

Villes en développement



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Development cooperation with local authorities

In 1986 ADP held a workshop on the subject of decentralised. The term already had a double meaning: development aid given by specialised bi- or multilateral institutions or by a city in the North to cities in the South. In France, institutions, tired of certain states, hoped this new approach would bring them closer to the field, at a level where the impact of aid would be more visible. Municipalities, relishing the recent decentralisation, wanted to prove their effectiveness in this area as well.

Eight years later, many conclusions reached by the ADP workshop are still relevant.

1. The original intuition has often turned out to be right: at the municipal level, it is easier to establish the trusting relationships essential to a successful project.

2. Co-operation between cities enables many citizens to see the realities of the South for themselves and get rid of their simplistic ideas on this subject. This broadening of their minds makes it easier for public opinion to observe and analyse issues relating to the South.

3. It is now well understood that a municipality co-operation cannot enjoy durable health in a state that is sick. As a result, decentralised co-operation cannot always manage without development aid at national level. So in the area of development aid there is no «one best way»; the different forms complement each other.

4. If municipalities do not show tangible results, they are even more discredited than central governments. You cannot produce results without a project; and you cannot form a project without intermediaries between the population and the municipality. The establishment of the democracy of the forum is full of promise for the future, but it does not easily admit of third-parties. And yet the effectiveness of



Port Bouët

Photo : Villes en développement

third-party aid depends on it. Municipalities have to show great tact in dealing with this.

5. This type of development aid is fraught with risks - not of the theoretical kind, but directly involving both parties. Here are a few examples:

- a city in the North, for strictly internal reasons, withdraws from an ongoing project on which a partner city in the South has already spent a lot of money;
- an accident or unfortunate initiative ruins a project;
- abuse of an agreement for the benefit of previously hidden vested interests;

- directing aid, which has been technically well used, towards a political clientele etc.

6. Adapting to different environments (e.g. how to find good financial intermediaries?) sometimes calls for the creation of common tools.

So the time has come for institutional and municipal operators from the North and the South to develop collective instruments that reduce risks and foster the exchange of information, thereby giving this very promising form of co-operation every chance of success.

Michel Gérard

Contents. Development cooperation with local authorities

Decentralisation in Africa: expectations and risks, by Jean-Pierre Mbassi.

Parakou-Orleans: a sustainable partnership, by Micheline Prahecq.

The European Union's approach to decentralised co-operation, by Christian Curé.

French technical assistance to municipalities, by Nicolas Widmer.

Decentralisation in Africa: expectations and risks

The founding legislation for the decentralisation process to which most African governments have committed themselves sets out three major sets of objectives: (i) to mobilise the populations in favour of sustainable grass-roots development; (ii) to deepen and entrench democracy at local level; and (iii) to restructure the state by giving new legitimacy to public institutions. An in-depth analysis shows that these expectations involve a number of risks.

1. Decentralisation and development

Most African leaders hold the view that decentralisation should make it possible to keep the promises of development that 30 years of centralisation have not kept. This conviction is based on two assumptions: first, that grass-roots development is the best guarantee of sustainable development; and second, that the commune (or municipality) seems to be less constrained by the world economy than the nation as a whole. As all have had to become integrated in the world economy, the validity of these assumptions has not been confirmed for the moment. At best, it is to be hoped that the local level provides a framework within which development initiatives may be kept under better control, because the needs are fewer and more homogeneous, and because the responses to these needs may be organised in such a way as to take more into account what is at stake socially.

But you can mobilise the population for development only if it can see for itself that the existence of a decentralised authority makes it possible to restore the local economy to health. And yet, even in the countries that have been committed to decentralisation for a long time, nothing of this sort seems to have occurred on a significant scale. On the contrary, public disinvestment has resulted in community facilities becoming backward. The less a local authority spends, the less it is able to convince its citizens of the usefulness of public services and the less it can locally mobilise the funds needed for investment.

2. Decentralisation and democracy

«Does decentralisation strengthen democracy?» The answer to this question depends on how, in practice, the three following basic principles of local democracy are implemented: leaders are chosen by democratic procedures; local authorities may govern freely; the local populations participate in the decision-making process.

The freedom to choose local leaders is unanimously recognised as a *sine qua non* for local democracy. But it would be a mistake to reduce the question of the representation of the local populations to the organisation of «democratic» elections, because it would be to neglect the fact that every African is influenced by three institutional systems:

- the traditional system, whereby an individual is bound to his community of origin by a set of rights and obligations governed by a customary code which gives priority to family solidarity over the freedom of the individual;

- the religious system, which, while recognising the freedom of the individual, puts it in an ethical framework based on the quest for social harmony and submission to the divine order;

- the modern system that proclaims the primacy of the individual over the group and which, in theory, recognises each person's right to have a say whatever his position within the group.

It is difficult, in such a context, to define a satisfactory system for representing the people. At national level, the problem has been resolved by setting up a bicameral parliament: one chamber is governed by the modern «one man, one vote» principle; and the other reflects the traditional value systems as much as possible. How is it possible, at the local level, to take into account the polysemous nature of «African citizenship»?

3. Decentralisation and reconstructing the state

Obsessed by the construction of national unity, most African states have been built on the negation of everything that could personify any form of autonomous local power. They have set about destroying their customary social organisation without always managing to replace it by a more effective form of government. The fact that practically every African country is ungovernable is due to the superimposition of a weak but arbitrary state on a still resilient social fabric, but which has been

systematically attacked and damaged. Will decentralisation offer an opportunity to set up a different form of state, which would be more concerned about local identities? Or will the assertion of local identities undermine the state? By calling into question the fragile balances struck in the past, is not decentralisation leaving the door wide open to even deeper disorders? And, by turning communities away from devotion to the national ideal in order to refocus them on their own future, is not decentralisation putting a brake on the movement towards regional integration, which could help overcome the historic handicap of states that have been built without any solid social anthropological foundations? In other words, is not decentralisation going against the tide of history, contributing more to Africa's backwardness than to her modernisation?

Among the upholders of this thesis there are many African leaders and experts. The comparison with the French experience strengthens their view that decentralisation can fully succeed only where the state is strong, efficiently represented throughout the land, and capable of carrying the entire population with it in a movement of national fervour. In their view, it is urgent to build this strong state by the intelligent devolution of central government, prior to decentralisation as such.

But those who think that decentralisation is an opportunity to reconcile the state with society are equally numerous. They want to see the nation being built on successive levels of common good, structured from the lowest to the top echelons of the state in accordance with the subsidiarity principle. By setting up autonomous local authorities, endowed with overall competence in their territories, and whose leaders would be democratically elected, the upholders of this view think they will succeed not only in restoring the states' legitimacy in the eyes of the population, but also in facilitating their integration at regional level.

All in all, the decentralisation policy is still, to a great extent, a gamble whose result will undoubtedly depend on the way African governments link it with democracy and

development. If they are not concerned about these linkages, and if the decentralisation policy does not lead swiftly to significant improvements in people's standard of living, their environment and involvement in the decisions that affect their lives, then those who look on decentralisation as another gimmick to clear the reputations of inefficient and illegitimate states will have been proven right.

Real decentralisation, designed to transfer power and responsibilities to subnational governments and private bodies, remains probably one of the most reliable ways of restoring confidence in public institutions. But it has to be carefully and seriously prepared, without raising false hopes, but also without overestimating the obstacles still to be overcome.

Jean-Pierre Elong Mbassi
Co-ordinator of MDP western Africa



The Town Hall in Bobo-dioulasso

photo : David Bellevalire

Parakou-Orléans : a sustainable partnership

The decentralised co-operation between the city of Orleans (107,000 inhabitants), a regional capital at the heart of an urban area with 250,000 inhabitants, and the city of Parakou (106,000 inhabitants), the third-largest city in Bénin, started quite recently: the exploratory mission took place in November 1992 and the Partnership Agreement was signed in March 1993. Today, one year later, as a delegation led by the Mayor of Orleans saw for itself on the spot, the first year's programme has been completed and the programme for 1994-1995 has been drawn up with the local authorities.

For the municipality of Orleans, decentralised DA is, first of all, a political commitment, as at the previous municipal elections we had said that we would do something for the Third World. Our action has involved all the elected councillors, who have voted unanimously in its favour, which is a guarantee of its durability. But this action also involves all the municipal staff, who actively participate when something has to be sent to Parakou or when a delegation from Parakou visits Orleans. The senior town clerk in Parakou has entered into direct correspondence with his opposite number in Orleans. The residents of Orleans have also shown great interest in this action: every time an article is published on it in the local newspaper we receive several phone calls from people offering their help!

Our partners, in their colourful language, ask for a lot, and we often have to say no.

But what has particularly pleased us is to see that they have been taking things in hand. They have said to us: «Please help us put the load on our head. But then it's for us to carry it.» We attach great importance to the rigour with which the project is carried out. As I see it, there are three aspects to this project.

First aspect: **the partnership.** Although we are concerned that the inhabitants of Orleans, and particularly its associations, should participate, the final decisions are never made in Orleans, because we never forget that the needs are in Africa and that it is these needs we have to meet. We never pay for the total cost of anything: when we have decided on an action, it is for our partners to say «we'll contribute such and such an amount» or «we'll provide the labour force». For example, the school we have just opened: just over 50% of its total cost was paid for by the city of Orleans; the

urban constituency (UC) of Parakou paid for part of it; and the rest was paid for by local parent-teacher associations.

Second aspect of the project, regarding the choice of actions to be taken, **a will to contribute to Third World development.** When requests are made that we deem not favourable to the African city's development or unlikely to make the populations feel more responsible, then discussions begin, which means we exchange a lot of files with our counterparts in Parakou until we come to an agreement.

Third aspect: **the need for monitoring.** To begin with, the monitoring of finances: what is being done with Orleans' money? As elected city councillors, we have to report on the use of Orleans' funds. Even for small amounts of FRF200,000 we cannot say, «We sent the money to Parakou, but we don't really know what happened to it.» We also want to know what will become of

the investments we finance: how will the school be maintained? Will people pay to use the latrines? For this monitoring work, the UC of Parakou has been lucky enough to have a French technical adviser, G. Sartena, appointed by the French ministry of development aid. We asked him to monitor the actions undertaken under the decentralised co-operation programme, notably from a financial viewpoint.

Another of our concerns is to link up our short-term and long-term actions. True, spectacular actions are always status-enhancing. But from the outset we must remember that we want to achieve a long-term impact and so not be in too much of a hurry.

On the one hand, we are working with a **long time-horizon**. For this reason, we are training the executive staff of Parakou's UC: Parakou's senior town clerk has been on a training course in Orleans. We sent our former finance director to Parakou. And we are expecting a visit from the engineer in charge of Parakou's technical department. As part of our long-term action, we have provided our partners with specialised documentation, which they sorely lacked.

But we have also decided to take action to improve the daily lives of the populations: in this respect, there is what is visible and what is not. Citizens, whether in Orleans or Parakou, do not always immediately see the point of, for example, training the town clerks. Whereas when we finance the construction of a school or of three wells the

inhabitants of Parakou can see the concrete benefits of the DA co-operation with Orleans. And it is also a pleasure for us, as elected councillors, on our return from a trip to Parakou, to be able to tell Orleans' citizens: «We have opened a school, which looks like this, and we have also opened three wells».

Finally, we wish to be consistent: first, **consistent within the geographical limits** of the Parakou constituency: when we decide to finance an investment such as a hydrant or latrines in a neighbourhood, we first ask for a survey of what is needed in the various neighbourhoods, i.e. an overall plan. We do not do something just to please the mayor of one commune and then of another.

Second, consistent with **French development aid policy**: as elected councillors, we obviously do not want to act as freelancers. Decentralised development aid, to be intelligible, has to be part of a general framework and contribute to France's good image, which we all benefit from. Even though the ministry of development aid's subsidies do not always arrive on time, our actions do benefit from them, and, as I said above, we do also benefit from the services, on the spot, of a national technical adviser.

**Presentation by
Micheline Prahecq
deputy mayor of Orleans.**

Photo : Christian Bidault



The city of Parakou is used by French development aid specialists as a sort of «laboratory» for its support work in the area of urban development in Bénin.

- In 1985, a unit, since called the SERHAU within Bénin's urban project agency, drew up an **urban master plan** for the city of Parakou.

- In 1989, thanks to funding by the FAC, the SERHAU unit set up within the urban community of Parakou (CUP) a management tool: the **urban land register** (RFU). This made it possible within two years to triple the CUP's financial resources, enabling it to pay off its debts and to balance its budget. This success justified the subsequent creation and use of RFUs in the cities of Cotonou, Porto Novo and Djougou.

In June 1991 an agreement was signed with Bénin known as the **Project for supporting local authorities and urban management**. A large part of this project concerns Parakou. It has two components:

- development of the capacity to fulfil the roles of manager, owner and urban community, including the drawing up of an urban development programme, and the reorganisation and equipping of the departments involved;

- completion of a first period of investments comprising the drainage network (clearing of gutters, reshaping of watercourses, building of crossing structures), the management of solid waste (the creation of disposal tips, refuse collection) and restructuring and fitting of elementary schools.

To achieve this project's objectives, the French development aid service has placed at the disposal of the head of the Parakou Urban Community a full-time technical adviser, Mr G. Sartena.

- In 1993 work began on the **complete reconstruction of Parakou's central market** and on the upgrading of the district around it and of the infrastructures that service it. These works were financed by Caisse française de Développement.

- Finally, in 1994, Parakou was a beneficiary of the **Special Development Fund** (FSD) set up following the devaluation of the CFA franc. The funds were allocated to a variety of projects including external works, and the provision of school and healthcare facilities in the most disadvantaged parts of the city.

The European Union's approach to decentralised co-operation

Introduced as early as 1990 in the Lomé IV convention¹, and then in 1992 in development aid to Latin America and Asia, the aim of decentralised co-operation is to involve a great variety of regional and local operators as partners in the European Union (EU)'s development programme.

The partners sought for include local government authorities, special initiative groups, local professional groupings, trade unions, co-operatives, NGOs etc. and, generally speaking, all organised expressions of civil society. Without becoming an absolute prerequisite, decentralised co-operation fosters partnerships with equivalent local operators in Europe.

That said, the diversity of the EU's practice of decentralised co-operation is characterised by two types of approach.

- The first one is the result of intra-EU experience of getting cities and local authorities (as well as the economic and academic worlds and civil society as a whole) more involved in EU policies in key areas such as culture, the environment or local democracy. The programme of co-operation and exchanges between cities comes under this type of approach. This programme first concerned cities in 12 EU member countries. Subsequently it was broadened to take in countries situated near the EU in eastern Europe and the Mediterranean. So this type of approach is more suitable for intermediate countries than for least-developed countries.

- The second type of approach comes under relations between the North and the South, and under EU aid to the least-developed countries. Africa has been the principal beneficiary of this approach both in terms of the quantity of resources allocated to it (mainly through the European Development Fund - the EDF) and because it was in Africa that the need to adopt new methods of providing aid was the most evident in order to counteract the unintended adverse effects of structural adjustment or to foster the fragile democratisation process.

What is at stake with regard to decentralised co-operation can be summed up as three challenges:

- to create conditions conducive to involving the actors of civil society in defining and establishing development priorities;
- to adapt aid mechanisms so that they are more attuned to society at local level and to fostering the initiatives of local actors;
- finally, to pay more attention to the

institutional and social stakes of development.

Under the Lomé convention there have been significant steps in this direction.

- Nearly 10% of the EDF's funds (i.e. Ecu600m) have been allocated to programmes designed and implemented in accordance with the principles of decentralised co-operation, mainly in the area of whole farm rural development and, more recently, in support of small and medium-sized enterprises or in urban development.

- «Micro-output programmes» have been implemented (involving 40 ACP countries and commitments amounting to Ecu100m). These programmes have been designed to support local micro-output programmes cofinanced with local actors. Although mainly focused on rural society, some micro-output programmes have begun to include urban social and economic infrastructure projects, mainly in secondary cities. Some have even promoted more structured approaches to local development. However, the design and management of most micro-output programmes have been centralised. But recently a trend has emerged for the new generation of such programmes to be in the form of funds for decentralised co-operation, the design and management of which are delegated to local actors.

- In addition, a growing number of sectoral appropriations managed by Brussels have been targeted at the same objectives as decentralised co-operation. So regional and local actors in the South are eligible to benefit from them. Among these appropriations, the one for «Decentralised Development Aid» is destined to act as a catalyst and to foster experimentation. It supports partnerships or networking between local actors in the North and in the South, as well as pilot projects, particularly in urban environments, in which the EU still has not invested very much.

In fact, urban development has remained the poor relation to the EU's DA effort, accounting for barely 3% of the total aid given by the EU to Africa over the last 20 years. However, there are encouraging signs

of a new trend in favour of urban projects in three appropriation lines: urban infrastructure and facilities, development of the productive sector and improvement in city management.

We expect decentralised DA to stimulate this trend and to propose new ways of operating suited to the realities and challenges facing local authorities in the South. Complementing the initiatives of local development agents, the local authorities in the South are quite naturally destined to become the driving forces of decentralised co-operation as envisioned by the EU. In most countries of the South, the fact that local institutions are relatively new and that the democratisation and decentralisation process is fragile are still obstacles to be overcome. This is the area in which the assistance of local authorities in the North is most needed. EU departments and delegations are more and more receptive to this type of co-operation. But the governments of the states that benefit from it, and who have the final say in setting the priorities of European aid, still have to be persuaded that decentralised aid can be an asset and not a liability. The movement of these partnerships in the direction of more «professional» ways of operating and of a closer co-operation with the state can only contribute to fostering the required trust. In this respect, the EDF programme of support for Côte d'Ivoire's coastal towns and cities is a noteworthy instance of positive co-operation between the state and municipalities in implementing a major economic promotion and investment programme.

Lomé IV, whose renewal for the period 1995-2000 is being negotiated, notably regarding decentralised aid procedures, could be the long-awaited boost, given the high hopes that this new approach has raised.

Christian Curé

**In charge of decentralised co-operation
Department of Development**

1. Which is the framework for EU development aid to African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states. Lomé IV covers the 1990-2000 period.

French technical assistance to municipalities

Faced with the failures of the two major «technicalist» trends which have marked African development over the last 20 years - large-scale projects and conventional technologies on the one hand, small-scale community-based projects with the appropriate technologies on the other -, and with the move towards decentralization and emphasis on local development local development, the question that now arises with respect to technical assistance for development can be summarised as follows: «How should local development be institutionalised?».

French technical assistance is historically well placed to respond to this demand for a more holistic, technical and political approach, based on a municipal philosophy which is a specific feature of the French model of municipal organization and which places joint responsibility for «political thought» and «technical thought» on the shoulders of local personalities.

Municipal development concerns all areas of activity. Decentralisation, seen as a *grassroots development tool*, should become the principal means to promote synergy and co-ordination between the various sectors (health, agriculture, town planning, education, etc.) and hence to achieve truly *integrated development* under the aegis of mayors acting as «local development agents» and personalities from the local elite.

The municipality has a political role in the original sense of involvement in *public affairs* and in the daily management of the town or city. The technical assistance in this area must therefore have a dual *technical* function:

- that of *social management*, for day-to-day municipal affairs, and

- that of *urban management*, to bring life into the town or city and to contribute to its development.

This dual task calls for sensitivity and empathy, combined with extensive knowledge of the techniques involved.

Municipal development, as a grassroots development tool, does not aim simply to revitalise the local community, is if it were some mythical all-powerful means of guaranteeing long-awaited success. Its purpose is rather :

- to promote a sense of responsibility among populations, encouraging them to take charge of their own development;

- to dynamise the private sector by the multiplier effect of locally focused investment;

- to establish the conditions required for the process of private accumulation;

- while guaranteeing the durability of local institutions.

At the same time, the municipality must become more credible in the eyes of its inhabitants, the protagonists of this development process.

This institutionalisation of local development, probably calls for:

- community involvement;

- development of larger municipalities' capabilities in the field of project supervision and management (technical services, privatisation) and, in the (case of) smaller municipalities, the development of a hybrid process calling for community involvement in a spirit of respect for institutions and a simplified (municipal) project supervision system.

In addition, such development respectful of institutions calls for improved municipal resources, as regards both tax income (of central government origin) and local financing (municipal taxes and cash contributions) and for the mobilisation of non-monetary resources (manpower, materials, etc.).

The fiscal aspect of municipal development is more a concern for lies tax and legal specialists and remains highly technical, especially since it (is apprehended) in a context of debate with international institutions who frequently only see these issues from the often distorted angles of debt and major macro-economic balances.

The municipal institution has a fundamental role to play in the management of everyday life for the benefit of the local population, thus helping to establish a climate of *trust in institutions*. It also has another more technical and forward-looking role: to manage public spaces and networks, to foster a feeling of belonging among inhabitants and to move forwards towards urban modernity.

In this context, made even more complex by the fact that these problems constantly touch on political issues on local and national levels, the technical assistant must be a

leader, a «dynamiser» of development. He must listen to others while giving his own advice, based on his technical knowledge, with no doctrinal or philosophical bias. He must often stand at the crossroads between institutions and social dynamics, acting as a technician (technical thought) helping the municipal team (political thought) to translate these dynamic forces into institutionalised actions. As he may often deal with techniques that he does not fully master, he must be able to mobilise specialises and become integrated into a knowledge network where he can find the technical know-how he lacks. Lastly, he must be fully informed of French policy in his host country so as to integrate this other political aspect (which may be of significant importance if France is one of the country's major donors) into his daily thoughts and action.

The main values which should constantly underpin technical assistance work would therefore appear to be:

- the re-establishment or strengthening of *confidence* between the population and institutions;

- the *transparency* of actions and of their financing;

- the *appropriation* of projects by the local population and authorities;

- the *reproducibility* of the systems established;

- the *simplicity* and *clarity* of procedures;

- *respect* for partners, for whom we are no more than advisors;

- *adaptation* to the realities of the field.

Should not our aim be to ensure that elected representatives and municipal agents, like their counterparts at a national level, take responsibility for projects and procedures to the point where we are no longer needed, and where we can then become simply partners and friends? That is, no longer ASSISTANTS.

Nicolas Widmer
Architect, town planner

Co-operation news

◆ Sand concrete in Senegal

The ancient technique of sand concrete production has been relaunched in France by the Sablocrète national project, brought to a close in Paris on November 30 after six years of research and promotional work. On this occasion, the development project for use of sand concrete in urban development (pavements, buildings) and infrastructure (Cayor canal) in Senegal was presented.

Sand concrete is particularly well suited for use in developing countries with large natural sand reserves, where aggregate production is relatively costly.

The formulation study for Senegal is being carried out with the support of Sablocrète and the French *ministère de l'équipement, transport et du tourisme* (DAEI), which was a partner in the launching of the national Sablocrète project.

The ENPC press has recently published a document entitled «Béton de sable» which summarises the approach and technical aspects of the Sablocrète project.

Contact: Contact : C. Barillet, METT/DAEI tél. (33.1) 40.81.27.95 -

Colonel Diop, Dakar tél. : (221) 23.70.10 H. Hilhouet Sablocrète, tél. (33)

56.55.81.80

G. Coronio Presses de l'ENPC, tél. (33.1) 44 58 34 60

◆ World Bank/METT «urban services» network

At the request of the World Bank, the economic and international affairs division of METT, with the support of the *Association des ingénieurs des villes de France* and the AGIR association, has set up a network of experts in the field of urban services management. Within the framework of World Bank projects, these experts will provide advice to African decision-makers on the preparation and negotiation of delegated management contracts and the management of operating companies.

Around 10 experts, working mainly for local government bodies, were selected by the World Bank and should begin their consulting work in January 1995. Requests have already been submitted by operational divisions of the World Bank for countries in English-speaking Africa.

The network will be organised by the DAEI, in close liaison with the World Bank and *Cités unies Développement* for the drawing up of educational material.

Contacts have also been established with the *Union africaine des distributeurs d'eau* (African union of water distributors), which is organising a forthcoming meeting on delegated management.

Contact : Anne Charreyron Perchet, *Direction des affaires économiques et internationales*, METT, Arche de la Défense, 92055 Paris-la-Défense Cedex 04 - France tél. (33.1)40 81 28 13, Fax. (33.1)40 81 27 70.

◆ Presentation by Jean-Marie Cour

The West Africa long term perspective study by J.M. Cour, financed by several donors, examines the issues of long-term development and population dynamics.

The assessment of activity in the region is based on a head count of people, their location and, above all, the budget of households. It is thus possible to draw a picture of the «real economy» of the regions studied.

The volume of investment for the current urban population of 80 million is, in fact, well above the figure given in national accounts. The observed slowdown in urban growth is a result of the economic situation but also of the relative exhaustion of the rural reservoir and, consequently, a smaller investment flow. The urban population in the next 25 years will reach around 250 million. This figure poses a challenge to local companies and to development aid organisations. The payback time for public urban investment is very long. If outside aid were to be stopped or reduced, a severe blow would be dealt to development and productivity, not to speak of the consequences on the living conditions of urban populations and the level of social unrest.

Contact : Club du Sahel - OECD, John Nooman, 24 boulevard Suchet, 75016 Paris - France, tél. 45 24 89 87

◆ Appointments

Georges Murat, IDTPE, within the framework of French co-operation, has been appointed to the *Ministère de l'Équipement et de la Construction* (MEC) of Gabon as advisor to the director general of public works. His task will also include the promotion of exchanges with the Departmental directorate for roads and bridges of Haute-Savoie, France, which has been chosen to develop partnerships with the MEC.

Jean-Pierre Denis, IDTPE, has been appointed technical advisor to the mayor of Pointe Noire (Congo) as part of a FAC municipality and urban environment support project.

South Africa

- Conference on urban development in March 1995

- One-day rail transport technical session in February 1995

ACTIM, the Housing Ministry and the *Ministère de l'Équipement* are organising a conference on urban development from 6 to 10 March in South Africa. It will comprise two sessions, one in Johannesburg and one in Cape province.

This conference, sponsored by the South-African Housing Ministry, will examine French experience and policy in the fields of urban development, financing of public housing projects and the private financing of urban services.

A sequel to the seminar organised in Paris in January 1994, it forms part of the French development aid programme with South Africa in the field of urban development, responding specifically to the wishes of the South-African authorities for their programme of reconstruction and development (PRD).

The CFME (*Centre français des manifestations économiques*) is organising a number of technical meetings and contacts on rail transport (commuter and main lines) in Johannesburg from 13 to 17 February.

Contacts : C. Barillet METT-DAEI tél.(33.1) 40.81.27.95 - J.J. Tissier ML-DHC tél.(33.1) 40.81.91.59 - N. Lebaudrier, CFME (33.1) 40.81.37.14

Symposia

16 - 18 February 1995
Delft (Netherlands)

Urban habitat: the environment of tomorrow. International conference organised by the «Building environment and development» research group with the help of the International institute for infrastructural, hydraulic and environmental engineering (IHE) based in Delft.

Contact : Secretary of «Building environment and development», Eindhoven university of technology, P.O.Box 513, 5600 MB Eindhoven. The Netherlands Tél. (31) 40.473.308

6 - 9 June 1995 Paris (France)
12 - 16 June 1995 Lyon (France)

International training session on urban transport (French/English) organised by CERTU. Module 1 (Paris): urban transport planning - Modules 2 & 3 (Lyon) : road traffic management, management of urban transport companies. Registration fee: FFR25,500 for 3 weeks.

Contact : CERTU, Maryse Fluteau-Cohen, 12 avenue Aristide Briand, 92220 Bagneux, France, tél. (33.1) 46.11.35.05

3 - 7 September 1995
The Hague (Netherlands)

A world of municipalities: the local way to innovation in international co-operation. World congress of the International Union of Local Authorities

Contact: Secretariat IULA World Congress 1995, c/o The Hague Municipality, P.O.Box 80000, 2508 GA the Hague - Netherlands, fax: (31) 70.353.35.88

Book review

Gestion de la croissance des grandes villes côtières d'Afrique de l'Ouest (Managing the growth of West-African coastal cities) Cotonou, 28 June - 1 July 1993 - Cotonou: municipal development programme - West and Central Africa module 1994 - 281 p (PDM-IV seminars series). Though the concentration of large populations in West African cities is not a problem in itself, it nevertheless leads to the rapid development of numerous difficulties that municipalities are unable to cope with due to insufficient resources. During the seminar, a number of presentations demonstrated how these problems arise and detailed some of the solutions tested locally.

Contact : PDM-Module Afrique de l'ouest et du centre : PB 01 - 3445, Cotonou - Bénin

Mutations sociales et articulations des espaces ruraux et urbains (Social changes and relations between rural and urban areas) In: Cahier du GEMDEV, n° 21, September 1994 - 289p. This collection of texts concerns two aspects of the GEMDEV research programme: «actors and factors of change», notably the relationship between cities and rural areas on a world-wide scale and «continuity and discontinuity of structures», which examines the crisis affecting structuring models - the model of the nation state and its associated development model, and the model of traditional solidarities.

*Contact : GEMDEV, 9 rue Malher, 75004 Paris - France
Price : 50 FF*

Vers un programme «Action 21» local (Towards a local «Action 21» programme). An urban synthesis of Action 21 for local authorities - Paris: Metropolis FMCU-IULA-Sommet 1994 - 143p.

In the wake of the recommendation of the Rio Summit in June 1992, four major international associations (Metropolis, International Union of Local Authorities, the Summit of World Cities, the World Federation of United Towns) are seeking, via this document, to help and encourage their members to take the necessary measures to develop environmental action programmes at a local level.

Contact : Metropolis, 16bd. Raspail, 75007 Paris - France

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