

ASG Record of November 27, 2013 Meeting / Compte-rendu de la réunion du GRA tenue le 27 novembre 2013

1. Introduction of new participants / Présentation des nouveaux participants

Yves Morneau - Since Jan 2011, Chair of the Canadian Institute for Conflict Resolution (CICR); member of the Canadian Peace initiative; member of the Steering committee of the Community Mediation Ottawa; from October 1999 until retirement from CIDA in November 2004, program manager, NGO Project Facility; ancien coopérant de l'ACDI; directeur du Bureau de la coopération canadienne à Cotonou (1996-99); agent principal pour le Programme de l'Afrique occidentale (1991-96); chargé de projet pour le programme décentralisé de la Tanzanie (1989-91); représentant sur place à Dar es Salaam (1986-89); gestionnaire de l'équipe pour le programme au Soudan (1985-86); gestionnaire du programme agricole Sim Sim au Soudan (1984-85); coordonnateur du développement rural, Diocèse catholique de Mansa, en Zambie (1997-1980); teacher and principal, Bahati Secondary School, Mansa, Zambia. Education: M.Sc Conflict Studies, MBA (1986) Saint Paul U and Ottawa U. A vécu 21 années en Zambie, en Tanzanie, et au Bénin.

Lionel Njeukam - Diplômé en études africaines de l'UPJV (Université de Picardie Jules Verne à Amiens); récemment déménagé à Ottawa. Sa thèse de doctorat est une étude socio-historique de la peine de mort au Nigeria, le pays le plus peuplé et le plus 'rétentionniste' d'Afrique. Actuellement, il s'intéresse à la question du fédéralisme en Afrique, à la lumière des expériences canadienne et américaine.

2. Gail Kaneb, "TOSTAN: Change Management at work in Africa / "TOSTAN: La gestion du changement à l'oeuvre en Afrique"

As described by Ms Kaneb, the Canadian Chair of the Board of this international NGO, Tostan's community-based change management program is currently being implemented in eight African countries. It is an innovative gender-sensitive experiment to enhance the dignity and improve the lives of people in poor, traditionally male-dominated and conservative rural communities.

The tried and proven methodology involves using local facilitators to win trust and build consensus of the entire village population for a three year program. One of the basic conditions is the inclusion of women of different ages in the community management committees, which has given them for the first time an institutionalized role on issues affecting their health and status. The objective is to get the community to identify through the powerful and well accepted practice of play-acting, the most corrosive social ills, and to develop through a curriculum of informal community-based education, the skills needed to deal with them. The first year of the program introduces concepts of human rights, democracy and problem solving, as well as practices of community health and hygiene, leading to literacy, numeracy, and income-generating skills in years two and three, after which the community is deemed self-sufficient.

According to Ms. Kaneb, two of the most common social evils being addressed through this program are the intertwined practices of female genital cutting and child marriage, leading to serious health consequences, a denial of educational opportunity and lifelong low socio-

economic status for the girls affected. It was therefore important that women and girls become part of the decision-making circle. In Tostan villages, cutting across the dominant male bias of traditional rural African culture, there are now some female chairpersons and even some all-female community councils. .

From the programme's inception in 1998 in thirteen Senegalese villages, the program has now spread to six thousand villages in eight countries. In some villages, female genital cutting and child marriage have been sharply curtailed or even eliminated. Demand now exceeds supply inasmuch as Tostan villages are seen by surrounding communities as prosperous and progressive. Trades disseminated include a full gamut of traditional crafts as well as some modern sector competencies such as solar stove construction and accountancy. At an estimated cost of \$8000 per year per village for a three year program, Tostan is judged to be very cost-effective.

Ms Kaneb reported that Tostan receives funding from UNICEF, some foundations and a few aid agencies. Nevertheless, it is confronting a funding squeeze which constrains its further spread. CIDA initially gave it a positive assessment in conformity with the Agency's Maternal and Child Health criteria, but CIDA's internal priorities then shifted and little funding materialized.

ASG participants at the meeting were impressed by Ms Kaneb's presentation. In response to her request for information about alternate funding sources, ASG Chairperson Louise Ouimet said that she would seek the views of members and forward suggestions to Tostan.

3. Recent African Developments and Views from Members

Louise Ouimet informed the group that she was working on a 'vision paper' on a new partnership with Africa.

The CIC National Capital Branch is tentatively planning a dinner conference focusing on Africa for February 6, 2014, at which guest speaker will be Dominic Barton, Managing Director of McKinsey and Company.

Mme. Ouimet has established contact with Jean Gauthier, the new executive head of the Canadian Council for Africa (CCAF), replacing Lucien Bradet. CCAF will be organizing a Canada-Africa business summit in May 2014.

The Deputy President of South Africa Kgalema Motlanthe.has recently paid a working visit to Canada. His focus was on investment in mining, but he was also received at senior level by Canadian government ministers during his visit to Ottawa.