

Change on the March



“We Don’t Want Everybody to Think the Same”

By Isolda Agazzi

DAKAR – It is only the second time that the World Social Forum (WSF) takes place in Africa, the first one having been held in Nairobi, Kenya, in 2007. Since the start of the WSF in Porto Alegre, Brazil, 10 years ago, the organisers have been building African participation. The number of people attending the WSF has steadily gone up: from 20,000 to 150,000. In Nairobi it dropped to 70,000, which made some observers announce “the end of the anti-globalisation movement”.

“But one has to compare apples with apples,” says Chico Whitaker, one of the founders of the forum. “Most of the participants come from the country or the region where it takes place. Senegal has only 12 million inhabitants, compared to 180 million in Brazil. Therefore, this year we will not have a huge gathering.”

He adds that, “our original intention was not to create a new movement that would change everything but to increase the possibility of people to get to know each other and come together. Politically, we needed to change our methods. Instead of creating a pyramid based on power, we decided to launch networks.”

The WSF is still concerned with the globally

dominant neoliberal dictum: “We are told that the market is the solution and that it needs to be free. But the market does not solve the problem of inequalities,” Whitaker concludes.

The WSF kicked off on Sunday Feb 6 with the traditional rally. Thousands of people marched in the city centre of the Dakar, capital of Senegal in West Africa, to reclaim food sovereignty, debt relief, trade equity, women’s rights, access to health, liberalisation of migration and many other causes aimed at fairer and more inclusive globalisation.

“The total number of participants is not known yet,” Taoufik Ben Abdallah of Enda Tiers Monde, the coordinator of the African Social Forum and one of the main organisers of this year’s event, told IPS in an interview. Enda Tiers Monde is an international development organisation with headquarters in Dakar.

“People have come from 130 countries. Many groups have arrived from all over Africa, often by bus. The participation of Asia is rather low but that is mainly due to the cost of the journey.”

Ben Abdallah welcomed participants at the Cheikh Anta Diop University by saying, “Africa is a rich region if you let countries determine their own policies.” Asked by IPS whether the “Jasmine Revolution” could spread across Africa,

Ben Abdallah answered that, “the way the Tunisian delegation was welcomed shows that what happened there is considered very significant”. The actual work started on Feb 7 amid some confusion. Most of the workshops scheduled in the university building had to be cancelled because students were attending classes as if the WSF did not exist. The former university director had promised use of the buildings for the whole week but the current director decided not to suspend classes.

Self-organised Workshops

The organisers met with university authorities while tents were set up rapidly. Several workshops were relocated there. Many participants think that the Senegalese government is not making any effort to support the global event but Ben Abdallah ensures journalists that it is only an organisational problem.

Feb 7 was devoted to Africa and hundreds of self-organised workshops took place on varied issues.

For Anna Dramé of the National Council of Civil Society Organisations of the small West African state Guinea, “holding the WSF in Africa is a good thing because it gives us the possibility to exchange ideas and find solutions to common

problems.

“I have been inspired by the workshops on violence against women and on land grabbing,” she told IPS. “I did not know about the situation in Mauritania and Mali and, once I am back home, I will be able to pass information along.”

For Sidibe Abou from Covire, a coordinating body that attends to victims of repression in Mauritania, “unity is strength and holding the WSF in Africa will give visibility to the problems of the unemployed, the widowed, the orphans and other excluded people. Discussing common problems may help us to find solutions.”

Nama Sidiki of Diobass in Burkina Faso, an organisation of small farmers, is also concerned about unlawful expropriation of land. “It creates conflict. In Burkina Faso, mainly rich locals and some members of government — rather than foreigners — have grabbed land. The WSF helps raise the awareness of people.”

During the last two days of the WSF, delegates attending “convergence workshops” will try to produce common positions and pave the way forward on thematic issues. As usual, the WSF will not produce any final outcome document. “The WSF is based on a bottom-up approach. We do not want to make all people think the same,” explains Whitaker.

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Challenge for Change

This World Is Impossible

The World Social Forum now underway in Dakar was preceded by a series of meetings throughout the year that confirmed the uniqueness of the WSF as a place to discuss the major problems of the world and proposals to address them. IPS has covered this entire process. (<http://www.ipsnews.net/>)

It is highly significant that the WSF has centred its discussions in Africa for the second year -and in a Francophone African country for the first time.

These forums are the result of an enormous economic and organisational effort that would not be possible without fervent activism and the WSF's massive following. This forum in particular will give Senegalese civil society a major boost, which will reverberate throughout the rest of Africa and beyond.

Since 2001, the WSF has generated giant expectations with its debates, ideas, and proposals, all oriented towards its ultimate goal and motto: "Another World is Possible."

The last decade has been one of the most turbulent and full of change in the history of the world. When it began, the world was still in the grips of neo-liberal ideology, the Washington Consensus was considered a near-religious commandment, the massively-expanding world of finance was suffocating the real economy, all culminating in the assertion that a response to the catastrophic acceleration of climate change should be entrusted to market forces and free enterprise. The hegemony of Washington was so crushing that it was able to make the world accept its warped allegation that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction -even after this had been proven untrue- and on that basis invade the country with a handful of allies, marginalising the UN in the process.

Throughout this period the forums provided more than a source of denunciations, resistance, and mobilisation. They generated a clear and cogent argument that extreme liberalisation, blind faith in the market as the guardian of the economy, and the rejection of all regulation, especially of the financial groups up to their necks in speculation, would speed the world towards planetary disaster.

This is precisely what happened, though many people outside the initial forums rejected these warnings, which they dismissed as naive or mere vapours of ideological extremism.

This decade has provided a vigorous confirmation of both the critique and the premise that inspired the World Social Forum: that "This World is Impossible." This is why another world is possible - and necessary.

However, while the former is indisputable, in terms of the latter, conditions are more favourable than even before, though certainly the path is not clear to bring about the changes and reforms needed to make the world better, more just, more safe, and more sustainable.

In other words, if civil society doesn't provide firm resistance and demand real and profound changes, this giant crisis might result in nothing more than a restoration conveniently devised to maintain the basic elements of the current system for the long term.

It is instructive to study what happened after the Great Depression that followed the Wall Street crash of 1929. To overcome this crisis, president Roosevelt in his New Deal introduced numerous changes, like the law that

separates commercial banks from investment banks, and limits on financial exposure, among others.

With these changes, the system survived for more than fifty years until, in the 1980s, a process of reversal began which culminated during the second term of president George W. Bush in the global depression, which is its predictable and tragic consequence.

The dilemma facing the Dakar Forum and certain to face those that follow is this: how can we make sure that the epic financial dysfunction that was diagnosed and predicted to implode will lead not to a return to business as usual but rather to the introduction of the changes that it requires?

From our point of view, this message should reach all civil society in order to spur it to mobilise and become a real engine of pressure. The main obstacle is the fact that the media have thus far have not been receptive to the forum. Thus the battle over information should now be given top priority.

This battle should be fought not only in the conventional media. By fortunate coincidence, the Dakar forum is taking place immediately after the popular uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt. Both countries were ruled by dictatorships, the press was mostly controlled by the government with few independent media, while opposition parties lacked influence and importance, as is usually the case in authoritarian systems. Apparently everything was under control.

But the opposition, sometimes virulent, was alive and it was a majority. Lacking political freedom and media that reflect their views, civil society was waiting for its chance and adopted its own means of communication, the Internet as well as more direct channels.

This is exactly the way the WSF came about, as a social network unconnected to political parties or economic or religious interests.

For this reason, the winds blowing from North Africa carry a lesson and stimulus for the Dakar meetings. Above all they confirm the strategies of the forums, which were born of and work in the heart of civil society in order to promote and introduce bottom-up change, the only kind that really changes the world.

We hope that TerraViva can contribute to this process.



Mario Lubetkin,
IPS director general

"The battle over information should now be given priority"

O Fórum Social Mundial (FSM) que hoje acontece em Dacar foi precedido por uma série de encontros ao longo do ano passado, que confirmaram sua posição única como espaço de discussão dos grandes problemas mundiais e das propostas para resolvê-los, que a IPS acompanha em suas coberturas (<http://www.ipsnews.net/>).

Tem um significado singular o fato de, pela segunda vez, o FSM centralizar suas discussões em um país africano e pela primeira vez em um país africano de fala francesa.

A preparação dos fóruns implica enormes esforços organizacionais e econômicos que não seriam possíveis sem uma adesão maciça e uma fervorosa militância. Este Fórum, em particular, dará um impulso poderoso à sociedade civil senegalesa, que desde o centro da África se propagará ao resto do continente, e além dele.

Desde 2001, o FSM gera enormes expectativas com seus debates, suas ideias e propostas em torno de seu lema e meta final: "Outro mundo é possível".

Esta década foi um dos períodos mais turbulentos e mais pródigos em mudança na história universal. Quando começou, ainda predominava a ideologia neoliberal no mundo, o Consenso de Washington tinha valor de mandamento, o mundo das finanças se expandia e sufocava a economia real, chegava-se até a afirmar que conter a catastrófica aceleração da mudança climática era tarefa que deveria ser entregue ao empenho da empresa livre e das forças do mercado. Era, então, tão sufocante a hegemonia de Washington que conseguiu fazer valer o urdido pretexto da produção de armas de destruição em massa no Iraque e, mesmo depois que essa falsidade veio à tona, lançar suas forças e a de alguns aliados na invasão desse infeliz país, deixando de lado as Nações Unidas.

Em todos esses anos, os fóruns não foram apenas ambientes de denúncias, de mobilização e resistência. Nas análises de seus expoentes foi previsto e antecipado que a liberalização a todo custo, a fé cega no mercado como reitor da economia e o veto contra toda ação reguladora do mercado, especialmente dos grupos financeiros que praticavam uma especulação desenfreada, levariam a um desastre planetário.

Foi exatamente o que ocorreu, apesar de muitos, de fora dos fóruns iniciais, desprezarem tais advertências, tachando-as de ingênuas, ou ilusórias, engendradas por um extremismo ideológico.

Esta década, portanto, confirma a premissa e a crítica que inspira o FSM: "Este mundo é impossível". É, portanto, necessário - e possível - outro mundo.

Enquanto o primeiro já está fora de discussão, para o segundo somente se apresentam condições mais favoráveis do que nunca, certamente não um caminho sem obstáculos, para conseguir as mudanças e as reformas que implantem um mundo melhor, mais justo, mais seguro, mais sustentável.

Em outras palavras, esta grande crise pode derivar em uma restauração convenientemente sustentada que mantenha o essencial do sistema durante um longo período, se a sociedade civil não opuser uma articulada e firme resistência que obrigue a mudanças profundas.

Esta já ocorreu, precisamente com a tão lembrada nestes dias Grande Depressão, sucessiva à crise de Wall Street de 1929. Para superá-la, o New Deal do presidente Roosevelt fez mudanças como a separação entre bancos comerciais e bancos de investimentos, colocou controles e limites à exposição financeira e adotou outras medidas que seria longo enumerar aqui.

Com essas correções, o sistema se manteve pouco mais de meio século, até que nos anos 1980 começou um processo de eliminação de controles que culminou com a precipitação absoluta do segundo mandato de George W. Bush e a depressão mundial que foi sua previsível e trágica consequência.

Este é o dilema que se apresenta ao FSM em Dacar e voltará a se apresentar o seguinte: como fazer com que este processo que diagnosticou e cuja implosão previu, possa ir além da simples restauração e seja o início das mudanças que propõe?

Do nosso ponto de vista, sua mensagem deve chegar à sociedade civil em seu conjunto, para que esta se mobilize e se converta em decisivo fator de pressão. O obstáculo principal é a barreira colocada pelo sistema dos meios de comunicação, que até agora são pouco receptivos em relação aos fóruns. Deve-se, portanto, dar prioridade à batalha pela informação.

Esta batalha não deve ser travada somente na mídia convencional. Por uma feliz coincidência, o Fórum de Dakar acontece imediatamente após as rebeliões populares na Tunísia e no Egito.

Nos dois países vigorava uma ditadura, a imprensa estava majoritariamente controlada pelo governo e eram escassos os veículos de comunicação independentes, enquanto os partidos de oposição, como costuma acontecer em regimes autoritários, careciam de importância e influência.

Tudo estava sob controle dos ditadores, aparentemente.

Porém, a oposição, mesmo virulenta, existia e era amplamente majoritária. Não podendo contar com liberdade política e com imprensa que refletisse suas reclamações, a sociedade civil esperou a ocasião e se dotou de seus próprios meios de intercomunicação, via Internet e por canais mais diretos.

É exatamente desse modo que se criou o Fundo Social Mundial, como uma rede social alheia a partidos políticos e interesses religiosos ou econômicos.

Por isto, os ventos que sopram do Norte da África são um ensinamento e um estímulo para as reuniões de Dacar e, sobretudo, uma confirmação das estratégias dos fóruns, que nascem e operam dentro da sociedade civil para promover e impor as mudanças de baixo para cima, que são as únicas que podem mudar o mundo.

Esperamos que este TerraViva possa contribuir em algo nessa direção. Envolverde/IPS

Same Old System Can Only Produce New Crisis



Busani Bafana interviews NICK DEARDEN, director of the Jubilee Debt Campaign

LONDON – The world is in financial crisis thanks to the reckless behaviour of bankers, say campaigners, yet ordinary people are picking up the tab. Debt activists fear the recession will provide cover for a fresh round of toxic debt to countries in the South.

Nick Dearden, director of the Jubilee Debt Campaign, an international coalition of about 200 organisations, says there has never been a more important time for activists to meet to discuss collaboration and strategies to bring about real change to the world's economy than now.

Q: What makes this a particularly crucial moment in the campaign against unjust debt?

A: With recession in full swing, we are worried that the British government will try to create the toxic debts for another generation of Africans. Some bits of industry are saying, "We need more support than ever, and you need to stop making our lives difficult with these environmental standards." We must stop this.

We're trying to make connections between debt crisis in Europe and the debt crisis that so many countries have been experiencing for decades. Thirty years ago, many countries in the global South went through a similar process.

In the 1970s banks lent recklessly to developing countries. When times got tough in the 1980s, banks put interest rates up and sparked what we now call the "Third World Debt" crisis. Those countries sacrificed their development – including the health and education of their citizens – to repay mountains of unjust debts.

The banks got bailed out by public institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Despite some debt cancellation, today many of those countries are at risk of high levels of debt again.

As people in Ireland, Greece and other European countries have discovered over the last 12 months, the lessons of the Third World debt crisis have not been learnt. It brings us back to the question – how can we fundamentally reform the financial system?

We are launching a report on export credit. Developing countries, including African countries, continue to pay the British government back for useless projects that should never have been given support in the first place. They were supported through something called export credits.

Export credits are a way of the British government supporting British exports – the government gives insurance to exporters working in particularly 'risky' parts of the world (mostly the global South). If the project goes wrong, the British government makes sure the exporters gets paid, and the amount often becomes a debt for the developing country concerned.

All industrialised countries have similar agencies. They use them to support their strategic interests – so they fund arms sales, energy control and so on.

So if you look at what the UK has supported – we're talking about the Turkwel Gorge Hydroelectric Project in Kenya or the Lesotho Highlands Water Project or the Dabhol Power Station in India or arms sales to General Suharto in Indonesia – many of these things wouldn't have happened without export credits. And today many developing countries are burdened with debt – kept dependent – by these same projects.

Q: What has been the response of global civil society movement to global financial crisis?

A: Well, there has been enormous anger here in Europe for sure. People don't see why they should have to tolerate severe cuts in their services, jeopardising their human rights, because those at the top gambled with their societies and their lives.

I think people in many African and other Southern countries have known this for a long time. But it's just dawning on some people in Europe. And actually people have really seen the connections between climate crisis and financial crisis – both are driven by a corporate-dominated global economy where those at the top can behave how they want and those at the bottom pay the price – clearly the environment also suffers when nothing matters but profit.

As such I'm optimistic, but I wouldn't want to underplay the threats out there. Appeals to racism and hatred also seem to be gaining ground, while many other people feel very alienated from politics of any kind.

New Scramble for Africa



Sierra Leone women farmers clear the rice fields at a Chinese demonstration farm near Freetown. Inset: Moses Shaha, from the Eastern and Southern African Small-scale Farmers Forum, a movement with members in twelve African member states.



By Thandi Winston

DAKAR – Some are calling it the second scramble for Africa – the growing appetite of external interests in securing huge tracts of land in Africa, displacing the small-scale farmers who form the backbone of the continent's own food security.

The issue has been one of the main talking points at this year's World Social Forum. And whilst there are no immediate answers, activists are warning about its effects on African people's livelihoods and food security.

For activists like Mercia Andrews, from the South African agrarian reform organisation, Trust for Community Outreach and Education, "there is a massive land grab taking place and Western countries are coming into Africa and using African land to feed themselves to ensure their own food security at the expense of Africans."

Andrews is also a member of the People's Dialogue, a network of African and Latin American indigenous and rural organisations. "They big companies) are once again displacing the poor and vulnerable," she says.

Multinational agribusiness corporations and investment banks are leading the rush to secure land. The countries that have been targeted are found all across sub-Saharan Africa: Sudan, Tanzania, Namibia, Senegal, and others.

A report by the International Food Policy Research Institute in 2009 said the acquisition of farmland in developing countries was "one of the lingering effects of the food price crisis of 2007/8" as governments – particularly in the oil-rich but arid Persian Gulf, but including South Korea and Libya – sought to guarantee a source of affordable food in the future. These agents join corporate prospectors for land who have sought to establish vast farms to grow food, cash crops such as sugar cane, oil palms and jatropha.

Rita Devan, a Professor of Economics at the University of Mumbai, said the issue has been raised by activists in India. "Indian people are buying land in Africa, as they cannot get land in India so they buying here (Africa)."

Lucy Edwards, an activist from Namibia said what made it more shocking was that the rush by multinational corporations and

large commercial enterprises to dispossess Africans of land is being done with the collusion of African governments and elites. Edwards says the issue is linked to the crisis of capitalism. "This kind of social system is not sustainable and we cannot continue to live in a society where we have this gulf between rich and poor. This leads to social strife."

At an event held on the sidelines of the WSF, entitled, "Do not touch my land, it's my life", international development charity Oxfam and the Senegal-based NGO Enda denounced land grabs European and Asians interests – as well as wealthy Africans. Oxfam's Lamine Ndiaye said the problem was compounded by the fact that in several cases, land was now being acquired with a speculative motive, with the new owners failing to invest in agriculture.

According to the World Bank, 42 million hectares were acquired by foreign interests across the global South between August 2008 and October 2009. Lungisile Ntsebeza, Professor and Research Chair of Land Reform at the University of Cape Town, describes it using the term "a new scramble for Africa", referencing the 19th century division of the continent by European colonial powers. Farmers are worried that the buying or leasing of arable land will make adapting to climate change even harder for them.

Moses Shaha, from the Eastern and Southern African Small-scale Farmers Forum, a movement with members in twelve African member states said, "We feed the nation and yet we now have to worry about land grabs. Climate change is taking away our livelihood and affects our farmers, who already do not understand this."

He said he had come to Dakar to network with other organisations and strategise over an effective way forward.

For Elizabeth Mpfu, a small-scale farmer from Masvingo in Zimbabwe, the issue is simple, "We must tell our governments that what they are doing is wrong. We as farmers must be bold and courageous and challenge them. We must also tell farmers about the seriousness of the situation."

A view shared by Moses Shaha. "We must tell our politicians to stop this and educate our farmers about the dangers of land grabbing. If we do not do this it will be disastrous for the future."

Challenging the Economic Order

Lula and Wade in Opposite Corners

By Koffigan E. Adigbli

DAKAR – The liberal doctrines imposed on the world's poorest countries no longer have a place in modern societies, says the former president of Brazil, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. Lula, as he's popularly known, appeared alongside Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade at the WSF in Dakar, where he is taking part in a gathering of altermondialistes from around the world. Lula delivered a speech in which he showed himself to be resolutely optimistic in the face of the current economic data. "The world economic order will no longer be shaped by a few dominant economies," he said. "In South America, but above all in the streets of Tunis and Cairo and many other African cities, a new hope is being born. Millions of people are rising up against the poverty to which they are subjected, against the domination of tyrants, against the submission of their countries to the policies of the big powers," said Lula. He also appealed to Africa to take cognizance of the continent's potential and the extraordinary future that awaits it, with its 800 million inhabitants and its immensely rich land, which could allow it first of all to achieve its independence in food production. "For too long, the rich countries have considered us as the dangerous and problematic margins, but those who have arrogantly given us lessons on how we must manage our economies, have not themselves been able to escape the crisis born at the centre of world capitalism," he said. On his part, President Wade clearly presented

himself as a defender of economic liberalisation. He went so far as to reveal that he was not in agreement with the anti-globalisation movement, even if he shares with them the idea of changing the world, which he acknowledges is in need of reform. "I am a supporter of the market economy and not the state-run economy which has failed everywhere or near it in the world," he said, adding that he has long campaigned for a seat for Africa on the UN Security Council. If you who are here, if you had supported this idea, then Africa would already be on the Security Council. Since 2000, I have followed your movement and I still – excuse my frankness – ask myself this question: have you succeeded in changing the world at the global level?"



FSM - Lula e Wade em cantos opostos

Por Koffigan E. Adigbli

Dacar, Senegal, 8/2/2011 (IPS/TerraViva) – As doutrinas do liberalismo impostas aos países mais pobres não têm mais espaço na sociedade moderna, disse o ex-presidente do Brasil, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

Lula, como é conhecido popularmente, apareceu ao lado do presidente senegalês, Abdoulaye Wade, no Fórum Social Mundial em Dacar, onde está participando de um encontro com altermundistas de todo o mundo. Lula declarou no seu discurso que está otimista diante dos dados econômicos atuais.

"A ordem econômica mundial não será mais moldada por algumas economias dominantes", disse ele.

"Na América do Sul, mas acima de tudo nas ruas de Túnis e do Cairo, e em muitas outras

idades africanas, está nascendo uma nova esperança. Milhões de pessoas estão se erguendo contra a pobreza à qual estão sujeitas, contra o domínio de tiranos e contra a submissão dos seus países a uma política dos grandes poderes", afirmou Lula.

Ele também fez um apelo para que a África tome conhecimento do potencial que o continente tem e do futuro extraordinário que o espera, com seus 800 milhões de habitantes e seu território imenso e rico, que permitiriam que seja a primeira no mundo a atingir uma independência na produção de alimentos.

"Por muito tempo, os países ricos nos consideraram um problema e uma ameaça marginal, mas aqueles que nos deram lições de forma arrogante sobre como deveríamos conduzir nossas economias não foram capazes, eles mesmos, de escapar da crise que nasceu no centro do mundo capitalista", destacou Lula.

Por outro lado, o presidente Wade se apresentou como um defensor da liberalização econômica.

Ele chegou ao ponto de revelar que não estava de acordo com os movimentos antiglobalização, e que, mesmo compartilhando da ideia de que o mundo precisa de mudanças, o que ele acredita é na necessidade de reformas.

"Sou um apoiador da economia de mercado e não da economia gerida pelo Estado, que já falhou em todos os lugares ou está perto disso", disse ele, acrescentando que não está mais fazendo campanha pela África por um lugar no Conselho de Segurança das Nações Unidas.

Plaidoyer pour une éducation inclusive pour tous

DAKAR – La Coalition en synergie des organisations de défense de l'école publique au Sénégal (COSYDEP) a tenu, mardi à Dakar, une rencontre sur l'éducation inclusive, soulignant l'urgence de garantir l'accessibilité de l'école pour tous les enfants du Sénégal et des pays en voie de développement. Cheikh Mbow, coordonnateur de la COSYDEP, qui tenait cette rencontre dans le cadre du Forum social mondial (FSM) organisé depuis dimanche dans la capitale sénégalaise, affirme que des milliers d'enfants sénégalais sont toujours exclus du système scolaire, alors que c'est leur droit d'être instruits.

«Il faut que les choses changent. Les enfants

ont droit à l'éducation, nous devons tout faire pour qu'ils aillent à l'école. Ils ne doivent plus rester dans les rues comme nous le voyons ici à Dakar», déclara-t-il. «Ils ne doivent plus mendier ou accompagner leur parent non-voyant ou sourd-muet à travers les quartiers. Les autorités de nos pays doivent prendre à bras le corps ce problème pour qu'on ait dans le futur des cadres pour notre développement», ajoute-t-il.

Mbow a plaidé également pour la gratuité de l'école, seul gage, selon lui d'une massification des effectifs dans les écoles.

Abtoub Traoré, la représentante d'Aide et Action, une organisation non gouvernementale (ONG) intervenant dans le domaine de l'éducation, a souhaité que les autorités des pays du Tiers monde s'investissent davantage dans l'éducation, notamment dans celle des enfants issus des couches vulnérables.

«En encourageant les parents à instruire leurs enfants dans les écoles où la scolarité est gratuite, nos autorités luttent sans le savoir contre le banditisme des jeunes. Parce que les enfants non instruits deviennent pour la plupart des délinquants ou des dangers pour la société», explique-t-elle.

Les enfants qui ont pris part à la rencontre ont souligné les violences de toutes sortes dont ils sont victimes. Les enfants ont établi une liste incluant notamment la pauvreté, les violences corporelles, et d'autres freins sociaux qui

sont des handicaps pour eux, insistant qu'ils aspirent à une éducation inclusive et achevée.

Ami Konté, une fillette de 11 ans, élève à l'école primaire de Guinauw Rails, une banlieue lointaine de Dakar, qui a participé à la rencontre, affirme que les enfants ont aussi des droits que les adultes doivent respecter.

«Nous avons droit à l'éducation, à la nourriture, à l'habillement et à la santé. Nous n'avons pas demandé à venir sur cette terre, alors nos droits ne doivent pas être bafoués. La gratuité de l'école ne peut que nous aider, nous les enfants dont les parents sont pauvres», ajoute-t-elle.

Louis Sagna, 13 ans, un autre élève ayant pris part à la rencontre, venu de la Casamance, dans le sud du Sénégal, a plaidé pour le désenclavement de certaines localités afin que les écoles soient plus proches des maisons.

«Pour aller à l'école, je fais plus de cinq kilomètres à pied. Je souhaite que les établissements scolaires ne soient pas loin de nos maisons», indique-t-il.

Selon les organisations de défense des droits des enfants, le FSM est l'occasion d'accentuer le plaidoyer à l'endroit des décideurs. Ainsi, elles comptent mettre à profit la présence des sommités nationales d'envergure internationale comme les professeurs Amadou Makhtar Mbow, ancien directeur général de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'éducation, la science et la culture.

Global Crisis Strengthens WSF's Legitimacy

By Julia Godoy

BERLIN – European non-governmental organisations combating neo-liberal globalisation find their position vindicated by the ongoing socio-economic and environmental crisis upsetting the world.

The legitimacy of the demands of the European members of the World Social Forum (WSF) is not only founded in the massive support they enjoy from workers and peasants groups across the globe. Now, it enjoys the endorsement of governments which not long ago were supporters of neo-liberal globalisation.

"The endorsement by European governments of our basic demands, such as the transaction tax, constitutes a great satisfaction," Hugo Braun, of the Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions for the Aid of Citizens (ATTAC), told IPS.

"But European governments must still realise that the global crisis cannot be solved with simply

declarations of intentions. The system cannot be repaired, the system must be replaced by another one," Braun said. "We need a strict control of financial markets, a democratisation of the economy, a transfer of wealth from the top of society to the lower classes, on a global basis."

Braun, who took part in the World Social Forum in Dakar, Senegal, said that the main subject of the gathering should be "the search for the features of a post capitalistic society. Profit driven capitalism cannot solve the crisis, it is rather the cause of it."

The financial transaction tax is one of the most emblematic demands of European NGOs opposed to neo-liberalism.

The idea – which calls for the exaction of a small fee on all speculative financial transactions to pay for development projects in Asia, Africa, and Latin America – is based on the proposal of late Nobel Prize winner in economics James Tobin. In 1997 the

tax was the founding pillar of the ATTAC group in France.

ATTAC is a founding member of the European Social Forum (ESF) and of the WSF.

The call for a financial transaction tax has recently been endorsed by French President Nicolas Sarkozy, who promised to put it on the agenda of the Group of 8 and the Group of 20 debates. During 2011, France will be coordinating both groups.

The German government publicly stated its support for Sarkozy's plan to put the financial transaction tax high on the G-8 and G-20 agendas this year.

Sarkozy also announced that his government would propose control instruments against speculation in foodstuff markets to stop rising prices and guarantee food supply.

With general awareness of the global economic and environmental crisis, several themes that have defined the WSF for the last 10 years have become

standard parts of a critique of neo-liberalism – from rejection of free trade to denouncing intensive agriculture and the privatisation of public services.

"The alter globalisation movement represented by the World Social Forum has renewed contemporary politics," says French journalist Laurent Joffrin, director of the daily newspaper Liberation.

Joffrin points out that the international political agenda is now dominated by numerous themes the WSF and its member organisations rescued from indifference – such as the plight of landless workers in developing countries, the rejection of intensive agriculture and industrial production of food, and the constraints imposed by the global environmental crisis.

"The WSF... forces the traditional Left to revise its own positions on all these subjects, including international trade, tax justice, financial globalisation, and climate change refugees," Joffrin said.

Tempo de crises globais mais complexas

Por Mario Osava



Rio de Janeiro, Brasil – O neoliberalismo, com sua globalização financeira, foi o inimigo que mobilizou os ativistas das mais diversas origens que há dez anos inauguraram em Porto Alegre o Fórum Social Mundial (FSM), instância de reflexão e articulação por “outro mundo possível”. Em sua décima-primeira edição, que começa no dia 6 em Dacar, o FSM encontra um mundo onde as políticas neoliberais perderam sentido e a ameaça é um colapso por variadas crises combinadas, como as financeira, climática, alimentar e hídrica.

O imperialismo norte-americano, outro alvo preferencial dos altermundistas, perdeu grande parte de seu poder econômico, enquanto a China emerge como outra superpotência também com práticas coloniais, embora sem militarismo nem exportação de suas crenças e seu modo de vida, pelo menos neste momento. O dinamismo dos grandes países chamados “em desenvolvimento” tirou centenas de pessoas da extrema pobreza, mas as desigualdades no mundo e dentro de cada Estado continuam intoleráveis, bem como a fome em muitas partes do mundo.

A ameaça climática se faz presente no aumento de mortes, refúgios e perdas agrícolas devido aos eventos extremos. Um grande poder destrutivo permanece nas finanças, com US\$ 860 trilhões em investimentos especulativos circulando no mundo, segundo o Banco de Pagamentos Internacionais. Esta soma equivale a 13 vezes o produto mundial bruto.

Tudo se agrava pelo “desgoverno planetário”, pela falta de instituições capazes de enfrentar “problemas globais”, segundo o economista brasileiro Ladislau Dowbor, que leva à capital do Senegal ideias de um grupo de intelectuais que, sob o título “Crises e Oportunidades”, discute soluções sistêmicas para os problemas convergentes.

Não é sustentável a crescente concentração da riqueza que leva dois terços da humanidade à exclusão do progresso, vivendo com 6% da renda mundial, como tampouco o é seguir no “Titanic ambiental”, esgotando os recursos naturais, “o solo e a vida marítima”, explicou Dowbor, professor da Universidade Católica de São Paulo.

O documento básico do grupo, do qual também participam o

“ecosocioeconomista” polonês Ignacy Sachs e a economista evolucionária britânica Hazel Henderson, rechaça “visões simplistas dos processos decisórios” e propõe o “resgate da dimensão pública do Estado” e substituição do produto interno bruto como medida econômica, entre outras dez premissas.

Ao retornar à África – após a primeira incursão em sua sétima edição mundial, em Nairóbi –, o FSM realça os grandes dramas da humanidade que se concentram nesse continente, cujo norte árabe vive atualmente intensa mobilização popular, que já mostrou ser capaz de derrubar a ditadura da Tunísia e agora coloca em xeque o regime do Egito.

O encontro da sociedade civil mundial deste ano “será vibrante, com gente nova”, mas acontecerá em condições precárias, com “um terço do orçamento previsto”, reconheceu Cândido Grzybowski, diretor do Instituto Brasileiro de Análises Sociais e Econômicas e um dos fundadores do FSM. Por exemplo, em muitos painéis não haverá tradução simultânea.

Está prevista a presença de 50 mil participantes para as diferentes atividades que acontecerão até o dia 11 em Dacar, um terço do registrado última edição unificada, em 2009 em Belém, no Estado do Pará, no norte amazônico do Brasil. Acontece que o Senegal tem 15 vezes menos habitantes do que o Brasil, tenta justificar Chico Whitaker, outro fundador do FSM, após explicar que, em geral, 80% dos participantes são do país sede e de vizinhos.

A presença latino-americana será reduzida, em particular pela debilidade econômica que enfrentam as organizações não governamentais devido às reduções nas doações pelo mundo rico, agravada pela taxa de câmbio desfavorável e pela escassez de financiamento nacional. Além disso, a passagem aérea para Dacar é cara, porque não há voos diretos e é preciso dar a volta pela Europa.

As limitações quanto à organização em Dacar refletem a falta de apoio governamental, enfatizando a posição de uma corrente brasileira que no ano passado realizou um Fórum Temático na Bahia e que defende a incorporação de “alianças com governos progressistas”, para dar mais força e repercussão ao FSM.

O Fórum se define como uma instância da sociedade civil, na qual os governantes só participam como convidados nos encontros organizados por entidades e movimentos sociais, embora a maioria de suas edições mundiais, como as cinco brasileiras, tenham recebido apoio financeiro de governos nacionais e locais.

Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, convidado nas edições anteriores quando presidia o Brasil, desta vez participará como “membro da sociedade civil” em um seminário previsto para o dia 7, intitulado “Dia de África e a Diáspora” na programação do FSM 2011. Lula já anunciou que as relações Brasil-África serão uma prioridade em sua atividade depois que deixou o poder.

Para a próxima edição unificada, bianual desde 2005, muitos brasileiros querem trazer de volta o FSM às suas origens, Porto Alegre, enquanto outros defendem levá-lo para a Bahia, Estado com maior população de afrodescendentes do país.

A Europa, outra forte proposta de sede para 2013, aponta para outros caminhos, como incidir em temas centrais da conjuntura. Trata-se do continente que melhor ilustra alguns dos problemas da humanidade, diante dos efeitos continuados da crise econômico-financeira global iniciada em 2008 nos Estados Unidos, segundo defensores da proposta.

Porém, são os novos modelos de “outro mundo” futuro, mais do que a conjuntura, que preocupam os intelectuais do FSM. “Está em jogo o desenvolvimento que mata a vida no planeta”, definiu Grzybowski, descartando como solução a “economia verde”, que a seu ver é, na realidade, um capitalismo maquiado que não altera os mecanismos da tragédia. Sua proposta é “ir além do FSM” e aproveitar a Conferência Rio+20, que atualizará o debate realizado na Conferência das Nações Unidas sobre Meio Ambiente e Desenvolvimento realizada em 1992 no Rio de Janeiro. As forças sociais devem organizar uma forte participação, para conquistar a aliança do governo brasileiro a favor de mudanças nos modelos, defendeu. Os problemas globais são imensos e complexos, mas “o mundo não para, o povo faz história”, como se comprova em vários países árabes nos dias de hoje, concluiu Grzybowski. Envolverde/IPS

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A Journey of Hope



Poverty Without Borders

By Andrea Lunt

NEW YORK – It's the land of freedom, of bright lights and burgers, where daring entrepreneurs arrive from across the planet in search of fame and fortune. The United States of America – the world's melting pot – has been a symbol of hope for centuries, but behind this vision of wealth and wonder is a tale often untold.

Food security, lack of water rights and unemployment might sound like the type of problems belonging to a developing nation, but they are also well documented issues here in the "land of the free".

As grassroots organisations gear up for this year's World Social Forum (WSF), kicking off in Senegal next week, U.S. – based NGOs are urging political leaders to remember social struggles taking place across the globe, whether it's in a suburb of Detroit or community in Dakar.

"In some ways there is this misconception around the world that because we live in the States, we don't deal with poverty, but it is real, especially in Michigan," said Oya Amakisi, a social activist travelling to the WSF this year.

"Our lives are very precarious right now. A huge percentage of people don't talk about it, but there are folks in three-piece suits living in cars," she told IPS.

Amakisi was one of the organisers of last year's regional U.S. Social Forum (USSF), which brought together up to 20,000 participants from around the world for a five-day conference in Detroit.

She is also affiliated with the Detroit to Dakar (D2D) initiative which was launched to highlight the parallels between social struggles in North America and in developing countries in Africa.

Amakisi said she hoped the upcoming WSF would be a place where activists can converge to share experiences and put forward solutions, not just discuss problems.

"We want to really learn how to create long-term effective change and transformation. Another world is possible... this is not our only option; struggling every day is not our only option, trying to figure out if we can keep a roof over our heads and feed our children should not be our only option."

"How can we get the basics – food, water shelter, respect, safety, education. The only thing we want is to be treated like human beings and have our voices heard in terms of how our lives are handled."

Also attending this year's WSF is fellow D2D collaborator William Copeland, from the East Michigan Environmental Action Council (EMEAC).

As a youth coordinator, Copeland sees daily the struggles facing many families in Detroit, which was one of the cities hardest hit by the global financial crisis.

Like many communities in Africa, he said Detroit citizens were forced to defend such things as land rights, food security and fair access to water.

"In Detroit, it's considered to be a food desert, where fresh food is fairly difficult to get within the city limits," Copeland said.

"It is four to five times easier to have a liquor store or fast food restaurant than it is to have any sort of fresh nutritious foods... right now people are growing food in abandoned lots and backyards," he told IPS. "There are also lots of struggles over water, over ownership of water and accessibility to water."

Following on from last year's USSF, Detroit community groups have launched new programmes aimed at addressing the social problems facing the city.

These include the Detroit Digital Justice Coalition, which harnesses media and communications to help unemployed people develop entrepreneurial skills, and the Detroit Food Justice Task Force, aimed at reconstructing the city's food chain to support more local farmers and provide easier access to healthy food.

More Complex Global Crises in 11th Year

By Mario Osava

RIO DE JANEIRO – Neoliberalism and the attendant financial globalisation were a common enemy that unified and mobilised activists of the most diverse tendencies who founded, ten years ago in Porto Alegre in southern Brazil, the World Social Forum (WSF) as a space to meet, reflect and debate, under the slogan "Another World Is Possible".

But in its 11th year, the WSF is meeting in Dakar, Senegal, at a time when neoliberal, free-market policies stand out less in a world threatened by collapse from a combination of crises: financial, climate change, food and water.

U.S. imperialism, another favourite target of the activists, has seen its economic clout wane while another superpower, China, emerges with its own colonial practices, although without militarism or the export of its belief system and way of life – for now.

The dynamic growth of the emerging economies has pulled hundreds of millions of people out of extreme poverty. But inequality in the world and within countries is still marked, as is the hunger people face on many parts of the planet.

The climate threat is felt in the rising number of people killed and displaced by extreme weather events, and the increasing losses suffered by agriculture.

Finance has a strong destructive force, with 860 trillion dollars in speculative capital circulating around the globe – 13 times global GDP – according to the Bank of International Settlements.

All of which is aggravated by "planetary misgovernance" – the lack of institutions capable of dealing with "global problems," according to Brazilian economist Ladislau Dowbor, who is heading to Dakar to share the ideas of a group of intellectuals who, under the title "Crises and Opportunities", are discussing systemic solutions for the "convergent crises."

The growing concentration of wealth that has left two-thirds of humanity excluded from progress and living on just six percent of global income is not sustainable, said Dowbor, a professor at the Catholic University of São Paulo.

Nor is it possible to continue forward on

this "environmental Titanic," exhausting natural resources, "the soil, the marine life," he added.

The basic document of the group of intellectuals that includes Dowbor, Polish-French "ecosocioeconomist" Ignacy Sachs, and British futurist and evolutionary economist Hazel Henderson, rejects "simplified visions of the social decision-making process," calls for rescuing "the public dimension of the state," and suggests replacing GDP as the main economic indicator, among other recommendations.

The WSF returns to Africa for its eighth global edition just as a popular uprising has toppled the dictatorship in Tunisia and another one is threatening to do the same in Egypt.

...there are calls "to rescue the public dimension of the state"

This year's Forum "will be vibrant, with new people," but it will take place in precarious conditions, "with one-third of the initially projected budget," said one of the founders of the WSF, Cândido Grzybowski, director of the Brazilian Institute of Social and Economic Analysis (IBASE).

In many of the events, for example, there will be no simultaneous interpreters.

Some 50,000 participants were expected, one-third of the total who registered in the last global edition, held in 2009 in the northern Brazilian city of Belém in the Amazon jungle.

Senegal has a population 15 times smaller than Brazil's, said Chico Whitaker, another WSF founder, who explained that 80 percent of participants in these events generally come from the host country.

The Latin American presence will be much smaller, partly due to the financial difficulties faced by non-governmental organisations as a result of the decline in foreign donor funds,

aggravated by unfavourable exchange rates and scarcity of national financing. And air tickets to Dakar are costly, because there are no direct flights from Latin America; flights go through Europe.

The organisational limitations in Dakar reflect the lack of government support, lending credence to the position taken by one Brazilian current of activists who held a thematic forum last year in the northeastern Brazilian state of Bahia and who advocate alliances with progressive governments, to strengthen WSF events and give them a broader impact.

The WSF defines itself as a civil society initiative in which government leaders only participate as guests in events organised by social movements and organisations.

However, most of the global editions, including the five held in Brazil, have received financial support from national or local governments.

Former Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, a guest at previous editions, participated in Dakar as a "member of civil society" in a seminar to mark the Africa and Diaspora Day in the WSF 2011 schedule.

Lula has announced that Brazil's relations with Africa will be a priority in his post-government activities.

For the next unified global Forum, which has been held every two years since 2005 – the others are "polycentric," with different regional events – many Brazilians want to bring the WSF back to its origins in Porto Alegre, while others are pushing for it to be held in Bahia, the state with the largest proportion of people of African descent.

But Europe, another strong candidate for hosting the 2013 edition, is focusing on other approaches, such as attempting to have an impact on the big issues of the moment.

However, it is the new paradigms of "another world" of the future, more than current challenges that are of greatest concern to the founders of the WSF.

"Development that is killing life on the planet is a major problem," said Grzybowski, who ruled out "the green economy" as a solution, saying it is really just "greenwashed capitalism" that does not modify the mechanisms underlying the tragedy.

From Dhaka to Dakar

By Ranjit Devraj

New Delhi – Is it more important to build links with African civil society groups or concentrate on existing networks in the South Asian region?

That is the dilemma before Indian delegates heading for the World Social Forum in Dakar, Senegal, and some who have opted out.

“Both are important,” Amit Sen Gupta of the Delhi Science Forum (DSF) told IPS. “Today, more than ever before, a world reeling from the impact of multiple crises needs alternatives at the global, national and local levels.”

Those attending the 6-11 Feb. event

in Dakar, like Sen Gupta and his fellow activist, D. Reghunandan, have an eye on a meeting there on 10 Feb. aiming to prepare for the South Asia Social Forum scheduled for Nov. 2011 in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

“This does not, however, mean that Indian movements have given up on the WSF,” said Sen Gupta. “Ever since the WSF was held in Mumbai in 2004, India has had a special place in its decade-long chronology and many still argue that WSF 2004 was among the most successful chapters of the WSF.”

So what happened to the special vitality of the Indian movement and the

willingness it showed to work together to build up the WSF?

Sen Gupta told IPS that the situation in India in 2001 – when the WSF movement began – and that in 2011 are very different. “The unity of the Left and Democratic movements stands fractured and this has resulted in lower investment of Indian movements in the WSF process – in India and globally.”

“A fundamental expectation of Indians in Dakar would be that the Indian Left would once again heal the recent fractures and be part of the global voice that challenges neo-liberalism,” said Sen Gupta. “Much of this has to be attended to back in India, but Dakar is an occasion where the need for unity will get more sharply defined.”

Meena Menon, a writer and activist who is attending the Dakar meet, agrees with Sen Gupta, but adds that the fact that there is no strong Left movement in West Africa was also a dampener to Indian groups.

“Of course, African groups are saying that this is precisely why they are hoping for strong Indian participation in Dakar,” she said. “The reality is that had the venue been in South Africa or even in the Maghreb, where Indian groups have linkages, the participation

may have been far stronger.”

However, she added that any linkages that could be forged with African groups in Dakar would be valuable because of commonality of interests in such areas as food security and agriculture.

Like other Indian delegates, Menon is also looking forward to the opportunity to strengthen the Dhaka’s South Asia Social Forum. “There is global relevance to recent events in Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal and the current regime in Bangladesh offers the democratic space to hold the November Forum.”

Gopal Krishna, convenor of Toxic Watch and campaigner against toxic industries, said he could not spare time to attend the Dakar WSF.

“Right now we are following a trade mission from Quebec led by Clement Gignac, economic development minister, that is in India through the week and we will try and prevent it from signing any deal that will enlarge the asbestos industry in India,” he said.

The proposals, Krishna said, reveal the “callous disregard of the Quebec-based asbestos mining companies and Indian asbestos product manufacturing companies towards the health of

Indians”.

Krishna said he was looking forward to attending the Dhaka Forum because “we do need to build regional-level solidarity first” and because there was a “close commonality of issues and approaches”.

According to Sen Gupta, whether regional or global, there is a general sense that the WSF needs to evolve from a platform of debate over “neoliberal globalisation” to one that can provide space for the forging of strong alliances that would be the building blocks of “Another World”.

“While the WSF’s format has seen changes to accommodate these new expectations, it is still a largely untested format in terms of its ability to play the role that is expected of it,” Sen Gupta said.

“Recent revelations that wealthy Indians had stashed away millions of dollars in Swiss banks reinforce the logic that Indian movements need to build up solidarity and challenge neoliberal globalisation,” Sen Gupta said.

“While movements in India are confronting the present government on these issues, the WSF is an occasion to ponder on the need for a much larger unity,” he added.



Kenyans Rekindle Old Flame

By Mary Itumbi

Nairobi – “One of the things we will be taking to Dakar,” says Onyango Oloo, “is [knowledge of] how not to organise a World Social Forum.”

Oloo was the national coordinator of the World Social Forum when it was held in Nairobi in January 2007, and observed firsthand the acrimonious controversy that surrounded the first WSF to be held in Africa.

“At the same time we would like to remember that the World Social Forum was the largest gathering to be held on Kenyan soil in terms of social movements. It ignited a lot of interest, even [from] some movements such as the gay, lesbian, bisexual, intersex movement. They made their first launch, they had the biggest tent in [the Forum venue at] Kasarani... lots of interesting things happened.”

More than 200 people attended a pre-World Social Forum event organised by civil society in Nairobi on Jan. 29, drawn from various organizations that deal with human rights abuses, indigenous people rights, climate change and others.

The event was held at the Ufungamano Hall, on the grounds of the University of Nairobi.

It was aimed at reviving interest from Kenyans in the World Social Forum. The 2007 edition drew criticism for both the highly visible presence of large international agencies and NGOs and high registration fees that kept many poor Kenyans out.

Kenyan volunteers working at the event also complained of mistreatment.

Reflecting, Oloo says that what is needed at the World Social Forum is the strong presence of social movements rather than NGOs.

“Social movements are generally progressive but not most of the time. For instance, [in Kenya] we have the movement of Mungiki that

has millions of members. They do some good things but at times they are involved in dubious, almost criminal, activities. So a social movement in and of itself is not necessarily always progressive, but the ones I am talking about are the progressive movements for social change. Movements of the informal sector, of workers, of youth, of women – those are the kind of movements I am talking about.”

Njoki Njehu is from the Daughters of Mumbi Resource Centre, the hub of a network of mostly women’s autonomous groups working on issues of food sovereignty, gender rights, civic and democratic participation.

She has been attending the World Social Forum since its inception in the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre in 2001. Njehu agrees that momentum was lost after the 2007 Social Forum, but she says the members of her group had their thinking transformed by their participation in the Nairobi WSF.

“They were in a way encouraged to understand that struggle is a way of life. They may not always think of it as struggle, as one is fighting to try and get a bursary for your child, that it is not necessarily about your child but it is about access to education by every child. If you are fighting because somebody is selling illicit brew or bhang [marijuana] in your community or your not getting the services you need because you have a problem, then it’s not just about you, but about the services and the situation in your community.”

Betty Makena Mutugi has been the chairperson of the women’s committee of the Central Organisation of Trade Unions (COTU) women for the last four years. She has been instrumental in pushing for participation in leadership positions by both young and older women in the union, as well as fighting for the rights of women in the workplace. Dakar will be Mu-

tugi’s first World Social Forum.

“When I was called to come to this forum, it was good for me to prepare myself to see what the other groups were doing,” she said. Mutugi will be the only Kenyan representative from COTU but will find many other unionists from across Africa – and beyond – who will join forces to strengthen their common struggles.

“We have a big problem of privatisation and the government is taking advantage of that, saying that there is a problem or crisis. And when they are privatising these companies they are telling us we have to reduce the numbers of workers, to go home, and then when the owners come and buy the company, they bring their own people.”

Mithika Mwenda is the Coordinator of the Pan-african Climate Justice Alliance, and one of the organisers of the pre-World Social Forum.

“As you know, it is quite difficult for all of us to participate [in person]. So we asked ourselves how we can ensure that as many people as possible participate in this process, not necessarily being in Dakar but through the spirit of being

in Dakar. Secondly, we believe that the World Social Forum is a huge opportunity to correct the injustices which has been committed against people for a long time.”

He says that the Jan. 29 meeting captured the spirit of social movements by seeking to harmonise Kenyans across ethnic and class barriers.

“We started asking ourselves, yes we are going, but are we really linking with our colleagues at the national level? What are we taking there?” he said. “The spirit of the World Social Forum is people’s participation. It is to try to see how indigenous people at the very grassroots, how forest communities and poor people, people disabled, youth and all those can participate in the politics in our country and even at continental level.”

As Kenyans head for the World Social Forum in Dakar, they expect to share their experiences, and return home with new strategies and stories of hope that we can borrow from to achieve their goals of a better and more just society, as the World Social forum slogan says, “Another world is possible.”





Gender activists interrogated issues around women's rights in the region. Credit: Abdullah Vawda/IPS TerraViva

“Militarism in Africa Impacts on Women and Children”

By Thandi Winston

DAKAR - One of Africa's leading daughters and feminists, the Nigerian scholar Amina Mama, says militarism is spreading especially in countries like Sierra Leone and Liberia. She says war and conflict are especially affecting vulnerable women and children. Mama was speaking to IPS on the sidelines of the World Social Forum about militarism on the continent and feminist debates at this year's forum. “Women and children have become the casualties of conflicts, whether you call it post-colonial conflict or not, I believe corporate interests have

fueled the conflicts,” she said.

The human rights violations exacted upon women during conflict have been devastating. In a 1999 survey of Rwandan women as part of the Global Fund for Women's (GFW) Militarism Initiative, 39 percent reported being raped during the 1994 genocide. Seventy-two percent said they knew someone who had been raped. In a random sample of 388 Liberian refugee women living in camps in Sierra Leone, three-quarters reported being sexually abused before being displaced from their homes in Liberia. GFW found more than half had experienced sexual violence since being displaced.

“Women and children have become the casualties of conflicts, whether you call it post-colonial conflict or not...”

Approximately 50,000 to 64,000 internally displaced women were targets of sexual violence during Sierra Leone's protracted armed conflict. Mama, who is the founding editor of Africa's first continental feminist scholarly journal, ‘Feminist Africa’, currently chairs the board of the Global Fund for Women, which makes grants to women-led organisations around the world. “There have been changes in the nature of conflict and war in certain parts of Africa,” she says, “These changes are leading to a particular [type of] policing, surveillance and violence against

women. It's been accumulating over time. “Congo is an example, if you trace back the violence and rape, it started during the Belgian colonial period. This was their practice. “And today men have absorbed that culture and misogyny of Western militarism that colonialism has taught them.” Mama is currently working with African women activists in Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Liberia to develop to develop a clearer understanding of the impact of armed conflict on women and children.

Tunisian and Egyptian Revolutions Inspire Delegates



Activists in Dakar are drawing inspiration from the uprisings in Egypt, Tunisia and elsewhere. Credit: Abdullah Vawda/IPS TerraViva

By Thandi Winston

DAKAR - Tunisia's Jasmine Revolution and the popular uprising poised to overthrow three decades of rule by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak have galvanised and inspired delegates at the World Social Forum. One debate that inspired the hundreds who attended it was a talk by a Tunisian who was at the forefront of January's Jasmine Revolution. The 55-year-old Communist party activist spoke at the People to People's Dialogue event, organised by Pambazuka, African People's Dialogue and the Climate Justice Network at the Rosa Luxemburg Centre in Dakar. Fathi Chankhi has been an activist for 30 years. He told delegates at the People to People's Dialogue that Tunisia's revolution was started by the peasants in rural areas. Mohamed Bouazizi, the street vendor who set himself on fire after his goods were arbitrarily confiscated by police on Dec. 17, grew up in a village called Sidi Salah; like so many others, his family moved to the nearby town in search of a better life. Thousands were inspired by his tragic act of defiance, and by the time he died of his injuries on Jan. 4, the frustration he and millions more like him felt had been unleashed with a force that has already toppled one autocratic president, and threatens several more. “In the face of the struggle we are trying to create

the revolution and understand the meanings of the new situation in the country,” Chankhi told the audience. He said that “the [North Africa] region is one of the pillars of the capitalist system, the region is the heart of capitalism, and it was a place for dictators to flourish.” It was the people who stopped this, he said, as they had had enough of dictators. He said the revolution was led by the youth and workers who wanted to be free. “The revolution in Tunisia was the will of the people and the will to be free from dictators.” Audience members, who clapped their hands and shouted “Viva Tunisia!” throughout the talk, were filled with praise for Chankhi. Costa Rican activist Carlos Aguilar said, “This talk was inspirational.” Another activist from South Africa said the revolution in Tunisia and Egypt is an inspiration to all Africans. Virginia Setshedi, from Soweto, said: “We should all learn lessons from it and go back home to organise the workers.” Chankhi said that the people in Tunisia are working together now, but warned that different classes should not fight each other. “The youth are active and the people are working together.” “We hope others in Latin America and Europe can also learn and be inspired by our revolution,” he said. “We walking to a golden future. I'm very happy.”

Les banquiers continuent quand même

Par Julio Goday

BERLIN - Le Forum économique mondial (FEM) est devenu cette année une plateforme pour les banquiers qui cherchent à réaffirmer leur pouvoir traditionnel. Et une fois encore, c'est devenu un forum - à l'opposé du Forum social mondial qui a démarré dimanche, 6 février à Dakar, la capitale sénégalaise.

En effet, au FEM de Davos, en Suisse, les effets néfastes de la mondialisation et les conséquences environnementales de la croissance effrénée ont été mis de côté.

"Ce que nous avons vu à Davos, c'est le retour de l'autosatisfaction du monde des entreprises", a déclaré à IPS, Rainer Falk, expert en mondialisation économique et éditeur du bulletin hebdomadaire d'information basé au Luxembourg 'World Economy and Development' (Economie mondiale et le développement).

"Il est clair que malgré ses conséquences désastreuses pour la stabilité internationale et le bien-être commun, l'idée d'un profit à court terme continue d'être le principe économique directeur au FEM et dans la plupart des grandes entreprises", a indiqué Falk.

Bien que le FEM affirme qu'il est le rassemblement de l'élite économique et politique du monde industrialisé, et en tant que tel de la sagesse mondiale, la vérité embarrassante est qu'il n'a pas prévu la crise financière et économique qui a amené l'économie mondiale au bord de la destruction.

Cette année, le FEM a été de nouveau surpris par les rébellions violentes dans les pays du Maghreb, qui ont conduit au renversement du dictateur tunisien, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, et la fin imminente du gouvernement de Hosni Moubarak en Egypte.

Malgré ces défauts, le FEM est retourné aux affaires comme d'habitude. Au lieu de faire face aux conséquences d'une économie mondiale dérégulée, et plaider pour des contrôles internationaux sur des activités spéculatives dévastatrices, certains participants à la réunion, dans les Alpes suisses, ont appelé à cesser de "taper sur les banquiers", comme l'ont indiqué certains des participants.

Par exemple, Jamie Dimon, directeur général de la banque d'investissement, JP Morgan, a affirmé qu'une raclée contre les banquiers "est une chose terrible à faire". Dimon a expliqué au public à Davos que c'était une "énorme idée erronée" de dire que toutes les banques ont été insolvables au cours de la crise financière actuelle.

"Toutes (les banques d'investissement et sociétés d'investissement) ne sont pas les mêmes, tous les directeurs ne sont pas les mêmes. Nous essayons de



Credit: Abdullah Vawda/IPS

faire de notre mieux tous les jours", a-t-il déclaré.

Dimon, ainsi que pratiquement tous les autres directeurs généraux de grandes banques internationales, se sont également opposés à l'idée d'une réglementation approfondie des marchés financiers. "Je peux reconnaître la nécessité d'opérer des ré

formes après ce qui s'est passé", a déclaré Dimon.

"Mais dire que nous sommes censés de nous baisser et de l'accepter seulement parce que nous sommes des banques - cela n'est pas juste".

D'autres banquiers présents au FEM à Davos ont exprimé des inquiétudes selon lesquelles des déficits publics élevés peuvent contribuer à un renouvellement de la crise financière, et ont appelé à des plans d'austérité serrés et à des réductions massives des dépenses publiques.

Le FEM continue également d'ignorer les contraintes que le réchauffement climatique devrait imposer aux activités économiques.

Au lieu de donner des incitations aux sources d'énergie innovatrices et d'envisager des modèles économiques alternatifs, les discussions au FEM ont touché la question de l'efficacité écologique seulement de façon marginale.

Kerstin Sack, coordinateur allemand du Groupe ATTAC, a déclaré que le FEM n'est pas parvenu à des solutions aux "problèmes urgents de notre époque, tels que la pénurie alimentaire, l'injustice sociale mondiale, et les conflits internationaux sur les matières premières".

Sack a indiqué que le slogan principal du FEM pour le sommet de cette année était trompeur. Le sommet a eu lieu sous la bannière de 'Règles communes pour un nouveau monde'. "Mais les gens qui viennent à Davos ne sont pas disposés à accepter des règles valables pour tout le monde", a-t-il dit à IPS.

Q & A

«On n'a pas besoin de renverser le système capitaliste»

Souleymane Faye s'entretient avec JOSEPHINE OUEDRAOGO, secrétaire exécutive de l'ONG Enda Tiers-Monde, à l'occasion du 11ème Forum social mondial.

DAKAR - Joséphine Ouédraogo est, depuis septembre 2007, la secrétaire exécutive d'Enda Tiers-Monde, une organisation non gouvernementale (ONG) basée à Dakar. Cette ONG veut promouvoir les droits économiques des pauvres, la protection de l'environnement...

Outre l'Afrique, Enda Tiers-Monde est présente en Amérique latine, en Europe et en Asie. A l'occasion du 11ème Forum social mondial (FSM) réuni dans la capitale sénégalaise, du 6 au 11 février 2011, Ouédraogo, sociologue de formation, explique, dans un entretien avec IPS, les enjeux de ce rendez-vous des altermondialistes.

Q: Avez-vous le sentiment que le combat contre la crise économique et écologique a suffisamment impliqué les populations à la base?

R: Je crois que font partie du combat contre la crise économique et écologique les luttes menées depuis très longtemps par des populations organisées à la base. Ces populations, à leur propre échelle, expriment les contraintes qu'elles vivent et souhaitent que les politiques se préoccupent d'elles. Les ONG qu'on voit à la tête des mouvements sociaux, les grandes associations internationales et les réseaux donnent aussi des points de vue et font des propositions. Ces ONG-là sont les relais du combat des pêcheurs, des agriculteurs et d'autres segments professionnels. Elles permettent l'accès de ces associations de base dans les arènes où se prennent les décisions.

Quand on prend l'exemple de ce qui s'est passé à la conférence de l'OMC (Organisation mondiale du commerce) à Cancun, au Mexique, la question du coton a été relayée, pas seulement par des Etats africains et asiatiques, mais aussi par les cotonniers du Mali, du Burkina, etc. Ils étaient là pour échanger leurs points de vue et sensibiliser les décideurs. Evidemment, comme dans tout système de leadership, de combat et

d'expression, on a aussi des associations qui parlent pour elles-mêmes et finissent par s'éloigner de la base.

Q: La gouvernance mondiale est encore dominée par le système capitaliste, à travers des institutions multilatérales - FMI et Banque mondiale en tête. Cette situation donne l'impression que le mouvement altermondialiste n'a pas encore porté ses fruits, après une décennie de rencontres du forum.

R: Il y a eu beaucoup d'acquis qu'on oublie peut-être. Les mouvements altermondialistes, mais aussi des mouvements qui ne font pas formellement partie de la mouvance altermondialiste, ont eu à défendre la même cause. Il y a eu des dénonciations et des démonstrations ont été faites par la société civile pour faire comprendre aux Etats et aux institutions financières internationales que ces programmes d'ajustement structurel (PAS) n'apportent pas des solutions à la pauvreté ni aux échecs des politiques nationales.

Grâce aux réactions des ONG et des associations, la Banque mondiale elle-même a fait son autocritique sur les PAS, au début de la décennie 2000. La Banque mondiale a arrêté ces PAS, même si elle agit autrement que ne souhaitaient ces Etats, ces ONG et ces associations. Il a été reconnu que la recherche absolue des équilibres macroéconomiques et la politique de gestion budgétaire orthodoxe ne résolvent pas le problème de la pauvreté.

Je pense quand même qu'il y a eu certains acquis tout au long des décennies et ce sont des éléments dont on va faire le bilan à l'occasion du Forum social mondial de Dakar.

Q: A votre avis, des pays africains ont-ils connu des succès ou ont-ils été des modèles dans la résolution de la crise économique et écologique?

R: J'ai peur de parler de modèle ou de succès parce que je crois que si un pays est un modèle, c'est certainement sur un domaine. On ne peut pas être un modèle en tout.

Il y a eu, certainement, de fortes avancées sur l'éducation dans certains pays et pas dans d'autres. Certains pays sont des modèles en matière de démocratie. Et souvent, ce ne sont pas les gouvernants qui mènent ces avancées. Ils les conduisent sous la pression de leurs populations.

On ne peut pas parler de modèles que l'on peut reproduire, d'autant plus que les parcours des pays et des sociétés ne sont pas les mêmes partout. Ensuite, à cause de la souveraineté, des Etats se gardent de dire: «Chez moi, ça ne vas. Je vais copier ce qui se fait ailleurs.»

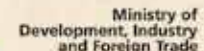
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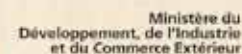
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Signs of Change

Sinais de mudanças



DAKAR – It started with a march through the streets of Dakar, grew with calls for a new global era and is ending with a challenge to activists to take the call for global change beyond the halls of the World Social Forum.

Bolivian president Evo Morales, who took part in the opening march with 70 000 other supporters, called for a programme of social struggle to build a new world: “There must be awareness and a mobilisation to put an end to capitalism and clear away invaders, neocolonialists and imperialists [...] I support the popular uprisings in Tunisia and in Egypt. These are signs of change,” said Morales.

Former Brazilian president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva told delegates liberal doctrines imposed on the world’s poorest countries no longer have a place in modern societies.

“In South America, but above all in the streets of Tunis and Cairo and many other African cities, a new hope is being born. Millions of people are rising up against the poverty to which they are subjected, against the domination of tyrants, against the submission of their countries to the policies of the big powers,” said Lula (See page 5).

The Forum remains a space for open and honest debate. Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade declared himself a supporter of the market economy that most here would reject, and threw down a challenge to participants regarding their engagement with established global institutions such as the United Nations.

“If you who are here, if you had supported this idea, then Africa would already be on the Security Council. Since 2000, I have followed your movement and I still – excuse my frankness – ask myself this question: have you succeeded in changing the world at the global level?”

It’s a challenge that participants in the forum – over 75,000 people from 132 countries taking part in more than 1,200 organised activities – take very seriously. Though unable to be at this year’s forum, Kenyan social justice activist Onyango Oloo, a key part of organizing the 2007 edition, suggested that building of another world is taking place away from the fleeting attention of mainstream media.

“This forum must contribute to changing the world,” said historian Boubacar Diop Buuba, a professor at the Cheikh Anta Diop University.

DACAR – Começou com uma marcha nas ruas de Dacar, cresceu com o chamado por uma nova era global e está terminando com um desafio para os ativistas, de levar este clamor além dos corredores do Fórum Social Mundial (FSM).

O presidente boliviano Evo Morales, que participou da marcha de abertura junto com mais 70 mil apoiadores, fez um apelo para que haja programas de luta social para construir um novo mundo: “Precisa haver conscientização e mobilização para colocar um ponto final no capitalismo e mandar embora invasores, neocolonialistas e imperialistas. [...] Eu apoio o levante popular na Tunísia e no Egito. São sinais de mudanças” disse Morales.

O ex-presidente brasileiro Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva disse aos delegados que as doutrinas liberais impostas aos países pobres no mundo não têm mais lugar na sociedade moderna.

“Na América do Sul, e acima de tudo nas ruas de Túnis e do Cairo, e em muitas outras cidades africanas, está nascendo uma nova esperança. Milhões de pessoas estão se erguendo contra a pobreza à qual estão sujeitas, contra o domínio de tiranos e contra a submissão dos seus países à

política dos grandes poderes”, disse Lula. O FSM continua sendo um espaço para o debate aberto e honesto. O presidente senegalês Abdoulaye Wade declarou ser apoiador de uma economia de mercado que a maioria presente no Fórum rejeitaria, e deixou um desafio aos participantes, no que diz respeito ao engajamento para estabelecer instituições globais como as Nações Unidas.

“Se vocês que estão aqui, se tivessem apoiado essa ideia, então a África já estaria no Conselho de Segurança. Desde 2000, eu segui o movimento de vocês, mas continuo – e me desculpem a franqueza – me fazendo a mesma pergunta: vocês já obtiveram sucesso em mudar o mundo em nível global?”, questionou Wade.

É um desafio que os participantes do FSM – mais de 75 mil pessoas de 132 países realizando mais de 1,2 mil atividades – levaram muito à sério. Apesar de não ter podido ir na edição deste ano do Fórum, o ativista queniano por justiça social, Onyango Oloo, peça fundamental na organização de 2007, sugeriu que a construção de um novo mundo está acontecendo, porém longe da atenção da mídia.



Sociedad civil europea llega fortalecida al FSM

Por Julio Godoy

BERLÍN – Organizaciones no gubernamentales de Europa que luchan contra la globalización llegan al Foro Social Mundial (FSM) de Dakar más fuertes y vindicadas por la crisis financiera internacional.

Ahora esos grupos no sólo obtienen apoyo de trabajadores y campesinos de todo el mundo, sino también de gobiernos que hasta hace no mucho respaldaban la globalización neoliberal y que han cambiado de tendencia en aspectos clave debido a la crisis.

“El apoyo de gobiernos europeos a nuestras demandas básicas, como el impuesto a las transacciones (financieras), constituye un gran motivo de satisfacción”, dijo a IPS Hugo Braun, de la Asociación por la Tasación de las Transacciones Financieras y para la Ayuda a los Ciudadanos (ATTAC). “Pero los gobiernos todavía deben darse cuenta de que la crisis mundial no puede solucionarse con simples declaraciones de intenciones. El sistema no puede ser reparado; el sistema debe ser reemplazado por otro”, dijo Braun.

“Necesitamos un estricto control sobre los mercados financieros, una democratización de la economía, una transferencia de la riqueza a los más altos de la sociedad a las clases más bajas, a una escala mundial”, añadió.

Braun, quien participa del FSM en la capital senegalesa entre el 6 y el 11 de este mes, opinó que el principal objetivo de la reunión debía ser “la búsqueda de los rasgos principales de una sociedad post-capitalista”.

“Un capitalismo impulsado por el lucro no puede solucionar la crisis, sino que es la causa de ésta”, afirmó.

El impuesto a las transacciones financieras especulativas es una de las demandas más emblemáticas de las organizaciones europeas opuestas al neoliberalismo.

El dinero reunido con ese gravamen sería usado para financiar proyectos de desarrollo en África, América Latina y Asia. La idea fue propuesta por el economista estadounidense James Tobin, ganador del premio Nobel.

En 1997 nació ATTAC, con el objetivo de hacer una campaña mundial a favor de la llamada “tasa Tobin”. El grupo es miembro fundador del Foro Social Europeo y del FSM.

El llamado a crear el impuesto acaba de recibir el apoyo del presidente de Francia, Nicolas Sarkozy,

quien prometió agregarlo a la agenda tanto del Grupo de los Ocho (G-8) como del Grupo de los Veinte (G-20).

Este año, Francia coordinará las actividades de ambos foros, que reúnen a las mayores economías del planeta.

Por su parte, el gobierno alemán expresó públicamente su apoyo a la intención de Sarkozy.

El mandatario francés además anunció que su gobierno propondría instrumentos de control contra la especulación en los mercados de alimentos, con el fin de detener el aumento de los precios y garantizar el suministro.

Ante la crisis económica y financiera mundial, varios de los temas debatidos en el FSM los últimos 10 años se han convertido en parte fundamental de las actuales críticas al neoliberalismo, desde el rechazo al libre comercio hasta las denuncias contra la agricultura intensiva y la privatización de los servicios públicos.

“El movimiento altermundista representado por el FSM ha renovado la política contemporánea”, sostuvo el periodista francés Laurent Joffrin, director del periódico Liberation.

Joffrin señaló que la agenda política internacional está ahora dominada por numerosos asuntos que el FSM y sus organizaciones miembro rescataron de la indiferencia, como las dificultades de los trabajadores sin tierra en el Sur en desarrollo, los problemas de la producción industrial de alimentos y la crisis ambiental.

“El FSM... obliga a la izquierda tradicional a revisar sus propias posturas en todos estos temas, incluyendo el comercio internacional, la justicia impositiva, la globalización financiera y los refugiados por el cambio climático”, indicó.

Mientras que durante la primera mitad de la pasada década los gobiernos de países industrializados seguían la vieja máxima de la ex primera ministra británica Margaret Thatcher (1979-1990) de que “no había alternativa” a la globalización neoliberal, el FSM ha insistido desde sus comienzos que “otro mundo es posible”.

La crisis financiera global, provocada por la desregulación neoliberal, y sus consecuencias en toda la economía probaron que la posición de Thatcher era autodestructiva, y que no sólo existen alternativas a la forma en que los gobiernos manejan los mercados financieros, sino que éstas son indispensables.

África absorbe la discusión

Por Thandi Winston y Souleymane Faye*

DAKAR – Los temas centrales que se discuten en el Foro Social Mundial (FSM) de Dakar giran en torno a la confiscación de tierras, las leyes migratorias y los subsidios agrícolas de Europa y Estados Unidos, entre otros problemas que aquejan a África.

“Este foro debe contribuir a cambiar el mundo. Es una oportunidad para que se expresen los representantes de los oprimidos”, señaló el historiador senegalés Boubacar Diop Buuba, profesor de la Universidad Jeque Anta Diop.

“Pedimos que se termine la injusticia en nuestro país, donde el gobierno roba tierras comunitarias. Este foro es una oportunidad para que escuche nuestras quejas”, señaló el trabajador social ghanés Philip Kumah, de Amnistía Internacional.

Realizar el FSM en África es muy importante, remarcó Beverly Keene, de Buenos Aires. “Es una oportunidad de aprender del otro y de analizar el impacto de la crisis internacional y las consecuencias del saqueo de minerales sobre la vida de la gente”, indicó.

La debacle financiera es uno de los principales temas que se discuten en el FSM, que busca alternativas a la “crisis del sistema capitalista”.

Decenas de miles de personas marcharon el domingo por las calles de la capital de Senegal en la inauguración del encuentro con pancartas, entonando cánticos de libertad y tocando el tambor mientras caminaron tranquilamente de las oficinas de la Radio y Televisión Senegalesa hasta la Universidad Jeque Anta Diop, sede principal del encuentro de seis días.

El presidente de Bolivia, Evo Morales, quien participó en la marcha, invitó a sus contrapartes de países pobres a integrarse al FSM.

“Hay que tener conciencia y movilizarse para poner fin al capitalismo y eliminar a los invasores, neocolonialistas e imperialistas. Apoyo el levantamiento popular en Túnez y Egipto. Son signos de cambio”, señaló Morales, ex dirigente sindical de los cultivadores de coca.

“Se necesita resistencia y conciencia. Tiene que haber un programa de lucha social para construir un nuevo mundo”, remarcó.

“Debemos salvar a la humanidad y para ello tenemos que conocer a nuestros enemigos. Los enemigos del pueblo son los neocolonialistas y los imperialistas. Tenemos que poner fin al modelo capitalista y reemplazarlo por otro”, añadió.



El alcalde de Dakar, Jalifa Sall, recibió a los participantes del FSM, pero faltaron otros integrantes del gobierno. El presidente, Abdoulaye Wade se encuentra fuera del país, pero tiene previsto presentarse en una de las actividades junto con su par boliviano.

El FSM se considera un espacio abierto para que todas las personas que se “oponen al neoliberalismo y a un mundo dominado por el capital u otra forma de imperialismo se reúnan e intercambien ideas”.

Para la feminista italiana Sabrina Viche, el FSM también es una oportunidad para interiorizarse de los problemas de las mujeres africanas.

“Vine a Dakar a escuchar a las mujeres que se esfuerzan para alzar su voz. Quiero conocer cuáles son sus luchas y cómo podemos apoyarlas desde el Norte”, indicó.

No basta sólo con conocer, dijo a IPS el sociólogo Raphaël Canet, de la ciudad canadiense de Montreal. “La gente tiene que saber para qué sirve el FSM. Su espíritu radica en los movimientos sociales”, señaló.

“No estoy seguro de que los movimientos sociales vayan a cambiar el mundo en un futuro cercano, pero sé que las gotas de agua terminan convirtiéndose en ríos”, indicó Thierry Tulasne, quien trabaja con el tema migraciones para una organización canadiense.

*Ebrima Sillah y Koffigan Adigbli en Dakar colaboraron en este artículo



Q & A

«Ne pas laisser les organisations parler au nom des migrants»

Souleymane Faye s'entretient avec SARAH KLINGEBERG, membre de la Coordination européenne de la Charte mondiale des migrants adoptée sur l'île de Gorée, au large de Dakar

DAKAR – Sarah Klingeberg, membre de la Coordination européenne de la Charte mondiale des migrants, participe au 11ème Forum mondial social (FSM) à Dakar. Adoptée le 4 février sur l'île de Gorée, près de la capitale sénégalaise, cette charte vise à définir et défendre les droits des migrants dans le monde.

Q: C'est quoi la Charte mondiale des migrants?

R: La Charte mondiale des migrants est un projet né en 2006 à Marseille, en France, à partir d'un groupe de migrants sans-papiers. Ils avaient constaté qu'il existait beaucoup de conventions et de déclarations sur la question de la migration, qui avaient été faites, toutes, par des Etats... Ils avaient constaté que rien n'avait été fait par les migrants eux-mêmes. Il était temps que les migrants prennent la parole et donnent leurs avis sur la question de la migration et sur les droits à respecter par les Etats.

Ils ont décidé d'élaborer cette proposition de charte revendicative sur la situation des migrants. Et à partir de là, ils ont commencé à diffuser cette proposition de charte à travers les forums sociaux. De là, la charte s'est diffusée à Madrid, en Espagne, et dans d'autres villes. Et d'autres migrants ont commencé à participer au processus.

Q: Quels sont les objectifs de la Charte mondiale des migrants?

R: L'idée de base est de redonner la parole aux migrants et ne pas laisser des institutions parler au nom des migrants. Et, à partir de ce premier brouillon sont nées plusieurs autres propositions de charte. La première version était très liée au contexte français. Donc, il fallait une charte valable pour tous les migrants de toutes les parties du monde. A partir de là, on a retenu quatre propositions de charte entre 2006 et 2010. Et a été élaboré en 2010 une synthèse de toutes ces chartes. Et en septembre 2010, elle a été diffusée auprès de tous les groupes ayant participé aux discussions de la charte. Des groupes de travail, au niveau local, ont apporté des propositions. Et une charte finale a été élaborée par consensus.

Q: Combien d'organisations ou d'associations ont-elles signé la Charte mondiale des migrants à Gorée?

R: Le principe de base de la charte, comme je viens de le dire, c'est que ses membres sont des individus, des migrants. Ce ne sont pas des organisations ni des associations qui ont participé à son élaboration. L'approbation a été faite par les migrants. Pour le moment, la charte est un produit des migrants, pas des associations ou des organisations. Des organisations et des associations ont toutefois soutenu le processus.

Maintenant que la charte est approuvée, on est dans la deuxième phase consistant à discuter sur que faire avec cette charte. Est-ce qu'elle doit être signée par les migrants ou les organisations? Est-ce que cette charte doit être portée auprès de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour être approuvée et signée? Tout cela sera décidé à partir de maintenant.

Q: Après son adoption, qu'allez-vous faire immédiatement de cette charte?

R: Pour le moment, il y a encore des échanges à faire. Maintenant, on a commencé la discussion sur ce qu'il faut faire avec et comment procéder. Des gens ont proposé de recueillir des signatures par les migrants d'abord, les organisations de soutien des migrants ensuite, ainsi que les militants et personnes intéressés par la question migratoire. Tout cela sera décidé. Il faut aussi mettre en place un organisme qui puisse coordonner les discussions.

'Ni Dalili za Mabadiliko' Asema Morales wa Bolivia Wakati wa Uzinduzi wa Kongamano



Delegates discuss the future of the World Social Forum. Credit: Abdullah Vawda/IPS TerraViva

DAKAR – Makumi kwa maelfu ya watu waliandamana katika mitaa ya mji mkuu wa Senegal wa Dakar siku ya Jumapili kuashiria mwanzo wa Kongamano la Kijamii la Dunia linalofanyika kila mwaka. Wanaharakati walibeba mabango ya rangi mbalimbali yanayokemea upokonyaji wa ardhi, sheria kali za uhamijaji, ruzuku katika kilimo barani Ulaya na Marekani na masuala mengine mengi. Wengine waliimba nyimbo za uhuru na kupiga ngoma wakati wakiandamana kwa amani kupita katika mitaa kwenye njia inayoanzia karibu na ofisi za shirika la utangazaji la serikali ya Senegal, RTS, na kuishia katika Chuo Kikuu cha Cheikh Anta Diop, ukumbi mkubwa wa mkusanyiko huo.

Rais wa Bolivia Evo Morales, ambaye alishiriki katika maandamano, alikaribisha marais wenzake kutoka nchi maskini kushiriki katika tukio hilo.

“Ni lazima kuwepo na uhamasishaji ili kukomesha uepari na kuwasafisha kabisa wavamizi, wakoloni mamboleo na mabeberu [...] naunga mkono maandamano ya raia nchini Tunisia na Misri. Hizi ni dalili za mabadiliko,” alisema Morales, kiongozi wa zamani wa chama cha wafanyakazi ambaye ni mshiriki wa mara kwa mara katika mikusanyiko ya harakati za kupinga utandawazi.

“Ni lazima kuwepo na upinzani na uhamasishaji. Ni lazima kuwepo na mpango wa harakati za kijamii kujenga dunia mpya,” alisema.

“Ni lazima kuokoa ubinadamu, na kwa kufanya hivyo, ni lazima kuwajua maadui wetu. Maadui wa watu ni wakoloni mamboleo na mabeberu. Ni lazima tukomeshe mfumo wa kibebari na kuweka mfumo mwingine katika nafasi yake. Ni vema kuondokana na matajiri na kubadili dunia.”

Meya wa jiji la Dakar alikaribisha washiriki, lakini wajumbe wengine waandamizi wa serikali ya Senegal hawakushiriki; Rais Abdoulaye Wade mwenyewe yuko nje ya nchi, pamoja na kwamba amepangwa kushiriki katika tukio hilo akiwa na mwenzake wa Brazili baadaye katika wiki.

Kongamano la Kijamii la Dunia linajifasili kama nafasi ya wazi ambapo wale “wanaopingana na uliberali wa kisasa na dunia inayoongozwa na mtaji au aina yoyote ile ya ueberu wanakuja pamoja kutoa maoni yao.”

Katika tukio la mwaka huu lililofanyika mjini Senegal, mijadala mingi itajikita katika kile ambacho waandaji wanakitaja kama mgogoro wa ustaarabu na uepari unaoandama Afrika na maeneo mengine ya dunia.

“Kongamano hili lazima lichangie katika kuibadili dunia. Ni fursa kwa wale wote ambao wanawakilisha wanaokandamizwa duniani kuzungumza sasa,” alisema mwanahistoria wa Senegal Boubacar Diop Buuba, ambaye ni profesa katika Chuo Kikuu cha Cheikh Anta Diop.

Philip Kumah, mfanyakazi wa kijamii nchini Ghana ambaye anafanya kazi katika shirika la Amnesty International, alisema, “Tunataka kukomesha kwa ukiukwaji wa haki katika nchi yetu ambayo serikali inawaibia wananchi ardhi. Kongamano hili ni nafasi kwa serikali zetu kuwa na sikio linalosikiliza malalamiko yetu.”

Kwa mwanaharakati Beverley Keene, kutoka Buenos Aires, kufanya kongamano hilo barani Afrika ni mwanzo muhimu. “Ni wakati wetu kujifunza kutoka kwa wengine na kutathmini madhara katika maisha ya jamii ambayo yametokana na mgogoro wa kifedha na uporaji wa madini ya wananchi.”

Mgogoro wa kifedha ni maarufu miogoni mwa kaulimbiu ambazo zitajadiliwa katika kongamano la siku sita ambalo linatafuta njia mbadala ya kukabiliana na “mgogoro uliotokana na mfumo wa kibepari.”

Mwanaharakati wa jinsia wa Italia Sabrina Viche alisema tukio hilo pia ni fursa ya kusikiliza wanawake wa Afrika. “Nimekuja hapa mjini Dakar kuunga mkono wanawake wote wa Afrika, ambao wanaendeleza harakati za kuhakikisha kuwa sauti zao zinasikika, nataka kusikia kutoka kwao harakati zao ni zipi na jinsi gani sisi wa Kaskazini tunaweza kuwasaidia.”

Lakini haijitoshelezi kukutana tu, Canet Raphael, mwanasosholojia kutoka Montréal, Canada, aliiambia IPS.

“Lazima watu watambue kongamano la kijamii ni nini. Moyo wa Kongamano la Kijamii unatokana na mizizi kutoka vuguvugu la watu katika ngazi ya chini ya jamii.”

Thierry Tulasne, ambaye anafanya kazi inayohusu masuala ya uhamijaji kwenye shirika la Canada alisema, “Sina uhakika kuwa vuguvugu la kijamii linaweza kubadili dunia katika siku za karibuni. Lakini nina uhakika kwamba tone moja la maji linawezekana kuwa mito mikubwa.”



TERRAVIVA



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