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## **Session 7: Oversight Mechanisms and Institutions**

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**Oversight mechanisms and institutions**  
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*“ Current debates and regional perspectives ”*

By Michelle Ndiaye

# Introduction

Security is a public good!

Security institutions are a major component of the national public service architecture to ensure both state and people's security

Their role should be considered a public and citizens' issue.

Oversight of the security sector should therefore be the engagement of all actors within the sector and beyond to optimize accountable service delivery to the public.

The concept of security has evolved from a narrow understanding of **state-centric notions of sovereignty and territorial integrity** to **threats to societal and individual well-being.**

## Introduction (Cont.)

These preliminary perspectives show the centrality of the role of accountability and oversight

Today's discussions on oversight will be anchored on three current policy debates and Regional perspectives

- 1. Evolving democratic settings**
- 2. Challenging governance environments**
- 3. Regional perspectives on Oversight mechanisms**
- 4. Way forward: An inclusive National Security Strategy**

# Security Sector Oversight in Evolving Democratic Settings

**Security institutions are critical to the democratization process just as democratic principles drive the optimal efficiency of the security sector.**

## **Optimal performance of institutions**

*The system of checks and balances in a democracy is to ensure that no one arm of government uses its powers excessively*

*Security sector masters the notions of democracy and civil accountability in pursuit effective service delivery.*

## **In reality...**

Undemocratic manipulations of the security sector



Security Sector constitutes a threat to peace and security under the guise of maintaining order

**Basic oversight functions are exercised by the Executive, the legislative and the judiciary**

The democratization of the security sector entails a lot more than state democracy

## Security Sector Oversight in Evolving Democratic Settings (cont.)

**Other Civilian Oversight  
Mechanisms play a limited role  
Despite existing legal provisions**

Auditors General

Civil Society Organizations

Ombudspersons

Whistle-blowers

Human Rights Commissions and Traditional and customary authorities (AU 2013)

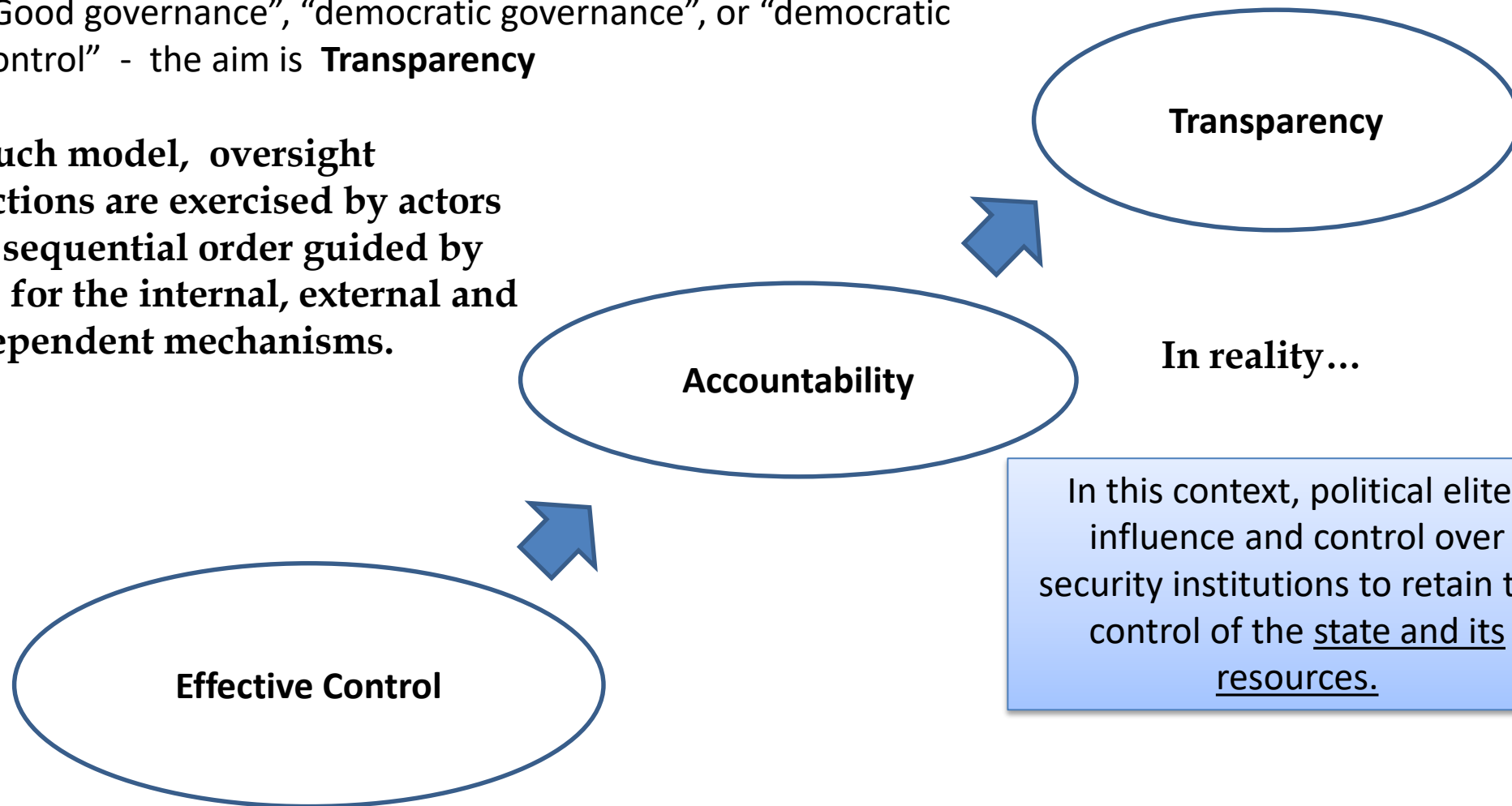
Media

Military oversight

# Security Sector Oversight in Challenging Governance Environments

“Good governance”, “democratic governance”, or “democratic control” - the aim is **Transparency**

In such model, oversight functions are exercised by actors in a sequential order guided by law for the internal, external and independent mechanisms.



**Limited oversight - Media et CSOs filling the vacuum**



## Regional perspectives on Oversight mechanisms

**The Regional Economic Communities urge MS** to establish effective democratic control and oversight institutions -  
Political declaration

The AU Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform (adopted in January 2013 during the 20<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly)

- **ECOWAS Policy Framework on SSR**
- **The SADC Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation in 2001 – Set of a Defense pact.**
- **IGAD , CEN-SAD, AMU, COMESA; EAC**

- **Public Oversight and Management Bodies:** such as the executive, the justice ministries, the legislature, national security advisory bodies, parliamentary sub-committees, anti-corruption bodies, Auditor General, customary authorities, the Pan African Parliament, and regional parliamentary bodies;
- **Justice and Rule of Law Institutions:** such as the judiciary, Office of the Public Prosecutor, ombudspersons, traditional and transitional justice systems, human rights commissions.

## Conclusions

The importance of regulation

Law enforcement

Communications among actors of the different mechanisms

Better protection of Whistle-blowers

Media freedom and independent CSOs

A NSS an opportunity to strengthen the role of Oversight Mechanisms

**Thank you**



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