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**Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali
resulting from the Algiers process. Between
euphoria and scepticism: traces of peace**



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TABLE OF CONTENT

Acronyms and Abbreviations	4
Foreword	6
Executive Summary	7
Introduction	8
i. Background and Purpose of the Study	9
ii. Objectives	9
iii. Research Questions	9
iv. Methodology	11
I. THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK	12
1.1. How Relevant is a “Political Economy Analysis” (PEA)?	12
1.2. How can a PEA add Value to this Work?	13
II. THE PEACE PROCESS IN MALI: AT A CROSSROADS	14
2.1. Conflicts in Mali: Revolts and Rebellions, Questioning the Nature of the State	14
2.2. The Structural Causes of Previous Peace Agreements’ Failure	17
III. Managing Diversity versus Political Overload	19
3.1. The Implementation of the Agreement and its Political Implications	19
3.2. Ambiguities of Institutional and Civic Appropriation	21
3.3. Segmentation, Fragmentation, Reconstitution and/or Reconfiguration: “Armed Movements counting on State Largesse”	23
3.4. Typology of the Key Participants in the Mali Peace Process	26
3.5. Reversal of Priorities: Lack of Leadership and/or Opportunism!	28
IV. AGREEMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY: REJECTION OR ACCEPTANCE?	31
4.1. Opposing the Agreement as a Means to an End?	31
4.2. Weak Anchoring of the Agreement at Local and Community Levels	33
V. CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING THE AGREEMENT	35
VI. RECOMMENDATIONS	36
6.1. Potential for Change in Governance	36
6.2. Concrete Actions Needed	36
References	39

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADC	Alliance for Democracy and change
AEP	Analysis Political Economy
AQIM	Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
AMM	Association of the municipalities of Mali
APL	Associations of Local authorities
ARLA	Revolutionary Army for the Liberation of Azawad
CAD	Development Assistance Committee
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
CEN	Conference of National Consensus
CI	Integration Commission
CJA	Congress for Justice in Azawad
CMA	Coordination of Azawad Movements
CME	Coordination of the Entente Movements
CM-FPR2	Coordination of the Movements of the Patriotic Front of Resistance
CNCA	National Coordinating Committee for the Implementation of the Agreement
CNRSS	National Council for the Reform of the Security Sector
CNSC	National Council of Civil Society
CRSS	Commissioner for the Reform of the Security Sector
COPAM	Coordination of the Patriotic Organizations of Mali
COPPO	Collective Opposition Political Parties
COREN	Coordination of People from Northern Mali
CPA	Coalition of the People for Azawad
CSA	Follow-up/Monitoring Committee of the Implementation of the Agreement
CSM	Convergence to Save Mali
CTS	Safety Technical Committee
CVJR	Commission Truth, Justice and Reconciliation
DDR	Disarmament, demobilization, reintegration
EGD	General Meeting on Decentralization
FAMA	Armed Forces of Mali
FES	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
SDS	Defence and Security Forces

FIAA	Arab Islamic Front of Azawad
FOSC	Forum of Civil Society Organizations
FPA	Popular Front of Azawad
HCC	High Council of Communities
HCUA	High Council for the Azawad Unit
MAA	Arab Movement of Azawad
MARN	Mission to Support National Reconciliation
MINUSMA	United Nations Integrated Multidimensional Mission for Stabilization in Mali
MISAHEL	Mission of the African Union for Mali and the Sahel
MNLA	National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad
MOC	Operational Coordination Mechanism
MP 22	Popular Movement of March 22, 2012
MPA	Popular Movement of Azawad
MPSA	Popular Movement for the Salvation of Azawad
MPLA	Popular Movement for the Liberation of Azawad
MUJAO	Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa
MSA	Movement for the Salvation of Azawad
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and development
NGO	Non-Governmental organization
UN	United Nations
ORTM	Radio and Television Broadcasting Office of Mali
CSOs	Civil Society organizations
Platform	Platform of the Signatory Movements of June 14 th
PRED	Plan for Sustainable Recovery in Mali
TFP	Technical and Financial Partners
RPM	Rally for Mali
SHS	Humanities and Social Sciences
EU	European Union
US-RDA	Sudanese Union - African Democratic Rally

FOREWORD

This report is the product of an internal process that the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) has carried out recently in order to enhance its contribution to building peace and security in Africa and in the world. After having initiated many activities and campaigns in different formats, the FES has decided to incorporate the “Political Economy Analysis” method in its strategy in order to better understand issues analysed in its various studies and publications.

In this respect, the creation of the Peace and Security Centre of Competence in Dakar is a means for FES to implement this new approach. An analysis of topics addressed in the past has prompted the Centre to “decompartmentalise” issues along the lines of national or regional factors. Mali was assigned to the sub-category “Why do peace agreements fail?”

This PEA examines the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali resulting from the Algiers Process that was signed between May and June 2015. The sensitivity of the subject and the fact that the participants involved in the implementation of the peace process in Mali were not always available posed major obstacles to the execution of the study. It was possible, however, to validate the information gathered by the expert at a workshop attended by some of the key participants in the peace process, with their contributions making it possible to complete the study.

The causes of the Malian conflict are deeply rooted in the social fabric of a country weakened by bad governance, with its corollary of social injustice and exclusion and, in many cases, difficulties in accessing basic social services.

The critical issue is hence the weakness of the State. The study also identifies a correlation between rebellions and crises in Mali and the nature and evolution of the state system. The study provides information and explores social relations within communities underlying the conflict and its multidimensional impact. It underscores the erosion of certain values, such as patriotism, nationalism and civic engagement.

The study focuses on the structural causes of the crisis, which are characterised by a number of deficiencies in governance in several areas, the political implications of the Agreement, and ambiguities in its implementation at the levels of institutions and citizens. The segmentation, fragmentation, reconstitution and/or reconfiguration of armed movements only add to the complexity of issues due to the plethora of parties involved and their expectations. With regard to the peace process, the issues of leadership, involvement of civil society organisations, and the weak embedding of the Agreement at the local or community levels are contributing factors to deficiencies in governance, hence the title of this study: “The Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali resulting from the Algiers Process. Between euphoria and scepticism: traces of peace.”

This study can be seen as a snapshot of the situation surrounding implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali resulting from the Algiers Process at a specific time; that is, two years after its signing. It does not claim to offer a comprehensive analysis of the challenges facing implementation of the Agreement, but it does shed more light on the paucity of benefits it has meant for the Malian people to date.

Philipp M. Goldberg
Residing Representative

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Political Economy Analysis (PEA) of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali signed by the Government and various armed groups in Bamako makes it clear that, in a fragile socio-political environment, the support provided by partners of the Government in strengthening the State system and consolidating peace depends heavily on identification of points of departure for promoting an inclusive and lasting political settlement. Steps need to be taken to encourage political, institutional and economic reform in order to strengthen the basic functions of the State by improving the provision of public services and solidifying the legitimacy of the State by shoring up its ability to meet the expectations of the population. Finally, it identifies new approaches to working outside the State system in order to build coalitions for progressive change involving civil society, the private sector and the media.

The current crisis in Mali holds the potential for a restructuring of the country's overall system of governance, which could foster social cohesion as well as equity within and between communities and regions. Because of its depth and the trauma it has caused among the Malian population, the crisis constitutes an historic opportunity to completely rethink institutional, political and social approaches to various visions for the country.

The crisis reminds us that conceptualisation of a project that aims to redesign the overall governance of Mali must be a process that focuses on the challenges facing the country from the local to the national level, inspired by proposals and experience of the various parties involved. It must also be backed by bold development policies – funded principally by the country itself - and appropriate security measures.

INTRODUCTION

i. Background and purpose of the study

The Government of Mali and several armed rebel groups signed the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali resulting from the Algiers Process under the aegis of the international community between May and June 2015. The document includes a Preamble, seven titles, 68 articles and four annexes. These pertain to the themes that were discussed during the entire stage of negotiations (political and institutional reforms, defence and security, development, reconciliation and transitional justice). This process took almost eight months. The commitment of the signatory parties is certainly in line with a lasting and definitive solution to the recurring revolts and rebellions in the so-called northern regions of the country. However, these conflicts have spilled over into the so-called central region and a large part of the western Sahel, and has signalled the rise of a new paradigm; namely, that violent conflicts are taking place more and more within countries, pitting the State against organised groups claiming to represent their “communities”.

A good understanding of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and of the contexts in which it was negotiated, signed and implemented can help understand the various related issues in terms of their temporal, spatial and political dimensions. In order to meet the expectations that this Agreement has given rise to, a comprehensive and careful analysis of the underlying political economy (AEP) is required. This needs to explore the expectations of bel-

ligerents, which is to say the armed groups and social groups, or even communities, that were signatories to the Agreement and that are increasingly portraying themselves as parties to the conflict. It will also help to understand the structural context of violence in the past, and to provide a positive impetus towards restoration of trust between the parties, national reconciliation, the inter-Malian dialogue, and facilitate the return of displaced persons and refugees. A new approach to collective security holds out all of these possibilities.

Resolution of the serious multidimensional crisis in which Mali has found itself since 2012 requires an analysis of *interaction between organisations and institutions at the national as well as the sub-national level of the actors involved*.

A diagnosis of the disease that is gnawing away at sections of Malian society, especially in the northern and central regions, is urgently required. A look back in history and some collective reflection will help us understand the various aspects of the evil that is behind the decay of Mali. The approach adopted here is based on an analysis of the political economy of the signed Agreement – i.e., to explore all the facts in all their various facets, to engage in reflection, and to collectively discuss visions of how to end the crisis.

It is important to remember that, even looked at within the boundaries of its current national borders, the country of Mali is home to a mixture of various peoples (ethnic groups) displaying dissimilar customs and lifestyles, and which have experienced different power management systems over the centuries.

This study employs the PEA method in an attempt to facilitate a better understanding of

the reasons for the failure of previous peace agreements, and provides a detailed analysis of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali resulting from the Algiers Process. It furthermore recommends measures to reinvigorate implementation of the Agreement, and offers a framework for a new approach to collective security.

If we are to obtain the desired results, the challenge lying before us is to fully grasp new constellations of power, and the relationships they reproduce. Indeed, these relationships may influence the implementation of the planned activities, and have a significant impact on the expected results, as well as the process – on hold for the time being – of organising a referendum in order to amend the Constitution of 1992. At present it can be witnessed that a large segment of the political class and civil society organisations (CSOs) have rallied under the banner “Antè A Bana” (“We refuse, it’s over”) in a protest movement; the armed factions that are signatories to the Agreement have been involved in armed clashes with one another; with local elections being repeatedly postponed, particularly in areas where interim authorities have been established.

ii. Objectives

The main objective of this study is to comprehend the true potential for change in the implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement. Ultimately, it is hoped that the study will provide insight into the hidden causes explaining the failure of previous peace settlements, a better understanding of the respective interests of the actors involved, their degree of influence on implementation of the Agreement, and help identify the agents of change.

iii. Research Questions

The key issues guiding us in the collection of data are: What are the contextual and structural problems that could influence the situation and what are the dynamics that could potentially prevent implementation of the Agreement?

We explored the following factors: conflicts over resources, demography, ethnic tensions, violent (cross-border) conflicts, organised crime, terrorism, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, the colonial heritage, the significance of non-governmental actors as parties to the conflict, the failure of the State (absence and weakness), privatisation of the security sector, the weakness of democratic institutions, the role of security forces, the lack of participation by civil and political society, the lack of transparency and responsibility on the part of elites vis-à-vis the citizenry, corruption of the elite and government administration, impunity, the exclusion of the majority of the population from the “dividends of peace”, the political representation of government agencies and their ability to fulfil their mandate in accordance with the terms of the Agreement, the level of trust between social groups as well as between the State and the population, the level of corruption and organised international crime, the migration of refugees and internally displaced persons or “chronic” migration, uneven economic development from one grouping to the other, and political/economic dependence due to obligations/agreements with foreign partners.

What are the relevant institutions that influence power relations?

Here, we wanted to determine how formal laws and rules, formal and informal social and

cultural norms (such as gender, social class, age, religion and ethnicity) and inequalities – at local, regional and national levels – influenced people’s commitments.

Regarding the actors and their attributes, we tried to answer the following questions: Who are the relevant actors? How do relations between stakeholders as well as their power relations play out? What is their framework for action, and what are their capabilities and resources? What actions and what types of parties have a direct impact on the situation? What are their motivations (financial, personal, political, cultural, etc.)? Who is able to influence these actions?

With regard to the *analysis of the interplay between the context and the parties involved*, the following questions made it possible to untangle the facts in the phenomena, and to determine the levels of:

- Interaction between the context and stakeholders, their strengths and the impact on society;
- Opportunities or obstacles created by this interaction;
- Challenges brought about by changes as these affect the context as well as the actors; and
- Identify potential coalitions and platforms in the analysis of stakeholders.

If the PEA is supposed to answer the question of the extent to which implementation of the Agreement can reform public governance in Mali, this implies either “rebuilding” the system, or a “marginal” or “cosmetic” adjustment of the same System. Given the interests

of the various parties, their power relations, incentives and resistance to change, it would appear that the commitments made by government authorities and the signatory movements will be either very ambitious in terms of announced reforms, or realistic and feasible. Either way, the context will help determine potential leverage to make the system adopt an approach much more in line with public interests.

The PEA has often been perceived as a tool used primarily to identify barriers and constraints. However, it has also been increasingly used to identify opportunities, to take advantage of policy changes and to support reforms. By better understanding the political constraints facing the Malian Government, stakeholders will become more efficient at identifying “second-tier” reforms that need to take place in key sectors like health, education and basic infrastructure. Thus, the analysis may help to promote a greater sense of ownership of reform processes, and improve the prioritisation and sequencing of reform efforts.

A PEA of this nature has its limits, of course. These relate to:

- (i) The extent and complexity of the problem;
- (ii) The difficulty gathering reliable data or in-depth analysis of various key aspects, such as: Informal sources of power, access to economic privileges and their distribution systems in a very fluid context;
- (iii) The linkages between political and economic powers;
- (iv) The difficulty in translating the analysis into concrete proposals or plans of action for the partners that assist the Malian government.

iv. Methodology

The methodological approach was based mainly on documentary and archival research, and in-depth surveys of some of the key stakeholders involved in implementation of the Agreement. It was validated after we presented our mid-term findings during workshops organised in Mopti, Kayes and the District of Bamako.

The documentary research consisted of collecting qualitative data from various ministries, other government agencies and civil society as well as archival documents on strategic “governmentality” (Foucault, 1994: 237).

The information-gathering process was facilitated by the involvement of historical actors such as signatories of various Agreements; former *Commandants d'Arrondissement ou de Cercle* (county officers), governors, local chiefs and authorities, leaders of social groups, etc. The whole process was based on a participatory approach, from the choice of target groups to the actual collection of data.

I. THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Despite a long tradition of using methods from the humanities and social sciences (SHS) characterising a number of development agencies operating around the world, these have been grappling in recent years with the question of how to use the PEA to refine their strategies and aid programs. There is no uniform conceptual framework for this approach, but the OECD-DAC definition helps identify and/or capture some of its main components:

“Political economy analysis involves the interaction between political and economic processes in a society: levels of wealth possessed by different groups and individuals, and the processes that create, support and transform these relationships over time” [original quote in French in OCDE-DAC, 2003].

This definition focuses attention on politics in particular, as this is the sphere in which competition and negotiations take place between interest groups with competing claims to rights and resources. However, it is also concerned with economic processes that generate wealth, and that determine how public policy choices are made. In fact, these processes are closely related and are part of a unified set of dynamics that influence the outcomes of development efforts.

For the sake of convenience in the analysis and operationalisation of the methodological tool, we have chosen the following definition, which we consider to be more explicit:

“Political economy analysis (PEA) aims at placing development initiatives within an understanding of the dominant political and economic processes in society – in particular the

incentives, relationships and power linkages between different groups and individuals. Such analysis may facilitate the implementation of development strategies that are more feasible politically, and therefore more effective if one has realistic expectations of what can be achieved in a given period and considering the risks involved.” [original quote in French in Mcloughlin, 2004: 1]

PEA helps understand the incentives, institutions and ideas that shape political action and its outcomes. As we will see, this can be extremely useful when considering the feasibility of policy reforms, institutional changes and realistic contributions that development partners and other donors can make as well as the risks involved.

1.1. How relevant is “Political Economy Analysis” (PEA)?

In view of the massive presence of partners and their multiple initiatives on the ground in post-crisis Mali, a PEA of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation would be particularly useful to development agencies, and it would help them understand the motivations of key political stakeholders, how specific policies and programs are formulated, and the implications of development strategies outlined previously.

PEA is programmatic. More specifically, it is concerned with understanding the interests and motivations of different social groups (in particular, political elites and the signatory movements) and the way the signatories of the Agreement manage the political outcomes that may facilitate or hinder return to some form of post-crisis normality.

It also examines the role of formal institutions

(the government and members of the Implementation Monitoring Group) in light of certain principles shared by the parties involved - for example, rule of law, elections, and informal social, political and cultural norms that shape interpersonal interaction and political and economic competition.

Finally, it attempts to assess the impact of values and ideas, including political ideologies, religion and cultural beliefs, on political behaviour and public policy.

1.2. How can PEA add value to this work?

The signing of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation fuelled ambitions to carry out profound reforms in Mali due to the exceptional attention that this country received at that time and the presence of more than 20 heads of state, official delegations and international organisations. If it is true that the Agreement was not signed at once by the armed groups, the issue today is how to put it into practice in concrete terms on the ground in spite of deadly clashes between the said armed groups and networks of terrorist activists on a number of fronts. How is the Malian Government demonstrating its will and capacity to break with practices that have suppressed and ankylosed the governance of people, communities, and government funds in the past, and how can it adopt a well-balanced approach to local development based on a shared vision? What latitude is there to initiate a qualitative change, and who are the agents for change/renewal?

These questions have weighed heavily on the minds of many Malians. However, they contrast with doubts held by many other

Malians about the sincerity of the armed groups that were signatories to the Agreement due to the “demonstrated collusion” (Malikilé, No. 52, 2017) between some of these groups and the undesirable terrorist movements at the negotiating table in Algiers, as well as splits and divisions between signatory groups espousing “ethnic” versus “community” lines.

Analysis of these debates reveals some real risks with regard to the feasibility of effective implementation of the Agreement. In fact, many members of civil society and the political class consider the Agreement in question as “something signed with forceps”, in reference to the statement made by the French ambassador to Mali at the time, Gilles Huberson. In his words:

“Those who will not sign the agreement will become obstacles to peace” (www.niarela.net, consulted on 26/12/17) - even though the signing the document was conceived as a gradual process.

II. THE PEACE PROCESS IN MALI: AT A CROSSROADS

2.1. Conflicts in Mali: Revolts and Rebellions; Questioning the Nature of the State

The magnitude of the multidimensional crisis resulting from the armed conflict in Mali necessitates the mobilisation of all our historical, political, economic, social, cultural and structural capabilities. In this perspective, the first step is to perform empirical and documentary research in order to create a pool of knowledge and carry out an analysis of the causes of the crisis while disentangling the links of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali from the Algiers process.

To understand the causes of deadlocks in the process of implementing the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation, it is necessary to look into its intelligibility. This means that we must question the underlying or officially omitted causes of the conflicts that have existed in the northern regions of Mali from 1960 down to the present day, and that have spilled over into the central regions and far beyond. We shall endeavour to remove these conflicts from both the emotionally charged “community” basis and the “tropism of the North” in order to analyse them as instances of breakdown in the day to day governance of the country. These conflicts are local in nature, but they have permeated Malian society in its entirety to the extent that they are perceived to be serious problems facing the State.

A retrospective look at the period during which various revolts and rebellions shook the northern regions of Mali shows that these conflicts occurred in particular contexts. An

analysis of these different revolts and rebellions is therefore important in the continued search for durable solutions.

Indeed, if we limit our analysis to the revolts and rebellions that have taken place in independent Mali, it becomes clear that this recurring phenomenon is closely related to the emergence and development of the modern state system in the country. This correlation also helps explain the complex trajectories of both the state-building process in Mali and the various legal instruments used to settle these revolts and rebellions.

- **1963-1964:** This revolt erupted in a context of state-building in which the single-party socialist regime increased the tax rates (a monopoly over taxation was being imposed). In line with the ideology of the ruling US RDA, the military hierarchy was seeking to consolidate the foundations of the new nation-state. This explains the choice of the military option as a means to quell the revolt.
- **1990:** A rebellion developed in tandem with domestic political demands aimed at reforming the State and securing freedom, democracy and a multi-party regime. This rebellion articulated objectives relating to public governance, calling for more attention to the needs of young Malians (mostly of Tuareg origin) who had left the country because of cyclical droughts (they had not received any government assistance), and to have them assigned to various State agencies. Some political measures were quickly taken in order to curb this rebellion. These included:
 - **The Tamanrasset Agreement:** This was negotiated under the aegis of

Algeria, and signed on 6 January 1991. It was never implemented as a result of the *coup d'état* that took place on 26 March 1991, however, and

- **The National Pact:** This was also negotiated under the aegis of Algeria, with backing by prominent individuals (Edgar Pisani and Baba Miské), and following several meetings was signed in Bamako on 11 April 1992. A National Conference (from 29 July to 12 August 1991) and two technical meetings (Segou and Mopti) were held prior to the signing of the National Pact. This agreement was concluded on the eve of the second round of the Third Republic's first democratic and multiparty presidential elections.
 - **1994-2000:** A series of local revolts and mutinies took place, according to some of the parties involved motivated primarily by delays in implementing the National Pact, and secondly by frustrations on the part of certain "ethno-cultural" groups from the northern regions of the country. These groups accused the government of lavishing too many privileges on armed "Arab-Tuareg" movements at the expense of the sedentary population. Frequent splits and coalescences between armed groups along tribal lines, and the formation of "ethno-cultural" self-defence groups were contributing factors. The revolts in question were unique in the sense that they broke out on the eve of the general and local elections in a setting characterised by particular socio-political tensions (the so-called "tontine Badiallo" affair and the advent of COPPO) and the beginning of a renewed term for the President of the Republic, which in reality was more a symptom of institutional fragility. These revolts were resolved at the political level, without any explicit agreements being concluded. The State established new districts in the Cercles (counties) of Ménaka (Alata) and Tinessako (Intadjédit).
 - **2006:** The Alliance for Democracy and Change (ADC) staged a rebellion. The Alliance accused the State of empowering less influential tribes to manage public affairs at the expense of certain leaders of Kidal and other large Tuareg and Arab tribes (the ubiquitous presence of Kel Affala/Ifoghas at local and national elective posts was attacked for its lack of transparency and failure to respect the rules of fairness between candidates as well as the right to freely choose persons for political office.
 - The signing of the Algiers Agreement, which was meant to correct some of these abuses, failed to eliminate social cleavages or tribal strife in the Adagh of Ifoghas (Kidal). This rebellion probably had a spill-over effect, amplifying the most recent conflict that broke out in 2012.
 - **2012:** This rebellion erupted in the regions of Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal following the return of soldiers of Malian origin who had served in the Jamahiriya army in Libya. Mali was preparing to hold new general elections for a new president of the Republic and deputies to the National Assembly. The coup d'état of 22 March 2012 further weakened the Malian State.
- Subsequently, it encouraged a successful incursion by the National Liberation Movement of the Azawad (MNLA) and its extremist Islamist

allies, who managed to seize control of nearly 2/3 of national territory. After the MNLA unilaterally declared the independence of Northern Mali on 6 April 2012, it was driven out of the region by its allies, who then imposed the Sharia on territory occupied by them.

Unlike all the other rebellions and revolts before, which had not had any explicit ideological foundations, the one led by MNLA had separatist objectives, and was organised into a political and an armed wing. It started in a context in which many tribes were trying to break free from the yoke of “community” hierarchies, with organised groups intent on drastically reducing the power of the State over the northern regions of the country in order to provide a sanctuary for AQIM and at present to Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims) under the aegis of Iyad Ag Ghaly and his ally Amadou Kouffa, from the Macina Liberation Front. Broader issues are also involved, such as arms proliferation, hostage-taking and large-scale trafficking of drugs, migrants and cigarettes. All this has contributed to spreading the war that had gradually developed in Mali’s Sahel and Sahara regions.

On 9 January 2013, the terrorist coalition launched an offensive in the so-called central and southern regions of the country. They were brought to a halt in Konna by the Malian armed forces, backed by French forces in Operation Serval. This military action was the initial step taken by France invoking U.N. Resolution 2100 (2013). Subsequently, the U.N. Security Council created the United Nations Integrated Multidimensional Mission for Stabilisation in Mali (MINUSMA) with a total force of around 13,000 peacekeeping troops. It replaced the International Mission for the Support of Mali (MISMA), which was placed under regional and African supervision in line with U.N. Reso-

lution 2085 (2012). The main objectives of the MINUSMA mandate are to stabilise the situation in the main towns and re-establish State authority throughout the country. The Malian transitional authorities were strongly encouraged to hold presidential and legislative elections. The Security Council also assigned the mission the task of facilitating implementation of the transition roadmap, including the national dialogue and electoral process.

Moreover, the international community in general and ECOWAS in particular had to pool efforts to thwart the coup attempt by Captain Amadou Haya Sanogo, who toppled President Amadou Toumani Touré (ATT) in March 2012, and return the country to a normal constitutional regime (Keita, 2015). The crisis has also had a profound impact on the people of Mali, marked as it were by the disintegration of social ties and thousands of displaced persons and refugees.

To sum up, this brief analysis indicates that all the revolts and rebellions that took place erupted when the modern State was either under construction or undergoing institutional change or transition. The historical analysis of conflicts in Mali also reveals some serious mistakes on the part of the State as well as a departure from certain republican values such as patriotism, nationalism and citizenship. Indeed, analysis of the causes of various revolts and rebellions points to weaknesses and mistakes committed by the State as the main factor in all the upheavals. Paradoxically, the analysis also underscores the role of Malian “citizens” who took up arms to attack national public institutions and destroy basic infrastructures that were financed either from the State budget or by loans negotiated with Technical and Financial Partners (TFP).

The first leaders of Democratic Mali adopted a unique approach, however. They held direct talks with former rebel leaders. This approach had a negative impact in the public sphere, in which a number of local chieftains were embroiled in power struggles. These power struggles have been a major factor conditioning various actors' local, regional, international and geostrategic interests and are fraught with issues of considerable complexity (FES, Policy Paper Mali, December 2016).

2.2. The Structural Causes of Previous Peace Agreements' Failure

There is no single, clear explanation for the failure of previous peace agreements signed by Mali in various crisis-resolution processes. The interviews and review of the literature suggest that a combination of exogenous and endogenous factors best explains the ineffective implementation of the previous agreements and the lack of monitoring and evaluation.

In this context, issues relating to governance are often cited as the reasons for institutional, financial, judiciary and communication deficiencies. This was the case with the proceedings of the Conference of National Consensus [*Conference d'Entente Nationale*] that took place in Bamako in 2017, which summed up the situation as follows:

- The deficiency in institutional governance is characterised by the decline of State authority, the absence of impact by government agencies throughout the country; difficulties in implementing the process of decentralisation; favouritism, nepotism, clientelism and demagoguery that the previous regimes did not combat forcefully

enough, the lax attitude of the administration and the various forms of impunity that prevail in the State system, unequal access of citizens to jobs in the State administration and defence and security agencies, failure to respond to the needs of the population and hence the difficulty for many people to answer the question "What does it mean to be a Malian?";

- Deficits in the financial sphere are manifested in widespread corruption and lack of transparency in the use of public funds, influence peddling, unequal distribution of government resources between regions and lack of transparency in the management of internal and external resources, especially on the part of national and international NGOs, which have collected billions of francs from donors but have had no real impact on the living conditions of the population. These NGOs are scarcely visible aside from the signs hanging in front of their offices and their "4 by 4" vehicles;
- Deficiencies in the judiciary are perceived in the guise of injustice and impunity, transgressions of due process and non-enforcement of court decisions;
- Deficiencies in government communication manifest themselves in the lack of a framework and insufficient exchange between government institutions and the communities they govern; the effects of illiteracy, which excludes the majority of people from the official language of communication, and a growing tendency among certain media to spread disinformation.

The deficiencies in governance mentioned here are not exhaustive, but they do illustrate the institutional fragility in which implementation

of the peace agreements has taken place. It becomes clear that, in addition to deficiencies in the area of governance (and many other contributing factors), the failure of past attempts at implementing peace agreements has been due, among other things, to:

- Failure on the part of signatories to live up to the commitments they have made and obligate themselves to in efforts to resolve various crises and armed rebellions;
- Inadequate management of previous crises;
- Lack of monitoring and evaluation of previous agreements;
- Lack of a well-organized civil society in the implementation and monitoring of the agreements;
- Inadequate information-sharing and communication mechanisms regarding implementation of the peace agreements on the part of public authorities;
- Spreading of disinformation by some leaders of armed groups and media;
- The weak legitimacy of political and institutional reforms carried out after signing of the agreements in the eyes of the population.

This summary of the structural deficits resulting from the combination of various factors does not provide an exhaustive analysis of the subject, but does offer some notion of the magnitude of the problem. What is also needed is a sober assessment of the various instruments that have been used in attempts to deal with recurring revolts and rebellions in order to draw accurate conclusions and make useful recommendations.

Regardless of the institutional form it will take, any renegotiation of the underpinnings of State sovereignty will have a profound impact on the northern and central regions of the country. Any such development will have to vanquish the avatars of nationalism as well as re-establish appropriate conditions for the army to restore rule over regions over which control has been lost and for the government to carry on an all-inclusive dialogue (on how to deal with “murderous actors”, neighbouring countries and immigrants, or the image of “us and them” based on exclusion). Hostage-taking, the rearming of AQIM and the impact of all this on programs of regional and international partners continue to be sources of concern. It is in this new context that democratic, political and socio-economic governance needs to be brought into line with the relevant provisions of the Agreement.

III. MANAGING DIVERSITY VERSUS POLITICAL OVERLOAD

3.1. Implementation of the Agreement and its Political Implications

The ongoing crisis is not limited to the northern and central regions of Mali. It is a result of national deficiencies in civic engagement, a weakening sense of duty, poor security conditions and unequal development between regions and territories.

Due to the often violent outcomes produced by the social crisis and various movements, manifested in new forms of exclusion, profound inequalities and persistent social gaps accompanied by multitudes of internally displaced persons, the quest of all-inclusive governance remains highly elusive.

It is nevertheless the case that the negotiation process was preceded by a phase of vision-sharing with discussions of possible reforms and various proposals in the wake of general elections in 2013. These visions and proposals are reflected in different resolutions adopted in formats such as the *Etats Généraux de la Décentralisation* (EGD), *Assises du Nord*, Forum of Gao, Timbuktu Peace Week, COREN Forum, etc.

On top of all this, other negative political factors have helped precipitate the social and political system into a context of political overload, incivility and an armed dialogue. This situation has impacted the legitimacy of the new institutions that emerged from the general elections of 2013. These were accused of failing to consult with the political classes in the negotiation process and signing the agreement. It should be noted that workshops were organised on behalf of the political class and civil society in or-

der to canvass viewpoints regarding the “roadmap” and “draft agreement”. Many members were conspicuous due to their absence, if not to say their avoidance of duty; major institutional reforms accompanying implementation of the Agreement have been initiated without the input of signatories to the Agreement and civil society.

These doubts are based on a number of factors. It is not the first time that the country has signed an agreement with armed groups, or announcements and proclamations have been made of willingness to change the existing institutional framework.

The “March 1991 Revolution” aroused very similar expectations with regard to good governance and economic and social recovery following signing of the National Pact. Today, many analysts agree that implementation of the National Pact has not been accompanied by any real monitoring or evaluation by the citizens that would fundamentally question the present mode of governance.

For the first time, the negotiation process has involved a handpicked selection of well-qualified civil servants, each of whom has valuable, in-depth knowledge of the parties involved as well as experiences in the past with State governance and the many facets of politics in Mali. Some key civil society organisations have also been involved. This process has also been influenced by a host of additional factors, however, the most important of which have been: the Government’s decision to replace Burkina-Faso as mediator after signing of the Ouagadougou Agreement on 18 June 2013, which made general elections possible in the first place, non-renewal of the mandate for the Special Envoy of the Transitional President, the repercussions of the visit to Kidal by Prime Minister

Moussa Mara, competition between Morocco and Algeria to influence inter-Malian discussions, internationalisation of the negotiation process due to the presence of several mediators in addition to Algeria, which assumed the lead role, constant reporting of the entire process in social media, where even the smallest steps taken were leaked to the public before the supreme authorities were informed, a situation that undermined the “public dialogue”, its outcomes, etc., while financial scandals surrounding State governance also had an impact.

The negotiating process and signing of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement have been widely followed by the political class, particularly opposition parties and a large number of civil society organisations. The broad dissemination of the text of the Agreement and its translation into at least twelve of the country’s national languages have not been sufficient to alleviate criticism and facilitate true political acceptance by the citizenry, hence portraying the Agreement as a political compromise that may be modified to align with national realities and not merely be seen as a legal document per se.

Arguing that the Malian government is corrupt, donor agencies are pumping billions to international, national and local NGOs to carry out their activities directly without any clear adherence to laws and regulations. Under these conditions, it is difficult to trace funds and assess their impact on beneficiaries. During the third follow-up meeting following the Brussels Conference for Mali, the Prime Minister at the time, Moussa Mara, recalled that commitments to assist Mali were made on the basis of PRED Document for the period 2013-2014 to the tune of approximately CFA 2.155 billion francs, of which 25% were to be in the form of loans and 75% outright donations. This means that the funds pledged in May 2013 ended up in

firm commitments amounting to CFA 1.474 billion as laid down in signed agreements and conventions. FCFA 965 billion has already been disbursed, including 807 billion in 2013 and 158 billion in 2014. While he welcomed the outcome of the dialogue and follow-up mechanism in place and urged partners to redouble their efforts in order to meet their commitments, the Prime Minister reiterated several principles dear to the TFP regarding the ultimate destination of these resources:

“Of the 965 billion disbursed, 193 billion were actually received by the Malian Treasury as budgetary aid and 140 billion were received as project aid. This adds up to 333 billion. In other words, 632 billion, or nearly two-thirds of the amount disbursed, was used without any involvement of our national agencies”.

In these circumstances, how could the Agreement resulting from the Algiers process, which is associated with certain costs, be effectively implemented in a weakened state in which aid partners hold the purse strings, the political class and CSOs do not share the same views regarding the merits of the Agreement and aid partners are becoming less and less accountable?

To reiterate, criticism of the Agreement is as follows:

“The Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation violates the unitary nature of the Malian State (...); under this Agreement, regional councils are to hold all political power with the exception of the national currency and foreign affairs. Their decisions are to be automatically put into effect; the State has dismantled itself in the process of building a democratic system (...); In the absence of the State, what is to be done about the actions of community leaders who are members of different political parties,

as there is a risk that they will not respect certain key principles (territorial integrity, national unity and republican form of the state); a process has been set in motion with the aim of weakening and destroying the armed forces, in turn weakening the State, etc.” (excerpts of interviews conducted between October and November 2017).

The Agreement is primarily of a political nature, however:

“This agreement is political and not technical. The difference between a political document and a technical document is that the political document sets the political framework and the technical document aims at perfection... It is time to understand the spirit of the Agreement”, as Ousmane Sy explained (remarks made in Ségou, October 2017).

Admittedly, it is necessary to adapt the official texts for the purposes of implementation, which requires two sets of reforms, in the case at hand: laws and decrees governing the decentralisation process, local elections, and a revision of the Constitution.

3.2. Ambiguities of Institutional and Civic Appropriation

In the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation, the existence of the Malian State is not questioned, let alone its sovereign trappings. A careful reading of the “signatory parties” suggests that the State has been moved down from its pedestal to the level of the armed movements. This is a red line that should not be crossed. The Agreement and the laws of the Republic are hence not incompatible. The existence of the unitary state is not compromised because no other government can be set up.

The limits of administrative centralisation and the imperfections of decentralisation have by now become evident. Thus, there is a need to implement a policy of regionalisation, and to give local communities the opportunity to determine their elected representatives in order to attain greater legitimacy and to more effectively embed public action at the local level.

The Agreement gives rise to a need to amend the Constitution (in art. 25), as it provides for the creation of a second chamber (chap. 3, art. 8). Revising a Constitution is a complex procedure in itself, but the fact that previous attempts have failed calls for a reassessment of the arguments already forwarded in connection with the creation of the second chamber. The implementation of these provisions will allow better representation of the diverse members of Malian communities. The criteria for designating elected officials must go beyond ethnic, sex and religious lines, however.

The commitment of the signatory parties to transcending the crisis is tied to implementation of the actions recommended in the Agreement. Some crises in Sub-Saharan African countries are due to the rigidity and inability of their institutions to devise a diverse system. It is necessary to leave this legacy behind by easing control at the central Government level. The level of control can be reduced in such a way that it ensures true representation of diverse social and community groups. In Mali, organising local elections is all about consolidating democracy, and not imposing more restrictions. It is a matter of enforcing already existing legislation so that “drug traffickers” cannot buy their way to legitimacy (supervision of elections, providing funds to finance candidates’ campaigns, etc.).

The Agreement explicitly refers to a Second Chamber. However, it leaves it up to Malians to decide what to call it (art. 6). It should be noted that most of the Government's proposals that have been included in the Peace Agreement emanate from such national deliberative formats as *Assises sur le Nord*, *Etats Généraux de la Décentralisation*, etc.

It is up to the people to assume ownership of this Agreement, however. An understanding, an agreement only makes sense through the primacy of enforcement. This is where jurisprudence is called upon. An agreement is not a solution to be applied in a systematic way; it is a tool that allows the parties to agree on a framework. The real solutions are to be found in the implementation of the Agreement, and these will require all the ingenuity of Malians.

An agreement is not a cocktail of solutions. The Follow-up Committee for the Agreement is only to monitor the process that is to enable Malians to take charge and find appropriate solutions. This means that there can be no question of renegotiating the content of the Agreement, when respecting its terms is an indication of the level of commitment of the signatory parties; it has more of a political than legal value, in fact. Certainly, there will be fluctuations in its rate of implementation in the search for the resources required.

In plain words, *"the Agreement makes it possible to shift from the language of arms to that of democracy."* The Government is weak, but it must not deprive itself of any resources that could strengthen its position:

"To intensify the dialogue, to encourage a confrontation of ideas is much better than armed confrontation. This agreement is therefore of a coercive character - for peacekeeping. The

problem of integrating members of armed groups will be the subject of further consultations above and beyond the Agreement", according to a political analyst on the ground (interview conducted in Bamako on 8 October 2017).

Regrettably, however, to date none of the relevant institutions of the State of Mali have issued any statement regarding the Agreement. This was the case with the Roadmap and the Draft Agreement, when many forums and debates were organised in order to explain things to stakeholders, although these were boycotted by the political opposition. At the same time, there seem to be no strong sense of leadership from the government regarding the implementation process. Is the recent statement (January 2018) issued by the United Nations Security Council not a good example of this?

Furthermore, it is clear that implementation of the reforms will have to take place in the face of economic constraints, both at the national (budgetary constraints, burden of debt service, which has increased significantly in recent years) and international levels (characterised by the persisting global financial crisis and the volatility of export product prices in the world market).

There is additional cause for doubt. Mali is the "land of dialogue", traditionally characterised by inclusive consultations involving all the parties in order to set out ambitious reform agendas. However, its social construct is mired in the prevailing overload at the political level. In the last ten years, the mandates of the ATT President would have produced a more than sweeping "consensus"— to be involved in government action – were it not for the coup d'état that has polarised the political class and civil society into several antagonistic camps.

FDR was opposed to the coup, COPAM and MP 22 were rather in favour of it, while the IBK-Mali 2012 coalition or even CSM adopted an ambivalent position. However, a large number of public policy documents adopted during this period were not sufficiently understood by various social groups, and have not generated the expected outcomes due to unsatisfactory implementation and monitoring. This oft-repeated situation has created a great degree of scepticism among many stakeholders about the benefits of their involvement, and the extent to which successive ruling elites are really willing to change things.

In short, the national political dialogue, widely called for since the coup d'état of March 2012, has not materialised due to missed opportunities and a failure to set clear agendas. Has the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, which was supposed to benefit from efforts by the entire political class and civil society (art. 51), not suffered the same fate?

Finally, we should underscore the decision by the President of the Republic to repeatedly entrust government work to prime ministers who are not from his own political party, the *Rassemblement pour le Mali* (RPM) [Rally for Mali], the contexts surrounding their respective resignations in an atmosphere of distrust on the part of RPM activists, financial scandals in connection with the purchase of the presidential plane and equipment for the armed and security forces, various reports by auditing agencies highlighting the poor management of public funds in a context of impoverishment, a fragile social and precarious security situation, etc.

Under these circumstances, many Malians have begun to seriously doubt the idea that the signing of the Agreement constitutes a commitment to engage in a renewal of bold

policies of virtuous public governance for the benefit of all Malian stakeholders as well as development partners.

3.3. Segmentation, Fragmentation, Reconstitution and/or Reconfiguration: “Armed Movements Counting on State Largesse”

At the time the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali was signed between 15 May and 20 June 2015 together with the platform of the 14 June Movements and Coordination of the Azawad Movements (CMA), the Government of Mali had not yet sufficiently grasped the heterogeneity of the signatory groups.

It is worth noting that the CMA was conceived on 28 October 2014 in the wake of the peace process that was initiated in 2013 (Ouagadougou Agreement). This alliance has a rotating presidency, and includes the following groups: The National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA) and the High Council for the Unity of Azawad (HCUA), a wing of the Arab Movement of Azawad (MAA), with other groups claiming to be members of the CMA, although they are not recognised as such by the founding members: The People's Coalition for Azawad (CPA), a wing of Coordination of the Movements and Patriotic Front of Resistance (CM-FPR2), the Movement for the Salvation of Azawad (MSA), and the Popular Front of Azawad (FPA), which initially joined the CMA, but withdrew from it on 29 November 2014. One of the last so-called members would be the Congress for Justice in Azawad (CJA), which opposed the establishment of interim authorities in Timbuktu and Taoudeni between March and April 2017.

Each of these two major signatory movements encompasses diverse groups, and the alliances between their respective sub-groups fluctuate according to their agendas and prevailing circumstances.

At the time of the signing of the so-called Ouaga Agreement, the Honourable Bajan Ag Hamatou (a Member of Parliament from Ménaka), argued that the cantonnement (disarming of fighters) should be mandatory, and should take place parallel to the negotiations to achieve peace:

“After the cantonnement, no one should be allowed to walk around with a weapon. No matter which country is helping us, it has to be done in good faith. However, we must acknowledge the fact that some countries, instead of helping us, are causing us problems. If we confine and disarm the armed groups, there will be no problem in Kidal” (<http://bamada.net/processus-de-negociation-la-necessaire-reance-laccord-de-ouaga-est-assez-complet-tout-est-dans-laccord>).

While he added that the vast majority of the people in North Mali only desired peace, the Honourable Member of Parliament denounced some members of the armed movements living in Morocco and others in Burkina Faso. Reflections like these help clarify the challenges and opportunities many countries in the African region see in positioning themselves as major players in the resolution of the Malian crisis. The decision of the Malian authorities to make Algeria the top mediator did not mean that an end has been put to these ambitions. Hence, outside actors continue to influence some of the leaders of these movements. This was the case throughout the Algiers process, and it is also the case at present.

These movements also fail to take local dynamics into account. The fact of the matter is that they are living from the largesse of the State, and to a lesser degree from certain community and ideological ties (religious and statutory). Thus, their aim is not really to strive towards the inclusivity so direly needed. This emerges from the declaration (undated) issued by a new movement called Coordination of the Movements of the Entente (CME) (Malikilé, No. 42 of 11/11/17).

This Coordination encompasses the following movements: CMFPR2, CPA, CJA, MPSA, MSA and FPA. For the CME,

“At the meetings, it was more declarations of intent expressed than concrete target-oriented actions — policymakers still employ archaic methods that are no longer in line with realities in the country. This is disorienting and prevents real progress. In addition, communities are increasingly aware of their rights, and this new situation prevents things from happening the way they did in the past.”

However, the CME noted that two of its member movements signed the Peace Agreement on 15 May and that they have seats in the CSA, while its other members include movements that were forced to leave the CMA and Platform due to disagreements over internal management practices and differing opinions.

It would appear that CME representatives repeatedly drew the attention of the other members of the CSA to violations of the provisions of the Agreement, and to the non-observance of its fundamental principles by the so-called signatory parties as well as by the CSA itself because it would not acknowledge the right of certain movements to participate fully in the process of implementing the Agreement.

The CME believed that objectivity in the discussions cannot be achieved if key stakeholders are not heard:

“The CSA and the Minusma, like the Government, know that the CME is one of the key players in the search for peace in Mali. It is the only coordination that never hid its intentions and never compromised with the principles and purpose of the Agreement. Therefore, to desire its exclusion is to desire the maintenance of a situation that allows some other key players with different intentions to prosper by means of a diversion...” commented one CPA representative.

This movement was making reference to the non-observance of articles 58 and 67 of the Agreement, which refer of the parties involved and address the make-up of the Monitoring Committee. It wanted its member movements FPA and MPSA to be taken into account.

All these factors contribute to strengthening the segmentation of the movements rather than encouraging them to interact and engage in a dialogue over local developments and the state-building processes. Such a context actually contributes to creating life-long “pensioners” with a vested interest in the multiplication of movements and their bodies. It prevents people from internalising the process.

The same frenzy is observable when it comes to organizing various forums and meetings within and between communities. The recommendations issued at the end of such gatherings do not benefit the peace process in any way. On the contrary, these meetings become pretexts to specify narrowly defined identities or community frameworks in order to benefit from state access and privileges.

Clearly, the state of mind evident among many representatives of these movements, and even some agents acting on behalf of the State, is such as to make the process continuous until all their desires have been satisfied, namely.

Since the independence of Mali, the part of the territory marked by some of the harshest geographical, climatic and hydrological conditions has been tamed by the rulers of the country as a territorial continuum to be homogenised at the administrative level, and even at the affective level (Cf. Report by Bakara Diallo, 1959). Hence, this pot-independent approach did not differ significantly from the previous. It has caused frustrations to mount, triggering many armed uprisings and enabling the reproduction of “*painful memories*” that run contrary to a “*national narrative*” that emphasises unity, and that neither accepts nor tolerates any differences.

This perspective did not allow one to fully grasp the diversity of Malian communities and the signatory parties to the Agreement. One of the first consequences of the signing of the Tamanrasset Agreement in 1991 was the splitting up of the unitary movement called Azawad People’s Movement (MPA) into at least three entities: the Revolutionary Army for the Liberation of Azawad (ARLA), the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MPLA), and the initial movement, the Azawad People’s Movement (MPA). Later, the Arab Islamic Front of Azawad (FIAA) was created as a result of divisions based on social status and/or categories, affinities and birth rights among clans in the home community.

These latent divisions were managed with political subtlety. Sometimes, solutions resembled embolisms bandaged in homeopathic doses. They only began to fall apart at the beginning

of the Algiers Process (2014), tending to worsen following the signing of the Agreement, with each member of the two main groupings trying to reap the dividends of Agreement for itself.

3.4. Typology of Participants in the Mali Peace Process

More than two years after the signing of the Agreement, it is still difficult to clearly identify and explain how the population is benefitting. Although not welcomed without reservation, and interpreted differently by a number of stakeholders, the Agreement does remain the only framework in place for the resolution of the conflict and the advent of peace. Its signing was made possible thanks to strong support from the international community.

However, it has many shortcomings that need to be addressed in the course of its implementation. It has not put an end to insecurity because the role of certain key players has not been specified, there is a risk of duplicating roles between the issue-based bodies and other institutions, the recurrent and unfulfilled demand for inclusiveness at the margins of the discussions in Algiers, there has been no debate on the future of the country in the National Assembly, there is ambiguity or silence regarding what to happen to the CMA and the Platform, and more particularly their leaders, etc. What is needed is a new “National Pact for Peace and Good Governance” rooted in the cardinal values of the Republic.

Faced with the growing expectations of a predominantly young population, and confronted with complex security challenges (drug trafficking, terrorism, smuggling of migrants, hostage-taking, targeted assassinations, etc.)

across such a vast territory, the government of Mali has yet to demonstrate a strong political will when it comes to implementing coherent and consensual initiatives in connection with the building of a new type of state that will provide good governance in accordance with the provisions of the Agreement. The logical consequence of such a situation is that the great hopes that prevailed upon the signing of the Agreement have now dissipated. This is due on the one hand to the recurrence of armed clashes between the signatory groups, and on the other to the resurgence of insecurity in large areas of the country. Lack of leadership on the part of the Government has caused rigid macro-policies to hold sway, when it is dynamic, complementary policies that are needed.

With regard to the types of stakeholders involved, the most salient ones are:

- National stakeholders: The parties involved at this level are the government as well as the Platform and CMA). The CMA and Platform are part of a collective, but each is ultimately free to act according to its agenda. Each stakeholder is composed several diversified subgroups;
- Informal stakeholders include those groups that felt marginalised at some point during the peace process. These are sub-groups that were either part of the CMA or the Platform, but which have now joined forces to create the CME;
- Stakeholders that operate outside the peace process have a great capacity for mischief, and did not participate in the Algiers process because they were not eligible (armed groups in the central region, namely: “Islamists” in the *Masina Liberation*

Front (FLM) and Nusrat al-Islam-wal-Muslimin - (Support Group for Islam and Muslims) under the leadership of Iyad Ag Ghaly);

- Regional and international actors involved in the negotiating process (Sahel groups);
- The international community (UN, MISAHÉL, EU, etc.);
- Permanent members of the U.N. Security Council (France, United States, etc.).

Article 57 of the Agreement provides for the creation, immediately after its signing, of a Follow-up/Monitoring Committee of the Agreement (CSA) chaired by Algeria, the leader of the international mediation group. The CSA includes the Government, the signatory movements and the mediator.

Its role is to monitor and ensure effective implementation of the provisions of the Agreement. This has necessitated the creation of different subgroups charged with handling the four themes listed in the Agreement (art. 62). It took almost a year for the CSA to become operational because of disagreements between the signatory movements, and the incessant disengagements that have resulted from the many clashes within and between the signatory movements on the ground. On several occasions, the signatory movements were criticised for adopting an “empty chair” approach especially when other movements created before and after the signing of the Peace Agreement loudly expressed their firm intention to become members of the different implementation committees.

In order to facilitate an understanding and implementation of the Agreement, the Govern-

ment of Mali has set up the CNCA (National Coordinating Committee for the Implementation of the Agreement). It is now part of the Office of the High Representative of the President of the Republic. Its role is essential because the operational implementation of the Agreement is primarily the responsibility of the Government. It is chaired by the Prime Minister and includes permanent members like the Ministers in charge of departments that are directly involved in implementing the Agreement, the Secretary General of the government and of the President’s Office, and the Chief of Staff of the Prime Minister.

In a spirit of broad inclusiveness, associate members were also appointed to it, representing: The National Assembly, the High Council of Communities (HCC), trade unions, political parties, religious as well as women and youth umbrella organisations. It has a permanent Secretariat that performs the technical work. The difference between the two bodies is that the first one is charged with monitoring the Agreement, while the second is assigned with operational implementation of the Agreement.

In order to ensure proper implementation of the Agreement, and in addition to the Office of the High Representative of the President of the Republic, various mechanisms have been established, including: the signing of tripartite agreements (Government of Mali, UNHCR and countries that hosted Malian refugees); the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (CVJR) and its branch offices; the National Council for Security Sector Reform (CN-RSS); the Office of the Security Sector Reform (C-RSS) and its specialised units; the National Commission for Disarmament – Demobilisation – Reintegration (CN-DDR); the Integration Commission (CI); the implementation of Transitional Justice through the development

of a national policy document on transitional justice; the adoption of the policy document called National Convention on Human Rights; the Conference d'Entente Nationale (CEN); the drafting of the Charter for Peace, Unity and Reconciliation; the mapping of Malian terroirs (provinces); establishment of the Mission to Support National Reconciliation (MARN) and its regional offices; the creation of goodwill missions in the regions of Kidal, the Inner Delta and the Niger Bend/Loop; and appointment of the Carter Center as an independent observer charged with objectively evaluating the implementation phases of the Agreement (chap. 20, arts. 63 and 64).

3.5. Reversal of Priorities: Lack of Leadership or Opportunism?

The Mali peace process is suffering from problems such as the setting of short deadlines for the interim period, the achievement of objectives (30 to 60 days after the signing of the agreement), etc.; deadlines that are difficult to meet because trust-building measures have not been fully carried out by the parties, in terms of MOC, cantonment, integration of ex-combatants, DDR, CN-RSS, etc. Such a context corroborates the notion that the signing of the Agreement provided benefits to the signatory parties only. The movements have determined that many major reforms were undertaken without sufficient input from the parties. At the same time, many people feel excluded from the process, and have resurrected some good old practices associated with neo-communitarianism; hence, the untimely setbacks in installing the interim authorities.

In fact, these findings reveal a reversal of the order of priorities in the process of implementing the Agreement. For example, setting up

interim authorities became a priority issue and contributed to mounting tensions, while this issue was originally only a marginal provision of the Agreement.

The redeployment of the government administration everywhere across the country in the wake of the redeployment of the Army is not yet a reality. This would facilitate the return of the refugees and displaced persons as well as the launch of socioeconomic activities, however. It would also facilitate the disarming and reintegration of fighters from eligible armed movements, and the organisation of local elections everywhere. According to the representatives of the signatory movements we interviewed, *“disarmament is not for tomorrow; we will maintain pressure by keeping our arms in plain sight in order to obtain the benefits of MOC, DDR and more”* (interviews performed on 14 October 2017).

At the same time, the local press is reporting that certain movements are taking money from unemployed young persons from the central and northern regions in exchange for recruiting them. Payments of

“FCFA 800,000 for those who want to enlist in the ranks of the Famas, FCFA 1,200,000 for the regiments of Guards and Gendarmerie and FCFA 3,000,000 for the customs service; etc. “(Cf. “Northern Mali: Demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration process (DDR) The armed groups take money for job positions”. (Le Sursaut of 4 December 2017 and Info-Matin of 8 December 2017).

Two years after signing of the Agreement, the order of the priorities would appear to have been turned upside down; the key players are bogged down in unproductive debates over implementation of the Agreement; the Gov-

ernment is lagging behind in the execution of reforms; disarmament has not begun, nor has redeployment of the administration. The armed movements and interim authorities are sharing power, but failing to provide security at the local level. Thus, it is not surprising to see people reproving these authorities wherever people feel they have not been enfranchised; and particularly when appointed or co-opted leaders are not legitimate in the eyes of the people.

It is urgently necessary to remedy this situation by setting goals that are clearly defined over time, and by getting stakeholders to focus their efforts on essential missions. The State must exercise its leadership in implementing the Peace Agreement. This is the only way forward; it allows the State to single out the numerous parties that are acting in bad faith because they actually have no interest in peace, and are eager to prolong this process in order to keep generating and reaping benefits from the current situation.

At the twentieth regular session of the Follow-up Committee of the Agreement (CSA), discussions focused on the following points: A memo on progress to date was presented, signatory movements used the “empty chair” ploy because they had not received the expected bonuses, they threatened one another, the prospect was discussed of organising local elections by the end of the year, the parties adopted an updated timetable and agreed on modalities for operationalising the MOC in Kidal and Timbuktu.

In reaction to the memo and to the possibility of sanctions from international agencies, the Coordination of the Movements of Azawad and the Platform (signatory movements to the Agreement) recently decided to state their points of view publicly. While they believe

that significant progress has been made, both movements mention certain shortcomings and difficulties, including:

- *The fact that the interim authorities present in many regions are not functional;*
- *The fact that the interim authorities do not exist at the Cercle and communal levels;*
- *The fact that no specific law has been enacted to create territorial subdivisions in the Regions of Taoudéni and Ménaka, and the Cercles of Achibagho and Almoustarat;*
- *The lack of consensus on the recommendations made by the Conference d’Entente Nationale (CEN), and on the process for the drafting of the Charter for Peace, Unity and National Reconciliation (Article 5 of the Agreement);*
- *The violation of the Agreement, given the fact that the National Assembly has enacted new laws and the President of the Republic of Mal has put them into effect. In other words, the process of revising the Constitution was suspended; the texts for the Free Administration Act, the Code of Local Communities, and the Electoral Act are still to be adopted;*
- *Failure to take into account certain aspects in the administrative reorganisation of the northern regions intended to increase the level of accountability within various institutions of the Republic of Mali;*
- *The lack of appropriate measures for the safe return of refugees, although tripartite agreements have been signed between the governments of Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger; a decision was made to facilitate registration of refugees on voters’ lists;*
- *The lack of measures for better representation of the population of the northern regions at the levels of State institutions, large departments and the bureaucracy;*

- *The lack of a common global strategic vision that takes into account the innovative security and national defence mechanisms recommended by the National Committee for the Reform of the Security Sector;*
- *The delay in deploying MOC battalions in Kidal and Timbuktu;*
- *The change in the status of the police as stipulated in the Agreement, which aims at substituting local police forces for the national police force on the basis of the new but non-consensual Code of Territorial Authorities;*
- *The fact that the other disarmament sites validated by the CTS have not yet been built;*
- *The fact that the so-called “Development Zones of the northern regions” have not yet been established;*
- *The unilateral decision to set up Regional Development Agencies in the northern regions;*
- *The lack of transparency regarding the management of the resources used by the government in the context of the contingency and normalisation plan;*
- *The fact that the International Commission of Inquiry that is to shed light on crimes committed from 1960 to present day has yet to be incepted.*

The Carter Center has been selected as the consensual independent observer for the entire process. However, the signatory movements have made more than a dozen so-called “urgent recommendations” that are to be included in a timetable duly taking into account the following priority points:

1. *“Revise all legislative and regulatory provisions already voted, but that are deemed non-consensual and not in conformity with the Agreement;*
2. *Take into account various articles of the Peace Agreement in writing: the new Constitution, the Community Code, the text on self-government, and the Electoral Law;*
3. *Effective operationalisation of the National Council for the Reform of the Security Sector (CNRSS) in order to design a comprehensive strategic vision and innovative security and national defence mechanisms”;*
4. *Postpone local elections (Regions, Cercles, and Communes) in the northern regions/ Azawad;*
5. *Set up the interim authorities at the regional level and finalize this action at the Cercle and Communal levels, so that they meet the most urgent needs of the population and contribute to the creation of jobs for young people;*
6. *Expedite the process of creating administrative districts, the return of refugees, the census of the population of the so-called northern regions/Azawad;*
7. *Seek and build a consensus regarding the Charter that resulted from the Conference of National Consensus”;*
8. *Expedite appropriate measures for greater representation of the populations in the northern regions/Azawad in the institutions, major departments and State administration;*
9. *Expedite the creation of “development zones” in the northern regions;*
10. *Establishment an International Commission of Inquiry;*
11. *Role and responsibilities of the international community, in conceptualising the commitments mentioned in article 54 of the Agreement; identification of missions and responsibilities; establish a timetable to carry out activities and actions under the auspices of the Monitoring Committee.*

IV. AGREEMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY: REJECTION OR ACCEPTANCE?

4.1. Opposing the Agreement as a Means to an End?

When one examines the long-term relationship between “political power” and “civil society» in Mali, it becomes clear that the prevalence of opposing viewpoints held by these key strategic players remains a constant. The signing of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in 2015 is no exception to this rule. Indeed, an important segment of Malian civil society led by the Forum of Civil Society Organisations (FOSC) voiced its opposition to the terms of the Agreement as soon as it was signed.

In Mali, civil society organisations emerged in a historical context of post-independence deterioration of the socio-political situation, causing certain problems to resurface such as environmental degradation, food shortages, unequal access to natural resources and the related issues of management and exploitation, the negative correlation between technological/economic progress and population growth, lack of qualified human resources and failure to take gender issues into account (Keita, 2008:11).

Today, Malian civil society is an essential stakeholder in the governance of the country. The involvement and contributions of civil society organisations to the process of implementing various political and institutional reforms, and in political dialogues, constitute a good indicator of the vitality of Malian democracy.

The signing of the Agreement by the parties represents the completion of a painful sequence of actions which had been marked

by absolute uncertainty. In the long chain of events at the time, it was, in its own way, a second instance of breaking with the past. The first moment coincided with the beginning of Operation Serval, which produced some positive effects.

For Gaoussou Drabo, a journalist and former minister in the government,

“The signing of the Agreement does not eliminate all unknown factors. But it makes it possible to move forward, while asking the right questions. Indeed, Malians have very specific expectations concerning the restoration of security. Some of what they endured during the months of occupation kept them from falling for either unwarranted optimism or general scepticism. The majority of the population are trying to find the necessary balance between a measured hope and an indispensable prudence. They are aware of the fact that the Agreement will not automatically remedying the most difficult situations. These will only be resolved at the end of a laborious process of reconciling positions and establishing a minimum level of trust. The signed document does not preclude the possibility of misunderstandings, friction or even divergence in principle. Moreover, it does not send out a signal immediately putting pressure on those actors that are still reluctant to respect its terms (www.maliweb.net, consulted on 26/12/17).

Various resolutions adopted by the United Nations have advocated ways of getting the parties to prevent conflicts, and when they break out, to solve them through peaceful means. It is true that international, regional and community-based actions are currently being prepared in order to improve or alleviate the situation that has given rise to conflicts (international justice, humanitarian assistance, deployment

of military forces, special arrangements and agreements, etc.).

Even though the Agreement states the mechanisms likely to consolidate peace, while seeking to create a degree of trust between the parties on a consensual basis, the issue of disarmament remains a problem. This is also the case with the repatriation of refugees and the return of displaced persons, and the restoration of public order. However, the mass training of military and security personnel by the EUCAP Sahel and the strengthening of capabilities by MINUSMA in terms of human rights protection coincide with some initiatives taken by the government aimed at reforming and strengthening State institutions.

Unfortunately, the Government of Mali only accepts political participation in the restoration and consolidation of peace through informal consultation channels despite the existence of a rich regional and conventional toolset throughout the African continent (Joiner, 2006). In particular, the process of implementing the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation is not sufficiently explicit when it comes to the formal role that political and civil society organisations must play if the objectives of the Agreement are to be successfully achieved (art. 51).

According to the Forum of Civil Society Organisations (FOSC):

“The sense of dialogue and consultation that should lead to a better synergy between parties of all types within the process of implementing the Agreement is far from becoming a reality”.

The true inclusiveness of political actors and civil society in the process is apparently of the civic engagement type. By determining, even on a hypothetical basis, the socio-political and

security context, one could identify and differentiate the nature of the collective action to be carried out. When one takes into account the current socio-political and security conditions, it becomes clear that political and civil society organisations must face up to a number of issues, such as how to stabilise State institutions and how to implement the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement at a steady pace.

Indeed, the current situation is characterised by a level of insecurity that civil society organisations and political parties assess using different criteria. In the meantime, the number of attacks on humanitarian missions doubled in 2017 year on year, and this in a context where the humanitarian crisis seems to be:

“(...) forgotten because the response to this crisis in Mali is one of the least funded in the world. Almost 20 per cent of the population [suffer from] food insecurity and 1.2 million people need water, hygiene and sanitation services. The absence of local authorities or the weakness of their capabilities hinders the delivery of basic services, and the prevailing insecurity also hinders the delivery of aid to vulnerable communities in some parts of the country”, as Baldo reports (www.tamoudre.org, Retrieved on 07/12/17).

Since signing of the Agreement, civil society organisations opposed to it have continued to criticise the peace process. Though it may strike one as sterile criticism, it is more akin to deliberately sitting on the fence or posturing than making any constructive criticism. It should be noted that civil society organisations as a whole face many challenges that affect their actions in relation to the peace process in Mali, such as the low capacity to influence and mobilise ordinary citizens, the lack of available resources, and the co-opting of civil society organisations by government authorities.

4.2. Weak Embedding of the Agreement at the Local and Community Levels

Throughout the implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, civil society organisations had to monitor and control the actions of both State authorities and their partners. Such a role is of critical importance in a decentralised system, not only at the central government level, but also at the regional and local levels. Ideally, civil society organisations should get involved in the process leading to political and institutional reforms, as well as on-going efforts concerning the CNRSS, DDR, CI and transitional justice because these steps affect all the different layers of Malian society (Daffé, 2015: 123).

The level of awareness regarding the peace process and implementation of the Agreement seems very low among ordinary citizens at the local and community levels. Indeed, as the various editions of “Mali-Mètre” (FES) aptly illustrate, the embedding of the Agreement seems limited in scope.

Indeed, in 2015, the sixth edition of *Mali-Mètre* (n° 06) showed that only 19% (less than one in five) of citizens knew the terms/content of the Agreement. A few months later, the picture was hardly better in the seventh edition of *Mali-Mètre* (n° 07), which reported that the vast majority of respondents in the survey (81.8%) did not know the terms/content of the Agreement. There were correlations between the level of awareness and level of education (52% at university level and 72% at secondary level compared to 83% at primary level and 88% of respondents with no formal education), and the gender of the respondents (87% women versus 77% men).

With regard to the significance of the Agreement, and how important its implementation is to the future, *Mali-Mètre* n° 07 showed that more than half (57.2%) of the respondents throughout the country believed that implementation of the Agreement was very important or important to the future, compared to 24% of respondents who considered it of little or no significance, while 18.9% of respondents had no opinion on the matter.

The percentage of citizens who believed that implementation of the Agreement was very important or important is greater in cities located in the northern regions of Mali (including Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal) than in the cities located elsewhere. As to whether the implementation of the Agreement had started or not, the opinions of persons surveyed were as follows: Approximately one-third of the respondents (32.0%) said that the process had not yet begun, compared to 25% of respondents who stated the opposite, and almost 43% (42.7%) who said they did not know anything about this. Inhabitants of cities located in the northern regions of Mali were most likely to argue that the implementation process had actually started (49% in Timbuktu, 45% in Kidal and 44% in Gao).

According to the eighth edition of *Mali-Mètre* (n° 08), the two top priority actions to be implemented by State authorities were reconciliation (13.9%) and disarmament (13.5%). Finally, *Mali-Mètre* n° 08 reported that 42% of respondents (more than two out of five) believed that there was no significant progress made in implementing the Agreement (15% considered that there was absolutely no progress) compared to 30% of respondents to the survey who believed that progress was being made in implementing the Agreement.

Thus, we can see that progress in implementing the Agreement is slow and there are many difficulties associated with the process. To illustrate this, one can cite the complexity of the process, the persistence of insecurity in both the northern and central regions, with a tendency to spill over into other parts of the entire country, a limited political dialogue between the majority and opposition parties, between decision-makers and civil society, a fragile level of trust between the State and armed groups and within armed groups, a weak communication strategy on the part of the government, the absence of the State and its decentralised offices across large stretches of national territory, resulting in limited access to basic social services for the population, the notorious weakness of the State and the lack of clear guidelines with reference to the strategy adopted by the government.

The involvement of civil society organisations in the process of implementing the Agreement is paramount. Unless they provide genuine support at the local and national levels, there will be great difficulties throughout the process. This is why these organisations need to mobilise local communities and build on endogenous/shared values to foster national unity. Establishing a mechanism for permanent dialogue between all the parties involved in the implementation of the Agreement will help to address all pertinent issues and alleviate all the misunderstandings between stakeholders (Sy, Dakouo and Traoré, 2016). This will also help process the “painful memories” resulting from and entrenched through recurring conflicts, and to create a framework for the successful implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement.

V. CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING THE AGREEMENT

The implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement is characterised by the involvement of multiple key players with divergent interests. The political and institutional reforms being implemented are giving rise to conflicts arising from personal strategies, and the weakness of the political leadership is not helping efforts to manage the peace process strategically. In this vein, the peace process is causing many intrinsic challenges to surface that are impeding implementation of the Agreement. Similarly, there are extrinsic challenges related, *inter alia*, to the resurgence of insecurity, which is having a significant effect on the peace and reconciliation process. Overall, we have identified six (6) major challenges facing implementation of the Agreement:

- i. Appropriation at the national level, and an all-inclusive approach in implementing the Agreement. This challenge relates to the ability of political and civil society leaders to mobilise the population in order to make a rational contribution to the implementation process of the Agreement at local, regional and national levels.
- ii. Involvement of individuals and communities in the initiation of a dialogue with non-signatories to the Agreement, particularly parties that come from Mali. These communities have ties with illicit networks of traffickers that operate across borders. Hence the need for more cooperation between nation states.
- iii. The need to demonstrate an enlightened political leadership with regard to the process – the lack of vision and a unified policy framework; DDR and CI started before the CNRSS, for example.
- iv. Multiplicity of signatory parties (opposition between CMA, Platform and CME at present) as well as national and international issues, as opposed to the limited number of key players around the negotiating table and at the signing of previous agreements. Finding resources to match commitments made by government and TFP (Brussels and OECD processes).
- v. Level of involvement of important partners such as the members of the UN Security Council (G 5 Sahel). These are supervising the implementation process.
- vi. Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2374 on sanctions against people who block implementation of the Agreement.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Our recommendations are of a two-fold nature: Those relating to the potential for a change in governance, and those involving concrete actions to be taken.

6.1. Potential for a change in governance

After long months of negotiations, this Agreement, like all the recommendations from the previous meetings of importance organised by local authorities (Association of the Municipalities of Mali – AMM), the Government of Mali (Meeting on Decentralisation, National Conference on the North) and CSOs (COREN, among others), provides for major reforms of the system of governance in Mali. In this sense, reform of the education sector, the system of governance through *regionalisation* as set out in the Agreement, the judicial and security sectors are decisive steps that offer Mali a real chance, or even opportunity, to establish a deeply rooted democratic system that can help ensure the stability and credibility of the institutions and parties involved.

The experiences that Malian people have endured and the expectations of the population either confirm or refute the relevance of certain issues because the State is no longer in the habit of reflecting upon its own structure, its mode of functioning, and possible changes in its environment over the medium and long terms.

The State as well as the regions and terroirs (provinces) under it are no longer monolithic. Today, and even more so tomorrow, we will have to consider a plurality of key players, and

think about inclusiveness. Renewal of the system of governance is critical in this regard.

All across Mali, people fail to understand the terms of this Agreement. There is a lack of explanation and debate, two necessary or even indispensable ingredients for successful implementation of the Agreement. This is why every action taken in this context becomes an opportunity for more debate all the way up to a controversial discussion of policy, which, despite its usefulness in a democratic society, has no intrinsic added value when one considers the gravity of the situation.

6.2. Concrete Actions Needed

a. All the parties involved see the benefit of conducting a political dialogue. This dialogue must take into account ongoing changes and mutations within communities, as it broadens the potential for inclusive participation to other signatory and non-signatory groups.

It requires a systemic presentation that attracts the attention of all actors across the country. This approach needs to focus on several target groups, and be adjusted to conform to the nature and role of each group:

- i. The institutions of the Republic and leaders of the political parties;*
- ii. Forums for discussions and exchanges at the State level and within decentralised and branch offices with the representatives of key professional and civil society organisations.*

On many occasions, participants to a number of forums, symposiums and conferences have pointed out the indispensable need to re-establish the conditions for clear-minded, proactive governance to reassess all existing research

documents and publications that would allow the parties involved to understand the past in order to provide a sound basis for generating constructive opinions. Such an approach can help build a bridge between decision-making centres and policy research centres/think-tanks in the country in order to facilitate the decision-making process via a rigorous historical analysis of the crises that have affected all communities, and to finally grasp their nature fully by taking into account the factors contributing to change. This can be an opportunity for academic and research centres in Mali to be of service to the country and justify their existence.

Only a deep-going assessment like this makes possible a transition from gathering information to using knowledge to construct different scales and establish a globalised context. This would in turn allow us to depart from certain traditional values - important as these may have been in the past - and help pave the way to modernity.

A critical debate, and a rigorous approach to mutual understanding must also make it possible to deconstruct certain *"painful memories"*, which some individuals are turning into what Amin Maalouf (1998) terms *"murderous identities"*, and myths surrounding or crystallising positions regarding certain *"terroirs"* viewed as separatist in nature and the root causes of the negative perceptions that exist at interpersonal or community levels.

Implementing this recommendation implies analytical work, some reflection on how to run the public administration as an art form of local officials, as well as new charismatic leaders (from religious and youth groups) that use social networks extensively, and a shared understanding of existing obstacles, shortcomings and flaws. A partial or piecemeal understanding is not enough.

Already, as stated in the recommendations issued by participants in the conference "What political systems for the Sahel-Saharan region? Observations on political and security solutions to the crisis in Mali and some options for stability in the Sahel-Saharan region" (2014), two sound approaches have been forwarded on how to create the conditions for a true dialogue:

"The introduction of structural and innovative solutions in fundamental Malian laws and regulations, financial systems and corresponding timetables, and first of all the leadership role of the government".

Unfortunately, within the framework of the 10th EDF it was disclosed that the EU delegation had signed a convention with the Malian Government and provided an estimated amount of EUR 5,000,000, but implementation has not produced any tangible or visible results to date. This program was carried out in the name and on behalf of Mali by the same EU Commission that should have been closely monitoring this type of financial engineering.

The Malian Government signed the Convention on 15 May 2014, with the execution timeframe being 60 months, starting from its effective operationalisation date, with an initial operational implementation phase of 36 months and a second, final phase of 24 months. The technical and administrative provisions (DTA) laid down in Annex II of the Convention (Program RACOMA, Agreement No. ML/EDF/023-900) mention two (2) components: Component 1 is entitled *"Conducting historical research in order to understand the causes of the conflicts between Malians"*; Component 2 aimed at setting up *"a platform that will allow exchange/interactions about the theme of radicalisation, and the modalities for combating this problem in Mali"*.

b. Reaffirm and update the leadership role of the government, given the major crisis in governance, the demands forwarded by communities to make them an integral part of the process even though there are already duly mandated representatives and institutions. The actions of the key political players and signatory movements must converge at a clear and shared vision of the commitments they subscribe to, and that take into account the acknowledgement of communities and the revolt of the young generations against the existing order as has been documented. This requires the following actions:

- *Writing an all-encompassing history of the various terroirs (provinces) and communities that make up the Malian society along the lines of reporting the “National Malian Narrative”;*
- Revisiting the contemporary history of the country and its true economic potential. Such an exercise will inevitably lead us to integrate economic factors into the study. It will clarify the linkages between notions of economic growth, the demographic dividend and crisis context, and ensure that we design economic alternatives rooted in a preference for endogenous financing, which is a sine qua non condition for sustainability and for protecting the country against supranational (bilateral and multi-lateral) hidden agendas;
- *An in-depth reform of public institutions and agencies to foster emergence of a new type of interaction between the State and its citizens from a context in which these agencies document the expectations to be met and the roles to be fulfilled by traditional leaders.* These actions must sustain the constant and flexible implementation of institutional reforms in order to overcome remnants of issues inherited

from the period of French colonisation and that are still fuelling inter-community conflicts. This will only occur when an effective communication strategy materialises in the Habermasian sense of the term, in various venues, as a series of debates that enable the involvement of the people at the local level;

- *An orderly assessment of implementation of the Agreement* and all commitments made by the State vis-à-vis its partners through the creation of an ad hoc governmental agency in which local experts/researchers may continue to analyse the situation and make recommendations.

c. Emphasising the eminently political aspect of the Agreement. This political aspect must prevail throughout its process of implementation, which must not suffer from the malice and hidden agendas of politicians.

d. Along with international and national NGOs, ensure that the State of Mali, which has very limited resources, also benefits from the funding of national public policies, and not turn it into a hindrance to their appropriation and implementation. After all, “customer service” must benefit the State more than the communities and consultancy agencies!

e. Make sure that financial considerations do not prevail over the need for political leadership given the creation of multiple bodies charged with implementing the Agreement.

Beyond the contexts of sub-regional and regional cooperation, the U.N.’s permanent members must facilitate the empowerment of African troops in terms of logistics (air transport and secure means of communication) so that they undertake effective action against terrorist groups throughout the Sahara and Sahel regions.

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The new peace accord, *Accord pour la paix et la réconciliation au Mali issu du processus d'Alger* [Accord for peace and reconciliation in Mali emanating from the Algiers process], was formally signed on 15 May 2015 by the Government of Mali,

the Platform and two groups forming part of the CMA. The remaining CMA groups signed the accord on 20 June 2015. This publication critically examines the implementation of the peace agreement until December 2017.

