

AFRICAN SOCIAL FORUM ADDIS ABABA CONSENSUS

ANOTHER AFRICA IS POSSIBLE !!

The Second African Social Forum (ASF) was held in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), from January 5-9, 2003. Over 200 African women, men and young people from 40 countries participated. They represented social movements, trade unions, peasants' organizations, NGOs and research institutions.

We reaffirmed our opposition to and rejection of the global neo-liberal system, its institutions and clubs, namely, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, the G 8 and the World Economic Forum.

Presentations were made on various thematic issues, including international trade, privatization, debt, the African Union, wars and conflicts, agriculture, the question of food security; health; African cultures, etc.

Following the discussions and debates on these issues we reaffirmed our strong conviction, contained in the Declaration made by the first African Social Forum (ASF), held in Bamako (Mali), that **"Another Africa is possible"**.

We also reviewed our practice as social movements in Africa since the Bamako meeting. Much progress has been made to develop and strengthen the ASF, to consolidate its place within the world anti-neoliberal movement, and to build popular struggles for economic justice on the ground. These include our participation in the Second World Social Forum held in Porto Alegre (Brazil), the establishment of national Social Forums in some African countries, and the march against neo-liberalism during the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg (South Africa).

The Forum observed that past and present economic policies implemented by African governments have failed to improve the lives of ordinary Africans. We concluded that only a dynamic civil society organized in strong and active social movements can and must challenge the neo-liberal political economy of globalization. The consensus was that we need to build a new African state and society, where public institutions and policies will guarantee cultural, economic, political and social rights for all citizens.

There was also a consensus that African unity and social integration are fundamental aspirations of the African Social Forum. Unity has to be organized and achieved through democratic mechanisms and institutions built with the popular participation of the African masses. This is why the ASF expressed deep concern and dissatisfaction with the neo-liberal orientation of the African Union through its adoption of NEPAD as the paradigm of Africa's development.

The ASF challenges national, regional and global institutions that continue to undermine our efforts to build a democratic society based on gender equality and social and economic justice. In that perspective, the African Social Forum commits itself to developing, promoting and popularizing, in a participatory manner, an alternative development paradigm, based on fundamental principles of democracy, human rights, gender equality and social justice. A development process designed and

controlled by the African people and based on their historical experiences. That paradigm will therefore be built on the following principles:

- The maximum participation of the African working classes, peasants, women and youth in decision-making processes, at local, national and regional levels in matters that affect their lives.
- The use of African cultures, not only as means of resistance to foreign domination, but also as a tool for building the economic, social and political framework for the Other Africa.
- The rejection of privatization of basic social services in Africa. We demand of our governments that they not relinquish their responsibility of providing basic social services such as water, energy, health and education to the people. To subject these to the demands of profits of the private sector is a violation of the citizens' basic human rights.
- The rejection of Africa's illegitimate external debt. That debt has been paid many times over. It is used to undermine Africa's self-reliant development and is the main cause for the continent's continued poverty. Therefore, the African Social Forum renews its call for the unconditional cancellation of that debt. It also calls for mass action for a collective repudiation of the continent's debt. In addition, the ASF demands the repatriation of all stolen wealth kept in American and European countries. Moreover, we demand reparations for the past and present damages caused to Africa by an unjust and unequal global system and its institutions.
- The rejection of the processes of decision-making and dispute settlement of the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the manipulation of our political leadership by the Quad countries to impose on Africa forced trade liberalization. In particular, we oppose the four Singapore issues (investment, competition policy, government procurement and trade facilitation). We call for a moratorium on GATS negotiations. We also call for the removal of TRIPS from the WTO altogether. We demand of our governments that they defend Africa's interests in the WTO and call for a rollback of the powers and controls of that organization.
- The development of the ASF based on the participation of grassroots social movements, supported by NGOs, institutions and professionals who act in line with the principles of the ASF.
- The development and use of methods of struggle which allow the maximum participation of the grassroots, through mobilization, education and action.

African farmers, most of whom are women, do not benefit from AGOA/Cotonou type of agreements. Women are especially disadvantaged, because of their unequal access to development opportunities. The ASF challenges African governments to remove agriculture from the WTO so that Africans are in control of agricultural production and food security.

On the issue of information and communication, it was observed that the marginalisation of women is due to poor access arising from poverty, illiteracy and other gender discriminatory barriers. The neoliberal political economy of globalization has deepened gender inequalities and reduced opportunities for women.

Africa is weakened by division and internal strife. These arise out of Africa's colonial past, foreign intervention, and the continuing poor African leadership that thrives on tribal and ethnic divisions. The

ASF demands of African governments that they resolve differences among African peoples by peaceful and constructive means based on using Africa's indigenous resources and institutions.

The Empire has declared a permanent war on the peoples of the world. The ASF resolves to support all peoples under threat from imperialist aggression and wars which endanger the lives of millions of innocents in Palestine, Iraq, North Korea, Colombia, Cuba, Indonesia, the Philippines and in other countries.

The ASF in Addis Ababa reiterated its commitment to strengthening alliances with other regional Social Forums, such as the Asian, European and Latin American Forums, and to work within the World Social Forum to challenge neoliberal globalization and build the foundations of the Other Possible World. Thus, the ASF serves as the space for convergence between the various components of the African civil society to strengthen and deepen national, regional and continental unity. The ASF also serves as a space for the democratic expression of views and alternatives to neoliberalism for the transformation of the state and society in the interests of the well-being of all African peoples.

The Addis Forum has adopted the Charter of Principles and Values, which will be the philosophical and moral basis of our movement. It has also proposed a number of organizational mechanisms with the view to building a more democratic African social movement.

Africa is a continent, rich of its natural resources, its cultures and the creativity of its people. It is by relying on this tremendous richness that we will build Another Africa, that is independent, self-reliant and prosperous. It is this unwavering faith that guides us in our struggle.

The ASF reaffirms that globalization from below, thought out, owned and implemented by people's organizations, is both necessary and possible.

**ANOTHER AFRICA IS POSSIBLE!
ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE!**

Addis Ababa, January 9, 2003.