

## **Section 7**

### **The Bamako Appeal**

- 7.1 **The Bamako Appeal** : Forum pour un Autre Mali, Forum Mondial des Alternatives (France), Forum du Tiers Monde (Sénégal), ENDA (Sénégal) and ors, February 2006
- 7.2 **Signatories to The Bamako Appeal** : François Houtart, WFA (World Forum for Alternatives), April 2006
- 7.3 **Answers to Bamako Appeal** : François Houtart, April 13 2006
- 7.4 **Bamako Appeal promotes struggle against market-driven society, Bamako, Mali** : John Catalinotto, January 27 2006
- 7.5 **World Social Forum puts Africa up front / Round tables issue Bamako Appeal / Appel de Bamako** : John Catalinotto, February 2006
- 7.6 **The World Social Forum lands in Africa** : Geoffrey Pleyers, September 2006

## 7.1

### THE BAMAKO APPEAL

[As circulated on the NIGD listserv on February 7 2006, after receipt from Samir Amin, President of the World Forum on Alternatives. Samir Amin and the WFA were one of the organisers of the meeting in Bamako, Mali, on January 18 2006, the day before the start of the Bamako Social Forum, from which this Appeal was issued. We have made minor formatting changes and also corrections and adjustments to the numbering, in which there was an error.

This document is available at [http://www.openspaceforum.net/twiki/tiki-read\\_article.php?articleId=66](http://www.openspaceforum.net/twiki/tiki-read_article.php?articleId=66).  
Jai Sen, CACIM, New Delhi, 7.2.06 / 14.03.06]

#### I. INTRODUCTION

More than five years of worldwide gatherings of people and organizations who oppose neo-liberalism have provided an experience leading to the creation of a new collective conscience. The social forums -- world, thematic, continental or national -- and the Assembly of Social Movements have been the principal architects of this conscience. Meeting in Bamako on Jan. 18, 2006, on the eve of the opening of the Polycentric World Social Forum, the participants during this day dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the Bandung Conference have expressed the need to define alternate goals of development, creating a balance of societies, abolishing exploitation by class, gender, race and caste, and marking the route to a new relation of forces between North and South.

The Bamako Appeal aims at contributing to the emergence of a new popular and historical subject, and at consolidating the gains made at these meetings. It seeks to advance the principle of the right to an equitable existence for everyone; to affirm a collective life of peace, justice and diversity; and to promote the means to reach these goals at the local level and for all of humanity.

In order that an historical subject come into existence -- one that is diverse, multipolar and from the people -- it is necessary to define and promote alternatives capable of mobilizing social and political forces. The goal is a radical transformation of the capitalist system. The destruction of the planet and of millions of human beings, the individualist and consumerist culture that accompanies and nourishes this system, along with its imposition by imperialist powers are no longer tolerable, since what is at stake is the existence of humanity itself. Alternatives to the wastefulness and destructiveness of capitalism draw their strength from a long tradition of popular resistance that also embraces all of the short steps forward indispensable to the daily life of the system's victims.

The Bamako Appeal, built around the broad themes discussed in subcommittees, expresses the commitment to:

(i) Construct an internationalism joining the peoples of the South and the North who suffer the ravages engendered by the dictatorship of financial markets and by the uncontrolled global deployment of the transnational firms;

(ii) Construct the solidarity of the peoples of Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas confronted with challenges of development in the 21st century;

(iii) Construct a political, economic and cultural consensus that is an alternative to militarized and neo-liberal globalization and to the hegemony of the United States and its allies.

## **II. THE PRINCIPLES**

### **1. Construct a world founded on the solidarity of human beings and peoples**

Our epoch is dominated by the imposition of competition among workers, nations and peoples. However, historically the principle of solidarity has played a role much more conducive to the efficient organization of intellectual and material production. We want to give to this principle of solidarity the place it deserves and diminish the role of competition.

### **2. Construct a world founded on the full affirmation of citizenship and equality of the sexes**

The politically active citizen must ultimately become responsible for the management of all the aspects of social, political, economic and cultural life. This is the condition for an authentic affirmation of democracy. Without this, the human being is reduced by the laws imposed on him or her to a mere provider of labor power, an impotent spectator confronted with decisions handed down by those in charge, a consumer propelled toward the worst waste. The affirmation, in law and in deed, of the absolute equality of sexes is an integral part of authentic democracy. One of the conditions of this democracy is the eradication of all forms of the patriarchy, either admitted or hidden.

### **3. Construct a universal civilization offering in all areas the full potential of creative development to all its diverse members**

For neo-liberalism, the affirmation of the individual – not that of the politically active citizen – allows the spread of the best human qualities. The capitalist system's unbearable isolation, imposed on the individual, produces its own illusory antidote: imprisonment in the ghettos of alleged common identities, most often those of a para-ethnic and or para-religious type. We want to construct a universal civilization that looks to the future without nostalgia; one in which the political diversity of citizens and cultural and political differences of nations and peoples become the means of reinforcing individual creative development.

### **4. Construct socialization through democracy**

Neo-liberal policies aim to impose as the sole method of socialization the force of the market, whose destructive impact on the majority of human beings no longer needs to be demonstrated. The world we want conceives sociability as the principle product of a democratization without boundaries. In this framework, in which the market has a place but not the predominant place, economy and finance should be put at the service of a societal program; they should not be subordinated to the imperatives of dominant capital that favor the private interests of a tiny majority. The radical democracy that we want to promote re-establishes the creative force of political innovation as a fundamental human attribute. It bases social life on the production and reproduction of an inexhaustible diversity, and not on a manipulated consensus that eliminates all meaningful discussions and leaves dissidents weakened and trapped in ghettos.

### **5. Construct a world founded on the recognition of the non-market-driven law of nature and of the resources of the planet and of its agricultural soil**

The capitalist neo-liberal model aims at submitting all aspects of social life, almost without exception, to the status of a commodity. The process of privatization and marketization to the ultimate degree brings with it devastating results on a scale without precedent in human history: the threat to the fundamental biogeochemical processes of the planet; destruction of biodiversity through the undermining of

ecosystems, the waste of vital resources (oil and water in particular); the annihilation of peasant societies threatened by massive expulsion from their land. All these areas of society-nature metabolism must be managed as the common wealth and in accordance with the basic needs of all of humanity. In these areas, the decisions must be based not on the market but on the political powers of nations and peoples.

**6. Construct a world founded on the recognition of the non-market-driven status of cultural products and scientific acquisitions, of education and of health care**

Neo-liberal policies lead to turning cultural products into commodities and to the privatization of the most important social services, notably those of health and education. This option is accompanied by the mass production of low quality para-cultural products, the submission of research to the exclusive priority of short-term profits, the degradation of education and health care for the poorest sectors of the people, including even their exclusion. The reinstatement and expansion of these public services should reinforce the satisfaction of needs and rights essential to education, health care and providing food.

**7. Promote policies that closely associate democracy without pre-assigned limits, with social progress and the affirmation of autonomy of nations and peoples**

Neo-liberal policies deny the preconditions of social progress – that some claim are a spontaneous product of the market – preconditions such as the autonomy of nations and peoples, necessary to the correction of inequalities. Under the regime of market hegemony, democracy is emptied of all effective content, made vulnerable and compromised in the extreme. To affirm an authentic democracy demands giving to social progress its determining place in the management of all aspects of social, political, economic and cultural life. The diversity of nations and of peoples produced by history, in all its positive aspects along with the inequalities that accompany them, demands the affirmation of autonomy of peoples and nations. There does not exist a unique universal recipe in the political or economic spheres that would permit any bypassing of this autonomy. The task of building equality necessarily requires a diversity of means to carry it out.

**8. Affirm the solidarity of the people of the North and the South in the construction of an internationalism on an anti-imperialist basis**

The solidarity of all the peoples – of the North and of the South – in the construction of a universal civilization cannot be founded on the illusory notion that it is possible simply to ignore the conflicts of interest that separate different classes and nations that make up the real world. Such genuine solidarity must necessarily transcend the antagonisms inherent to capitalism and imperialism. The regional organizations behind the alternative globalization movement must seek to strengthen the autonomy and the solidarity of nations and of peoples on the five continents. This perspective is in contradiction to that of the present dominant model of regionalization, conceived as consisting of mere building blocks of neo-liberal globalization. Fifty years after Bandung, the Bamako Appeal calls for a Bandung of the peoples of the South, victims of really existing capitalism, and the rebuilding of a peoples' front of the South able to hold in check both the imperialism of the dominant economic powers and U.S. military hegemony. Such an anti-imperialist front would not oppose the peoples of the South to those of the North. On the contrary, it would constitute the basis of a global internationalism associating them all together in the building of a common civilization in its diversity.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **III. LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES AND PROPOSALS FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION**

In order to progress from a collective conscience to the building of collective, popular, plural and multipolar actors, it has always been necessary to identify precise themes to formulate strategies and concrete proposals. The themes of the Bamako Appeal deal with the following 10 fields, including both long- term goals and proposals for immediate action: the political organization of globalization; the economic organization of the world system; the future of peasant societies; the building of a workers' united front; regionalization for the benefit of the peoples; the democratic management of the societies; gender equality; the sustainable management of the resources of the planet; the democratic management of the media and the cultural diversity; democratization of international organizations.

The Bamako Appeal is an invitation to all the organizations of struggle representative of the vast majorities that comprise the working classes of the globe, to all those excluded from the neoliberal capitalist system, and to all people and political forces who support these principles-- to work together in order to put into effect the new collective conscience, as an alternative to the present system of inequality and destruction.

#### **PROPOSALS OF THE BAMAKO APPEAL**

Only by building synergies and solidarity beyond geographical and regional borders is it possible to find methods of action that can lead to real alternatives in this globalized world. Working groups will continue during the year to inquire further into and concretize the topics addressed below, to prepare for the next meeting and to propose strategic priorities for action.

##### ***1. For a multipolar world system founded on peace, LAW and negotiation***

In order to imagine an authentic multipolar world system which rejects the control of planet by the United States of America and guarantees the whole gamut of rights for politically active citizens, allowing the people to control their destinies, it is necessary:

1) to reinforce the movement protesting against war and military occupations, as well as solidarity with the people engaged in resistance in the hot spots of the planet. In this respect, it is crucial that the world demonstration against the war in Iraq and the military presence in Afghanistan envisaged for March 18 and 19, 2006, coincide with:

- calls for the prohibition of the use and the manufacture of nuclear weapons and destruction of all the existing arsenals;
- calls to dismantle all the military bases outside of national territory, in particular the base in Guantánamo [U.S.-occupied Cuba];
- calls for the immediate closing of all the CIA-run prisons.

2) to reject any interventions by NATO outside Europe and to require that the European partners dissociate from themselves from U.S. "preventive" wars, while engaging in a campaign intended to dissolve NATO.

3) to reaffirm solidarity with the people of Palestine, who symbolize resistance to world apartheid, as expressed by the wall establishing the divide between "civilization" and "barbarism." For this purpose, to give priority to reinforcing the campaigns that demand the demolition of the wall of shame and the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the occupied territories.

4) to widen the solidarity campaigns with Venezuela and Bolivia, since these are places where people are building new alternatives to neoliberalism and crafting Latin-American integration;

Besides these campaigns, it would also be advisable to:

- set up of a network of researchers, working in close connection with associations of militants acting at the local level, to build extensive and up-to-date data bases concerning U.S. and NATO military bases. Precise information on these military and strategic questions would make it possible to increase the effectiveness of the campaigns carried out to dismantle them;
- create of an observer group, an “Imperialism Watch,” which would not only denounce wars and war propaganda, but also expose all operations and pressures, economic and other, exerted on the peoples of the world;
- create a worldwide anti-imperialist network that could coordinate a variety of mobilizations throughout the planet.

## ***2. FOR an economic Reorganization of the GLOBAL system***

With the goal of developing an action strategy for transforming the global economic system, it is necessary:

- 1) to reinforce the protest campaigns against the current rules of operation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and to define alternative rules (for the removal of the WTO from agriculture, services, intellectual property...);
- 2) to create working groups, which build relations with existing social associations and movements that have already undertaken this work over an extended period, to establish, in the most serious and exhaustive manner possible, an inventory of proposals for alternative measures in the most fundamental economic areas:
  - the organization of the transfer of capital and technology;
  - the proposal for regulations (“codes of investments” for example) specifying the rights of nations and workers;
  - the organization of the monetary system: control of the flow of capital (in particular speculative capital), suppression of tax havens, construction of regional systems of management of the stock exchanges and their connection to a renovated world system (calling in question the role of the IMF and the World Bank, returning to the principle of the rule of national laws to define the local economic system, overcoming the obstacles imposed by the unnegotiated decisions of international organization, etc.);
  - the development of a true legislation concerning foreign debts (requiring that national states provide audits allowing people to identify illegitimate debts) and the reinforcement of the mobilization, in the very short term, for the cancellation of Third World debt;
  - the reform of social services and their financing, including education, health, research, retirements...

3) to create groups of expert researchers who can follow the evolutions of the movements of capital and mechanisms of dependence of national financial capital on international financial capital;

4) to create working groups, with Internet site and newsgroups, by country and area, for the study of the structures of capitalist property, and the mechanisms by which capitalism operates in each country and its relationship with the international financial system;

5) to create places to educate journalists and inform them about the complex mechanisms of neoliberal globalization.

6) to establish contacts, in the form of connected Internet sites, between various associations of economists progressives and militants engaged in the search for alternatives to neoliberal globalization in each world region (Asia, Africa, Latin America, Oceania, Europe, North America).

### ***3. FOR REGIONALIZATIONS IN THE SERVICE OF THE PEOPLE AND WHICH REINFORCE THE SOUTH IN GLOBAL NEGOTIATIONS***

Starting from the assumption that free trade, while supporting strongest countries and transnational monopolies, is the enemy of genuine regional integration and that the latter cannot be carried out according to the rules of free trade, it is necessary to create the conditions for an alternative means of co-operation within each great area, like for example a revival of the Tricontinental, always in close connection with the action of the social movements.

- In Latin America, confronting the aggression of the multinationals, the workers have proposed the demand for regional integration from a new point of view, based on cooperative advantages, instead of on comparative advantages. Such is the case of the alternative experiments of co-operation in the South regarding oil (Petrocaribe), reduction of the debt (repurchase of debts between countries of the South) or of education and health (Cuban doctors), for example. In fact, this co-operation that is meant to support the growth and solidarity of all countries must be based on political principle and not on the rules imposed by the WTO.

- In Africa, hopes for unity is very strong, as is the consciousness that resistance and development are impossible while countries are isolated and confronted with pressures from neoliberal globalization. The many institutions of integration, however, are ineffective there, and the most active are those inherited from the periods of colonization and apartheid. The African Union and its economic and social program (NEPAD) do not include any idea of collective resistance. It is in this context that civil societies must become aware of the need to overcome their divisions.

For the North-African countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea, the Euro-Mediterranean Accords constitute an additional example of regionalization carried out to impose dependency on the South.

- In Asia, to confront neoliberal globalization, despite the difficulties, popular initiatives to carry out another type of regional integration have succeeded in beginning to join together a number of civil society organizations and NGOs in the majority of the countries, leading in particular to the development of a popular charter aiming to reinforce co-operation in trade.

Consequently, it seems appropriate to recommend, besides an intensification of the campaigns against wars and the threats of wars, the following proposals:

1) for Latin America: to widen the support campaigns to the ALBA, definitively to make sure the U.S.

strategy of ALCA fails; to promote independence and the development in justice and equity among peoples and to integrate based on co-operation and solidarity and with the ability to adapt to specific needs of these two latter characteristics; to mobilize the social movements so as to broaden and deepen the processes of alternative integration, such as with Petrocaribe or Telesur; to promote trade in the context of a logic of cooperation; and to strengthen the coordination of social and political action organizations to implement these recommendations.

2) for Africa: to sensitize the movements of civil society to the need to formulate alternative proposals for African initiatives; to take into account the need for coordinating actions undertaken on regional and national levels; to launch campaigns for peace to put an end to the existing conflicts or to prevent the risks of new conflicts; to depart designs of integration founded on race or culture.

3) for Asia: to thwart the expansion and the competition of capital among countries and to reinforce solidarity between working classes of the various countries; to promote the local circuit between production and consumption; to promote sciences for rural reconstruction.

To be effective, co-operation among countries of the South must express solidarity with the peoples and governments that resist neoliberalism and seek alternatives from the point of view of a multipolar world system.

#### ***4. FOR the DEMOCRATIC MANAGEMENT OF the PLANET'S Natural resources***

The concept of “natural resources” must be subordinated to that of sustainability, and thus of the right to a decent life for both present and future generations, with the goal of stopping the devastation and plunder of the planet. What is involved here is a vital principle and not a simple management of natural resources. These resources cannot be used beyond their renewal or replacement capacity, and should be employed in accordance with the needs of each country. Criteria for their use must be defined so as to guarantee genuine sustainable development, which means preserving biodiversity and intact ecosystems. It is also necessary to encourage the development of substitutes for non-renewable resources. The commodification of life results in wars over oil, water, and other essential resources. Agribusiness gives the advantage to the culture of exploitation and profits over the culture of ecological sustainability (and the meeting of subsistence needs). It imposes technical methods which produce dependency and destruction of the environment (contracts of exploitation to impose certain material methods of production: machinery, chemical fertilizers and pesticides, and imperial seeds-- along with GMO).

Concretely, two levels of actions on the environment must be combined: micro and macro. At the macro level, which relates to the national governments, it would be desirable that an interstate framework of multilateral dialog should have the ability to put political pressure on the national governments to take global measures. The micro level concerns local or regional actions, where civil society has an important role to play, in particular to disseminate information and to change practices in order to save resources and protect the environment. The local level must be at all times be reinforced, as decisions are too often considered only at the macro level.

The following actions could result from this:

1) to constitute an international court charged with considering ecological crimes: the countries of North and their local clients could then be sentenced to pay reparations to the countries of the South (ecological debts);

2) to disallow as illegal contracts that force farmers to be dependent on the suppliers of seeds, a situation

that leads to technological slavery and the destruction of biodiversity;

3) to abolish “pollution rights” and their sale and purchase and to oblige the rich countries to decrease their production rate of carbon dioxide (now 5.6 tons per person per year in the United States) to allow the poor countries (now 0.7 tons per person per year for the non-G8 countries) to industrialize;

4) to prohibit the buildings of dams (insofar as they are really necessary) without compensation for the displaced populations (economic refugees);

5) to protect the living and genetic resources from being patented by the North, which impoverishes the countries of the South. This process constitutes a colonial-type theft;

6) to fight against the privatization of the water, which the World Bank promotes, even in the form of private-public partnership (PPP) and to guarantee a minimum quantity of water per person while respecting the rhythm of renewal of ground water;

7) to create a group to Observe the Environment (Ecology Watch) prepared to denounce and respond to those actions characterized as aggression against the environment.

## ***5. FOR A BETTER FUTURE FOR PEASANT FARMERS***

In the domain of peasant agriculture, there are initially medium and long-term objectives related to food sovereignty, which are simultaneously at the national, international, multilateral (that of the WTO) and bilateral levels (Economic Partnership Agreements [EPA], negotiated between the African, Caribbean and Pacific [ACP] countries and the European Union). Then, at the national level, this also involves agricultural pricing and marketing policy (more than structural policy)-- the access of the farmers to the means of production and first of all, the land. In the very short term, in 2006, what is necessary is preventing the completion of the Doha Round, and the refusal to conclude the EPAs. For this purpose, the proposals here relate to two axes: the means to achieve food sovereignty in the medium term, and as a precondition imposing a setback on the Doha Round and EPAs.

### 1) Proposals to assure food sovereignty:

Food sovereignty involves granting to each national state (or group of states) the right to define its internal agricultural policy and the type of connection it wishes to have with the world market, along with the right to protect itself effectively from imports and to subsidize its farmers -- with the proviso that it is prohibited from exporting agricultural produce at a price lower than the average total production cost excluding direct or indirect subsidies (upstream or downstream). Food sovereignty is the lever that makes it possible for all countries to regain their national sovereignty in all areas. It is also a tool to promote democracy since it requires the participation of all the various forces in agro-alimentary production in defining its objectives and means, starting with the family farmers. It thus implies regulatory action on the national, sub-regional and international levels.

— At the national level:

The national states must guarantee access of the peasant producers to the productive resources, and first of all to the land. It is necessary to stop promoting agribusiness and the monopolization of the land by the national bourgeoisie (including government officials) and transnational firms to the detriment of the peasant producers. That implies facilitating investments in family farms and improving the local products to make them attractive to consumers. Access to land for all the peasants of the world must be recognized

as a basic right. Implementing this right requires adequate reforms of the land systems and sometimes agrarian reform.

To share the objective of food sovereignty with the urban consumers — an essential condition to have the governments participate — three types of actions should be carried out:

- restrict actions of the merchants that penalize the farmers and consumers.
- hold public awareness campaigns for consumers regarding the immense harm done to agriculture and to the economy as a whole by dependence on imported products, which are virtually the only products sold, for example, in the supermarkets of West Africa.
- gradually raise farm prices by promoting the right to import, but only in such a way as to avoid penalizing consumers with very limited purchasing power. This must be accompanied by the distribution of coupons to the poorer consumers that allows them to purchase local foodstuffs at the old price, similar to what is done in the United States, India and Brazil--while awaiting an increase in productivity of the farmers to cause a drop in their unit production costs, enabling them to lower their selling prices to the consumers.

— At the sub-regional level:

So that the national states can recover their full sovereignty, and first of all their food sovereignty, regional political integration is unavoidable for the small countries of the South. For this purpose, it is necessary to reform the current regional institutions, in particular, in Africa, the West African Economic and Monetary Union and the Economic Community of West African States (UEMOA and CEDEAO in their French initials, resp.), which are much too dependent on the various mega-powers.

— At the international level:

To pressure the United Nations to recognize food sovereignty as a basic right of national states, one essential to implement the right to food as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and the International Treaty of 1996 relating to economic, social and cultural rights. At this level, four regulatory instruments of international agricultural trade should be established to make food sovereignty effective:

- an effective protection against irresponsible, socially destructive imports, i.e., one founded on variable deductions that can guarantee a high-enough fixed entrance price to assure a minimum domestic farm prices adequate to secure farmers' investments and banks' loans; customs duties alone are insufficiently protective with regard to strongly fluctuating world prices, a fluctuation worsened by that of fluctuating exchange rates.
- the elimination of all forms of dumping, by prohibiting any export priced below the total average production cost of the exporting country, excluding direct or indirect subsidies.
- set the mechanisms of international coordination of price controls, so as to avoid structural overproduction and to minimize conjunctural overproduction that collapses farm prices.
- the need to get agriculture away from WTO control by entrusting the international regulation of agricultural trade to an institution of the United Nations, possibly the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO). In particular, by reforming its organization on the tripartite model of International Labor Organization (ILO), which would associate to this regulation the representatives of agricultural trade

unions (International Federation of Agricultural Producers and Via Campesina) beside representatives of the agro-alimentary firms (which act already in the shadows on the governments negotiating with the WTO) and of the national states.

2) Short-term proposals to prevent the Doha Round and the Economic Partnership Agreement:

A major lesson of the ministerial Conference of the WTO in Hong Kong is that the governments of Brazil and India, and with them G-20, abandoned the interests of the populations of the Third World and appeared the most determined promoters of neo-liberal globalization. Since the Doha Round is a “total package” (individual undertaking), there is a way to cause its failure. International civil society, and first of all the country-wide organizations of North and the South, will be able in a media campaign to show that these subsidies (particularly of the “green box”), are an instrument of dumping much more significant than the explicit subsidies for exports, and they will be still more significant starting in 2014 when the export subsidies are eliminated.

## ***6. TO BUILD A WORKERS' UNITED FRONT***

Two of the principal weapons in the hands of workers are the right to vote and the right to form trade unions. Up to now democracy and trade unions were built mainly within the national states. Now, however, neo-liberal globalization has challenged the workers the world over, and globalized capitalism cannot be confronted at the national level alone. Today, the task is twofold: to strengthen organizing on a national level and simultaneously globalize democracy and reorganize a worldwide working class.

Mass unemployment and the increasing proportion of informal work arrangements are other imperative reasons to reconsider the existing organizations of the laboring classes. A world strategy for labor must consider not only the situation of workers who work under stable contracts. Employment out of the formal sectors now involves an increasing portion of workers, even in the industrialized countries. In the majority of the countries of the South, the workers of the informal sector – temporary labor, informal labor, the self-employed, the unemployed, street salespeople, those who sell their own services — together form the majority of the laboring classes. These groups of informal workers are growing in the majority of the countries of the South because of high unemployment and a two-sided process: on the one hand, the decreasing availability of guaranteed employment and increased informal employment, and on the other hand, the continuous migration from the rural areas to the towns. The most important task will be for workers outside the formal sector to organize themselves and for the traditional trade unions to open up in order to carry out common actions.

The traditional trade unions have had problems responding to this challenge. Not all the organizations of the workers—except in the formal sectors--will necessarily be trade unions or similar organizations and the traditional trade unions will also have to change. New perspectives for organizing together, based on horizontal bonds and mutual respect, must develop between the traditional trade unions and the new social movements. For this purpose, the following proposals are submitted for consideration:

1. An opening of the trade unions towards collaboration with the other social movements without trying to subordinate them to the traditional trade-union structure or a specific political party.
2. The constitution of effectively transnational trade-union structures in order to confront transnational employers. These trade-union structures should have a capacity to negotiate and at the same time have a mandate to organize common actions beyond national borders. For this purpose, an important step would be to organize strong trade-union structures within transnational corporations. These corporations have a complex network of production and are often very sensitive to any rupture in the chains of production and

distribution, that is, they are vulnerable. Some successes in the struggles against the transnational corporations could have a real impact on the world balance of power between capital and labor.

3. Technological development and structural change are necessary to improve living conditions and eradicate poverty, but the relocations of production are not carried out today in the interest of the workers; instead, they are exclusively profit-driven. It is necessary to promote a gradual improvement of the wages and working conditions, to expand local production along with local demand and a system of negotiation to carry out relocation in other ways than simply following the logic of profit and free trade. These relocations could fit under transnational negotiation in order to prevent workers of the various countries from being forced to enter in competition with each other in a relentless battle.

4. To consider the rights of migrant worker as a basic concern for the trade unions by ensuring that solidarity among workers is not dependent on their national origin. Indeed, segregation and discrimination on ethnic or other bases are threats to working-class solidarity.

5. To take care so that the future transnational organization of the laboring class is not conceived as a unique, hierarchical and pyramidal structure, but as a variety of various types of organizations, with a network-like structure with many horizontal bonds.

6. To promote a labor front in reorganized structures that also include workers outside the formal sector throughout the world, capable of taking effective coordinated actions to confront globalized capitalism.

Only such a renewed movement of workers, worldwide, inclusive and acting together with other social movements will be able to transform the present world and to create a world order founded on solidarity rather than on competition.

### ***7. FOR A DEMOCRATIZATION OF SOCIETIES AS A NECESSARY STEP TO FULL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT***

Progressive forces must re-appropriate the concept of democracy, because an alternative, socialist society must be fully democratic. Democracy does not come from on high. It is a process of cultural transformation, because people change through their practice. It is thus essential that activists in popular movements and in left or progressive governments understand that it is necessary to create spaces for real participation both in workplaces and in neighborhoods. Without the transformation of people into protagonists of their history, the problems of the people -- health, food, education, housing.... -- cannot be solved. The lack of political participation contributed to the fall of the socialist countries of Eastern Europe. The citizens of these countries were hardly motivated to defend regimes where they were observers and not actors.

The struggle for democracy must also be linked to the struggle to eradicate poverty and all forms of exclusion. Indeed, to solve these problems, the people must become wielders of power. That implies waging a struggle against the logic of capitalist profit and erecting in its place, in whatever areas that can be won, a different, humanist logic of solidarity. It is no longer enough to just assert the need for an alternative society; it is necessary to propose popular initiatives which are alternatives to capitalism and which aim to break the logic of commerce and the relations that this dynamic imposes.

But this also involves organizing struggles that cannot be reduced to simple economic demands, as necessary as these are, and which put forward an alternative social project, including real levels of authority and democracy, going beyond the current forms of parliamentary representative democracy and its elections. We must struggle for a new type of democracy, coming from below, for those on the lowest

levels of society, through local governments, rural communities, workers fronts, politically active citizens... This democratic practice of solidarity will be the best way to attract new sectors of society to the struggle for a fully democratic alternative society.

In order to concretize these principles, the following broad outline is proposed:

- Insert democracy into the totality of the conditions which characterize movements of emancipation and liberation, in their individual and collective dimension.
- Recognize that the failures of the Soviet system and the regimes that arose from decolonization resulted largely from their denial of freedom and their underestimation of the value of democracy. The development of alternatives must integrate this fact and give pre-eminence to building democracy.
- Contest the hypocritical words of the dominant powers, which are all too ready to give lessons in democracy. U.S. imperialism's cynicism is particularly unbearable, as its agents reveal themselves as torturers, warmongers and violators of liberty. Despite this, U.S. cynicism should not serve as a pretext to limit freedom and the exercise of democracy.
- Reject the dominant conception of democracy advanced by the United States and the Western powers. Democracy cannot be defined as accepting the rules of the market, subordinating oneself to the world market, to multi-party elections controlled from abroad and to a simplistic ideology of human rights. This type of neoliberal democracy blocks genuine democracy by arbitrarily tying the importance of free elections and the respecting of human rights to demands for an expansion of the market economy. The curtailment of democracy in this way, which puts the market first, perverts its meaning.
- Recognize that there is strong dialectic between political democracy and social democracy, because political democracy is incomplete and cannot last if inequalities, exploitation and social injustice persist. Social democracy cannot progress without struggle against oppression and discrimination, while still keeping in mind that no social policy can justify the absence of freedom and disrespect of basic rights.
- Affirm that democracy requires an effective and increasing participation of the population, producers and inhabitants. This implies transparency in decision making and in responsibilities. It does not diminish the importance of representative democracy. On the contrary, it completes and deepens it.
- Since democracy must facilitate the struggle against poverty, inequalities, injustice and discrimination, it must reserve a strategic position for the poor and oppressed, their struggles and their movements. In this sense democracy in the operation of these movements contributes to their survival and successes.
- Democracy in the anti-globalization (or "other-globalization") movement is an indication of the importance the movement attaches to democracy in its orientations. It indicates a renewal of the political and organizational culture, with particular attention given to the question of authority and hierarchy. For this purpose, one proposal for immediate action is to lead a campaign so that the movements for popular education have an important role in civic education in democracy and that this dimension be present in teaching.

Let us recall, indeed, that the anti-globalization movement is carrying a fundamentally democratic project. It asserts the access for all to fundamental rights. These include civil and political rights, in particular the right to freedom of organization and expression that are the bases of democratic freedoms. It also asserts the economic, social, cultural and environmental rights which are the foundation of social democracy. It finally asserts collective rights and the rights of the people to struggle against oppression and violence imposed on them. It is a question here of defining a program to implement democracy.

The anti-globalization movement also recognizes the importance of public services as one of the essential means to guarantee access to equal rights for all. It defends the struggles of workers and users of these public services. It promotes proposals coming out of movements to defend them, in education and health. For example in health, access to a list of free drugs, the rejection of monopolies, the dictatorship of patents and their attempts to put living organisms under control of a patent.

- The struggle for democracy must take account of various levels of intervention. We will examine five of these levels: enterprise, local democracy, national democracy, larger regions, and worldwide democracy. For each of these levels, an action can be proposed as illustration. The choice of the priorities will be the result of debate over strategy.

1) Democracy in the enterprise is a major demand. It implies the recognition of the authority of workers, users and territorial and national collectives. It necessitates the rejection of the shareholders' dictatorship and the destructive logic of finance capital. It leads to control of decisions, and in particular to making them on a local level. The development of innovative forms of self-organization and mutualisation is one way to assert the plurality of forms of production and to reject the false evidence that private capitalist enterprises are the most efficient. The movement demanding social and environmental responsibility from companies is of great interest, in spite of the risks of cooptation, on the condition that it leads to putting enforceable public standards into international law.

2) Local democracy responds to the demand for proximity and participation. It bases itself on local institutions that must guarantee public services and that provide an alternative to neoliberalism. It puts the satisfaction of the needs at the local level ahead of arrangements for companies on the world market. It makes the acquisition of citizenship possible, in particular through residence, and its consequences in terms of voting rights.

3) National democracy remains the strategic level. The questions of identities, borders, respect of the rights of minorities and the legitimacy of institutions form the bases of popular sovereignty. Public policies can be the arena of confrontation against neoliberalism. The progressive redistribution of wealth based on taxation should be defended and extended. Measures like a minimum income and retirement based on solidarity between the generations are not reserved for the rich countries, but flow from the division between profits and the income of labor specific to each society.

4) The larger regions can spread neoliberal policies everywhere, as in the European Union, or can demonstrate counter-tendencies or provide sites of resistance, as the development of Mercosur and the failure of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA – English, ALEA – French, ALCA -- Spanish, Portuguese) shows. From this point of view, the continental social forums have considerable responsibility.

5) Worldwide democracy is a prospect for response to widespread neoliberal policies. In the current situation, the mobilizations with the highest priority to be carried by the anti-globalization movement are: cancellation of the debt, fundamental questioning of World Trade Organization (WTO – English, OMC-- French), suppression of tax havens, international taxation particularly on financial capital (transfers of capital, profits of the transnational firms, etc.), a radical reform of the international financial institutions (with in particular the principle one country, one vote), the reform of the United Nations in respect of the rights of the people and the rejection of preventive war.

We should create a Democracy Observation Post, which is able to resist the hegemony of the dominant countries, primarily the United States, with its duplicitous discourse on democracy; to encourage citizen control; to promote the democratic forms invented and implemented by the social movements and

politically active citizens.

### ***8. FOR THE ERADICATION OF ALL FORMS OF OPPRESSION, EXPLOITATION AND ALIENATION OF WOMEN***

The forms of patriarchy are multiple, like its bonds with imperialism and neoliberalism. It is important and necessary to analyze its impact on women. « Patriarchy » refers to the domination of the father/patriarch and was used to describe a family model dominated by men, who have authority over all other members of the family. This model is certainly not universal, a number of African societies having been matrilineal or dual, with paternal and maternal lineages, each having their own roles for an individual. This patriarchal system expanded with the rise of monotheistic religions along with colonial ideologies and legislation.

Today, patriarchy specifically designates domination by males, and inequality between genders to the detriment of the women, and their multiple forms of subordination. The family, which socializes the child, remains primarily for the “domestication” of girls and women. This imposition of a hierarchy of the genders is all the more marked in that it is supported by cultural standards and religious values leading to the appropriation of women’s productive and reproductive capacities. The State reinforces this patriarchal structure with its policies and family codes. Discrimination persists in relations within the family, in education, in access to material, financial and natural resources, in employment, in participation in political power, etc. Despite a perceptible advance in women's rights, male domination is still firmly in place with the “masculinization” of institutions that constitute neoliberal organization.

The analysis of the relationship between patriarchy and imperialism and the balance sheet of the struggles of women against these systems leads us to propose several actions:

1. Break with the practice of placing the women's question on the side. This practice leads to a political and scientific apartheid. Since the question of gender cuts across many arenas, it must be taken into account in every recommendation.

2. Continue lobbying organizations of civil society and the political community, in order to reinforce the alliance between feminist organizations and progressive forces and to insert in the progressive agenda appeals in favor of women, including:

- struggle against the image of their inferior position in the social, political, cultural and religious discourse of the global society;
- develop education and training of women in order to break the internalization of this position of inferiority;
- spread a better consciousness of their active roles in society;
- encourage men to question this masculine domination in order to deconstruct its mechanisms;
- reinforce legal provisions for an effective equality between the genders;
- increase women’s equal representation in institutions (parity).

3. Render visible the history of the women, their individual and collective actions, notably:

- the nomination of Mille women, established by some associations in Hong Kong, for the 2005 Nobel Peace Prize;
- the campaign of Women say No to war against the war in Iraq;
- various campaigns on current subjects or social projects;

4. Promote the basic right of the women to control their bodies and their brains, to control decisions relating to their life choices: education, employment, various activities, but also sexuality and child-bearing (right to contraception, choice to have a child, right of abortion...) -- women's bodies being the site for all sorts of oppression and violence.

5. Support theoretical reflection, starting from feminine experiences, in order to counter male domination in order to reinforce the perspectives of women on various questions affecting society, and in order to open new horizons for research and action. Women's perspectives need to be cultivated particularly on matters of population (such as the population Conference in Cairo in 1994), or environment (as in the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992), where women demand the right to live in a healthy environment.

6. Develop databases and an Internet site on the relationship between women and imperialism and neoliberalism.

## ***9. FOR THE DEMOCRATIC MANAGEMENT OF THE MEDIA AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY***

1 - For the right to education:

Before the right to culture, the right to information and the right to inform, the fundamental problem of the right to education arises. This right, though it is officially recognized everywhere, remains ineffective in many countries, and particularly for young women. It is thus a priority for all social movements to pressure governments to fulfill their most elementary obligations in this field.

2 - For the right to information and the right to inform:

— Initiatives towards the large media

The right to obtain information and the right to inform enter in contradiction with the general logic of how the media are structured. Through their increasing concentration on a worldwide scale, the media are not only the direct recipients of the benefits of neoliberal globalization, but also the carriers of its ideology. It is thus necessary to fight tooth and nail to throw sand into the gears of this machinery for "formatting" the human spirit, machinery whose goal is to make the neoliberal order appear not only inevitable but even desirable. For this purpose, campaigns must be launched in each country, within the framework of an international coordination:

- for legislative initiatives aimed at fighting against media concentration;
- for legislative initiatives aimed at guaranteeing the autonomy of the editors as opposed to the shareholders and owners, by encouraging, where they do not exist, the creation of journalists' associations with real power to act;
- for education encouraging criticism of the media in the school system and popular organizations.

— To support the alternative media

The alternative media and the non-profit media, in all their forms (print, radio, television, Internet), already play important role in delivering pluralist information not subject to the diktats of finance capital and multinational corporations. This is why it is necessary to demand that governments create legal and tax conditions from which these media can benefit. A watchdog group of the Alternative Media could identify the most advanced laws existing in the world today. Just as the owners and directors of the large media do, it would be useful for the alternative media to organize each year a worldwide meeting of the people responsible for the alternative media, possibly within the framework of the process of the World Social Forums.

— Don't allow the television networks of the North a monopoly of the images broadcast to the world

The large networks of international television of North, like CNN, have profited for a long time from a de-facto monopoly and have presented a view of the world corresponding to the interests of the dominant powers. In the Arab world, the creation of Al-Jazeera, with great professionalism, made it possible to break with the one-sided vision of Middle-Eastern conflicts. The recent launching of Telesur makes it possible for Latin America to be seen not exclusively through the prism of the North-American media. The creation of an African network meets an identical need, and all effort must be made to assure that it is born.

3 - For the right to express oneself in one's language:

The first way to recognize all the expatriate elites of the planet is by their use of English. There is a logical bond between the voluntary or resigned submission to the U.S. super-power and the adoption of its language as the sole tool for international communication. Today Chinese and the Romance languages have – if one promotes mutual comprehension within the large family that they form – and tomorrow Arabic will have as much a right to play in parallel the role English does. It is a question of political will. To fight against “all-English,” the following measures should be encouraged:

- to create a goal within the educational systems, if conditions allow, of teaching two foreign languages (and not only English) for active and passive competence (understand, speak, read, write) and one or two other languages for passive competence (to read and understand orally).
- To put into practice, in the education systems, methods to teach mutual comprehension of the Romance languages (Spanish, Catalan, French, Italian, Portuguese, Rumanian -- which are official languages in 60 countries). When each one speaks his/her own language and understands that of the conversational partner that communication is most efficient.
- In the specific case of Africa, to make teaching and promotion of the national languages a political priority of the African Union.

To create an international fund to support the translation of the maximum number of documents in the languages of the countries which have low incomes, in particular so that they are present on the Internet.

### ***10. FOR the DEMOCRATIZATION OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND the institutionalization of a multipolar international order***

The United Nations is a peoples' institution, and for this reason represents a step forward. But it also

reflects the balance of power among national states, whose impact can prove to be ambivalent, even negative, regarding certain peoples or under certain circumstances. Changes in the UN are thus necessary, insofar as the hegemony of the most powerful countries enables them to use the UN for their own purposes. Consequently, we propose the following initiatives:

1. Democratize the area referred to as the United Nations;
2. Initiate “reforms” of the UN with a goal of limiting the inequalities of the balance of power among national states;
3. Act on the governments which constitute UN, and for this reason, to constitute within each country an observer group that permits a demonstration of the action of the governments within the United Nations, its specialized organizations and the authorities created by the Bretton Woods meeting (the IMF, the World Bank, WTO);
4. Refinance the specialized organizations such as the FAO or the WHO, to avoid their dependence upon transnational corporations;
5. Ensure a wide and effective presence of social movements and nongovernmental organizations within the international institutions;
6. Promote International Courts of Justice, in particular concerning the economic crimes, while preventing them from being manipulated by the dominant powers, and, in same time, constitute courts of popular opinion in order to promote alternative means of establishing justice;
7. Democratize the United Nations, increase the power of the General Assembly and democratize the Security Council in order to break the monopolies (right of veto, atomic powers);
8. Promote a United Nations that allows for regionalization that is equipped with real powers on the various continents. It is in particular proposed to promote a Middle East Social Forum, gathering the progressive forces of the countries of the area to seek alternative solutions instead of the U.S. project of the Greater Middle East.
9. Promote inside the UN respect for the sovereignty of national states, in particular vis-à-vis the actions undertaken by the IMF, the World Bank and the WTO.
10. Promote a world Parliament of the People to bring humanity out of the vicious circle of poverty.

#### **Disclaimer**

One objective of OpenSpaceForum is to make available articles and other documents for public discussion. The views of the authors of various articles and documents are not necessarily the views of this webspace. Similarly, the display of articles and documents on this webspace does not imply that the authors agree with the views of this webspace.

## SIGNATAIRES DE L'APPEL DE BAMAKO

### *['Signatories to The Bamako Appeal']*

[Explanatory notes :This list received by CACIM on March 24 2006 from François Houtart of WFA (World Forum for Alternatives).This version of the original document, with English translation of title and subtitles, prepared by Jai Sen of CACIM, New Delhi, India, March 26 2006.]

#### **Entités collectives :**

*(Collective entities)*

1. Forum pour un autre Mali, Mali
2. Forum mondial des Alternatives, France
3. Forum du Tiers Monde, Sénégal
4. ENDA, Sénégal
5. International Action Center, Etats-Unis
6. PCdoB, Brésil
7. Website Resistir.info, Portugal
8. Journal *Alentejo Popular*, Portugal
9. *Serpaj Ecuador*, Equateur
10. *Alternative Information Center*, Israël
11. Solidarité, France
12. Centre syndical de recherches *Cestes*, Italie
13. Revue *Proteo*, Italie
14. Revue *Nuestra América*, Italie
15. Mouvement social "Alternatives", Russie
16. *Promoción del Desarrollo popular*, Mexique
17. Assemblée des Mouvements sociaux du Forum social mondial, Caracas 2006
18. IBON Foundation, Philippines
19. CUT, Brésil
20. Union des ONG du Brésil
21. MST, Brésil

#### **Personnalités :**

*(Personalities / Individuals)*

1. Samir Amin, directeur du Forum du Tiers Monde et président du Forum mondial des Alternatives, Egypte et France
2. François Houtart, CETRI et Forum mondial des Alternatives, Belgique
3. Aminata Traore, ancienne Ministre de la Culture, Mali
4. Bernard Founou, directeur de recherches au Forum du Tiers Monde, Cameroun
5. Rémy Herrera, coordinateur du Forum mondial des Alternatives, France
6. Mahmood Mamdani (Uganda), Columbia University, New York, Etats-Unis
7. Miguel Urbano Rodrigues, éditeur du website *Resistir.info*, Portugal
8. Rui Namorado Rosa, éditeur du website *Resistir.info*, Portugal
9. José Paulo Gascão, éditeur du website *Resistir.info*, Portugal
10. Jorge Figueiredo, éditeur du website *Resistir.info*, Portugal

11. Lau Kin Chi, directrice de ARENA, Hong Kong, République populaire de Chine
12. Dai Jinhua, République populaire de Chine
13. Wang Hui, République populaire de Chine
14. Wim Dierkxsens, Pays-Bas et Costa Rica
15. John Catalinotto, rédacteur en chef de Workers World Party Newspaper, Etats-Unis
16. Torab Haghshenas, éditeur de la revue persane *Andeesheh va peykar*, Iran
17. Luciano Alzagar, *Rebelión*, <http://www.rebellion.org/noticia.php?id=25934>
18. John Bellamy Foster, éditeur de la *Monthly Review* et président de *Monthly Review Press*
19. Ingemar Lindberg, Suède
20. Augusta Conchiglia, responsable de la revue *Afrique Asie*, Italie
21. Isabel Rauber, Argentine
22. Néstor Kohan, Argentine
23. Paulo Nakatani, vice-président de la *Sociedade brasileira de Economia politica*, Brésil
24. Mohamed Said Saadi, président du Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Aziz Belal
25. Jhonny Jimenez, directeur de *Serpaj Ecuador*
26. Michel Warszawski, Israël, responsable du *Alternative Information Center*, Israël
27. José Reinaldo Carvalho, vice-président du PCdoB, Brésil
28. Carlos Lopes Pereira, directeur de Journal *Alentejo Popular*, Portugal
29. Bernard Cassen, président d'ATTAC, France
30. Ignacio Ramonet, directeur du Monde diplomatique, France
31. Jacques Berthelot, France
32. Devan Pillay, Afrique du Sud
33. Rosa Maria Marques, responsable de la *Sociedade brasileira de Economia politica*, Brésil
34. Alioune Sall, Sénégal
35. Jacques Muller, ingénieur agronome INAPG, maire (Vert) de Wattwilelr (Alsace)
36. Pathe Diagne, Sénégal
37. Luciano Vasapollo, professeur à l'Université La Sapienza de Rome
38. Hein Marais, Afrique du Sud
39. Jean Bricmont, professeur de physique, Belgique
40. Etchri Sassou. B. Koffi, Coordinateur FAMDES INTERNATIONAL, Togo
41. Mariam Dembélé
42. Igata Kazumasa, ATTAC Japan, Japon
43. Igata Miyoko, ATTAC Japan, Japon
44. Dianto Bachriadi
45. Jacques Bidet, président d'honneur de la revue *Actuel Marx*, France
46. Alexander Buzgalin, coordinateur du mouvement social russe "Alternatives", Russie
47. Zbigniew Marcin Kowalewski, directeur de la revue *Rewolucja*, Pologne
48. Nicola Bullard, Bangkok
49. Armand Clesse, Luxembourg
50. Vittorio Agnoletto, député européen
51. Luis Lopezllera Méndez, Président de *Promoción del Desarrollo popular*, Mexique
52. Ali Turqui Rabiou, Syrie
53. Tayseer Quba'a, Palestine
54. Mamdouh Habashi, Egypte
55. Darwis Khudori, Professeur de Langue et Civilisation asiatiques, Indonésie
56. Sam Moyo, directeur exécutif de l'African Institute for Agrarian Studies, Zimbabwe
57. Michel Azcueta, ancien maire de Villa El Salvador, Colectivo « Confianza Perú », Pérou
58. Corinne Kumar, Tunisie
59. Cecilia Baeza, présidente du Collectif des Féministes pour l'Egalité, France
60. Antonio Tujan Jr., directeur de recherches à la IBON Foundation, Philippines
61. Emir Sader, Professeur de sociologie, Brésil

- 62. Konrad Markowski, revue *Nowy Robotnik*, Pologne
- 63. Magdalena Ostrowska, journal *Trybuna*, Pologne
- 64. Przemyslaw Wielgosz, revue *Lewa Noga*, Pologne
- 65. Stefan Zgliczynski, Institut éditorial Livre et Presse (IW KiP), Pologne
- 66. Isabel Monal, Institut de Philosophie de La Havane, Cuba

**LISTE DES INVITES qui n'ont pas encore signé :**

(List of Invitees who have not yet signed)

- 11) Pierre BEAUDET (Canada)
- 23) Gustave MASSIAH (France)
- 29) Nick DEARDEN (Grande-Bretagne)
- 36) Diana JOHNSTONE (Etats-Unis)
- 39) Luciana CASTELLINA (Italie)
- 8) Marta HARNECKER (Chili)
- 19) João Paulo RODRIGUES (Brésil)
- 31) Silvio BARO (Cuba)
- 13) Devan PILLAY (Afrique du Sud)
- 15) Fatou SARR (Sénégal)
- 16) Fatou SOW (Sénégal)
- 17) Langa ZITA (Afrique du Sud)
- 18) Abdourahmane NDIAYE (Sénégal)
- 24) Alioune SALL (Sénégal)
- 25) Hein MARAIS (Afrique du Sud)
- 28) Amady Aly DIENG (Sénégal)
- 34) Thomas HOUEDETE (Bénin)
- 5) Morteza HAGH-SHENS (Iran)
- 12) Mariam DEMBÉLÉ (Palestine)
- 20) Subhi TOMA (Irak)
- 27) Salameh KAILEH (Syrie)
- 30) Hassania CHALBI (Maroc)
- 33) Mohamed Said SAADI (Maroc)
- 37) Khaldoun AL NAQEEB (Koweït)
- 38) Fayez BICTACHE (Egypte)
- 22) Dianto BACHRIADI (Indonésie)
- 43) Kinhide MUSHAKOJI (Japon)
- 54) Francis COMBES (France)
- 64) Vittorio AGNOLETTO (Italie)
- 65) Wim DIERCKZSENS (Pays-Bas / Costa Rica)
- 66) Eric ROULEAU (France)
- 62) Jacobo TORRES DE LEON (Venezuela)
- 67) Gilbertro MARINGONI (Brésil)
- 40) Térèse KEITA (Niger)
- 46) Issa SHIVJI (Tanzanie)
- 52) Fidèle-Pierre NZE-NGUEMA (Gabon)
- 53) Mahmood MAMDANI (Ouganda)
- 56) Chérif Salif SY (Sénégal)
- 57) Pathe DIAGNE (Sénégal)
- 41) Leila GHANEM (Liban)
- 42) Ayse BERKTAY (Turquie)
- 45) Mamdouh HABASHI (Egypte)
- 47) WANG Hui (Chine)

- 48) LAU Kin Chi (Chine / Hong Kong)
- 49) WEN Tiejun (Chine)
- 50) HUANG Ping (Chine)
- 51) DAI Jinhua (Chine)
- 58) Nicola BULLARD (Philippines)
- 59) Walden BELLO (Philippines)
- 60) Utsa PATNAIK (Inde)
- 61) Tissa VITARANA (Sri Lanka)
- 69) Christophe AGUITON (France)
- 70) Jacques NIKONOF (France)
- 71) Otto WAHL (Allemagne)
- 72) Alexander BUZGALIN (Russie)
- 73) Boris KAGARLISKY (Russie)
- 74) Jean-Yves BARRERE (France)
- 78) une personne remplaçant Muto ICHIYO (Japon)
- 79) Paul NICHOLSON (Espagne)
- 80) José BOVE (France)
- 82) Raffaele SALINARI (Italie)
- 83) Mario AGOSTINELLI (Italie)
- 84) Susan GEORGE (France)
- 85) Jhonny JIMENEZ (Equateur)
- 86) Sam MOYO (Zimbabwe)
- 87) Carlos LOPEZ (Guinée Bissau)
- 88) Eddy MALOKA (Afrique du Sud)
- 89) Fatima MEER (Afrique du Sud)
- 90) Akilagpa SAWYER (Ghana)
- 91) Yao GRAHAM (Ghana)
- 92) Koffi TETEH (Ghana)
- 93) Abubakar MOMOH (Nigeria)
- 94) Paulin HOUNTONDI (Bénin)
- 95) Adelino HANDEM (Guinée Bissau)
- 96) Amath DANSOKO (Sénégal)
- 97) Abdoulaye BATHILY (Sénégal)
- 98) Sassou Koffi BUSOMEKPO (Togo)
- 99) Sékou Cisse (Guinée)
- 100) Ibrahim HAYDAR (Soudan)
- 101) Hassan NAFAA
- 102) Kaïs Jawad AL AZAWY (Irak)
- 103) Tayseer QUBA'A (Palestine)
- 104) Azmi BISHARA (Palestine)
- 105) Khaled EL FISHAWY (Egypte)
- 106) Hany EL HOSSEINY (Egypte)
- 107) Zein Alabidine FOUAD (Egypte)
- 108) Basma EL HUSSEINY (Egypte)
- 109) Ali FAYAD (Liban)
- 110) Walid SHARARA (Liban)
- 111) MOHSEN (Liban)
- 112) Saad MEHIO (Liban)
- 113) Ali Turki RABIUO (Syrie)
- 114) Batir Mohamed Ali WARDAM (Jordanie)
- 115) Majid RAHNEMA (Iran)

- 116) ADONIS
- 117) Arundhati ROY (Inde)
- 118) NGUYEN Thi Binh (Viêt-nam)
- 119) Fernando SARATH (Sri Lanka)
- 121) YOON Ja Kim (Corée du Sud)

### **Disclaimer**

One objective of OpenSpaceForum is to make available articles and other documents for public discussion. The views of the authors of various articles and documents are not necessarily the views of this webspace. Similarly, the display of articles and documents on this webspace does not imply that the authors agree with the views of this webspace.

---

## 7.3

### **The Bamako Appeal : Answers from François Houtart**

[The Bamako Appeal : Answers from François Houtart on Monday April 3, 2006 of the WFA (World Forum for Alternatives) to questions asked by Jai Sen, CACIM, March 25-26 2006 @ [http://www.openspaceforum.net/twiki/tiki-read\\_article.php?articleId=137](http://www.openspaceforum.net/twiki/tiki-read_article.php?articleId=137)

#### **Notes :**

1. The list of questions here includes both CACIM's first list (dt March 14 2006) and also the one question asked later (q 11, March 21 2006).
2. Responses listed below are as per François Houtart's letter to JS, March 24 2006.
3. Some spelling corrections done to FH's responses, js 250306.]

#### **Qs & A's :**

1. Who were the sponsors of the Bamako Appeal ? Was it only the WFA, or were there other organisations (and/or individuals) associated with it taking shape ?

*The sponsors were: the World Forum for Alternatives, the Third World Forum, the Malian Social Forum, and ENDA (a NGO working in Africa).*

2. The Introduction to the Appeal says that it is "built around the broad themes discussed in subcommittees". Can you give us some details on this ? Who initiated this process (I assume WFA ?), what were the mandates of the various subcommittees, who were the members of the subcommittees, when was this work undertaken, and are their respective reports available anywhere ? Or could you send them to us ? (And would you like them also posted on a webspace (probably OpenSpaceForum? or our own space at CACIM, which we are slowly now setting up), so that the full background is available ?

*The 10 subgroups have worked during one day and have produced a report, which has been edited by Samir, Rémy Herrera, and myself and published in the Appeal.*

3. To my understanding, the Bamako Appeal was launched at the Bamako Meeting itself, on January 18. Is this correct ? Or was it available before this, and if so where, to whom, and how did discussion on this take place ?

*Yes.*

4. Was the draft of the Appeal that was placed at the Bamako meeting on January 18 modified at all there ? If so, in what ways ?

*No modified, simply complemented by the reports of the groups.*

5. Was the Appeal actually approved at the Bamako Meeting ? If so, who were the signatures of the Appeal as it stood at Bamako ? (The version we have does not have any names mentioned.)

*It has been approved in Bamako in a general outline one day before the Forum. The final draft has been worked during the Forum, but it has been sent afterwards for signatures.*

6. Was the Appeal endorsed by all the participants at the Bamako meeting ? If not, were there any dissenters or objectors ? Could you summarise their points of objection, and/or direct us to them / give us

their contact details ?

*No dissent.*

7. Was the Bamako Appeal then presented and discussed at the Bamako Social Forum at all ? If so, at what meetings, and what was the outcome ? If not, why not ?

*It has been presented and also discussed in the Forum. Some objections have been raised, before the Forum, by some members of the Secretariat who think that it was an initiative to change the character of the Forum.*

*This has been clarified. Others within the Forum have reacted against what they were considering as an initiative taken by intellectuals without enough consultation with the bases. I have presented the appeal at the meeting of the Social Movements and it has been well accepted.*

8. I understand that the Appeal was then carried forward and presented at the Caracas Social Forum, perhaps at the Social Movements Assembly that took place there, but we do not have any details, nor can I find any on the web, as yet. Can you please tell how and where it was presented / tabled, whether it was discussed, whether it was further modified there, and whether it was approved, either at the Social Movements Assembly or anywhere else ?

*Samir and myself have presented the appeal in various panels in Caracas.*

*Personally I have presented it in the meeting of the Social Movements. It has been well accepted. In some panels the same reactions as in Bamako have been presented, but without too much echoes.*

9. What, then, is the present status of the Appeal ? Is it now final, or is there place / opportunity for further modifications to come in – and if so, where should such proposals be directed ?

*There [is] no opportunity to change ... what has been published.*

10. What do you now plan to do with the Appeal ? What are the further steps you have in mind ? I note that in the appeal, it talks of working committees to carry forward the work. What are these committees, how have they been constituted, what are their terms of reference, when do they report ?

*For the continuation, the plan is to organize working groups by internet on each of the 10 points and to begin an exchange of ideas and proposals between the persons ready to work on them. It should go along the line of defining actors and strategies. The constitution of those groups will be proposed in the following days.*

Additional question :

11. Who has supported (and is continuing to support) the Bamako Appeal initiative, which is obviously quite a major undertaking ?

*[No response as yet]*

12. Finally, please of course make available to us any other relevant information that we might not have requested above but that we should have, to have a complete picture.

*(List of signatories sent separately by FH March 23 2006. [To view this list click here](#)).*

---

## 7.4

### **'Bamako Appeal' promotes struggle against market-driven society**

*John Catalinotto, Bamako, Mali, January 27 2006*

@ <http://www.workers.org/2006/world/bamako-appeal-0202/>

A group of about 80 anti-globalization intellectuals and political activists, including Marxist economists and organizers, came together to meet on Jan. 18-19 in Bamako, Mali, just before the polycentric World Social Forum opened in this city. The gathering, which was not an official WSF activity but whose invitees also participated in many WSF discussions, issued a statement at the end of the meeting: the Bamako Appeal.

The appeal involves promoting discussion and action on a series of points outlining major problems for humanity. These include the need to build a workers' united front and to struggle against imperialist domination and U.S. military hegemony; the problems of peasant societies under threat of destruction from subsidized competition; democratic management of media and cultural diversity; and the struggle against neoliberal and market-driven policies.

One of the Bamako Appeal's major goals is to promote solidarity among workers and progressives in the imperialist countries and the peoples' movements in the oppressed countries. The appeal says the participants "have expressed their concern with the task of defining alternate goals of development, creating a balance of societies, abolishing exploitation by class, gender, race and caste, and marking the route to a new relation of forces between North and South."

Egyptian economist and head of the Third World Forum Samir Amin, who is a professor at the University of Dakar in Mali's neighbor Senegal, had called this pre-WSF gathering a "Peoples' Bandung Conference" to mark the 50th anniversary of the 1955 conference of non-aligned nations held in Bandung, Indonesia. Some of the Malian political leaders working on the WSF hosted and participated in the conference. They included former Minister of Culture Aminata Traore.

Among the 80 people participating in the pre-WSF discussions were Bernard Founou-Tchuigoua and Babacar Diop Buuba, both university professors in Dakar, Senegal; former member of the European Parliament Miguel Urbano Rodrigues of Portugal; Chilean political journalist Marta Harnecker; Lebanese-French editor Leila Ghanem; and the organizer of the rebellion.org website Luciano Alzaga.

Also there were Wen Tiejun and Jinhua Dai of Peking University; editor-in-chief Isobel Monal of the Cuban magazine "Marx Now"; Brazilian radical economist Paolo Nakatini and Communist Party of Brazil representative Jose Reinaldo Carvalho; French economist Remy Herrera; trade-union expert Ingmar Lindberg of Sweden; Antonio Tujan of the Philippine Institute of Political Economy; Mamdouh Habashi of the Anti-Globalization Egyptian Group; and John Bellamy Foster, editor of Monthly Review from the United States.

Ignacio Ramonet of Le Monde Diplomatique, Bernard Cassen of Attac-France and anti-globalization author Susan George, who have been closely connected with all prior major social forums, also spoke.

Along with the invited guests, there were also some groups of youths from some of the former French colonies, in particular Senegal, Benin and Togo. Some of the Cuban medical and other aid workers in Mali also participated.

To carry out the discussion the larger group split up into 10 different committees. These held intense discussions for about three hours each, five committees at a time. Some of the committees decided to try to set up permanent watchdog commissions, such as "imperialism watch" and "ecology watch."

### **Alarcon asks for anti-imperialist actions**

Cuban National Assembly President Ricardo Alarcon took part in the discussions too. He made some practical suggestions. One was that the Bamako Appeal have as its goal not simply to set up an anti-imperialist forum that outlines a program or spreads ideas, but that it also organize for coordinated anti-imperialist actions.

The Bamako Appeal does call for some actions. Among them is support for the March 18-19 worldwide days of anti-occupation demonstrations.

The call says it aims "to reinforce the movement protesting against war and occupations, as well as expressing solidarity with the people in fight in the hot spots of the planet. In this respect, it would be very important that the world demonstration against the war in Iraq and the military presence in Afghanistan envisaged for March 18-19, 2006, coincide with:

- \* the prohibition of the use and the manufacture of the nuclear weapons and destruction of all the existing arsenals;
- \* the dismantling of all the military bases existing outside of national territory, in particular the base at Guantanamo;
- \* the immediate closing of all the prisons of the CIA."

The appeal also calls for solidarity with Palestine and for being on guard to stop U.S. intervention against Venezuela and Bolivia.

In summary, the "Bamako Appeal, built around the broad themes discussed in subcommittees, expresses the will to:

- (i) Construct an internationalism joining the peoples of the South and the North who suffer the ravages engendered by the dictatorship of financial markets and by the uncontrolled global deployment of the transnational firms;
  - (ii) Construct the solidarity of the peoples of Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas confronted with challenges of development in the 21st century;
  - (iii) Construct a political, economic and cultural consensus that is an alternative to militarized and neoliberal globalization and to the hegemony of the United States and its allies."
- Catalinotto represented the International Action Center at the pre-WSF meetings.*

-----  
This article is copyright under a Creative Commons License.

Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., NY, NY 10011

Email: [ww@workers.org](mailto:ww@workers.org)

Subscribe [wwnews-subscribe@workersworld.net](mailto:wwnews-subscribe@workersworld.net)

Support independent news <http://www.workers.org/orders/donate.php>

Page printed from:

<http://www.workers.org/2006/world/bamako-appeal-0202/>

<http://www.workers.org/print.php>

## 7.5

### **World Social Forum puts Africa up front / Round tables issue Bamako Appeal / *Appel de Bamako***

*John Catalinotto, February 1 2006, Bamako Mali*

International Action Center @ [http://www.iacenter.org/wsf2006/wsf\\_bamako-012006.htm](http://www.iacenter.org/wsf2006/wsf_bamako-012006.htm)

February 1, 2006--For those people who know Mali's capital Bamako has only a handful of large buildings -- some government offices, the luxury hotel at 15 stories, the international bank and the great mosque -- it may have been a surprise that this city was picked for the African session of 2006's Polycentric World Social Forum (WSF).

But Mali has a rich history that reminds people of the high point of African civilization before the slave trade decimated the continent. In the early 14th century, Mali was the leading power in an empire bigger than medieval Europe, on the trading route from the Middle East to the African Gold Coast.

On that route was the legendary city of Timbuktu, located in the dry region of northern Mali known as the Sahel, on the edge of the Sahara desert. It is said that Mali's 14th century ruler Mansa (or Kankan) Moussa once traveled to Mecca with an entourage of 60,000 retainers, each carrying a bar of gold. He gave away so much gold in Cairo that his generosity collapsed the medieval market for that precious metal.

Landlocked and extremely poor, Mali still produces and exports gold, along with cotton. These two products account for 80 percent of Mali's exports. Mali's 480,000 square miles are almost twice that of Texas, but only 4 percent is arable, mostly in the inland delta of the mighty Niger River, which starts in the mountains of neighboring Guinea and flows northeast until it turns southwest through Niger and Nigeria and empties into Nigeria's oil fields in the Gulf of Guinea.

Over a million of Mali's 12.5 million people inhabit the capital, Bamako, a city of tree-lined streets with small wooden buildings and the feel of a giant village. Many Malians live in crushing poverty at a survival level, statistically about the same rate as Bolivia, and 10 percent of the population are nomadic, mostly Touaregs in the North.

Mali's infant mortality rate is over 100 per thousand live births. The adult literacy rate is under 50 percent.

But anyone walking across the Bridge of Martyrs from the south to the north side of the Niger will see a beehive of population and traffic, with most people still looking well, riding mopeds and driving old cars at a density familiar in any modern city. Continue through the blocks- long market toward the large mosque and people are mostly walking through the busy narrow crowded streets of the capital, women dressed in colorful attractive clothing and men standing tall. Everyone is selling and some buying on these streets, mostly cheap manufactured goods from all over the world.

Mali had a progressive government when it won independence from the French Empire in 1960, but it is now ensnared like most of Francophone Africa in French neo-colonialism. Mali's currency, the CFA, is

locked into the Euro, like that of Bahamas or Ecuador is to the dollar. The few real jobs are in government services, on a railroad now facing privatization or in the gold mines, but 80 percent of the people live off the land, and cotton prices are so low on the world market that imperialist agribusiness is wiping out the local producers.

### **Africa front and center**

The organizers of the World Social Forum chose this city host the African session of its 2006 gathering from Jan. 19-23. Malian activists organized, with a minimal infrastructure, a series of 600 meetings over those days in the universities, the congress buildings, the museums and conference centers of Bamako. According to these intrepid organizers, including former Minister of Culture Aminata Dramane Traore, some 15- 20,000 people, mostly from Francophone Africa and including many from the farming villages, attended the Bamako WSF.

For the first time in the five years of the WSF's existence, the issues of Africa were at its center. According to Malian organizer Mamadou Goita, "We had over 300 people from the rural areas of Mali alone, while another 8,000 came from neighboring countries. All of them participated in the forum and enriched the discussions. This has never happened before."

At the opening demonstration Jan. 19, thousands of people marched through Bamako's streets to the National Stadium, demanding fair trade policies, no privatization of the railroad, an end to subsidies to imperialist agribusiness, freedom for the Western Sahara and an end to the debt.

For the people of Africa, who for the first time had the opportunity to discuss their day-to-day problems before the world, the forum meant a chance to raise some of the most basic demands. Fair trade for agricultural products with an end to subsidies for imperialist agribusiness, development of industry in Africa, fair treatment of immigrants in Europe, protection of the environment of the poor countries, an end to the crushing debt burden were all put on the agenda.

On Jan. 23, a group of international guests from Lebanon, Turkey, Syria, Sweden, Belgium and the U.S. stopped at a local restaurant near the train station. As we left, some young Malian men implored us to bring the message back to the WSF and to the world that "All we want is work. We would prefer to stay here and work. Or we will come to Europe and work."

This train station was at one end of the railroad from Dakar, Senegal, to Bamako that was the scene of an historic 10-month-long strike in 1947-1948 that played a big role in the region's struggle for independence from France. Senegalese author and filmmaker Sembene Ousmane brought the story of this strike to the world in literary form by in his novel, "God's Bits of Wood."

At the WSF, Malians brought as a major issue the attempt to privatize the railroad and its sale to a Canadian-based transnational corporation.

### **A fate worse than debt**

Because the media has hyped the alleged commitment to cancel debt of the poorest countries through the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative, people may think the debt problem has been substantially relieved. In reality, this initiative has achieved little.

Throughout the 1990s and in the 21st century, the major imperialist powers have used the leverage of the crushing debt to enforce through the International Monetary Fund what is known as "neo-liberal" policies on the indebted countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Without IMF approval, the countries can't

get the new credit they need to function in the world economy.

The changed demanded is that African governments cut trade barriers that protect local producers, denationalize industry, cut government spending on health care, education and food subsidies, and open their markets, which keeps their economies as sources of cheap raw materials and cheap labor for transnational corporations and continued interest to banks. In 1999, for example, the HIPC countries repaid \$1,680 million more than they received in the form of new loans.

As a result of World Bank and IMF policies, average incomes in Africa have declined, and the continent's poverty has increased. These policies are still imposed on the HIPC countries that received debt relief, which includes Mali.

In Guinea and Zimbabwe, the inability to service foreign debts has only caused the Fund, the World Bank and Western countries to freeze all aid, causing the economic situation to deteriorate.

In general in Africa, around \$80 billion is needed to guarantee the provision of basic medical care, primary education and drinking water for the world's poorest population, said delegates from the Democratic Republic of Congo. However, they said, the poorest nations in the South had to payoff more than \$300 billion in debt to developed countries.

What is really needed is unconditional cancellation of debt and reparations for the enormous wealth that has been stolen from Africa in the last five centuries.

At the Bamako WSF there were 600 meetings scheduled at nine sites throughout the capital. An additional important issue involved immigration. A whole group of West African immigrants had just been expelled from Morocco after spending up to a year walking across the continent in the hope of ending up in Europe with some sort of job, no matter how hard or how ill-paid.

At one forum, the discussion involved both the Africans telling of their plight and European progressives, mainly from France and Italy, trying to work in solidarity with the Africans and to fight for the rights of all workers. A man from Angola told of being separated for seven months from his family without contact as he tried desperately to get to Europe. He had still only reached Mali.

The WSF does not make overall demands, let alone organize to carry them out. But participants expressed their satisfaction in meeting others from the continent also working for human progress.

### **The Bamako Appeal**

In addition, a group of about 80 anti-globalization intellectuals and political activists, including Marxist economists and organizers, came together to meet on Jan. 18-19 in Bamako just before the polycentric World Social Forum opened. The gathering, which was not an official WSF activity but whose invitees also participated in many WSF discussions, issued a statement at the end of the meeting: the Bamako Appeal.

The appeal involves promoting discussion and action on a series of points outlining major problems for humanity. These include the need to build a workers' united front and to struggle against imperialist domination and U.S. military hegemony; the problems of peasant societies under threat of destruction from subsidized competition; democratic management of media and cultural diversity; and the struggle against neoliberal and market-driven policies.

One of the Bamako Appeal's major goals is to promote solidarity among workers and progressives in the

imperialist countries and the peoples' movements in the oppressed countries. The appeal says the participants "have expressed their concern with the task of defining alternate goals of development, creating a balance of societies, abolishing exploitation by class, gender, race and caste, and marking the route to a new relation of forces between North and South."

Egyptian economist and head of the Third World Forum Samir Amin, who is a professor at the University of Dakar in Mali's neighbor Senegal, had called this pre-WSF gathering a "Peoples' Bandung Conference" to mark the 50th anniversary of the 1955 conference of non-aligned nations held in Bandung, Indonesia. Some of the Malian political leaders working on the WSF hosted and participated in the conference, including Aminata Traore.

Among the 80 people participating in the pre-WSF discussions were Bernard Founou-Tchuigoua and Babacar Diop Buuba, both university professors in Dakar, Senegal; former member of the European Parliament Miguel Urbano Rodrigues of Portugal; Chilean political journalist Marta Harnecker; Lebanese-French editor Leila Ghanem; and the organizer of the rebellion.org website Luciano Alzaga.

Also there were Wen Tiejun and Jinhua Dai of Peking University; editor-in-chief Isobel Monal of the Cuban magazine "Marx Now"; Brazilian radical economists Paolo Nakatini and Rosa Marques, and Communist Party of Brazil (PCdoB) Vice President Jose Reinaldo Carvalho; French economist Remy Herrera; trade-union expert Ingmar Lindberg of Sweden; Antonio Tujan of the Philippine Institute of Political Economy; Mamdouh Habashi of the Anti-Globalization Egyptian Group; Belgian physicist Jean Bricmont; and John Bellamy Foster, editor of Monthly Review from the United States.

Ignacio Ramonet of Le Monde Diplomatique, Bernard Cassen of Attac- France, Belgian progressive anti-war Jesuit Francois Houtart and anti- globalization author Susan George, who have been closely connected with all prior major social forums, also spoke.

Along with the invited guests, there were also some groups of youths from some of the former French colonies, in particular Senegal, Benin and Togo. Some of the Cuban medical and other aid workers in Mali also participated.

To carry out the discussion the larger group split up into 10 different committees. These held intense discussions for about three hours each, five committees at a Alarcon asks for anti-imperialist actions

Cuban National Assembly President Ricardo Alarcon took part in the discussions too. He made some practical suggestions. One was that the Bamako Appeal have as its goal not simply to set up an anti-imperialist forum that outlines a program or spreads ideas, but that it also organize for coordinated anti-imperialist actions.

The Bamako Appeal does call for some actions. Among them is support for the March 18-19 worldwide days of anti-occupation demonstrations.

The call says it aims "to reinforce the movement protesting against war and occupations, as well as expressing solidarity with the people in fight in the hot spots of the planet. In this respect, it would be very important that the world demonstration against the war in Iraq and the military presence in Afghanistan envisaged for March 18-19, 2006, coincide with:

- the prohibition of the use and the manufacture of the nuclear weapons and destruction of all the existing arsenals;
- the dismantling of all the military bases existing outside of national territory, in particular the base at Guantanamo;
- the immediate closing of all the prisons of the CIA."

The appeal also calls for solidarity with Palestine and for being on guard to stop U.S. intervention against Venezuela and Bolivia.

In summary, the “Bamako Appeal, built around the broad themes discussed in subcommittees, expresses the will to:

- (i) Construct an internationalism joining the peoples of the South and the North who suffer the ravages engendered by the dictatorship of financial markets and by the uncontrolled global deployment of the transnational firms;
- (ii) Construct the solidarity of the peoples of Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas confronted with challenges of development in the 21st century;
- (iii) Construct a political, economic and cultural consensus that is an alternative to militarized and neoliberal globalization and to the hegemony of the United States and its allies.”

In Caracas, Venezuela, where the second of the Polycentric WSF sessions finished Jan. 30, President Hugo Chavez called for an international organization to take anti-imperialist action. The 2007 WSF is scheduled for Nairobi, Kenya.

*Catalinotto represented the International Action Center at the meetings that issued the Bamako Appeal.*

## 7.6

### The World Social Forum lands in Africa

*Geoffrey Pleyers, September 2006*

After the successful World Social Forum (WSF) in Porto Alegre in 2005, alter-globalisation activists decided to “decentralize” the next edition by organizing three parallel events in 2006, in Bamako (Mali, 19-23 January), Caracas (Venezuela, 24-29 January) and Karachi (Pakistan, 24-29 March). The WSF process therefore hit new ground, with the hope of integrating new regions and new people in its process but also to learn from their struggles and to incorporate their debates, knowledges, and dynamism.

Far away from its Latin-American origins and actors, the WSF landed in Africa, in a place where alter-globalisation was little known. Among the few Malians that had ever heard about it, most had a negative image: “*Those who break windows and shops*”, “*People that criticize everything*”, “*People who spent their time demonstrating*”. To interest the Malian population in the Forum was therefore an uneasy task - and the organizers achieved a lot. In this perspective, the daily 10 minutes coverage of the WSF given by the national broadcast channel represented a major success. The opening demonstration that only gathered some 10,000 activists (in comparison, there were over 200,000 in Porto Alegre in 2005), gave a first illustration of the weak popular participation. The Forum itself gathered around 15,000 activists, a relative success in an African city - but where the organizers were waiting for twice as many.

Almost three hundred organizations took part in the preparation process, and people from 113 countries attended the event. The Togolese delegation travelled three days by bus to reach Bamako and the travel was even harder for hundreds of Malian peasants and miners who often came for the first time to their capital city. Due to the difficulty and the travelling cost, most of foreign African participants were NGO professionals. Besides Malian organisations, French (over 500), Senegalese, Burkina, Moroccan and Kenyan delegations were especially active and visible. Participants from Belgium, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands were also numerous, and often connected with a wide range of local partners. About 500 workshops were held in Bamako, with an audience sometimes over 200 activists but more frequently between 10 and 30 people, allowing everyone to take part in the debates and discussions. Unexpected by the organizers, the most popular event of the Forum turned out to be the very committed Reggae festival, that gathered 15,000 young people on a Friday evening in the national stadium.

The cancellation of third-world debt, food sovereignty, women, and migration were among the most discussed issues inside and outside of the WSF workshops.<sup>7</sup> Hundreds of migrant candidates who had been turned back took part in the Forum. A Malian mother summarized one of their main messages: “*Young Malians have to migrate because of the extremely deteriorated terms of international trade. If cotton was paid its real value, they wouldn't have to go and seek elsewhere for ways to survive.*” The *Women's Universe* in the Forum was among the most interesting places, mostly dedicated to sharing of experience among African women, notably in self-managed social projects. The *Peasant Space* gathered participants from over forty African countries and helped to create and to strengthened relations between national, regional and international organisations, especially the “*Via Campesina*”. Many farmers insisted on the necessity of specific organisations to represent their needs and requests: “*Before, it happened too often that NGOs spoke in the name of farmers. We need an organization of our own to speak for*

---

<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, the issue of the war was almost totally absent in Bamako.

ourselves.” The *Youth Camp* however, was much smaller than in Porto Alegre and remote from the main venues of the Forum.

Overall, the organization of the Forum relied on dozens of Malian and European activists who took many initiatives related to alternative media but also had to cope with some opposition from the main organizers.

In terms of heroes honoured, rebel Africa has no idealized model, although the memory of the former president of Burkina Faso Thomas Sankara was honoured on several occasions, especially in the Youth Camp.

The Bamako “Polycentric WSF” was of special interest for three main reasons. First, it was ***not under the control of a governmental power*** nor another political force, contrary to Caracas. The Forum was hence open to a broader diversity of organisations and activists with no major common political reference except their aspiration to a better and fairer world. Indeed, the Bamako WSF gathered from Malian miners speaking in Bambara to Marxist intellectuals and many European NGO professionals

***The encounter of African and European activists*** was the second main achievement of the Forum in Bamako. From the opening march onwards, North and South activists gathered around similar issues: African, French and Belgian and trade unions; fair trade partners; farmers coming from various continents under the banner of the *Via Campesina*... They continued their dialogues during and after the workshops. Alter-globalisation activists from the North and from the South observed similarities among neoliberal policies in their respective countries and the way they had been imposed. Many NGOs invited their local partners to take part in the WSF events and new cooperation projects have been launched. The Forum was deeply marked by the complex heritage of colonialism and the current European – and especially French – politics in Western Africa.

This was for example the reason of the massive presence of the Belgian catholic trade union in Bamako: “*We have a big responsibility in what occurs in Africa, much bigger than in Latin America. (...) This is why we decided to send a large delegation in Bamako rather than in Caracas*”. The Bamako WSF was held only a few weeks after the ‘France-Africa’ heads of state summit and in the same venue. The weight and hold of French politics in Africa is in every mind. The WSF was a notable opportunity to denounce electoral frauds and the repression by the Togolese dictatorial regime that has not yet lost the support of Paris.

The third and most important challenge of this WSF event was ***its arrival in Africa***. The continent is widely considered as “the major victim of neoliberal globalisation and of unfair international trade”. Although limited, African participation to the previous WSF has progressively improved since 2002 thanks to the efforts and funding of some Northern NGOs. As Africa took a more important place in global public spaces and medias throughout 2005,<sup>8</sup> this WSF was an occasion to integrate Africa in the globalisation of resistance and to prepare for the World Social Forum in Nairobi (Kenya) in 2007. It was an opportunity to listen to African voices that are usually little heard in the global movement. They proclaimed Africa was not a poor and passive continent waiting for Western help but people who aspire to a massive change and to “live with dignity”.

The same message was delivered in the workshop “African visions”, in the women universe and in the youth camp: “*We have to change ourselves to change Africa*”; “*We have to take our responsibility, in solidarity with peoples from the North but without always waiting white peoples before moving ourselves*”

---

<sup>8</sup> Anheier H., Glasius M., Kaldor M. eds. (2006) *Global civil society 2005-2006*, London: Sage.

*and making things change*". This posture entails a different way to relate to Northern activists and NGOs within a movement where the dependency towards the North remains strong. From international trade to democracy and music, people expressed a strong will to become actor in their lives and in their continent: *"With globalisation, they wanted us to think that people couldn't do anything on their own territory. This is not true! We have to fight against this widespread idea!"* (a Malian activist). The same determination animated thousands of alternative projects. Among them, a woman in a housing project in Dakar said: *"Generally, estate agents come, build some houses, and we buy our house without any possibility to give our opinion. We want now to think for ourselves about our houses and our neighbourhood, with green areas for kids to play, a health centre and a school"*.

### **The leadership of the Forum in Bamako**

The success of the 2005 WSF in Porto Alegre widely relied on its 'decentralised' organisation, giving more initiative power to thousands of participants and less to the international organising committee and elite activists. Consequently, rather than massive crowds listening to famous intellectuals, hundreds of tents were set up to host smaller and more participatory meetings. After introductory speeches, many assemblies split into smaller groups, giving everyone the chance to express his own opinion. This dynamics opened the forum to other actors and to bottom-up processes, giving the WSF a refreshing momentum.

The WSF 2006 challenge was how to land on new ground. The easiest way to resolve it was to rely either on professional elite activists or on the country's political power. Considerations about a more participatory event and active roles for grassroots people hence remained a step removed. The organization of the Bamako Polycentric WSF widely relied on a small group of professional activists whose central figure was Aminata Traore, well connected to international activists networks and a former Minister of Culture of Mali. Most of the organising team members were well inserted in international alter-globalisation or NGO networks. They seemed much closer to their European fellow travellers than to their country's grassroots activists. During the press conference and the main events, they reproduced discourses that were very similar to what international leading activists said in Porto Alegre one year earlier. On the other hand, most local activists formulated their struggles and debates in very different ways, much closer to local preoccupations.

The preparation process was mostly top-down, with little place for grassroots initiatives. 300 people came to the WSF from the remote Malian region called Morila to denounce the amazing damage caused by mining exploitation on surrounding population's health and living conditions. A few months before the WSF, some of their fellows had been jailed after a demonstration. Although their situation was a crude illustration of extreme exploitation and environmental deterioration caused by international corporations and neoliberal globalisation, the Forum leaders - who may have feared annoying a government that helped to organise the WSF - did not put their claims forward.

The weak popular participation in the Forum and the image shared by many people of Bamako seeing the Forum as "an event for Western people" and "an encounter of NGO leaders" (comments received in personal interviews) are some further indicators of a gap that separated local people and the activist elites who were in charge of the Forum's organisation. A Malian student involved in the youth camp summarized the situation by emphasizing similar problems within the WSF organisation and Malian national politics: "What is missing here is the confidence between the leaders and the population. The leaders have ideas and come to present them to the people, but they never listen to what people would like!".

### **A great opportunity**

The fact that the WSF widely relied on some local activist elites in Bamako was perhaps only normal as this was its first experimentation in Africa. Actually, the top-down logic was even stronger in the first

World Social Forums in Porto Alegre. Beyond the discourses of political leaders and texts that try to fix the claims of an alternative movement in perpetual evolution, the 2006 WSF in Bamako was also – and foremost – an open space dedicated to “free and relatively undirected exchanges between people of many different persuasions, backgrounds, contexts”<sup>9</sup>. Thousands of activists shared their claims, hopes, and alternative experience. It was the opportunity for countless exchanges between North and South activists and for strengthening international relations with local partners. After the Forum, many European activists travelled in Malian towns and the countryside to share grassroots activist experience and ideas. For thousands of alter-globalisation activists, the 2006 Polycentric WSF events were exceptional opportunities to discover new regions. The WSF brought dynamism and more unity to the local civil society, but it learned also a lot from local activists and received fresh insights and impetus. As a result, many African and Asian delegates insisted on the need to organize similar meetings in other regions of the globe, to allow more people to access the Forum’s debates and spirit.

Over this past period, activists of the whole of the Southern Africa region have also shown a genuine enthusiasm to host the 2007 WSF in Nairobi. Several preparatory and discussion meetings have been held with grassroots activists. In July 2006, the Durban *Centre for Civil Society* brought local activists together with committed national and international scholars at an exciting meeting. The debates and dialogues that took place there contributed to a better mutual understanding and to narrow the gap between committed international intellectuals and local grassroots activists. And since the Bamako Polycentric WSF, the Kenyan Organizing Committee has also strongly committed itself to pay major attention to grassroots dynamics and people. This is one of the reasons why Nairobi may be a major step towards building a more genuinely international alter-globalisation movement, which is definitely one of its most important challenges.

---

<sup>9</sup> Sen J. (2005) *Breaking boundaries*, In: Sen J., Saini M. eds. *Talking new politics*, New Delhi: Zubaan, p.30.