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Dear Fatou

I hope that this letter finds you and your colleagues at WANEP well.

The purpose of this rather formal correspondence is to provide feedback and some hopefully useful comment on the way forward on the WANEP 'concept notes' to the African Human Security Initiative (AHSI) project.

Let me start off by thanking you for this first iteration of the WANEP document that we received some days ago. You will recall that the purpose is to update the presentation that WANEP provided during our September meeting, based on the feedback and subsequent discussion, and thereby:

- Present a theoretical framework that would justify the choice of a set of key commitments of African Heads of State within the ambit of the WANEP theme, namely civil society engagement. These commitments would also be unpacked in a table that covers, for each commitment, key indicators of compliance, methodology of how the partner would go about measuring compliance and any associated problems (if any, and measures to overcome these problems). In summary this input would motivate, define, document (and subsequently comply) with a solid methodology; and
- Provide a schedule of activities in the form of a work plan. This would include a time schedule, activities and output, providing a clear description of the research process over time, including country visits, etc.

You will recall that it is up to the ISS to work on a draft conceptual paper, to be circulated to other project partners by the end of October. One of our tasks is to provide some type of definition and framework for our discussion of 'human security' since it represents the core concept that binds the various research clusters together, and include within that framework a motivation for the 'choice' of clusters. This is therefore still a bit of a lacuna in providing conceptual coherence to the work of the various partners.

The WANEP document provides a brief introduction and background, followed by a section that defines civil society and draws the link between civil society empowerment/ engagement and human security. It then sets out your research objectives and identifies key commitments relevant to this theme. Finally it outlines elements of the research strategy and methodology. Overall this first draft provides a solid foundation for this section of the AHSI project.

We particularly liked the conceptual section on “civil society and human security in Africa”, which promises an excellent theoretical introduction to come in the final report of this theme. To this could be added some more historical context on the development of civil society in Africa, and some of the debates about (often antagonistic) relations between the state and civil society in Africa, with some country specific references to Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya, Algeria, etc. This would elaborate on your observation that “the recognition of the role of civil society varies from state to state”. The following references may be useful for this section: Mamdani & Wamba-dia-Wamba, “Citizen and subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism” (London: James Currey); Sandbrook, R. and Halfani, M. (eds), “Empowering People: Building Community, Civil Association and Legality in Africa”, 1993; and Bayart, J-F, “Civil society in Africa” in P. Chabal (ed) Political Domination in Africa (1989).

The statement of WANEP’s research goal “to benchmark the performance of 8 African governments against commitments...to strengthen and co-operate with civil society groups and organisations for the promotion of peace and human security” is succinct and well-defined. However, in the introductory section, you add “It will also assess the level of preparedness of civil society to respond to this new emerging partnership with governments and the AU”. This may be too ambitious and outside of the ambit of the AHSI project as a whole, which is confined to measuring compliance by the states themselves. We would urge you to focus on finding out what the governments are doing to engage civil society (which should, of course, include asking civil society organisations what they think of their government’s efforts) for practical reasons and theoretical consistency with the other themes.

Moving to your section on “key commitments and benchmarks”, could we suggest reformulating the list as five commitments, namely:

1. Fostering and facilitating active and genuine participation of citizens in the decision-making processes and the conduct of public affairs;
2. Promoting political pluralism, allowing for the existence of several political parties and workers’ unions, and the participation of civil society, including enhancing and ensuring gender balance in the political process;
3. Building a partnership between the government and all segments of civil society;
4. Ensuring the full participation of the African peoples in the development and economic integration of the continent;
5. Fostering participation of the African peoples in the activities of the African Union.

How to measure the implementation of these commitments needs to be clarified further. It is important that the commitments are each broken down into benchmarks and are therefore 'measurable'. For example, indicators of whether each government has implemented Commitment 5 could be "has the government ratified the Pan-African Parliament Protocol?"; "has the government held any consultations with civil society in that country about ECOSOC?". For Commitments 3 and 4, you could ask to what extent does each government work with NGOs and civil society more broadly in implementing development projects, and so on. These indicators are the questions that you give your local researchers to ask in each country – your "assessment tool" in other words.

Finally, we have asked each partner to compile a work plan, indicating who your researchers will approach in each country and when. This will help to co-ordinate all the research that is going on in the same 8 countries and enable us to benefit from each partner's expertise in the different subregions.

At the risk of being accused of a South African bias we attach an example that could be useful, namely the benchmarks/indicators for the democracy and political governance theme by Dr Anne Hammerstad of SAIIA.

Hope this helps and look forward to receipt of a revised and updated version of the WANEP document at your earliest convenience.

Warm regards,

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Attached: SAIIA methodology