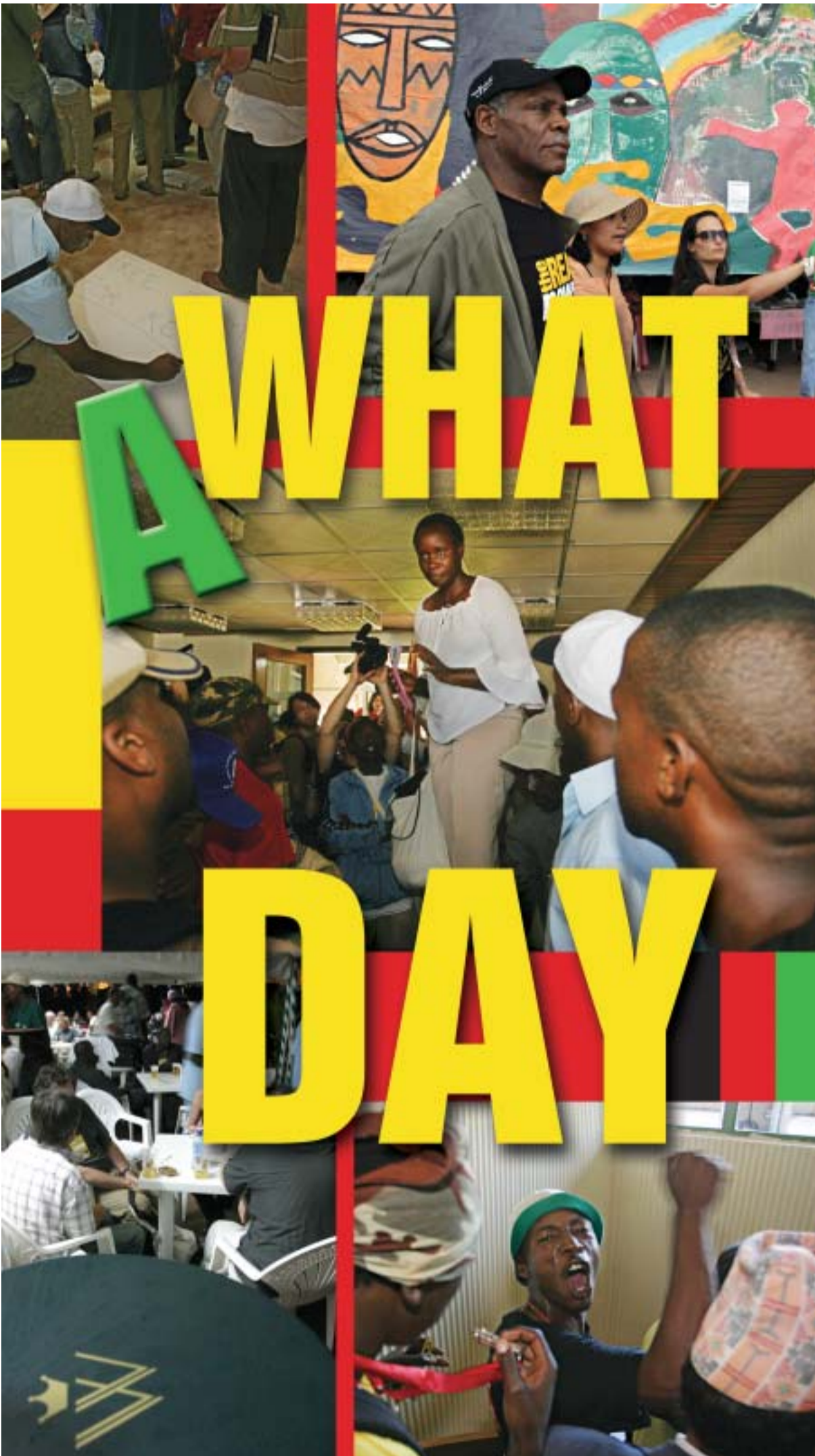




TERRAVIVA

The independent newspaper of the VII World Social Forum, Jan 20-25, Nairobi, Kenya

PAULINO MENEZES



It was no ordinary day at the Forum yesterday. An angry crowd protested, stopped the traffic, and created confusion.

This isn't a meeting of the G-8, where disruptions occur daily. The WSF's not supposed to be like that – it does not lend itself to anarchist protests. The phrases anti-globalisation and civil society define the Forum.

Yet, it was the worthy WSF that found itself at the end of the of the protesters' anger. Some 200 of them from the slums demanded to be let into the stadium, forcing Forum organiser Jose Chacon to order the giant metal gates opened.

The WSF organising committee had reached an agreement Monday night with Nairobi's slums representatives to scrap fees for Kenyans wishing to join the Forum and allow street hawkers to compete against restaurants and bottling companies.

A new young activist star emerged during the short sharp slum uprising: her name is Wangui Mbatia, from the People's Parliament, and she was coherent, calm and convincing.

"We have been congregating and waiting on the roadside for two days explaining to the officials that we cannot afford the fees. It is apparent that unless we use force, we will never participate in the Forum."

"They went to Kibela, and saw the worst part of our poverty. Now we want to come here for the Forum to see the best part of us."

The protesters later disrupted the morning media briefing with their chant of 'Free Everything.'

Most of the action took place around Gate 1, close to where the Forum's privileged hang out – the Windsor café, an extension of a hotel whose owner is none other than John Michuki, Kenya's Internal Security Minister.

This VIP is known in Kenya as 'Kimeendero' (the Crusher), for his alleged role during the British colonial times. More recently, he drew international condemnation for raiding one of Kenya's major national newspapers, 'The Standard'. His explanation for the raid: "If you rattle a snake, you must be prepared to be bitten by it."

One Forum organiser told TerraViva that Windsor is "a Kenyan enterprise that we wanted to showcase at the WSF."

In the evening police intervened during a meeting of Forum participants at Kibagare slum, west of Nairobi, whose residents are facing eviction. Boaz Waruku, a member of the Forum organising committee told TerraViva, "It seems our security agents were lurking close by, and they temporarily arrested two participants. When we challenged the police and asked under what law they were being arrested, they were released."

Yesterday's extraordinary events go to the very heart of what Forum participants are talking about: about the future of this Forum that wants to change the world (see pg3); the need to provide the poorest a space on the international high table, and for anti-poverty policies to be driven by the poor.

Globalising from Below

Are we prepared to disempower ourselves in order to allow those on the frontline of the struggle for survival to drive global change?

Seven years on from the first Forum, there has been much talk of the WSF losing steam and much talk of the global gathering becoming irrelevant. Wherever these discussions go, one thing is clear: the original rallying call of the Forum 'Another World is Possible' is still relevant today.

The time has come to place the global process for change under the leadership of the very people – billions of women, men and young people around the world – who are in the frontline of the struggle for survival.

We have spent the past years letting off steam on the corporate-led neo-liberal globalisation process and the widespread suffering caused by the unjust global political and economic system. There has been a lot of talk and also some joint action.

The time has now come not only to focus on the external actors and the power imbalances out there, but also to have an honest reflection on the way we work; the way the NGO community is organised and the power imbalances therein. It is not simply about power imbalances at a global level between the northern and southern NGOs, and not even about the power imbalances at the national level between NGOs and Community Based Organisations (CBOs). We have to go beyond that and reflect whether as social activists we are doing enough for the empowerment of the affected communities.

When we talk of empowerment, are we also prepared to be disempowered ourselves? When we talk of participation of the poor in our work, are we really listening to and learning from them? Is our work genuinely guided by their experiences and concerns?

No one knows better about poverty than the billions of women, men, boys and girls living in the most deprived conditions.

Social injustice in Nairobi – like in many other places in the world – is clear for all to see. What we need is nothing less than a local-global social transformation. As an optimist; I am quite hopeful that such a transformation can happen. I have seen from my first visit to the Kibera People's Settlement in 2004 how, amid such material deprivation and injustice, there is a wealth of wisdom.

Let the Nairobi WSF be the springboard for a new type of globalisation from below with solidarity across national boundaries and leadership from the communities. Let the Nairobi WSF be the spark that will open the floodgate of their energy and determination. Let the Nairobi WSF be the turning point for global social change.

Aye Aye Win, from Burma, is the Co- Founder and Executive Director of Dignity International

A full version of this column is available at www.ipsterraviva.net

Another World For Africa

The open space character of the World Social Forum fuels a factory of ideas and alternative proposals to capitalist dominion.

For the global civil society, the resistance of Africans, who have been subjected to atrocious violence and human rights violations and the devastation of a world system that serves the major corporations and the imperialist powers, is a source of inspiration and strength to carry forward its mission of building 'other worlds'.

The 7th World Social Forum of Nairobi is a special moment politically and historically. In the face of the severe inequality in the process of globalisation and the logic of terror and the war that feeds it, we continue to expand and create hope like a network of citizens that extends around the planet.

We have the possibility of establishing deep roots in Africa, the cradle of humanity, bringing a new dynamic to the process of the forum. Given that Africa is being neglected by the economic system and the reigning powers, holding the Forum here is a form of radical commitment to the insurgent global civil society.

In its brief history the WSF has shown itself to be an essential site for the emergence of a new political culture. Much of its power derives from its character as an open space, founded in the respect for our diversity and plurality.

The recognition of the principles and the ethical values of freedom of choice and opinion, equality,

solidarity, interdependence, participation and shared responsibility, non-violence, the preservation of common goods and nature – all of this fuels the WSF as a factory of ideas and alternative proposals to the devastating and exclusive capitalist dominion.

Disagreements, confrontations, consensus, and dissent are all part of the environment of the Forum, and all contribute to the development of its innovative political culture.

Does this stir up confusion and uncertainty? Yes, at least among those who are watching from the outside. The results of the forums may not please the dominant political status quo and are unlikely to be adopted by the global markets. The dreams, hopes, and ideas that strengthen the civil society are the benefits reaped by those who participate directly in the effort.

Immersed in the Forum process, we grow stronger.

Now in Africa, we will dismantle the prevailing vision and rhetoric about a lost and hopeless continent. We will learn from Africa's vibrant culture. Holding the WSF in Africa means filling ourselves with the visions, images, analyses, critiques, demands, and proposals of the social movements and the entities of African civil society.

It is a huge challenge but it is also a great opportunity to bring together what has been divided, to unite without denying diversity and thus strengthen each other mutually.

Candido Grzybowski is director of the Brazilian Institute of Social and Economic Analysis (IBASE) and a member of the International Council of the World Social Forum.



Omar Galindo

Through the Looking Glass

Where do we go from here?

The WSF needs a broader audience than just those attending the forums, urged a range of delegates debating its future.

► **Gavin Yates**

The future of the World Social Forum (WSF) itself came under scrutiny at a string of sessions Tuesday with participants making repeated calls for more grassroots involvement and a sharper focus in future years.

There appeared to be a general consensus that the WSF was effective at providing spaces for debate and was useful to attendees, but there was concern that it lacked direction and tended to be too insular.

"We can continue to have these debates in small rooms but if we continue in the same way, these debates will stay in small rooms," Prof Boaventura de Souza Santos from the economics faculty of Universidade



Sentinelli, Lubetkin and Dulci

de Coimbra in Portugal told a meeting.

Mobilising Actions

An Indian representative said the lack of participants from poor communities was harming progress at the WSF. "We need people from our communities to take part. The slum communities I work with are very successful in mobilising actions such as protest marches and I have seen little of that here."

Another speaker from the floor said that one of the main criticisms of the WSF was the fact that the forum had had little resonance in Kenya itself.

"Many of the people outside the gates don't have any idea what we are doing here," she said. "That must change if we are to move forward."

Emira Woods, a Liberian national who works for the Institute of Policy Studies in Washington DC, argued for direct engagement with governments and institutions, saying "I have meetings on Capitol Hill (the home of the United States Congress) and sometimes it's like banging your head against a wall but this is not an 'either or' situation. Grassroots campaigns, national campaigns and global campaigns can influence government."

Focused

Hilary Wainwright, a British progressive intellectual who has attended every Social Forum, said the WSF had been effective in many ways.

"It has helped to destabilise the neo-liberal consensus of the 1990s; and other events such as the Seattle protests (At the World Trade Organisation meeting in 1999) have shown that alternatives are possible."

She thought that the event itself could be more focused. "It would be useful to have a 'sussed' press strategy to get the messages out to the wider world. I know this is difficult as we do not currently have a way of ensuring effective representation at the WSF and there isn't a structure of accountability."

However, two government ministers had words of praise for the Forum.

Luiz Dulci, Minister of the Presidency from Brazil, said, "The WSF is a big political innovation both in shape and content. It has produced results, sometimes they might not be visible but they are real. I believe strongly that the WSF will continue to produce results."

And Patrizia Sentinelli, Italian vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, said it was "healthy that there is a connection between civil society and government."

The debate on the future of the movement and the WSF will no doubt rage for some time to come but with no forum planned for next year and 2009 still hanging in the balance, activists from around the globe will be keen to see a resolution soon.

Hollywood Star Backs 'Voices of Dissent'

► **Zarina Geloo**

Hollywood star Danny Glover joined other peace activists in Nairobi Tuesday in issuing a plea to civil society to fight back and reclaim space lost to increasingly authoritarian governments emboldened by the War on Terror.

Glover, speaking in a panel discussion at the WSF, said there has been "a slow closing of voices of dissent" since the 9/11 terrorist attack and the invasion of Iraq.

"Civil societies are crucial to democracy. Right now the space for their voice is slowly closing up and we see this especially since the so-called War on Terror and also since 9/11. Organisations need to address this problem and reclaim their space."

The panel, organised by CIVICUS, an international alliance citizen's participation, was on 'the war on terror and how it is threatening civil society.' Speakers said anyone opposing the Iraq war was considered a traitor in the US.

"This has had a chilling effect on discussions in civil society, it has emboldened the right wing and made people afraid to speak out. Alternative voices have been drowned in the interests of supposed national interest," American peace activist Jody Williams said.

Glover argued that the erosion of democracy had its roots in racism. He gave the example of America where the incumbent administration closed off voices of dissent ostensibly to fight terrorism, but in fact to take away and control the rights of people.

"We would never have heard about how the black people in New Orleans were suffering after Hurricane Katrina. It would have been swept under the carpet because the people were black and poor. It was only because it became a national issue and foreign media was covering it that the government began to rouse itself to do something."

A menu of protest as delegates count the cost

► **Qurratul-Ain-Tahmina**

Hunger and thirst at the World Social Forum are costly. And it becomes costlier the closer you get to the main events.

The ever-buzzing Windsor Sideshow restaurant owned by Kenyan minister John Michuki is one of the very few eateries allowed inside the boundary fence. It is also the costliest.

There are more than 50 food suppliers at the WSF and the majority of them have been designated spaces outside the boundary without any clear signage to mark the food-court.

A half-a-litre bottle of water, free from the tap and about Ksh22 at a local supermarket, costs between Ksh25 on the outskirts of the WSF venue and up to Ksh100 from the Windsor Sideshow.

A Windsor baguette is Ksh400, while downtown it would cost between Ksh50 to Ksh100. A meal of rice and chicken, vegetable or beef at Windsor is Ksh400.

The food-court offers a buffet with six to eight dishes at Ksh300 or 400. Bread and cakes are

available with the vendors at less than Ksh50.

Service with a smile

Monica Cordova from the USA did not know about the food-court until Monday. "There is no sign and nobody told us. Here you get better food, better prices and full service with a smile," she says – adding that they were outraged at the discrimination in allocating space.

"We each paid Ksh33,000 for four days of doing business," says David Nakhabi. "But they placed us far away. That place is like being in the bush."

Nakhabi and a few others moved their stalls closer to the boundary fence on Monday. On Tuesday, security tried to send them back three times.

"We are not moving," said Nakhabi.

Another vendor, who did not want to be named, said: "We never knew that we would not have space within the venue. Nobody comes this far away to eat."

Since Tuesday morning, entry to the WSF is free for all Kenyans. But, not food though.

Paulino Menezes



Human Rights Cities: a model for a new world

At least 15 cities and communities spread across the world are being rebuilt and reordered by their own residents.

► **Gavin Yates**

From Argentina to Senegal via India, Mali and Austria, a new model for community empowerment has begun to emerge.

From its earliest beginnings in Rosario, Argentina, to newer developments here in Kenya at the 150,000 strong Korogocho slums of Nairobi, people are coming together to ensure that their basic human rights are upheld.

In Human Rights Cities, residents demand their basic human rights through ad-

vocacy, activities and awareness. At the World Social Forum on Tuesday, representatives from Human Rights Cities came from Rwanda, Ghana and Kenya to share their experiences of this way of living.

Improving slums

A representative from a Korogocho youth group said that before residents proclaimed that they would be a Human Rights City, the experience for the slum-dwellers was a harsh one: "People were being robbed for their clothes which were sold almost from

their backs. But now people can walk at night, business is starting to grow and investment is coming in."

This experience of people reclaiming

their communities from lawlessness has been replicated across the globe with one participant saying: "If you learn your human rights then you can claim them. If you do not you cannot go forward."

The concept of Human Rights Cities was formed by the People Movement for Human Rights Learning (PDHRE) based in New York. As of 2005, there were 15 Human Rights Cities and communities in 11 countries, including a capital city – Accra, Ghana.

Individual projects have now taken on lives of their own and are completely self-determined.

A model for success

Raymond Atagobo is the Ghanaian representative at the WSF and he told the audience of the success of the four projects in his country particularly in terms of citizen advocacy. "When there are legal problems sometimes you have to use a lawyer but through our city of human rights we act as a community and seek justice. You can depend on the power of the community. Recently 100 local people went to court and through numbers the application was granted."

Kathleen Modrowski from the PDHRE told IPS TerraViva that she believed that the Human Rights Cities project was a model for success.

"It really is creating a new dimension ... in Rosario in Argentina we all know of the repression where people disappeared. Now people there know that human rights are our only option."

Even in Washington DC in the United States a City of Human Rights is being established. Modrowski explained why: "In Brooklyn NYC a young African-American has a 60 per cent chance of going to jail but only a 22 per cent chance of graduating high school. Life expectancy is 47 years old for men."

Even in the so-called 'Land of the Free' it appears that active human rights is starting to become an essential for survival.

Tackling Poverty in the North

► **Qurratul-Ain-Tahmina**

Hurricane Katrina awoke people to the "racist, exploitative, pro-rich and uncaring nature" of the US government, believes Malcolm Suber of the People's Hurricane Relief Fund (PHRF) in the USA.

PHRF believes that the federal and local government "criminally failed the black survivors of Katrina" after the August 2005 disaster.

"The people's response to the survivors has been tremendous but

the political response was abhorrent," Suber told a small but attentive audience.

PHRF was formed after the disaster by a group of community, labour and cultural leaders to aid survivors. "Our task is to organise our people so that we can return to New Orleans," said Suber. "And make the government follow the UN standards for rehabilitating internally displaced people."

Nearly 70 percent of the post-Katrina population of 500,000 were black. Of these, more than 30 percent live in poverty according to unofficial

statistics. Some 280,000 residents – 220,000 of them black - are still displaced all over America.

So far, \$100 billion have been allocated for restructuring the city, said Suber, but reconstruction has been given to a handful of private developers.

And government has closed the five housing projects which mostly sheltered the black population: "The government's vision is to have a whiter and richer New Orleans."

Sheikh Ahmed from Kenya said there were no such things as natural disasters: "Disasters are made by man. We cannot

believe that America can't tackle this."

"We in the North take inspiration from the South," Suber told Terra Viva after the workshop. "I feel the WSF should now take up the issues of poverty and militarization in the rich northern countries."

He called for support for an international tribunal that PHRF is arranging jointly with three other US organisations on the second anniversary of the disaster. Based on people's testimony, the tribunal will try the US government on charges of human rights violation and atrocities.

Tax Justice Network

Stop Looting Africa's Resources

► Zarina Geloo

For every one pound that flows into Africa in the form of loans and aid, eight pounds flow out of the continent into offshore bank accounts through corrupt and criminal activities. Now, the Tax Justice Network, an international NGO, is homing in on the looting of Africa's resources as part of its development campaign.

Speaking at the World Social Forum (WSF) ahead of the launch on Tuesday of the Tax Justice Network for Africa, Kenyan coordinator Alvin Mosioma said African resources were currently being siphoned off into tax havens and wealthy northern jurisdictions with the collusion of some of the world's most powerful corporations and wealthy banks.

It was, he said, "a continent-wide theft of extraordinary proportions".

Collusion

"Tax havens and capital flight means that Africa's wealth is flowing to bank accounts in Monaco, Switzerland, Jersey and London with the collusion of some of the world's wealthiest countries and companies."

Mosioma said research had

A new campaign has been launched to stop "a continent-wide theft of extraordinary proportions".

shown that the continent was a net creditor to the rest of the world, with about 30 percent of sub Saharan Africa's GDP being moved offshore.

He said Europe was a magnet for criminal funds and money launderers because of the country's secretive banking arrangements.

According to the Tax Justice Network, about £25 billion flowed into Africa in aid and loans in the last decade, while an estimated £200 billion flowed in the opposite direction – to British and other Northern banks through corruption, money laundering and other criminal means. London banks were said to hold \$6 billion from Kenya and Nigeria alone.

Banking Secrecy Laws

A United Nations report estimated \$800 billion was held in Britain's tiny offshore islands. In

March 2006, bank deposits from third world countries in Jersey alone stood at nearly \$348 billion – up from \$17 billion in 1980.

Vitus Azeem from the Tax Justice Network in Ghana said Third World governments were often pressured by the MF and World Bank to cut corporate tax for multi-nationals. He cited the example of Zambia which had signed away mining rights for a paltry 0.06 percent in royalties (the world average is three percent), no social obligations and tax free concessions for 20 years.

Azeem said the Network would focus on, among others, dismantling banking secrecy laws, stop trade mis-invoicing – where countries were not given the correct prices for goods quoted on the international market – and stopping tax competition where countries were encouraged to reduce their taxes for multi-nationals in return for foreign aid.

Nobel Women's initiative

What makes for World Peace?

► Martin Adhola

Three Nobel Peace Prize Laureates on Tuesday hit out at the world's superpowers for their increasing ineffectiveness in promoting world peace and equitable resource distribution. And regional superpower South Africa was lambasted for using its vote at the Security Council to stifle democracy in Burma.

Speaking at a panel discussion on the role of women in building a better world, Prof Jody Williams, American winner of the Peace Prize in 1997 for her work on the landmines campaign, said South Africa's behaviour was appalling: "It's shameful that the South African government could use their first vote at the Security Council to stifle democracy in Burma that is under military rule; where people are suffering and being degraded the way they went through the apartheid era."

Williams was referring to the South African government's recent vote – with Russia and China – against a UN resolution that condemned Burma's injustices to its people.

Iranian rights activist Sharin Ebadi, winner of the prize in 2003, said that despite human rights violations in Iran, America had no right to interfere with Iran's nuclear programme.

"The people of Iran have to arm themselves with two swords – one to fight the Americans who are trying to impose their will on them and the other to fight for their rights within Iran that are being trampled on by the government," she said.

According to Ebadi, peace in the world would only come if the world put in more money into education and health.

"If we increase the sums that we spend on education and health, rather than the enormous budgets that we have on military equipment, then the world would be a better place to live in."

Kenyan environmentalist Wangari Mathai, the winner in 2004, said that global super powers should ensure that there is equitable distribution of resources in the world.

"Until we see equitable distribution of resources in the world we will never know world peace," she said.



Paulino Menezes

Call to Reform Global Bodies

► Hilmi Toros

Fresh calls have gone out for fundamental reforms of international institutions in favour of "democratic governance of globalisation" and "the promotion of more equitable development and respect for cultural, natural and gender diversity".

The call is made in the Manifesto of the World Campaign for In-Depth Reform of the System of International Institutions – a platform supported by a group that includes Danielle Mitterrand, social activist and wife of the late French President; Federico Mayor, former UNESCO head; Samir Amin of the Forum du Tiers Monde; Kumi Naidoo, Secretary-General Civicus; Sara Longwe of the African Women's Development and Communication Network; and Hassen Lorgat of

SANGOCO (a South African NGO Coalition) and Transparency SA.

Corporate fundamentalists

The group also calls for the establishment of mechanisms to enable the world's citizens and civil society organisations to achieve direct representation and participation in the global decision-making processes.

Longwe told a WSF gathering that the current UN system is run by "corporate fundamentalists" and recent changes were a mere "mopping up" operation in the face of past errors rather than genuine reforms.

The group also aims to have global multilateral institutions – such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organisation – to be integrated

within the United Nations. It therefore stressed the need for "a stronger and more democratic" UN to put an end to social and economic imbalances.

The campaign to reform the system of international institutions, which began in 2006 and is to run until 2009, also has the support of American writer-activist Noam Chomsky, Colombian Nobel Laureate Gabriel Garcia Marquez, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson; former President of Portugal Mario Soares and former UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali.

Economic Apartheid

Reforms at the UN system have so far been confined to re-structuring of the

United Nations secretariat in New York and continuing changes in UN agencies, but have shied away from drastic measures such as giving a formal role in decision making to civil society groups.

Kumi Naidoo of South Africa called for an end to "the system of global economic apartheid."

The IMF and World Bank, he said, were part of the same international system with similar voting structures weighted in favour of rich countries.

"Africa does not want anything special. What it wants is what ordinary people everywhere want – whether in Asia, Africa or Latin America and even Europe – an end to the system of global economic apartheid."



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Mabadiliko

Mwito kufanyia mabadiliko mashirika ya ulimwengu

► Hilmi Toros

Mwito mpya umetolewa kwa mashirika ya ulimwengu kufanywa mabadiliko ili kuwa na “maongozi ya kidemokrasia” na “kuiimarisha usawa wa maendeleo na wakati huo kuheshimu utamaduni na jinsia”.

Chini ya manifesto ya kampeini ya dunia kuhusu mabadiliko ya kina na mifumo ya taasisi za kimataifa, mwito ambao umeungwa mkono na kundi linalojumuisha Danielle Mitterrand mke wa aliyekuwa Rais wa Ufaransa, Federico Mayor aliyekuwa msimamizi wa UNESCO, Samir Amin wa *Forum du Tiers Monde*, Kumi Naidoo, katibu Mkuu wa Civicuss, Sara Longwe kutoka mtandao wa *African Women's Development and Communication* na Hassen

Lorgat wa SANGOCO (ambalo ni shirika la Muungano wa mashirika yasiyo ya kiserikali Afrika Kusini) na shirika la Transparency la Amerika Kusini.

Wajibu wa mashirika

Shinikizo hili ni mwito wa kuanzishwa kwa taratibu ili kuwezesha watu duniani na mashirika ya wanaharakati wa kijamii kushiriki kikamilifu katika taratibu kuhusu maamuzi yanayohusu dunia.

Longwe aliarifu mkutano wa WSF kwamba, mfumo wa sasa wa Umoja wa Mataifa unasimamiwa chini ya “misingi ya kimashirika” na kwamba mabadiliko ya hivi karibuni yalikuwa tu ni “kufunika” makosa yaliyopita badala ya kuleta mabadiliko halali.

Shirika hili linanua kuwa na mashirika ya pamoja ya kidunia kama vile Benki

ya dunia, Shirika la Kimataifa la Utoaji msaada na shirika la Biashara Ulimwenguni na kujumishwa ndani ya umoja wa Mataifa. Kundi hili linahimiza haja ya Shirika la Umoja wa Mataifa “thabiti na demokrasia zaidi” ili kumaliza ukosefu wa usawa katika jamii.

Kampeini ya kufanyia mabadiliko mfumo wa taasisi za kimataifa iliyoanza mwaka wa 2006 na kutazamiwa kumalizika 2009, tayari imeungwa mkono na miongoni mwao mwandishi Noam Chomsky, mshindi wa tuzo la Nobel Gabriel Garcia Marquez, aliyekuwa Kamishina katika shirika la Umoja wa Mataifa linaloshughulikia wakimbizi Mary Robinson, aliyekuwa Rais wa Portugal Mario Soares na Boutros Boutros Ghali aliyekuwa katibu mkuu wa Umoja wa Mataifa.

Acheni kuiba Raslimali za Afrika!

► Zarina Geloo

Kwa kila pauni moja inayoingia Barani Afrika kwa njia ya mkopo au msaada, Pauni nane zinatoka nje na kuhifadhiwa katika benki za kigeni kupitia ufisadi na shughuli za uhalifu. Kwa sasa, mtandao wa Ushuru na haki (Tax Justice Network) unaonya kuhusu wizi wa raslimali Barani kama njia moja ya kuendeleza juhudi zake.

Akiongea wakati wa kongamano linaloangazia maswala ya kijamii siku ya Jumanne kabla ya kuzinduliwa kwa mtandao wa Ushuru na haki kwa Bara la Afrika, mratibu wa mradi nchini Alvin Mosioma alisema kwa wakati huu, Raslimali Barani Afrika zimekuwa zikiibwa kupitia ushuru na mikataba kwa ushirikiano na baadhi ya watu mashuhuri duniani na benki tajiri. Alisema “huu ni wizi mkubwa wa raslimali za Bara”.

Njama

“Ushuru mkubwa unamaanisha kwamba raslimali za Bara zinahamishwa na kuhifadhiwa katika akaunti za benki huko Monaco, Uswizi, Jersey na London kupitia njama zinazoendelezwa na baadhi ya mataifa na makampuni tajiri.”

Mosioma alisema uchunguzi unadhihirisha kwamba, Bara hili ni mkopaji mkuu duniani huku asilimia 30 ya kiwango cha ukuaji wa uchumi Kusini mwa jangwa la Sahara kikihamishwa kwenda nje. Alisema Bara Uropa limekuwa mhifadhi mkuu wa hazina na ufujaji wa pesa kutokana na njama za siri za benki.

Kwa mujibu wa mtandao wa Tax Justice, karibu Pauni Milioni 25 ziliingia barani Afrika kwa njia ya ufadhili na mikopo huku takriban Pauni bilioni 200 zikihamishwa kwenda Uingereza na benki zilikoza Kaskazini kupitia ufisadi, ufujaji na njia nyingine za uhalifu. Benki za jiji la London zilikisiwa kuhifadhi Dola Bilioni 6 kutoka Kenya na Nigeria.

Kwa mujibu wa Ripoti ya Umoja wa Mataifa, inakisiwa kwamba Dola Bilioni 800 zilikuwa zimehifadhiwa katika kisiwa kidogo nchini Uingereza. Mnamo Machi 2006, Hazina ya benki kutoka mataifa yanayokua huko Jersey ilikuwa na Dola Bilioni 348 kutoka Dola Bilioni 17 mwaka wa 1980.

Vitus Azeem kutoka mtandao wa Ushuru na haki wa Ghana anasema serikali za mataifa yanayokua zilikuwa zikipokea shinikizo kutoka Benki ya Dunia kupunguza ushuru wa makampuni kwa manufaa ya mataifa ya kigeni. Alitoa mfano wa taifa la Zambia ambalo lilikuwa limetoa haki za uchimbaji madini kwa asilimia 0.06 kama dhamana (kiwango cha wastani duniani ni asilimia 3), bila masharti ya kijamii wala kutoza ushuru kwa miaka 20.

Azeem anasema mtandao ungependa kuangazia mambo kadhaa mojawapo ikiwa kuvunjilia mbali mikataba ya siri ya benki, kusimamisha udanganyifu wa bidhaa ambapo mataifa hayakuwa yakiarifiwa vyema kuhusu bei kamili katika masoko ya kimataifa na wakati huo kusimamisha ushindani wa ushuru ambapo mataifa yanahimizwa kupunguza ushuru kwa maslahi ya mataifa ya nje chini ya kisingizio cha kupokea msaada.

Wazo la wanawake washindi wa tuzo la Nobel

► Martin Adhola

Siku ya Jumanne, wanawake watatu washindi wa tuzo la Nobel walishutumu mataifa yenye nguvu duniani kutokana na kutowajibika kwao vyema kuleta amani duniani na kutoshughulikia usambazaji sawa wa raslimali. Wakati huo, Afrika Kusini ambalo ni taifa linaloongoza barani Afrika Afrika kimaendeleo, lilishutumiwa kwa kutumia kura zake wakati wa mkutano wa kamati ya usalama kuzamisha demokrasia huko Burma.

Akizungumza wakati wa mazungumzo kuhusu wajibu wa wanawake kuwa na ulimwengu bora, Profesa Jody Williams mshindi wa tuzo la amani la mwaka wa 1997 aliloshinda kutokana na kampeini zake kuhusu migodi alisema kitendo cha Afrika Kusini kilikuwa ni cha kusikitisha. “Ni aibu kwamba serikali ya Afrika Kusini imetumia sauti yake wakati wa mkutano wa kamati ya usalama kuzamisha demokrasia nchini Burma, taifa liliko chini ya utawala wa kijeshi ambako watu wanatabika na kushushwa hadhi kama ilivyokuwa wakati walipokuwa chini ya utawala wa ubaguzi”

Williams alikuwa akizungumzia kuhusu kura ya hivi majuzi ya Serikali za Afrika Kusini, Russia na China kupinga uamuzi wa Umoja wa Mataifa ambao ulishutumu ukiukaji wa haki wa serikali ya Burma kwa raia wake.

Mwanaharakati wa haki za kibnamu kutoka Iran Sharin Ebadi ambaye pia ni mshindi wa tuzo mwaka wa 2003 alisema mbali na ukiukaji wa haki za kibnamu nchini Iran, taifa la Amerika halikuwa na haki kuingilia kati mpango wa taifa hilo kutengeza bomu la nuklea.

“Watu wa Iran watajhami kwa visu



Sharin Ebadi, Kenneth Kaunda na Prof Wangari Maathai

viwili-cha kwanza kupiga Wamarekani wanaojaribu kulazimisha nia yao kwao na cha pili kupigania haki zao nchini Iran ambazo zinaingiliwa na serikali” akasema.

Kwa mujibu wa Ebadi, amani duniani itawadia tu endapo pesa zitatumika kutoa huduma za masomo na Afya.

“Tukiongeza mchango wetu kwa masomo na afya, badala ya kutumia bajeti kubwa kwa vifaa vya kijeshi, basi

dunia itakuwa mahali bora pa kuishi”

Mwanaharakati wa mazingira kutoka Kenya Profesa Wangari Maathai ambaye pia ni mshindi wa tuzo la Amani la Nobel la mwaka wa 2004 alisema mataifa makubwa duniani yanafaa kuhakikisha kwamba kuna usambazaji sawa wa raslimali.

“Hadi tutakaposhuhudia usawa katika usambazaji wa raslimali duniani, hatutawahi kushuhudia amani,” akasema.

PAULINO MENEZES

Curing Social Ills: Have Faith in Faith?

If the World Social Forum (WSF) offers any and every alternative cure to all social ills, how about having a bit of faith in faith?

► Hilmi Toros

“Religion power” is in full force at this forum - its tents far bigger than any other groups. Their membership ranges from the Caritas Ecumenical Platform with 1,000 activists present representing over 300 Christian relief and social organisations to Franciscan and Paulines Sister of the Roman Catholic Church.

For it is in a multitude of steaming tents run by faith-based groups that crucial issues -ranging from good governance to peace building or poverty and HIV/AIDS - are being freely debated. These issues reflect the traditional concerns and activities of churches in social issues across the globe, particularly in Africa.

At the same time, why not a bit of religious message? It's a touchy subject, even in Africa where evangelism thrives and diverse religious groups vie to hold their flock and to add more.

“Religious groups are doing a good job in tackling social problems,” says Sylvia Borren, Executive Director of Oxfam Netherlands and a noted expert on global social issues. “But my concern is whether they are also selling their religious message.”



Paulino Menezes

Defending the Poor

“Religion is important in solving social problems,” says Elizabeth Jensen of Caritas International, a major Roman Catholic relief agency. “It gives you a platform. It commits people.”

Jensen says evangelical work is not a part of the group's social and charitable mission. One visible sign is a quote from the Bible, printed on the group's booklet that, in fact, could be acceptable to many: “...speak out and judge fairly, defend the rights of the poor and needy! Proverbs 31:9.”

Sister Sheila Kinsey of the Franciscan order from the United States finds social work and spreading the Gospel compatible. “We tell the message of the Gospel in our work,” she says, “but there is no coercion. We just let the people know.”

Intimate connection

Comboni Sister Teresita Cortes Acuirre of the Philippines freely refers to the Gospel as she recounts her social work for the poor in Kenya, since there is an “intimate connection” between the two.

Paulines Order Sister Stephanie deals with HIV/AIDS. She says: “They know what we stand for and we help all.” Hers is to advocate fidelity in marriage, ab-

stinence and spiritual assistance to heal the stricken.

A rare condom use would be permissible in case one partner in a marriage is stricken with AIDS, she says.

Borren's view is that religious teachings put women in a “subordinate position” denying some rights including her professed same-gender preference.

At the tent of the Franciscan Centre for Missionary Animation, they are selling T-shirts reading: “Behavioural Change is The Weapon for a Better World. Stick to it.” At a mere \$5, it is not a best-seller.

Activists from other religions were not in evidence at the forum. But religion is recognised as a key force in social life and transformation.

The force of religion was evident in the collapse of the Soviet Empire and the communist system in Eastern Europe in the 1980s and 1990s. The spark that began the chain of events dooming the communist system is traced to Pope John Paul II, who put his church firmly behind the free trade union movement in Communist Poland.

That may have been religion power's answer to the memorable remark by Soviet dictator Josef Stalin, who once questioned its power by asking how many divisions the Pope had.

Interview Q. & A.

Brazil Prepared to Support International WSF Fund

Funding is the single most relevant backstage issue at the WSF. Had Nairobi 2007 been properly funded, perhaps it would not have been necessary to see a cellphone company sponsoring an event which is denouncing multinationals. TerraViva spoke with Brazil's Presidency Minister, Luiz Dulci, on this and other issues.

► Alejandro Kirk

TV. The Kenyan poor rebelled this morning against WSF fees and high prices at Kasarani. Would Brazil join in supporting an independent fund for WSF gatherings?

LD. Strictly respecting the WSF's autonomy and if the Forum's coordinators ask on their own initiative, we certainly would be prepared to cooperate, just like we have cooperated financially with Brazilian social movements.

TV. Do you agree with the Forum's fees for participation?

LD. I believe that a fee was established precisely because the Forum is self-contained and autonomous. All participants here are poor. There are no rich people that I know of. Such is the way the Forum was conceived and I find that excellent.

TV. What is your assessment of this 7th Forum?

LD. The WSF is undoubtedly the world's largest civil society event and it has consolidated itself over the years. Here it has been proved that the Forum can take place anywhere, successfully, even in countries with less financial resources.

TV. Were there any doubts about that?

LD. There were doubts, prejudices. I had heard that it would be a failure; that nothing would work. And it is not like that. There are plenty of participants, meetings are taking place, it is a success and that should be recognised. This morning's events prove that, like in all Forums, the poor are eager to participate. That in no way diminishes its success.

TV. What should be the relationship between progressive governments and the Forum?

LD. The Forum's strength comes from its autonomy from political parties and governments, and it must stay that course. The social movements have become a key political actor in the world scene and have changed the international political environment in a positive sense. Its most precious treasure is autonomy and independence.

TV. Why is President Lula attending Davos and not Nairobi?

LD. It has never been possible for our President to attend the WSF outside Brazil. For several reasons: it is not easy to have him travel here when it has not been possible for him to call on a state visit to Kenya. But Lula is a historical supporter of the Forum, a total supporter.

TERRAVIVA



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