



DRAFT AFRICAN COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY FOR THE WSF 2011

I- INTRODUCTION

This paper was requested from the Panos Institute West Africa by the Secretariat of the African Social Forum. It aims to serve as a basis for discussions to be held with a) members of the ASF Communications Commission; b) representatives of the African networks of alternative media; c) between them and members of the Communications Commission of the Local Senegalese organizing committee, and finally; d) the members of the Communications Commission of the International Council (07/25/2010).

This draft African Communications strategy, articulated with the Communication Strategy of the Local Organizing Committee' Communications Commission shall be validated by the ASF Board (26/07/2010).

Finally, the African Communications Strategy will be discussed in the context of the meeting of the WSF Board (27-28-29/7/2010).

The proposals contained in the draft are formulating a framework and courses of action. This framework and these main lines will encourage cooperation between the various levels of intervention in terms of communication.

They appeal to the initiatives of various players in the communications sector from Senegal and Africa; starting with members of their respective Communications Committees.

II- CONTEXT

In 2011, the WSF is back to Africa, after the Social Forums in Bamako (Polycentric) and Nairobi (World). The organization of the WSF in Africa provides a unique opportunity:

- To popularize the debate on public issues of globalization for Africa and the citizens responses thereto.
- To strengthen and expand social movements, and their numerous Social Forums that develop in many African countries.
- To expand and accelerate pan-African citizenship synergies and dynamics.

- To communicate these civic movements to the world, and develop links with other regions, especially in the "South".

In this process of popularizing and democratizing global issues central to Africa (and of which Africa is often the center), in a move to amplify the voices of African citizens, to mobilize and expand African social movements, communications within Africa on and between social movements hold a crucial position.

However, whether internal (social movements, social forums in Africa) or external (towards the general public in Africa and elsewhere); one-to-one (information on the challenges of globalization for Africa) or multidimensional (a public space where citizens' voices, including and especially those marginalized, speak and converse), whether institutional (making visible "the WSF event") or social (mobilizing and strengthening social movements, and they intend to promote citizens' voices), communications are facing a lot of challenges.

- Language barriers between international languages inherited from colonial division, which maintains the dispersal of African social movements (and forums).
- Language barriers between international languages and national languages, which continue to determine the modes of organization and representation, including national movements and forums in Africa.
- The political and social biases of many mainstream African media, which distort and pervert the public debate.
- The weight of the international media that format African views on global issues ... and on Africa itself.

However, in terms of communication, and communications organization, Africa has remarkable **potential** and **strengths** to address these outstanding challenges.

In the African communications sector

- The emergence of non-state, non-Communist local radio stations over the past twenty years. (There are now several thousands of them on the continent, differently distributed across countries and regions.
- The existence of some mainstream African media committed to social responsibility.
- The increasing use of some of the new technologies (mobile, video) and the originality of their forms of collective ownership ("citizen-based journalism").
- The emergence of African networks of citizen media (PIWA, Highway Africa, SYFIA, African Woman and Child Feature Services, etc.), which are linked to global networks, but now with a certain autonomy (Amarc-Africa, IPS -Africa, etc.)
- The persistence of non-media forms of communication (music), and the influence of communications.

In the African Social Forum, and Local Social Forums. Of particular note:

- The rapid growth (the highest of all regions of the world) of National Social Forums in Africa and the gradual decentralization of the national Social Forums themselves have increased the physical spaces of communication.
- The invention of new forms of communication within the ASF: the caravans.

- The availability of an African "channel" of production and dissemination of information on issues of globalization and the WSF as an alter-globalization event. *Flame of Africa* has been made available by PIWA to Social Forums since 2003. In seven years, *Flame of Africa* has covered all editions of the WSF, and the ASF or the WASF. It released a dozen issues: the print paper. It extended to an online edition, and a radio production (*Flame of Africa* audio).
- The experiences and solidarity between communications players of other regions of the world (Ex: Ciranda, etc.), active in the context of the World Social Forum.

These are the strengths that the African communications strategy for the 2011 WSF wants more to use.

III- VISION

***“Another world is necessary. Africa is doing its utmost!
Another African communication is possible.”***

- ***“Another world is necessary: African citizens and social movements are doing their utmost ... and they do express it”?***

Africa bears the brunt of neo-liberal globalization and the shift of geo-political stakes (exploitation of mineral resources; exploitation of natural resources and sale of land resources; migration; upgrading mechanisms of global governance and the consequences of the global financial crisis).

African citizens have no choice but to invent responses, through various forms of organizations. Faced with the image of an African victim – lazy and resigned – there is an Africa that is resilient and inventive.

The WSF 2011 is an opportunity to know that *Other Africa*, including by Africans themselves.

- ***“Another communication is possible in Africa: the evidence of it”?***

Possible? How?

This communication strategy aims to integrate different underused communicative “assets”. Priority will be given to:

- The use of local languages (including through radios).
- The use of ICTs, which are accessible and combinable.
- A central place for social groups promoting “another universality” (women, migrants, etc).
- Popular, but non-media forms of communication (trailers, music, etc.).

IV- OBJECTIVES

1. To facilitate the expression of citizens' voices and perspectives on the challenges of globalization for Africa and on the responses through the initiatives and experiences of the African civil society before and during the WSF 2011.
2. To Facilitate regional dynamics of production, exchange and dissemination of African citizen-based media content before and during the WSF 2011, between regions and countries.
3. To ensure an African coverage of the 2011 WSF event.
4. To facilitate virtual participation of African social movements in the 2010 WSF, through ICTs.
5. To contribute to the Memory of African social movements and the 2011 WSF.
6. To developing synergies with the Communications Commission of the International Board and other communications players of the WSF, and with the Communications Commission of the Local Organizing Committee.

V- ACTIVITIES

1. A regional information campaign and debates in the African media BEFORE Dakar 2011.

“Expressing the voices and perspectives of African citizens about globalization”.

1.1. Objectives.

- Encourage regular, sustained, decentralized production of information and debate in the African media.
- Facilitate the exchange, dissemination and accessibility of media content.

1.2. Methodology and deliverables.

1.2.1. Printed Media Production.

- **What?**
 - Reports, investigations and written testimonies on the challenges of globalization discussed in the 2011 WSF (Food security, migration, trade, exploitation of natural resources, land and mining, climate change).
 - In international languages (English, French, Arabic? And Portuguese?), and extensively used local languages (Swahili, Fulani/Pulaar, Malinke, Bambara,).

- **Where:**

The various African regions, with a priority for West Africa (the region where is the WSF is being held), and a priority for Senegal within that priority.

- **When?**

3 months prior to the WSF 11 (November, December, January).

- **How many?**

About 40 papers per month, provided by a dozen journalists from different regions, meaning a total of 120 papers in their different languages.

1.2.2. **Radio Production**

- **What?**

- Same topics as for the press (see above).
- International Languages.
- Local languages: languages of regional circulation (see above), the Wolof and other local languages spoken in Senegal (in particular cross-border languages).

- **How many?**

200 minimum (of about twenty minutes) (“Broadcast-Ready Stuffs”) made in the languages listed above, by a dozen journalists.

1.2.3. **Audio-visual production**

- **What?**

A video of 30 minutes produced in different regions of Senegal, each illustrating one aspect of the effects of neoliberal globalization in Senegal and the resistance thereto.

- **When?**

Available late December 2010.

1.2.4. **Dissemination and sharing.**

The whole production is thus multimedia-based.

- The products are disseminated primarily in the media that journalists are attached to.
- A monthly newsletter - "Flame of Africa" - releases online articles on a monthly basis: 3-5 editions before February 2011.
- All products are available for free on various sites: websites of “Flame of Africa”, the WSF, the ASF, African organizations and networks partners in the initiative.
- The regional radio Broadcast-Ready stuffs are rebroadcast throughout all local radio stations in Senegal. They form the basis for discussion of radio talk: involving auditors, and members of local organizations, including Local Social Forums of Senegal.

100 Local Debates in local radio stations will be held in Senegal in two months preceding the WSF.

x Debates will be held in other countries. [To be defined with the ASF Board members, and particularly members of the Communications Commission]

2. Regional coverage of the WSF 2011 by the African media: "FLAME OF AFRICA" AND ...

“Teams, media through which information is conveyed and shared platforms”.

2.1. Objectives

- Provide coverage of the WSF 2011 by African journalists.
- Provide a different perspective of globalization to African audiences.
- Provide a different image of Africa to the rest of the world.

2.2. Methodology

- Selecting a team of twenty journalists from various regions and languages, from the print press and radios.
- Training/briefing these journalists for 1 to 2 days (open session) before the opening of the WSF.
- A support of the PIWA and cooperation between partner organizations (IPS Syfia, Amarc-Africa, Highway Africa, for the production, dissemination and exchange.)

2.2.1. Newspapers

- Distribution of copies of Flame of Africa in Dakar and in situ (open outcry in the streets, deposits in hotels, etc.)
- A daily supplement in a daily newspaper of Dakar will be explored.
- An online broadcast of Flame of Africa on the websites of partner organizations.

2.2.2. Radio

- A “live” broadcast of programs on the WSF Radio (if a provisional band is obtained).
- Online dissemination on the websites of the ASF/WSF and if partners (Flame of Africa audio Amarc, etc.)
- A replay of accessible programs by Senegalese radios.
- Replay by African radios of programs available online.

3. Welcoming foreign journalists: "Sherpas"

“Contributing to correct the image of Africa

Facilitating the work of foreign journalists.”

3.1. **Setting-up and running the Media Center of the WSF**

[See COMMUNICATION STRATEGY OF THE LOCAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION].

- Fixing logistics
- Preparing press releases
- Holding press conferences
- Etc.

[See COMMUNICATION STRATEGY OF THE WSF COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION]

3.2. Sponsorship of foreign journalists (international and African) by editorial offices of Dakar media.

- **What?**

- The editorial offices of Dakar welcome Dakar 1 - 2 foreign journalists each.
- The newsrooms direct their host to unusual subjects.
- Co-productions or exchanges of productions are made (articles or radio program of the host in the host paper/newsroom and vice versa.

→ [Note: ALSEE CHECK WITH STUDENTS OF CESTI?]

- **When?**

5 days.

During the 2011 WSF (One can also imagine that journalists are too many).

4. Facilitating distance participation of African social movements in the 2011 WSF: “Off-DAKAR, IN-DAKAR”

- **Objectives.**

Facilitate the involvement of African social movements (including Senegalese ones ... and the Diaspora) that cannot physically attend the 2011 WSF.

- **How?**

- Focus group discussions (about the different priorities of the WSF: migration, etc ...).
- Geographic and linguistic diversity is respected (local languages of Senegal, and transnational languages such as Puular, Malinke, Swahili will be encouraged in teleconferences).
- A room available outside Dakar for social movements that want to participate in a videoconference with participants (and vice-versa) during the WSF.

- **Implementation**

In collaboration with “Dakar-étendu” proposed by the WSF Com-Com?

- **When?**

During the five days of the WSF.

5. Contributing to the memory of social movements and the WSF: The VIDEOMATON

- **Objective**

Taking evidence and positions of participants in the WSF on issues discussed during the WSF, the event itself, and the process of Africans Social Forums.

- **How?**

- A studio with a journalist and a camera.
- Participants in the WSF do a short interview or intervention (5-10 minutes max) [Organization to be considered].
- The studio is open every day during the five days of the WSF (starting at 8 am?).

- **Results/Products**

- 40 hours of testimonies/positions are available. Between 200 and 300 testimonies/interventions.
- The raw material is the property of ASF and the WSF. It may be freely used by members of the Social Forums.

[NB: STUDENTS OF THE CESTI MAY HOST VIDEOMATON?]

More:

Adding to these visual testimonies are some 200 radio programs, 100 regional Senegalese radio debates and 150 regional articles.

6. Diversifying the means of communication: Concerts, exhibitions, caravans, etc.

- **Objectives**

To encourage popular and creative forms of communication

- **Activities**

- **Caravans**

- They join Dakar from different African countries.
- Journalists onboard cover the wildlife.
- Cultural events are planned at the “stop-overs”.

[Note: SEE ALSO ASF MOBILIZATION COMMISSION]

- **Concerts** [With other sub-commissions of the Local Organizing Committee and the WSF]
 - Identification of Senegalese musicians by the Communications and Culture Committee.
 - Identification of musicians from East Africa, Southern and Northern Africa, by members of the Communications, Culture and mobilization Commissions of the FSA.
 - **Exhibitions**
 - Handicraft (and grassroots' Economy)
 - Painting
 - [See with volunteers of the Biennial of Visual Arts in Dakar].
 - Cinema.
 - [SEE WITH THE COM-COM AND CULTURE COMMISSION OF THE ASF LOCAL ORGANISING COMMITTEE]
- Screening and discussing African films?
=> [Note: SEE "LIBERTE D'EXPRESSION" (FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION) FESTIVAL OF BURKINA, FORUT OF SENEGAL].
- Roving Cinema in Dakar and inland towns of Senegal?
=> [Note: SEE "IMAGE et VIE"].
- More**
- Festivals to be organized in other African countries during the 2011 WSF, as one of its activities.

IMPLEMENTING the African Communications Strategy

- The proposed draft will be discussed and enriched by participants at the meeting on the African Communication at the WSF 2011, scheduled for 07/25/2010.
- It will also be discussed at the African Social Forum Board meeting billed for 07/26/2010.
- This strategy provides a framework within which different African actors of the African communication can develop initiatives.
- This is part of a strategy of cooperation with international and Senegalese communications players. The discussions will take place on the 25-26-27-28-29 of July 2010 and will lead to the finalization of the Plan of Action and a better articulation of roles.