Regional Workshop on: Consolidating the Gains in Decentralization Reforms and Win-Win Policy Analysis

Capacity Building in Decentralization Reforms in Africa
The Experience of CAFRAD

Windhoek

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1. **Background**

Decentralization is synonymous with freedom and confidence. There is no freedom without confidence and there is no confidence in a centralized system.

Centralization is characterized by fear, suspicion and egoism. The one in the command position has no trust in others. He makes himself indispensable and turns the whole attention to himself.

What is true for individuals is also true for corporations and nations, knowing that, they are all composed AT individuals. Any change in a corporation or organization has to start with individuals. When individuals resist, no change can occur.

Specifically, centralization and decentralization are, first of all, individuals’ problem. When individuals change, when they adopt new values and approaches, results are manifested in their settings.

Decentralization therefore requires, above all, a change and a new approach in human-being cohabitation.

The question is, however, what kind of changes are needed in order to enhance decentralization? In other words, how can decentralization serve as a driving force in social cohabitation and integration, economic incentive and performance, as well as political participation and democracy? It means that, there is a need for a revolution in the way we perceive authority, command and responsibility.

In this perspective and without any doubt, decentralization can be seen as a catalyst in social emancipation and population participation.

But, if decentralization means conceding authority, responsibility and resources to the lower level, the prerequisite should be, that both levels have to play the game. The lower level has to build and strengthen its capabilities in assuming authority and responsibilities. Without up-grading its capacities and enlarging its resources, the lower level can not assume effectively its responsibilities and benefit from the decentralization process. Respectively, the level in the command will need new relationships, based on complementarity. This mutual involvement and change is fundamental to the success of the process.

In addition to community responsibilization, decentralization is also source of socio-economic development, through confidence in local initiatives and entrepreneurship, as well as national emulation and complementarity. Participation and productivity are best appreciated when people feel the need to work for their self-sustainability and their own growth. This approach produces a feeling of satisfaction, accomplishment and fulfilment.
At any time when the State becomes unable to ensure its economic role in producing goods and services, privatization becomes synonymous of decentralization. In this aspect, the State or the Government, not only disengages itself and encourages private sector to take over, but also and mainly stimulates and backs up private initiatives, free market and competitiveness. The State influence, in this situation, does not disappear. Its role, however, changes.

By decentralizing and privatizing economic activities, the State remains the principal actor in creating an enabling economic environment, through sustainable and sound policies, regulations, incentives and security.

A decentralized economy is not only in the hands of the private sector but it is also is grounded on the development of the potentialities of each region and community. It is a sustainable economy based on socio-economic welfare of local communities as well as the whole nation. A decentralized economy, therefore, is appropriate to stimulate local entrepreneurship, productivity, competitiveness and complementarity, being the foundation for economic growth and development.

The specific aspects of decentralization discussed above are of great significance for the success of decentralization reform. However, when addressing decentralization, political, administrative and financial considerations remain the most sought. This is true because, without political will and commitment, translated into administrative actions and financial means, no real decentralization can occur.

The basic questions to be asked when dealing with decentralization are: why for example in Africa, most of our economic and political systems have been centralized? What have been or are the consequences? On the other side, why do we militate for decentralization? What kind of society, administration, economy and political system do we want to build? In other words, what are the aims behind decentralization?

Unless we take time to deeply analyse such questions and considerations and also involve all the stakeholders in the exercise, the decentralization process can continue to lack its essential meaning. Furthermore, without a long term vision, founded on our potentialities and our present situation, our countries will fail in their decentralization efforts.

It is obvious that the excess of centralization has caused political unrest, economic crisis and social degradation in our continent. Centralization has benefited people in command, but not countries or populations. Decentralization is therefore the mechanism for individuals and countries to recover their freedom, rights and well-being. It is the way, for populations to express their existence, their importance and their capabilities.

In this connection, decentralization means democratization, where freedom and right of association, undertaking and expression are granted. Decentralization is therefore recognition to local authorities the right to organize themselves and initiate actions for their self-reliance and self-sustainability.
Through this process, not only the local government becomes partner with the central government but also both develop complementary actions to secure resources and welfare benefiting the whole nation.

By founding their relationships in mutual trust and confidence, local and central governments can work together to achieve decentralization and build a harmonious and integrated State.

In Africa, decentralization is underway. Some countries have reached the devolution stage, granting more powers and responsibilities to local governments. Others still work on the appropriate mechanisms to lead to the success of the process. Whatever the stage reached, no one can doubt on the irreversibility of the process in the continent.

2. Experiences of Selected Countries on Decentralization Reforms

From various papers presented by participants during CAFRAD’s seminars on decentralization reforms, we have extracted some significant parts to be shared. Following are summaries of various ongoing and practical experiences in the continent on decentralization reforms. It does not mean that these are the best or the only good experiences. They just provide information on activities in selected countries, without neglecting those which are not included.

THE GAMBIA

The 1997 Constitution states that Local Government administration shall be based on a system of democratically elected councils with a high degree of local autonomy.

It states further that the State shall be guided by the principles of decentralization and devolution of governmental functions and powers to the people at appropriate levels of control to facilitate democratic governance.

The implementation of this constitutional provision has been embodied in the “vision 2020”, as expressed in the first five-year strategy and plan of action, with the following policy objectives for local government reform:

1. To extend the process of democratisation to the local level by promoting the direct participation of the population in the management of their own affairs.
2. To promote a spatially integrated approach to development which starts from the people themselves.
3. Within the context of these objectives it has been decided to organise a decentralised local government administration on the basis of the following general principles:
• The highest echelon in local government administration is the City Council, Municipal Council or Area Council, known collectively as local government authorities.

• Decentralized local government administration shall be at the level of the current administrative divisions for the rural areas, and within the existing territorial boundaries of these divisions or of the existing municipal and city council.

• This administration will be directed by a body consisting of Councillors, elected by universal adult suffrage.

• The administration shall have legal status and envoy financial autonomy.

3. Strategies for Implementation of the Reforms

To achieve these policy objectives, the following implementation strategy is proposed:

Establish and operationalise a Programme Coordination and Management, Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism within the Department of State for Local Government and Lands, comprising:

• The Programme Coordinating Committee (PCC).

On the basis of approved government policy, the PCC would be responsible for policy formulation and review; the expediting of policy decisions and the resolution of any major implementation problems that may arise. Specifically, the Committee would approve work programmes and budget; review semi-annual and annual progress reports and initiate any corrective action that may be necessary; appoint and supervise senior personnel and make judicious allocation of resources for efficient programme implementation. The PCC would submit an annual progress report to the Secretary of State for Local Government and Lands.

The Committee is composed of the Permanent Secretary, Department of State for Local government and Lands as Chairman, the Permanent Secretaries of the Departments of State with the relevant portfolios, representatives of Local Government Authorities including other key stakeholders of other local level institutions and development partners.

The PCC provides a channel for intersectoral linkages and would ensure that the PMU enjoys a considerable degree of autonomy in the execution of its mandate.
• **The Programme Management Unit (PMU)**

The PMU will be responsible for the overall management and coordination of programme activities. It would produce the annual work plans and budgets for all activities for submission to the PCC for approval; supervise implementation of approved work plans; and have authority, through the PCC, to effect corrective action. In addition, the PMU would ensure that expenditures correspond to programme activities and that resources acquired for the programmes are effectively used.

Specifically, the PMU would be responsible for:

- Procurement and disbursement;
- Maintaining the project accounts and making arrangements for audits;
- Submit semi-annual, annual and other reports that may be required by the PCC and development partners.

The PMU would be headed by a full time Programme Manager who would be assisted by Programme Officers. The staff would also include an Accountant, an Accounts Clerk, a Secretary and other support staff.

- Develop the appropriate legal and institutional framework for the establishment of democratic, autonomous Local Government Authorities by redefining the roles and functions of Central Government, Local Government Authorities and other local level institutions.
- Capacitize the authorities and ensure the provision of the requisite human, material and financial resources for the effective and efficient discharge of their mandate.
- Create the conditions for a continuous dialogue with the population by developing and implementing a communications strategy. This would assist in nurturing full understanding of the concepts of the reform, provide information on the progress of the process to all involved, and obtain feedback from all levels.
- Create and capacitize development institutions at local level, adopt bottom-up development planning procedures and establish a mechanism for financing local investments early in the process.
- Define Central and Local Government responsibilities and transfer responsibilities and functions based on assessed requirements of Local Government Authorities for the developed human, financial and technical capacity.
4. Summary of Action Plan

Legal and Administrative Reforms

- Establish and operationalise a Programme Coordination and Management, Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism comprising of the Programme Coordinating Committee (PCC) and the Programme Management Unit (PMU).
- Revise and enact legislation related to Local Government Administration viz, Kanifing Municipal Council, Banjul City Council, Local Government, Provincial and District Tribunal Acts; the Elections Decree and other related Regulations.
- Draft and enact legislation for establishment of DCCs/MCCs, WDCs, FDCs and other Local Government Institutions.
- Review and adopt Financial Instructions and Financial Memoranda in line with proposed Local Government Reforms.
- Restructure the Department of Community Development in consonance with the reformed Local Government System.
- Review, redefine and adopt sectoral functions and activities as well as administrative procedures at both Local and Central Government levels in line with proposed Local Government Reforms.

Capacity Building

- Capacity assessment of Local Government Authorities VDCs, WDCs, DCCs/MCCs.
- Preparation of Institutional Development Plans.
- Acquisition of the necessary human and material resources.
- Implementation of Institutional Development Plans.
- Provision of office and residential accommodation for Local Government Authorities.
- Preparation and execution of an infrastructural development plan (public assets).
- Implementation of an Action Plan to expand the financial base of Local Government Agencies.

Community Participation

- Conduct of Local Government Elections in accordance with provisions of the Constitution.
- Establish and strengthen all participatory organs in each Local Government Authority including Community-Based Organisations.
To meet the costs of the operations, and implementation of the decentralization programme, significant financial resources have been provided in the Governmental budget.

LESOTHO

The decentralization and establishment of Local Government policy is concomitant with the principles of democracy interpreted in the constitution. The decentralization is an integral part for poverty alleviation, with three broad objectives:

- to ensure that the decision-making, resource allocation, district level planning, local development and public services move physically closer to the people.
- to deepen and widen access to the structures of government and give the electorate greater democratic context over development planning process, and making public institutions more accountable to elected representatives.
- and to ensure equitable distribution of government’s human, institutional and infrastructural resources and capacity building.

The goal is to realize sustainable development under the control and management of the people directly affected, thus ensuring better co-ordination of development efforts and full participation of communities in poverty reduction efforts.

The decentralization is conducted in three-phased approach, namely: phase one - conceptualization and ownership; phase two - transition and; phase three - post election.

**Phase one and achievement made:**

1. Establishment of the Ministry of Local Government.
2. National stakeholders forum which formed a basis for a white paper.
3. Workshops in all the districts to discuss the white paper, represented by chiefs, civil servants, private and parastatal sectors as well as NGOs.
5. Passage of Local Government elections Act.
6. Establishment of the Inter-ministerial task force to:
   - determine the functions and personnel to be decentralized to Districts and Local Government Structures;
   - draw job description and competencies for District administrators;
   - determine terms and conditions of service for Local Government Service;
   - determine recruitment procedures and handling mechanism.
7. Five consultancy studies were commissioned in:
   - financing of Local Government, suggest possible sources of revenue
for Local Government;
human resources study : to clarify the roles and relationships of the positions and institutions, such as Council chief Executive, District administrators, District planning units, Local Government Commissions, Council staff, etc.;
Infrastructure study providing physical infrastructure for Councils, social infrastructure, development infrastructure, etc.;
Planning framework study : multidisciplinary planning units;
Education study, combining health and agriculture.

8. Boundaries delimitation study: for demarcation of Local Government boundaries;
9. Workshops for three pilot Ministries : Education, Health and Agriculture for an integrated decentralization plan;
10. Studies on Chieftainship and District financial management in order to harmonize co-existence of the traditional institutions and modern form of governance.

The transition phase :


• Local Government boundaries delimitation. Discuss and consider the report of the study on the same issue ; public consultation; finalize boundaries delimitation and publish the local authorities boundaries.
• Up-date of voters registration; to desegregate voters roll by local boundaries and up date voters roll.
• Budget preparation for Local Government elections.
• Voters education/advocacy and support strategy.
• Amendment to Local Government Act, conferring some powers of the Ministry of Local Government to the Independent Electoral Commission, especially for the demarcation of the boundaries of the local authorities.
• Action Plan.

Other actions planned during the transition period are :

• promoting ownership of the process of decentralization and establishment of local government units in all Ministries - workshops - meetings, etc.
• determining the best possible means to providing infrastructure for local authorities - constructions.
• development of administrative, financial and legal systems, such as rules and regulations, procedures, guidelines, etc.
• development of an integrated plan inclusive of all Ministries - all stakeholders.
• soliciting technical and financial assistance from co-operating partners.
• placement and strengthening of district planning units, multi-sectorial planning units.
• appointment of district administrators, local government service commissioners, chief Executives of councils, etc.
• preparation of training programmes and introduction for councilors, ChiefExecutives, etc.

THE THIRD PHASE

Concerns monitoring and evaluation of systems and performances/councils as well as institutional building.

UGANDA

In Uganda, decentralization has been a deliberate Democratic Reform for the transfer of political, administrative, financial and planning powers and authority from the Centre to Local Government Councils.

According to the 1995 Constitution and the Local Governments Act, 1997, there are two categories of local councils in Uganda.

Administrative Unit Councils

These are (in rural areas) at County, Parish and village levels; and (in urban areas) at Parish, Ward and village levels.

The administrative Unit councils perform the following functions :

• They draw the attention of Local Government Political and Civic Leaders at their level to any matter that rouses their concern and interest;
• At county level, they advise the area member of Parliament on all matters pertaining to the County (Counties or parts thereof are the Parliament Constituencies in Uganda);
• They resolve problems identified at that level;
• Monitor the delivery of services within the area of jurisdiction;
• Assist in the maintenance of law, order and security;
• Carry out any functions imposed by law or incidental to the above.

Committees:

• Assist in the maintenance of law, order and security;
• Initiate, encourage, support and participate in self-help projects and mobilise people, materials, and technical assistance in relation thereto;
• At the Village level vet and recommend persons in the area who should be recruited into the armed forces;
• Serve as the communication channel between the government, District and other Local Councils and the people in the area;
• Generally monitor the administration in the area and report to the
higher authorities;
Generally monitor projects and other activities undertaken by the
Central Government, Local Governments and NGOs in the area;
Carry out other functions which may be imposed by law or incidental
to the above.

Local Government Councils

at District, City, Municipal, City Division and Municipal Division, sub-county
and town councils.

The Local Government councils have a corporate status while the
Administrative Unit councils do not.

Functions and powers of Local Government councils:

- Exercise all political and executive powers and functions;
- Provide services as it deems fit with the exception of the functions,
powers and services reserved for the Central Government;
- Protect the Constitution and other laws of Uganda and promote
democratic Governance; and
- Ensure the implementation and compliance with Central Government
policy.

Central-Local relationship (respective responsibilities).

In line with the Local Government Act, 1997, the Ministries (the Central
Government) inspect, monitor, supervise and where necessary, offer technical advice
and training. The Central Government retained the following functions and services:

1. Arms, ammunition and explosions;
2. Defence, Security, maintenance of law and order;
3. Banks, banking, promissory notes, currency and exchange control;
4. Subject to the Constitution;
5. Citizenship, immigration, emigration, refugees, deportation;
6. Copyrights, patents and trademarks and all forms of intellectual property,
icorporation and regulation of business organisations;
7. Land, mines, mineral and water resources and the environment;
8. National Parks, as may be prescribed by Parliament;
9. Public Holidays;
10. National monuments, antiquities, archives and public records as Parliament
may determine;
11. Foreign relations and external trade;
12. The regulation of trade and commerce;
13. Making national plans for the provision of Services and co-ordinating plans
made by Local Governments;
14. National elections;
15. Energy policy;
16. Transport and communication policy;
17. National censures and statistics;
18. Public Service of Uganda;
19. The judiciary;
20. National Standards;
21. Education policy;
22. National surveys and mapping;
23. Industrial policy;
24. Forests and game reserve policy;
25. National research policy;
26. Control and management of epidemics and disasters;
27. Health policy;
28. Agricultural policy;
29. Any matter incidental to or connected with the above functions and services.

The Central Government no longer:

- approves Local Government budgets;
- approves Local Government by-laws;
- terminates the mandate of a Councillor nor dissolve Local Government Councils;
- have direct powers over Local Government staff.

Also, all regional offices save for armed forces and finance were abolished. All matters, services and functions of Local significance are decided upon and implemented by the respective Local Councils particularly on health, education, water, roads, bridges and field services.

**Resources for Decentralised Government.**

Basically, Local Governments depend on finances from:

- Central Government transfers (Grants);
- Local revenue collections, mainly from: graduated tax, market dues, licences, fees, rents and rates, user charge, etc.;
- Donors: NGOs, other foreign Governments, etc.

**Responsibilities in the Decentralization process.**

- The principal organ facilitating and overseeing the implementation of the decentralization programme is the Decentralization Policy Implementation Committee (DPIC), under the chairmanship of the Head of civil service.
- The DPIC comprises of Permanent Secretaries of key Ministries directly involved in the process of decentralisation (beginning with Office of the President and that of the Prime Minister).
- The Decentralisation Secretariat is under the Ministry of Local Government. The Secretariat provides the technical and administrative support necessary for
the successful implementation of the programme. The secretariat works through specialised staff seconded from Government institutions and parastatals, seminars and workshops, experts and consultants.

- Local Government Councils appoint statutory bodies in the Districts (Commissions, etc.)
- Civil servants implement the policies.

Uganda has pursued the devolution type of decentralisation, along with privatisation, where some powers, roles and responsibilities have been surrendered to private persons and bodies.

**BURKINA FASO**

The mechanism of decentralization is well advanced in Burkina Faso. The coordination of the whole process is made under the responsibility of the National Committee for Decentralization. In addition to the Constitution and legal provisions, decentralization is conceived and implemented within the framework of national development orientations and plans.

DECNETRA.

Local authorities include Regions, provinces, and communes. Each entity is headed by a chairman, nominated by the central government.

**CAMEROON**

The decentralization process includes four levels: Central, Region, Department and Commune.

The Region and Commune have juridical, moral and financial status.

The Commune has a deliberative organ or municipal council and an Executive organ. The Mayor and his deputies are elected by the communal council.

Region and Commune are decentralized, territorial local governments.

The Region has its administrative and financial autonomy, as well as juridical status.

The Regional Council is the deliberative organ.

The Executive organ is headed by the President of the Council.

The President is elected by indirect suffrage. He is assisted by the Bureau and a delegate, nominated (as representative) by the State.
EGYPT

Organization and structure of the Decentralized Unit.

- The supreme council for local administration, is formed under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister or his deputy. Members are the competent Ministers for local administration, the Governors and Heads of the Local Popular Councils of the Governorates.
- The economic Region. Each Region combines two or more governorates to form the Committee for Regional Planning. The Committee is headed by the Governor of the Region.
- Governorate, consisting of Central towns, cities, districts and villages.
- Executive Council of the Governorate, chaired by the Governor. The Governors report directly to the Prime Minister and are appointed by the President.
- Local Popular Council. Each Governorate has a Local Popular Council, composed of elected representatives, and chaired by a President and two Deputies.
- Financially, the governorate gets its resources from two parts: resources which are in common or shared with the other governorates; in this case, the governorate has half of its revenue or collection from taxes on the exports and imports within its scope, and the other half is deposited in accounts of the joint resources. The governorate receives also half of the collection from transferred values and taxes of the commercial and industrial profits in addition to resources belonging to the governorate, such as taxes imposed on land, licence, subsidies, donations, etc.

GHANA

The decentralization policy and strategy of Ghana is embodied in the chart called District Assembly system. The focus is on the transfer of power (authority), functions and resources involving human, financial and material from Central Government, Ministries and Departments to regional and local (district) authorities.

The District Chief Executive is nominated by the President of the Republic. But, he has to be approved by the District Assembly before he is confirmed by the President as duly appointed.

The District Assembly or legislator is headed by the speaker or chairman of the Assembly.

The District Chief Executive is the direct representative of the President of the Republic and the Central Government. He is the chairman of the Executive Committee and responsible for the day-to-day performance of the executive and administration functions of the Assembly.
The Chief Executive is also responsible of the Departments of the assembly and the coordination of the work of the chairman of the sub-committee of the District Assembly, labelled as District Ministers.

KENYA

The decentralization process in Kenya is grounded on the rural-urban balance strategy. The main responsibility in the implementation of the strategy is the District. In this capacity, the District, through the District Development Committee, integrates and coordinates in its programmes, the development activities of local authorities, parastatals, regional development authorities and non-Governmental Organizations. The Committee is headed by the District Commissioner.

MALAWI

Malawi uses the devolution form of decentralization in its local government system. Local authorities have been created with administrative and financial autonomy. However, the central tendencies of government, wishing to retain an interest in everything in the field, has denied local authorities the autonomy and resources for effective provision of the services. Instead, local authorities remain dependant on central government administration.

5. Findings From Countries’ Experiences

When analysing these papers and many others and discussing with officials directly involved in the mechanism of decentralization reforms in Africa, we find the conclusions highlighted hereafter:

- Decentralization is a national project, reflected in the constitution and involves Central and Local Governments, private sector, NGOs, Civil society and the entire population. It expresses the degree of political maturity, the level of population emancipation and the solidity of national and local institutions.
- Decentralization is, first of all, a political affair, necessitating a clear vision of the society, translated into sound national and local policies, as well as total stakeholders commitment.
- Decentralization has social, economic and political implications. It requires not only up-grading awareness of populations for their full participation, but also supplementary and important resources, and sharing of powers and responsibilities.
- Decentralization and democratization, as well as privatisation are complementary processes and have to go together.
- Decentralization is seen as a tentative solution to poverty alleviation, fight against unemployment and under-development. It enhances self-reliance and local initiatives, in the one hand and builds local capacities and sustainability, in the other.
- Decentralization is a way, for the central government, to let local governments, or people do what government is unable to do. It is the way for
people and local communities to take care of themselves and be able to participate in national edification through their local communities.

6. **CAFRAD’s Programme in Decentralization and New Perspectives**

CAFRAD was created to backup African governments efforts in reforming and modernising their administration, in order to improve their performance and efficiency. In this connection, important programmes have been carried out in training, research, consultancy and publication, with emphasis on administrative reform, decentralization and rural-urban development, public enterprise management and privatization, women in development, public management and public policy analysis, democratization and good governance, etc.

Through these actions, decentralization has been conceived as a component of the whole process of administrative reform, including, among other important facets, democratisation, economic liberalization, social equity and institutional capacity building. The present CAFRAD’s programme on decentralization comprises, thus the following three complementary parts:

- Critical review and evaluation of on-going practices and programmes in decentralization reforms in order to consolidate best practices and extend the gains in connected areas;
- Learn from new trends, methods and techniques in the decentralization process;
- Up-grade capacities and competencies in local government management through exposure to appropriate management and policy making methods and techniques for better local governance.

The main objectives of CAFRAD’s programme (workshops) on decentralization reforms are as follows:

- Disseminate information on the current state of devolution, by central authorities, of powers to local-level representative institutions;
- Identify constraints and obstacles to meaningful decentralization in Africa, and suggest ways of removing them;
- Focus participants’ attention on measures to be designed to enhance the capacity of decentralized bodies to design and implement “demand-driven”, local-level projects;
- Sensitize participants in the use of win-win policy analysis methods, new public management, good governance, total quality management, information and communication technologies, environmental management in the decentralized units;
- Outline measures aimed at fostering customer-service orientation within local and central government agencies;
- Encourage participants to develop action plans for follow-up actions.
It should be noted that CAFRAD had already conducted training seminars on consolidating and extending the gains in decentralization reforms in Tangier (Morocco) in February 1998, in Banjul (The Gambia) in February 1999, and the 19th Conference of Directors of ENA/IPA/IDM in Africa scheduled to be in held in London (U.K.) on 16 Julu 1999 will be on Training Senior Administrators in Decentralization and Local Government Management.

The Namibia workshop will address itself to the following sub-themes:

1. Critical and comparative review of current decentralization policy and practices;
2. Conceptual review of decentralized governance;
3. Financing decentralization: innovative resource mobilization;
4. Local environmental management and sustainable development;
5. Information and communication technologies and decentralization;
6. Fostering customer-service orientation in service delivery agencies;
7. New public management in local governance;
8. Management and evaluation of decentralized governance programme;
9. Country presentation (from participants) and case studies;
10. Issues and priorities in decentralization reforms;
11. Visit to local projects;

In addition the Namibia workshop will discuss win-win policy analysis methods whose elements include:

- conservative goals and alternatives;
- liberal goals and alternatives;
- relations between the major alternatives and goals;
- development of Win-Win solutions, and
- feasibility and hurdles to overcome.

Through these various actions, we are convinced that African countries will move further, from simple deconcentration to total devolution, decentralizing fundamental areas such as education, health, social infrastructure, economic production, budgeting, planning as well as policy and decision on local socio-economic development. In this token, Africa needs a new approach of making politics and business, grounded on genuine sharing of authority, responsibilities, advantages and challenges.

In organizing this series of workshops on decentralization reforms, CAFRAD intends to enhance the mechanism of decentralization and consolidate the gains, build capacities and back-up of local governments options in democratization, responsibilization and total popular participation.