

# Roundtable: “Institutions and Regional Integration Mechanisms in fragile African countries”



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# Issues & aim

- **Social cohesion and state building in fragile countries**
- **Regional integration and state building in fragile countries**
- **Regional integration and fragility**
- **A debate on what should be the goals of EU development aid and on whether regional integration can represent a way out of fragility for African countries**

# State Building

- **State Building: “Actions undertaken to establish, reform and strengthen state institutions where these have been eroded or are missing” (Rocha-Menocal, 2009)**
- **The State cannot be treated in isolation.**
  - **State-society relations are central to state building → we learnt that State building is not exclusively a “top-down”, but also a “bottom-up” approach linking state and civil society**

# **State Building - Lessons from the past**

- **Has support to democratic governance and institutional development worked to prevent fragility and to deal with it in its early stages?**
- **What lessons, if any, can be drawn from the use of current implementation (e.g. projects, contributions to trust funds, macroeconomic support and management by non-state actors or by the UN) in countries in situation of fragility?**

# **State Building- The role of EU**

- **Social cohesion and state building is mainly an endogenous process. Is there a role for external partners?**
- **What can donors do to effectively support the creation/strengthening of linkages between State and Society and promote inclusiveness in fragile countries ("social contract")?**
- **Can donors create the right incentives for democratic governance and increased investments in public goods and services? How?**

# **State Building & Regional Integration**

- **Does state capacity building in one country affects state capacity building in a neighboring country? How?**
- **Does increased state capacity in one country affect the incentives for regional cooperation with other countries which have a lower (or higher) state capacity? How?**

# **Regional Integration: challenges and potentials**

- **Regional Integration in Africa has a long (and not very successful) history. It remains a key economic and political challenge**
- **Most African countries are currently into one (or many...) regional treaty**
- **Benefits from Regional Integration have not yet been leveraged, except for a very small increase in intraregional trade**

# **Regional Integration and fragility**

- **Integration as a way to reduce (some of) the root causes of fragility. Increasing interdependence increases costs of conflicts and facilitate diffusion of trust (Uneca)**
- **But an uneven distribution of economic benefits of regionalization can increase tensions**
- **Fragile Institutions may not be willing to transfer power to a supranational entity**
- **In addition, “incomplete” States may produce an “incomplete” integration (Kuhnhardt, 2008).**

# Regional Integration

- Does regional integration represent a way out of fragility?
- How can regional integration address some of the root causes of fragility? Which ones?
- Do weak states produce only a weak integration?
- Is the European model (first consolidated states and then regional integration) the model for the 21st Century in Africa?

# **Regional Integration – the role of EU**

- **Can any lessons be drawn from the European experience of integration?**
- **How does the EU currently influence the process of regional integration in Africa? What is the role of the Economic Partnership Agreements and how do they articulate with the current status of RTAs in Africa (“spaghetti bowl”)?**
- **Do EPAs produce negative spillovers via trade diversion and the rise of non trade barriers between African countries?**