



African Flame

Another World
is Possible

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African Social Forum, Lusaka (ZAMBIA)

Debt Cancellation a must

By Zaa Twalangeti

THE African Social Forum currently proceeding in Lusaka Zambia has urged Africans to speed-up and in one voice call for the total cancellation of odious, ecological and illegitimate debt.

The call was made by Jack Jones Zulu, a Policy Analyst with Jubilee Zambia.

Presenting a paper at the Africa Social Forum held at Mulungushi Conference Centre, he said "The urgency of this call is that the conditionalities attendant to those debts keep most African governments enslaved to the lender".

He further hinted that such effort can only work if social movement against debt team up with the national legislators and have a common stand on the issue of debt.

According to Zulu, this should be backed by genuine government commitment to push for the cancellations.

This is against the backdrop that Africa's external debt currently stands at over US\$300 Billion. It is further compounded by bad governance. The other factors are the erratic oil prices and national and regional social, economic and political turbulences.

Africa's debt currently stands at US\$15 billion, which is 11 per cent of the total global debt.

Other data shows that governments in sub-Saharan Africa spend over US\$ 13 person on debt servicing and only US\$5 on the health of each person. Further, each person has to service approximately US\$400 per month while the average earnings of an African per month is less than US\$120 per month.

"The picture is worsened by the fact that about half the population of peoples in SSA leave on less than a dollar a day.

Almost 30 per cent of the total earnings of most SSA governments is directed towards debt servicing, leaving scores of African children with no access to education, stressed Zulu.

Regarding the impact of debt on the HIV/AIDS crisis in Africa, data shows that there are currently 28.5 million people who are infected with the HIV virus and are in need of Anti-retroviral drugs, but cannot access them. This situation has led to approximately 6,500 HIV/AIDS-related deaths every day.

The workshop called on the debtors to convert at least US\$ 15 billion that Africa owes the lenders to the fight against HIV/AIDS.

African education systems

By Aaron Mwewa

THE Pan-African Association For Literacy and Adult Education – PAALAE – has prodded African countries not to completely discard the African system in preference for the so-called "modern education" from the west as it is said to have very valuable ingredients for individual and societal development.

Delivering a presentation in the Issues of Education in Africa thematic group at the ongoing ASF on behalf of PAALAE, Babacar Diop Buuba said indigenous African education is good because it closely links general knowledge and practice.

Another key attribute in African traditional education systems that Buuba highlighted is the embedded education with production promoted and its high societal value.

He added that African education is easier to manage because it has a link between culture through the use of the mother tongue and the immersion of knowledge in cultural practices such as games, religious rituals, dances, music and sport.

The foregoing strengths of African education systems should have no doubt been in the minds of African experts that that gathered in 1990

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Jennifer Mulenga from Zambia breaks down as she gives her touching testimony during the Africa Women's courts of the ASF. Picture by Owens Miyanza

"Fight For Freedom
punchline in
proposed Forum
anthem"

By Brenda Zulu

KENYA Social Forum (FSF) yesterday unveiled a proposed African social forum anthem in Swahili that well received by delegates attending the Lusaka meeting.

The anthem focuses on demands for freedom.

Spelling out clearly that "Oppression and killing will not kill the spirit of our struggle to demand for our freedom and our sweat.

We refuse to surrender to the killers, no doubt we too are humans we reject slavery.

We must reclaim our land, we must fight for our freedom, we must liberate our education, culture and our industry," the anthem blends with cries for justice thronging the forum's workshops.

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HIV/AIDS gains centre stage, after marginalisation

By Magari Mandebvu,
Zimbabwe

SOME participants in the Forum from southern Africa were surprised to see that the topic of HIV/AIDS was not mentioned on the preliminary programme for the Forum. This was rectified very quickly and on Sunday morning there will be a session on access to treatment for HIV/AIDS led by the Zimbabwe Social Forum.

This is a recognition that HIV/AIDS is one of the biggest troubles afflicting southern Africa. The region has more HIV positive people than any other in the world. South Africa, with its population of more than 40 million, has the largest (in absolute terms) number of HIV positive people compared to any country in the world, while

Botswana, with less than 2 million people, has the largest proportion infected of any country in the world. Zimbabwe and Swaziland both have more people living with AIDS and children orphaned by AIDS than they can cope with. This clearly is a major problem for all of southern Africa, weakening national economies, disrupting family life and the future of millions of children and threatening more extensive collapse of society.

Delegates from Women Living with AIDS in Zimbabwe have one further grievance to air. Zimbabwe, like other countries, has contributed to the Global Fund for combating HIV/AIDS, but people with HIV/AIDS in Zimbabwe are not seeing any benefit from the Fund. Ms Tariro Chikwanha and Joyline Chimbadzo point out that anti-retroviral drugs are very

expensive and a course of treatment, with appropriate tests, takes a long time, which adds to the cost.

"Politics should be kept out of this. People need the help of the Fund to save their lives. Our country puts some money into the Fund; we should see some coming back to us," said Chikwanha.

Others would say that the real problem is not politics. People should not be penalised for having an oppressive government, but if the government is so corrupt that the Fund cannot be sure both Chikwanha and Chimbadzo, and the millions like them, will get the benefit of any money they give, then they will certainly think twice before giving anything.

The debate is on.

Come and watch our fantastic performance of our Zambia Musician for the
Africa Social Forum Concert

SAKALA BROTHERS
AMAYENGE
DANNY

Free Entry

DATE: Monday 13th December 2004
VENUE: Mulungushi International Conference centre
TIME: 18:00 hours Till late

Naked South African Sub-Imperialism

By Console Tleane

IT IS said that at times explaining something in theoretical (call it abstract) terms can be difficult. For instance, how best can one explain the term sub-imperialism? As delegates listened to speaker after speaker talking about the brutality of Western imperialism and its effects on Africa, a walk to the nearest shopping mall from the Mulungushi Hall, where the ASF is holding its third meeting, offers free lessons on the form of *sub-imperialism*.

Almost every shop at the two shopping complexes near the Hall is South African owned, from the supermarkets through to the eateries. Even the products in these shops are directly imported from South Africa. The magazine and newspaper stalls are lined-up with South African titles.

"This is embarrassing. It is sad. At least this meeting must come out with a resolution denouncing South African sub-imperialism," said Alvin Anthony, from Jubilee South Africa. It is more disturbing that there is so much South African

'capture' of so many spheres of the economy of a country that hosted its (South African) liberation movement for so many years, adds Anthony.

While the nakedness of South African sub-imperialism is becoming increasingly clear for everyone to see in the region it is interesting to note that very little has been said about this disturbing development. Or is it a matter of imperialism ceasing to be exploitative when practiced by an African country as opposed to one exercised by a Western one?

Or is a total takeover of an economy as it is happening to not only Zambia but also other SADC countries like Botswana, Namibia, Malawi and others under Nepad a lesser evil than such a takeover by the EU or North America?

It would seem that Anthony is correct in pointing out that forums like the ASF need to also conduct an inward-looking exercise and see through the growing imperialist tendencies developed by certain African countries.

Isn't a rose by any other name a rose? Shouldn't we be talking about its thorns?

Social Movements and Economic Alternatives

IN THE last years, a phenomenal growth in organisation in response to corporate globalisation has been experienced. The effects of this form of globalisation on communities, workers and the environment have been analysed. This understanding has been shared and people have come together in massive and widespread protests.

Through processes of the World Social Forum, continental forums, regional and country versions, activists have asserted that "Another World is Possible".

However, not much has been said about what this other world should look like.

What type of alternative world

should we be working towards?

How should thinking on alternatives be developed?

How do we ensure that this debate is shaped by those most severely affected by corporate globalisation? What role should social movements play in this regard?

The above questions will be deliberated on in the Southern Africa Centre for Economic Justice and South African Social Movements Indaba organised event during the African Social Forum today.

The meeting will be premised on a participative discussion on economic alternatives and a process towards taking this debate forward.



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Women's Tribunal, new way of sharing experiences in Forum



There was candle light in memory and honour of all abused women in Africa at Mulungushi Conference Centre

By Brenda Zulu

THE Africa Social forum conducted an African Court of Women's lives and livelihoods, which offered through testimony, expert analysis, poetic visuals, dance and drum, the situation of women in this violent globalised world.

Rabia Abdelkrim from FAMES/ ENDA, Senegal explained that the role of the judiciary was not to mimic the courts but to articulate new concepts in dispensing justice.

"Testifiers were going to speak with their bodies," she said.

It was argued that existing concepts of development, security, human right, have become insufficient when it comes to dealing with the violence of our time.

The Court of women invited everyone to create a new alternative space and infuse these spaces with a new political vision

that will challenge the truth in all universals of wars, globalization and violence.

African women spoke on the invisible wars of poverty and development, that are unleashing new forms of violence against the poor, the vulnerable and the women.

Globalisation has found new ways of excluding and exterminating the other, the women. Women survivors of institutionalized system of violence like colonisation, apartheid, will bring testimony on the wars against the other, telling their stories of how globalisation is bringing new slavery, new genocides.

Denying medicines to all so that the global pharmaceutical companies make profits is another aspects of this genocide, patented HIV/AIDS medicines cost countries USD two hundred and fifty to three hundred for one years treatment. Patents are therefore

literally robbing Aids of there victims.

Women in all cultures and societies have, in different ways been marginalized and violated. Women, particularly in the global south, is not only being forced to bear the brunt of increasingly impoverished people, but also the increasing disintegration of her communities, cultures under the onslaught of consumerism.

Women brought testimonies of violence of restructuring tradition and brutalized patriarchies.

Wahu Kaara from Kenya Debt relief Network pointed out that other people usually wrote Africa's history. The challenge faced by ASF and the WSF was to locate Africa's voice.

"The expression cannot be spoken better by an African woman in terms of aspiration. The creativity and sustenance for the African woman we are taking in Lusaka that we have alternatives.

"Take us seriously" says Youth Camp

By Aaron Mwewa

A PARTICIPANT at the ongoing Youth Camp of the Africa Social Forum has alleged that youths are not taken seriously by the secretariat of the Africa Social Forum.

Zimbabwean delegate Macdonald Lewanika claimed that he had concluded after following keenly the activities of the Africa Social Forum that they do not rank issues to do with the youth highly on their agenda.

To drive his point home, Lewanika said that only five (one from the Diaspora) youths attended the Intercontinental Youth camp (IYC) from Africa when other continents sent more times that number.

He said to his knowledge even the African youths that went to attend the IYC none of them were directly sponsored by the Africa

Social Forum.

He wondered how the governments on the continent would take the youths seriously when the mass civil society coalition and social movements which the ASF epitomizes does not take them seriously.

He said the civil society is the best place where to start the best practices in youth empowerment.

"It will be a very big achievement if the ASF manages to sponsor even just one youth to the next World Social Forum. Change can start even by one small step,"Lewanika added.

And Youth Camp coordinator, Kiss Abrahams has lamented the absence at the camp of many countries especially those from West and North Africa.

He said the gathering could have befitted and a learnt a lot from the countries that are missing in attendance.

The Youth Camp he said is a must-attend gathering as it provides space from which young small scale businessmen and future political leaders can be groomed.

He further implored the participants to ensure that they come up with recommendations of impact and not unrealistic ones.

He also called for the autonomy of the Youth Camp at the ASF unlike what transpired at the World Social Forum.

"The youths should be given the latitude to manage their own initiatives, they have the muscle and brains to do it very well. It's now our time, we need to be given chance,"Abrahams said.

He said it is high time that youths were mainstreamed seriously in the governance process as they constitute a significant part of the population in Africa.

Photo Focus of activities at the African Social Forum



(Above Left) are the African crafts that Zambian women produce (Above Right) women participation at the conference is encourage, alot of them have come from across the country and outside.

(Middle Left) Another Africa is Possible slogan put a smile on most of the participants, (Middle Right) Sakala Brothers performed at the ASF conference.

(Below) Light at the end of a dark tannel

Peace and conflict in Africa: Is there a solution?

By Console Tleane

AFRICA is a geological and vegetational scandal, and curse. This was the implied message in the session on peace and conflict on the continent. While differing on the best intervention methods delegates attending the session agreed on one thing: all of the conflicts on the continent centre on one thing - natural resources.

What seems to be missing in the analysis that is developing is a clear and sharp understanding of conflicts and how they link with the dominant ideological, political and economic system that currently control the world. For instance, one of the glaringly missing links in the analysis is the

nature of the African states; that they are largely comprador states whose class interests are intricately linked to those of international capital.

In the above equation different interests within the international capital fold would inevitably struggle to jostle each other to become the dominant forces that control the modern African state. Most, if not all, conflicts can easily be placed within this observation.

Western capital is represented in this regard by an axis of governments and multi-national corporations. The direct role played by different multinational corporations in most conflicts was for instance raised by Bokari Fofana from Guinea who highlighted the fact that the

conflicts in Angola and Sierra Leone were, and continue to be sponsored by petroleum and diamond companies.

As the discussions and different interventions during the session indicated, it is becoming increasingly unavoidable for the ASF to take positions on the root causes of conflicts on the continent: western governments and their multinational corporations; international finance institutions like the IMF and World Bank; the WTO; and even local comprador classes that benefit from these conflicts.

Isn't it time that the ASF started to consider the growing call for these organisations to be dismantled?

African education systems

From page 1

for the preparation of the Jomtien World Education Forum where they analyzed the destiny of the African continent.

According to them, present day societies, are undermined through imposed type of economies, political systems that serve the interests of the minority groups, and finally foreign or endogenous compradores. To, most African countries in a quest of modernizing their education, have westernized their systems.

The experts did however; stress on the fact the ongoing problems are not only bound to the brutal contact with outside world. It is important to recall that traditional African education had at the same

its weak points too. Among the weakness are a weak level of abstraction and generalization and excesses in some initiation practices such as sexual mutilations. A low level contact level with the outside world such as other social groups or geographical areas is another key weakness.

But, Buuba in his presentation looked to the future with confidence and said that it is still possible to stand up, to break the external and internal chains while drawing on the old, traditional pedestal and while opening up to the outside world by contributions in the development and expansion of the new technologies of information and communication.

The ASF receives support from India

By Console Tleane

MORE needs to be done to ensure that the African Social Forum grows to include more organisations and interests than is currently the case. This was said by Padmanabhan Krishna Murthy from the All India Federation of Trade Unions (AIFTU). Murthy was one of the organisers of the Fourth World Social Forum held in Mumbai, India, earlier this year.

"We need to do more if we want to host the 2006 World Social Forum in Africa. We need to have more organisations that represent workers, young people and the peasantry," said Murthy, referring to the current composition of the ASF, and to some extent the WSF.

"It is important that both Forums are not dominated simply by NGOs. Also, we need to ensure that we take the messages formulated here back to our constituencies, otherwise we are not going anywhere," he added.

Murthy also added that activists from all African countries must be encouraged to become active in the ASF. Without doubt, this challenge will go a long in undoing some of the lingering divisions that still persist to date, one being the colonial divisions between Sub-Saharan and North Africa.

Murthy promised India's support for Africa's bid to host the 2006 WSF.

"Fight For Freedom punchline in proposed Forum anthem"

From page 1

The clarion call in the song was "We do not want to be oppressed, No more killings, Lets crush the blood sucker for justice and freedom to blossom".

If the Anthem is officially accepted by the Forum's council, all proceedings will be occasionally be punctuated by

Oh freedom - AFRICA! AFRICA!

Oh freedom - AFRICA! AFRICA!

Lets fight for freedom

Oh our land

Fight for freedom

Our resources

Fight for AFRICA

"Let women take over Zimbabwe leadership"

... As Zambian woman urges ASF to help drive the constitution review process



African women find it difficult in accessing ARVs

By Glory Mushing-Zambia

AHOME based-care guardian has called on the current Zimbabwe government to step down and pave way for women to rule the country.

Giving a testimony about issues that Zimbabwe women were facing in as far as HIV/AIDS were concerned, during the Women's court session, Lilien Butau Masinyu of the Chapawi home based care in Harare Zimbabwe lamented that the Zimbabwean government had failed to take care of its citizens especially the women and in particular those that were in the centre of the HIV/AIDS struggle.

Masinyu who keeps a total of 17 orphans in her few roomed house in Mbare, Harare narrated on how she was going out of her way to take care of HIV/AIDS infected peoples without any sort of help from the government and how it was so difficult for the people living with the virus to access Anti-Retroviral drugs due to the strenuous process that went on in the country.

"The process for people to have access to ARV's is very difficult. You have to go through a CD4 count before you access the drugs and Governments can't provide the money for people to pay in these processes," she complained adding that treatment was also expensive.

She further stated that the economic situation was very worrying and that some children could not even afford to go to school

"The current government should go and let the women take over, they have failed to take care of us!" She emphasised.

Like the Zimbabwean situation, similar sentiments were highlighted during the same session by a Zambian woman, based in Mumbwa district south of Zambia.

Annie Fellows of the Mumbwa District Development Association stated that ARV's were equally difficult to access in her area and people were dying.

She noted that despite Zambia having enjoyed independence for 40 years, people were still suffering in different areas and HIV had just come in.

She observed that there were still other development problems such as poor infrastructure, saying the road networks were bad.

She further observed that despite the ongoing of constitution review, the process had derailed and nothing was coming out of it and called on the forum to find strategies of ensuring that the constitution review process is sped up before the election time, as well as ensuring that there is transparency during the elections, scheduled for 2006.

"The forum should ask them to finish the process by 2006. If they are saying we wait up to 2008, it will mean another 4 more years of suffering," she appealed.

Access to education a major problem in Africa

Bright Chibvuri, Zambia

ACCCESS TO education is a major problem in Africa and the girl child is the most affected.

This was said by Gina Mumba of the Zambian People's Action Forum at the 3rd African Social Forum held here. Amongst the major problems, she said poverty was affecting 800 000 school going age in Zambia who are currently not enrolled in schools.

Although global statistics indicate that the number of out-of-school children is declining from 106.9 million in 1998 to 103.5 million in 2001, it has been

acknowledged that the pace remains too slow for the world to be hopeful of achieving universal primary education by 2015.

In Africa, south of the Sahara alone, 20 million girls for instance, spread over 40 countries are still out of school.

One participant from Gambia noted that the problem of education in Africa was centralized on lack of adequate resources and recommended that the civic society should play a meaning role to compliment government efforts of mobilizing resources to improve the education system in the continent.

Gambia, as a country is also affected by the poor quality of education because the teachers are poorly trained and this affects the students.

To address the problem of ensuring that the girl child receives proper education, Tembo Chambala from Malawi said there was need for affirmative action to promote girls especially those aspiring to enter into professional disciplines.

It was also recommended at the forum that non-formal education should be recognized as a credible alternative path to achieving the education for all goals in Africa.