

INTRODUCTION

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This international workshop is one of the activities of our two-year research project under the title of "African Political Economy in Transition", which has started this fiscal year. This two-year project is the 3rd one, succeeding the 2nd three-year project which was carried out between 1988 and 1990 under the overall title of "Socio-Economic Development and the Formation of States in Contemporary Africa", and the 1st one which started in 1985 under the overall title of "Economic Crisis and Development Problems in African Countries".

This kind of workshop has been held every year since 1987, except for last year when it was canceled because of the Gulf War crisis. This year we are very happy to have this 5th international workshop with participants from Africa without being interrupted by such a trouble. But when we take a glance at the actual situation in Africa, we cannot be at ease. Africa finds herself in great difficulty. It is not by chance, though not intentionally, that the two words which are very familiar to Africanists, that is, "development" and "state" have disappeared in the title of our 3rd research project. Both development and state are in danger and in question today in Africa.

During the 1980's, most African countries could not realize economic growth as expected and fell down in stagnation or crisis. Under these circumstances the international monetary system, led by IMF and the World Bank, has imposed "structural adjustment" on African countries as a conditionality of their financial cooperation. African countries seem to be almost losing their independence in the domain of economic and fiscal policies. The

recovery of fiscal balance, first. Balance predominates over development.

On the other hand, people in Africa have come to demand more and more strongly better living conditions and the democratization of political systems in their countries. The process of political democratization has caused political disorders, confusion, and, in some cases, bloody violence in many African countries. I should say that the "state", a political framework which Africa inherited from colonial powers, is also in question.

Anyway we can say that these external and internal pressures have forced many African countries to experience the transitional period both economically and politically. Where are African countries going? Can African countries overcome these difficulties and institutionalize the basis for the long term economic development and establish a new political system to assure it? This workshop, I do hope, will contribute to clarify some aspects of these questions, through three case studies on Ghana, Kenya, and Tanzania, with the stimulating and fruitful discussion of all the participants.