



Un autre monde
est possible

flamme d'Afrique

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Passage de témoin entre Antonio Martins du Fsm et Taoufik ben Adallah du Fsa (à droite) : la course est partie pour Afrique 2007.

TAOUFIK BEN ABDALLAH «Mobiliser le plus possible pour 2007»

L'Afrique accueille le Fsm dans deux ans. Peut-on avoir une idée de l'agenda du Fsa dans cette perspective ?

Taoufik ben Abdallah : Nous ne sommes pas encore dans la phase de définition d'un agenda précis, mais dans l'identification des grandes étapes ainsi que la vision que l'on voudrait mettre derrière le Fsm en Afrique.

Et quelles seraient ces étapes ?

La première étape passe par l'amélioration de notre processus préparatoire. Ça veut dire que dans le court terme nous allons déployer tout ce qui est nécessaire pour mobiliser le plus grand nombre possible de mouvements et de gens qui doivent évoluer dans le forum, au-delà de ce qui a été fait pour prendre en charge la perspective 2007. Une autre étape sera l'organisation du Forum social africain lui-même en 2005, qui doit être une sorte de répétition de notre implication dans le Fsm.

Le forum de 2006 au Maroc représente aussi une étape. Dans le cadre de la décentralisation du Fsm, le conseil du Fsa a appuyé la candidature africaine et va s'impliquer dans la définition de la vision de 2006 pour en faire, avec nos amis marocains, une étape de la préparation de 2007.

Aussi bien à Mumbai qu'à Porto Alegre on a remarqué que la majorité des Africains ne se sont pas véritablement dans les activités. Cela ne risque-t-il pas de constituer un handicap en vue de 2007 ?

A quel niveau ?

Au niveau participatif, par exemple.

La participation est liée, d'une part, à notre faible capacité actuelle de mobilisation à cause des contraintes à faire participer des mouvements de cinquante-trois pays,

compte tenu de nos limites. Mais ceux qui sont là ont essayé, autant qu'ils ont pu, de prendre part aux activités organisées par le Fsa ou par les autres mouvements du monde entier. Au-delà des activités organisées par le Fsa, il y a d'autres mouvements africains qui ont été très actifs comme le Ripess qui prépare une grande rencontre sur l'économie solidaire (à Dakar, en novembre 2005).

Certains pays africains n'ont pas encore de Forum social. Le Fsa interviendra-t-il pour faire corriger cela en vue du prochain Forum mondial ?

On ne peut pas dire que le Fsa va faire ceci ou cela. Car selon la charte du Fsm, nous ne sommes pas une organisation mais un espace où coexistent plusieurs mouvements ou entités. Le nombre de forum nationaux n'est pas une fin en soi. Ce ne sont que des espaces qui existent par nécessité ; il n'y a pas de principe qui voudrait qu'on construise des choses pyramidales au niveau national, sous-régional ou continental. On raisonne en termes de mouvements au sein desquels les défis sont posés et traités.

Mumbai 2004 et Porto Alegre 2005 ont placé la barre très haut alors que Lusaka n'a pas été très populaire. Ne risque-t-on pas de connaître des problèmes lors du forum en 2007 ?

C'est vrai, mais Lusaka a quand même marqué un changement. Là où, dans le passé, les forums africains réunissaient trois cent personnes, elles étaient six cents dans la capitale zambienne. Il y a eu un doublement même si on aurait souhaité qu'une mobilisation populaire se produise. Il faut en prendre acte, c'est une étape.

Propos recueillis par Vladimir MONTEIRO

Hugo Chaves é aclamado

Aguardado com enorme expectativa pelos altermun-dialistas, o presidente da Venezuela foi ontem, 30, aclamado em Porto Alegre. Com um discurso provocador, Hugo Chavez criticou o imperialismo neoliberal da América e falou da "revolução socialista" que está a acontecer em Venezuela.

(Cont. P. 1)

Religiões afro-brasileiras buscam raízes na África

As religiões afro-brasileiras marcaram presença no Fórum Social Municipal de Porto Alegre, na expectativa de encontrar suas matrizes africanas para trocar experiências e conhecimentos sobre a sua crença. Infelizmente para eles, a África esteve fracamente representada no evento e os 'guardadores da religião africana' não estiveram no FSM.

Ainda que tenham se sentido frustrados, Mãe Norinha, presidente das Casas da Religião Afro-brasileira no Rio Grande do Sul garante que vão continuar a cultivar a religião que lhes foi relegada por seus antepassados. "Ainda hoje somos confrontados com uma forte discriminação. Porto Alegre é o único estado do Brasil que tem uma lei que pesa sobre as nossas cabeças, que é o código de protecção aos animais", conta Mãe Norinha.

Esta lei federal "ataca" as religiões africanas na sua essência porque, precisa essa anciã, sacrificam alguns animais. "Nós também defendemos os animais, só que alguns deles são por nós sacrificados e, por isso, somos rotulados, maltratados e confrontados com pesadas multas, o que não deixa de ser uma discriminação", assegura Mãe Norinha, enumerando os animais sacrificados pelas religiões afro-brasileiras: cabritos, cabras e aves.

Na crença da "Nação de Oió" os seguidores são considerados filhos de Person, que é descendente directo de Oió. Mãe Norinha é, nessa linha, neta, bisneta e filha de Mãe de Santo. "Os segredos da nossa religião são transmitidos de forma oral de mãe para filho. Ao longo da nossa vida, a filha de Oió prepara o seu substituto, no caso em concreto, uma filha, que assumirá o seu lugar na Casa das Religiões Afro-brasileiras do Rio Grande Sul.

"Vimos ao FSM para encontrar com os nossos irmão e as nossas raízes, inclusive solicitamos a organização deste evento que programasse um painel para que pudéssemos trocar informações e reforçássemos as nossas raízes", finaliza esta filha do Santo, que tem se socorrido apenas dos livros e da sua memória, que foi alimentada pelos seus antepassados, para manter intacta a sua fé e liderar uma comunidade afro-brasileira com raízes bem africana.

Constança de Pina

ENDA ET LE FSM Le partenariat se poursuit vers 2007

La collaboration entre Enda Tiers monde et le Forum social africain (Fsa) a quatre ans. L'Ong dont le siège est à Dakar assure le secrétariat du Fsa, soutient la participation de la société civile à ses réunions, met à leur disposition des documents, etc. Jetant un regard sur le travail des mouvements sociaux africains, le secrétaire exécutif d'Enda trouve que «la participation africaine se consolide d'année en année. Il y a des difficultés mais aussi des progrès», indique Mohamed Soumaré. Selon lui, la perspective du Fsm 2007 prévu en Afrique peut élargir des bases «avec un approfondissement de la contribution et des prises de position des Africains». L'engagement d'Enda dans cette perspective est d'ores et déjà affirmée. «Nous allons nous engager aux côtés de du Fsa comme nous allons nous engager pour le forum régional de 2006 au Maroc», ajoute Mohamed Soumaré. Il souligne au passage l'importance des critères à mettre en place et à respecter lors du choix du pays qui accueillera le Forum mondial en Afrique. Des critères tels que «la vigueur des organisations de la société civile, au niveau local, la qualité des infrastructures et surtout le niveau d'expression démocratique».

V. MONTEIRO

COUMBA TOURE (Mali - Membre du Comité de lancement de l'Appel mondial contre la faim) «La campagne contre la pauvreté doit passer par des actions concrètes»

Jeudi dernier, vous avez participé au lancement de l'Appel mondial contre la pauvreté, sous la présidence du chef d'Etat brésilien Lula Da Silva, à l'occasion de ce Fsm 2005. Quelle place l'Afrique peut-elle occuper dans cette mobilisation ?

Coumba Touré : Je pense que nous avons un leadership à assumer dans cette mobilisation. On ne peut parler de pauvreté sans parler de l'Afrique, des Africains. Seulement, nous ne sommes pas toujours prêts à prendre les rênes là où il le faut. Nous n'osons pas assez. Mais partout où ce thème sera soulevé, nous devons dire ce que nous pensons et exprimer nos points de vue sur la manière dont les choses devraient se passer, au lieu de laisser d'autres parler et décider pour nous.

Y a-t-il des idées ou des initiatives africaines en perspective ?

Il y a des idées et des initiatives. Quant à savoir comment elles vont être intégrées dans le cadre mondial, c'est une autre question. Ma proposition est que si on veut faire une véritable campagne mondiale contre la pauvreté, elle doit être soutenue par les populations. Et pour cela il faudra faire des choses concrètes. Evidemment, quand on mène une campagne, il faut des symboles, des mots de ralliements, etc., qui rendent visible face aux gouvernants. Mais il faut aussi du concret

Qu'appellez-vous des choses concrètes

Ce que je propose au niveau de l'Appel mondial c'est d'aller vers ce qu'on voudrait voir le monde devenir. Vous savez, quand on parle de pauvreté, il est question d'accès aux soins de santé, à l'éducation, à la nourriture saine, etc. Pour moi donc, faire des choses concrètes c'est agir pour montrer ce qui se passerait si on arrivait à l'idéal pour lequel on se mobilise. Je verrais donc bien que les organisations qui se mobilisent dans cette campagne y mettent les moyens pour que pendant une journée, par exemple, l'entrée dans les hôpitaux soit gratuite, que tout le monde puisse avoir ses médicaments gratuitement. Ce sont là des initiatives qui peuvent montrer aux populations pourquoi on se mobilise.

Quelle est la structure qui va prendre en charge cette campagne ?

Pour le moment, il y a un comité ad-hoc. Mais plus qu'une campagne, c'est encore un appel lancé à toutes les personnes, toutes les organisations (caritatives, syndicales, etc.) qui pourraient être impliquées, à se joindre à cet élan. Il y aura sans doute différentes approches et façons de faire, localement et spécifiquement, mais la philosophie de base est que tous soient d'accord qu'on doit le faire ensemble et qu'on peut le faire.

Après avoir participé plusieurs fois au Forum social mondial, sentez-vous une évolution d'un rendez-vous à un autre ?

Ce qui marque surtout, c'est que le Forum a grandi. La participation est plus grande, plus diverse. Et on surtout noté, avec cette édition, qu'il y a beaucoup plus de jeunes. Mais c'est toujours aussi vivant. Et ça reste véritablement un forum de changement

et d'alternatives.

Qu'est ce qui reste de toutes ces idées ?

L'échange qui se passe ici n'est pas à négliger. Il y a des gens qui font des choses intéressantes là où ils vivent. Et quand ils viennent en rencontrer d'autres qui font de même chez eux, dans d'autres contextes, ce échange a de la valeur. Peut-être que cela les poussera à aller plus loin dans ce qu'ils faisaient, à prendre en compte des choses qui n'entraient pas dans leur logique d'action. Quand un tel impact est noté à travers le monde, c'est forcément un moteur de changement.

Dans ce forum, l'Afrique est faiblement représentée. Que faire pour qu'une telle marginalisation ne lui soit pas préjudiciable alors qu'elle a beaucoup à gagner dans un «autre monde» ?

Depuis le début du Fsm en 2001 cette participation est faible, même si elle s'améliore au fil des éditions. Mais il faut mettre cette faiblesse sur le compte des difficultés qu'ont les Africains à voyager, avec les coûts des billets, les trajets à effectuer et les visas à trouver. C'est la raison pour laquelle le fait d'organiser le Fsm de 2007 en Afrique est une belle opportunité. Certes la question de la participation populaire africaine ne sera pas pour autant réglée, puisqu'il est même difficile de voyager l'intérieur de l'Afrique pour des raisons de coûts et de moyens de transports suffisants et adéquats, mais on aura une présence africaine plus importante. Et ce sera l'occasion de focaliser les thèmes de discussion sur ce qui se passe en Afrique.

Mais l'idée de l'altermondialisme même a du mal à s'ancrer au sein des populations africaines. Ne risque-t-on pas, en 2007, de créer un événement



auquel ces dernières ne comprendront pas grand chose ?

Il y a effectivement un travail de base important à faire. A tous les niveaux, mais surtout au niveau du Forum social africain. C'est simplement une question de mobilisation et qu'on s'y engage dès maintenant. Pour le reste, véhiculer les idéaux du Forum n'est pas difficile en Afrique, car ils rejoignent ce que nous faisons tous les jours dans nos engagements respectifs auprès des populations.

S'il en faut une, quelle image retenez-vous de ce Fsm 2005 ?

Sans doute celle du Estadio Gigantinho (Ndlr : là où a été lancé l'Appel contre la pauvreté). C'était impressionnant de voir toutes les origines et couleurs mélangées dans l'enthousiasme. On se rend compte que le Fsm est un espace d'espoir pour beaucoup de personnes, d'organisations et de mouvements qui sont souvent marginalisés là où ils opèrent et qui, ici, se rendent comptent qu'il y a beaucoup de gens dans le monde qui pensent et agissent comme eux. Différemment.

Par Tidiane KASSE

Flamme d'Afrique-Flame of Africa, um ano depois

Foi no Fórum Social Mundial de Mumbai, em Janeiro de 2004, que este jornal foi lançado. O objectivo de Flamma de África-Flame of Africa era dar mais visibilidade à participação africana nesses encontros, facilitar a expressão e partilhar as ideias desenvolvidas pelos africanos, seus valores e suas expectativas dentro do slogan "um outro mundo é possível".

Este quotidiano, que circula apenas por ocasião dos foras, faz aqui a sua quarta experiência. Após Mumbai, o Chama da África acompanhou o 1^o Fórum Social social da África de Oeste realizado em Conakry (Guiné) de 28 a 30 de Novembro 2004. Em Lusaka, durante o 3^o Fórum social africano, que decorreu entre 10 e 14 de Dezembro, fez-se mais uma edição deste jornal. Este 5^a FSM é, portanto, a quarta etapa de uma experiência que completa agora um ano de existência.

A iniciativa de animar este jornal resulta de uma parceria entre Enda Tiers-monde, Instituto Panos da África do Oeste e Mulheres pela Mudança. Paralelamente ao acompanhamento da participação africana nos FSM, traduz uma vontade de aumentar o trabalho dos m ídias e as comunicações para reforçar os movimentos sociais africanos, assegurando uma maior difusão das ideias e das perspectivas que se vão surgindo. Os jornalistas que compõem a redação do Flamma d'Afrique-Flame of Africa vêm de diferentes países africanos. A par do jornal, eles fazem a cobertura do FSM para melhor informar o público africano através de outros canais (listas de difusão e jornais on line).

Rédaction française, lusophone et anglaise

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Hugo Chaves é aclamado em Porto Alegre

(Cont. P. 1)

As palavras de Hugo Chaves, o seu discurso de resistência ao Alca, que classificou de um neo-colonialismo do mercado, e às forças neo-liberal inflamou o estadio de Gigantinho, na cidade Gaúcho de Porto Alegre. De pé, a multidão ouviu Chavez evocar o espírito do líder Che Guevarra, que abandonou o conforto do poder em Cuba para ajudar os seus irmãos em vários países da América Latina - Che foi morto junto com um pequeno grupo de guerrilheiros numa pequena Vila na Bolívia - e garantiu que o imperialismo não é invencível, mas tem a pele grossa e recorre a força para combater a sua debilidade ideológica. Um imperialismo que é forte por fora, pode no seu interior, pode ruir e não consegue travar as resistências em Cuba, Venezuela, Rússia, China, Líbia, Algéria e muitos outros países.

E os resultados desse resistência, no caso da Venezuela, mostram que a via escolhida por esse país da América Latina foi a melhor.

“Investimos nesses anos mais dinheiro em educação, saúde, moradias sociais, etc, de que nos últimos cinco anos. Hoje, na Venezuela a população tem acesso gratuito à equipamentos sociais - escolas, universidades, entre outros -, com ajuda da nossa irmã Cuba. Temos milhares de médicos cubanos a prestar serviço no nosso país e, nos últimos dois anos, foram feitas mais consultas, com o avião gratuito das respectivas receitas, do que em toda a última época.

Para Chaves, hoje a Venezuela está mais forte, interna e externamente porque o governo está a redistribuir as riquezas provenientes do petróleo. Mas isso foi um processo longo que exigiu algum tempo. Tempo que Chavez pediu aos brasileiros que concedam ao seu amigo e camarada Lula, que foi vaiado no último dia 27 no Gigantinho por participantes do Fórum Social Mundial, para quem Lula está a distanciar dos seus propósitos.

Constança de PINA

African women speak

A diverse pool of participants graced the World Social Forum, many motivated to attend by different influences. Esther Ngumuo is a teacher from Tanzania and Akbarat Frank is a development worker from Eritrea. Both are members of the Lutheran World Federation who have been sponsored by their international office to attend the Forum. Salma Maoulidi caught up with them during a workshop session interval.

by Salma MAOULIDI

Salma: How long have your engagement been with the WSF?

Esther: This is our first time at the Social Forum.

Akbarat: The Geneva office of the Lutheran World Federation invited and sponsored us.

Salma: Why were you invited?

Akbarat: I think because of the work I do back home. There is a lot I can learn and replicate from the experiences in the different workshops.

Salma: Which workshops did you attend?

Esther: We have been to sessions on Human Rights, Ecumenism and another on the plight of the Dalits, mostly areas in which our church works on.

Salma: What has been the most remarkable experience for you at the WSF?

Akbarat: The session on the Dalit was very touching. Little did I know that such a problem exists. I could not believe that Indians would discriminate against other Indians. In Africa our experience with marginalization and discrimination has been in the context of colonialism. This is our association with oppression.

Esther: I agree. The presentation from the Dalit activist was powerful. I felt like I was in India living through their experience. They were able to communicate their struggle very effectively. We were all moved.

Salma: What problems have you encountered at the WSF?

Akbarat: The main problem we encountered during the sessions was related to with translation. There are not many English panels in this terrain. Many are in Portuguese or in Spanish. Also the weather was hot and humid and the tents did not have adequate ventilation.

Salma: What single thing do you want to follow up on after the WSF?

Esther: I want to build on the examples of men working with women for the sake of building their society as I saw Dalit men do. Patriarchy has made many assume that men and women can't work together. We see each other as enemies and not as people with common destinies.

Akbarat: For me it is the courage of the Dalit women. They are in the forefront of fighting oppres-

sion against their people. I think giving women visibility and leadership in a movement is a foundation for building women's capacities in any field. Also, I learnt the importance of unity and devotion in a movement. It is the only way we can succeed in our struggle.

Salma: WSF is moving to Africa in 2007. In the meantime, activists are organizing around regionally and nationally around the concept. What, from this WSF, can you take with you to help you in your organizing?

Esther: we are already doing most of what I see here. As a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania, we have many projects that bring together men, women and youths to discuss their issues but I think we need to make the associations with global issues more conscious.

Salma: Do you belong to any other social movements?

Akbarat: I am a member of the National Women's Association in Eritrea although I am not as active as I would like to be because of my work. But I do pay all my subscriptions.

Esther: I also belong to the Women's Cycle of Concern, an international organization of Christian women. It is multi-denominational and is concerned with development issues affecting women.

Salma: What are the major challenges facing women in your countries?

Esther: Information not reaching those in need of it due to communication break down. Otherwise it is made available but not in time. Also, the recent trend whereby personal profit becomes the basis of engaging in community service. I guess it is all part of the subsistence culture!

Akbarat: For me it is massive illiteracy in many communities. Consequently many women are ignorant and do not know their rights let alone how to claim them. The National Association for Women has been doing groundbreaking work in this area, running literacy classes and raising legal awareness.

Salma: What is your vision for the world?

Esther: I believe we all have the answers. It is up to us to take action.

Akbarat: I want to see a just a peaceful world, without borders or discrimination but with people who love and care for each other and respect one another on the basis of their humanity.



Forum seen as one struggle with many fronts

by Console TLEANE

So, we have come to the end of yet another World Social Forum. As we reported in the first issue of this series of the *African Flame*, participants from the African continent made their presence felt in various sessions of the Forum.

There were light moments, like when members of the Feminist Dialogue decided to move the voyeurists who liked watching young women washing at the Youth Camp, and disturbing moments, like when allegations of racism against black youth emerged from the Youth Camp.

Yet, overall, most participants who spoken to the *African Flame* gave positive feedback about the Forum. Ngina Jacqueline was attending the Forum for the first time. She attended last year's ASF meeting in Lusaka, Zambia.

"For me the Forum was a good experience in the sense that what came out is that unity is key to achieving our goals. I live in the slums of Nairobi and I had an opportunity to meet other people who also live in the slums; and that opened my eyes to the fact that poor people all over the world are faced with

the same problems," said Ngina.

For Quattara Diakalia, from Cote-d'Ivoire, who will be more remembered for selling *bubbus* during the Forum, what was most important was learning more about neoliberalism.

"What was also equally important was to build alliances with other organisations that work in similar areas that we work in," said Diakalia, who also attended the Youth Camp.

Idaisha Chengu from Zimbabwe added that the Forum was phenomenal. *"It gave me a chance to interact with people who work in the same area as myself. But more importantly, it gave me an opportunity to locate my identity, and to appreciate the South-South Dialogue,"* said Chengu.

It would seem that African participants enjoyed this year's Forum, and some of the hot debates within the ASF itself, which were held in a frank and candid manner.

Talking about "hotness", you must reverse your long-held view that Africa is the hottest continent in the world. Children of the motherland could simply not cope with the heat here.

The only time that one could get some cool air was in the newsroom and in the hotel room.

Whither, World Social Forum?

by Kimani NDUNGU

Some doubt may be starting to emerge as to what exactly the World Social Forum (WSF) aims to achieve and how it will go about pursuing its objectives. And it is not only because the forum has come to be regarded in certain quarters, perhaps with a measure of good reason, as a gilded talkshop, but also because some activists view it as an annual 'social carnival' that is sinking ever deeper into the clutches of money makers.

Indeed, an article in one of the earlier editions of the *The Flame* brought to light the grand collusion that seems to be afoot between airlines, hotels and local businesses as they all rush to claim their stake in the inevitable commercial spin-offs generated by the hosting of this annual event. To put it bluntly, there are fears that the forum could be turning itself into yet another profitable cash cow for the merchants of capital.

Questions are being posed about what precisely the WSF has achieved since its nascent beginnings in 2001 in Porto Alegre. Since its inception five years ago, the Forum has maintained its status as "an open meeting place where groups

and movements of civil society opposed to neo-liberalism and a world dominated by capital or by any form of imperialism...come together to pursue their thinking, debate ideas democratically, formulate proposals, share their experiences and network for effective action".

This 'open access' concept, to coin a phrase, ensures that the forum remains flexible and horizontal rather than commandist and structured. It constitutes the raison d'etre for the forum's existence as a space for activists to meet, debate and formulate strategise.

For those who desire to see more action however, there is a feeling that the Forum should transform itself into "an effective political force for global change", as stated in an article in "Terraviva", one of the many daily publications doing the rounds in the 2005 WSF.

It may not be a sign of things to come but a group of prominent individuals among them two Nobel laureates, a number of prominent authors and the editor of an influential French newspaper have even come up with what has been called the "Porto Alegre Manifesto in an attempt to give more flesh to the activities of the forum. The

manifesto is a 12 point plan that will hopefully transform activist talk into action because as "Terraviva" says in quoting one of its presenters, "It's not possible to continue to speak of 'another world is possible if we do not make some proposals to reach this world'"

But some of the people that *The Flame* spoke to within the vicinity of the 'Social Territory' paid glowing tribute to the WSF calling it an important counter-hegemonic force to the dominant neo-liberal paradigm. "What people need to understand is that the World Social Forum is merely an open space for people to meet, share ideas, discuss strategies and then decide on what individual actions each one of them will want to pursue", says Aarma Balani from India. "It is not for the WSF to take collective decisions because it is not a super-government, or a super-state that can dictate its will upon all activists across the world."

Kone Selange from Ivory Coast and a member of the African Social Forum espouses similar sentiments. As she asserts when asked what she thinks of the WSF: "Yes of course, the Forum is important for mobilisation. It is a space to meet and network with other people,



besides the fact that it is useful for the wide range of information we get as activists through interaction with each other."

South African activist Trevor Ngwane sees the WSF as "a reference point" for activists because "its vision of 'another world is possible' is unifying and gives focus to all the struggles taking place in the world. This struggle also emphasises the failures of the capitalist system and challenges us to look for alternatives which together can constitute a new social system."

While the debate continues, it is worth asking whether all the monumental planning and the colossal sums of money sunk into the organising of each World Social Forum every year is worth the outcomes that are agreed upon at the end of the six days of deliberations. Would it not make better sense perhaps if the Forum was disaggregated and more space introduced in between the meetings? Furthermore, the continents and

regions within them should be the key drivers of activities, as they ought to under the current arrangements, and the WSF should merely be the open space where all these ideas converge. As an example, continental forums could hold their own meetings every year, while the WSF meets every three to five years. Such a process could ensure that a greater degree of inclusivity and participation is maintained as well as a thorough exhaustion of issues taken up for action, while the WSF meeting itself would be the grand finale to the three or five year processes.

Short of that, the WSF may find itself proving the veracity of its critics arguments that it has become a talk shop, an annual jamboree which enables a small coterie of lucky individuals to grab a passport, get on a plane and fly to Porto Alegre or Mumbai or wherever else that the meeting is set to take place. Already, a few of those who have participated in past events are beginning to talk of "forum fatigue".

AFRICA IS NOT FOR SALE!



African Flame

Another World is Possible

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“IMF and the World Bank are useless” says report Forum report



Anti War protests continue unabated

By Thomas DEVE

The Global Call to Action Against Poverty organised a controversy table where its participants were told that the IMF and the World Bank are useless. Candido Grybowski from IBASE says a report which was compiled after consulting World Social Forum participants notes that 90% of them believe that IMF in particular is useless.

Participating in a debate whose lead persons were drawn from civil society, IMF, NGOs, donors and the United Nations, Candido said time had come for people to focus on structural causes of poverty, review and change development models and accompanying systems that perpetuated the status quo.

He further highlighted that the UN should be reformed and subjected to fundamental change because some of the member states had governments that are run by dictators and other characters who behaved like criminals and gangsters.

All panellists agreed that the global poverty situation called for urgent measures to redress the situation but were not unanimous on measures that were going to be taken in order to address the increasing debt burden of developing nations, lopsided trade regimes

that favoured the North, aid and financial flows that empowered the north to impose development measures favourable to creditor nations.

IMF representative Simonetta Nardin, participating in the dialogue for the first time welcomed all the criticism and assured all present that her institution was listening to all the shortcomings brought before it and was opening its doors for dialogue within all the aggrieved parties. This did not go down very well with participants who argued passionately that it was not enough to listen.

For them policy and structural changes were long overdue. These measures were also proposed to cover the UN especially the veto powers accorded to the big powers whose policies and influence were inimical to the interests of developing nations.

UN Under secretary general Jose Antonio O'Campo responded by highlighting that the UN had opened its doors for civil society to influence processes and explained at length how the issues of citizen's rights were being mainstreamed into most work it was undertaking.

Thomas Deve from the G-CAP international facilitation group highlighted that while dialogue was welcome, it should not shy away from

Africa's pertinent demands encompassed in calls from social and economic justice.

He noted that most African activists especially in social movements working closely with NGOs were not keen to dialogue with the Bretton Woods institution and were advocating for their immediate withdrawal from Africa unless they want to be fundamentally restructured, something which was not easy because their top executives do not believe that they are agents of death and destruction in the developing countries.

He noted that many Africans and their governments were not taking MDGs seriously because they do not offer a framework for total eradication of poverty immediately.

The 2015 deadline advocated in the UN millennium also irked most Latin American movements.

Feminisation of poverty as a result of neoliberal programmes was also highlighted in the dialogue and was profiled as a major concern for most feminists and the women's movement that are not rallying behind any dialogue on MDGs.

Cecilia Lopez from Colombia, in Latin America noted that calls for engagement in her part of the world were premised on the tradition of aggressive critical engagement.

Editorial

Drawing strength from the spirit of volunteers

by Thomas DEVE and Console TLEANE

The Social Forum would not be the great force that it has come to be if it did not draw its strength from hundreds of volunteers who come in the form of the Babels translators, media practitioners and all other processes that technically support these two categories.

It has indeed been a major breakthrough to have the alternative voices projecting themselves in medium that do not alter the messages and attempts at all costs to use the collective spirit of the forum space to broadcast everything activists see as critical in the form of alternative action and proposals.

For Africa, special tribute goes to Terra Viva, Ciranda and the African Flame for consistently dedicating space and resources highlighting African issues emanating from Porto Alegre.

The same goes to what is becoming an activist bedrock, the alternative media.

The challenges range from taking part in seminars, advertising activities, distributing information packages, writing, editing and finally publishing or producing themselves. This is an incredible feat when one recalls the hierarchical and clear divisions of labour that exist in traditional media.

It is this capacity to be multifaceted and multi-skilling that antiglobalisation activists have as a formidable tool in the battle to change the world and make sure that corporate-led globalisation does not decimate people and communities in its quest for profit.

The struggle continues! And one hopes that the lessons of Porto Alegre and Mumbai will reverberate in all four corners of the world as forces of progress march on.

Africa has a lot to learn, and it is gratifying to note that the solidarity its peoples have shown to others over the years has been recognised, and all roads will lead to the continent in 2007.

From the newsroom

Putting together a newspaper is never an easy thing; not even an eight-page tabloid, with three pages dedicated to the English language. Consider this: you have to attend sessions where you are either a speaker or have to actively intervene from the floor (as a delegate from your own organisation), then take notes (both as a delegate and as a journalist), rush back to the newsroom to write your story and receive stories from other volunteer journalists. Then the tough work starts; chasing deadlines, with the design team waiting for copy, and the printers ready to roll.

Add to the above the fact that the organisers of the WSF have decided to use only the Linux programme. Many of us use only Windows back home, not that we love Bill Gates, but simply because we have not mastered Linux. So, what does that mean? Carrying heavy laptops everyday in this sweltering heat from the hotel to Gaso Metro, and all around the WSF grounds.

The day would only end at 8pm when we put the paper “to bed” (send it off for printing).

We hope that you enjoyed reading the paper.

She lamented the losses that feminists experienced since Beijing and Cairo UN organised conferences and felt that it would be folly for anyone to expect total commitments for MDGs especially the halving of poverty component.

Ted van Hees from Novib amplified concerns from developing countries when he proceeded to blast governments of the North for failing to deliver on commitments they made in terms of aid flows. He urged fellow citizens of the North to join campaigns that will see pressure being mounted on their governments in order to push

them away from pushing agendas and policies that would hurt the poor.

Focussing on the Global call to action, he stressed the need for civic engagement on key moments during 2005 when the G8, UN leaders and WTO meet respectively in June, September and December.

At the tail end of the meeting, a proposal to twin aspects of the dialogue with events at the World Economic Forum was mooted, but was quickly dismissed as some participants felt that this was taking the process towards a wrong orientation.