

Welcome note at the 2017 ACCA GA by co-chair: Michel Yoboue

**Representatives of ACCA member organizations,
Ladies and gentlemen representing ACCA partners,
Distinguished guests
Ladies and gentlemen**

It is a duty and an agreeable pleasure to welcome you all to this capacity building meeting on the role of Civil Society in Private Security Governance, which is taking place right now. A day before the 4th General Assembly of the African Coalition for Corporate Accountability (ACCA).

I am already looking forward to the participation of each of you. This rightly reflects the interest you all have in our goal to supporting the communities and individuals whose rights are violated on a daily basis by the activities of companies and for what brings us together today through private security companies.

Indeed, the governance of private military and security companies (PMSCs) is a matter of great concern at the international level, and Africa is considered as an attractive emerging market for this new type of industry, with chronic conflicts obviously contributing to maintaining and developing this business sector.

The unregulated development of the private security sector, often beyond the control of democratic governance, represents a major challenge for security, development, respect for human rights and the rule of law. In many cases, civil society organizations (CSOs) are the only source of information on the role and impact of this industry and they have a key role to play in promoting and improving the good governance of the security sector. Nevertheless, despite the increased recognition of their role, CSOs face significant constraints that affect their capacity to operate.

On the one hand, the ability of CSOs to promote and contribute to good governance of the private security sector depends on the context in which they operate: the lack of information on private security companies (PSCs), the lack of adequate tools and how challenges are identified often limit the ability of CSOs to address and respond to the challenges of good governance of PSCs. On the other hand, the absence of an enabling environment - such as, for example, a lack of political will or a situation of conflict - also hinders the capacity of CSOs in this context.

Thus, in the perspective that CSOs can more effectively perform their role with regard to the governance of private security sector, it is important that CSOs be sensitized to these issues.

The Center for the Democratic Control of the Armed Forces of Geneva (DCAF)

With these words, I would, on behalf of the ACCA Steering Committee, like to wish you a fruitful day of capacity building on the role of the SC in private security governance.