



Emerging Voices

International Institute for Journalism
Alumni Report on Development Policy in the Light of the
German Twin Presidency of the European Union and the G8
2007

Internationales Institut für Journalismus
Alumni-Berichterstattung über die deutsche
Doppelpräsidentschaft der Europäischen Union und G8
2007



Internationale Weiterbildung und Entwicklung gGmbH Capacity Building International, Germany

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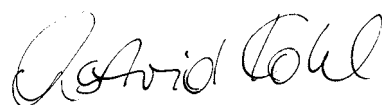
PREFACE

It was about gender, peace and security. They talked about good governance, investment and growth. They raised the question how women, especially African women, could be encouraged to participate in the political and economical life and the general development of their countries. In the end the overall theme of this conference may be summed up with the now well-known words by the academic and missionary, James Kwegyir Aggrey, born in 1875 in what is today Ghana: "If you educate a man you simply educate an individual, but if you educate a woman, you educate a family" – a quotation cited by the editor-in-chief of the influential Ghanaian Times, Ajoa Yeboah-Afari, in an article about the conference: "Women's Economic Empowerment as Smart Economics: A Dialogue on Policy Options".

This conference took place in Berlin in February and was the overture to a series of high-caliber events organised by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development in the first half of 2007. The International Institute for Journalism (IJ) of InWEnt – Capacity Building International, Germany, took this as an opportunity to invite numerous interested journalists from Africa and Asia to Germany, with the chance to report back on the activities and initiatives of the Ministry and of German and international cooperation on issues of development. The aim: The Africa agenda of the German twin presidencies of the EU and G8 should be noticed and discussed particularly in those countries where partnership and cooperation are supposed to have an impact and contribute to change.

20 IJ-Alumni – who had taken part in training programmes on reporting economics, politics and on environmental issues in previous years – came to Berlin and Bonn to get first-hand knowledge about globalisation and its grassroots effects. And they found interested and open VIPs from the political and economic arena, no matter where they went: whether to the meeting of the EU Minister for Development Cooperation with 30 ministers representing the group of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries at the Petersberg near Bonn, or the Berlin meeting of the G8 Ministers for Development Cooperation with colleagues from emerging economies and African organisations or to the German Forum of the World Bank and the 8th Africa Partnership Forum. Finally, the IJ took the opportunity to send participants of a current training on online journalism to the G8 Summit in Heiligendamm where they closely followed the negotiations on Africa focused on good governance, investment, peace and the fight against devastating diseases.

The end-product is an impressive collection of articles, published in 17 countries, amongst others in Kenya, Tanzania, Cameroon, Ghana and Nigeria, and providing an array of insights on development and international cooperation from African perspective. They are like a jigsaw puzzle which creates a colourful picture of voices and reality – a picture, which is a must-see for anyone who wants to chip into the development process. What was it that the German Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, said at the end of the Africa Partnership Forum? "Partnership means not simply talking about Africa but talking directly to those African governments that are engaged in reform and fighting poverty."



Astrid Kohl

Head

International Institute for Journalism

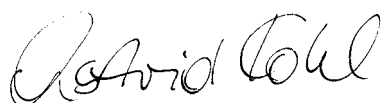
VORWORT

Es ging um Gender, Frieden und Sicherheit. Es ging um gute Regierungsführung, Investitionen und Wachstum. Es ging um die Frage, wie Frauen, ganz besonders in Afrika, politisch und wirtschaftlich gestärkt und an der Entwicklung ihrer Länder beteiligt werden können. Am Ende ging es wohl auch um das wohlbekannte Zitat von James Kwegyir Aggrey, 1875 im heutigen Ghana geboren: „Wenn man einen Mann ausbildet, bildet man eine Person aus. Bildet man aber eine Frau aus, so wird die ganze Familie ausgebildet“, hatte der Gelehrte und Missionar einst bemerkt und wurde nun von der Chefredakteurin der einflussreichen Ghanaian Times, Ajoa Yeboah-Afari, in einem Artikel über die Konferenz „Women's Economic Empowerment as Smart Economics: A Dialogue on Policy Options“ zitiert.

Diese Konferenz fand im Februar in Berlin statt und war der Auftakt zu einer Reihe hochrangig besetzter Veranstaltungen, die vom Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ) im ersten Halbjahr 2007 ausgerichtet wurden. Das Internationale Institut für Journalismus (IJ) von InWEnt - Internationale Weiterbildung und Entwicklung gGmbH nahm dies zum Anlass, um fachlich versierte und interessierte Journalisten aus Afrika und Asien nach Deutschland einzuladen und ihnen die Möglichkeit zu geben, über die Initiativen des BMZ und der deutschen und internationalen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit zu berichten. Die Afrika-Agenda der deutschen Doppelpräsidentschaft von EU und G8 sollte auch dort wahrgenommen und debattiert werden, wo Partnerschaft und Kooperation greifen und verändern sollen.

20 IJ-Alumni, die in den Jahren zuvor an Trainingskursen zur Wirtschafts-, Politik- und Umweltberichterstattung teilgenommen hatten, reisten nach Berlin und Bonn, um aus erster Hand mehr und Hintergrund über die globale Ordnung und Neuordnung zu erfahren. Ob beim Treffen der EU-Entwicklungsminister mit 30 AKP-Ministern auf dem Petersberg, beim Berliner G8-Treffen der Entwicklungsminister mit ihren Kollegen aus den Schwellenländern und afrikanischen Organisationen oder zuletzt auf dem Deutschen Weltbankforum und dem 8. Africa Partnership Forum, überall stießen die IJ-Alumni auf heißbegehrte und gesprächsbereite Größen aus Politik und Wirtschaft. Schließlich gelang es dem IJ sogar, mit den Teilnehmern eines aktuellen Trainings zum Online-Journalismus nach Heiligendamm zum G8-Gipfel zu fahren, die dort mit Spannung den Verhandlungen zu Themen wie gute Regierungsführung, Investitionen, Frieden und Sicherheit und den Kampf gegen Krankheiten folgten.

Herausgekommen ist eine beeindruckende Sammlung von Artikeln, die in Kenia und Tansania, in Kamerun, Ghana und in Nigeria, insgesamt in 17 Ländern veröffentlicht wurden und über Entwicklungsperspektiven und internationale Kooperation aus Sicht vor allem der afrikanischen Länder Aufschluss geben. Und zusammen ergeben sie ein Mosaik aus Stimmungen und Stimmen, die hören muss, wer aktiv werden will. Wie hatte Entwicklungsministerin Heidemarie Wiecek-Zeul zum Abschluss des Africa Partnership Forums gesagt? „Partnerschaft heißt, dass wir nicht allein über Afrika reden, sondern direkt mit den afrikanischen Regierungen, die sich für Reformen und den Kampf gegen die Armut einsetzen.“



Astrid Kohl

Leiterin

Internationales Institut für Journalismus



German Chancellor and Development Minister speak with an African member of the conference
Foto: InWEnt

Women's economic empowerment as smart economics

Berlin, 22-23 May 2007

Women play a key role in economic growth and development. World Bank and IMF studies have shown that the economies of the developing countries are losing billions of US dollars because women are still discriminated against in economic life or even excluded from it.

In order to find practical ways of improving women's economic participation in the developing countries, Development Minister Heidemarie Wiecek-Zeul was to host a conference entitled " Women's economic empowerment as smart economics" in Berlin on 22 and 23 February.

Ministers from the North and the South, senior business figures and representatives of the World Bank and other international organisations discussed possible ways of fostering and better harnessing women's economic potential.

One focus of the conference was the implementation of the Gender Action Plan launched last September by the World Bank with the aim of enabling more women to take part in economic processes. The conference has been opened by the German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Development Minister Heidemarie Wiecek-Zeul.

Text BMZ
www.bmz.de

Participants

Ajoa Yeboah-Afari

1977 general course IJ West Berlin/Germany
1984-1996 Ghana correspondent "BBC African Service" Accra/Ghana
1987-1996 freelance journalist
1997-2002 public affairs officer "Commonwealth Secretariat" London/UK
2003-2006 president "Ghana Journalists Association" Accra/Ghana
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Women's TMs Economic Empowerment, A Developmental Issue

The African situation was the launch pad of a high level international conference on women's economic empowerment that opened here in the German capital on Thursday. The first session was devoted to discussing gender, governance and growth in Africa.

The backdrop of the two-day conference, is a gender action plan launched by the World Bank last year, and spearheaded by Germany's Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Heidemarie Wiecek-Zeul.

The rationale of the Action Plan, as summed up by Danny Leipziger of the World Bank, is that "it is important to recognise that economic empowerment is not only a women's issue, it is a developmental issue". The four year Gender Action Plan launched last September, aims to help unleash the economic potential of women and reduce the barriers they face.

Dubbed, "Gender Equality as Smart Economics" the Action Plan is seen as a global women's empowerment initiative that seeks to make gender equality a major issue in international development cooperation. The two main objectives of the Plan are to empower women economically as well as create an institutional basis and women's access to financial markets. It is estimated to cost 24.5 billion dollars. In a keynote speech at the opening ceremony, the Federal Chancellor, Mrs. Angela Merkel, said that her presence at the conference demonstrated her full support for the Action Plan in both her capacity as Chancellor as well as the current leader of the European Union. She noted that the African Union also has a clear policy on gender equality and her discussions with AU Chairman, President John Kufuor, has shown a willingness to make progress on the gender front and she hoped to have more discussions with President Kufuor on the way forward. "Africa is very much our focus," she added.

In his presentation, Mr. Leipziger, Vice President, Poverty Reduction and Economic Management of the World Bank, pointed out that in Africa, although women account for the majority in the agricultural work force, they receive less than ten% of all credit going to small farmers and only one% of the total of credit given to agriculture. "This is not good development policy and it is not smart economics," he said. Women share in development success but they share unequally, he said. Also, he noted that providing access to basic infrastructure and services can make a world of difference in the productive lives of women. Transport offers a striking illustration of the interdependence between public policy and household economics, and the associated time problem for women, he stated. "Studies in the 1990s indicate that women in sub-Saharan Africa transport more on their heads in volume than is transported in vehicles."

In her speech, Mrs. Wiecek-Zeul noted that the conference is relevant for both developing and industrialised countries. She said as champion of the Action Plan, her aim was to forge new partnerships, achieve progress on women's economic and political empowerment and thus make it possible for the global achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. "Without progress on gender equality, we will not be able to halve extreme poverty," she said.

Ajoa Yeboah-Afari
newtimesonline.com
23/02/2007

Africa To Host, Smart Economics

The second international conference on women's economic empowerment, dubbed "smart economics", an initiative of the World Bank and its partners, is to be held in Africa later this year. It will be a follow-up to the Berlin conference that ended here on Friday with urgent calls from participants for immediate action towards realising the objectives. The rationale of the women's economic empowerment campaign that led to the Berlin gathering is perhaps best summed up by Dr Kwegyir Aggrey's famous quotation that "if you educate a man you simply educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you educate a family." Says the World Bank: "Increased women's labour force participation and earnings are associated with reduced poverty and faster growth; women will benefit from their economic empowerment, but so too will men, children and society as a whole. There is a business case for expanding women's economic opportunities: it is smart economics. "The backdrop of the campaign is a four-year Gender Action Plan launched by the World Bank Group last September. It "targets four key markets: land, labour, product and financial. The plan identifies and implements policy measures to level the playing field and improve the policy and institutional environment for women. "It also seeks to" reduce transaction costs through infrastructure interventions that increase women's basic access to the four markets."

The high level participants at the Berlin meeting focused on women, finance and private sector development, raising women's contribution to production, as well as women's legal status and access to economic resources. No details were given as to which African country will host the conference, or how soon, but Germany's Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Heidemarie Wiecek-Zeul, a champion of the Gender Action Plan, promised her government's support for it. Even before that, she said, the spring meeting of the World Bank, in April, will be an opportunity to take the Action Plan further. At the closing session on Friday, speaker after speaker urged immediate action to continue the momentum and achieve results. As Professor Firmino Mucavele, Executive Head of the NEPAD Secretariat put it: After all the talking, when we leave here someone has to do the work. It is not enough to have policies (the important thing) is to implement them. We need action-oriented activities. Commenting on Africa's own Gender Action Plan of 2005, Prof. Mucavele suggested the setting up of a gender task force by the development partners to complement the Berlin meeting.

The keynote speaker at the opening ceremony of the Berlin conference, held February 22 and 23, was the Federal Chancellor, Angela Merkel. She stated that her presence pointed to her commitment to the campaign, not only as the Chancellor, but also in Germany's current capacity as leader of the European Union as well as the G 8. Mrs. Merkel noted that 2007 is also the year of equal opportunity in Europe. Women's economic empowerment is important for Germany as well, she said. She pointed out that although on paper Germany has gender equality, there are challenges. For example, the big German companies have hardly any women board members. "We can all learn from each other, she said. "High profile participants from Africa included Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, former Minister of Finance and of Foreign affairs in Nigeria and Antoinette Sayeh, Liberia's Minister of Finance. On the issue of micro-credit, Dr Okonjo-Iweala, now a Fellow of the Brookings Institution in Washington D. C. , observed that African women have been engaged in micro credit for some time and now need support to advance. "We now have a whole series of women in the middle. How do they move up? "She called for new mechanisms to open up credit to women, new and more creative forms of collateral. For example, she said, in Iran, women's expensive carpets and jewellery are being accepted as collateral.

On some of the unfair world trade practices, she touched on the Chinese wax prints threat. Using the traditional fabric she was wearing as an example, she said the Nigerian manufacturers are being put out of business by cheaper Chinese copies exported to Nigeria. Mrs Sayeh said expectations are very high for Liberia because of the leadership of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. For most Liberians life is hard, she said. "Women are still only 2% of the formal sector and access to credit is nonexistent, so we have a long way to go." However, she said, the government is strongly committed to empowering women. It will take a long time, "but we feel encouraged that we have the right leadership to do it."

Observers view the Berlin conference with similar optimism. Because empowering women for increased economic gains is now being promoted as "smart economics", governments and the international community will feel more committed to succeed.

The conference, hosted by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, was convened by InWent- Capacity Building International of Germany. Other partners included the Women's Department for International Development and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Norway and Denmark.

Ajoa Yeboah-Afari
newtimesonline.com
24/02/2007

Women's Economic Power: the Foundation of Development

The journey into Kenya's biggest slum, the Kibera slum in Nairobi, is a slow decent down a narrow passageway. Curious eyes follow each bounce of the four-wheel-drive truck as it dances from side to side. The further down you go into the slum, the more rancid the odours become. The smell of smoldering trash piles burning openly on all sides. But go deeper into this slum that is home to more than 600,000 people with 80% of the population being women and children and the smell begins to blend together. It is the smell of hopelessness indeed. Midway down a long narrow alley, a mother welcomes visitors into her tiny home that is no more than 80 square feet. Eight people live here but it will soon be nine. The woman's fifteen year old daughter is pregnant with her second child. There is no husband.

Three years ago following her husband's death, the mother of seven led her family into the urban blight away from the village. She could not raise enough money to take care of her children while being in the village, therefore seeking hope in the city where her grim day-to-day struggle for survival is still apparent.

But hers is not an isolated case. Going back up the hill to the slum's entrance, the smell begins to mix again. A goat sifts through a smoking trash pile. She accompanies an older woman who is hunched forward as she picks through the ashes, looking for anything she can eat. Her family was wiped away by the Aids scourge and now she is left to fend for herself with no source of income.

Such are some of the predicaments that face the majority of women in developing economies due to lack of economic empowerment. However, the movement to empower women economically is receiving much grip as it appears to be a vital factor in improving all aspects of women's lives.

Leaders from across the globe led by the Chancellor of the Federal Government of Germany, Angela Merkel and the Federal Minister for Economic, Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Heidemarie Wic-zorek-Zeul, convened in Germany's capital Berlin this week to create a new initiative for the economic empowerment of the hardest working yet least supported individual in the world: the woman.

The high-level conference too saw many women express despair at having attended meetings and summits of a similar subject only to observe so little being done after listening to beautiful rhetoric. It was also argued that besides formal employment, women have always worked in the home, looking after children, cleaning or cooking but because this is unpaid, it is not counted in the official statistics.

To some extent, the increase in female paid employment has meant fewer hours of unpaid housework. However, the value of housework has fallen by much less than the time spent on it because of the increased productivity delivered by washing machines, dishwashers and so forth. Cleaners and nannies paid by working women now also do some work that used to belong in the non-market economy.

Nevertheless, most working women are still responsible for the bulk of chores in their homes. In developed economies women produce just under 40% of the official GDP. But if the worth of housework is added valuing the hours of the average wage rates of a home-help, then women probably produce slightly more than half of total output.

Participants in the conference had different views concerning the issue. Mrs Beatrice Gakuba , the Chief Executive Officer of Rwanda, Flora Sarl, had this message to the conference: " Women don't have to shout for their rights or their empowerment when they are able to be economically independent by all means. "

According to Mrs Leyla Khait, Vice President to the Arabic Council of Women Business Owners in Egypt, " Women produce for others, on the land of others. They too must have the chance to own land. When a woman has means, the husband consults her. Without economic power, you only get what men are willing to give up. "

The under-utilization of women was also perceived as having stunted not only the economic but also the political growth in most poor countries. Betty Maina is the Chief Executive of Kenya Association of Manufacturers. She says: " Economic empowerment leads to political empowerment. When a woman has money, she can be more productive hence inviting herself to the table. "

In September 2006, the World Bank group launched the four year action plan, Gender Equality as Smart Economics' to spur greater economic potential for women in key areas such as infrastructure, agriculture and finance in developing countries. Paul Wolfowitz, the group's president feels that women are now the most powerful engine of global growth: " Communities and countries in the developing world pay a high price for not allowing women to live up to their full economic potential. Women's ability to benefit from financial services will benefit not only women but also men, children, and society as a whole as economies grow and poverty reduced" he says.

In view of Germany's double presidency of the G8 and the European Union, the link between gender, responsible government and sustainable growth in Africa still remains a major challenge on its development agenda.

Despite the increased economic importance of women, they could become more important still. More of them could join the labour market and more could make full use of their skills and qualifications. This would provide a sounder base for long term growth. It would help finance rich countries' welfare states as populations age and it would boost incomes in the developing world.

Agatha Katheu
BusinessMirror
Magazine
02/2007



Women's empowerment is smart economics

While recommending the World Bank's programmes, which comprise more than 20 billion dollars per year, must develop a stronger focus on women Germany's development minister Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul said that women play a key role in economic growth and development.

Opening a conference entitled "Women's economic empowerment as smart economics" in Berlin recently the German minister said that global studies have shown that the economies of the developing countries are losing billions of US dollars because women are still discriminated against in economic life or even excluded from it.

The minister who is also champion of the World Bank's Gender Action Plan suggested that concrete agreements on the next steps and actions should be taken and networking between those who work for the economic empowerment of women should be strengthened.

Ministers from the North and the South, senior business figures and representatives of the World Bank and other international organisations discussed possible ways of fostering and better harnessing women's economic potential.

One focus of the conference was the implementation of the Gender Action Plan launched in September 2006 by the World Bank with the aim of enabling more woman to take part in economic processes.

It was pointed out that women besides being homemaker are filling the more jobs today and are a powerful engine of global growth. In 1950, only one third of America women of working age had a paid job. Today, two thirds do and woman make up almost half of America workforce. Since 1950 men's employment rate has slid to 77% .

In Japan and Italy women's share of job's is still 40% less. In the emerging East Asian economies, for every 100 men, there are now 83 women in labour force. Women have contributed in a major way to Asia's export industries, accounting for 60-80% of jobs in many export sectors such as textiles and clothing.

This is really talking of women in paid jobs. Gradually women have always been working in unpaid sectors, significantly the home.

They have always worked at home looking after children, cleaning and cooking and they continue to do so. However with the increase of skilled women workforce in the paid sector, increased non paid jobs like nannies and cleaning have fallen into the category of paid jobs and consequent market economy.

Wieczorek-Zeul said: "I want to forge new partnerships, achieve progress on women's economic and political empowerment, and thus make it possible for us to reach the Millennium Development Goals. Without progress on gender equality, we will not be able to halve extreme poverty."

Renu Malhotra
The Political and Business Weekly
New Delhi
27/03/2007



Informal meeting of EU development ministers and informal ACP-EU dialogue on Economic Partnership Agreements

Petersberg near Bonn, 12-13 March 2007

This was the first time in the history of European development policy that this particular group came together for a meeting: at the Petersberg near Bonn, German Development Minister Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul welcomed her colleagues from 26 EU member states, EU Commissioners Peter Mandelson and Louis Michel, and about 30 ministers representing the group of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. There were also other prominent guests, such as World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz, UN Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro, and German entrepreneur Michael Otto. The two-day consultations produced a consensus between the EU and the ACP countries on the central issue on the meeting's agenda, Economic Partnership Agreements. And the Petersberg Communiqué on European Development Policy is evidence of the fact that the EU member states are working hard to make progress on the European process of convergence on development policy.

At the concluding joint press conference, Wieczorek-Zeul said: " There is a consensus and common understanding among EU and ACP member states that Economic Partnership Agreements are to be an instrument for fighting poverty. "

Hans-Joachim Keil, Associate Trade Minister of Samoa and representative of the ACP countries, confirmed this view, pointing out to the numerous international journalists present: " We have made a lot of progress today. With the meeting we had today, the will is there and the understanding is there. Everybody is cooperating now to make sure that the negotiations are completed within the tight time-frame of 2007. " The central common goal of the Economic Partnership Agreements is to fight poverty, promote sustainable development in the ACP partner countries and foster their fair share of the global economy.

On energy and climate change, too, the representatives of the EU member states and of the Commission were able to make significant progress. In a joint press conference with EU Development Commissioner Louis Michel and Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson, Wieczorek-Zeul announced the forging of an energy partnership between Europe and Africa. She emphasized that without sustainable access to energy, there can be no development. " Rising costs for fossil energy are jeopardizing development achievements in Africa. We in the European Union therefore want to support Africa in expanding the use of renewable energy and improving energy efficiency. " The Minister also drew attention to the impact of climate change in Africa: " It is obvious that Africa is not to blame for anthropogenic climate change, but Africa is particularly affected by the consequences of climate change. " The Minister noted that, in the proposal to be presented by the European Commission for a Europe-Africa energy partnership later this year, adaptation to climate change would therefore play a central role.

The outcome of the informal meeting of EU development ministers and of the informal ACP-EU dialogue confirms the statements contained in the Petersberg Communiqué on European Development Policy. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the European Communities, that declaration affirms the shared objectives, values and principles of EU development policy in a common document.

Participants

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2000–2001 national service "Radio Ghana" Accra/Ghana
2001–2002 journalist "Legacy Magazine" Accra/Ghana
since 2002 senior reporter Business and Financial Desk "Daily Graphic" Accra/Ghana
2004 training course "Reporting ECOWAS" IJ Accra/Ghana
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Usia Nkhoma-Ledama

2005 special training course "Newspaper management" IJ Mainz and Berlin/Germany
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1986–1990 journalist and reporter Economical Desk "Quotidjen Wal Fadjri" Dakar/Senegal
1990–1994 public relations officer "University of Saint-Louis" Saint-Louis/Senegal
1994–1997 public relations officer TV station "CANAL + HORIZONS" Dakar/Senegal
1998–2001 reporter "Agence France Presse" (AFP) Dakar/Senegal
2001–2006 public relations officer "Industries Chimiques du Sénégal" Dakar/Senegal
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William Rasoanaivo

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2004 training course "Le secretariat de redaction" IJ Berlin/Germany
2004 co-founder-editor "Gazety Kely" Antananarivo/Madagascar
2005 training course "Electronic sub-editing and layout" IJ Berlin/Germany
since 2006 editorial cartoonist and computer graphics artist "L'Express Dimanche" Port Louis/Mauritius
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1998–2001 consultant "Centre pour l'Environnement et le Développement" (CED) Yaounde/Cameroon
2002–2003 consultant "World Bank Group" and editor-in-chief, production manager "The World Bank News"
2004 training course "Le Secrétariat de Redaction" IJ Berlin/Germany
since 2005 consultant "Institut pour les Recherches Socio-économique et la Communication" (IRESCO)
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Germany to partner Africa on energy supply

Germany to partner Africa on energy supply

Story: Samuel Doe Ablordeppey,
Bonn, Germany
Courtesy: Inwent-ILJ

THE German Development Minister, Ms Heidemarie Wiese-Zorek-Zeul, has stated that Europe will carve a comprehensive, long-term energy partnership with Africa which will benefit both parties.

Speaking at the end of the Africa-Europe Energy Forum in Berlin, she said "the aim must be to improve the climate for investment, to increase the amount invested in energy and to bring transparency to oil and gas revenues."

She added that the development of renewable energy must be reinforced in view of climate change.

About 500 experts from Europe and Africa met at the invitation of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the European Commission, to help intensify cooperation between Europe and Africa in the energy

sector.

The two-day dialogue produced recommendations which will be on the agenda of the Council of the European Union in May, this year. It is also in the spirit of Germany's Presidency of the EU and G8, during which Germany hopes to whip up the enthusiasm of the EU, G-8, and particularly in the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, to be keen on pushing forward the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with the EU before a December 31, 2006 deadline.

A communique issued at the end of the conference and posted at the website of BMZ, said the conference called for the strengthening of cooperation between Africa and Europe, as Africa was considered a rich energy source.

"Strengthening cooperation between Africa and Europe is mutually beneficial: reliable energy supply, climate protection and sustained poverty reduction are goals that can only be reached in a joint effort. Expanding the use of renewable and particularly efficient energy sources can make a major contribution in this regard," the

communique said.

The conference also recommended that financial resources provided through development co-operation were not sufficient to meet Africa's energy needs and therefore new paths for financing should be pursued, saying that Africa's own resources, especially from oil sales, donor resources and private-sector resources must all be used.

The conference noted that Africa was particularly suffering under climate change, even though the continent was contributing very little to emissions harmful to the climate.

"Natural disasters, deteriorating water supply, and an increase in tropical diseases are just some of the consequences. This is an area in which the industrialised countries in particular are called upon to help finance the necessary adaptation efforts," the communique stressed.

There was agreement that it was not only cooperation between Africa and Europe but also regional cooperation and solidarity within Africa which needed to be strengthened and supported.

Samuel Ablordeppey
Daily Graphic
11/03/2007

ECOWAS looks good for partnership

ECOWAS looks for good partnership

Stories: Samuel Doe Ablordeppey, Bonn, Germany — Courtesy: Invert-ITJ

THE Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has made it clear that it is looking for partnership and development-oriented agreements with the European Union and not one that will stifle and ruin their economies.

Speaking to journalists on Tuesday evening at the informal dialogue between the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries in Bonn, the Nigerian Minister for Commerce, Dr Aiyem Madibbo Umar, one of the representatives of the ECOWAS region, confirmed reports that the West African sub-region had asked for a three-year extension of the negotiations because "certain things are not clear to us".

The informal dialogue is at the instance of the German government who is determined to push the ACP-EU negotiations on trade in order to reach an agreement with ACP countries by December 31, 2007.

The EU-ACP dialogue took place on the sides of another informal EU Development Ministers meeting to set an agenda for a bigger and formal EU Ministerial meeting.

which would also take major decisions on the EPAs with ACP countries.

A non-chaudhary ACP-EU joint review meeting of the negotiating process is expected to come off in May this year.

The meeting was therefore, to give politicians the chance to meet the technical team — those doing the real negotiations on behalf of the policies — so as to understand the frustrations and issues drawing the agreements back.

Dr Umar said the negotiations had to take place in a more transparent and proper way than the present hanky panky game being played with issues being shrouded in secrecy, adding that the EU must allow for sector studies to be conducted and civil society involved in the process.

On investments, he did not mind words as the fact that ECOWAS countries would not just open their markets to Europeans for investment and that the three-year extension was to allow rough edges in the negotiations to be straightened.

At a press conference to close the meetings, the German Minister of Economic Cooperation and Development, Ms Heidi-Marie Wiesner-Zeul, said both sides had exhibited a lot of commitment and the political will, necessary to move the negotiations forward.

All ACP countries have shown the commitment to the negotiations. We are going to hold a series of high level meetings to discuss further some of the issues," she stated.

On the issue of incorporating agreements on trade in investment and services in the EPAs, Ms Wiesner-Zeul said it was not a question of inclusion, rather investment in energy, infrastructure and human resource was crucial and indispensable for Africa to develop, grow its economy and create jobs.

"We have talked about the need to increase development aid and I have approved of it. But we also need investment for economic development and growth to create jobs. This calls for financial interventions such as microfinance for the poor in Africa to have an economic turnaround," she stressed.

She announced that the EU would make microfinance available to African countries through the World Bank and added that besides these, private investments in sustainable and renewable energy sources and infrastructure were important for Africa.

The two-day forum was organised by the Federal Republic of Germany in part of programmes lined up in connection with its Presidency of the EU and the G8.

Caribbean countries ready to meet EPA deadline

THE Caribbean ACP Forum, one of the groupings within the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP), has stated that it will do all within its power to be within the deadline for signing an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union (EU).

The Director General of the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery, otherwise known as Cariforum, Dr Richard Bernal, said "we regard the EPAs as important agreements and we want to complete on schedule".

Dr Bernal said the Caribbean region would not ask for any extension of deadlines because it could not bear the consequences of a non-agreement situation and "we have no choice but to be ready".

He was speaking to newsmen on Monday after an informal dialogue between the European Union and the ACP countries in Bonn, Germany.

The EU-ACP dialogue is happening on the sides of another EU Development Ministers meeting to set an agenda for a bigger and formal EU Ministerial meeting, which would also take major decisions on the EPAs with ACP countries.

The position of Cariforum is markedly different from its African counterparts who are asking for extensions to put their economies in shape, build competitive capacities and perhaps strengthen intra-African trade.

The EU and ACP countries have a December 31, 2007 deadline to start in signing all agreements to replace the cur-



Mr Paul Wolfowitz (middle), World Bank President, in a chat with the German Economic Development and Co-operation Minister, Ms Heidi-Marie Wiesner-Zeul, (right) and Dr Asha-Rose Migiro (left) after the forum.

rent quota and tariff free exports the ACP countries enjoy when they export to Europe under a preferential treatment. In lieu of any such agreements, the EU will impose tariffs on exports to its territory from these countries and will not be keen on supporting their economies with financial inflows such as the European Development Fund (EDF).

There are splinter groups within the ACP region, such as ECOWAS, South African Development Commission (SADC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the larger African Union (AU), The Cariforum and the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC), each of which can go solo to sign an agreement with the EU, hence the

EPAs. Dr Bernal said Europe was the biggest trading partner of the Caribbean region and would go to all lengths to clinch a formalised agreement with them, adding that "we want to avoid confronting any reprisals".

He, however, agreed with his African colleagues that the EPAs had to be complemented with building the competitive capacities of the ACP countries to enable them to compete globally.

The World Bank President, Mr Paul Wolfowitz, who would speak on the topic investing in Africa, said his recent trip to Africa, making reference to Ghana and Tanzania, revealed that some African countries were doing well and needed to be supported by increasing their finances.

The Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations, Dr Asha-Rose Migiro, a Tanzanian, said "the EU should work in partnership with Africa to build linkages as an important step in reducing poverty".

Answering questions on whether the EU should extend the deadline for Africa, the German Economic Development and Co-operation Minister, Ms Heidi-Marie Wiesner-Zeul, said it was not thing having a fixed date and another, incorporating a review window to take on board later adaptations.

Giving details of the informal dialogue between the EU-ACP countries, which was held behind closed doors, Ms Wiesner-Zeul said apart from the EPAs, the forum would also address investing in Africa's energy sector as it provided a necessary linkage to resolving poverty on the continent.

She said the EU would also be interested in investing in African countries to avoid devastating consequences of climate change since the continent bears the brunt of the phenomenon although it did not contribute to it.

The German development minister said the EU would also be keen on prevailing on African oil exporting countries to use oil revenues transparently and in the best interest of its peoples.

The two-day forum was organised by the Federal Republic of Germany as part of programmes lined up in connection with its Presidency of the EU and the G-8.

Samuel Ablordeppey
Daily Graphic
12/03/2007

ACP, EU confab on partnership agreement kicks off

ACP, EU confab on partnership agreement kicks off

OVER 70 ministers and commissioners of trade, industry, commerce and economic co-operation of EU countries and their counterparts in Africa, Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) are gathering in Bonn, Germany for a two-day conference on the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) from March 12 to 13, 2007.

Ghana is being represented by Mr Kwadwo Afram Asiedu, a deputy Minister of Trade, Industry and PSI.

This conference, deemed an informal dialogue of EU-ACP because it is happening alongside a major EU Development Ministers meeting on pro-development design for the EPAs, seeks to discuss how to push the EPA agenda forward.

About 36 delegates from 30 ACP countries will participate in the meetings alongside over 30 EU ministers and delegates who will discuss other topics such as how the EU will address complementarity and the division of labour in European development policy, energy and development.

It will be the first time that the EU and the ACP countries have met within the framework of an EU ministerial meeting and it is part of the German government's goals to use the EPAs to improve the economic opportunities available to the EU's partner countries in the spirit of globalisation and in a broader context of Germany using its EU Presidency to achieve better linkages of trade and development.

"It is important that the EU sends a clear signal that the Economic Partnership Agreements will benefit the developing countries by enabling them to participate in global trade in a more just way," said the German Minister for Economic Co-operation and Development, Ms Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul.

The meeting, however informal, will receive some important guests such as Mr Paul Wolfowitz, the World Bank President; Mr Michael Otto, the Chairman of the Board of the Otto Group and founder of the "Cotton - made in Africa" initiative; Madam Asha-Rose Migiro, the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, and Mr Louis Michel, Member of the European Commission, responsible for development and humanitarian aid, as well as Mr Peter Mandelson, Member of the European Commission, responsible for the EU's foreign trade policy.

Extend deadline on partnership pact

Extend deadline on partnership pact

Story: Samuel Doe Ablordeppy, Bonn, Germany — Courtesy: Inseent-ILJ

CIVIL society groups and other stakeholders in West Africa's development process have unanimously called on the European Union to extend the deadline for reaching a deal on Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) and give their African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) partners enough time to think through controversial and uncertain aspects of the agreements.

According to them, the EPAs, as being proposed by the European Commission (EC) at the moment, are not fair to the ACP countries as they have the potential to cause the collapse of their economies and take jobs from their citizens.

The Head of Programmes of the Third World Network (TWN) in Accra, Mr Tetteh Harmeku, and the Nigerian Director General of Customs, Mr Jacob Gyeku Huba, said that Africa particularly needed time to develop its own intra-regional trade and form more sophisticated linkages among themselves before they could sit with their EU counterparts at the negotiating table.

"We think as it is now, we need to link Africa together properly in trade and harmonise customs rules and regulations before we can sit with the EU as a larger bloc. We are running faster than we can," they agreed.

Speaking on the topic "Are Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) Pro-development? The Policy Coherence for Development of EU-ACP Free Trade Agreements," Mr Harmeku said the inclusion in the negotiations of what had become known as the Singapore Issues — investment, competition and procurement — represented issues that would lead Africa into deprivation as they would incapacitate African governments in their use of procurement and investment to build local capacity to guide each country's own development.

According to Mr Harmeku, the EU proposals as they stand on these issues will lead to the removal of tariffs on services and open Africa again to unimpeded investment from Europe, adding that having been forced to liberalise its industries in the 1990s, West Africa has already lost thousands of its industries and competitive advantage to the Western world.

• To allow more brainstorming

He debunked the EU's promise of helping to solve supply-side constraints, saying "it is not enough to build supply-side constraints by building infrastructure — roads, energy, etc — because EU goods, with all their competitive advantage, which makes them cheap, are already in the country and will rely on this same infrastructure to their advantage."

He added: "Development is not simply about adjustment cost but how we build productive capacity across the entire economy so that farmers can grow more and get more income."

Mr Harmeku said the EU and its ACP counterparts should for now preoccupy themselves with how to make Africans maintain grips on their enterprises and factories and how to use services, such as financial services and telecommunication to support, grow and sustain agriculture and industries in Africa.

He buttressed his point with a study by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), which recommended that the best way to help developing countries was to build their capital and human resources in entrepreneurial skills in an integrated way so that they would not remain exporters of primary products.

Mr Harmeku said time was not of essence in signing the EPAs and that the EU's insistence on an artificial and contrived December 31, 2007 deadline was only a demonstration of how the EU was using its might and financial power to cow the smaller and developing nations into signing an agreement that would in the end be disastrous and injurious to their respective economies.

Mr Huba, for his part, said the EU had taken time to become a bloc and Africa also deserved the benefit of time to evolve and build its own economy so as to have two blocs facing each other at the table rather than the current situation of the mighty negotiating with the poor.

Mr Huba said intra-African trade was already very low and there was the need to resolve all the related problems before a larger bloc-to-bloc agreement would be attempt-

ed. He said African countries depended heavily on customs duties to finance their development and that was why under the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS), there was the arrangement to offset lost revenue with the 0.5 per cent ECOWAS levy on non-ECOWAS products.

Mr Huba argued that under the EPAs, tariffs would be cut and Africa would not find any source of revenue to fund its development.

A civil society activist and an European journalist, Mr Klaus Schilder, attacked the development assistance pledges of the EU to ACP countries under the five-year European Development Fund (EDF), which, he said, took a longer time to disburse.

Indeed, Outfit has done a study that establishes that since the EDFs started in 1975, the highest level of disbursement has been 45 per cent.

Mr Schilder said the EDF disbursements were surely going to be slow under the 10th arrangement, though there was a marked improvement in terms of figures (€2.7 billion for the next five years), because the EU membership, each of whom must ratify the pledge, had now increased from 15 to 27 countries.

He called on the EU to soften its hard and fast stance on the deadline and extend it by a reasonable number of years to allow the EU to study and consider some of the proposals submitted to the table by ACP countries.

The German Minister of Economic Development and Co-operation, Ms Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, took a completely different position and said the EPAs would develop the economies of the ACP countries and must be taken seriously.

"The EPAs will improve ACP countries access to EU markets and it is not the intention of any EU country to flood African markets with their products," she stated.

She argued that even without EPAs between ACP countries and China, China was already devastating their economies without a reciprocal effect, but even the EPAs offered asymmetrical tariff cuts between the two parties.

Samuel Ablordeppy
Daily Graphic
14/03/2007

European Union and ACP-Countries meet on Economic and Partnership Agreements (EPA)

The United Nations Deputy Secretary General, Dr Asha-Rose Migiro, and World Bank, President Paul Wolfowitz, are among the key guests who will attend the two day informal meeting of the ministers of European Union and the countries of African, Caribbean and Pacific Region (ACP) on Economic and Partnership Agreements (EPA) to be held in Bonn, Germany from today (Monday march12).

According to the time table issued yesterday by the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development together with Dr Migiro and Wolfowitz, other key invited guests are Louis Michel, member of the European Commission, responsible for development and humanitarian aid and Peter Mandelson, Member of European Commission, responsible for the EU's foreign trade policy.

On Tuesday Dr Migiro will address the delegates on reform of the UN development architecture.

Dr Migiro is a former Tanzanian Foreign Affairs minister who was appointed to that new post at UN early this year.

Later today (Monday) World Bank boss together with EU special Representative, Roland van de Geer, will address delegates on the topic of Investing in Africa.

During the meeting which will be chaired by the German Development Minister Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, EU and 30 ministers from ACP countries will discuss EU pro-development design of the Economic Partnership Agreements.

This will be the first time that the EU and the ACP countries have met within the framework of an EU ministerial meeting.

The goal being pursued during the German EU Presidency is to achieve better linkage of trade and development and EPA once finalized is expected to help improve the economic opportunities available to the EU's partner countries.

"It is important that the EU sends a clear signal that the Economic Partnership Agreement will benefit the developing countries by enabling them to participate in global trade in a more just way", Minister Wieczorek-Zeul said in her statement.

Usia Ledama
Mwananchi
11/03/2007

European NGOs call on the EU to delay Negotiations on the Economic Partnership Agreements

The United Nations deputy Secretary General, Dr Asha-Rose Migiro has said that she does not see China penetration to Africa as a threat to Africa's development but insisting that all development partners must work together to confront development challenges facing the third world countries.

She said that here yesterday evening (Monday) when responding to journalists questions shortly before she joined the Informal Meeting of EU Development Ministers held at the Petersberg, near Bonn, ahead of today's (Tuesday) joint meeting between EU and Africa, Caribbean and Pacific ministers on Economic Partnership Agreement (EPAs).

"I don't see China as a threat, not at all, but if the goal is development then I think EU can help Africa on that and China as well have a role to play, all development partners need to work together on confronting this challenge" she insisted.

Earlier journalists asked if the EU determination to see EPAs negotiations are concluded by the set deadline of December 31, 2007 is because of fear of China who are now seen as a threat to western world in the scramble for Africa 's raw materials.

Dr Migiro said, EU together with other development partners should work in partnership with Africa in confronting development challenges and there is no need of suspecting each other.

Speaking on EU-ACP ministers meeting, Dr Migiro said, she is optimistic that the meeting will come out with a consensus on how the two parties can work together in bringing about development in Africa.

She said, UN stands firm on millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as a key vision towards development and so EU and Africa should equally play their role into achieving them.

'We need a common development vision, Africa needs to see MDGs as their own and EU needs to play their role into achieving that' she said.

The World Bank president, Paul Wolfowitz, said, the main issue in investing to Africa is the issue of finance and thats what developed countries should strategies on.

German's Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Heidermarie Wiecezrek-Zeul said, if Africa is to attain economic development then the issue of investment must equally be taken on board.

Usia Ledama
Mwananchi
12/03/2007

Common Development Strategy for Africa needed

European non governmental organizations have called upon immediate withdrawn of the December 31, 2007 deadline set for the conclusion of Economic Partnership Agreement (EPAs) negotiations between the European Union and countries of African, Caribbean and Pacific(ACP) arguing that the date is not realistic and will hurt poor countries concerned.

Speaking during a one day international conference organized by German and European nongovernmental organizations held at Deutsche Welle conference hall in here yesterday, NGOs and participants said, the set deadline is meant to put pressure on ACP countries to agree on things which at the end of the day they wont bring any positive impact on them as far as development of their countries are concerned.

They called upon Germany through its EU's presidency to change the direction of the negotiation and halt down the speed so as to give Africa enough room to decide on their development agenda.

They said EPAs process and content must be reviewed to be peoples centred contrary to the situation now, so that in the end Africa women, children, young and the poor are not marginalized.

The conference was organised by two umbrella associations of development organizations, ssociation of German Development NGOs (VENRO) and Confédération européenne des ONG d'urgence et de développement (CONCORD).

During the discussion the European NGOs called on the EU to delay the negotiations in order to ensure that EPAs are good development tools as they are meant to be.

Giving key note address during the conference, the Head Programmes at Third World Network-Africa (TWN-Africa), Mr Tetteh Hormeku, said they are opposing the negotiation process because it does not take into consideration African agenda so the deadline should be pushed forward to create a room for further consultations on the content of the negotiation a as per the african perspective and needs.

"EPAs policies and EU interpretation on them undermines ACP future and the current negotiation process denies ACP an opportunity to review the framework and identify their own problems which shows that the whole process is up to no good for Africa development agenda, " he said.

He said development in Africa is about how to build sustainable domestic productivity capacity and how to build linkages between development sectors so as to support the growth of local industries and not just about relying on FDIs.

Jacob Gyeke Buba from Nigeria said though there is a desirability for EPA, the content of the negotiations must be clearly defined and take into account Africa perspective on the issue so that the end goal indeed help to attain the desired goal of bringing development to Africa and curb poverty.

"EU has taken time to become what it is today, they took time to define trade and custom issues and logistics among their members, and that is what Africa is calling for, we need time and not rush on these sensitive issues, " he said.

Klaus Schilder who is project manager for EU North South Policy at World Economy, Ecology and Development (WEED) in Berlin said if EPAs negotiations will be concluded on the current framework then Africa stands to suffer economically because many African countries will not be able to withstand the competitive pressure exerted by European export industry. The German Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Heidemarie Wiecezorek-Zeul said European development policy stands to benefit from the critical dialogue with nongovernmental organizations.

In her presentation she underlined that the envisaged Economic Partnership Agreements between the EU and ACP countries offer an opportunity for combining trade and development issues in a beneficial way and defend the December, 31 deadline saying it is there not to put pressure on ACP nor EU but to ensure there is a guideline on the negotiations and ensure that all parties strive to reach an agreement.

" The timeframe for the conclusion of the EPAs by the end of 2007 is tight, but we should make use of it. If we don't put a deadline then we might not end these discussions, experience has taught us that, " she said.

The Minister however agreed with the NGOs that trade liberalization does not automatically lead to progress on development and noted that it was vital now to integrate the envisaged trade agreements into longer-term development strategies and to design them in such a way that they deliver developmental benefits.

" In the interest of the developing countries in particular, we must not squander this opportunity, ' she added.

Later in the evening, Minister Wiecezorek-Zeul opened the Meeting of EU Development Ministers at the Petersberg near Bonn and today (Tuesday) the informal meeting of EU-ACP ministers will take place where as they will discuss EU pro-development design of the EPAs.

The United Nations Deputy Secretary General, Dr Asha-Rose Migiro, and World Bank President, Paul Wolfowitz, are among the key guests who will attend the meetings and address the delegates.

Usia Ledama
Mwananchi
12/03/2007

Delay in the Negotiations on Economic Partnership Agreements expected

The fate of conclusion of negotiations on Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) between European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP) set for the end of the year hangs in balance as African countries are pressing for their demands on the whole issue to be considered first before they conclude anything.

EPAs which combines development and trade policy, aims to reduce trade barriers between the ACP countries themselves and between them and EU which includes ACP countries to lower their tariffs to EU goods.

The deadlines for conclusion of negotiations between EU and ACP is set for December 31 this year when a World Trade Organisation waiver for the EU's existing preferential trade arrangements for ACP countries expires.

But African ministers who are part of the negotiation team have made it clear during their informal meeting with EU development ministers held at Petersburg, Bonn yesterday, that much as they are committed to the set deadline, their concern on EPAs must be taken into account first before they conclude negotiations.

The Africa countries are negotiating EPAs through their regional groupings which are Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Southern African Development Community (SADC), Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC), West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Nigeria's Minister for Commerce, Aliyu Modibo Umar, told "The Citizen" shortly after the EU-ACP closed door meeting that, ECOWAS needs at least three years extension on the deadline so that to sort out critical issues of their concern before they can sign any EPA agreement.

"We have put a case that we don't believe the deadline is realistic unless certain conditionalities are met, we believe that EPAs are also predicated on successful conclusion of Doha round, even though European Commissioner, Peter Mandelson, is not thinking that way but we do believe that certain things studies have to be conducted and there must be transparency. We can not just open up our economies just because we want an agreement. We do have a responsibilities on our hands" he said.

He said ECOWAS is looking for partnership and they are not begging for anything from Europe that's why it is important that their concerns on EPA must be taken on board for a meaningful impact.

"What we are saying is we have the population, we have the skills we want the entrepreneurs to come and not just people who come and take our raw materials and manufacture them somewhere else because that does not make sense to me and that is basically what we are trying to argue to bring new perspective into these talks, " he said.

He however said that ECOWAS has confidence with Germany EU presidency because they have given the issue a real attention compare to the past situation. He said the informal meeting between EU and ACP meeting was successful as issues were clearly brought out for proper understanding of each other prior to the formal EU-ACP meeting in May.

Giving Sadc's position, Botswanas Minister of Trade and Industries, Neo Moroka, said they want EPAs negotiations being confined only on trade and goods at the moment and other areas of negotiations can follow later when SADC feels they are ready and have build capacity to negotiate competitively with EU.

He said, SADC though committed to the deadline, can not sign the agreement on everything blindly because doing so will be suicide to them.

"Our key important message to EU is first, SADC is committed to negotiations, second we will negotiate only on trade and goods, third we would like the EU in the negotiations with ACP to agree on negotiations that take into account the level of development of the countries, forth we would export to EU to respond on time to any proposal that comes from us, fifth we would like the EU now to also start communicating their expectations and offers to us so that we can also start working on the responses, and lastly we would like the kind of political dialogue that is taking place as evidenced by our meeting today to continue so that we continue to give guidance" he said.

"ACP countries have committed to being part of the global economy and committed to be integrated into global economy, but we cant sign EPAs blindly without taking into considerations our issues" he said.

The informal meeting ended late yesterday and the German's Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Heidermarie Wieczorek-Zeul who chaired the meeting said she has been impressed on the way ACP were well prepared for the meeting and that final responses will be known during the formal meeting in May.

Usia Ledama
Mwananchi
13/03/2007



ACP, EU discuss trade relations in Germany, amid raging energy crisis

APA-Köningswinter (Germany). The future of the cooperation between the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries will be partly determined in Köningswinter, near Bonn (Germany) where the ministerial delegations to an international trade informal meeting have began pouring in, APA learnt here Sunday.

A gorgeous small town, both baroque and gothic, which is drained by the Rhine, Köningswinter is conducive to the brainstorming already launched by experts negotiating a number of items on the conference's agenda - the liberalisation of trade, the listing of sensitive products, cooperation and development as well as the burning issue of energy.

World Bank governor, Paul Wolfowitz, and DR Congo's president Joseph Kabila are due at the meeting, expected to give a fresh boost to the EU-ACP's Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs).

The EPAs are aimed at introducing reciprocity in trade relations by 2008 with the setting up of free trade zones between the EU and its ACP partners in accordance with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) agenda.

"The energy issue will be crucial due to the ongoing situation worldwide," an ACP expert told APA.

The pundit expressed fears that the dominant issue of supplies security and climate changes might overshadow other critical issues.

Concurring, a central African delegate and negotiation cycles regular said the Europeans seem willing to go farther and get down to action by boosting their "negotiating power", after resolving to complete European gas networks toward enhancing their capacities.

Energy and supply security are two challenges that are critical to the EU and for which it wants to arrive at a "shared vision" in the long term.

In addition to completing the energy market, the EU has simultaneously launched negotiations with energy-producing and transiting countries in a bid to develop an "engagement strategy" aimed at guaranteeing its own sources of supply.

The continental body has infused 730 million euros in the "intelligent energy" programme to consume less and better, increase production and competitiveness as well as innovation skills toward shielding the European continent against frequent situational twists.

"The EU is seeking to reduce its dependency and for this reason is attempting to minimise the risks linked to the vagaries in the production of oil and gas, two highly strategic products," said an ambassador that regularly attends EU-ACP negotiations.

The two regions have never-ending divergences on the approach to the negotiations, but fears are that the ripples of the energy crisis might affect the Köningswinter talks the outcome of which millions of banana, sugar, peanut, cotton, fruit and cereal producers are looking forward to.

Time factor may wreck EU-ACP negotiations

APA-Königswinter (Germany). The time management may be the main disagreement between the European Union (EU) and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries in the ongoing negotiations which are expected Monday to reach their critical phase with the opening of the cooperation ministers' informal meeting in Königswinter, near Bonn the German capital.

Following the negotiations leaders' meeting, cooperation ministers are ready to take over in a moot atmosphere simmering with heavy insinuations on either side, to sound out the maiden intentions of the delegations present in Bonn.

Interviewed by APA, a European diplomat set the tune by revealing among the ACP partners, particularly African countries, "A shocking lack of preparation that could wreck the completion of the December 2007 agreements".

"African seem to pay no heed to the time allowed, despite their vow in a bid to come straight to globalisation", a European diplomat said under anonymity.

"The conclusion of the agreements is not a race against time", Ghanaian Mohamed Ibn Chambas, the chairperson of the Ecowas economic commission told APA, insisting that "A mature and well-thought-out accord is better than a show-off agreement".

Although frustrated by the critics towards African countries, Chambas remained optimistic, underscoring that the European Union has spent time to achieve unity.

"Why then to hurry up?" the Ghanaian wondered, insisting that the rhythm of negotiations requires certain flexibility".

Such move, will hence grant necessary time for a sound defence line within the ACP countries to strengthen the negotiation abilities face a "hardened and welded" Europe.

Considering these observations, Germany which is to preside over the EU for the six coming months, expressed through its prominent cooperation minister, Mrs Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, the difficulty to reach this objective due to a spate of hindering parameters.

"Many people flurry at the trading and development approaches, which stains the sound conduct of the ongoing negotiations", underscored Mrs Wieczorek-Zeul, a prominent figure of the German SPD (ruling party).

According to several pundits present at the Bonn meeting, the EU-ACP negotiations are prone to time extensions even if such a prospect would induce a financial incidence to be borne by the European taxpayers.

On the one side, observers shunned the "Alleged issue of an overwhelmed schedule" at a moment when the non-ACP countries threaten to refer to the World trade organisation (WTO) with the expiration of preferential agreements.

On the other, they agreed to advocate a " short postponement of this schedule and give more time for its implementation".

In addition, the high rate securing of the franc CFA by the Euro wrecks the exports of African cotton whereas some observers fear that the drop of tariff barriers weakens the African economies because the effectiveness of the Economic partnership agreements (EPAs) would mean a substantial drop of customs tariff revenues.

" We have demonised and defied development", told to APA Charles Jospin, the French former cooperation minister who is taking part in the German civil society forum which deals with the topic "Are the APE useful to development".

During this forum, outstanding experts voiced objections of principle against the EU approach under protection of the WTO.

Mamadou Ndiaye
African Press Agency
APA
12/03/2007

Cameroon pleads for a broad-based ACP-EU accord

APA-Königswinter (Germany). The Cameroonian delegation to the ministerial meeting between the African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries (ACP) group and the European Union (EU) Tuesday pleaded for a broad-based balanced accord between the two partners, APA learns here.

Cameroonian Economy and Finance Minister Polycarpe Abah Abah, who led the Cameroonian delegation, made the disclosures in an interview with APA where he was flanked by his Commerce counterpart Luc Magloire Mbarga Atanganga.

The various parties are heading to "A harmonisation of their positions to an economic partnership accord covering certain aspects that were inadequately considered," Abah Abah noted.

He argued that the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) will bear little fruit if they overlook the development aspect, recalling that at the Berlin meeting in November 2006, the ACP and EU countries overcame certain hurdles related to conflicting perceptions on the aim of these accords, slated to replace the Cotonou agreement signed in 2000.

"We have not come to Bonn to negotiate but to raise the awareness of the states", he said as he was ready to depart for Ndjamena to attend the Community of Central African States summit, leaving his Commerce counterpart behind to continue with the discussions.

The informal debates have opened brainstorming avenues, but left a few aspects to clarify, especially the funding of the implementation of the EPAs and the nagging issue of the deadline, which was pushed to the second semester of the year, when Portugal takes over the EU presidency from Germany.

To harmonise the positions of the six ACP and EU regions, it has been in principle to create a regional fund and budget support schemes towards fostering "Adaptation to the new context arising from the EPAs, which have upset traditional taxation systems and induced new restructuring operations in the face of the huge losses of revenue they will possibly cause in all the southern hemisphere countries," the minister said.

The Finance minister added that these funds would be "Additional resources and not those from the tenth European Development Fund (EDF)", recalling that the ACP group regions should be allowed to advance at individual paces to reflect the particularities of each. Yet he said the common goal is to conclude the accords by December.

"This date was not chosen by chance. we are linked to the EU by the Cotonou accord to which the World Trade Organisation (WTO) - at the Doha Round - granted an exception expiring on 31 December 2007," Atanganga said on his part.

"It is possible for each region to advance individually, depending on their interests, but if there is no accord complying with the WTO rules by this date, our products will be subjected to common law on the European market because they will cease being covered by any exception whatsoever," Atanganga added.

In the event that an accord is not reached by December 2007, a legal vacuum will arise and trade preferences will be suppressed alongside exceptions in the current scheme in which European exports to Africa are taxed while African exports to Europe are exempted from all such measures.

Both Cameroonian ministers said the motive behind the EPA negotiations is to offer the states "A cover, an umbrella".

"The Doha Round is more devastating than meets the eye," warned Atangana, who is a well-versed regular of similar negotiations.

He said provisionally, the EPAs are "A niche, a cocoon due to the full opening of the markets"

"The EPAs are more of a stake to Africans than to Europeans," he concluded.

Mamadou Ndiaye
African Press Agency
APA
13/03/2007

Germany G8 summit to focus on Africa, minister says

APA-Königswinter (Germany). The African continent is a sanctuary of disasters but it hosts great hopes with great and interesting prospects, Mrs Heidemarie Wiecezorek-Zeul, the German Minister for Economic, Cooperation and Development said Tuesday in Königswinter, near Bonn, the German capital.

Mrs Wiecezorek-Zeul was speaking at the end of the informal meeting between the development and co-operation ministers of the European Union (EU) and the African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries (ACP).

"A great impetus is looming for this continent", Mrs Wiecezorek-Zeul predicted at the final press conference while briefing APA on the weight of Germany within an initiative which aims at reversing the demeaning image of the continent.

The German Cooperation Minister said in 2007, Berlin has a double role as it chairs both the EU and the G8, which groups the eight most industrialised countries in the world.

In this ambit, Africa will be very topical at the Germany summit slated for June 2007 with the different initiatives deployed here and there to put the continent into orbit.

Mrs Wiecezorek-Zeul noted that there are no better opportunities than those offered by these two organs to plead for the African cause and voice its stand at Heiligendamm" (Easten Germany) that is the venue of the June summit.

Hailing the observations of Paul Wolfowitz, the president of the World Bank who pegs the African growth rate at nearly 5%, the German minister thrilled to these performances referring to the "evident clues of achieved strides".

Mrs Wiecezorek-Zeul announced the holding in May 2007 in Berlin of a great forum devoted to Africa under the leadership of the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for African development (NEPAD) committee.

This meeting, she said, is quite judicious because it precedes the G8 summit and its conclusions will enable a broad awareness of the eight most powerful countries in the world.

Commending the ongoing democratic strides in Africa, the German cooperation minister advocated the strengthening of such prospects, and urged African leaders to "reinforce the rule of law in their respective countries to attract more investments".

African leaders should encourage the enactment of laws and stress good governance, Mrs Wiecezorek-Zeul affirmed, arguing that the initiative of the economic partnership agreements (EPAs) which are under negotiations between the EU and the ACP, smacks of a "political prerequisite" along with the worldwide massive changes.

The German official further pleaded for the "financing of micro-instruments" in favour of Africans to allow them easy access into the market and to be familiar with its constraints in a way to better their living conditions.

Mrs Wieczorek-Zeul is expected soon in the Democratic Republic of Congo to encourage that country to carry on, despite the thwarting snags, its way to reconstruction and recovery.

The EU has disbursed funds worth 3 billion Euro earmarked for governance in developing countries and other 2 billion Euro to back the trade within the ACP countries.

This financial support demonstrates the European concern to draw these countries out of this threatening poverty spiral that can, at any moment, jeopardise the geo-strategic balance of the different parts of the world.

Under the German initiative, the EU and ACP convened in Bonn to hold informal discussions on the EPAs. This meeting is considered as a diplomatic and economic success by observers who are mindful of the advances achieved through this 30-year old partnership.

Mamadou Ndiaye
African Press Agency
APA
13/03/2007

DR Congo to get millions of dollars for democratisation process

APA-Königswinter (Germany). DR Congo will get 160 million euros from the European Union and 186 million dollars from the World Bank later this year in response to calls by the new government to support the democratisation process in the country, the EU Development and Humanitarian Assistance Commissioner, Louis Michel told reporters in Königswinter (Germany) on Tuesday.

Addressing a news conference in Bonn on the merge of the two-day informal meeting between the EU and ACP Development and Economic Cooperation ministers, Michel said the contribution by the WB and the EU in targeted countries will promote sound policies and greater efficiency.

Michel said the donors are endeavouring to streamline their contributions in developing countries by coordinating the efforts and by setting of attainable priorities.

He spoke about the production of a "Donors' guide book" that will contain the partners' achievements and progress reports in a bid to monitor and maintain cooperation between the donors and recipients.

"Good governance should be the bedrock for the targeted cooperation," Michel said, noting that the European Commission had earmarked 3 billion euros out of the 22 billion euros allocated by the European development Fund (EDF) which will be used to promote good governance.

Africa has no responsibility in global warming, says German minister

APA - Königswinter (Germany). Africa has no responsibility in global warming, German Economic Cooperation and Development Minister Heidemarie Wiecezorek-Zeul told APA on the sidelines of the European and ACP ministers informal meeting in Königswinter (Germany).

"Not only doesn't Africa have any responsibility in the warming, but suffers from it," she said.

The German official pleaded for a mobilisation of technical and financial means to give Africa adequate resources to meet future challenges.

Alongside her European peers, Wiecezorek-Zeul was highly favourable to Africa, increasing her multiple announcements in favour of the continent in nearly all her public appearances.

Addressing the German civil society and the many journalists covering the event, Wiecezorek-Zeul, a highly influential minister in the corridors of power in Berlin, underscored the need for Europe to develop "strong sensitivity" to Africa.

In an interview with APA, she evoked the need to reach an "European consensus" allowing the EU to harmonise its development policy goals and to define the guidelines of the European intervention.

According to her, the best evidence that Africa is suffering from climate changes is that its pollution contribution is minor because it lacks polluting industries "equalling those in great industrialised countries".

If nothing is done, stagnation will lead to a shortage of resources, exacerbating the situation of millions of people around the world - especially in Africa -, exposing them to diseases and poverty.

The ripples of this economic development are affecting Africa in its development quest, the German minister said, expressing her conviction that environment policy stakes "transcend continental borders".

Germany is seeking to rally other countries to its environmental concerns to advance the fight against global warming and climate change.

Despite reserves and reluctances, a number of European nations signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Furthermore, German experts have largely contributed to the launch of the Kyoto Protocol at the UNFCCC signatory states' conference held in 1994 in Berlin, when incumbent German Chancellor Angela Merkel, was the Environment minister.

The informal meeting of European and African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) ministers ends Tuesday in Bonn.

Mamadou Ndiaye
African Press Agency
APA
13/03/2007

EU chief trade negotiator assesses 30 years of EU-ACP preferential system

APA - Königswinter (Germany). The European Union Trade Commissioner, Peter Mandelson on Tuesday said the implementation of the preferential trade system between the European Union and the African Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries for the past 30 years did not live up to expectations.

"We need to readjust our practices, due to the profound changes underway in the world", Mr. Mandelson told reporters on the sidelines of the informal meeting between the EU and ACP development and economic cooperation ministers in Königswinter, near Bonn.

Mandelson, the EU chief negotiator admittedly said that "three decades of a preferential system have failed to improve the living conditions of ordinary people in developing countries", blaming this setback on the anachronism in the relations based on a logic of assistance, in a world heading towards competition.

To support his opinion, the EU Commissioner gave the example of Asian and Latin American countries which "are better off" without a preferential trade system, and which in his words, have developed instinctive feelings of resistance that have prepared them to enter the globalisation "fairly easily".

The Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) are aimed at ensuring a smooth transition of ACP countries towards the globalisation of the economy.

With regard to the support measures envisioned by the European Union, they are intended to correct the adaptation variances stemming from the integration process to an economy in a globalisation trend.

According to Mr. Mandelson, the system of the EPAs is tricky. But "almost everything and contrary to what is being said and done" about them, these agreements ultimately are "a long integration process and a vital locomotive for integration".

Questioned about the deadline set on 31 December 2007 for the signing of the agreements, Mandelson observed that "everyone is bound to the same requirements", commending the breakthroughs registered in the Caribbean region. In this regard, he called for "quick action" in the other regions, which he would not name.

According to some reports in Bonn, the Caribbeans is expected to meet in July to sign the economic partnership agreements with the European Union.

The chief negotiator, Richard Bernal, told APA Monday that the said agreements should be signed if ACP countries "do not wish to miss the train of modernisation".

The EPAs advocate a gradual liberalisation of trade with the grouping of countries in a common market, then the integration of these regional markets and eventually the association of northern and southern markets in a wide free trade zone, allowing for some fine-tuning meant to back up "fragile" economies.

"Europe will work hard towards settling misunderstandings due to its major responsibilities", Mr. Mandelson assured; recognising nevertheless that it is no easy task to set "Ambitious" objectives.

He also deplored the confusion made between commercial and development policies.

"There is no alternative but the EPAs", Commissioner Mandelson indicated during the European leaders' press conference held in the sidelines of the two-day meeting of ACP and EU ministers which ended on Tuesday in Bonn.

Mamadou Ndiaye
African Press Agency
APA
14/03/2007





Foto:William Rasoanaivo

Batailles pour signer les APE

D'un côté, sur les hauteurs boisées de Petersberg, des ministres de chaque État membre de l'Union européenne. De l'autre, en contre-bas dans le village de Königswinter, la délégation des pays ACP (Afrique, Caraïbes, Pacifique). Le décor est planté pour la réunion informelle des ministres en préparation de la signature des Accords de partenariat économique (APE), qui s'est tenue les 12 et 13 mars près de Bonn, en Allemagne. Une grande première.

L'enjeu est de taille et Maurice était représentée par son ambassadeur basé à Bruxelles, Sutiawan Gunesse.

"La continuité des relations économiques avec l'Europe est vitale", a-t-il déclaré. Ainsi, Maurice soutient ses pairs de la Southern African Development Community (SADC), la communauté de développement de l'Afrique australe et s'engage à signer les APE d'ici la fin de l'année.

Les cinq autres partis du groupe ACP ont également déclaré s'engager à conclure ces accords, non sans avoir émis des réserves. En commun, les États ACP ont fait un plaidoyer pour plus de soutien dans le renforcement des capacités, ainsi que pour la non-réciprocité, dans une certaine mesure, sur les échanges commerciaux.

Selon Sutiawan Gunesse, le "défi capital" pour Maurice est de préserver les acquis lors des précédentes négociations sur le sucre. Il a également souligné que Maurice est prête à étendre ses négociations dans le domaine du service.

Un point de vue que ne partagent pas forcément d'autres pays de la région, qui préfèrent se concentrer d'abord sur le commerce de biens. C'est d'ailleurs le terrain d'entente et la base adoptés par les pays ACP pour poursuivre les négociations.

La délégation ACP a déclaré qu'il est tout à fait réaliste de conclure les accords avant 2008. " Il n'y a pas d'autres alternatives que de signer", ont indiqué bon nombre des membres de la délégation ACP, sur divers tons, variant entre l'enthousiasme et la résignation. Les régulations sur les échanges commerciaux entre l'UE et les États ACP, prévues par les accords de Cotonou, prendront fin cette année. Un nouveau cadre doit être établi pour les remplacer. Ce qui explique l'empressement des deux parties pour parvenir à un accord.

"L'Europe est notre principal partenaire et donateur et personne n'a intérêt à ce qu'un vide s'installe après cette année", a commenté notre ambassadeur. Des ONG ont suggéré de reporter ces signatures pour laisser aux pays ACP le temps de mieux se préparer aux éventuelles adaptations engendrées par les APE. Mais la plupart des membres de la délégation estiment qu'une prolongation des échéances mettrait leurs pays dans des situations pour le moins précaires et nuisibles.

Après ces réunions préliminaires, les deux parties se retrouveront pour conduire les travaux jusqu'à la conclusion – coûte que coûte – des APE, qu'ils espèrent pour la fin de cette année, au plus tard.

William Rasoanaivo
Express Dimanche
18/03/2007

Forcing européen pour la signature des APE

Les Etats de l'Afrique, Caraïbes et Pacifiques (ACP) semblent céder sous la pression de l'Union Européenne pour signer les Accords de Partenariat Economique (APE). Malgré leurs réserves, les différentes zones économiques ACP se sont engagées à conclure les accords à temps. Mais rien ne garantit leur bonne foi et malgré la coalition de façade, les points de vue divergent.

Les APE sont pro-développement. En résumé, c'est le message lancé par la délégation européenne sous la houlette de Mme Heidemarie Wiecezorek-Zeul, ministre allemande de la Coopération économique et du Développement, lors de la rencontre informelle des ministres ACP et européens – la première du genre – le 12 et 13 mars en Allemagne. Deux milliards d'euros seront débloqués pour faire face aux adaptations et aux nécessités engendrées par ces accords. Ces derniers ont reçus la bénédiction du président de la Banque Mondiale, Paul Wolfowitz, qui a déclaré que "les pays ACP devraient les signer", tout en recommandant un "code de cohérence" entre les bailleurs.

Mais la crainte des pays ACP s'exprimait par le truchement des organisations non gouvernementales (ONG). Quelques membres d'ONG sont venus manifester devant l'hôtel qui accueillait les ministres ACP, brandissant des pancartes et laissant entendre que les APE pourraient ruiner entre autres les sécurités alimentaires, détruire les petits producteurs et accentuer la pauvreté.

Jacob Gyeke Buba, membre de la délégation ministérielle nigériane a expliqué lors d'une conférence parallèle organisée par les ONG que la libéralisation du commerce et la réduction des tarifs exposent le continent africain à une inondation de produits européens. Il estime que, avant de faire face à l'Europe, bien de pays ont d'abord besoin de renforcement de capacités étant donné que les produits africains ne sont, en majorité, pas compétitifs.

Ainsi, malgré les assertions que toutes les 6 régions ACP se sont engagées à conclure les accords avant la fin de l'année, certaines voix s'élèvent en coulisses, à l'instar de M. Alhaji Aliyu Modibbo Umar, ministre du Commerce Nigérian, qui a laissé entendre que la Communauté Economique des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (Ecowas) ne sera pas prête avant trois ans et, en attendant, fermera son marché à l'Europe.

En agissant ainsi, les membres de l'Ecowas risquent ainsi de baser leurs négociations sur les préférences, quand les accords de Cotonou ne seront plus en vigueur, l'année prochaine. Mais l'Ecowas compte évoquer une extension des préférences.

Et c'est là que les perceptions divergent. En effet, une éventuelle extension est qualifiée de "vulnérable" selon les dires de Neo Moroka, ministre du Commerce et de l'Industrie du Botswana. "Les pays ACP n'ont pas d'autres choix que de signer" A-t-il déclaré, malgré quelques réserves. Son avis reflète la position de la Communauté de Développement d'Afrique Australe (SADC). Il plaide afin que les règles régissant les échanges entre les deux partis ne soient pas réciproques. Il insiste également sur le renforcement de capacité, qui va au-delà des enveloppes des Fonds Européens pour le Développement (Fed). Il estime que les échanges soient pour le moment limités aux biens et non étendus dans le secteur des services et des investissements. Pour la SADC, l'Afrique du Sud – malgré qu'il ne fasse pas partie des petites économies – soit considéré dans les négociations, en tant que membre de la communauté économique de la région. Autant de plaidoyers auprès de l'Union Européenne.

Et puis, il y a ceux qui, non seulement considèrent qu'il faut signer les APE, mais qui sont pratiquement disposés à le faire avant la date butoir. M. Richard Bernal, Ambassadeur, Directeur général du Mécanisme de négociation régional caribéen (MNR) paraît rassuré et confiant. Les Caraïbes (région Cariforum). "Il n'y a d'autres choix que de signer" souligne-t-il d'un ton cependant plus rassuré. "Nous jouissons de beaucoup d'expériences en commerce et nous pourrions partager nos expertises pour aider les autres groupes à conclure à temps", a-t-il laissé entendre.

Des positions complexes reflétant la complexité de ces accords, mais que les deux partis comptent conclure à terme, avec le moins de complications possibles.

William Rasoanaivo
Midi Madagasikara
03/2007



Cartoon by William Rasoanaivo

ACP-Union Européenne: Les négociations à Bonn port

L'Afrique arrache quelques concessions au sujet des futurs accords de partenariats économiques avec l'Union européenne

Petersberg est un de ces endroits auxquels nul n'accède sans montrer patte blanche. Il est aux Allemands ce qu'est le Camp David aux Américains. Ici, luxure et parure se retrouvent dans la plus grande solennité, au milieu de pins géants qui font de ce site un lieu unique, historique. Plutôt un endroit stratégique dont les portes ne s'ouvrent que lors d'événements de grande importance pour l'Allemagne. La légende est loin d'être surfaite. C'est là-bas, sur les hauteurs de Königswinter, petite bourgade près de Bonn, que la présidence Allemande de l'Union européenne a décidé de tenir la réunion informelle des ministres de l'Union européenne et des ACP (Afrique Caraïbes et Pacifique) au sujet des négociations sur les accords de partenariat économiques (APE).

Les discussions commencent le 12 mars. Entre huis clos, plénières et tractations de couloirs. L'encadrement très serré de la police ne laisse rien filtrer. Quelques fois, les revendications de quelques Ong réunies à Bonn (non loin du site des négociations) viennent perturber la sérénité des participants. Mais, personne ne perd de vue les vrais enjeux: la signature au 31 décembre 2007 des accords de partenariats économiques devant régir les rapports commerciaux entre l'Union Européenne et les pays ACP. Finalement, au deuxième jour, les deux parties parviennent non pas à un accord ("Nous ne sommes pas venus négocier", a précisé le commissaire européen, Louis Michel), mais à une entente sur la poursuite sereine des négociations en vue de la libéralisation des échanges.

A Petersberg, l'Afrique a continué à parler de plusieurs voies, notamment sur l'opportunité ou non de signer les nouveaux accords de partenariats au 31 décembre. Pour certains pays, comme le Nigeria, la signature des accords de partenariat économique (APE) avant décembre 2007, ne paraît pas réaliste. Une prolongation de la date butoir devrait être envisagée. Ce qui n'est pas du tout du goût des pays de l'Union européenne décidés à tourner la page des accords de partenariats dits préférentiels qui, jusque-là, régissaient les rapports commerciaux avec l'Afrique. Entre les deux extrémités, d'autres voies émergent, qui entrevoient la signature au 31 décembre, mais après une série de mesures d'accompagnement. Cette voie est notamment portée par le Cameroun pour qui les APE sont une porte d'entrée incontournable dans la mondialisation.

Pour Polycarpe Abah Abah, ministre des Finances du Cameroun et représentant de la zone Cemac à cette rencontre "si nous n'avons pas signé avant 2008, il y aura un vide juridique, nos pays payerons des droits de douanes pour entrer dans l'UE. Fort de cela, nous avons réaffirmé notre engagement à pouvoir signer au 31 décembre 2007. Nous ferons une évaluation au mois de juillet pour voir le chemin parcouru et ce qui reste à faire pour parvenir à un accord équilibré au 31 décembre 2007. Nous n'allons pas signer n'importe quoi", a-t-il précisé lors d'un entretien avec le reporter de Mutations.

"Les enjeux sont importants", a ajouté le ministre du Commerce, Luc Magloire Mbarga Atangana, autre représentant camerounais à cette réunion. Et de poursuivre, "Les APE sont un outil destiné à préparer nos pays à commercer dans un contexte de forte concurrence. Le côté intéressante de l'accord avec l'UE, c'est que c'est un cocon qui nous met à l'abri de la concurrence immédiate ouverte, pour laquelle, à l'évidence, nous ne sommes pas prêts". Les négociations à venir auront l'avantage de clarifier définitivement les revendications et donner un peu plus de visibilité sur le contenu de ces accords par régions, ainsi que sur la liste des produits essentiels qui pourraient être pris en compte dans les échanges commerciaux avec l'UE.

Dans cette perspective, il a été arrêté, de commun accord avec les autres représentants des pays ACP, le

principe de conditionner la signature des accords de partenariats économiques à la satisfaction d'un certain nombre de revendications auxquelles l'Union européenne accède: la prise en compte de la dimension "développement" dans les échanges commerciaux, l'appui budgétaire aux pays ACP pour amortir les pertes de recettes fiscales qu'engendrerait l'effondrement des barrières tarifaires, la création de fonds régionaux en plus de l'augmentation subséquente du budget du Fonds européen pour le développement (Fed). Au terme de cette entente, les Etats membres de l'Union européenne s'engagent à porter leur aide au développement, d'ici 2015, à 0,7% de leur Pnb et à atteindre d'ici 2010, l'objectif intermédiaire de 0,56% .

Des fonds budgétaires additionnels, d'autres mesures d'allègement de la dette, ainsi que des instruments innovants de financement fourniront une contribution majeure à la réalisation du plan échelonné de l'Europe pour l'augmentation de l'aide publique au développement. Mais ces propositions restent très vagues pour nombre d'Africains, notamment ceux de la société civile qui craignent que ne se perpétue le règne de l'iniquité aux dépens des économies africaines. D'ailleurs, au moment où les ministres du développement de l'UE et des ACP discutaient à Königswinter, un groupe d'activistes manifestaient près de là, pour attirer l'attention des délégués ACP sur les conséquences éventuelles d'une négociation aveugle. Tout le scénario classique d'un contre-sommet. Les manifestants en moins.

Roger A. Taakam
Mutations
14/03/2007

Préférences ou libre échange?

L'Afrique invitée à choisir entre marginalisation et mondialisation

C'est certainement un grand coup que veut frapper l'Allemagne qui assure, en ce moment, la présidence de l'Union Européenne. Le vent des échanges économiques entre ACP et Ue pourrait en effet tourner sous le règne d'Angela Merkel. Mais c'est une posture qui a aussi son revers. Car, les choses peuvent mal tourner. Prévenants, les Allemands manœuvrent habilement pour que tout ce passe bien, dans l'intérêt du développement de l'Afrique.

Le constat est clair: en 25 ans d'accords préférentiels, l'Afrique n'a guère développé son économie, pas plus qu'elle ne participe aux échanges commerciaux. Le temps est désormais au changement de cap, avec pour enjeu majeur le développement de l'Afrique.

Avec la libéralisation du commerce, il semblait plus que jamais nécessaire de revoir le cadre des échanges dits "préférentiels" qui permettaient à l'Afrique de vendre sur les marchés européens. C'est l'objet des nouveaux accords de partenariats économiques qui devraient en principe entrer en vigueur le 1er janvier prochain. Le partenariat entre l'UE et les pays ACP initié en 1963 a pris une nouvelle dimension avec la signature de l'accord de Cotonou en juin 2000 par les 70 pays d'Afrique, des Caraïbes et du Pacifique (ACP) et les 15 membres de l'Union européenne (UE). Ainsi cet accord ratifié par tous les Etats ACP, prévoit la conclusion des APE en tenant compte des règles de l'Organisation mondiale du commerce (OMC).

L'accord fait suite à 25 années de coopération ACP-UE régie par quatre conventions successives de Lomé. Il s'articule autour de deux grands thèmes: la coopération économique et commerciale, et la coopération financière et technique. Aux termes de l'Accord de Cotonou, le système actuel de relations commerciales préférentielles non réciproques doit laisser la place à des accords de partenariat économique (APE). Chaque APE doit être négocié entre les pays ACP et l'UE. La première phase des négociations, entamée en septembre 2002, s'est déroulée dans l'ensemble des ACP. La seconde phase, engagée en 2003, repose sur des négociations régionales. Celles-ci devraient aboutir à la signature de nouveaux accords de libre-échange qui seront mis en place en 2008. En ce moment, le débat achoppe sur le maintien de cette date. Et tout porte à croire que les nouveaux accords entreront effectivement en vigueur au 1er janvier. Seule la période de transition pourrait varier d'une région à l'autre.

Vers un fonds de solidarité énergétique?

L'Union européenne réfléchit sur les questions d'énergie et de développement en Afrique.

Les ressources naturelles africaines sont de plus en plus l'objet de la concurrence mondiale. Avant toute chose, leur exploitation doit contribuer au développement durable du continent sur le long terme. Outre son fort attachement au multilatéralisme efficace, l'UE oeuvrera en faveur de la transparence et de la justice en vue d'assurer le développement durable." C'est l'un des principaux engagements auxquels sont parvenus les ministres de l'Union européenne en charge de développement au terme de leur réunion informelle tenue à Bonn en présence des délégués venus des pays d'Afrique .

Plus que jamais, le débat autour de l'aide à l'Afrique sur les questions énergétiques est enclenché. Réunis à Brazzaville en octobre 2006, les représentants d'Afrique et de l'Union européenne avaient déjà lancé un appel au renforcement du dialogue sur l'énergie au niveau politique et à un partenariat global entre l'Europe et l'Afrique quant à la sécurité énergétique et l'accès à l'énergie. Du 12 au 13 mars 2007 à Bonn, il s'est agi d'explorer les pistes d'une "Alliance "Au sujet de l'énergie entre l'Afrique et l'Europe.

Il est notamment recommandé aux pays africains de mettre l'accent sur l'utilisation durable des ressources énergétiques locales et renouvelables, telles que l'énergie hydraulique, géothermique, les utilisations traditionnelles et modernes de la biomasse, l'énergie solaire et éolienne. Ces ressources représentent, d'après les pays de l'Union européenne, un potentiel susceptible de réduire la dépendance des pays pauvres en ressources naturelles vis-à-vis des importations pétrolières, et, en même temps, elles contribuent à lutter contre les changements climatiques et ses répercussions négatives. Naturellement, ils sont prêt à y mettre quelques financements, dont les montants ne sont pas encore arrêtés.

"Il est particulièrement important de soutenir l'Afrique dans ses efforts de réduction des émissions de gaz à effet de serre en suivant des approches d'énergie durable. Néanmoins, il reste nécessaire de prendre des mesures urgentes en vue d'atténuer les répercussions des changements climatiques qui se font déjà sentir", peut-on lire dans le communiqué qui a sanctionné les discussions de la réunion informelle des ministres ACP-UE, tenue à Bonn. Les ministres européens présents à Bonn précisent en plus que "l'action européenne respecte les valeurs communes dont elle fait la promotion active: le respect des droits humains, l'égalité entre sexe, la démocratie, la bonne gouvernance."

Prenant les ministres européennes au mot, les ONG et membres de la société civile qui se sont retrouvés à Bonn pour la conférence "Prospects in Africa", ont instamment demandé aux pays de l'UE de "restructurer les fonds en faveur de l'utilisation des énergies renouvelables, faire valoir l'influence européenne dans les organisations internationales de financement, faire avancer la réforme des secteurs énergétiques nationaux et promouvoir des politiques énergétiques nouvelles, instaurer les conditions préalables à la diffusion de technologies énergétiques modernes et durables". Pour la première fois, l'idée d'instituer un fond pour l'énergie a été débattu, et évoqué publiquement par Louis Michel, Commissaire européen au développement et à l'aide humanitaire.

Roger A. Taakam
Mutations
14/03/2007



Meeting of the G8 Development Ministers, Foto: InWent

Meeting of G8 Ministers for Development Cooperation

Berlin, 26 – 27 March 2007

The triad "Fighting Poverty – Shaping Sustainable Development – Strengthening Global Partnerships" set the tone for the discussions conducted in Berlin on 26 and 27 March 2007 by G8 representatives with responsibility for development policy. Development Minister Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul had also extended an invitation to ministers from the emerging economies Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa and to high-level representatives of African organisations, the first time that these two groups had been invited to such a meeting. "With our two-day conference we have brought added momentum to the preparations for the G8 summit. We have made good progress on central development policy issues," said German Development Minister Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul at the conclusion of the talks.

Highlighting the main achievements, Mrs Wieczorek-Zeul said that three concrete results had been reached at the meeting: "First, we want to continue the dialogue between developing, emerging and industrialised countries. Second, we have agreed to strengthen regional cooperation in Africa itself. And third, we have prepared the way for health systems, climate and conflict prevention to be discussed as topics at the G8 summit." She explained that there had been a broad consensus that, mindful of shared global responsibility, the dialogue between the developing, emerging and industrialised countries needed to be intensified in order to combat global poverty. The economic drive and political influence of the emerging economies could make a crucial contribution towards moving the efforts of the G8 countries forward.

It was unanimously agreed that strengthening regional cooperation in Africa was a key prerequisite for development and an important element of poverty reduction. Close economic relations between African countries and supra-regional infrastructure will offer many countries the possibility to create economic prospects and market opportunities for themselves. "There is great potential here that needs to be tapped. Together with our African partners, we agreed that this is exactly the right moment for a German G8 initiative to strengthen regional cooperation," Mrs Wieczorek-Zeul pointed out. The talks with high-level representatives of the African Union (AU), the African Development Bank (ADB), the East African Community (EAC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) therefore also served the purpose of specifically discussing possibilities for G8 support.

With regard to the topics of health systems, climate and conflict prevention, Mrs Wieczorek-Zeul continued: "We are aware with all these topics that developing countries in particular need special support from us. Sub-Saharan Africa is home to two thirds of all the people in the world who are HIV positive; women and girls are particularly affected by this disease. The consequences of climate change will be especially dramatic in developing countries; and a large number of armed conflicts are being played out in developing countries." She went on to say that the German G8 Presidency has set itself the goal of addressing these problems and launching concrete initiatives. These include measures to ensure universal access to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care by 2010 or to help with adapting to the consequences of climate change, a problem that particularly threatens people in developing countries. "And we know very well that we must provide additional funding for this," said Mrs Wieczorek-Zeul. "Germany is an internationally reliable partner and will meet its commitments to increase funding for development cooperation substantially."

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G8 tips Africa on growth, roots for enterprises

African governments should increase the participation of the private sector to attain the UN Millennium Development Goals.

This is the message to the continent from Group of Eight (G8) development ministers. After a meeting in Berlin, Germany, last week, the ministers asked Africa to create an enabling environment for more sustainable investment.

The ministers hailed the growth rates of more than 5% registered in many countries as a product of sustained reforms and good governance.

To sustain the positive developments, they called for specific efforts in financial sector to benefit micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.

"As a result, employment and income will be generated, whereby a particular concern will be to promote women's equal participation in economic life," they said.

The development ministers from Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and the United States met ahead of the G8 Summit in Heiligendamm, Germany, from June 6 to 8.

The summit is an annual economic and political event attended by heads of government of these countries.

For the first time in the history of the G8, the ministers met representatives of emerging economies and African organisations. Ministers from Brazil, China, India, and Mexico attended the meeting.

The African Union, African Development Bank, East African Community, Economic Community of West African States, Intergovernmental Authority on Development, and the Southern Africa Development Community also took part.

Germany's minister for Economic Co-operation and Development, Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, who hosted the meeting, said strengthening regional co-operation in Africa was a prerequisite for development.

"Regional economic co-operation can be a key to development. Where purchasing power is low and markets are fragmented, cross-border economic activities can open up new markets and thus increase the reach of African economies," she said.

The ministers also called for a pro-development conclusion of the Doha trade talks and urged G8 countries to honour their commitments to double funding to African countries by 2010.

They said industrialised countries must make their development co-operation more effective in line with the Paris Declaration and keep their pledges to increase Official Development Assistance (ODA).

The Paris Declaration, which was endorsed on March 2, 2005, is an international agreement among governments and international co-operation agencies to increase Aid effectiveness.

Wieczorek-Zeul stressed that developing countries will be hardest hit by consequences of climate change, and particular attention would be given to forest protection to reduce greenhouse gas emissions caused by deforestation in developing countries.

" The number of storms, floods, droughts and forest fires will increase significantly, threatening the livelihoods of people in developing countries, " she said.

During a meeting between the ministers and representatives of emerging economies, the parties agreed that revenues from extractive resources must be mobilised to fight poverty.

The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) was cited as one of the ways of enhancing transparency of payment flows in the raw materials sector.

A global conference to foster dialogue between the G8 and emerging economies on transparency in the sector is scheduled for Germany later this year.

The G8 reaffirmed its commitment to continue supporting the Global Fund to fight Aids, tuberculosis and malaria, but called for more attention to the special situation of women and girls in the fight against HIV/Aids.

Lucy Kirauni
The Standard
06/04/2007

G8 courts African leaders

On March 26-27, the G8 development ministers held preliminary discussions in Berlin - Germany for the Heiligendamm G8 summit in June. East African Community Secretary General Juma Mwapachu was among the leaders of African regional economic organisations invited. Business Editor Frederic Masiga talked to him on various issues about the meeting and the EAC.

The G8 leaders at this meeting have described this event as historic, do you find it so?

The G8 development ministers are right to describe the meeting as being historic in the sense that there has been a dispatcher from the G8 leaders engaging a selected number of leaders from African largely those who represent the group that has been coordinating Nepad issues and specifically in 5 countries; this time not only have they engaged the African Union directly but they have also gone further to engage what you might call the micro institutions of the African Union namely the regional economic communities. This is the first time that the leaders of eight regional economic communities - there were only 5 of us - were able to meet with G8 leaders. So it is historic.

What sense of commitment to African issues by the G8 did you get from this meeting?

The G8 leadership has been making commitments. And over the last 5 years or so there has been growth in terms of ODA (Official Development Assistance), there has been growth in terms of technical assistance for capacity building of the AU itself and of the regional economic communities. The EU in particular has taken a lead in supporting the African peace and security architecture by creating the African Peace Fund as a result of which the AU is able to implement this architecture. There have been increased activity but for the first time the G8 leadership has found it fit to engage the grassroots players in Africa namely the economic communities that operate at micro level, that interface with the people. These are institutions that are more sensitive to the challenges on the ground so it was okay for the AU to be a representative organ, but I think this time the G8 leadership found it fit to say wait a minute, I think we need a voice from the actual grassroots players and to that extent I find this particular meeting historic not necessarily that they made commitments but the mere fact that they found it fit to talk to us now directly. I think this could result in much more concrete action.

What in this meeting did you find of more importance specifically for the East African Community?

Being able to share insight about the accessions of Rwanda and Burundi into the EAC and what it really means to have post conflict countries coming into the EAC because it heightened the need to address serious infrastructure problems that our sub region faces in terms of the road network; the railway system, the road system and our power system. Uganda and Tanzania have had their GDP growth eroded by at least two% over the last two fiscal years as a result of power shortages. So, getting Rwanda and Burundi into the global map as new members of the EAC and what can be done to bring these countries out of the economic morass that they find themselves and opening up new avenues for what is described as the peace dividend which is how the ordinary people's lives are really going to be improved.

Some critics have said the only reason why the G8 invited African countries is because of the immense pressure of competition for African resources created by China, India, Brazil and the US. Do you agree with that position?

I don't think there is any competition going on here but I can understand that the Sino-Africa policy in recent times has taken headlines and quite obviously the recent visit to Africa by the Chinese president has brought about some shock waves in the western world. I think it is important for strong emerging

economies like India and China to have responsibilities for Africa's development. I do not think that they are there to compete. I think every body has a niche in terms of responsibility, what kind of economic activities to engage in and help Africa fight poverty. China and India, why shouldn't they have their own economic interest after all the Europeans have had century-old relationship with Africa, and how much have they really benefited out of Africa – enormous! I think they are not competing interests; I think they are complementary interests.

What agenda would you table to the G8 if given opportunity?

We want the EAC as a project to be owned by the East African people. What we have done is to work out some kind of a partnership with the G8 and the EU countries. At the end of last year we developed a partnership party whereby instead of dealing with development partners on individual basis, we deal now with them collectively. So there is greater aid harmony and coordination and we are the determinants of where those resources should be directed and our particular focus is on capacity building to enable the EAC have the capacity to deliver.

The EAC is the fastest growing regional economic organisation in the whole of African. We are not like other regional economic bodies that are so much focused on trade issues. We are a development-orientated institution and infrastructure is our first priority, other issues that we believe are important are health and education. Two weeks ago in Zanzibar we established the East African Health Research Commission, which will now coordinate health issues on an East African basis. We are now developing a bill to re-establish Inter-university Council of East Africa to give a greater policy role for developing an East African quality person who thinks East African. Also we want to move our agriculture forward, right now it is fragmented on state levels. We are also trying to see how best we can revive East African wide research institutions. Later this year we shall constitute an East African Science and Technology Commission.

What is the biggest challenged to achieving these?

We are concerned that the EAC project may be owned by the elite and the political establishment in East Africa. We have not been able to create a sense of ownership among ordinary citizens and this requires working with media, women, children in East Africa so that we can make this project owned by the people of East Africa. I am glad that the European Union is giving us enormous resources to undertake this priority.

Do we as EAC have forms of raising credit locally to support the EAC project?

Not really. An issue like this really should come from the budget that our governments contribute. I do not think that you could mobilise resources outside government's institutional framework or from donors. But the question is relevant; how do we in East Africa look inward to see what we can do by ourselves. The Kengen IPO and the recent Stanbic IPO in Uganda clearly show that once we have the laws in place as far as the banking sector is concerned, the banks should be able to tap into these vast resources. With the kind of dividends paid out of our stock markets, it is possible to mobilise capital. I think we have not been innovative and creative enough to look inwards in terms of how we can tap available resources. My particular interest here is to see how best East African can develop a regional capital market where an entrepreneur can go to a regional capital market with a project, raise a debt-free capital and let East African have a broad ownership of an enterprise that is East African and not just Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania. This is my outlook.

Interview
Fredrick Masiga with
Juma Mwapachu
Daily Monitor
26-27/03/2007

EAC grapples with globalisation

Africa is finding itself at the receiving end of the global economy for not adequately investing in an export-driven private sector, a vibrant capital markets and better economic infrastructure.

Consequently, Africa's claim of the total value of the world's trade is only 2%; it produces only about 2% of the world's economic output and has investment valued at only 1% of the global total.

This means that Africa remains grossly marginalised in global businesses, cannot effectively participate in fair trade with others, is unable to mobilise adequate investment capital from domestic savings and millions of its inhabitants are exposed to harsher conditions of living.

To reverse the situation however, the Secretary General of the East African Community has called for deepening of economic freedoms that will spur the growth of a vibrant export-driven private sector, institutionalise capital markets as a source for mobilising domestic capital to support investment in agriculture, infrastructure, and the manufacturing sectors.

" Africa needs to develop an export-driven private sector if it is to join the globalization bandwagon, " Mr Juma Volter Mwapachu said.

He was recently speaking at the meeting of the G8 (eight most industrialised countries in the world) development ministers in Berlin, Germany.

Mr Mwapachu said Africa invests less compared to countries in the East and South Asia. Africa's investment to Gross Domestic Product ration is below the average 25% benchmarked by the UN Economic Commission for Africa illustrating the inadequate capital to fund private sector growth, and strategic projects like road and railway development.

He however said that the experience from the Initial Public Offer of Kengen – a Kenyan power generation parastatal company – last year and the Stanbic Bank Uganda, demonstrated that savings are available for investment in securities markets.

Kengen had a 200% oversubscription for the 30% shares which the Kenyan government offloaded raising \$300 million (about Shs525 billion) over three months and the Stanbic was oversubscribed by the same margin for a 20% stake sold raising about Shs150 billion in just one month.

Mr Mwapachu urged western donors to play a pivotal role in helping Africa invest strategically to support institutions like capital markets that could spur growth in other areas as well.

He said African countries must boost the productivity levels of their agriculture and manufacturing sectors.

Unpredictable prices of Africa's key agriculture export commodities like tea, coffee, cotton cocoa, sugar groundnuts have contributed to disincentives to expanding production, " he said, adding that the huge market-distorting subsidies offered to the European Union and US farmers have rendered the preferential market access programmes ineffective.

He also decried the cost of doing business in Africa, with specific emphasis on East Africa, which he said had been hit by a serious power shortage causing a decline in GDP growth for Uganda and Kenya by about 2% last year.

Mr Mwapachu called on African countries to reverse the predicament of brain drain and " brains going down the drain" by improving salaries for its professionals and providing modern working tools such as in the health sector.

He said Africa's participation in economic globalisation can be heightened by a deeper regional integration to exploit benefits of scale, access for a fairer market in the EU and the US, directing investments and aid to infrastructural bottlenecks, relaxing labour immigration policies in the EU to enable African immigrants work in these countries and be able to increase remittances to their respective countries.

The two-day meeting was among others, attended by several African heads of regional bodies like the African Development Bank, the Ecowas, Comesa, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the SADC.

Fredrick Masiga
Daily Monitor
02/04/2007

Bid to integrate Africa into global economy

Daily Graphic, Wednesday, March 28, 2007

Bid to integrate Africa into global economy

Story: Charles Benoni Okine, Berlin, Courtesy IJ/in/Went

A TWO-DAY meeting between development ministers of the Group of Eight Most Industrialised countries in the world (G8), got underway in Berlin on Monday to map out a working strategy to better integrate Africa into the global economy.

The meeting which was held behind closed door amidst tight security, was expected to announce a package to help guide the African Union and other developing economies to meet their targets as per the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The outcome of the meeting, dubbed "Fighting Poverty-Shaping Sustainable Development-Strengthening Global Partnership" will be announced yesterday.

In attendance at the meeting are representatives from the AU, African Development Bank (ADB), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), East African Countries (EAC) and ministers from China, Brazil, India and South Africa.

Sources close to the meeting said 'key issues for the dialogue would be the contribution of the G8 and emerging economies towards achieving the Millennium

Development Goals as well as Africa's integration into the world economy.

It said the G8 was poised to deepen the dialogue on development co-operation between it, the newly industrialised countries and the African organisations.

Among issues journalists, particularly from the African countries are eager to elicit answers from the G8 are on how to ensure free trade between the developed and developing countries and Africa in particular. They are also eager to ask questions related to debt cancellation and moves to make African countries self dependent.

The MDGs as set by the United Nations is aimed at achieving among others, a reduction global warming as a result of the emission of green house gases into the atmosphere of which the G8 countries were major culprits.

On the side of Africa, it is to improve access to education, and potable water and also minimise to the barest minimum, the incidence of diseases such as malaria which is a major killer on the continent and HIV/AIDS which was fasted reducing the productive human resource needed to enhance the development of the continent.

Charles Okine
Daily Graphic
28/03/2007

G8 resolves to support Africa

G-8 resolves to support Africa

Story: Charles Okine, Berlin, Courtesy IJ/inWent

THE Group of Eight (G-8) comprising most industrialised nations of the world, has resolved to increase its support for African countries that are submitting themselves for scrutiny under the African Peer Review Mechanism.

The move is to enable such countries, which had already gone through the process, to meet the targets set under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

According to the G-8, the standards set under the mechanism ensured good governance on the part of African governments, which eventually would trickle down to the people.

The group also reaffirmed its commitment to help African countries and other developing nations of the world to move out of poverty and disease.

Speaking at a news conference on Tuesday at the end of a two-day ministerial development meeting in Berlin, Ms Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, the Federal Minister for Economic Co-operation and Development in Germany and host of the meeting, said the Peer Review Mechanism was an important measure for good governance and those who submit themselves to it stood to gain a lot from whatever support the G-8 was committing to enhance Africa's development and moves towards achieving the MDGs.

Ghana under the Presidency of Mr John Agyekum Kufor, who is also the current African Union Chairman, was the first African country to submit itself for scrutiny by its peers under the mechanism.

The pledge, therefore, means that Ghana stood to benefit immensely for its courage as far as the Peer Review Mechanism was concerned.

Ms Wieczorek-Zeul was of the view that the G-8 needed to ensure that whatever support was being given to African countries was properly utilised to the advantage of the people.

The meeting was dubbed "Fighting Poverty - Sharing Sustainable Development - Strengthening Global Partnership".

The two-day meeting was the first time in history that the G-8 ministers with responsibility for development policy had met together with representatives from the African Union (AU), the African Development Bank (ADB), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) led by Dr Mohammed Iben Chambaz and the East African Community (EAC) to discuss key development policy issues on the agenda of the German G-8 Presidency.

Other key representatives present were Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa among others.

Ms Wieczorek-Zeul said the G-8 was interested in seeing the alleviation of poverty on the continent of

Africa and those countries committed to it must be pushed to achieve that.

She said "we are open for any discussions with the African countries and we expect them to talk to us".

For his part, the Director-General for International Co-operation and Development, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France, Mr Philippe Etienne, said funds would be committed and beneficiary countries would be made to apply for it.

He said based on their success regarding the Peer Review Mechanism, the G-8 would release the funds for accelerated development.

Earlier in a summary before question time at the news conference, Ms Wieczorek-Zeul said achieving the MDGs would require the creation of an environment that would facilitate economic activity and encouraged broad-based private sector-led growth.

She commended African countries for their sustained growth over the last few years and noted that "this economic growth is partly the outcome of courageous reforms and improved governance".

Many African countries including Ghana, had recorded a growth of at least five per cent in the last few years.

She said the German Presidency wanted to strengthen these positive developments and contribute to sustainable growth, adding that "our goal is more and more sustainable investment in Africa and we know that our G8 partners and our African partners share this goal".

The concrete plans for achieving this involve measures in the financial sector that are specifically designed to also benefit micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in Africa, she noted.

She was of the view that, as a result, employment and income would be generated whereby a particular concern will be to promote women and women's equal participation in economic life.



• AU Chairman President J.A. Kufor

Charles Okine
Daily Graphic
29/03/2007



ECOWAS common currency is reality

Story: Charles Bononi Okine, Berlin,
Courtesy IJ/InWent

THE President of the ECOWAS Commission, Dr Mohammed Iba Chambas, has stated that the attainment of a common currency for the sub-region is a reality and asked member countries to continue with the implementation of sound economic policies for it to be a success.

He said the levels of economic transformation of the countries including Ghana, that had subscribed to join the common currency over the last few years had been consistent and positive, an indication of the commitment of members to achieve results.

Dr Chambas said this in an interview in Berlin on Wednesday shortly before the Development Ministers of the Group of the World's Most Industrialised Countries (G-8) held a major news conference to announce the outcome of discussions held between them and African institutions such as the ECOWAS, African Union (AU), East Africa Community (EAC) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) among others.

It was the first time the G-8 ministers with responsibility for development policy together with representatives from the various African communities, South Africa, Brazil, China, India had met to discuss key development policy issues on the agenda of the German G-8 Presidency.

Dr Chambas said the idea of the ECO had made it possible for the sub-regional countries to follow strict macroeconomic policy guidelines.

The attainment of the common currency for the region had been faced with some dif-

— *Chambas*



• Dr Mohammed Iba Chambas

ficulties, a situation which has forced the postponement of the implementation more than two times.

The new scheduled date for the implementation of the ECO had been scheduled for 2009.

Dr Chambas said the idea of the ECO was positive and needed not to be rushed to encounter problems.

He said what member countries interested in the new proposed common cur-

cy were doing was positive and noted that "this is what will make it solid when it finally takes off".

Dr Chambas said the common currency would have to be founded on a sound economic base and must be tried and tested.

He reiterated that the ECO was a reality and not a myth and asked member states to continue to improve their economic policies to meet the criteria.

Under the convergence criteria set for the introduction of the ECO, members states were required to among other things, record a persistent increase in growth of up to seven per cent per annum and also build foreign reserves of more than three months of exports.

Dr Chambas said no matter how difficult, the signs were positive towards achieving them.

He said member states stood to gain as it would help reduce the cost of doing business, stimulate trade and economic activity between them and also make the currency more credible to attract the confidence of the world because it would be anchored on strong economic policies.

Dr Chambas said the enabling environment was being created at the moment and that was necessary to ensure full success when the time came for the take-off.

Charles Okine
Daily Graphic
30/03/2007



World Bank Forum and Africa Partnership Forum

Berlin, 21 – 23 May 2007

The German World Bank Forum (WBF) and the eighth gathering of the Africa Partnership Forum (APF) took place in Berlin from 21 to 23 May. They were two of a series of events in 2007 linked to the Africa agenda of the German twin presidencies of the EU and G8.

At the close of the two events, Development Minister Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul underlined the importance of maintaining a continuous dialogue between the G8 and reform-minded African countries: "Partnership means not simply talking about Africa but talking directly to those African governments that are engaged in reform and fighting poverty."

The focus of the WBF organised by the World Bank and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development was on the topic "Sustainable Investment in Africa". High-level government representatives from Africa participated in the Forum to discuss with various multipliers from German politics, business and civil society how German companies and organisations can support sustainable development on the African continent by intensifying their involvement.

On 22 May, Development Minister Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul welcomed Germany's Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel and Denmark's Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen as well as participants of the WBF for the opening of the Africa Partnership Forum. They discussed together with the Personal G8 Africa Representatives (APR) from the G8 countries, representatives of the Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation (OECD) and the reform-oriented African countries who are involved in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) initiative.

The aim of the Africa Partnership Forum is dialogue on strategic, political and socio-economic issues relating to African development and the implementation of NEPAD's programmes. This year's APF dealt with, inter alia, the following topics: investment, gender, peace and security, climate change and the status of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). Additionally, the eight APF elaborated recommendations for the preparations for the G8 and African Union summits.

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Cooperation "Africa on the rise" : The German Minister opened the World Bank Forum in Berlin

" The key to Africa's development is pro-poor economic growth, " said Development Minister Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul in her speech opening the German World Bank Forum. She noted that, for several years now, Africa had been experiencing a phase of unprecedented growth. Yet this positive development was not adequately benefiting poor people in many African countries. The Minister emphasised, " If poverty is to be reduced, we need more sustainable growth. But that in itself is not enough. Without democracy, social equity and gender equality, we will be unable to make serious inroads into poverty. " Minister Wieczorek-Zeul underlined that women's empowerment was not simply a question of human rights but, at the same time, smart economics. " It is 'stupid economics' for women to continue suffering economic disadvantage, because it deprives developing countries of opportunities and income. Many African countries could give their economies a considerable boost if they were to achieve gender equality. "

The Minister also emphasised that an increase in sustainable investment in Africa is necessary and possible. " Currently, less than 2% of global direct investments flows to Africa - that is not enough. Germany and the G8 are supporting reform-minded Africa countries through a partnership for development aimed at creating the basis for an increase in sustainable investment: good governance, an adequate infrastructure and the combating of corruption. "

Minister Wieczorek-Zeul emphatically reiterated Germany's intention to deliver on its international commitments. "At Gleneagles, we committed to double our development assistance for Africa by 2010 and, within the EU, Germany has pledged to increase its official development assistance to 0. 51% of gross national income by 2010. We stand by these commitments and will deliver on them. "Also opening the World Bank Forum alongside Development Minister Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul were President Festus Mogae of Botswana, President Thomas Boni Yayi of Benin and other senior figures. One of the prominent guests at the forum is Muhammad Yunus, winner of the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize.

The German World Bank Forum, staged jointly by the German Development Ministry and World Bank, is held in Germany at regular intervals. It offers a platform for public dialogue between the World Bank and representatives of politics, business, the media and civil society.

This year, the World Bank Forum is taking place within the context of Germany's presidency of the G8 and, by focusing on the topic of " Sustainable Growth for Africa", reflects one of the focuses of Germany's G8 agenda. The German World Bank Forum continue this 22 May with Africa Business Day, focusing on investment opportunities for German business in Africa and the opportunities available to African businesses on the German and European markets.



Coopération Le devenir économique de l'Afrique en négociation à Berlin

" L'Afrique en mouvement"

Tel est le thème du Forum allemand de la banque mondiale ouvert hier, lundi 21 mai 2007, à l'Ecole européenne de gestion et de la technologie à Berlin, en Allemagne, par madame Heidemarie Wiczorek-Zeul, ministre allemande de la coopération économique et du développement. Y prennent part des leaders de la politique, des affaires et de la société civile allemande. L'Afrique y est représentée tant par des leaders sociaux que par de très hauts responsables d'Etat, à l'instar du président de la République du Bénin, Thomas Boni Yayi. A Berlin, celui-ci plaide pour la nécessité d'investir dans le facteur humain en Afrique, pour la promotion de la bonne gouvernance sur le continent, pour l'énergie sans laquelle il n'y a point de développement, et pour l'accès des agriculteurs africains aux subventions comme leurs pairs occidentaux.

Le président béninois plaide également pour que soit levées les barrières douanières aux produits agricoles africains sur les marchés mondiaux, de même que pour un appui subséquent aux institutions sous-régionales africaines et pour le lancement d'une initiative visant la mobilisation des capitaux dans les pays africains à faible revenus, afin que le continent soit débarrassé des préjugés défavorables de l'afropessimisme. Avec un taux de croissance franchissant la barre des 5% dans 24 pays subsahariens, l'Afrique du président béninois porte désormais beaucoup d'espoir, tant ses ressources minérales, halieutiques et agricoles demeurent intactes, et parce qu'après plusieurs décennies d'instabilités politiques et économiques, le continent vit maintenant des Mutations qui augurent des lendemains meilleurs.

Lundi en matinée, la chancelière allemande Madame Angela Merkel et de grands hommes d'affaires ont discuté de la promotion du développement et d'investissements durables en Afrique. Vingt-quatre heures après son ouverture, le Forum allemand de la banque mondiale débouche ce mardi 22 mai sur la huitième rencontre du Forum pour le partenariat avec l'Afrique, où les représentants du G8, de l'OCDE et ceux du NEPAD, examinent les stratégies politiques et socio-économiques en vue de la mise en œuvre des programmes du Nouveau partenariat pour le développement de l'Afrique. Des personnalités tels que Michel Camdessus de la Banque de France, Firmino Mucavele, directeur exécutif du NEPAD, Polycarp Abah Abah, ministre camerounais des finances, ou encore, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, présidente du Libéria sont annoncées. En somme, un double forum pour élaborer des recommandations pour les futurs sommets du G8 et de l'Union Africaine.

La ministre allemande de la coopération économique et du développement, affirme à ce sujet que l'Europe a besoin d'une Afrique forte, d'une Afrique qui n'est plus le continent des désastres, crises et guerres. Et le nouveau partenariat avec l'Afrique, d'après le président béninois, doit tenir compte des provisions pour le financement des mécanismes de développement, de l'enracinement de la bonne gouvernance, du relèvement des faibles revenus des pays africains pour que ceux-ci puissent de leurs propres ressources, et de la mise sur pied d'un système commercial plus juste.

Henri Fotso
www.aicinfo.net
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Coopération et développement

Le huitième Forum du partenariat avec l'Afrique ouvert par Angela Merkel

Berlin, Deutsche Telekom AG. C'est le lieu où plus de 200 leaders économiques et politiques d'Afrique et d'Europe se sont retrouvés ce 22 mai pour deux jours, à l'occasion du huitième Forum du partenariat avec l'Afrique, ouvert à la suite du Forum allemand de la Banque mondiale. La chancelière allemande Angela Merkel, avant de prendre la parole pour l'inauguration des travaux à huis-clos, s'est faite précédée par deux personnalités: Anders Fogh Rasmussen, premier ministre du Danemark, et Nana Akufo Addo, ministre des affaires étrangères du Ghana.

Parité des sexes. Le premier ministre danois a axé son intervention sur un nouveau leadership qui monte en Afrique: le leadership des femmes, avec en tête Ellen Johnson Sirleaf qui tient le pouvoir au Liberia. Un exemple africain, comme celui européen de Angela Merkel, qui dirige aujourd'hui l'Allemagne et préside l'Union Européenne. Mais Anders Rasmussen a relevé le considérable écart qui existe encore entre l'homme et la femme en Afrique, continent où 60 à 80% de la main d'œuvre agricole est féminine, alors que les femmes n'y sont pas généralement des propriétaires terriennes. Il a également déploré le déficit en éducation et en formation chez les femmes africaines, et appelé à une parité homme - femme pour ce qu'il nomme un " leadership conjoint . " De l'intervention de Anders Fogh Rasmussen, il ressort donc que le sommet du G8 prévu en décembre prochain intégrera cette notion de la parité femme - homme dans ses préoccupations.

Démocratisation en marche. Le ministre des affaires étrangères ghanéen, Nana Akufo Addo, a succédé au premier ministre danois à la tribune, pour tracer au nom du président ghanéen et président en exercice de l'Union africaine John Nkufor, comme une feuille de route qui pourrait être celle de l'Afrique à la veille du sommet Union européenne - Union Africaine prévu à la même période que le prochain sommet du G8.

" L'Afrique ne doit plus être une simple pourvoyeuse de matières premières. L'Afrique ne doit plus être une partenaire mineure. Elle doit pouvoir échapper aux conséquences de la pauvreté", a souligné Akufo Addo.

" L'Afrique d'hier, l'Afrique des régimes totalitaires est en train de reculer, cédant la place à une Afrique qui se démocratise et qui avance ", a ajouté par ailleurs le ministre ghanéen. Des exemples dont on devrait tenir compte en regardant cette Afrique du ministre ghanéen des affaires étrangères, c'est alors la Côte d'Ivoire de Laurent Gbagbo et Guillaume Soro qui viennent d'illustrer que l'Afrique peut se sortir de ses crises elle-même, le Liberia et la Guinée Bissau qui se sont arrangés au niveau frontalier, et même la RDC qui vient d'organiser des élections pluralistes. " Les armes se tairont bientôt en Afrique. Mais il ne faut pas se voiler la face. Il y a beaucoup de pays du continent qui ne pourront pas atteindre les objectifs du millénaire ", a souligné Nana Akufo Addo.

Pourquoi pas l'Afrique comme l'Europe-. La chancelière allemande a pris le relais à la tribune pour d'abord affirmer son heureux sentiment d'inaugurer ce Forum en présence des ses collègues européens. Angela Merkel a ensuite affirmé que l'Afrique n'est pas très connue en occident, surtout dans un pays comme l'Allemagne dont on a souvent du continent noir que des rapports sur les guerres et les catastrophes. " La réalité est plus nuancée "A-t-elle indiqué. " L'Europe a aussi été comme l'Afrique il n'y a pas longtemps, déchirée par les guerres. Pourquoi ce qui a été en Europe possible il y a 50 ans ne le serait pas aujourd'hui en Afrique. "A martelé la chancelière. " Comment cela a-t-il été possible ", s'est-elle interrogée. Et Angela Merkel, elle-même, trouve la réponse.

Car, indique Madame le chef du gouvernement allemand, il a fallu que les pays européens regardent au-delà des frontières nationales, avec des idéaux de tolérance et de solidarité. Sur ce point, Angela Merkel a cité des exemples qui ne font pas honneur à l'Afrique: le Soudan, la Somalie, et le Zimbabwe. Elle a insisté sur le cas zimbabwéen de Robert Mugabe qui brille selon elle par des intimidations, des expropriations et des destructions de biens. " La politique de Mugabe est inacceptable ", a lancée la chancelière Merkel, d'un ton fort.

Dans la perspective du sommet du G8, Angela Merkel qui assure pour l'heure la présidence de l'Union européenne a évoqué la croissance et la responsabilité auxquelles l'Afrique devrait parvenir. Toutes choses qui supposeraient la bonne gouvernance, selon elle, et feraient que l'Afrique participe efficacement à la mondialisation plutôt que de la subir.

Henri Fotso
www.aicinfo.net
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Kenya: World Bank Forum Opens in Germany

The number of extremely poor people in Africa has fallen below the one billion mark.

The 10th German World Bank Forum in Berlin was told yesterday that Africa was consolidating its reforms and focusing on development.

Running on the theme, "Africa on the Rise", the two-day conference that will be followed by the African Partnership Forum (APF) convened to discuss how best to improve investment in Africa for sustainable growth, infrastructure and good governance as a means to achieve economic growth in Africa.

German Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development Mrs Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul and World Bank Vice-President Abiageli Katryn Ezekwesili opened the conference and committed themselves to make Africa a priority in their agenda. " German Federal President Kohler has made Africa a priority and the continent is very high on the agenda of the German World Bank Forum and the G8, " said Mrs Wieczorek-Zeul. She added that Germany had made growth and responsibility the central theme of its G8 presidency, thereby taking up the positive developments and big challenges in Africa and putting them on the agenda at the highest level internationally. The Germans' goal is to support successful initiatives in Africa to develop democracy, the rule of law and sustainable economic development on the continent. The forum was organised by the German government as part of German presidency of the G8.

Invited were African presidents, high-ranking government representatives as well as heads of African bodies such as NEPAD, and AU to look at economic challenges and opportunities in Africa. "They are here to discuss with multipliers from German politics, business and civil society; how German and international companies and organisations could promote sustainable growth and sustainable development on the African continent by intensifying their involvement," said Mrs Wieczorek-Zeul at the opening of the conference. She said this was the only way to achieve the Millennium Development Goals whose principal focus was to reduce poverty, improve health systems and bolster accessibly for populations amongst others. Participants include the President of Botswana, Mr Festus Mogae, Mr Thomas Yayi Boni of Benin and entrepreneurs like the founder of Celtel, Mr Mohamed Ibrahim.

Mr Bethuel Kiplagat and Mrs Angela Ambitho are representing Kenya while KenGen CEO Mr Edward Njoroge will give a talk on closing the infrastructure gap as a way of unlocking Africa's potential for accelerated growth and human development. At the same time, it was noted that the West needed to rethink and change its perception of the African continent, with the international Press asked to focus on the development taking place there. "Economic growth and governance have improved recently with a hope in checkmating poverty. The international community is not indifferent to these changes, despite the delay by developed countries in honouring their promises towards the continent," Yayi Boni said.

Pocylne Karani
The East African
Standard
22/05/2007

Africa agrees position ahead of G8 conference

The 8th African Partnership Forum came to a conclusion after two days of deliberations between leaders from Africa, the G8 and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation Development (OECD). Its recommendations and proposals are to be presented at the next G8 meeting to be held in the remote city of Heiligendamm next week.

Led by the German Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Mrs Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, four discussions groups presented proposals and recommendations on concerns on new investment into Africa, climate change, peace and security as well as gender mainstreaming.

On trade and investment the APF told the G8 to urgent honour past commitments, in particular to support the Investment Climate Facility (ICF) and increase funding for infrastructure to a target \$22 billion (Sh1. 5 trillion) per annum.

Proposals on promoting investment in Africa included a call for more technical and financial support, though it was noted that development assistance alone was not enough to help reduce poverty by half. " Successful completion of Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) by several African states. is a clear indication that the investment environment is improving, " said Professor Femino Mucevele, Nepad Secretariat chief executive. " It is now time to invest in Africa. "

He said through APRM, Africa can improve the investment climate substantially and further called for more support to investment-related activities in National Plans of Action in countries reviewed.

The group on investment also called on countries to ratify and implement existing international and African instruments that tackle economic governance and corporate responsibility. These include United Nations and African Union conventions against corruption as well as OECD anti-bribery conventions.

The group also emphasised the importance of sufficient funding for existing mechanisms such as the Investment Climate Facility, the Infrastructure Consortium for Africa, the African Development Bank project Preparation Facility and the NEPAD/OECD Africa Investment Initiative.

Economic governance and corporate responsibility was also underlined as avenues for helping generate sustainable investment and bringing about wider social and economic benefits.

" Domestic investment is also essential for sustainable economic growth so Africa should take serious steps in mobilising its own resources, " Mucevele added.

The importance of regional integration as a means for attracting investment was also emphasized. There was a call for new joint initiatives, from both regional institutions and development partners, to help build capacity and support for efforts by regions to harmonise business regulations and create common platforms for regional investment promotion.

Mr Njongonkulu Ndugane, the Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, representing civil society at the meeting, had a message for G8 leaders as well.

" Words will not lift millions of people in Africa out of poverty, " he said. " Honour the words and the pledges you have made. It is time to act. We need the up-scaling of infrastructural investment in our continent because that is what will bring lasting sustainable development. "

From donor countries, there was a strong feeling that addressing gender issues and empowering women is a vital aspect of reaching the Millennium Development Goals, a set of UN development targets for all nations.

Mr Anders Rasmussen, Denmark's prime minister, says investing in women is investing in all these goals.

"Giving women equal opportunities to educate themselves and better access to financial resources is the key to achieving our development goals because gender discrimination is simply unjust and can slow down development," Rasmussen said.

The G8 meeting, to be attended by Mr James Mwangi, Equity Bank's managing director, will also deal with proposals to be forwarded to the African Union, aimed at finding a single voice with which to tackle issues within and outside the borders of Africa. So all eyes will now be on the upcoming G8 and AU summits.

Pocylene Karani
The East African
Standard
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KenGen shares plan at World Bank meet

Africa has major challenges to overcome in bridging the gap in electricity access between her and the developed world, KenGen's managing director has said.

Addressing the German World Bank Forum in Berlin on Tuesday ahead of the G8 Summit, Mr Eddy Njoroge said the continent faced challenges attracting investment in the power sector as tariff setting is still politically motivated.

Njoroge, who was one of the key speakers at this year's forum dubbed "Africa on the Rise", told the multi-stakeholder conference that small power systems and small markets limited profitable business ventures in the power sector.

He said that the required power capacity in Africa in the next 25 years – an additional 269 gigawatts – required an estimated \$563 billion (Sh38 trillion) in additional investment, according to the International Energy Agency.

" The big question is: Will Africa be able to meet this cost or afford tariffs which will amortise this investment? " he asked.

Njoroge told the summit that after almost 20 years of power sector reforms in Africa, the gap is still wide with low access levels. In Africa, access to electricity is said to be as low as 5% in some countries. However, he pointed out that there had been encouraging development with the increased generation capacities due to the independent power producers; improved financial performance of power utilities; and improved governance of the sector.

Njoroge also told the plenary that KenGen is exploring opportunities to venture into renewable energy. He pointed out Marsabit, Garissa and Ngong' as places that offered a huge potential for new investment in wind power.

" Demand for electricity in Kenya has grown since 2002 from 780 to 983 megawatts , representing over 200 megawatts increase for the past four years, " he said. " This continues to grow at a rate of about six to seven per cent annually. We are looking at other cleaner sources of energy to keep abreast with demand. "

Kengen, he said had also submitted nine projects to the World Bank Carbon Financing Unit and had six approved. As a result, the power generating company hopes to displace 662, 600 tones of carbon emissions per annum.

" We shall be able to raise \$6 million (Sh408 million) annually from this initiative, " he said. " We are in the process of establishing a regional CDM centre because we feel that CDM and carbon trading will be an important part of development especially on energy sector in the region. "

Njoroge added that agricultural processing, industrial manufacturing and municipal units have a lot of waste that can be used as a source of energy in the industry.

"Already we have signed a partnership with one of the sugar milling companies and hope to secure another deal with another sugar milling company in Kenya to see whether we can explore the potential in the generating energy from waste," said Njoroge.

In geothermal, he says a potential of over 7000 megawatts exists in the Rift Valley region and the company was looking at partnerships with people who can be able to exploit this potential.

This is addition to a separate company, The Geothermal Development Company, which will undertake the riskier part of the business upfront especially the drilling and the availability of resource assessment.

Pocylene Karani
The Standard
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Africa's time has come

The German minister of economic development and corporation described it as Europe's closest neighbour. Botswana President said it offered the highest return on investment. Sudanese business mogul described its women as hard-working while former DaimlerChrysler chief executive said its people were born traders. Africa is the new buzzword and its time has come. The continent took centre stage and it was top of the agenda at this year's World Bank Forum in the German capital Berlin. G8 and EU presidency holders Germany held the forum under the theme, Africa on the Rise, on May 21 and 22.

There were no barbed wire fence that separated delegates from angry protestors and elaborate demonstrations from international NGOs and civil society groups that offer photojournalists picture opportunities which have become typical of such gatherings. They are saving the energy and the effort for the much talked about G8 meeting tomorrow in Heiligendamm, Germany. This however does not mean the forum was less important. The forum is one of the highlights of this year's G8 Africa consultative process. Together with the Africa Partnership Forum, which took place directly after the World Bank Forum, they serve as a platform to drive forward partnership, cooperation and sustainable development with Africa. The recommendations from the AFP will also serve as the basis for communication with the G8 at the meeting of the world's industrialised nations tomorrow.

More than 150 delegates from business, government, academia and civil society attended the World Bank Forum to talk about sustainable investment in Africa and what German companies and organisations can do to support sustainable development in the continent. President Festus Mogae of Botswana who addressed the opening session of the forum encouraged foreign investors to explore opportunities in Africa saying it offered the highest return on investment. "Africa's development lies in its backwardness," he said, pointing out to opportunities such in telecommunications, energy and tourism. He pointed out, however, that challenges such as inconsistent policies and laws in some countries and high transaction costs among other issues make the continent unattractive to foreign direct investors. He said regional integration was also important for Africa to attract direct foreign investment. He ruffled some feathers, when he said positive news from Africa is often under-reported by media from developed countries.

He said Somalia and the Sudan get more coverage and are used as yardsticks to measure the continent's development, overshadowing that last year alone, 12 countries in Africa held multi-party elections. "Even in the most democratic countries, as we have seen, hiccups happen. In developing countries democracy is work in progress," he said. On China's engagement in the continent, Mogae said the Asian country was displaying rational economic behaviour. It has a demand for raw material, he said, and it is fulfilling this demand in its own way. The Botswana President said the West does not like it when Africa has an alternative other than itself. On corruption in the continent Mogae added that the role developing countries play in corruption that happens in Africa is often downplayed. Trade and Industry Minister Mandisi Mpahlwa who attended the forum on behalf of Finance Minister Trevor Manuel said Africa's situation will not change if developed countries continue to treat it as one big mess. He said macro-economic stability with a few exceptions is a priority for most countries in Africa. He said the fact that the continent's most populous nation Nigeria held elections is an achievement. The important thing is they happened and not how they had happened was an achievement. In time, he said, "we will perfect this."

The forum, which is in its ninth year, has for the first time placed Africa at the centre of its agenda. The first day focused on the continent's political and social situation and issues that impact on economic growth such as good governance, infrastructure and HIV/Aids. The second day, African Business Day, gave representatives from the private sector in Africa, the World Bank and German businesses a platform to talk about opportunities and risks trade, investment, telecommunications, energy, water and solid waste. The Africa Partnership Forum was held from May 22 to 23 to discuss four key issues: climate change, investment, peace and security and the empowerment of women and girls. Recommendations from the AFP will inform G8's talks with Africa tomorrow. And many hope the messages, which are endorsed by the continent, main development partners and civil society will Africa will remain at the top of the agenda when the G8 meeting kicks off tomorrow at Heiligendamm in Germany.

Phumla Matjila
www.thetimes.co.za
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China in Africa: Is Europe jealous or Africa love-blind?

Africa is getting beautiful by the day. There is increasing economic growth which averaged above 5% in 2006, inflation rates are dropping and increasing macroeconomic stability.

Africa's finances have gotten better due to lower debt levels. Most African countries are showing increasing private sector credit to GDP ratio even as the financial landscape of Africa changes with the emergence of sounder banks portfolio and regional banking groups in Nigeria and South Africa.

The signs are getting obvious and so suitors are wooing with arms full of gifts trying to win her love. She seems to have fallen heads over heels in love with China, leaving Europe, an old suitor acting like a jealous lover or at least that is what Africa says. Europe however claims it is not acting like a jealous lover but just looking out for the best interest of Africa. She thinks that Africa, blinded by love, may be selling her priced virginity too cheaply to a suitor with sweet words but little love for her future.

Festus Mogae, President of Botswana is one of those who think Europe is jealous of Africa's romance with China. Speaking at the German World Bank business forum in Berlin in May he criticized Europe for frowning at Africa's romance with China. He says, Africa needs money to nourish its increasing beauty and if Europe is not willing to provide it, then Africa is happy to open her arms wide for China which is not just doing the wooing but is also doing the spending.

Festus Mogae's position is easily understandable, which may have been influenced by a hangover from his recent trip to Shanghai where China recently hosted all African heads of States to a sort of jamboree. But at the close of the party, China had on the table for African leaders a cheque in excess of \$20 billion to invest in infrastructure in Africa. This is coming at a time Europe is still foot dragging in increasing official development assistance to Africa making lots of promises year after year but taking little action.

While Europe is doing the talking, China is already walking the talk and helping Africa invest in vital infrastructure. The Chinese are building a copper smelting plant in Zambia. This is expected to help the Zambian government process its huge natural resources in copper and export it into the international markets especially to China which with its rapid economic growth needs these resources. The Chinese are also building an investment park in Angola while they are helping Kenya renovate and expand its main airport as well as building its roads. In Nigeria, China has already entered into contracts with the government to help build its railways and is also helping in rural telephony, the oil sector and other vital areas of the economy. China's biggest attraction for Africa seems to lie in the pricing of the jobs it does for African countries.

A source at the Zambian Embassy in Germany affirms "We (Zambia) have a very strong interest in getting china to invest in our manufacturing sector and also roads since they can do it cheaper."

Chinese firms are under bidding European firms in several contracts in Africa. A German firm revealed at the German World Bank Forum in Berlin how in a recent bid for a contract in Kenya, the Chinese firm under bid three other European firms by as much as \$14 million. Also in another project in Mauritania, a Chinese firm under bid two European firms by as much as \$15 million euros. Of course the contracts went to the Chinese firms, although the German contractor believes the quality of the Chinese firm's delivery will not be up to the standard and quality that they would have delivered at the higher price. In other words, the

Chinese firms will deliver lower quality with the less money while they would deliver high quality with more money. But this seems to hold little water with cash strapped, donor nation neglected Africa governments eager to meet their infrastructure challenge so that they can alleviate poverty in their land. As an African delegate at the German World Bank Forum proverbially explained it "Fresh food is good but it means little to a man dying of hunger if it will take 24 hours to deliver where there is an immediate stale food to assuage his hunger. That is the dilemma faced by the average African government."

However, Isaac Aluko-Olokun, Senior Special Assistant to the Nigerian President on NEPAD gives an insight on why Africa is romancing with China. He says "China has always been a strong supporter of African issues even during the heated apartheid period where they used their position in the UN Security Council to push Africa's fight against apartheid. "Also they do not ask for conditionalities. They do not talk down on us because they are giving us money. They respect us. They are reliable. They have been supporting Sudan before Dafur and have not stopped supporting Sudan because of Dafur. They now have the economic and technology know-how to help us and most importantly they are ready to stay with us through thick and thin. Besides, they are also more willing to impact their technological know how to us"

The Malian ambassador to Germany agrees, "We are seeing China as a neighbour more than Europe because they do not discriminate among language and geographical barriers in their investment drive". This is true because China has been romancing with virtually every government on the continent from Sudan to Mali. The bottom line for Chinese engagement is that the country must have a natural resource to exchange for its expertise and money. Once that condition is satisfied, the Chinese will deal even if half of the country's population are locked in jails or are dying from economic mismanagement, for China that is not a business consideration.

This Chinese attitude towards investment in Africa is what the Europeans and Americans who have enjoyed traditional investment preeminence in Africa claim they are worried about. That China is encouraging bad governance with its finance. There are some European analysts who however admit that Europe and America are actually afraid that the current romance Africa is having with China is going to cost them the pride of place they enjoyed in Africa's heart. They see the possibility of their influence in Africa whittling down in the near future if the current romance with China by Africa is sustained.



For Europe this may not be much of good news because Africa is actually its closest neighbour geographically with huge potentials represented in huge untapped natural resources which would prove useful in the near future if European economy starts picking up gain. America can run to Latin America for survival but where will Europe run to if Africa falls to China. This is what is keeping Europe worried on the rising prominence of China and Africa. Not all of Africans are however thrilled about the influx of Chinese investment in Africa.

Bamanga Tukur, President African Business Roundtable and Chairman NEPAD business forum is one of those who think Chinese investments add little value to the African economy. "When Chinese firms come to Africa, they bring in almost everything, utilizing very little local capacity and therefore make little impact on the local economy. This is probably because they have cheaper labour" Bamanaga said.

He also said that the fact that The Chinese leave virtually in little self enclosed communities in their host countries and import from China almost all their needs also mean their contribution to their local communities is significantly minimized. So Bamanga advises that Chinese investment in Africa should be received with caution.

There are other Africans who toe the middle line. Archbishop Njongo Ndungane, Founder and President-African monitor however feels that it is best for Africa to have a strategy in place in its dealings with whatever regional block that seeks her because of the abundance of her untapped resources. With such a strategy in place, fears of domination of enslavement will be minimized, he says.

But sources within NEPAD reveal how they made efforts at the initial stages of the Chinese investment in Africa to get African governments to strike better deals with the Chinese government failed. "We wanted a situation where African countries created partnerships between African private sector and the Chinese, with the African private sector maintaining a controlling 51% stake while China maintained 49%" in their investments in Africa. Unfortunately, most African governments were not interested and seem to have little confidence in their private sector handling such deals, sources at NEPAD reveal. The feeling though is that some of the African governments may not have been too interested in exposing the contracts they signed with the Chinese. For example, they cite the case of Angola where while efforts were being made to convince the Angolan government to allow the oil companies publish what they pay, the Chinese government came in offering the Angolan government "no question asked deals". The impact was that the Angolan government became less pressured to toe the transparency line.

The truth however is that for Africans, the issue is beyond love or jealousy, the bottom line is that Africa needs money to put its economy on the development ladder. Right now China is a willing provider and as long as Europe sits on the offence on its commitment to Africa, China will be a ready alternative. As Isaac Aluko puts it "Africa is just playing the China card. "There is also the line that" China already recognizes that Africa is on the rise, which is why it is making heavy investments in Africa."

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businessdayonline.com
12/06/2007

Africa needs N6.4trn for infrastructure

Oby Ezekwesili, Vice President, Africa of the World Bank has disclosed that Africa will need a total sum of N6.4 trillion (\$50 billion) to develop and maintain its infrastructure which she described as its biggest challenge in its economic development efforts.

Without the much needed infrastructure, the fast pace growth needed to remove more people out of poverty on the continent will remain elusive. Ezekwesili, represented outgoing World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz, who was told he will not be welcomed in Berlin because of the current controversies that led to his inglorious exit from the World Bank at the German World Bank forum that opened in Berlin on Monday.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Ezekwesili disclosed that though two thirds of Africa's population now live in countries with economic growth rates average 5% per annum, "a major challenge for Africa remains the infrastructure gap."

"Africa needs about \$22 billion to develop infrastructure and another \$18 billion to maintain it" she said. However "Africa do not have the fiscal space to engage in such huge finance. "She there called on the international community stating that "Africa can claim the 21st Century with the support of the international community."

But also speaking at the same occasion the German Development Minister, Heidemarie Wiecezorek-Zeul said that "The key to Africa's development is pro-poor economic growth, "in her speech opening the German World Bank Forum.

She noted that, for several years now, Africa had been experiencing a phase of unprecedented growth. Yet this positive development was not adequately benefiting poor people in many African countries.

The Minister emphasised, "If poverty is to be reduced, we need more sustainable growth. But that in itself is not enough. Without democracy, social equity and gender equality, we will be unable to make serious inroads into poverty."

Minister Wiecezorek-Zeul underlined that women's empowerment was not simply a question of human rights but, at the same time, smart economics. "It is 'stupid economics' for women to continue suffering economic disadvantage, because it deprives developing countries of opportunities and income. Many African countries could give their economies a considerable boost if they were to achieve gender equality."

The Minister also emphasised that an increase in sustainable investment in Africa is necessary and possible. "Currently, less than 2% of global direct investments flows to Africa - that is not enough. Germany and the G8 are supporting reform-minded Africa countries through a partnership for development aimed at creating the basis for an increase in sustainable investment: good governance, an adequate infrastructure and the combating of corruption."

Minister Wiczeorek-Zeul emphatically reiterated Germany's intention to deliver on its international commitments.

"At Gleneagles, we committed to double our development assistance for Africa by 2010 and, within the EU, Germany has pledged to increase its official development assistance to 0.51% of gross national income by 2010. We stand by these commitments and will deliver on them." Also opening the World Bank Forum alongside Development Minister Heidemarie Wiczeorek-Zeul were President Festus Mogae of Botswana, President Thomas Boni Yayi of Benin and other senior figures. One of the prominent guests at the forum is Muhammad Yunus, winner of the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize.

The German World Bank Forum, staged jointly by the German Development Ministry and World Bank, is held in Germany at regular intervals. It offers a platform for public dialogue between the World Bank and representatives of politics, business, the media and civil society.

This year, the World Bank Forum is taking place within the context of Germany's presidency of the G8 and, by focusing on the topic of "Sustainable Growth for Africa", reflects one of the focuses of Germany's G8 agenda.

Anthony Osae-Brown
businessdayonline.com
23/05/2007



Summit Meeting of G8 Heads of State and Government

6-8 June 2007

"Heiligendamm is a success for the people of Africa"

At this year's world economic summit (G8 Summit), the heads of state and government from the G8 countries of the USA, Canada, Japan, the UK, France, Italy, Germany and Russia as well as the President of the European Commission met in Heiligendamm, situated on the Baltic Sea.

At the close of the meeting of the G8 heads of state and government in Heiligendamm, German Development Minister Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul expressed great satisfaction with the summit outcome.

"The G8 showed that they are prepared to take action and are standing by their promise to double development aid to Africa by 2010," she said, adding that they were on track to meet the pledges made at the 2005 Gleneagles Summit. "As of next year, Germany will be increasing its development funding by 750 million euros each year, with the majority of that money going to Africa."

Negotiations on Africa focused on good governance, sustainable investment, the fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, and peace and security.

"The G8 countries have pledged funding of 44 billion euros over the coming years to fight HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, three devastating diseases. Germany's contribution will total 4 billion euros by 2015," Mrs Wieczorek-Zeul underlined. She also emphasised that more measures are needed to improve the situation for women and girls, who are particularly vulnerable to infection with the HIV virus. "We will, above all, be supporting programmes that ensure that the HIV virus is not transmitted from expectant mothers to their unborn children," said Mrs Wieczorek-Zeul.

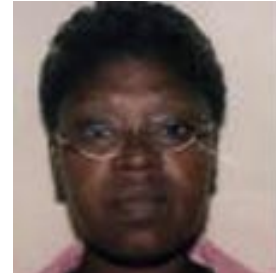
Tangible progress had, she said, also been made on promoting sustainable investment and good governance. Efforts will focus specifically on improving infrastructure and fostering regional cooperation in Africa and measures in the financial sector. One example is the establishment of a regional microfinance fund as a means of making women, in particular, more economically independent.

"At this summit, we have clearly demonstrated that the partnership with Africa is a priority on the German political agenda. We want to boost Africa's economic potential and build on the positive developments that can be observed on the African continent – progress towards democracy, further economic growth and a reduction in armed conflicts," the Minister stated.

Participants

Thelma Chikwanha

- 2002 proofreader "The Financial Gazette" Harare/Zimbabwe.
- 2003 journalist "Sunday Mail" (Zimbabwe Newspapers Group) Harare/Zimbabwe
- 2004-2006 journalist "The Herald" Harare/Zimbabwe
- present freelance journalist "Southern Times" Windhoek/Namibia and "The Federation of African Media Women" Harare/Zimbabwe
- 2007 training course "Multimedia and Online Journalism" IJ Berlin/Germany



Betha Madhomu

- Present lifestyle editor "Trends magazine" Harare/Zimbabwe
- 2007 training course "Multimedia and Online Journalism" IJ Berlin/Germany



Maarouf Ould Oudaa

- 1993-2000 reporter Agence Mauritanienne d'Information" (AMI) Nouakchott/Mauritania
- 2000-2002 director of information "Agence Mauritanienne d'Information" (AMI) Nouakchott/Mauritania
- 2002-2004 adviser of director "Agence Mauritanienne d'Information" (AMI) Nouakchott/Mauritania
- 2007 training course "Multimedia and Online Journalism" IJ Berlin/Germany
- present contributing to "African News Agency" (APA), "RAYA" newspaper and "Radio Netherlands Worldwide"



Chien Thang Phan

- since 1999 reporter "Lao Dong Newspaper" Ho-Chi-Minh City/Vietnam
- 2007 training course "Multimedia and Online Journalism" IJ Berlin/Germany



A stitch in time saves nine

Civil society leaders have urged G8 leaders at Heiligendamm, Germany, to make a financial commitment to increase HIV and Aids funding and save the lives of 6000 people who perish daily owing to the pandemic.

"The G8 must prove its promises were more than mere empty rhetoric and say when and how they will increase aid," said Charles Abani, director of Oxfam in Southern Africa.

Abani was referring to the promises made at the Gleneagles summit of the G8 in 2005. Then, the leaders of the eight richest countries agreed to increase aid by \$ 50 billion a year by 2010, with half of this amount earmarked for Africa. Two years later, the total is still stagnant at \$ 21. 4billion.

According to Oxfam, the G8 could miss its 2010 target by a whopping \$30 billion if they do not move fast. The organization which advocates for the end of poverty also stated disappointment in Italy, which has so far shied away from financial commitment.

"Chancellor Merkel must lead the others today in announcing how they will meet their promises to increase aid," Abani told journalists at a press conference held in Rostock on the second day of the summit.

Abani went on to say that delay in providing the funds would be a deplorable failure for millions of men and women who would have to pay with their lives. "These promises are not inconsequential numbers on a balance sheet but about life and death for real people" he said.

The Oxfam director also stressed that total official development assistance amounts to only \$103 billion – a tenth of global military spending and less than what the world spends on bottled water.

HIV/Aids remains Africa's biggest problem, causing at least 6000 deaths everyday. The Global Fund, which finances program to stem AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis, applauds the G8 for contributing 80% of its funds. According to the Fund, 3000 lives are thus saved everyday. Twice as many people, however, die of the disease. While \$10. 4 billion have been pledged to the Fund, only \$3. 5 billion have been disbursed.

Director of the Burundi AIDS program, Dr Francoise Ndayishimiye told journalists that the G8 had saved her life, as their funding had made antiretroviral drugs available to her. The medical doctor applauded G8 effort, but insisted more could be done if the leaders were to meet their 2010 target.

Dr Ndayishimiye pointed out the successes of the G8 summit in Genoa 2001. She said that the number of people accessing antiretroviral treatment had risen from 600 in 2002 to 8000. However, 16 000 are still on the waiting list.

The Doctor who is HIV positive was optimistic that leaders many lives would be saved, if the G8 kept their aid promises of 2005. "We can reach and save many lives, my life and my husband's life will be saved," she pointed out.

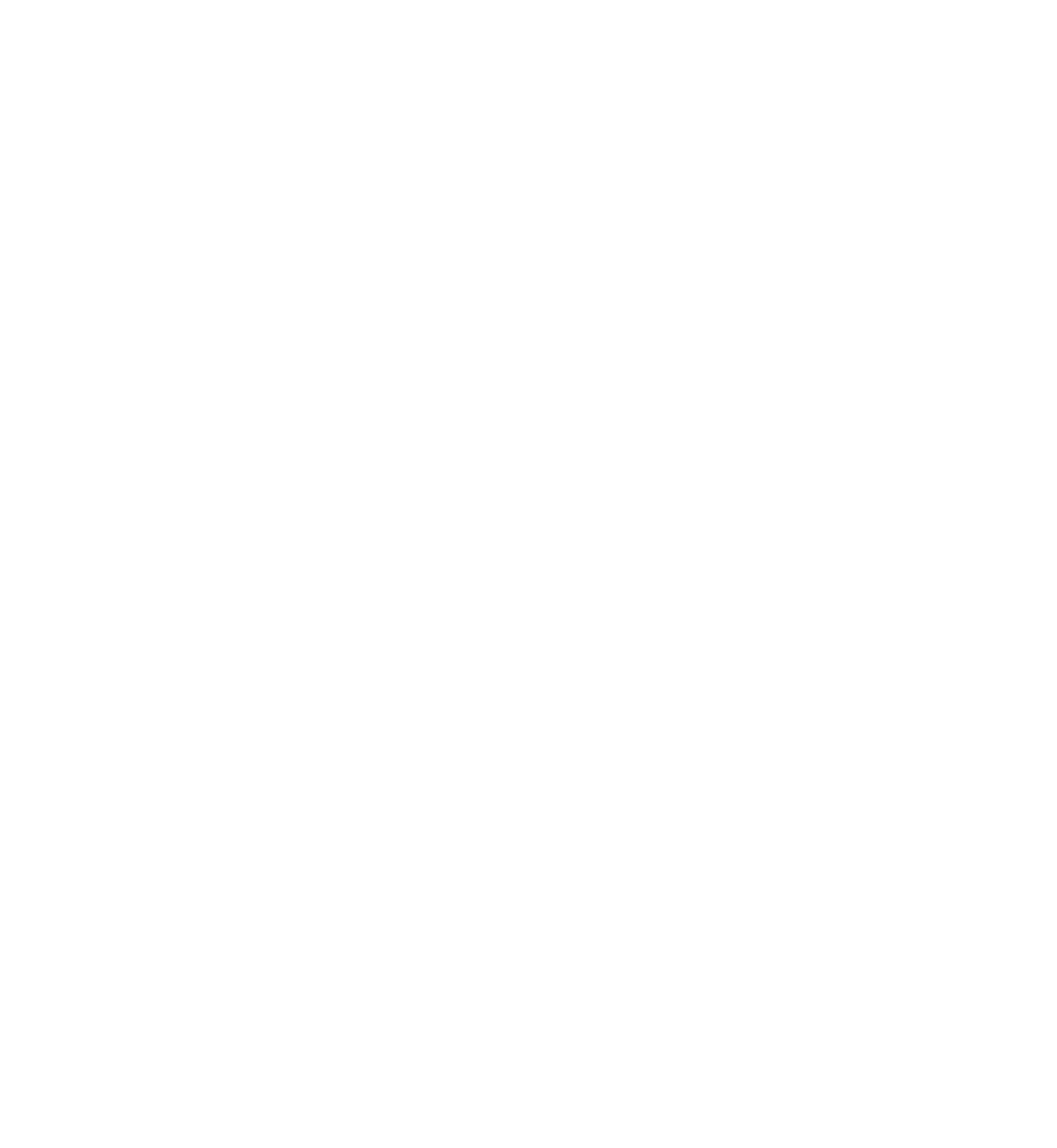
Global Action against Poverty, a global alliance of trade unions, community groups and campaigners against poverty said their response to the G8's failure to fulfill their promises was, "The people roared and the G8 whispered."

The alliance representative Kumi Naidoo said the 6000 people that died of HIV/Aids everyday were equivalent of the victims of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, when the twin towers of New York's World Trade Center were crushed. "Why is the response not the same?" He suggested the response might be different if the victims' color was predominantly white.

Collin Magalasi, the head of Actionaid's South Africa Country Program, said the G8's failure to fulfill their promises to the poor was immoral. He said the leaders' actions were not only defrauding the poor but their own public which they represent. Magalasi expressed his organisation's displeasure at the slow pace the leaders were taking.

He went on to say that the leaders' snail pace was frustrating the needs of the poor in Africa and that their actions had resulted in brain drain. "In Malawi for instance 71% of the trained doctors have all left the country while 414 trained nurses have all left for United Kingdom, Germany and the United States."

Thelma Chikwanha
The Federation of
African Media Women
23/05/2007



G8 needs to strengthen support systems

Social Watch, an advocacy network, demands that G8 leaders do more and faster to win the fight against poverty, the number one Millennium Development Goal (MDG).

In a statement today, Social Watch, an international network of more than 400 civil society organizations, pointed out that the legitimacy of the G8 was dubious. The organizations' director, Jens Martens questioned their discussions of development of countries that are not adequately represented: "They do not have the legitimacy to discuss good governance in Africa without enough African representation."

He also pointed out that the world's economic giants need to fulfill their earlier commitments to fund developing nations. These commitments go back decades, and were reaffirmed in 2002. The developed nations pledged to allocate 0.7% of their gross national income (GNI) to Official Development aid (ODA). As current ODA spending falls far short of this mark, Social Watch urges the G8 to up the stakes.

According to Social Watch, the US government currently contributes 0.17% of GNI to aid, the United Kingdom 0.52% and France 0.47%. The respective figures for Italy, Japan and Canada are 0.2 to 0.3%. Host government Germany is affording 0.36%.

The countries the G8 governments represent make up two thirds of global income. Agricultural subsidies for farmers in these nations make competition tough for those in poor countries, argues Social Watch. The network also demands further debt relief for the poorer African nations.

If lived up to, G8 pledges on these issues would speed up progress in developing nations, according to Social Watch. However, the organization worries that most of South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and other regions will not have made much progress by 2015. According to the organization's Basic Capacities Index, at the current rate of progress, universal access to minimum social services will only be achieved by 2108 in Sub-Saharan Africa, a delay of roughly a century of the MDGs.

"The world's wealthiest countries have made very little progress in fulfilling their side of the agreement and allowing a majority of the world population to work their way out of poverty," reads part of the press statement.

On the other hand, Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel has reaffirmed the G8 summit's commitment towards strengthening Africa's economies. In a statement before the summit she said the meeting would deliver on G8 pledges made in 2005.

However, Social Watch is not the only organization questioning the legitimacy and effectiveness of the G8. The "Group of Eight" is exclusive in its composition, and has over the years come under constant attack for their policies, mainly that of globalization.

Scores of protestors against globalization formed a barricade on the streets blocking delegates' entry. Some of them have made body walls around the fence outside the venue of the summit. Others have blocked the railway line from Rockstock which leads to Heiligendamm which is the venue of the summit.

Thelma Chikwanha
The Federation of
African Media Women
23/05/2007

G8 summit takes off, so do rallies

The annual G8 summit, which kicked off in German's Heiligendamm city today was marked by demonstrations from various civic groups who questioned the legitimacy of the convention.

There was tight security in the whole region. Heavily armoured police officers worked tirelessly to prevent any form of violence.

In an interview, one of the civic groups leaders, Jutta Sundermann said her group, Attac, had sent in more than 4000 protestors to voice their grievances against the summit.

"We are mainly concerned about the globalization stance that the G8 countries claim to have adopted with a view to solve various problems affecting poor countries. The problem is that they seem to have only focused much on economic issues and neglected other important areas like human and social rights," said Sundermann.

Jens Martens, a director for another civic group, Global Policy Forum agreed. He finds it worrying that the G8 countries are discussing issues concerning poor countries, which are not represented at the summit." It's just not enough to have only 5 African representatives invited to take part in this summit. We feel the summit has to be open to all states around the world."

According to Martens, it doesn't make sense to have an exclusive group of the so called wealthiest of countries: "They don't have the mandate to discuss the policies of other countries." In his view, the G8 has no concrete commitment to doing something worthwhile.

Demonstrations against the G8 summit for this year started last weekend. Almost 150 police were injured, 25 of them seriously, when masked protesters showered the officers with rocks and beer bottles during a rally ahead of the summit on Saturday. Police said they made 17 arrests. Heavily armoured officers eventually drove the protesters back with water cannons and tear gas. Violent clashes involved hundreds of anti-globalisation demonstrators.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel is hosting the leaders of Britain, France, Japan, Italy, Russia, Canada and the US for discussions on global warming, aid to Africa and the global economy.

The summit, like past ones, is attracting protesters opposed to capitalism, globalisation, the war in Iraq and the G8 itself.

Police have surrounded the summit site with a fence topped with barbed wire, and closed the surrounding waters and airspace, fearing terrorism or disorderly protests like the ones that marred the 2001 summit in Genoa, Italy. At the time, police and protesters clashed for days, and one demonstrator was killed. At Heiligendamm, protests near the fence have been banned by the courts, but demonstrators are going there nonetheless.

The G8 is one of the most important international forums for dealing with global issues. The G8 presidency plays a very important role due to the organisation's informal structure. Heads of state and government of the leading industrial nations met for the first time in Rambouillet, France in 1975 to discuss developments in the global economy. At that time, the world's six or seven largest powers were represented.

This was the founding moment of the world economic summit. Today, G8 summits are still the climax of the annual presidency of each state. The range of issues under discussion now covers the whole spectrum of global politics. Foreign and security policy and development issues are discussed in addition to economic matters.

The G8 is an informal forum of Heads of States and Government. The group is not an international organisation. It does not have its own administrative structure with a permanent secretariat or office for its individual members.

The organisation and agenda for the annual G8 summits is traditionally a matter for the relevant presidency. The necessary preparations – including negotiating drafts of resolutions – are taken care of by the so called G8 Sherpas, personal representatives of the heads of state and government.

Betha Madhomu
Zimbabwe Newspaper
06/2007

Waiting for promises to be kept

The Global Call to Action against Poverty (GCAP) has called on the Group of Eight (G8) leading industrial nations to deliver on the promises made to developing countries two years ago at their summit in Gleneagles.

GCAP is a global alliance of trade unions, community groups, faith groups and campaigners working together across more than 100 national platforms. While this year's summit was going on at Heiligendamm Germany, representatives of this alliance addressed journalists on the key issues of aid, HIV/AIDS, climate change, health and education. Earlier this week, they presented a million-voice petition to German Chancellor Angela Merkel and British Prime Minister Tony Blair, lobbying for action at the G8 summit.

Speaking on aid, Charles Abani, director for Oxfam in Southern Africa, said the G8 summit must stop stalling and start acting to prevent millions of deaths in poor countries: "The G8 must prove its promises were more than empty rhetoric and say when and how they will increase aid. There are no excuses. The cost of inaction is too high." Abani appealed to Chancellor Merkel to lead the others in announcing how to meet their promises to increase aid.

Statistics reveal that despite promises made in Gleneagles in 2005 to increase aid by \$50 billion a year by 2010 – half of which for Africa – aid to Africa has barely changed and remains at \$21.4 billion. Overall, global aid has fallen. Indications are that the G8 could miss its 2010 target by a massive \$30 billion.

"This is a deplorable failure for which millions of women, children and men are paying with their lives. These promises are not inconsequential numbers on a balance sheet but about life and death for real people – the 50 000 people who die everyday from preventable diseases and the 80 million children that will not see the inside of a classroom," said Abani.

He said at \$103 billion, global aid remains just one tenth of global military spending and less than the world spent on bottled water in 2006. He added that G8 governments need to provide less than \$1 per citizen per week extra to meet their promise of increasing aid by \$50 billion by 2010.

GCAP is calling for action from the world's leaders to meet their promises to end poverty and inequality. In particular, they demand solutions that address the issues of public accountability, justice and the fulfillments of human rights. They also call for trade justice, a major increase in the quantity and quality of aid and financing for development. Debt cancellation and gender equality are also among their demands.

Collins Magalasi, a spokesperson for Action Aid Southern Africa, which is also a member of GCAP, said although a country like Malawi appreciates what the G8 has done to enhance the level of education, there is still more to be done.

"Millions and millions of children in Malawi have had access to free education, but it is the quality of education that we are now worried about. This is as a result of the lack of commitment from other members of the G8 countries," he said.

Magalasi said Italy, Germany and France have not released the promised close to \$12 billion towards aid. This, he said is an indication that these countries are not seriously committed.

"Of course things are moving with the little that they have given but at the same time they are missing the important point that they indeed commit themselves to solve the problems of the poor countries," said Magalasi.

He also lamented the health situation in poor countries, especially Africa, which has been heavily hit by a massive exodus of health practitioners. "This is the time to act. The health system in Africa is very bad. Africa doctors and nurses are working in the G8 countries. We have added up nurses and doctors that we are unable to keep and this is a continued frustration of the needs of the poor," said Magalasi.

Commenting on what the G8 countries have done to solve HIV/AIDS related issues, Dr Françoise Ndayishimiye of the Global Funds said the promise has been kept but a lot more needs to be done to boost the fight against the scourge and other related diseases.

"The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria is a G8 promise that was kept. I'm one of those who have been saved in Burundi. G8 has saved lives because six years ago it decided to build the global fund and universal access to drugs for everybody. However, we don't see the plan of how they are going to finance these promises, especially now that there are so many people on the waiting list," she said.

The Global Fund is seeking \$6 billion a year by 2010 or \$8 billion if demand can be demonstrated, to help developing countries reach the goals. The fund's board has representatives from all the G8 countries and along with new donors, they need to play a leading role.

Betha Madhomu
Zimbabwe Newspaper
06/2007



The G8 and development aid for Africa

The agenda of the G8 summit held Wednesday in Heiligendamm, Germany, shows a particular interest in Africa. The talks will emphasize urgent economic development problems in the continent, such as reducing poverty and fighting HIV/AIDS, according to an official press release.

However, Africans are used G8 leaders making that kind of promises, but not to seeing the pledges materialise. Therefore, skepticism has grown among development experts and non government organizations. Indeed, they recall that the G8 did not achieve the targets for raising development aid as they had agreed during the G8 summit at Gleneagles, Scotland, in 2005.

According to a report issued by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), a group including the thirty richest nations of the world, this lack of progress is obvious for Official Development Assistance, which has fallen by 5,1% last year.

The OECD report also states that aid to sub-Saharan Africa – excluding debt relief for Nigeria – has increased only by 2%, in sharp contrasting to the big promises of doubling aid for the black continent made by the heads of states and governments at their Scotland summit.

Therefore, the big question now is whether G8 leaders will commit themselves once again to the goal of spending 0, 7% of national incomes on development aid before 2015. This rate is among the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), approved by the leaders of the international community. The MDGs are about reducing poverty as well as promoting health and education.

Besides putting these topics on to the G8 agenda, the German government, which hosts the summit, does not hide its wish to see the involvement of G8 countries in Africa focus on the continents' abundant natural resources. Berlin seems especially worried by the progress achieved by some emerging economies, such as India and China, in terms of exploiting these resources.

In the German capital, it is recalled that African-Chinese trade has quintupled since 2000, reaching 50 billions dollars in 2006. It is also known that Chinese investment have risen to 5,5 billions dollars in 43 African countries. This makes Beijing the third biggest economic partner for Africa, behind only the USA and France.

With the same logic, German Chancellor Angela Merkel had declared some month ago that Europe "has not left Africa to the engagement of the People's Republic of China". At a conference on urbanization issues in Berlin in November, shortly after the Africa-China Summit in Beijing, Merkel had stated, "We have to take place in Africa".

The presidents of seven African countries (South Africa, Algeria, Senegal, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Egypt and Ghana) are invited to attend some meetings of this summit. That, in itself, is another proof of growing G8 interest in Africa.

Africa in the G8 summit talks

The G8 summit that ended Friday in Heiligendamm, Germany, has reaffirmed the group's interest in the African continent. "We regard ourselves as strong partners for Africa and will continue to work at fulfilling our commitment towards Africa", a declaration issued by the summit states.

The Group of Eight believes that African reform will only be successful if backed by solid African ownership, at pan-African, regional and national levels. "We want to develop this partnership further", the declaration stresses.

The summit has recalled its "long standing commitment to Africa's development". It ensures that Africa was "Again a priority on the agenda" of the present meetings. "As African governments continue the necessary reforms, development partners are working on the timely and coordinated implementation of their commitments", the declaration t says. However, the document estimates that stronger efforts are required by all actors to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

"The G8 have strongly supported the emergence of a new institutional landscape on the African continent, centering around the African Union, its NEPAD program, the regional economic communities and a strengthened African Development Bank as well as new pillars of pan-African governance like the pan-African Parliament and the African Court on Human and people's Rights".

The document ads that G8 members have supported democratic processes, including through carrying out electoral observation missions. "Some G8 partners have supported the World Bank Gender Action Program focusing on economic empowerment of women as a tool for promoting gender quality. G8 members have supported state and non-state actors in the implementation of the UN Convention Against Corruption ratified by more than 40 African States. Some G8 partners have supported the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), now involving 18 African countries, with US\$ 7. 5 million, and others intend to join the (EITI) donors group".

According to the document, the G8 has supported the creation of the African Standby Force (ASF) and focused on defining strategies and guidelines for the ASF in areas such as logistics, communication and the civilian components of peace support operations. "Currently, AU-led peace support operations are underway in Darfur, Sudan, and, most recently, in Somalia", it recalls.

As for agricultural development, the G8 commits itself to increase its support for the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program (CAADP). In the health field, the G8 summit has reaffirmed the promise of the international community to work towards the goal of universal access to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support by 2010. The group of eight has underlined the necessity of renewing efforts to address the feminization of the pandemic, including addressing mother to child transmission. "The G8 must support African efforts to strengthen health systems more broadly, including through support for long-term plans and better institutional coordination".

In the field of education, the G8 summit has promised to reaffirm efforts to help African countries to develop sustainable capacities and identify the resources needed to pursue their sustainable educational strategies.

Relating to aid, the report recalls that many African countries are already benefiting from 100% debt

cancellation under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI). "Under MDRI, 18 African countries have already received 100% debt relief, and another 15 African countries will receive similar debt cancellation when they reached the required standards". The G8 members said they will continue to work with other donors at fulfilling the Gleneagles commitment to double aid to Africa – an additional \$25 billion as part of an estimated global annual increase of \$50 billion by 2010.

The group of eight has expressed its conviction that social protection has the capacity to contribute to individual employability and to ensure that those who can work obtain adequate support to find employment and to obtain skills required by the labor market.

It is argued that social protection systems contain some universal elements and should be based on values such as social equity, fairness and justice in order to promote equal opportunities and participation.

According to the report, the G8 members believe that social security systems require further development and extension of coverage taking into account nations' abilities to provide such coverage given their varying states of economic growth and recognizing the fact that there can be no one-size-fits-all model.

The G8 summit announced its agreement to keep this issue on the development policy agenda, encouraging relevant international organizations to work in close cooperation on this issue. "In conjunction with economic growth and active labor market policies, social security is an instrument for sustainable social and economic development", the leaders of the eight economically most powerful countries agree.

Maarouf Ould Oudaa
Agence Mauritanienne
d'Information
06/2007



No binding target for climate change agreement

Thursday, the G8 agreed to "seriously consider" the goal of halving global emissions by 2050. German Chancellor Angela Merkel called this deal is a "success", but many environmental groups said it's not enough.

"G8 Act Now", read a banner on a high speed rubber boat that Greenpeace protesters rode into the restricted area in front of the Heiligendamm resort where the G-8 summit is being held.

A "Tom and Jerry" stunt between police canoes and Greenpeace boats occurred in the coastal security zone. After 5 minutes, navy speedboats caught up and crashed into the rubber dinghy, throwing 4 protesters overboard.

That daring action took place before results of the climate talks at the summit were first announced. The campaign by Greenpeace had added to making reporters eager to read the official declaration on the matter.

They did not have to wait long. German Chancellor Angela Merkel appeared at the briefing room in Heiligendamm and said, G8 countries had agreed to pursue major cuts to greenhouse gases emissions, and they would seriously consider the possibility of halving global emissions by 2050. Merkel said she was "very satisfied".

But global warming campaigners said the agreement did not go far enough. Greenpeace decried the deal as "barely worth the paper it is written on" because it contains no binding targets for emissions cuts. "The deal is clearly not enough to prevent dangerous climate change" said Daniel Mittler, climate policy advisor of Greenpeace International. And anti-globalization group Attac, which organized days of noisy protests against the summit comments: "These goals are a joke".

Other campaigners, however, see some progress. At least, the G8 have admitted that there is both a global threat and a need for a road map for fighting this threat. Perhaps the G8 should be more modest than calling their declaration a "huge step forward".

Today, Greenpeace is protesting again. This time, they are using a big balloon to carry two big banners reading "G8 Act Now". But this time, it's too late to impress the G8 leaders. They have finished their climate talks.

Chien Thang Phan
Lao Dong Newspaper
06/2007

InWEnt – Internationale Weiterbildung und Entwicklung gGmbH Capacity Building International, Germany

InWEnt – Capacity Building International, Germany, stands for the development of human resources and organisations within the framework of development cooperation. InWEnt offers courses that cater to skilled and managerial staff as well as decision makers from business, politics, administrations and civil societies worldwide.

With the education, exchange and dialog programmes for approximately 55,000 persons per year, InWEnt constitutes the largest joint initiative of the German Federal Government, the Länder (German federal states) and the business community. The centre in Bonn and 30 other locations in Germany and abroad employ roughly 850 staff.

The organisation commands a total annual budget of approximately 130 million. The Federal Government is main shareholder and represented by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), which is also the main financial contributor. Approximately 40 percent of the budget is from further commissioning bodies, in particular the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, the Foreign Office (AA), the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology, and, increasingly, the European Union (EU) as well as various further multilateral organisations. Main cooperation partners are the KfW Bankengruppe (KfW banking group), the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH (German Technical Cooperation) and private business foundations.

InWEnt was created in 2002 through the merger of Carl Duisberg Gesellschaft e.V. (CDG) and the German Foundation for International Development (DSE). In keeping with the tradition of the predecessor organisations, both Länder (German federal states) and German business are shareholders and thus ensure that InWEnt is firmly anchored in society.

Within its business fields, InWEnt amalgamates the decades of expertise and regional experience contributed by CDG and DSE. The methodological repertoire is structured along broad lines, making it possible to customise modules to fit the specific requirements of customers and tasks and provide appropriate solutions. The employment of new media permits the development and implementation of innovative knowledge management methods, the launching of international virtual learning communities and the promotion of multiplier systems.

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The meetings and conferences were convened by the Development Policy Forum of InWEnt – Capacity Building International, Germany,
On behalf of the German Federal Government.

