



TECHNICAL RETREAT BETWEEN AMCOD AND THE POLITICAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT OF THE AFRICAN UNION

On 23 November 2011, a technical retreat between the African Union Commission and the All Africa Ministerial Conference on Decentralization and Local Development (AMCOD), was held at the Haile Resort Hotel, HAWASSA in Ethiopia, to reflect on joint activities to be implemented throughout and beyond 2012, which has been declared as the Africa year of shared values. The agenda comprised the following items:

1. The current status of collaboration between AMCOD and the AUC
2. The outcomes of the second ordinary session of AMCOD held in Maputo from 8-10 August 2011
3. Collaboration between AMCOD and AUC within the framework of celebrations to mark the Africa year of shared values
4. The way forward and recommendations for the future

The presentation of each agenda item was followed by discussions and recommendations.

1. Regarding the presentation on the status of collaboration between the two organizations, participants appreciated the intensity and quality of the initiatives undertaken by both sides.
2. Regarding the outcomes of the second ordinary session of AMCOD held in Maputo from 8-10 August 2011, participants noted the pertinence of certain decisions, particularly those relating to the following 6 points:
 - i) The adoption of the 10th August every year as the Africa Day for Decentralization, Local Governance and Local Development;
 - ii) The drafting of an African Charter on the values and principles of decentralization, local governance and local development;
 - iii) The establishment of an excellence award system in decentralization and local governance;
 - iv) The publication of a periodic report on the status of decentralization and local governance in Africa to be submitted to the AU regularly;
 - v) The adoption of a long-term plan of action for the 2011-2026 period; and
 - vi) The adoption of the principle to draw up a framework document for monitoring the implementation of the theme of the August 2011 AMCOD conference: "financing decentralization, service delivery and local development".

3. Regarding collaboration between AMCOD and the AUC within the framework of celebrations to mark the Africa Year of Shared Values, participants were informed about the issues agreed on during the earlier retreat held in August 2011 at NAZARETH, Ethiopia. Following a presentation of the outcomes of the international seminar organized by AMCOD in Douala, Cameroon, in January 2011, participants stressed the importance of ensuring that the outcomes of subsequent engagements be taken into account and formulated recommendations to that effect.

RECOMMENDATIONS

4. Concluding on the HAWASSA retreat, and in view of strengthening and providing guidance to future collaboration in the short- and medium-terms, the following recommendations were made:
 - i) Pursue and strengthen the ongoing collaboration between AMCOD and the AUC, while broadening it to include other structures of the Commission and other relevant regional institutions (the Great Lakes Commission, RECs,) working on cross-border issues, the diaspora and the freedom of movement (AUC in collaboration with AMCOD);
 - ii) Draft terms of reference for the elaboration of the Charter on the values and principles of decentralization, local governance and local development (AMCOD in collaboration with AUC);
 - iii) Recruit an expert to design a framework document that will guide the thinking process on the future functioning of the Specialized technical Committee (STC) on Decentralization, Urban Development, Public Service and Administration (AUC in collaboration with AMCOD);
 - iv) Develop synergies between AMCOD, the AUC and the UCLGA on the elaboration of a charter on the values and principles of decentralization, local governance and local development (AUC, AMCOD, UCLGA);
 - v) Conceptualize the celebration of the Africa for decentralization, local governance and local development as a joint initiative between AMCOD and the AUC;
 - vi) Brainstorm on the situation of the African State and the major factors impeding development (grassroots legitimacy, local governance, service delivery, capacity, promoting traditional knowledge and cultural heritage) (AMCOD in collaboration with AUC);
 - vii) Clarify the role of civil society in operationalising shared values, taking into account customary governance, the mobilization of the contributory potential of civil society in public service delivery (AMCOD in collaboration with AUC) ;
 - viii) Organize (in collaboration with the AUC), an information session on shared values with local authorities in selected pilot regions in order to disseminate AU instruments. (AUC in collaboration with AMCOD) ;

- ix) The AUC and AMCOD shall jointly organize celebrations to mark the Africa Day of decentralization, local governance and local development (identify a “champion”for 2012) –in connection with brainstorming in point (i) (AMCOD jointly with AUC);
- x) Carry out an inventory of ongoing initiatives that are likely to enrich the shared values theme from the standpoint of outputs and outcomes. This will include case studies such as the “**Africa Local Governance Timeline**” (ALGOT) currently being developed by AMCOD (AMCOD in collaboration with AUC);
- xi) Identify other actions that will be implemented jointly in 2012 to catalyze political awareness on the importance of shared values in the formulation of decentralization and regional integration policies which are sensitive to local governance as a basis for sustainable development and greater state legitimacy (AMCOD – supported by the AUC);
- xii) Establish a common expert database on local governance (AUC jointly with AMCOD)