and its limitations and weaknesses have been recognized. It is hoped that after the reform, it will play a more active and constructive role, like the RECs in other regions of Africa. ECCAS should ultimately seek to serve the interests of the people in the region rather than those of the political elites.
- RECs, members of parliament and CSOs have an important role to play in putting pressure on states to ratify and transpose the numerous instruments that the UN, the AU and the other RECs have adopted.
- RECs and other international organizations are a reflection of the states that established them. They can only do what they have been given the powers to do.

- EMBs must conform to universal principles that guarantee their independence and autonomy, and give them the power to manage elections.
- Political parties in the region need to be strengthened to enable them play an effective part in governance.
- RECs should try to document the different traditional methods that have been used in our societies to prevent and resolve conflicts. They should also explore the measures used to make our communities resilient to conflicts.

4. The Political Conditions for Deepening the Transition to Democratic Governance in Central Africa

Professor Nadine Machikou Ngameni: Moderator

The fourth panel was moderated by Professor Nadine Machikou Ngameni of the University of Yaoundé II. The keynote presentation was made by Dr Francois Ndengwe. The discussants were Senator Jean Tsomelou, Chair of the Social Democratic Front Parliamentary Group, Cameroon; Gervais Rufyikiri, former Vice President of Burundi; Anicet Clément Guiyama, Minister Adviser, Office of the President of the Central African Republic; and Dr Nestor Bidadanure, expert in conflicts and security.

Francois Ndengwe: Keynote Speaker

Francois Ndengwe focused his presentation on four issues: sovereignty, leadership, confidence and freedom of expression as the bedrock of all freedoms. He started by interrogating and analysing the strengths and weaknesses of the classical definitions of democracy, especially that of Shumpeter in his classic work, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (1942). He cited Shumpeter's five conditions for democracy: the high quality of the political class, limitations to the domains that are subject to political decisions, a trained and competent bureaucracy, the self-control of democracy and a broad tolerance of differences of opinion. From this, he extrapolated four conditions that in his opinion are necessary for democracy in Central Africa. He analysed the concept of sovereignty using the sovereignty triangle, which is built around law, money and the military on each base.

In looking at the crisis of leadership in the Central Africa region, Francois Ndengwe highlighted the issues of training political elites, the influence of external forces on political leadership in the region, the constant friction between the political leadership and citizens, the quality of competition for political leadership and the problem of prolonged stays in power by political leaders in the region. In his opinion, confidence is a critical asset for any country. He analysed the state of confidence in the Central Africa region from the perspectives of the citizens, the citizens and their leaders, and the citizens and state institutions—especially the judiciary, ethnic groups, linguistic groups and religious groups. In his analysis of the demographic heterogeneity of Africa, particularly Central Africa, he had some interesting findings that in many respects explain the complexity of the problems of the region. Two factors underscore

Africa's unparalleled demographic heterogeneity: Africa has only 14 per cent of the world's population but 64 per cent of the world's ethnic groups. He noted that, with 3,315 ethnic groups, Africa is 60 times more heterogeneous than China and 553 times more heterogeneous than the United States. Countries in the region have some of the highest number of world languages. Cameroon has 279 indigenous languages (4.04 per cent of the world total), DRC 214 (3.10 per cent), Chad 132 (1.92 per cent) and CAR 69 (1 per cent).

In his opinion, freedom of expression is the foundation of all liberties. He pointed out that freedom of expression is not respected in the region and contended that there is a direct correlation between restrictions on the freedom of expression and the persistent absence of good governance in the region. He concluded by pointing out that the transition to democracy was not working in Central Africa. While democratic systems of governance are not perfect, they provide the best means to achieve our development goals.

Senator Jean Tsomelou

Senator Tsomelou started his presentation by pointing out that the democratic transition in Africa in general and in Central Africa in particular has given politicians a unique opportunity to reconnect with the people and plan a better future. While certain basic fundamental values and principles should guide us, each country must draw up its own agenda for change in consultation with its citizens. Many common values and principles, such as the separation of powers, free and fair elections, multipartyism and a free media, while recognized, are not fully developed in the region. The political conditions for deepening democratic governance require a number of steps.

The first step is full recognition and acceptance of genuine multipartyism based on regular, free and fair elections. For this to happen requires an electoral code agreed by consensus, an independent EMB, an electoral calendar agreed by all, limitations on the number of political parties based on objective criteria and freedom for independent candidates to contest elections. The second step is to facilitate the establishment of an active civil society uninhibited by restrictive laws on freedom of association, freedom of assembly, and so on. Third, there needs to be a free and independent media run by professional, trained journalists.

Senator Tsomelou drew attention to another serious problem in the region: the proliferation of political parties, because everybody wants to be a leader. He also raised the alienation of youth who make up 65 per cent of the population in the region, and women who make up 55 per cent. More proactive measures need to be introduced. The fundamental condition to arrest the present democratic reversal is to ensure that there are strong and credible opposition parties in the region that are ready to govern. This will require political parties that are willing to dialogue with each other, able to mobilize youth and women, organized in a democratic and representative manner that represents all the diverse groups in the country, and led by people who have the interests of the country at heart. There must also be a law that regulates the activities of all political parties.

Gervais Rufyikiri

Gervais Rufyikiri outlined three political conditions that are fundamental to deepening democracy in the Central Africa region. First, the need for strong and independent institutions with wide powers that enable them to prevent any abuses of power by powerful politicians, especially the president. Problems are caused by weak institutions such as the Parliament of Burkina Faso, which could not withstand Blaise Compaore's pressure on it to change the Constitution, or the Constitutional Court in Burundi, which succumbed to pressure from President Nkurunziza.

The second condition is respect for the fundamental principles of good governance. Most countries in the region where the democratic transition has stalled are those where there are severe restrictions on human and political rights, and where there is frequent tension between the state and civil society. Opposition leaders are regularly harassed and even tortured, and it is no surprise that countries such as Cameroon, the CAR, Gabon, Congo and DRC are consistently classified as 'not free' in Freedom House's annual survey. Finally, he argued that the fight against corruption must be intensified. Most of the fragile and politically unstable countries in the region correspond with the most corrupt countries in Africa. Many of the presidents in the region have, through corrupt means, become even richer than their countries—and are reluctant to leave power because they fear prosecution. He concluded by arguing that strong and efficient institutions, respect for fundamental rights and strong measures to control corruption will enhance the prospects for democratic governance.

Anicet Clement Guiyama

Anicet Clement Guiyama started his presentation by recalling a number of similar dialogues that have taken place to address the problems of the Central Africa region since 2003, during which he had met many of the present eminent participants. He wondered why many of the numerous recommendations that had been made were never implemented, as a result of which the situation in the region is steadily deteriorating.

He focused on the lessons to be learned from his brief experience as part of the transitional team that is trying to establish a basis for a democratic system of governance in the Central African Republic. First, he said that the political scene in Central Africa is dominated by men and women with no political experience. Nor are they democrats; they are only there to pursue their selfish interests. Second, he argued that the management of power during a transition carries many risks, especially when this is based on rules adopted before the crisis began. The fragility of institutions, such as a weak army and police force, lack of funds and all sorts of pressures, makes things difficult. Third, high levels of illiteracy, feelings of frustration among youth, the absence of justice, and a culture of impunity and of violence aggravate the crisis and make it almost impossible to involve citizens in planning for the future. Finally, he raised the issue of the reluctance to accept a woman as interim leader, which has not helped the situation.

He outlined some measures that could contribute to the creation of an enabling environment. First, democracy can only be established with democrats. There is a need to establish a leadership training programme that will help to change mindsets and

enable people, and the political class in particular, to put the interests of the population and the country ahead of their own selfish interests. Second, there is a need to build democratic awareness and a democratic culture at all levels, especially among women and youth. Finally, there is a need to combine democratic construction with social and economic development, because poverty is often the root cause of political instability.

Nestor Bidadanure

Nestor Bidadanure started by pointing out that the generations that preceded us were slaves and later endured colonialism, but overcame both. What is the mission of our generation? We have to fight for peace, and democracy is the only way to achieve sustainable peace. However, all the development indicators for the countries in the region are red. In spite of our wealth, we do not have sustainable peace. He argued that a sustainable peace can only be achieved in a situation where people are able to enjoy full political and economic rights.

In his opinion, the main enemy today is the crisis of identity, fed by radical demagoguery along religious and ethnic lines. Extremist religious groups seek to eliminate all those who are different from them. The colonial ideology of divide and rule has survived and is being exploited by the present leadership. He argued that there is a need for people to read more about some of our exceptional leaders, such as Patrice Lumumba and Nelson Mandela, to understand what they stood for, what made them great and see how this can help us in the current crisis in the region, and more generally in Africa.

Discussion

- The issue of political education for citizens and political leaders was widely discussed. The need for a changed mindset, possibly achieved through civil education programmes, was recognized.
- One of the major causes of insecurity in the region is the fact that many presidents create a republican guard that operates like an army on its own and is loyal to him rather than to the country. The need was recognized to restructure armies in the region so that they are composed of all ethnic groups in the country and loyal not to an individual but to the political leadership.
- Although freedom of expression is of critical importance, all human rights are closely interrelated and the violation of one will inevitably lead to a violation of others. Respect for all human rights is fundamental to entrenching democracy.
- Because of the role the media plays in a democracy, there is a need for public service media to be accessible to all and regulated in a manner that is not vulnerable to control or manipulation by the government.
- The rights of women to access power and even hold the highest office in the country must be recognized and protected.
- The independence of certain key institutions, such as EMBs and the judiciary, was underscored in light of recent experiences in certain countries in the region.

5. Institutional Conditions for Deepening the Transition to Democratic Governance in Central Africa

Ambassador Emile Ognimba, Moderator

Ambassador Emile Ognimba, Deputy Secretary General of the ACP Group in charge of Policy and Development, acted as moderator for the fifth session. The session started with a presentation by Edouard Nduwimana, Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Burundi, followed by presentations by Paulette Oyane Ondo, CSO representative; Calixte Mbari, Senior Policy Officer, DPA, African Union; and Frank Kayitare, International IDEA.

Edouard Nduwimana

Edouard Nduwimana started his presentation with what he considered to be the basic principles of democracy. He pointed out that any institutions established must reflect the needs and concerns of the people. Elections should not be equated with democracy. In his opinion, the institutions put in place must be such as to guarantee pluralism and representativeness. In Burundi, the constitution has guaranteed inclusivity by stipulating minimum representation for certain groups, such as women and minorities. He noted the need for strong institutions and a system of separation of powers, and emphasized that the judiciary in particular need to be independent in order to be effective. To enhance popular participation in governance, he suggested that political, administrative and fiscal decentralization were required. Many political problems are caused by a weak political opposition that does not understand its role in governance. He therefore suggested that laws should be adopted that define the role of political parties and make them accountable. He concluded his presentation by saying that institutions should not be personalized.

Paulette Oyane Ondo

Paulette Oyane Ondo started her presentation by pointing out that when we talk of institutions, the starting point is the constitution. The constitution should reflect the national will and the manner in which the people have decided that they want to be governed. It should contain the basic principles that will ensure that all holders of power are subject to the rule of law as opposed to the rule of man.

She contended that although the Gabonese Constitution contains many universally accepted principles, such as the principle that national sovereignty resides in the people, universal suffrage, the rule of law and so on, these are merely ornamental because they are not respected in practice. In her opinion, the Gabonese Constitution is only a facade, behind which the President of the Republic exercises unrestrained power over everybody and over every institution. Members of Parliament, who are the people's representatives, are supposed to check and control government on a regular basis. Because the ruling party dominates parliament, however, it acts more like an institution designed to serve executive and the President of the Republic rather than a check on any abuses of power. For the classic principles of constitutionalism to function and facilitate progress towards respect for the rule of law and democracy, a social, political and institutional equilibrium must be restored within the governance system.

For social equilibrium to be restored, all citizens must be treated equally and not, as at present, according to their ethnic origins. For there to be political equilibrium, all citizens must have an equal right to govern and political alternation must be a reality. As regards institutional equilibrium, she noted that there is need for administrative and political decentralization as well as a strict separation of powers. In her concluding remarks, she suggested three possible scenarios for deepening the transition to a system of democratic governance in Gabon. The first is for the Gabonese authorities to unilaterally decide after 55 years to change the current authoritarian system into a democratic one. This is unlikely to happen. The second scenario is for the people to take their destiny into their own hands and chase the present regime out of power. It is doubtful whether this could happen.

As a third scenario, the political liberation of the country must result from dialogue and negotiations. In her opinion, an open dialogue conducted in good faith is the only means to open the way to a transition that will eventually democratic one. This is unlikely to happen. The second scenario is for the people to take their destiny into their own hands and chase the present regime out of power. It is doubtful whether this could happen. As a third scenario, the political liberation of the country must result from dialogue and negotiations. In her opinion, an open dialogue conducted in good faith is the only means to open the way to a transition that will eventually pave the way for democracy in Gabon.

Frank Kayitare

Frank Kayitare, in focusing on the prerequisites for political parties to play an effective role in deepening democracy in the Central Africa subregion, started by pointing out that political parties are the nuclear families for politicians. It is the parties that recruit, groom and deploy parliamentarians, members of the executive and—unfortunately in the context of the subregion—even technocrats within government agencies. In his opinion, these political parties should therefore be the first institutions to hold politicians accountable on both delivery and ethics. For this to happen however a number of minimum conditions must be fulfilled:

- Political parties should themselves be internally democratic. We cannot expect democratic politicians from non-democratic parties. For instance, we talk of 'life presidents' at the national level, but forget that these tendencies often start within

political parties with ‘life party leaders’. Democratic and transparent internal party processes as well as a culture of accountability at the party level are likely to translate to upholding these norms at the state level.

- Parties should be policy-based/programmatic, instead of being ‘electoral associations’. One of the core mandates of political parties is to aggregate citizens’ views, aspirations and concerns into viable policy options. Delivery on this mandate through rigorous policy scrutiny and development would positively affect the democratization process.
- We need ‘proposition parties’ not opposition parties. The role of the opposition should not be simply to pinpoint where the ruling parties are going wrong, but rather to offer viable, implementable policy options that are in line with citizens’ aspirations.
- Political parties should add value to the political discourse. What is the point of a party existing if it contributes nothing—or worse, negatively—to the political discourse? Most countries in the subregion have more than 70 political parties (there are 500 in DRC). Do these parties really represent that number of political programmes? Each party needs to identify a niche.

In terms of the conduct of politics, it is imperative that political parties understand the importance of political cooperation, especially in a subregional context characterized by socio-political polarization. Competition is healthy for democracy, but so too is interparty dialogue to secure at least minimum inter-political cooperation to address the complex issues facing countries and citizens. For example, political parties should jointly agree/define the development and democratization visions of their countries, and the divergence should be on how to achieve it. At least they would have secured that common understanding of where they want to get to as a country. Otherwise each party that comes to power starts ‘from scratch’, instead of building on what has been done by the predecessors to achieve a clear vision owned and defined by all.

For interparty dialogue to succeed, however, each individual party must first achieve internal coherence. Intraparty dialogue is therefore as important as interparty dialogue.

Calixte Mbari

Calixte Mbari approached the topic from the perspective that constitutionalism and respect for the rule of law are critical elements in regulating and distributing power between the institutions responsible for democratic governance within a state. The notions of constitutionalism and respect for the rule of law immediately bring to the fore three important issues.

First, the existence of a normative framework based on the constitution. Second, the existence of state institutions responsible for governance and enforcing the law. Third, the relationship between these institutions with each other, on the one hand, and their relationship with citizens in their capacity as voters, subject to the law, on the other. Although one of the key elements of modern constitutionalism is the separation of powers, the reality is that the executive is often overbearing and dominates the other branches.

He pointed out that although all the countries in the region have constitutions that contain many of the elements of constitutionalism and the rule of law, many threats remain. These threats and weaknesses manifest themselves in several ways:

- A dominant executive that is more interested in perpetuating itself in power than serving the interests of the nation. This has led to the removal of term limit provisions in constitutions, rampant corruption, clientelism and nepotism.
- The marginalization of parliament by dominant political parties, which leads it to behave more like a part of the executive than a branch to check the executive.
- Judiciaries that are controlled and manipulated by executives.
- The politicization of the armed forces and security services, many sections of which have been tribalized to serve the narrow interests of political elites.
- Weakened CSOs and other actors in the private sector, which can no longer play an effective role due to limited financial resources or restrictive laws.

He ended his presentation by pointing out that unless these weaknesses are overcome (e.g. by encouraging the countries in the region to ratify and implement AU instruments), and establish independent judiciaries and EMBs, democratic progress in the region will continue to stagnate.

Discussion

- The need to fund political parties and the various options for doing so were discussed, and it was agreed that because of their role in promoting democracy, a transparent, fair and equitable method for funding all serious political parties must be agreed. The AU and RECs should consider developing a mechanism for the funding of political parties.
- The issue of the victimization of several actors with a role in deepening and promoting democracy was discussed. It was noted that restrictive laws on the registration of CSOs have been adopted in many countries in the region, and in some instances their bank accounts have been arbitrarily blocked. Journalists have also been victimized, and in some countries they have been imprisoned or forced into exile while their newspapers or radio stations have been shut down.
- Regular national, regional and subregional intra-party discussion forums could be facilitated by the AU and RECs.
- The issue of populist radicalism was discussed, and it was agreed that this could be reduced if there were more inclusive political processes.
- The issue of strong institutions, particularly independent judiciaries and EMBs, was also discussed.

6. Security Conditions for Deepening the Transition to Democratic Governance in Central Africa

Kalliopi Ango Ela, Moderator

Kalliopi Ango Ela, Executive Director of the Foundation for Geopolitics in Central Africa, acted as moderator for the sixth session. The keynote presentation was made by Dr Maurice Enguéléguélé of International IDEA. There were presentations by Professor Thérèse Atangana Amougou, University of Yaounde; Gabriel Rufyiri, CSO Representative; Dr Francois Ndengwe, Chair of the African Advisory Board; and Nestor Bidadanure, expert in conflicts and security.

Maurice Engueleguele: Keynote Presentation

Maurice Enguéléguélé identified several security risks, which need to be addressed if the transition to democratic governance in the region is to be enhanced. He focused on the risks associated with democratic elections: (a) political risks, or issues of political inclusion; (b) legal risks, with the institutions that ensure compliance with the law; (c) institutional risks, linked to the institutions responsible for managing the elections and announcing the final results; (d) operational and technical risks, such as the availability of ballots and ballot boxes, the counting of votes and the retransmission of results, and the issue of electronic voting; and (e) risks associated with the integrity of the elections, such as funding the elections, funding the campaign process and the integrity of electoral observation and monitoring.

In order to counter these risks, he recommended:

- Establishing a minimum level of security for everyone in the country, especially for vulnerable groups such as women and youth;
- Inclusive political agreements between the different political parties to reduce the risk of post-election violence;
- Use of innovative elections risk management instruments, such as International IDEA's ERMTool and OSIWA's Election Situation Room (ESR), to monitor what is happening, as well as the use of biometric identification documents and better monitoring and analyses of voter turnout;

- The professionalization of electoral observation;
- The constitutionalization of independent EMBs; and
- The use of preventive diplomacy.

He also noted the need for a comprehensive study on money, politics and the transition to democratic governance in Central African countries.

Professor Therese Atangana Amougou

Professor Atangana Amougou started her presentation by pointing out that she had some difficulties associating security imperatives with the deepening of democratic governance because, since security considerations often have pejorative implications, the two notions appear a priori to be diametrically opposed to each other. Nonetheless, in looking closely at the issue, she felt that the topic had four aspects: the security of state institutions, the security of civil society, the security of the electoral process and the security of people and property.

In looking at the security of state institutions, Professor Amougou argued that the prohibition on unconstitutional changes of government is a critical element in deepening democratic governance. The idea is to prevent constitutional change for reasons that do not serve the supreme sovereign interests of the people. With regard to the security of civil society, she argued that civil society needs to be free, strong and well informed on issues of democracy. She cited the role that civil society organizations played in events in Burkina Faso, and suggested that they have an important role to play in civic education as well as the sensitization of citizens. On the security of the electoral process, she noted that this involves ensuring that the institutions involved are independent and have the ability to monitor voting processes, including the counting of votes and the transmission of results to the institution responsible for tabulating them and announcing the final result.

Finally, with respect to the security of persons and property, the idea is to ensure that there is no violence. In this regard, vulnerable groups such as women and youth need to be protected. She pointed out that youth are particularly vulnerable to extreme ideologies and recruitment as child soldiers by armed groups, because of poverty, unemployment, lack of access to education and other forms of social exclusion. Women, she noted, are also vulnerable to political violence by armed terrorist groups, who use them as sex slaves and suicide bombers. She concluded by pointing out that no durable democratic system of governance can be established unless the precarious security situation in the region is improved.

Gabriel Rufyiri

Gabriel Rufyiri pointed out that regimes in the Central Africa region come to power either through coups d'état, rebellions and wars, or through elections. Once in power, those regimes that result from violence in one form or another do not usually favour democracy. He felt that there are many regimes in the region that do not bother about the future of the country, and sometimes even deliberately create insecurity within the

country in order to maintain their hold on power. To address the problem of insecurity, he suggested a conscious effort to end the culture of impunity for those who commit crimes, a move away from the politics of divide and rule, and more efforts to allow divergent views to be expressed and tolerated.

Nestor Bidadanure

In his presentation, Nestro Bidadanure tried to explain why people cheat in elections. He argued that political power in many instances is used as a means to access wealth and to escape from poverty and misery. This transforms political life into a jungle for the survival of the fittest. People are prepared to use ethnicity, religion and war to gain political power. In many cases, the war does not end when one party comes to power because others will continue to fight to displace it.

Citing the example of the DRC, which is as big as the whole of Europe, he argued that our countries have enormous natural resources. It is the mismanagement of these resources that breeds conflicts and wars. Without durable peace, there will be suffering; and democracy cannot be established in such circumstances. He cited the problem of street children and wondered why NGOs in the region have not carried out a study on their plight to see what can be done. He gave the example of Rwanda where after the genocide, there were about half a million street children but the government adopted a policy of settling them with foster families and institutions.

Francois Ndengwe

Francois Ndengwe focused on two points. First, linked to the issue of the sovereignty of African countries, he noted that most elections in the region are funded by external actors. He wondered how we can claim to be sovereign but depend on external actors for the funding of our elections. Such funding usually comes with strings attached—or the external actors have their own agendas. Second, he highlighted the dependence on foreign financial support from Europe for peacekeeping missions in Africa and the increasing risk of a new agenda for which Africans are not fully prepared. He argued that Africa had not previously experienced terrorism of a religious nature—all this has come from abroad. He wondered how Africa's biggest economy could allow itself to be threatened by Boko Haram. Why can the army not deal with it?

He argued that African countries must be prepared from more attacks. The challenge for deepening democracy on the continent is how to establish a governance system that addresses the needs and concerns of the people and promotes inclusion and social cohesion. It is the indifference to the needs of some groups in society that makes them vulnerable to extreme ideologies. He argued that anti-terrorism laws are not enough. He concluded by suggesting that we me have to go back to our African culture to see how the security problems of today could be resolved.

Discussion

- Can our own pan African institutions be used instead of external ones to deal with election conflicts? Are they sufficiently neutral?

- To enhance accountability and reduce corruption, there is a need to publish the salaries of our leaders and ministers. Is this an issue that can be dealt with by the requirement in many constitutions that the assets of our leaders should be declared in full?
- Africa needs to devise a strategy to combat the increasing risk of radicalization, which is spreading across the region. How can the RECs and the AU help in this?
- It may not be very accurate to say that terrorism and religious extremism were unknown in Africa. Jihadist movements were led by Osman Dan Fadio.
- Inclusive democracy is the best way to combat radicalism and religious extremism.

7. Deepening the Transition to Democratic Governance and the Socio-Economic Transformation of Central Africa

Ambassador Vijay Makhan: Moderator

The seventh panel was moderated by Ambassador Vijay Makhan, the former OAU Deputy Secretary General and AU Special Envoy. The keynote speaker was Professor Adebayo Olukishi, Director, Africa and West Asia Region, of International IDEA. The discussants were: Lucas Olo Fernandes, Transparency International, Equatorial Guinea; Professor Georges Kobou, University of Yaounde; and Zacharies Myboto, former minister and Chair of the National Union, Republic of Gabon.

Professor Adebayo Olukushi: Keynote Speaker

Professor Adebayo Olukushi began his presentation by referring to a point made in an earlier discussion about whether we should sacrifice democracy in order to first achieve economic development, which appears to have been what countries like China and Singapore have done. A participant had responded that this was like being asked to choose between his mother and his father. According to Professor Olukushi, the democracy–socio-economic interface is a dialectic, in which one complements the other, one cannot be fully grasped without the other and the absence of one has consequences for the other. In his opinion, you cannot get the socio-economic aspects right if you do not get the political governance right. In other words, we cannot deepen and extend political governance in the absence of socio-economic rights or in the absence of investment in the economy. The link between the two may not be linear, but one feeds on the other.

He noted that Central Africa's socio-economic development challenges are legion: (a) an unhappy history of rapacious colonial exploitation; (b) socio-economic conditions laid down during the colonial period that have been carried over and remain precarious; (c) despite enormous resources, the region is the biggest underperformer on the continent on all the human development indices; (d) poverty and inequality continue to increase in the region; and (e) corruption is out of control in most countries. Resources are not the cause of the problem but poor management of these resources. For example, Glencore, a multinational that exploits minerals in DRC, makes a profit

of USD 50 billion annually, ten times greater than the GDP of the DRC. Gabon, the DRC and Cameroon rank among the top ten countries in the world that suffer loss of revenue from their natural resources as a result of under pricing.

He argued that the opportunity to establish democratic systems in the 1990s came at a time when commodity prices had collapsed; and the Lagos Plan of Action, which could have helped, was immediately derailed by the imposition of Structural Adjustment Programmes. African countries were pressured to democratize in a time of economic recession. We focused our energies on building democratic systems while our economic and fiscal policies were being dictated to us by the international community, especially the World Bank. We were therefore trying to build democratic systems using donor funds.

The challenges we now face should be addressed in the following way:

- Build a broad and holistic vision of transformation of our societies where we define where we want to be and do not allow ourselves to be influenced by the so-called emergence doctrine.
- Build a political consensus around our vision.
- Win back control over policy and the policy space.
- Understand that the most sustainable policies are those that deliver socio-economic benefits to the populace. People do not eat elections; if anything, they can lead to democracy fatigue.
- Establish a new social contract between the state and society in Central Africa.

Zacharie Myboto

Zacharie Myboto started his presentation by pointing out that Central Africa was sick as a result of a multidimensional acute democracy deficit. He pointed out that the expectation in the 1990s was that multipartyism would lift the region from this abyss. He regretted that the elections have been numerous and regular, but have never been free, fair or transparent. Incumbent parties, such as the Gabonese Democratic Party (PDG), which came to power in 1968, used the opportunity to entrench themselves. He pointed out that on two occasions, in 1993 and again in 2009, the ruling PDGs presidential candidates lost the election but imposed themselves on the people. The government even went so far as to dissolve a united opposition group in violation of the law. After four years of trying to get the courts to reverse this decision, he said that the matter had now been referred to the President of the AU Commission. He concluded by pointing out that there has been no socio-economic transformation because of the poor management of the economies in the region by its presidents.

Professor Georges Kobou

In his presentation, Professor Kobou focused on the two dimensions of liberty: substantive liberty and instrumental liberty. He linked these to the socio-economic

plight of the countries of the Central Africa region. There has been no socio-economic transformation in the region. He described the region as a car without a driver. For the region to recover, it needs to free the capacity of the people and transform the economy to be one of production rather than just consumption.

Lucas Olo Fernandes

Lucas Olo Fernandes enumerated some of the socio-economic challenges of the region: corruption; the free financial flow of our wealth with very little coming back through development aid; and poor management of the economy. He argued that it is necessary to integrate the economies in the region. Politics in Central Africa has become a goal in itself, whereas it should be a means to achieve certain ends and a means to enable people to serve their country and even the region. Many leaders hang on to power because they fear what will happen when they leave office. He suggested that adequate pensions should be provided for former leaders to encourage them to leave power voluntarily.

In suggesting that the economies in the region should be brought closer together, he saw it as ironic that the two closest capital cities in the world, Brazzaville and Kinshasa, do not even have a bridge to link them. He suggested that ECCA should promote free movement between member states. He concluded by pointing out that it is the people of Central Africa who know best how to address their problems.

Discussion

- How can we deepen democracy if the production tools that we have, such as our natural resources, sea ports, banks and other critical aspects of our economy, are owned and controlled by foreign actors, such as multinationals? We can break the chain of control if we take our destiny in our own hands. There are many forces that are determined to ensure that Africa does not work. Who benefits from this? Unless we overcome these forces we will not succeed. The answer lies in more democracy rather than less.
- The Norwegian experience of taking control of its oil wealth right from the beginning teaches us that we must take control of our resources.
- We have no control over our monetary policy because we do not control our money or our economy. There is a need to ensure that all these are controlled nationally.
- When will Africa make up its mind and say that it has been humiliated long enough and nobody will humiliate us again? The challenge is ours to take.
- Change is occurring all over the continent but not every change is transformative. Most often, the change is uncoordinated. What we need is transformative change that alters the current exploitative systems, structures and institutions, and gives the people control over their own destiny.
- Since independence, most of the countries in the region have been deindustrializing at an alarming rate. We cannot talk about an emergent Africa in such circumstances.

- We are not doing any value addition. In many countries, the oil has been mortgaged for years such that we would hardly benefit from any oil price increases, and future generations will have no income to rely on. In some countries, such as Botswana, although arrangements have been made to process and sell diamonds in the country, the money leaves the country within hours.
- African countries have no clear strategy for defending their interests. Greece in two years of its economic crisis has received more aid than Africa has received in 40 years.

Closing Ceremony

Professor Abdoulaye Bathily: Chair

The closing ceremony was chaired by Professor Abdoulaye Bathily, United Nations Secretary-General Special Representative in Central Africa. Professor Charles Fombad, the Rapporteur, read the recommendations that had emerged from the dialogue. This was followed by closing remarks by Professor Adebayo Olukoshi, Director, Africa and West Asia Region Bureau, of International IDEA. Closing remarks were made by Professor Bathily.

Professor Charles Fombad: Rapporteur

The final recommendations appear in the following section.

Professor Adebayo Olukoshi

In his remarks, Professor Adebayo thanked all the numerous participants who had responded positively to the invitation to take part in the dialogue. He particularly thanked the Government and the people of Gabon for hosting this first in a series of dialogues, which he hoped would become an annual event. He thanked his staff and the various people who had helped with the local organization. He reinforced many of the points that he had made in his opening remarks.

Professor Abdoulaye Bathily: Closing Remarks

In his closing remarks, Professor Bathily confessed that before the dialogue started, he had had some concerns, but after the two days he was very happy with the way the discussion had gone.

He said that he had recently presented his quarterly report on the situation in the Central African Republic to the United Nations Security Council. There was much pessimism about the situation in the region generally. The situation in Burundi took up most of the discussion by the Security Council. The elections planned in the region up to 2018 were also debated because of the potential for conflict that these might provoke, and especially the ongoing attacks by Boko Haram. He was congratulated for the hard work he has been doing in a difficult region.

Professor Bathily said that he saw in the discussions that had just ended a spirit of responsibility, a depth of engagement and great cause for optimism. He called on everyone to dialogue. In his view, what he had seen during the two days was a model of

dialogue that should be replicated in the region. He was greatly encouraged to see the former President of Burundi and the current Vice President of the National Assembly of Burundi sitting together and talking to each other. This gave him no reason to despair that this spirit of dialogue will not continue as Burundi struggles to resolve its present crisis.

In his opinion, the discussions show that we need the transition to democratic governance in the region to be accompanied by real and meaningful transformation in the daily lives of the people. We cannot talk of an emergent Africa without concrete evidence of change. It was his opinion that Africa cannot emerge from the current crisis by giving multinational companies control over the continent's resources. Education and African researchers must do more.

He assured Professor Adebayo that the UN will always collaborate with any future dialogue that is planned, whether in Gabon or elsewhere on the continent. He noted that International IDEA has a solid record of timely intervention in Africa. He mentioned the example of the role that International IDEA played in helping the transition in Nigeria after the end of the Abacha dictatorship. The organization, he pointed out, has a good tradition of openness. He concluded by pointing out that we have seen from our two days of discussion why it is important for people to meet and talk to each other. He ended by saying that he was very happy to have been part of the dialogue.

Recommendations

Although many different views were expressed in the discussions, there was a great deal of convergence and agreement on most of the issues. Where there was apparent lack of consensus, the principles contained in the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, which all participants agreed was the overarching framework that sets down the parameters of constitutionalism, good governance, respect for the rule of law and human rights on the continent, prevailed. The recommendations are subsumed under different sub-themes.

1. Recognition of the challenge facing the Central Africa region

It is agreed that:

- Although democracy is under threat globally, the challenge is particularly acute in Central Africa.
- All international and regional governance measurement indicators of the rule of law, progress in constitutionalism, democracy, respect for human rights and economic development show that Central Africa has made the least progress of all regions in Africa. This calls for urgent and decisive action to be taken on all fronts to reverse the trends before it is too late.
- It is a collective responsibility on all and therefore the discussions were robust, frank, constructive and are not intended to put any individual, institution or country on trial.
- Democratic governance is a prerequisite for sustainable development in Central Africa. This is because democratic governance fosters transparency, accountability, the rule of law, respect for human rights, civic participation, and civic inclusiveness—all of which are necessary for securing economic productivity and equitable distribution, thereby reducing social inequalities and enhancing state legitimacy. If democracy does not ‘deliver’ on development—jobs, economic empowerment of citizens, social service delivery, health, education, and so on—it risks being overthrown.

2. The role of international organizations

Recognizing the role that international organizations have to play in mitigating the governance deficit in Central Africa, it is agreed that the following measures should be taken:

- The present reforms of ECCAS should be speeded up and it should be given a broad mandate and adequate financial resources to be as effective as similar RECs in Africa.
- The AU and RECs should develop a framework for regular monitoring and evaluation of democratic governance processes in the different countries to be able to anticipate and pre-empt potential conflicts by proposing appropriate policy options for strengthening democratic practice.
- Election calendars should be honoured by countries in the region, and the AU and RECs should conduct regular analyses of the state of preparedness in each country to identify gaps and propose corrective measures to enhance the prospects for free and fair elections.
- The AU and RECs should also undertake regular/periodic needs assessment and capacity building activities targeting specific institutions at the forefront of promoting democracy, such as civil society, Parliamentary Committees, and EMBs.
- The AU and RECs should only recognize elections that comply with the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and similar, instruments as well as other related guidelines and, where necessary, specific sanctions should be consistently enforced for non-compliance with the agreed norms and standards contained in these instruments.
- The AU and RECs should adopt a binding instrument that defines the rights and duties of all political parties in order to enhance genuine multipartyism and inclusive participation by all in governance. This should include a system for the public funding of political parties.
- The AU and RECs must adopt common measures that will ensure that African countries take control of their economic policies and natural resources.

3. The role of leadership

Considering the fact that the Central Africa region has a majority of the longest serving leaders in Africa and the risks that a prolonged stay in power poses to democracy and good governance, it is necessary that:

- Constitutional rules are adopted that guarantee free and fair elections and reduce the risks of life presidencies or presidential monarchies.
- To address the problem of rampant corruption and the embezzlement of public funds, there is a need for strict rules that subject all leaders to regular and rigorous scrutiny and accountability.
- The armies in the region should be depoliticized and constituted in an inclusive manner from all ethnic groups in the country. Special presidential guards that owe their loyalty to the president must be disbanded.

4. Improving political participation, representation and inclusivity

It was noted that Africa has the most heterogeneous ethnic and language groups in the world, which must be represented. It was also noted that in spite of the myriad of opposition parties in the different countries in the region, opposition parties are often treated as enemies or second class citizens and their views ignored. This has led to marginalization and majoritarian tyranny. In many countries this has provided a fertile breeding ground for armed movements. There is therefore a need for states in the region to recognize the fact that political opposition is a critical sine qua non for a fully functional liberal democracy. To recognize the role of political oppositions, protect them and open up space for broader participation by other marginalized groups, it was agreed that:

- A legal instrument should be adopted that formally recognizes and protects the rights of opposition parties, defines their rights and duties, and ensures that there is accountability and internal party democracy.
- A fair and equitable system of public funding for all political parties must be adopted.
- The legal framework on political parties must enable all parties, especially the official opposition, to play an effective part in the legislative process and reflect the views of those they represent.
- A non-partisan approach should be adopted in defining and developing a national vision for the country.
- Special affirmative action provisions need to be included in national constitutions to ensure that women, youth and other marginalized groups, such as the disabled, are represented in all political and administrative institutions.

5. Strong institutions and EMBs

There is now a general consensus that Africa needs strong institutions and not just strong leaders. The poor election record of most states in the region has been caused by the lack of a level playing field, and particularly the absence of genuinely independent EMBs. It was therefore agreed that there is a need for:

- Fair electoral laws that have been agreed by all political parties in an inter-party dialogue.
- Constitutionalized EMBs that are independent of all political parties, autonomous and have full powers to manage all aspects of elections.
- The core principles of judicial independence must be constitutionalized to ensure that judges can decide cases free from undue influence, intimidation or manipulation.
- Public service must be depoliticized.

6. Promoting constitutionalism and respect for the rule of law

It was recognized that one of the most serious causes of the crisis in Central African states is non-respect for the constitution, especially by political leaders, which is often compounded by a high level of ignorance of constitutional provisions among citizens and even political elites. To address this it was agreed that:

- All citizens, but especially political leaders, must respect the constitution, and the fundamental principles of good governance, human rights and the rule of law.
- Because of the risks that journalists face in the region, special measures are needed to protect them.
- All citizens, especially politicians and civil society, must put pressure on their governments to ratify and transpose all the international treaties that have been adopted to promote good governance, and respect for human rights and the rule of law by the different countries.
- Civil society and academia must take the lead in developing education programmes that will provide civic education and promote the growth of a democratic culture.
- The fight against corruption must be intensified by states in the region. Pressure should be brought to bear, by CSOs, the AU and the RECs, on all states to ratify and transpose the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption and similar instruments adopted by the RECs.

7. Improving decentralization and local governance

To counter feelings of marginalization and exclusion, more concrete steps need to be taken to enhance citizen participation in governance through political, administrative and fiscal decentralization. Within this framework, it was recommended that all the states in the region should sign, ratify and implement the new African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance and Local Development, which is a natural complement to the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance.

8. Socio-economic transformation

It is now recognized that without food on the table, democracy and the right to vote are meaningless. It was also noted that most of the businesses in the region are owned by foreign nationals or multinational corporations. This means that governments in the region have little control over their economic policies. It is also now generally accepted that democracy and development are inextricably linked. To enhance the prospects for the democratic transformation that is required to bring about democratic governance and make it sustainable, it was recommended that:

- The governments in the region should take concrete steps to take control of and

define economic policy in a manner that will benefit their countries.

- The governments in the region should adopt policies that limit foreign ownership of businesses in the region and also proactively encourage national ownership of businesses.

9. Issues for future policy debate in the region

There are a number of issues that countries in the region should consider for future debate, whether nationally or regionally. These include:

- Whether they should focus their resources on getting ECCAS to work better or continue to be involved in overlapping RECs, such as COMESA and SADC.
- A comprehensive study of indigenous methods of conflict prevention and resolution, and their adaptability to and use in dealing with contemporary conflicts.
- The issue of radicalization, particularly of youth, needs to be carefully studied and a regional approach adopted.

Annex

1. Concept Note

Introduction

There is a consensus in all the recent analyses on the state of democratic governance in Central Africa on the fact that it has experienced a regression in both qualitative and quantitative terms in the past five years. Central Africa, with its considerable potential wealth and population that is the youngest on the continent, is ranked last among the regions of Africa with a score of 40.9/100 (−0.9) against a continental average of 50.1/100 (+0.2), according to the 2015 IIAG.¹ The prospects are not optimistic, as evidenced by the crises and socio-political tensions facing all countries in the region and that threaten its stability and development.

International IDEA, which has a long history of engagement with various democracy actors across different countries, aims to contribute to the quest for effective democratic governance in Central Africa by convening a two-day policy dialogue. The dialogue is structured as a two-day multi-stakeholder event designed to concentrate minds on the structural and/or conjunctural preconditions (political, institutional, social) for deepening the transition to democratic governance in Central Africa as a prerequisite for the eradication of poverty and the sustainable development of the countries of the region. In doing so, it will contribute to an identification of key reform issues that deserve the urgent attention of political leaders across the board and which could constitute part of the agenda of work for institutions like International IDEA in supporting efforts at promoting sustainable democracy in the region. It will also afford the Institute an opportunity to share with participants, key elements of the new programme direction which it intends to follow in engaging both with its African Member States (Cape Verde, Botswana, Mauritius, Namibia, Ghana and South Africa) and various other countries that expressly request its service.

Background context

Central African countries, like other countries on the continent, experienced a wave of democratic transitions in the 1990s. However, the popular enthusiasm—especially among the youth—that marked this period and which was justified by the prospects of the establishment of a post-colonial political order characterized by the preponderance of democratic governance, has been quickly replaced by disenchantment and total despair. According to a recent study, 85 per cent of the populations of Central African

¹ See AfDB/OECD/UNDP, '2015 African Economic Outlook: Regional development and spatial inclusion', 25 May 2015, <<http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en>>; and World Bank, Africa Pulse, 11 (April 2015), <http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/Africa/Report/Africas-Pulse-brochure_Vol11.pdf>. On the IIAG see <<http://www.moibrahimfoundation.org/iiag/downloads/>>.

countries do not believe in the quality of democracy in which they live; 92 per cent reject authoritarian regimes (military or one-party rule); and 80 per cent are desperate for improvements in their socio-political living conditions, and think their country has a democratic governance deficit.² Common symptoms of this deficit include:

- irregular and/or unfair elections, which differ in form, content and quality, and have not necessarily enhanced their value as instruments for resolving differences;
- sectarian mobilization, intimidation and electoral violence (e.g. in Burundi or DRC) which have become conflict triggers;
- the weaknesses of constitutionalism and rule of law (including the persistence of unconstitutional changes of government, the refusal to respect the constitutional rules limiting presidential terms, and the resistance to hand over political power);
- poor transformative leadership;
- difficulties in managing diversity and inclusion—particularly with regard to young people and rural populations who are generally jobless or underemployed;
- poor qualitative political participation of women and youth (as voters, candidates and in the decision-making process);
- failure to respect the rule of law, and violations of civil liberties;
- persistence of electoral corruption and the shrinking of civic space, reinforced by special legislation to fight terrorism (e.g. Cameroon, Chad and Equatorial Guinea);
- poor public service delivery;
- poverty and weaknesses of EMBs; and
- the persistence of electoral risks and related violence.

Meeting the challenges of democratic governance

All democracies around the world contend with seasons of recession and discontent from time to time but the test of the robustness of their systems and processes is their capacity to forge responses that enable them not only to tackle contemporary problems according to democratic norms and practices, but also to renew and reinforce their democratic order. In the face of the structural and/or conjunctural constraints faced by the countries of Central Africa in governing their socio-political systems, the question of deepening the transition to democratic governance has come to occupy a place of prominence on account of the immediacy of its impact on the lives and welfare of the people.³

2 See Enguéléguélé, M. et al., *Mapping of Civil Society Landscape in the Central and West Africa Region: A Rapid Desk Review* (Civicus, May 2015).

3 See Bratton, M. and Houessou, R., 'Demand for Democracy is Rising in Africa: but most political leaders fail to deliver', AFR Barometer Policy Paper no. 11 (April 2014).

In short, it also has a direct effect, both in the short-term and over the long haul, on the legitimacy of governments and perceptions of the efficacy of democratic systems for producing and sustaining results in terms of development, peace and security in the countries of the region. This tryptic will certainly be revisited at the regional policy dialogue on deepening transition to democratic governance which International IDEA is convening and which draws participation from various political actors from the different countries that make up Central Africa. It will inevitably provoke conversations about what is needed in this region to move the process of democratization to a new level where development challenges are treated as an integral part of the democratic project, with citizen well-being placed at the centre of development policy.

Objectives of the dialogue

The Dialogue is designed to offer invited participants an opportunity to undertake a collective reflection on the challenge of deepening the transition to democratic governance in Central Africa with a view to:

- Unpacking the complexities of the problem nationally and regionally;
- Assessing government responses to the problem to date;
- Exploring avenues for deepening the nexus between democratic governance and development in the region;
- Reflecting on the avenues and mechanisms by which Central African countries might move towards a goal of nurturing developmental democracies; and
- Developing an agenda for further action by various democracy actors, including areas for which deeper knowledge of the dynamics at play would be required.

Participation

Participants in the dialogue will be drawn from different tiers and arms of government (especially the executive and legislature, and national, provincial and local administration), political parties, civil society and community organizations, the media, business groups and professional associations. They will come from the different countries that make up the Central Africa region and represent a balanced gender and inter-generational mix, which will allow for an open exchange of experiences and perspectives. Participation in the dialogue is by invitation.

Expected outcomes

The Dialogue is expected to contribute to a better understanding of the root causes, effects and consequences of the democratic governance deficits facing the countries of Central Africa, as well as to identifying ways to improve the transition to this socio-political system in the region. The knowledge-sharing and exchange of ideas about the particular situation and context in different countries will contribute to a better nuanced assessment of the overall democratic governance deficit in the region and enable participants to delineate a plan that can serve as a basis for further action at different levels.

Information

For further information about the Dialogue, please contact Alistair Clark, Programme Officer, International IDEA, Africa Region Office, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Email: A.Clark@idea.int

2. Programme

Day 1

9:30–10:30	<p>OPENING CEREMONY</p> <p>Chair: Professor Abdoulaye Bathily, United Nations Secretary-General Special Representative in Central Africa</p> <p>Welcome remarks Speaker: Professor Adebayo Olukoshi, Africa and West Asia Region Director, International IDEA</p> <p>Goodwill messages Ambassador Hamuli Baudouin, Political Affairs Director, ECCAS Ambassador Vijay Makhan, Special Guest, Former OAU Deputy Secretary General and AU Special Envoy</p> <p>Opening Statement Professor Abdoulaye Bathily, United Nations Secretary-General Special Representative in Central Africa</p>
10:30–10:45	Group photo and Tea/Coffee break
10:45–12:45	<p>PANEL I: Democratic Governance Deficits in Central Africa: The Challenges Moderator: Madeleine Mukamabano, Expert</p> <p>Keynote speaker: Akere Muna, Sanctions Commissioner, AfDB</p> <p>Discussants Dieudonné Kombo-Yaya, Former Minister and Former Chair of the National Elections Authority, Central African Republic Professor Charles Bowao, Former Minister, Republic of Congo Brazzaville Professor Augustin Loada, Minister, Republic of Burkina Faso, Expert Acheikh Ibn Oumar, Former Minister and Former Special Representative of the Republic of Chad to the UN</p> <p>Discussions with participants</p>
12:45–14:00	Lunch break

14:00–16:00	<p>PANEL II: The Political and Socio-Economic Impacts of Democratic Governance Deficits in Central Africa</p> <p>Moderator: Dr Cyrille Zogo Ondo, Expert Keynote speaker: Dr François Ekoko, Regional Representative of the UN Office for South-South Cooperation</p> <p>Discussants President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, Former Head of State of the Republic of Burundi Professor André Mbatta Mangu, Expert Michika Tshishima Nadide, National Secretary of the Movement for the Liberation of Congo (DRC), in charge of electoral process and relations with citizens' institutions, Democratic Republic of the Congo Serge Nzeza Maketa, Expert Florence Mukobwajana, Treasurer General of the party and member of the Central Executive Committee, The Democratic Green Party of Rwanda</p> <p>Discussions with participants</p>
16:00–16:15	Tea/Coffee break
16:15–18:15	<p>PANEL III: Overcoming democratic governance deficits in Central Africa: Options for regional organizations</p> <p>Moderator: Marie Madeleine Kalala, Friends of Panel of Wise, African Union Commission Keynote speaker: Dr Frank Okuthe Oyugui, Executive Director, LMRCG/ICGLR</p> <p>Discussants Ambassador Baudoin Hamuli, Political Affairs Director, ECCAS Abraham Okoko Esseau, CEO Fondation pour L'Avenir, Republic of Congo Brazzaville Dieudonné Tshiyoyo, Regional Electoral Adviser, UNDP/RSCA, Addis Ababa Hortense Nguema Okome, Head of AU Liaison Office to ECCAS François Ndengwe, Chair, African Advisory Board</p> <p>Discussions with participants</p>
19:30–21:30	DINNER

Day 2

8:45–10:15	<p>PANEL IV: The Political conditions for deepening transition to democratic governance in Central Africa</p> <p>Moderator: Professor Nadine Machikou Ngameni, Expert Keynote speaker: Dr François Ndengwe, Chair, African Advisory Board</p> <p>Discussants Senator Jean Tsomelou, Chair of the SFDF Parliamentary Group, Republic of Cameroon Gervais Rufyikiri, Former Vice-President, Republic of Burundi Anicet Clément Guiyama, Minister Advisor, Office of the President of the Central African Republic Dr Nestor Bidadanure, Expert</p> <p>Discussions with participants</p>
10:15–10:30	Tea/Coffee break
10:45–12:45	<p>PANEL V: The Institutional Conditions for Deepening Transition to Democratic Governance in Central Africa</p> <p>Moderator: Ambassador Emile Ognimba, Deputy Secretary General of the ACP Group in charge of Policy and Development Keynote speaker: Professor Abdoulaye Bathily, UNSG Special Representative in Central Africa</p> <p>Discussants Edouard Nduwimana, Deputy Speaker of the Parliament, Republic of Burundi Paulette Oyane Ondo, CSO Representative Frank Kayitare, International IDEA Calixte Mbari, Senior Policy Officer, DPA/AUC</p>
12:45–13:45	Lunch break
13:45–15:45	<p>PANEL VI: The Security Conditions for Deepening Transition to Democratic Governance in Central Africa</p> <p>Moderator: Kalliopi Ango Ela, Executive Director of the Foundation for Geopolitics in Central Africa Keynote speaker: Maurice Enguéléguélé, International IDEA</p> <p>Discussants Professor Thérèse Atangana Amougou, Expert Dr François Ndengwe, Chair, African Advisory Board Gabriel Rufyiri, CSO Representative Dr Nestor Bidadanure, Expert.</p> <p>Discussions with participants</p>
15:45–16:00	Tea/Coffee break

16:00–18:00	<p>PANEL VII: Deepening the transition to democratic governance and socio-economic transformation of Central Africa</p> <p>Moderator: Ambassador Vijay Makhan, Former OAU Deputy Secretary General and AU Special Envoy Keynote speaker: Professor Adebayo Olukoshi, Africa and West Asia Region Director, International IDEA</p> <p>Discussants Mr Lucas Olo Fernandes, Expert Professor Georges Kobou, Expert Mr Zacharie Myboto, Chair of the National Union, Republic of Gabon</p> <p>Discussions with participants</p>
18:00–18:30	<p>CLOSING CEREMONY</p> <p>Chair: Professor Abdoulaye Bathily, UNSG Special Representative in Central Africa</p> <p>Lecture of the recommendations: Professor Charles Fombad, Rapporteur</p> <p>Closing remarks: Professor Adebayo Olukoshi, Africa and West Asia Region Bureau International IDEA</p> <p>Closing statement: Professor Abdoulaye Bathily, UNSG Special Representative in Central Africa</p>

3. Participants

Name	Institution	Function
S.E. Ambassadeur Vijay ,Makhan	Mauritius	Former OAU Secretary General and AU Special Envoy
S.E. Prof. Abdoulaye Bathily	UN	UN/SG Special Representative in Central Africa
Mr. Mbari Calixte	DPA/AUC	Principal Political Officer
S.E. Ambassadeur. Ahmad Allam-Mi	ECCAS	Secretary General
Mr. Jean-Clair Zue OBAME	ECCAS	Expert and Special Advisor on Elections
Mrs. Hortense Nguema	ECCAS	Head of AU Liaison Office to ECCAS
S.E. Maître Akere T. Muna	AfDB/IACC	Sanctions Commissioner and Chairperson of the International Anti-Corruption Conference
Mr. Benjamin Amama	RDP (Ruling party)	Former Minister of Public Service and Special Envoy
Mr. TSOMELOU	Senator SDF (opposition)	Chairperson of the parliamentary Group
S.E. Prof. Daniel Ona Ona Ondo	Government of the Republic of Gabon	Prime Minister (Only attending the Opening Ceremony)
S.E. M. Alain Claude Billy By Nze	Government of the Republic of Gabon	Minister of Communication
S.E.M. Pacôme Moubélet Boubeya	Government of the Republic of Gabon	Minister of Interior
M. Zachary MYBOTO	National Union (principal party of opposition)	Chairperson
M. Paul Marie Gondjout	National Union	Deputy Executive Secretary in Charge of Elections
Bar. Séraphin NDAOT REMBOGOT	Social Democrat Party (Opposition)/National Council of Democracy	Chairperson/Chairman
Bar. Paulette Oyane Ondo	Representative of CSOs	
M. Dieudonné Kombo-yaya		Former Minister of Foreign Affairs/Former Chairperson of the NEC
S.E. Mme. Léa Koyassoum Doumta	National Council of Transition	Vice President
S.E.M. Anicet Clément Guiyama	Présidence de la République	Ministre conseiller politique à la présidence
Mr. Abraham Okoko Essau	Fondation pour l'Avenir	CEO
Mr. Henri Bouka	National Commission for the Organization of Elections	Chairperson
S.E. M. Sylvestre Ntibantunganya		Former Head of State

S.E. M. Edouard Nduwimana	Parliament	Vice-président
M. Gervais Rufyikiri	opposition	Ancien vice-président de l'Assemblée
M Joseph Djimrangar Danadji	Opposition	Chairperson of a party
S.E.M. Hassan Sylla	Ministère de la Communication et porte-parole du gouvernement	Minister
.Mr. BREYE GOULOUA	INEC Tchad	Rapporteur de la Sous-Commission Contrôle et Suivi des Opérations à la CENI du TCHAD
M. Acheikh Ibn Oumar	Opposition	
SM. .E. Patrice Emery Trovoada	Government of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome	Prime Minister Head of Government
Prof. Mathieu Mebenga	Catholic University of Central Africa	Professor
Mr. Serge Nzeza Maketa	Conseil d'Appui au Développement Communautaire (CADEC) Kinshasa/R.D.C	Expert
Mr. Gabriel Rufyiri	OLUCOME	Coordinator
Lucas Olo Fernandes	TI	Regional Coordinator for Central Africa Equatorial Guinea
Mrs Ntangabirori Erica	Campagne pour la Démocratie et les droits de l'Homme	
Prof. Guy Rossatanga- Rignault	UOB	Professor
Prof. Charles Bowao	University of Brazzaville	Professor
Mme. Kalliopi Ango Ela	Foundation for Geopolitic in Central Africa	Executive Director
Dr François Ndengwe	African Advisory Board	Chairman
Dr. Nestor Bidadanure		
Mme. Madeleine Mukamabano	Expert/Facilitator	
Prof. Charles Foambad	UP	Professor
Prof. André Mbatta Mangu	UNISA	Professor
S.E. Ambassadeur Emile Ognimba	ACP Group	Deputy SG
S.E. Prof. Augustin Loada	Ministry of Civil Service of Burkina Faso and Representative of Afrobarometer	Minister
Mrs Marie Madeleine Kalala		Former member of the AU Panel of the Wise
Prof. Alioune Sall	African Future Institute	Executive Director

Mr. Thierry Hot	NotreAfrik	CEO
Mr. Chanda Tirthankar	RFI	Journalist
Mr. Yves Laurent Ngoma	Local Correspondant Libreville/ BBC	Journalist
Mr. Noubert Ouendjin	UNOCA	Communication Officer
Mr Juan Gomez	RFI	Journalist
Prof. Adebayo Olukoshi	Africa and West Asia Region	Director
Mrs Kgothatso Selema Serote	Africa and West Asia Region	SPO
Maurice Enguéléguélé	Africa and West Asia Region	SPO
Alistair Clark	Africa and West Asia Region	PO
Abiyot Dubale	Africa and West Asia Region	Finance And Administration Assistant
Hiwot Ngussu	Africa and West Asia Region	Admin Assistant
Frank Kayitare	GP	PO
Brian Majani	Africa and West Asia Region	Intern
Ms TSION Admassu	Africa and West Asia Region	Intern
The Resident Representative	OIF	Representative
Prof. Thérèse Atangana Amougou	OIF	Representative
Prof. Nadine Machikou Ngameni	UYII	Chairperson
S.E. M. Bienvenue Okyemi	Ministry of Culture and Arts	Minister
Dr. Paul Simon Handy	ISS South Africa	Chercheur Principal
Prof Georges Kobou	UYII	Professor
Dr François Ekoko	UN Office For South South Cooperation	Regional Representative
Dr Dieudonne Tshiyoyoy	UNDP	Regional Electoral Advisor
Mrs Daisy Bathusy	BDP	Chair of the Womens league
Ms. Darsheenee Raumnauth	DPA/AUC	Consultant
Mr. Marc Naba	DPA/AUC	Consultant
S.E Mme Pearl Nomvume MAGAQA		Ambassador of South Africa
S.E. Mme Mandy SATHOUD MOUDODI		Honorary Consul of Ghana
S.E. M. Claude AYO IGUENDA		Honorary Consul of Cape Verde

S. E. M. Dominique RENAUX		Ambassador of France
S. E. M. Helmut KULITZ		Ambassador, Head of EU Delegation
S. E. Mme Cynthia Helen AKUETTEH		Ambassador of United States of America
S. E. M. Samuel MVONDO AYOLO		Ambassador of Cameroon
S.E. M. Pierre NZILA		Ambassador of Congo
S.E. M. M. Oswaldo DIAZ		Ambassador of Equatorial Guinea
S.E. M. François LUAMBO SIONGO		Ambassador of DRC
S.E. M. Franck PING		Honorary Consul of Tchad

About International IDEA

What is International IDEA?

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) is an intergovernmental organization that supports sustainable democracy worldwide. International IDEA's mission is to support sustainable democratic change by providing comparative knowledge, and assisting in democratic reform, and influencing policies and politics.

What does International IDEA do?

In the field of elections, constitution building, political parties, gender in democracy and women's political empowerment, democracy self-assessments, and democracy and development, we undertake our work through three activity areas:

- providing comparative knowledge derived from practical experience on democracy building processes from diverse contexts around the world;
- assisting political actors in reforming democratic institutions and processes, and engaging in political processes when invited to do so; and
- influencing democracy building policies through the provision of our comparative knowledge resources and assistance to political actors.

Where does International IDEA work?

International IDEA works worldwide. Based in Stockholm, Sweden, it has offices in Africa, the Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean.



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