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Master's Research Report

A Causal Model of Decentralisation and the Quality of Local Governance in Sub-Sahara Africa: The Impact of Pan-African Organisations AMCOD and UCLGA

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study examines the causal relations between the national political, economic and social context as well as macro- and micro-level design of decentralisation reforms, and the effects that decentralisation has on the quality of local governance. Central government political will, overall poverty level and local social structures and norms are identified as important determinants of the capacity of decentralisation to bring about good local governance. Subsequently, it is outlined that pan-African organisations operating in the realm, namely AMCOD and UCLGA, can intervene to improve decentralisation's record to enhance local governance at three points in time: before decentralisation is on the agenda, when it is conceptualised and when local governments are already fully operational. The most promising area of action of these organisations is identified as the improvement of political will and commitment of central governments to democratic decentralisation and good local governance. Moreover, they can provide advice on how to best design decentralisation reforms and improve the technical, administrative and fund-raising capacity of local governments.