



INSIGHTS FROM THE IASC-AFRICA WEBINAR (March 31, 2022)

“(Re)centering the commons in Africa around the territories and cultures of local communities”

The African branch of the IASC organized on March 31, 2022 an informative and didactic webinar on “(Re)centering the commons in Africa around the territories and cultures of local communities”. The event, which is the culmination of a selective process of a series of eight (8) communications attracted an audience of sixty-two (62) participants.

At the outset, Koffi ALINON, member of the IASC Executive Council, presented this association and especially the ongoing process aimed at better structuring an approach by the commons with an African and Francophone perspective. The webinar was structured around three (3) very lively discussion topics.

DISCUSSION THEME 1: “CUSTOMARY NORMS, LEGAL FORMALISM AND RIGHT OF PROPERTY ON THE COMMONS”

This session was moderated by Serigne Momar SARR (Member of the IASC; Teacher-Researcher at the University of Ziguinchor, Senegal). Two communications have been delivered:

- Mr. David TISSIDI, geographer from the University of Maroua (Cameroon), on the subject "Tangle of local rights: case of actors around the Laf forest reserve -Madjam (Far North Cameroon);
- Ms. Khadidiatou SENGHOR from the Marine Social Sciences of Leibniz ZMT (Germany) in co-production with MM. Achim SCHLÜTER from the same institution and Bara DEME from the University of Portsmouth (United Kingdom). The subject was: “Applying the Network of Action Situation to the Institutional framework of fisheries and Marine Protected Areas (MPA) governance in Senegal”.

In terms of discussions, the two presenters were challenged respectively on the issue of conflicts within resource spaces, the overlapping of different rights in the field, on the one hand for Mr. TISSIDI and on the other hand on the reproduction and the sustainability of species, the policies enacted by Senegal.

Ultimately, we notice in both communications, the plurality of actors who interact through different standards, despite the ambition of participatory management. This results in a confrontation that can lead to conflicts around resource spaces; which is likely to call into question the sustainability of resources. Also, we should note the obvious effort to adopt and adapt the Institutional Analysis and Development framework as a model for analysing field elements; which reinforces the future of the theory of the governance of the commons.

DISCUSSION THEME 2: "CONFLICTS OF USE AROUND RESOURCE SPACES"

This second theme was moderated by Koffi ALINON (Member of the IASC Executive Council; Researcher, Center for International Cooperation in Agronomic Research for Development – CIRAD, Chad). During this session, participants followed three presentations:

- Mr. Boureima TOURE, Anthropologist at the University of Letters and Human Sciences of Bamako (Mali) on the theme: "Problems of the consensual management of resources and interdependent operating systems in the Office du Niger area in Mali.
- "Pastoral mobility in the context of insecurity linked to Boko Haram and diversity of conflicts around the exploitation of natural resources in the Cameroonian Sahelian zone" by Jules BALNA, Geographer at the University of Maroua (Cameroon)
- "Towards an open and sustained war for the control of pastoral resources in the yaérés of Logone: stakes and actors games" from Evele ZACHARIE (PhD candidate in geography, University of Maroua); communication delivered by Valentin ZOUYANE, (Geographer, University of Ngaoundere).

The participants challenged the authors on points of terminological clarification and on substantive questions. Thus, details have been provided on what the "ordalie" is as a tool contributing to conflict resolution and what consensual conflict management covers in the context of central Mali. On the role of the State, the authors recognized that it remains essential. However, beyond the claim of State regulation on agro-pastoral spaces, the observation in the field rather corroborates the absence of the State, the void of which is filled by the more or less lasting arrangements between actors whose arrangements seem generally useful in conflicts resolution.

DISCUSSION THEME 3: "COMMONS MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ISSUES FOR AFRICA"

This theme was moderated by Rim JEMLI (Member of the IASC; Teacher-Researcher at the University of Sfax, Tunisia). During this session, participants heard communications from three different disciplines:

- A 1st Intervention in Management Sciences: "The impact of global warming on fair trade sectors and producer communities: the case of sustainable cocoa in Côte d'Ivoire", presented by Ms. Mantiaba COULIBALY-BALLET and her co-author Mr. Marc VALAX- Côte d'Azur University, GRM Laboratory (France);
- A 2nd Intervention in Economic Sciences: "Polycentric governance of the great routes of southern Tunisia: marking the paths of cooperation", presented by Mr. Mabrouk LAÂBAR, Laboratory of Economy and Rural Societies (LESOR), Institute of Arid Regions of Medenine (Tunisia).
- A 3rd Intervention in Geography: "Land issues and strategies of actors in the peri-urban space of the municipality of Avrancou (South Benin)", presented by Mr. Mivossin Philippe TOGNON and his co-authors Mr. Nadohou Alodédji Richard AHODO-OUNSOU and Mr. Antoine Yves TOHOZIN, Laboratory for Urban and Regional Dynamics Studies (LEDUR), Department of Geography and Regional Planning (FASHS-UAC) (Benin).

The presentations were in phase with the webinar topic through the study of the management schemes of various natural resource systems (or even CPRs according to Elinor OSTROM). The presentations come to consolidate the subject of the 1st Webinar which aims to refocus the Commons

in Africa with regard to the Ostromian approach. During a rich discussion, participants elaborated on the status of various natural commons described in the presentations while observing the overlap between their modes of collective management and the three pillars of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.

FINAL NOTES AND PERSPECTIVES

Mr. Everisto MAPEDZA (IASC Africa Regional Coordinator; Principal Researcher, International Water Management Institute – IWMI, Accra, Ghana) gathered some points for the way forward. Other forthcoming webinars will be organized in 2022. The diversity of resources in common goods serving as a basis for collective action as emerged from the various communications, raises the question of their sustainability in the context of climate change as highlighted by the latest IPCC report. He called for maintaining a rigor in the conceptualization of the commons accompanied by robust and solid methodologies in line with the work within the IASC. In this regard, a multidisciplinary approach must be privileged while considering the context which is diversified and which sees the emergence of new actors with decentralization and globalization.

The multifaceted and complicated nature of conflicts should nevertheless lead research to attempt typologies based on the economic aspects, livelihoods, scale and dimensions of the conflicts (local, national, cross-border, global). Moreover, beyond the theoretical description of their statutes, what is essential is to objectify the common resources in a way that local populations want.

Mr. MAPEDZA encouraged participants to join the IASC and informed about the next events of the IASC Africa branch, in particular an in-person conference planned for the fourth quarter of 2022 in Dakar, Senegal and focusing on Security and the Commons in the Sahel and in the Horn of Africa as well as the IASC Biennial Conference scheduled for June 19-24, 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya.

Started at 10:12 GMT, the webinar was closed at 13:05 to the satisfaction of the participants.