

AFRICA SOCIAL FORUM

DECEMBER 1-5 2005

CONAKRY, GUINEA

FOURTH EDITION

AFRICA, THE CRADLE OF HUMANITY AND THE WORLD'S FUTURE

INFORMATION GUIDEBOOK

ANOTHER AFRICA IS POSSIBLE

I. CONTEXT AND JUSTIFICATION

In the spirit of the World Social Movement, Conakry will be hosting the Fourth Edition of the Africa Social Forum (ASF) December 1-5 2005, following on the previous editions in Bamako, Mali (2002), Adis Abeba, Ethiopia (2003) and Lusaka, Zambia, (2004). The Africa Social Movement has grown considerably through the organisation of national and regional social fora throughout the Continent as well as an increasing participation on the part of Africans in the various World Social Fora. This dynamic has helped civil society heighten its awareness of the need to strengthen the independence of African countries as well as establish synergy and complementary actions on the part of the various movements towards the implementation of credible development policies.

The African continent is currently facing a number of difficulties be it on the economic, political or social level, which maintains it in a chronic state of underdevelopment. More than half of the African countries are ranked as being in the least advanced category. Economically, the implementation of severe macro-economic measures is causing more injustice and harm to the African populations. Parallel to this, the systematic pillage of natural resources and the flight of intellectuals are worsening the crisis and the progression of underdevelopment. Agricultural, trade or debt related issues remain unsolved at a time when free trade policies are being promoted by international financial institutions (WTO, IMF, World Bank etc.) as well as future APC-EU trade.

On a social level, with more than 52% of its population under the age of 35, the Continent is facing is coming up against serious problems related to justice, the degradation of traditional values of solidarity, identity crisis, causing increasing gaps within the social structure which are at the source of most conflicts. Furthermore, these conflicts added to a high rate of emigration, the escalate of HIV-AIDS and the overall degradation of the environment is all elements confronting the evolution of African civilisations today.

On the political front, even with the many efforts here and there towards democratization, African countries continue to pay a very high price for their bad governance. Attempts to democratize electoral systems are at a standstill in most African States, which has a negative influence on the different mechanisms used to access and exercise political power. Opposite to the recorded inefficiency of imposed values and regulations (i.e. poverty reduction strategies, structural adjustments etc.) we see the emergence of a need to identify endogenous solutions that require the *africanization* of certain concepts and certain principles such as democracy, good governance and conflict management.

This being said, Africa is also bursting with potential. On one hand, the Continent represents the world's reserve in mining resources, a huge agricultural and environmental potential, a unique

diversity of human expertise and a cultural heritage which finds its origin at the root of the history of man and of which many aspects have yet to be discovered. On the other hand, there are millions of people belonging to traditional and modern organizations, working together not only to fight poverty but also to preserve certain human values that lean towards sustainable development.

Indeed, at a time when the incredible technical and scientific progress we are witnessing has gone a deviated from its original mission which was to serve all mankind rather than a small minority, society has been caught up into a rat race based on the materialisation of human values which has ended up enslaving human beings.

The Forth Edition of the Africa Social Forum aims to make African development stakeholders more aware of the need to rectify the current situation and find ways to go about it in a collective manner. It will release new ideas and new strategies that promote a more just globalization while reviving and updating African values; a vision that will continue to grow at the World Social Forum in Kenya in 2007.

OBJECTIVES

General Objective

- Define the basis for a political, economic, social and cultural rebirth of the Continent through the Africa Social Movement.

Expected Results

The Africa Social Forum will have:

- Contributed to a clearer vision of the present and the future through an overview of the history and values of the African continent.
- Highlighted the abundance of human creative potential on which can be built a new identity for the Continent
- Analysed current mechanisms of subservience and exploitation
- Encouraged synergies and complementary initiatives towards change
- Promoted and encouraged mobilisation around the Polycentric Social Forum of Bamako in 2006 and the World Social Forum in Nairobi in 2007

METHODOLOGY

The Forum will consist of:

- Conferences, workshops, seminars, roundtables
- Sub-regional and regional platforms
- A Youth Forum
- Women's Tribunal
- Local Elected Forum
- Trade Union Forum
- Farmers' Forum
- Popular platforms
- Artistic and cultural events
- Commercial and artistic exhibition; poems and news competition
- Forum on Communication
- Writers and culture forum

Themes and subjects of discussion:

- GOVERNANCE AND DÉMOCRACY : international policy ; rights and democracy ; governance
- CULTURE AND RELIGION : history of the Continent ; cultural identity ; religion ; art
- ECONOMY AND GLOBALIZATION : economic globalization; trade issues and free trade areas ; agricultural issues ; debt and development
- SOCIAL SERVICES AND ENVIRONMENT : Millennium Objectives of development; education ; environment ; health
- INTEGRATION : regionalism ; integration ; religion ; Diaspora ; communication ; security ; conflicts and peace

II. PARTICIPATION

The Forum is open to everyone who wishes to participate

Will be invited:

- Participants from African countries representing the main sectors
- African Diaspora
- Regional and international institutions
- NGOs, Unions, Farmer's organisations, women's groups, youth organisations, human rights organisations, community organisations, artistic and cultural organisations, education organisations
- Local elected representatives
- Thematic sub regional and regional networks
- Media
- Academics
- Leaders of opinion etc.

III. ORGANIZERS

The Forth Edition of the Africa Social Forum is organized by the Africa Social Forum Council, the CECIDE (International Trade Centre for Development) in charge of the external contacts and National Council of the Guinean Civil Society organizations, in charge of the internal contacts. E-mail contact cecidegn@yahoo.fr

The host country

Guinea is situated in West Africa. Its population is approximately 8 million people, 51% of which are women and 45% under the age of 30. A French colony, it was the first to access independence in 1958. After a first centralized Republic, authoritarian and with a Unique Party, the country has endowed with a policy system of multipartism. Since 1989, the development of the country is marked by a regional neighbourhood dominated by conflicts and instability. It is in this context that the Guinean Social Movement (thousands of cooperatives, trade unions, NGOs, women and youth associations, etc.) grows and works; it keeps a good relationship with bordering countries. Moreover, beyond its own cultures, Guinea is the only country of West Africa which integrates various cultures from its neighbourhood: French-speaking (Senegal, Mali, Côte d'Ivoire), English (Sierra Leone), American (Liberia) and lusophone (Guinea Bissau).

Council of African Social Forum

CECIDE (International Trade Centre for Development)

Established in 2000 the CECIDE is a Guinean NGO that works towards sustainable development in a world plagued by unfair trade and globalization. It aims to increase citizens' understanding of issues related to international trade and development, an improved knowledge of international trade institutions and mechanisms and major stakeholders. The CECIDE promotes multilateral cooperation and the involvement of actors engaged in trade issues and questions relating to sustainable development. It encourages a participatory approach within the decision making process concerning sectoral policies; the promotion and defence of citizen's economic rights. CECIDE is in charged of ensuring the secretariat of the African Social Forum, whose first edition was held in November 2004 in Conakry (Guinea).

National Council of Guinean Civil Society Organisations, CNOSCG

Established in February 2002, the CNOSCG is an umbrella structure whose membership includes Guinea's major civil society alliances, federations, trade unions etc. It is also composed of regional, prefectoral and sub-prefectoral councils all working towards the empowerment of civil society and the protection of citizens' interests. The Council aims to promote sustainable development, participatory democracy and cooperation between civil society and other stakeholders.

IV. PROGRAMME

We will send you the detailed programme as soon as it is available

General Information

ASF space

ASF activities will be organized in Conakry in *Palais du Peuple*, inside buildings and on sites located around *Palais du Peuple (Cendid, Hôtel Riviera, Jardin du 2 octobre, etc.)*. The Forum will take place in 5 days, that means from 1 to 5 December 2005.

Halls: Big halls for plenary sessions: 2000 places

Halls for workshops and forums: 50 to 200 places

Exhibits: It is possible for organisations to reserve a space or a stand to inform participants on their programme, activities etc. To make a reservation, please inform the steering committee **before 31st October.**

Translation

A simultaneous system of interpretation will be ensured in five halls (English, French)

VI. CONTENT

Debates address the following issues:

1. Social movements and the development of Africa

- Issues related to globalization and responses.
- **Policies for Africa**
- Economic, social, political and cultural aspects;

- Advantages
- Consequences
- What mechanisms to ensure rebirth? :
 - o Political
 - o Economic
 - o Social
 - o Cultural

2. Integration

- What type of integration for Africa? For which prospects?
 - o Political
 - o Economic
 - o Social
 - o Cultural.

How will the activities be structured for maximum output?

Issues will be addressed in thematic panels, plenaries and workshops.

- **Panels** : Panels with various themes will be presented by experts (political scientists, economists, sociologists, scientists)
- Panels will be held everyday in the *Salle des Congrès of Palais du Peuple* ; time will be specified later.
- **Plenaries**: Plenary sessions will give panellists the opportunity to present the themes that will be discussed; this will help participants understand what is at stake and enrich their contribution in thematic workshops. Each plenary session will have its moderator and rapporteur
- **Thematic workshops**: Groups will be made up, each will address a specific subject. Panellists are responsible for the workshop addressing their specialty. At the end of their work, groups will present propositions and recommendations during a plenary session. Workshops can also include a panel. Individual contributions on related issues are most welcome. Activities will generate and be coordinated by the secretariat and applicant organizations.
- **Thematic forums**: Forums will take place at specified places and time on issues and themes on which you will be informed later: forum of elected representatives; forum of writers; forum of film-makers, forum of farmers, trade unions etc. These are spaces to allow sharing of experiences.

VII. ACTIVITIES

- o Organizations or persons wishing to present activities are requested to inform before November 15th 2005, specifying:
- o **The format**: workshop, conference, forum, exhibit, cultural event etc.
- o **Theme**: indicate the title, panellists etc.
- o **Choice of the halls**: if possible indicate number of expected participants.

African Diaspora: A large place is programmed for the African Diaspora. Please register with the secretariat [adcecide@yahoo.fr]

VIII. REGISTRATION

Foreign delegates should give their names, address, arrival dates, hotels categories and prices no later than **November 10 2005**.

VISA: ECOWAS countries are exempted from visa. For other participants, contact the Guinean Embassy in your country. If your country doesn't have an Embassy, please send the secretariat the following information before **November 10 2005** and we will make arrangements for a temporary visa at the airport upon arrival:

- o Name and first name
- o Date of birth
- o Address
- o Passport number, date and place of reception and date of expiration

IX. PARTICIPANTS

Participation is free and open to everyone.

The ASF steering committee informs that it cannot provide and pay for participants' expenses unless specified otherwise. It invites them to seek extra resources allowing them to participate in large numbers.

In this spirit, the steering committee encourages bordering countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Mali, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea Bissau, to come to Conakry in large numbers by road, using buses, trucks and cheap public transportation.

The steering committee has provided a huge space in the *Jardin du 2 octobre* for the Africa Youth Forum which will be addressing specific youth related issues.

.. **Activities**

As any meeting of this kind, an opening and closing ceremony will take place with artistic and cultural events.

The forum will have 3 main components, mixing work with pleasure :

- Activities which will include panels, plenary and thematic workshops;
- Visits of exhibits : artistic, cultural and commercial
- Artistic and cultural events

Daily planning

All the participants will have the final program before the starting of the activities.

XII. GENERAL INFORMATION

Site of the Forum

The ASF will take place in the big building of Palais du Peuple and its surroundings.

Accommodation

There are many good hotels in Conakry.

Prices vary from CFA 15,000 to CFA 60,000 (between US \$30 and \$120) with or without breakfast, depending on the hotel.

Best hotels: Novotel, Mariador Palace, Hotel Camayenne, Riviera Royal (which is situated near the site of ASF)

Local Transportation

Public transportation in Conakry is by taxi and minibus

- Taxis: Can be used individually, with prices varying between 1,500 and 2,000 CFA (between \$3 and \$4) for long distances far from Palais du Peuple, such as Mariador Palace and Riviera, at Taouyah, or collectively, for 250 francs (50 cents).
- Minibus: The price is CFA 150 (0.25 cents) minimum.
- **Airlines reaching Conakry :**
- Air France, Air Sénégal International ; Air Maroc ; Air Ivoire ; Brussels Airs ; Slok Air ; Belleview

Photocopies: A team will be in place to ensure the photocopying of documents for 100 guinea Francs (.25 cents) per page.

Food

A space will be set up where Guinean food will be served. Prices will vary between CFA 1,000 and CFA 2,500 (\$2 to \$5). Drinks will be available from FCFA 100

Temperature: Weather is good in Conakry at this time, ranging between 30 and 32 degree during the day and 25 to 30 degrees at night. Bring light clothes.

Curiosity

Conakry is currently redoing its road network that brings frequent traffics jam.

- National museum (15 mn from the Forum site),
- Island of Loos (Iles de Loos),
- The smoking dog (Le Chien qui fume, Dubréka 5km),
- Veil of the Bride (Voile de la mariée) (Kindia situated in 150 km from Conakry),
- Guinea has one of the most varied artistic and cultural heritage in the West African region, which brings makes it an interesting tourist spot.

Currency Exchange (official price) : 1\$ = 4,000 FG

CONTACT

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