

## **Foreword Volume 6 (1997/98): Good Governance and Economic Development**

Volume 6 of the African Development Perspectives Yearbook is discussing the theme of "Good Governance and Economic Development in Africa". Good Governance has become an important subject in international development since the end of the 1980s, and since this time in the context of development studies, development policy as well as development cooperation we are confronted with the issue of how to improve the governance systems. Good Governance is a very broad theme, but the main issue is the relation between the government and the civil society, or still broader, the relation between the state and the private actors. In contrast to the 1960s and the 1970s much deeper conclusions are drawn from this discussion. It is not enough to improve the government machinery, or the public administration, or the civil service. It is not enough to work on a better local government or for a better provincial government, or even on a better economic policy-making process.

The term "good governance" basically implies a holistic concept, involving all spheres of government, the private sector, and the civil society, and all the interactions between these three poles are relevant. Principles of good governance matter, as government has to be based on the observance of human rights, equality, justice, equity, basic needs provision, effectiveness, and subsidiarity. Based on these principles adequate policies and instruments are necessary at all government levels, and in the context of all segments of the private community to reach the private actors. In Volume 6 all these issues are discussed in detail.

In Unit 1 a general introduction is presented by highlighting the dimensions of good governance in the African context. It is important to note that Africa has taken up the discussion very early, and many documents give evidence of this fact. In Unit 1 we also find an important discussion on the causes, the consequences and the dimensions of corruption in Africa. It is made quite clear that African solutions are necessary to solve all these problems. New modalities of strengthening the state in Africa and working for more adequate governance systems are discussed, and concrete proposals are made. Good Governance is seen in the context of national, regional and international development strategies. The role of good governance for economic development is highlighted. It is considered important to raise the reputation of government activity.

In Unit 2 national case studies are presented. Countries like Tanzania, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, and Swaziland are taken as cases to show the diversity of conditions and the steps that have to be taken nationally towards better governance systems. It is made clear that good governance and the ability to design own economic programmes depend on each other. Good Governance implies that a country itself takes the initiative in reforming institutions and policies. Good Governance implies also that a country implements sound programmes and policies at provincial and local levels. International assistance cannot substitute for the capacity of own programme design.

In Unit 3 of Volume 6 the observance of human rights is discussed as a determinant factor of civil society formation and economic development. The observance of human rights is not only an intrinsic value but is also part of any meaningful definition of social development. Although there are particularities of an African understanding of human rights, there can be no doubt that the basic ideas of human rights are universal. It is made clear in this Unit that the relation between human rights and economic performance is relevant for all spheres of African development. However, the relation is not a simple one, and not a linear one. Various country cases are considered that show how different the relation between human rights observance and economic performance can be. It is of importance to highlight the implications for national development and for development cooperation, and we observe that various cases require quite different policies

and instruments to have an impact on human rights observance and/or socio-economic performance. It is also considered in this Unit how development cooperation and explicit human rights conditionalities can influence human rights observance and economic performance. Implications of all this for the design of the new Lomé Convention are presented. There are chances to go with the new Lomé Convention far beyond the current situation, by giving new guidelines for governance reform, human rights observance, and accelerating economic development. In this Unit we also find a discussion why development cooperation is often not consistent in its attitudes and instruments towards regimes that violate basic human rights. Arbitrary decisions and strategic interests of donors often dominate the scene so that the impact on African countries that have a bad record on human rights and on basic needs provision is limited. Positive assistance measures to improve the extent of human rights observance and measures to improve the level of social and economic development are discussed at length. Most of these positive measures however are relevant for countries that have already started the process of transition to democracy. Countries however where the state has already collapsed or is substantially weakened need other forms of assistance. Case studies on Rwanda and Burundi show that even for reconstruction and peace-making efforts minimum political conditions need to be there, and adequate administrative and power structures need to be put in place. Local, decentralised and autonomous units and its populations may have to start with a modest reconstruction and rehabilitation effort in such cases. It may also be necessary to learn from experiments as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa to overcome the psychic dimension of the conflict in these countries.

In Unit 4 of Volume 6 very important case studies on local government and local development are presented, referring to countries as Namibia, Tanzania, Kenya and Ghana. All these case studies on local government, local empowerment and local development show that central and local government units have a quite complementary role, and that development can only take place if implementation of central government policies is followed through at provincial, municipal and local levels. Such an implementation not only requires constitutional rights and competencies at the local level, but mainly also an appropriate allocation of funds and of skilled personnel. Good Governance has to be related to all levels of government, and at all levels the interaction with the private sector and the civil society organisations is important. Many policies and programmes follow from the lessons we can learn from these interesting case studies. Assistance and support to local development actors can be given in various ways, and at various levels. Many successful experiments of local government reform also outlined in this Unit can be used as a reference for the paths towards improved governance systems at the local level.

In Unit 5 good governance and better environmental resource use are considered as a central theme. Improving the environmental situation and the resource use in African countries needs to be related more directly to the issues of good governance. Resource use management issues need acceptance at all government levels, especially also at the local government level, but the interaction with other government levels is crucially important. The involvement of civil society organisations at all levels of action is highly important; it is not possible to rely only on central government policy prescriptions to improve the state of the environment. On the other hand central government action is indispensable for a consistent path of environmental protection and natural resource development; there is an increasing necessity to link policies and programmes with neighbouring governments, and to broaden the general awareness of the environmental problems at stake in the civil societies of the neighbouring countries. In the Unit it is made quite clear that civil associations, local actors and environmental awareness groups play an increasing role in implementing Agenda 21 at the local African scene, and this in concert with enlightened governments. New instruments have emerged to plan for environmental protection at national and local levels, and empowerment of those groups that work for environmental protection is increasingly important. Case studies, for example on Zimbabwe, present in-depth-analyses of conditions, restraints, and policies towards sustainable resource use and good governance.

In Unit 6 most important information on institutions and programmes regarding good governance reform and empowerment of civil society organizations is presented. This News and Information Unit gives evidence of an increasing interest in Africa's regional organisations to deal with these important issues. Promotion of civil society organizations at the national and regional levels has become a core activity in Africa and for Africa.

Most important is the presentation of very important documents in various of these units; these documents show that Africa has taken the lead in the discussion on the issues of good governance, and that Africa is continuing the discussion by linking the issues of democracy, human rights observance and good governance to the requirement of long-term national and regional development in Africa. These documents are of great importance because of the collective will and effort of the Africans expressed in these statements.

Complementary to Volume 6 is Volume 7 of the African Development Perspectives Yearbook. Volume 7 on "Empowerment and Economic Development" goes in content beyond Volume 6 in presenting strategies of empowerment and programmes of assistance towards those groups that are important at local and national levels to strengthen governance systems and to make them more responsive to the civil society. Unit 1 of Volume 7 presents an analysis of the empowerment potential for vulnerable groups, especially those in rural areas and of women. Unit 2 deals with issues of empowerment of small industrial producers, and appropriate support mechanisms. Unit 3 discusses the issues of empowerment of unskilled labour and human capital formation for skilled people, by focussing on the institutional reconstruction of labour market institutions, of the civil service, and of the capacity building activities in the African countries. In Unit 4 the empowerment of the people in the former homelands of South Africa is the theme; infrastructure provision for neglected social and ethnic groups, and the role of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa are other issues discussed in this unit. In this regard the most central aspects of good governance and empowerment of the vulnerable groups in the new South Africa are discussed. Most important documents are presented. In Unit 5 we find an analysis of conflict and crisis in the African Region by referring to the cases of Sudan and Somalia. Most important is the strategy of empowerment of those groups (CSOs, NGOs and other local actors) that work for peace, development and state reconstruction. Empowerment of peace-preserving groups and local development actors is a main aspect in this Unit. Most important is also the fact that there is an increasing awareness about these issues at the international and regional African levels; sustainable social and economic development and empowerment of vulnerable groups and local NGOs are considered now more and more in the context of state reconstruction and peace-building efforts.

Important documents from African and international organisations are reprinted also in various units of Volume 7 of the Yearbook. Over the years the African Development Perspectives Yearbook has become the leading publication in Germany on Africa. An increasing number of policy and research institutions in Africa are cooperating with the Research Group in Bremen. African university teachers use the Yearbook in their courses. Officials of international and regional organisations make use of the analyses, projections and the documents reprinted in the various volumes of the Yearbook. Civil society organisations all over Africa benefit from the information and the analysis contained in the various volumes. The network of the Research Group on African Development Perspectives in Bremen is still enlarging. Many organisations support the network by information, cooperation and encouragement. With seven volumes of the Yearbook a highly successful work period of the Research Group in Bremen on African development has passed since 1989. For the coming decade of work of the Research Group many important tasks are awaiting. The theme for Volume 8 of the Yearbook with the title "Africa's Reintegration into the World Economy" is reflecting on the future tasks. It is more and more necessary to work on realistic strategies of reintegrating Africa into the world economy, by better national and regional policies, and by a more facilitating international environment. Africa's links

with the world economy and with the international public and civil community will occupy as themes the work effort of the Research Group in the years to come.

In its first decade the Research Group on Africa in Bremen has discussed in the various volumes of the Yearbook such important themes for Africa as, human dimensions of structural adjustment; the role of agriculture for industrialization; the role of new energy policies; the importance of active labour and employment policies, and the role of regional employment strategies. With volumes 6 and 7 on good governance and empowerment strategies the Yearbook again covers important issues of African development today, and these are the issues that may shape the fabric of the economies and societies in Africa in the next century. In the next decade the Research Group in Bremen will focus on the new role of Africa in the world economy and in world society, in the context of the global informational and technological revolution, and on a future for Africa that is reflecting the demands of the knowledge society that is emerging globally. We thank all the supporters of the Yearbook for their steady encouragement and their assistance.