AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE ON STATE-BUILDING

- INSTITUTIONAL CAPABILITIES AND LEGITIMACY OF THE STATE

Edited by: Suvi Tuominen

A seminar organized jointly by the Crisis Management Initiative and the Institute for Security Studies, 19 February 2009, Brussels, Belgium
About the Organizer

The Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) focuses on issues critical to creating sustainable peace and security, and making strategic contributions to the capacity of local, regional and international actors operating in war-torn and conflict-ridden societies through preventive diplomacy, peace-mediation and state-building.

CMI

- Promotes sustainable security in a pioneering way;
- Brings together actors to seek solutions to security challenges;
- Engages in capacity building among the international community in conflict prevention, resolution and transformation;
- Advocates solutions for security;
- Uses comprehensive approaches that bind together security and development, good governance, justice and reconciliation.

CMI’s Post-War State-Building Activities

The objective of CMI’s post-war state-building activities is to address the causes of state fragility and to improve the ability of the state to fulfil its function of serving and protecting its citizens. CMI produces methodological tools for prioritizing and sequencing in state-building programmes.

The cluster additionally develops tools for effective implementation of state-building priorities. It also aims to better link peacebuilding, state-building and long-term development processes. The geographical focus is currently in Africa.

Acknowledgements

CMI would like to acknowledge all the speakers and participants of the seminar for their valuable contribution. CMI especially wants to acknowledge the Governments of Belgium, Finland and Norway for their financial support in making this seminar possible as well as the German Government for their support for this publication.
It is increasingly apparent that effective state-building is critical for global peace and security and that preventing state fragility and supporting state-building are the most important tasks facing the international community today.

Developing Africa into functioning states has become a firm priority of African leaders, African organizations, foreign governments, and multilateral institutions. Yet there is no “one size fits all” road map for African state-building. One of the most pressing challenges for African nations is the question of how to develop systems of governance that are operationally functional and responsive to the needs of African citizens. There is a clear need to support African leadership and vision in state-building processes and to see state-building as a response to state fragility.

To tackle these challenges and to highlight these opportunities, Crisis Management Initiative arranged, together with the Institute for Security Studies, a seminar “An African Perspective on State-building – Institutional Capabilities and Legitimacy of the State” in Brussels on 27 February 2009. The specific purpose of the seminar was to discuss the importance of strengthening institutional capacities for service delivery in fragile countries in Africa in order to consolidate peace and contribute to long-term stability, and also to discuss what European policy makers can do to better direct their support to that end.

The seminar also addressed the current debate among researchers and policy makers as to the respective roles of internal and external actors in prioritizing, sequencing, and implementing state-building agendas. Through this lens, participants discussed African actors and policies for state-building, as well as the role of international actors, particularly the European Union, in cooperation, coordination and division of labour.

The seminar facilitated participant discussion on state-building processes in Sierra Leone and the Central African Republic and provoked critical discussion about the model of state-building in Africa. The seminar further raised the question how the donor community could better support legitimacy of the state and its ability to provide services.

The seminar was attended by representatives of EU institutions, governments, research organizations and civil society.

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II DEFINING STATE FRAGILITY AND STATE-BUILDING
Kelsi Shire, Crisis Management Initiative

State-building targets “fragile states”. Because there is no global agreement on how to define a “fragile state”, there is equal disagreement over the purpose and definition of statebuilding itself. Traditionally, sources have defined as “fragile” those that experience “sovereignty deficits”, meaning that they are incapable and/or unwilling to perform “essential state functions”, to implement pro-poor policies, or to deliver public goods. Whatever the definition, “fragile states” are widely acknowledged to exhibit negative patterns such as the lack of monopoly on the use of violence, poor economic performance, corruption and the lack of transparency, high risk of violent conflict, and an underdeveloped democratic culture.

Despite these commonalities, there are many different types of state fragility that derive from the causes and nature of each state’s deficiencies. Often, fragile states are viewed as being “stuck” or “trapped” in cycles of violent conflict and anarchy, the mark of a failed state. Severe poverty, poor governance, and often the presence of profiteable natural resources help lock these cycles into place. Though typologies of fragility are almost as numerous as definitions for “state-building”, most sources agree that where each fragile state falls along the dichotomy between relative peace and active warfare determines what kind of fragility it is experiencing and what its needs are in terms of reform and intervention. For example, the African Development Bank uses “marked deterioration”, “active conflict and/or prolonged crisis”, “post-crisis/transitional”, and “gradual improvement” as the stages of fragility, and has identified a strategic approach and policy instruments thought to be most useful in each phase.

More recent literature stresses a dynamic model where states fall along a continuum between “fragility” and “resilience” in their ability to deliver functions expected by societal groups, manage changes in these groups’ expectations, and use nonviolent means to withstand and manage shocks and societal change. As defined by the OECD DAC Fragile States Group Task Team, state-building is “an endogenous process to enhance capacity; institutions and legitimacy of the state driven by state-society relations.” Put simply, its goal is to develop state resilience as determined by the context and history of the targeted society. Implicit in this model is that states experience fragility when there is some failure of social contract, but that the terms of that contract must be the result of an organic negotiation process between citizens and the state.

State-building should not be confused with peacebuilding, nation building, or institution building, though it may be mutually reinforcing with these tasks. Instead, state-building is a long-term and non-linear effort that focuses on developing governance by targeting a country’s legitimacy, political processes, and administrative capacities at both local and national levels. Models that confuse good governance with certain institutional prescriptions ignore the role of society in shaping a governance model that best suits their needs, expectations, and ideas about legitimate authority. Developing de facto sovereignty, where states hold legitimacy with their own citizens should be prioritized over the more formal components of democracy and stability. Non-state actors, local government structures and practices, and historical preferences will serve varying functions in the development of each state.

External actors should play a supportive and collaborative role by looking for opportunities to strengthen the re-negotiation of the social contract. It is imperative that they exercise great caution, sensitivity, and flexibility to ensure that they do no harm through their involvement. The resulting social contract will in turn lay the foundation for establishing state legitimacy by ensuring that governing institutions are shaped by the needs and expectations of citizens.

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1. Other sources use “failed state”, and “weak state”.
6. Framing paper on statebuilding- forthcoming

8. Ibid p. 2
9. OECD DAC Fragile State Building Task Team, pp. 4-6
III OPENING REMARKS

1. Minister Karel De Gucht
Karel De Gucht is a Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Belgium

Good morning and welcome. There are at least two good reasons for being here. One is to pay tribute to Nobel Peace Prize Winner 2008 and Chairman of Crisis Management Initiative: Mr. Martti Ahtisaari

Mr. President, thank you for your presence among us today. You and your organization Crisis Management Initiative are important actors of peacebuilding in this challenging 21st Century. I thank you for your continued efforts to improve EU cooperation and your tireless pleading for effective partnerships to enhance the role of civil society participation in crisis management. It is an honour to work alongside you at this seminar.

The second reason is today’s subject for reflection that I find particularly interesting. It is our challenge to determine the national, regional and international policy strategies most conducive to strengthening institutional capacities for effective service delivery to civil society in Africa. In doing so, we must ascertain that these strategies are in tune with the heart and soul of the African people and at the same time resonate with the rational discourse of the larger world institutions. It is futile to expect that the international community by itself will be in a position to procure the recipes that current fragile states themselves will be in a position to develop within Africa so desperately need. Nor will the latter be capable to develop without the sustained accompaniment of the world community. There is only one way to go about this, and that is through dialogue and cooperation. Such dialogue can sometimes be delicate, yes, but needs to be open, honest and straightforward. Dialogue is absent when diversity of opinion is expressed but not really listened to and acted upon. Dialogue requires legitimacy for it is pointless to engage in a political process that is not supported by the primary stakeholders, the people. President Martti Ahtisaari and Crisis Management Initiative share a strong belief that it serves the people and at the same time resonate with the heart and soul of the African people.

Legitimacy should be at the heart of any government. Government involves a contract between the rulers and the people that should be based on trust and respect, not a rule based on fear and coercion.

During the end of the 20th century, declining legitimacy was a problem for most African leaders. At the same time, state instruments of coercion also shrank. Many Africans no longer considered their leaders willing or capable of assisting their welfare or of representing their political aspirations. Resources were sucked out of society by the government while the government offered little in return. The sad truth is that the aspirations of the African people were taken hostage by dictatorships, coup d'etats and institutionalized corruption. These resulted in too many cases in periods of chronic civil war, complete lawlessness and severe infringements of human rights.

Confronted by this Africans combined both engagement and disengagement. They tended to work with the state, or whatever remained of it, when it was in their interests to do so, but avoided it when it was not. Where formal state institutions had decayed, civil society had no other option but to step into the breach. Africans took to create and strengthen channels and operations within the informal sphere. State collapse occurred where state institutions of enforcement, execution and decision making failed completely. Basic functions of state could no longer be fulfilled and finding for oneself became the only viable strategy.

Considering these dynamics, it is clear that in the aftermath the challenges to re-establishing a working and legitimate state in many cases were and are enormous. To redeem this, the responsibility of Africa and its local power brokers cannot be overemphasized. It takes hard work, conviction and perseverance to build and establish good functioning, democratic and transparent states that serve the interests of the people and are fully accountable to them.

Donors have to widen their perspective on, and understanding of, legitimacy considerably. In order to strengthen both legitimacy and effectiveness of state institutions it is vital to address both non-state informal ‘traditional’ and state-based formal ‘modern’ sources of power, authority and legitimacy. It is therefore crucial, in developing states exhibiting signs
of fragility, that these two dimensions be blended if state institutions are to take root in society and develop an organic ridge between past, present and future.

In the long term the most effective way to guarantee a state’s survival is through the re-legitimization of its institutions. If trust can be restored, then authority can be regained. As Professor Kevin Clements (of the Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Queensland) puts it: for the emergence of effective, capable and legitimate states, it is necessary that legitimacy is grounded. “Grounded legitimacy” - according to Professor Clements - exists when the system of governance and authority is well-connected with local realities; when it is connected with people’s understanding and experience of the fundamental underpinnings of social order and well-being and engaged with their collective sense of their own needs and their shared sources of meaning. In the absence of grounded legitimacy, rational-legal states often fail to take root in societies and tend to govern either in a predatory or coercive fashion or in a disconnected and disempowering way that undermines the resilience and problem-solving capacities of local communities.

We of course aren’t the first to come to this conclusion and the real question is how to help these states build their capacity and legitimacy.

Mr. President, I borrow your phrase: "Building peace includes many phases and it cannot be considered as a ready-made pattern and path, which just needs to be followed. Each peace process is a unique combination of history and future, with unique people and interests." 11

As you all know, my country Belgium has a longstanding relationship with a few characteristic states of Central Africa where the challenges of grounded legitimacy and state-building are ongoing.

I believe that our efforts should continue boosting the capacity of African states to deliver basic services to their people, providing for education, justice, medical services, customs, human security, good governance, et cetera. Belgium is contributing in all these domains to the best of its abilities. Our development cooperation and peacebuilding efforts have increased exponentially over the past few years. We know that our European and African partners count on us as we count on them. The strategic partnership between the EU and Africa is the recognition of this understanding and depends on the capacity building of the African Union to lead the continent in all kind of reforms and improvements. Hence my visit to Addis Ababa and my discussion with members of the African Commission and AU-member states, in the margin of the AU Summit. Our political commitment is stronger than ever.

Belgian Security Sector Reform (SSR) experts are involved in the establishment of an SSR strategy for the European Commission and in the design of a security process in the Central African Republic. My UN Ambassador is Chair of the Peace-Building Commission country specific meeting for Central African Republic. Not to mention our continued efforts in countries in the region of the Great Lakes.

I believe that it would help for us to start by evaluating our own assumptions and certainties. We should try to avoid reproducing our own mistakes in our development aid and state-building strategies for Africa.

Before I leave you to get to business, I want to pay tribute to Alison Des Forges who died last Thursday 12 February 2009 in a plain crash as she was heading home to Buffalo, New York. In his announcement on the Human Rights Watch website, Executive Director Kenneth Roth writes the following:

“Alison felt the best way to make things better was to be relentlessly professional and scrupulously fair.”

I believe she would have wanted to be with us today.

I thank you.

2. President Martti Ahtisaari

President Martti Ahtisaari is a Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and Chairman of the Crisis Management Initiative.

Ladies and gentlemen, friends and colleagues,

I would like to warmly welcome you to this seminar on African Perspective on State-building. This gathering offers a unique opportunity for us to reflect on the past and future of state-building partnerships and explore an African vision of state-building.

I am here in my capacity as founder and chairman of the Crisis Management Initiative, the main organizer of this event in cooperation with the Institute of Security Studies. We have work together to create an interesting programme for today. This seminar has been made possible with funding from the Governments of Belgium, Norway and Finland, for which I am grateful.

Africa is changing fast. The Index of African Governance of the Kennedy School of Government, which is based on 57 indicators ranging from deaths in war, to literacy and gross domestic product, clearly demonstrates that governance across Africa is improving. Furthermore, economic growth in the past years has been historically high. Increasing interest shown by investors in Africa has helped to globalize Africa - both in reality and in perception. Africa’s success affects the chances of success in a wide range of global endeavours - whether economic, political or environmental.

Africa is also coming together. The creation of the African Union in 2002 and the NEPAD strategic framework in 2001 have been important milestones in progress towards African ownership over state-building activities. The AU has brought about a significant improvement in the ability of the commitment to promote stability, anticipate and prevent conflicts, promote and facilitate peace processes, and support post-conflict reconstruction and state-building activities.

The creation of sub-regional organizations for economic cooperation and development demonstrates that Africans are increasingly aware that cooperation is necessary to take advantage of changes effected by globalization. These efforts to shape and execute joint visions for governance and prosperity should be encouraged as a means for ownership and inclusive dialogue in state-building activities.

Despite all these positive developments, Africa remains fragile with a wide range of causes. We saw this with the outbreak of violence after the elections in Kenya a year ago and with problems in Zimbabwe. The real impact of the global economic slow-down is yet to be discovered.

I look forward to candid discussion in today’s seminar on how in today’s world we can best secure the economic well-being of the citizens. I think we are all aware of the different approaches that are applied around the world today. It is important that we recognize that the causes of state fragility, however, are not purely economic.

Developing Africa into functioning states has become a firm priority of African leaders, African organizations, foreign governments, and multilateral institutions. Yet there is no “one size fits all” road map for African state-building. Effective and legitimate states are shaped and sustained by an enduring relationship with the particular society that they govern. When state-building strategies prioritize inclusiveness, domestic ownership, flexibility, and strong communication between actors, they best promote state resilience.

Above all, building resilient states requires building resilient societies. State-building actors must seize every opportunity to include actors outside a nation’s formal leadership, especially women, civil society, and local government leaders. State-building is also very much about making long-term investments and prioritizing them. Unfortunately, the funds available for state-building have sometimes been more supply- than demand-driven. There is current debate among international actors and research groups as to how to identify and prioritize areas for donor assistance. Some organizations and actors have taken note of recent calls for “good enough governance” strategies that avoid laundry lists of reform and overwhelming domestic absorptive capacity. To help prioritize, they have identified what they believe are the most essential functions that states should perform. These lists are intended to help international actors, through dialog and partnership with domestic actors, strategically allocate resources to where they can be best used. However, not all agree with this approach. State-building could also be seen as an exclusively organic, endogenous process where external actors act as facilitators and enablers rather than guides.

Recent discussion, particularly within the OECD framework, about the importance of state-society relations for negotiating a social contract is yet another strong step forward. The recognition that enduring states are legitimated by their citizens before the international community, suggests the need for humility among donors as to their role in state-building processes. The ultimate goal of state-building is to develop a national system that protects, sustains, and improves the quality of life within national borders as judged by that country’s citizens.

Developing and implementing effective methods for monitoring and evaluation of state-building activities is essential to make state-building a meaningful exercise. Yet the need for I accept and acknowledge that external intervention is a necessary part of state-building, but that state-building should be fundamentally driven by endogenous actors, beginning at the local and national levels and proceeding with support from regional and continental organizations. However, the international community must recognize that it sometimes contributes to the fragility in Africa. International assistance efforts are still often agency-driven, working in competition and with minimal coordination. Moreover, clarity in the relationship between the local and the international actors and how the relationship will change over time is often lacking.

The donors must deliver aid and other forms of state-building assistance with a greater awareness of these challenges. The donors should continue supporting African decision making, particularly from pan-African and sub-regional organizations, in how to ensure that external assistance makes a positive contribution to African state-building and long-term development.

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better monitoring and evaluation continues to exist more in policy mantra and publications than in actual programmes. External actors must recognize that state-building is not a new activity, and that they must be more introspective as to why their attempts at statebuilding have failed for decades. There is a need for more frank reflection on current and past motives for intervention and whether those should change in future engagements.

As there is learning required both on the side of donors and other external actors and national governments leading the state-building, we need meetings like this where donors and African representatives undertake a sort of role reversal, and as we gather to listen and learn how our previous activities have been perceived and have impacted the nations we have claimed to engage as partners. We need to more consciously listen, not as master statebuilders, but as supporters of African self-empowerment.

Predetermined democracy checklists are not conducive to partnerships in any meaningful sense of the word. In perceived crises and fragility, a focus on immediate output and urgency are not most helpful. They easily overlook the causes of fragility that relate to social and economic exclusion. Let us have the courage to accept the recommendations of past evaluations.

Decisions must be made on African terms, but we have an ethical responsibility to encourage decision making from all Africans within a society. It is wrong and ultimately ineffective to engage only with political elite in the interest of rapid action. Without these considerations, our actions risk repeating the national dialogue patterns that contributed to fragility in the first place.

Trust is the vehicle to stability

Trust in government is perhaps the most important ingredient for state legitimacy. Trust requires that citizens are enabled to provide for their own most basic needs. One almost infallible way to promote that trust is to create opportunities for youth employment and entrepreneurship. Popular dissatisfaction and unemployment swell insurgent ranks and the lack of security further hinders development and economic activity.

Trust in government can also be created by giving people the tools to be architects of their own future. From here, we return to the concept of state-building itself. Donors should give the money, the advice, and the space for African leaders to step forward and create their own vision for governance. African leaders should give the encouragement and the peer feedback to national leaders who struggle with the internal causes of their states’ fragility. National leaders should give the political space for local leaders, from powerful and marginalized groups, to shape the national agenda and the evolution of institutions.

And we should all have the trust to communicate openly about our intentions, expectations, and needs. Indeed, encouraging open communication and dialogue between European policy community and African experts, such as this seminar, can make a valuable contribution to the recent governance debates and state-building mechanisms that are developing on the international scene.

Ambassador Ahmed Haggag

Ambassador Ahmed Haggag is a Member of the Advisory Council of the Institute for Security Studies and Secretary General of Africa Society

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to pay tribute to His Excellency, President Ahtisaari. We still remember him in Africa for his tireless efforts in state-building in our continent. Mr President, your tireless efforts of persuading and pressuring for the establishment of Namibia is still remembered and we say thank you. We also want to congratulate you for the 2008 Nobel Peace Prize.

I would also like to pay tribute and thanks to His Excellency Minister Karel De Gucht and Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Belgium together with Norway and Finland for making this meeting possible. Also thanks of the Institute for Security Studies and CMI for choosing our Institute to be a partner in organizing this meeting.

In Africa, most of our states are still young - most of them are not more than 50-60 years old. This could explain why the institutions of state in Africa are still fragile. Most of the countries gained their independence after the end of colonial rule through liberation struggle or other means. I still remember the first summit of the Organization of the African Unity, held in Cairo in 1964, where a long debate on the prospects of state-building in Africa took place. President Nekruma of Ghana and other heads of states said that they didn’t believe in existing borders in Africa, and that all of them should be abolished and one united Africa should be established. They argued that the borders of the African states are inherited from the colonial rule, therefore they are completely illogical, they have no regard to geography, history or ethnic affiliation, et cetera, and that we should establish a supra national state in Africa with one government, one currency, one army and one Foreign Minister and so forth.

13. Speech edited from the recorded tape by Savi Tuominen
But the majority of member states recognized that although borders in Africa are artificial but if new discussions or negotiations on new borders in Africa are reopened, it'll invite many conflicts. The big entities would want to control small entities. Therefore despite these reservations we should recognize the borders we have inherited from the colonial rule and try though cooperation to cement the emergence of an African identity. This was the debate in 1964. Now, the debate still remains almost the same in the African Union today: should we establish a Union of African countries or the so called the United States of Africa? Should we establish it now, or should it be done gradually? Majority of African countries, I think, consider that forming the supranational state is a hasty one and that the nation states in Africa should increase cooperation among themselves and with the same goal that one day, like what happened here in Europe, we could have the United States of Africa.

Also, after the independence in most of the African countries, the state institutions were lacking. Even the liberation movements that gained power right after independence, they considered that it is not the time to have a multi-party system because of the lot of challenges they are facing. They argued that discipline and cohesive authority is needed in order to deal with economic development. This was wrong and led to many conflicts among African states and also within African states themselves.

When the Charter of the OAU was proclaimed, it included a stipulation that the new organization should not interfere in the internal affairs of the member states. Some member states used this for their advantage and told the Organization that what happens inside their borders is their internal matter. Now it is recognized that a lot of internal developments could cause danger in the African nation state and more cooperation in dealing with conflicts is needed.

The new African Union is not any more an organization of governments only but for the first time the civil society also has a role. The African Union has a pan-African parliament and for the first time the African Union is monitoring elections in different states.

We need the advice of the friends of Africa, and Africa should not be shy in consulting our partners. European and African dialogue and cooperation has progressed very well and after the Lisbon conference we hope that this cooperation will bring fruits in the near future. Europe is one of our major partners and over 90 percent of Africa’s trade is still being done with Europe, the United States and the new emerging powers. If Europe would like to assist, I hope it would be in consultation with the institutions of our member countries.

The nation state itself is rather a new phenomenon in the world. Before, states were formed through conquest, for example. Now the nation state, in order to gain legitimacy, has to have the consent of its people. It’s not only a territory with fixed borders guarding itself against external threats but its own mission should be primarily to its own citizens.

We should differentiate between states and their governments. The state is something that stays; governments, on the other hand, could be changed according to the will of the people. Legitimacy of any government depends on how it can deliver services and basic necessities to its people. It’s not only a territory with fixed borders guarding itself against external threats but its own mission should be primarily to its own citizens.

Before, security was all about guarding against external threats but now it is mainly internal human security that is more important. In Africa, there’s a lack of resources and that’s why it is very important for African countries to cooperate among themselves and with others. We have seen recently massive immigration among different parts of Africa; should this lead to more xenophobia against African citizens or bring more cooperation among African countries? We hope that this will happen, otherwise there will be more conflicts.

Now we see African countries even invite the African Union to have a say in their internal problems. The internal problems are not any more the sole prerogative of the state or the country concerned since local conflicts could spill over the borders. Refugees, they disrupt communication, trade and lead to displaced persons. African countries should cooperate in solving their conflicts. Some people say or write that the nation state in Africa should have a religious connotation. I think that the nation state should be open to all of its citizens regardless of their religious affiliation.

The notion of human rights was really not recognized adequately in the OAU activities. Many countries said that we have our own traditions and we should not have to adopt another system that is not in accordance with our traditions. But developments here did happen. Now, for the first time we have the African Commission of Human and Peoples Rights. Many of you have been following what is happening in the ICC and how it will affect some African countries. But we have to deal with issues of human rights if we do recognize that Africa is going to develop socially and economically and even politically.

Mr. Chairman,

I will stop here. I hope that all the participants will discuss in frank and transparent manner and without thinking about being oversensitive about our national affiliations. Thank you very much Mr. Chairman.
This session discussed the process of building the legitimacy of the state by improved service delivery from the perspective of both the state and the society.

4. The Role of Civil Society in Social Dialog - Andrew Mwenda

Andrew Mwenda is Managing Editor of the Independent newspaper in Uganda and a John S. Knight Fellow of Stanford University.

Andrew Mwenda focused in his speech on the lack of incentives for African Governments to provide basic services to its citizens.

Mr. Mwenda argued that the lack of governmental legitimacy in some African states is due to the lack of incentives for the governments to provide services to their citizens. This phenomenon already has roots in history. Colonial states were not interested in providing services to citizens and it was mainly the responsibility of the church. After independence, the legitimacy of the post-colonial state was built on its ability to provide these services. In order to gain legitimacy, the state rapidly expanded services and ended up being over-developed in function and under-developed in capacity. As a result, the quality of services rapidly declined.

According to Mr. Mwenda, in order to understand the problem, namely the lack of incentives, that still remains, we need to understand how states are organized and how power is exercised and reproduced in Africa. Today, the political powerbase of the ruling elites is based on patronal and clientelistic policies, by which they buy off the loyalty of the necessary elites. The regimes in power are not required to provide services to the citizenry to stay in power, and the service sector remains poor. In order to create better service delivery, both time and money are needed. Patronage on the other hand, is a very cost-effective instrument for maintaining power. Thus, in reality, a few get rich at the expense of many and state has been disconnected from its citizens. The situation is at worst so biased, that the ordinary citizens see public good as gifts from the government - not as a basic right.

Mr. Mwenda further highlighted, that the donors have not given the African states enough incentives to try and gain legitimacy through service delivery. In many cases the ruling elite in Africa does not depend on its citizens but on international donors. African elites have not been willing or able to invest in building strong states precisely because they can enjoy a personal luxury through manipulating the fragility.

5. Negotiating the State-Society Relationship - Dr. Rahul Chandran

Rahul Chandran is an Associate Director in the Centre on International Cooperation at New York University.

Dr. Chandran highlighted that managing fragility is indeed an important task of the international community. There are many reasons for why it is important: terrorism, nuclear proliferation, economic cost of war and the cost of human suffering, which seems, according to Dr. Chandran, to be the lowest priority of the international community at the moment. He further highlighted that interference from the international community in the case of fragility is always and only about self-interest: we do not interfere for some enlightened and noble reasons. Also, the mechanisms of the international community we have today do not deliver their promise - stability. According to Dr. Chandran we have failed to deliver: we are not delivering legitimate, effective and resilient states because we don’t know what legitimacy, efficiency and resiliency mean and know much less about how to support them.

According to Dr. Chandran, what we are actually trying to support is a process of state formation. This process has certain characteristics. The process of state formation is long-term and continuous, it is first and foremost a local process, and it is unpredictable: input does not map the output. The single answer or perfect model for state simply does not exist.

Dr. Chandran argued that the state formation is about fragility and resilience. Can your government adapt and respond to change? If it can, you’re state is resilient, if not, it’s fragile.

According to Dr. Chandran it is the political process that is at the core of state formation. The process of how to balance what citizens expect from the state and what state expects from its citizens and the state’s capacity to deliver on that promise. This process is constantly
shifting. It is the political process that allows a state to have a dialogue with its citizens and through this dialogue the state clarifies the relationship between the expectations and its abilities.

An effective state is able to address the demands of its citizens, not necessarily meet them all but is at least aware that these kinds of demands exist. The legitimacy of the state, among other things, is built on this responsiveness. According to Dr. Chandran the implications of the above described political process is that we, as an external actors, cannot control state-building. All politics is local and external actors cannot predict the outcome. Dr. Chandran also highlighted that institutions are not portable: they cannot just be dropped into a certain country and be expected to function the same everywhere.

This being said, according to Dr. Chandran the core process to support is thus political: problems in Democratic Republic of Congo are not all solved by schools, Darfur is not a health care issue and Somalia is not just about building roads. It is a political settlement that is needed. Improved service delivery is not a path to stability. It is an ingredient to stability, a necessary ingredient, but probably the least important one.

What is it then that European policymakers should do? According to Dr. Chandran the current situation does not look too good. Our systems don’t work, The European Commission is not a credible actor, it is uncoordinated and lacks strategic coherence. What is needed is an organized instrument that is fast and flexible with responsive multi-year financing, unified reporting standards and coordinated timetables for all EU member states. And this would only be a baby-step.

Dr. Chandran stressed that this broken business process has to be fixed, the importance of the state-building issue has to be acknowledged and most importantly, pretending that this is not our self-interest has to stop. Unless this is done, the international community is not going have serious conversations on stability and is not going to be an effective partner for building it.
This session looked into alternative ways to building effective state administration and the capacity to provide security, economic opportunities and basic services to citizens. The session discussed the China model with a special focus on how to build state legitimacy through improving its institutional capacities.

6. The China Model - Professor Dr. Zhang Wei-wei
Dr. Zhang Wei-wei is Research Fellow at the Centre for Asian Studies in Geneva and Professor of International Relations at Fudan University in Shanghai.

Dr. Zhang Wei-wei, presented the Chinese model as one model for state-building.

Since the late 1970s, China has focused on indicators of growth and welfare and aimed at good performance as a way of gaining legitimacy to the state. According to Dr. Zhang, the key difference between the so called Western state model and the Chinese one is how they are legitimized: the Chinese legitimacy is based on performance, where as the Western legitimacy is based on processes.

In addition to performance based legitimacy, Dr. Zhang pointed out some other key characteristics of the Chinese model. China has a developmental state, which Dr. Zhang pointed out is often seen as the most controversial character of the model. China has a strong government that is pro-development and is able to shape national consensus. In addition to shaping national consensus, the government ensures political and macro-economical stability and pursues industrial policies by giving certain industrial sectors favourable policies and loans. Putting people first matters and fighting poverty is seen as a core human right. Aiming for harmony, and trying to find the commonalities of different interest groups, instead of contradiction is a characteristic found in Chinese society as well as in the Chinese model for state-building.

One of the characteristics, according to Dr. Zhang, in the Chinese model is clearly constant experimentation – the model has been developed through trial and error. China adopted a very pragmatic and evidence-based approach to modernization and then concluded that neither the Communist model nor Western Democracy, as such, can lead to the path of modernization that China prefers. Thus China has found the advantages of selective learning and cultural borrowing; and the Chinese model has been developed through learning from various models.

Dr. Zhang stressed that the evidences found, that were thought to be related to modernization, were tested first in certain smaller areas and if they were seen to be working, they were spread elsewhere. The overall pattern of change happened by sequencing and setting priorities: Economic reform first, then political reform; agricultural reform first, industrial reform second; rural reforms first, then urban reforms; easy reforms first, then the difficult ones; and so forth. This was done in order to create virtuous circle that worked step by step. Political reforms in China have been cautious and they have been done in order to facilitate economical reform and not to aim for democracy for the sake of democracy. China has had suspicions of how democratization actually works in a developing country and also in a country the size of China.

According to Dr. Zhang it is characteristic for Chinese model that in the Chinese society the old and new systems have co-existed and the new has replaced the old one gradually. For example, China maintained two different price structures that co-existed for a couple of years; a state-fixed price that was gradually replaced by a market fixed price.

What Dr. Zhang Wei-wei concluded was that it is good governance that matters the most. Good governance can take the form of Western governance, it can also take other forms, likewise bad governance can also take the form of Western democracy, or other forms.

The Chinese state model cannot be copied as such, as the Chinese model is specific to China and to Chinese culture, but it may include elements that states in Africa can consider. Dr. Zhang thus encouraged each country to explore its own way to development.
Minister Natty Davis discussed how Africans see the Chinese model of state-building.

Minister Davis stressed that the principle of people matter first, also embraced in the Chinese model, is a universal principle. After the independence in Africa, the principle of people matter was present. However, the implementation was different. Very few African state-building processes have been based on the principle “let’s work with what we have”. This means recognizing the strengths that already lie within the nation and using these strengths as a starting point when starting to build the state, like in China. Instead, practices and institutions were transposed and the results, as seen today, were not very good. According to Minister Davis the people matter first principle is very important, but its application has challenges.

Very few African state-building processes have been based on the principle “let’s work with what we have”. This means recognizing the strengths that already lie within the nation and using these strengths as a starting point when starting to build the state.

Minister Davis also stressed the role of donors in state-building. Building the capacity of a state to provide basic services should be the first priority. However, often the international agencies deliver these services directly to the citizens undermining the government’s role. This has direct implications to state legitimacy. People then don’t see their own state as a “doer” but the donors. In order to succeed, the state needs a system of governance that is able to respond to the needs of the citizenry.

However, he also pointed out the challenges of budget support. The more aid that is given to the budget, the more it will be seen as a fundamental part of the budget and thus can lead to aid dependency. Minister Davis also raised a point, that maybe, it would be more viable, in the Liberian case, to support the state outside the budget and this way give a chance for the state to strengthen its own processes and the state’s own internal revenue base.

Minister Davis also highlighted the need for gradual reform, selective learning and sequencing and prioritizing important characteristics of Chinese model. He also highlighted the need for strong leadership. The remaining challenge still seems to be on how to transfer that strong leadership into a strength that will be retained when leadership changes.
VI COUNTRY CASES: CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC AND SIERRA LEONE

In the third session, two separate country case examples were discussed in two separate sessions.

8.1 The Causes of State Fragility:
Kelsi Stine

8.1.1 The Central African Republic

The Central African Republic (CAR) has experienced chronic fragility since independence in 1960, caused by cycles of poverty, exclusion, coups, localized violence, and state weakness that characterize the entire central African region. Yet while Chad and Sudan are hardly peaceful neighbours, the CAR’s problems are fundamentally caused by internal factors. As with most fragile states in Africa, CAR leadership has purposefully enforced federal weakness by privatizing the state through repression and criminal activity for decades. What the CAR lacks in governance culture is only worsened by natural disadvantages; CAR is a landlocked nation with a subsistence agriculture-based economy and deposits of diamonds and uranium. Now, the success of peace accords between the government and two rebel movements, APRD and UFDR, signed on 21 June 2008 will help decide whether the country continues to make steady inroads to peace. However, violence in the CAR acts much like a hydra—when one source is removed, others appear to multiply.

Poverty left in the wake of the peace accords (which may or may not last) has caused the formation of criminal gangs who terrorize thousands of villagers and travellers through violent attacks. These gangs have caused over 20 thousand people to flee their homes in 2008 alone, and remain an active source of fear and instability24. Militant groups have also begun taxing villagers, using rape and attacks to enforce their rule. In response to this increase in crime, villagers have begun forming self-defence groups while conflicts between armed herdsmen and sedentary farmers have escalated throughout this year. When combined with violence along the Chadian and Ugandan borders, there is no mystery why the CAR ranks tenth in terms of state failure25 and seventh from the bottom on the Human Development Index. Until basic security and human services are restored, the critical lack of citizen trust in the future of the CAR, the capabilities of the CAR government, and the integrity of the CAR’s political leadership will continue to derail efforts to develop resiliency.

The country is currently ruled by President François Bozizé, who has promised to engage in political dialog and to promote national development. After his coup in 2003, Bozizé was formally elected in 2005 election that was declared “free and fair” by the international community. Yet even under the best light, Bozizé’s style of government has been far from democratic with widespread brutality committed by the army and Bozizé’s failure to establish an independent judiciary, to protect human rights, and to exercise financial transparency26. Furthermore, his government lacks capacity in almost every area possible, though with only 5,300 poorly trained and equipped armed forces to secure its large territory, the security sector defects are the most urgent problem27. Other governance challenges include poor infrastructure and an economy dominated by subsistence agriculture.

Although a ceasefire and UN engagement are in place, the humanitarian and security realities in the country are extremely worrisome. Health and nutrition indicators remain disastrously low, over 197,000 people are displaced28, and thousands of women and girls require post-rape support services. Aside from these recovery needs, violent criminal gangs who attack villagers and travellers, and remain the most active source of national fear and instability29. Much work is needed to sustain current progress, and it will take decades to see any lasting change. The CAR will continue to be threatened by instability in neighbouring Chad, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and must develop pro-poor state infrastructure to escape its perpetual fragility. The continuation of international efforts provides a strong opportunity for that transition.

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17. United Nations (2008), pg. 5
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
State fragility in Sierra Leone has been primarily driven by the proliferation of arms, valuable natural resources, rebel forces, and extreme poverty, all set in a region with a history of poor economic performance, violence, and corrupt regimes. Active conflict in Sierra Leone began in 1991 with the initiation of a campaign against President Momoh by Foday Sankoh and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), launching the nation into eight years of civil war. However, Sierra Leone has struggled with the deeper causes of state fragility since its independence in 1961 and the corrupt rule of Siaka Stevens who set a precedent of patronage networks and corruption.

Like many African nations, Sierra Leone contains valuable diamond mines, which made seizing government power a profitable endeavour. Stevens, his successors, and profit-minded rebel groups used violence and intimidation to control illicit diamond trade networks, inspiring the term “blood diamonds” from the bloodstream of brutality. The causes of Sierra Leone’s fragility cannot be isolated to domestic factors, as American and European businesses that purchased these diamonds played a major role in funding the violence. The international community is also responsible for readily equipping Sierra Leone, Liberia, and other West African nations with arms and other military supplies during the Cold War, which were used to equip national and rebel soldiers in their campaigns of brutality.

Sierra Leone’s government has also struggled to maintain consistency, and has vacillated between negotiating and fighting with the RUF since 1996. The RUF has proved equally worthy of mistrust through its refusal to report to disarmament centres and when its capture of 500 UN peacekeepers resulted in the collapse of the 1999 Lomé Peace Agreement. Clearly, Sierra Leone struggles from a crisis of government legitimacy, stability, and monopoly on violence. These troubles are linked to the regional cycles of conflict, economic collapse, and poor governance that characterize the entire Mano River basin. During Liberia’s civil war, warlord Charles Taylor funded and armed RUF soldiers to exert greater control over the diamond trade. Further, and rebel forces from both nations have launched attacks from across the Sierra Leone/Liberia border. RUF forces were also backed by Taylor’s National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) in their initial attack in Kailahun before moving into Kono.

More positively, Sierra Leone held two successful national elections in 2002 and 2007, putting it much further along in the peace consolidation process than the CAR. In particular, the 2007 election where Ernest Bai Koroma won the presidency marked the first peaceful transition of power to an opposition party in the nation’s history, a hallmark for electoral legitimacy and stability. The Koroma government, although under severe pressure to provide jobs as political favours to northern party supporters, has repeatedly emphasized the need to develop “social contract” through service provision. So far, it has managed to secure emergency electricity supplies for Freetown through donor support, demonstrating responsiveness to voter demand. Sierra Leone has also sustained strong economic recovery since 2000, largely through remittances from expatriates, select mining investments, and foreign aid.

Despite these signs of improvement, poor economic and social indicators still risk derailing current progress. Sierra Leone falls last on UNDP’s 2008 Human Development Index, below even Sudan and Somalia, which rank worse in terms of instability. Koroma’s government remains highly dependent on foreign donors, despite resource shortages that greatly limit its ability to shield its citizens from the current global food crisis, increasing the nation’s fragility. Younger generations at risk of rebel recruitment are growing increasingly frustrated at the lack of economic opportunities, feeling that they have not benefited from recent progress towards peace. Challenges in furthering economic growth and public sector reform must be quickly addressed to improve Sierra Leone’s chance of emerging from its violent past.

In 2004, Sierra Leone’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission released its final report to clarify the history and course of the country’s violent civil war and identify the perpetual causes of state fragility. It found that “unsound governance provided a context conducive for the interplay of poverty, marginalization, greed and grievances that caused and sustained the conflict.” The report also stated that, “proper governance is still an imperative, unfulfilled and frustrating for Sierra Leoneans.”

The promised peace settlement in 2006 has faltered, with violence continuing in some parts of the country and the government struggling to maintain control. Corruption and patronage networks remain pervasive, and economic growth has been slow. Sierra Leone’s future remains uncertain, with challenges to peace and stability ongoing.

21. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
26. See Foreign Policy’s 2009 Failed State Index.
27. International Crisis Group, pg. 16.
filled objective in Sierra Leone," noting that corruption remains rampant and public officials have displayed little urgency to address the plethora of challenges facing the country. It also noted that, “The state is an abstract concept to most Sierra Leoneans and central government has made itself largely irrelevant to their daily life,” requiring an “an overhaul in the culture of governance” to build trust and legitimacy for state institutions.

8.2 Conclusions from the Breakout Sessions on the Country Cases
The Central African Republic (CAR) is at the early stages of post-conflict recovery and is a good example of fragile country. The session on CAR concluded that security sector reform is a first step when considering the priorities of state-building in Central African Republic. In the CAR, the political culture is and has been based on the capacity of the political elite to gain power through arms and not on their ability to develop a political programme. The elites consider security institutions as their own property mainly tasked to secure their power. Instead of this, the concept of security needs to be transferred to the broader one, where security is seen as the security of the whole country. The session suggested that in the case of the Central African Republic, the security sector reform should particularly concentrate on reforming the army because it is politicized and tribalized and has been misused by the leaders.

What is also essential is making the state visible to its citizens beyond the borders of the capital by strengthening its capacity in order to ensure successful state-building.

Recommendations from the international community were not to insist too much on elections as such. Legitimization that the leaders get through weak elections is enough for leaders to maintain their power but it is not a good base for negotiating the state-society relationship. Recommendations also highlighted the need to evaluate aid. Not only should we assess what the recipient country has done with the aid but also to assess the structure of the aid community. Financial crisis and the decline of the aid flow can also been seen as a good opportunity as it will force us to re-think the procedures and priorities of the aid.

The session on Sierra Leone highlighted that the country is still in the middle of the process of state-building and because of that it is difficult to assess success and failure at this stage as the outcomes are still not very clear.

However, the session stressed the importance of the case knowledge. Often general knowledge is difficult to apply into a certain case as well as it is also difficult to draw practical knowledge and conclusions on a particular case. Case knowledge is, however, crucial when evaluating the consequences and facts of the particular case. Also, the structures and conditions of the donors should be adapted to a case. The current situation seems to be that the within the aid organizations the bureaucracies must cope with so many cases that they may not meet the expectations and needs of the particular situation. Structural reforms are thus necessary in the EU Commission and Council.

The session on Sierra Leone also concluded that regional organizations, and in the case of West Africa ECOWAS in particular, can play a constructive role in conflict resolution and state-building. Therefore, more attention to their capacity development is required for regional stability.

VII CLOSING REMARKS

9. Support for African State-building - Dr. Paul-Simon Handy
Dr. Paul-Simon Handy is a Head of the African Security Analysis Program of ISS

Dr. Handy highlighted the fact that currently the debate on state-building is mostly taking place outside of Africa. He further stressed that there is no African debate on state-building or pan-Africanism, and only a handful of countries have engaged in national debate.

According to Dr. Handy, there is a need for direct debate and to bring African actors to discuss on which direction they want to take in state-building. This discussion on the priorities needs to be anchored into the local consensus. The conditions for these discussions need to be created. Also, the African research capacity on state-building needs to be strengthened.

Dr. Handy stressed, that the capacity has to be built also for the African actors to understand the complexities of the conflict situation. This is an area where the press could contribute in spreading the knowledge on an overall understanding of situation. According to Mr. Handy the press should inform citizens of the actions what the state realistically can and cannot do. Expectations in a post-conflict county tend to be much higher than the state can realistically perform and thus it is important to inform citizens about the realistic possibilities. This environment needs to be created locally.
Ms. Joenpolvi highlighted that the vision for state needs to be developed nationally. No matter what this model will be like, resilient state needs to be structured and capacitated to listen, respond and deliver to the needs of its people.

Ms. Joenpolvi also stressed that, as stated in the OECD principles on fragile states, the context should be taken as a starting point. But what is also needed is the understanding of what this context means more specifically. According to Ms. Joenpolvi it could in fact mean more than only understanding the history of the country concerned but accepting the different ways of forming the state.

She also addressed her words to international community by quoting President Ahtisaari’s opening speech: “the international community really sometimes contributes to state fragility more than it would like to admit”. The international community must be aware of the danger that a state follows the agenda of international donors and not its own. Ms. Joenpolvi highlighted that in the future, what is needed, is learning from past mistakes. A frank dialog and discussion on what are those points where we have gone wrong is essential. The donor community should also note that the resilient state needs to have the capacity to continuously maintain the state-society negotiation process. This should be kept in mind in donor programming and priorities.

Ms. Joenpolvi further called for every nation to have the courage to develop their own model of state and also extended this question to the donor community: do we have the courage to support countries that choose a different model that is different from the Western Democracy?

Ms. Joenpolvi concluded by asking how this understanding of what makes a resilient state should be included in conflict resolution processes, including mediation. CMI will continue to explore this question.