

THE AFRICAN SOCIAL FORUM REPORT

4-9th JANUARY 2002

BAMAKO, MALI

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

The African Social Forum was convened in Bamako, Mali from 5 to 9 January 2002, as an offshoot of the World Social Forum with a dual objective of strengthening the organization of the social movement in Africa and consolidating the world social movement. The Forum was attended by more than two hundred social movements, organizations and institutions from forty five African countries. The motto of the Forum was Another Africa is Possible

The meeting intended specifically to contribute towards the goal of enriching and strengthening the African Civil Society and preparing it for the forthcoming World Social forum in Port Alegre, Brazil in February 2002.

The Forum's specific objectives are as follows,

- Strengthen the capacities to analyze, propose and mobilize the organizations of the African social movement to enable them to fully play their role in Africa and within the World Social movement.
- Build an African space for the concerted formulation of alternatives to neo-liberal globalization, on the basis of a diagnosis of the social, economic and political effects of the later.
- Define strategies for social and political reconstruction, including a redefinition of the role of the state, the market and citizens' organizations.
- Define the terms and conditions of citizen control to ensure that political change promotes the expression and implementation of alternative, credible and viable responses.

To achieve these objectives the conference focused on the following themes:

1. Restraining neo-liberal policies and strategies and international financial institutions.
2. The Debt Burden and the need for Reparations
3. Trade and Free Trade Agreements
4. Evaluating the African Initiatives-NEPAD and the African Union
5. Production and Livelihoods (Agriculture)
6. Meeting Social Demands
7. Gender and Equity
8. State, Markets and Citizen Organizations
9. Participation, Democracy and Citizen Control
10. Peace and Conflict Prevention
11. Human Rights

The conference did set up two-day working groups according to the above themes to examine more in depth the issues, share experiences and make proposals on alternatives and strategies to realize a new Africa. The Conference began on Saturday the 4th of January 2002 with speeches and presentations from Ahmed Ben Bella the former president of Senegal, Aminata Traore former Mali Culture Minister,

academics and social activists who included Samir Amir, Yash Tandon, Ki-Zebro, Dot Keet, Taoufik Ben Abdallah, Helena Rama Niang, Marie Angelique Savane, Zo Randriamiaro, Rabia Abdelkerim, and Boris Diop.

In his formal official opening address the Ahmed Ben Bella the former president of Senegal expressed appreciation and satisfaction with the organization of the African Social Forum, the need to challenge the current global system and the necessary revisit of civil society organizations practices in Africa. Taoufik Ben Abdallah in his introductory remarks welcomed all the delegates and thanked all the alliance that helped to make the African Social Forum meeting a success. He reiterated the need for Africans to be organized, harmonize their differences, unite and stand against globalization. He also pointed out that the current global system is not only weakening African governments but will also try to ostracize civil society.

2.0. PLENARY PRESENTATIONS

The first session of the conference was meant to receive presentations that will serve as a frame work for the conference's thematic group discussions and alternative strategies. The theme of the first plenary presentations was entitled Fending off neo-liberal strategies and policies. The first presentation was made by Prof .Samir Amir who was also chairing the session. He took the delegates through the various forms of imperialism beginning with slavery to the current process of globalization and neo-colonialism. he emphasized the need for delegates to link the expansion of markets in developing countries of Africa to the political dimension of capitalism. He expanded on the features of the new phase of Imperialism-Globalization. He mentioned that SAPs were imposed on Africa to enable servicing of the moral and odious external debt as well as advance the US hegemony and the triad dominance of Europe, Japan and USA in the Third World.

Professor Yash Tandon spoke on the need for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to be effective, always used research-based arguments and avoid being confused by organization such as WTO by becoming experts through specializing in their areas of operation. He spoke of six crucial issues to be discussed at the forthcoming Financing for Development Meeting in Mexico and the politics behind them. These are mobilizing domestic resources, mobilizing international resources, trade as a way of accumulating resources, the Official Development Aid (ODA), Debt Cancellation, and Systematic Issues/coherence to the international financial institutions rules. He urged the participants to denounce and resist the fallacy of foreign direct investment, trade liberalization, debt relief and strings-attached ODA as devices by the West to keep Africa in a position of subordination and exploitation. He recommended that domestic savings should come from Africa's people not fooreign direct investments (FDIs) and the need to promote indigenous solutions to development and resist neo-liberalism.

Dot Keet's presentation furthered the participants understanding of the neo-liberal system by discussing the underlying myths of the neo-liberal system, its pillars of communication, institutions and think-tank. He spoke of the need to challenge the current global system and the ideological struggle for Africans to free themselves. Among the the underlying myths of the neo-liberal system she mentioned is the undemocratic, non-transparent and inaccessible International financial

institutions, protected economies of the North, the fallacy of global free trade, capital speculation and privatization.

Marie Angelique Savane spoke on the need for social and political reconstruction. She emphasized the need for reforms in the international financial institutions, the need for good negotiators in Africa, civil society and social reconstruction. She pointed out that a new Social Contract as well as a new social and political culture was required. Zo Randriamiaro spoke on the existing link between colonialism, racism and the current process of globalization in that they all promote discrimination especially against women. He pointed out how globalization through SAPs have worsened the position of women by disempowering them. She also linked the issues of governance and state role as they affect the status of women in a neo-liberal system. She also mentioned the fact that Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) advanced by the International Financial Institutions are designed without women's participation and as such they serve to promote the global exclusion of women and the poor from the nation state and citizenry rights. She called for the addressing of the issue of public goods and women that has been neglected.

Rabia Abdelkerim added to the gender and equity presentation by referring the delegates to the statistics that depict the poor status of women vis-à-vis their contribution to world production. She quoted the UNDP statistics that two thirds of women are illiterate and poor yet two thirds of the World's production is done through them. She called for a new paradigm and analysis of gender issues as necessary and crucial. Helena Rama Niang spoke of the support that the traditional patriarchal system offered to capitalism in regard to the oppression of women. She also spoke of the need to differentiate between the women's organization and feminism. Helena also spoke of the need to focus on mobilization of resources in a manner that empowered women economically and gives them financial security. She called for the creation of synergies between elite women and grassroots women.

The Gender Equity presentation was followed by presentations on Social Demand. In his Introduction Taoufik Ben Abdallah made the following points. He noted that African countries don't have policies that take into account social demand. Civil society play an important role in assisting access to social delivery but it does not abdicate the state from its responsibility. The financing of social programmes with international finance leads to further indebtedness and civil society should take note of this.

Trevor Ngwane in his presentation provided a case study of the struggle of people from Soweto, South Africa for access to electricity, water and housing. He spoke of how electricity tariffs favour big businesses and the rich while Sowetans who pay more for their electricity, get disconnected when in arrears. This has been done because the government owned company Eskom is preparing for privatization. In reaction to these cut-offs the Soweto Electricity Crises Committee was formed which opposes privatization and reconnects disconnected users. The SECC demands an end to electricity cutoffs, writing off of arrears and an end to privatization. These struggles have led to a broader Anti-privatization Campaign against the privatization of basic services like water and housing and health. He called on the social movement to embark on actions confronting neo-liberal policies that denies access social services to the poor.

This was followed by a session on Culture, Creativity and Ethics. In her presentation, Aminata Troare emphasized that all social and economic problems has a cultural dimension. She explained how the debt problem in Africa has implications for culture and exacerbate African financial woes. She called on the social movement to build the other Africa that is possible through the expression of culture. She noted that culture is not stagnant like the exhibitions in museums but living, vibrant and growing. Borris Diop added to this by elaborating on the challenges of globalization to African culture. He noted artist through different mediums have reconstructed the African identity denied by colonialism. He elaborated on the initiatives of those in the film industry, music and book industry to advance culture and oppose globalization.

3.0. HIGHLIGHTS ON CONFERENCE THEMATIC ISSUES

Much of day two and day three of the conference was devoted to thematic groups discussions. This allowed participants to share experiences across the continent, analyze issues and propose alternatives and strategies. In follow-up to the group proceedings, plenary sessions were organized specifically to receive reports from the thematic groups. The rapporteurs from the workshop groups presented their reports to plenary and later time was devoted to accommodate supplementary information, points of clarification and emphasis of crucial issues.

First thematic group to report to plenary was the **Debt and Reparations**. the group reported that it discussed the debt issue in regard to its experiences of its negative effects on development in several countries in the continent. This includes among other things its negative impact on social services, retrogressive aspects to development and the general impoverishment of the people's of the continent. Cases given illustrated that debt was odious and illegitimate, an instrument of the west to suppress and keep Africa in a subordinate position. The question of the historical development of debt /ecological debt was discussed at length with participants emphasizing that the north has plunder the South's resources through slavery, colonialism and now through neo-liberal fundamentalism. The group identified SAPs, PRSPs and HIPC as devices/instruments used by the North's agencies of the WTO, WB and IMF to elude or postpone the issue of debt cancellation.

Recommendations

The group demanded total debt cancellation and reparations for all forms of imperialism advanced by the North. They called for a strategy of repudiation of the debt - not paying the debt. In fact according to the group the north owes the south. The debt should be situated within a broader analysis of globalization and therefore the group ultimately rejected HIPC and PRSPs. They proposed that social movements should look at national/domestic debt and expose corruption and embezzlement of funds by the political elites. Debt is not a one country issue but should be addressed collectively. They also demanded that 0.7 ODA should unconditional/without strings made available to developing countries. they also called for partnership with Northern NGOs around to help recover stolen money in foreign banks in the North.

The group also agreed to support the idea of a debt tribunal in Brazil. Secondly the group also agreed to participate and influence the UN Financing for Development

Summit which will take place in Mexico in March, the African Union Meeting in July in South Africa and the World Summit on Sustainability in August in Johannesburg.

The second thematic group focused on the theme-**Trade Agreements: Stakes and Prospects**. The group focused on 4 major agreements on trade that affect Africa in many negative ways. These are the WTO trade agreements, GATTs, AGOA and the Cotonou or ACP_EU agreements. The group noted with concern that due to these agreements, over the last 20 years Africa's trade shares on the world market have been declining. In various ways these agreements have been used to sideline Africa and keep it backward. In regard to WTO three important issues of investment, competition policy trade facilitation and government procurement transparency have been used to deny Africa the required subsidies for development while opening it up as a ready market and investment opportunity for the North and its agencies. AGOA remains America's instrument to keep her interests in Africa, while the Cotonou is Europe's instrument to integrate Africa into the global market, force it to be compatible with WTO rules as well as establish the EU as the watchdog of Africa's democracy and the rule of law.

The group went on to discuss the need to foster strategies to counter the growing forces of globalization being imposed on African governments and communities. In this regard Yash Tandon took over the platform to elaborate on short term, long term and intermediate strategies. In regard to long term strategies he pointed out 4 basic tasks, mentioned 5 broad guidelines to immediate strategies. These immediate strategies are to do with the forthcoming 2002 crucial meetings in Port Alegre in January-February in Mexico, ACP Summit in Brussels in June, IMF/WB meeting in Canada in June and Rio +10 in Johannesburg (South Africa) in August.

The Third Thematic Group was focusing on **Markets, New Roles for the State and Civil Society**.

Two presentations were made, firstly on the state and social movement in the Northern Africa and the societal state in central Africa. The group pointed out that it had looked at the national state, emphasized various principles and was yet to complete its work on strategies and the way forward. Some of the important issues brought out include the need to uncouple democratization and neo-liberalism, the need for leadership ethics in Africa and the reverence of socio-economic rights. The group also explored the feasibility of civil society capacity to put pressure on the state to reverse certain negative policies, emphasized the need to regulate markets, revisit the issue of CSOs sustainability and donor dependency.

Recommendations:

A number of proposals were made in regard to markets and these centered on democratization, regulation and ethics. Civil society must form alliances to oppose the state and resist the decisions made by international financial institutions. They called for better effective communications, capacity building of negotiators in international fora. They also emphasized the creation of a state with a human face, promotion of the informal sector and the importance of ethics. The civil society should not limit its role to provide basic services but should instead contribute to the process of democratizing the state. The various social movement on the continent should form alliances so that there is a greater degree of international solidarity.

The Fourth Thematic Group on Meeting Social Demands viewed these needs as a way that allows social movements to mobilize the masses in the fight against globalization. The group noted that basic services are not met in society because of the quest for profits at the expense of people, corruption, abuse and poor allocation of resources and poor policy by what the group dubbed as 'gangster' states.

The group also discussed universal vis-à-vis private provision of basic needs as rights or privileges. Another issue of concern to the group was the role of NGOs in provision of basic needs, CSOs relations with the state and means of co-operation between the two. Important also was the question of who defines democracy-people or International Financial Institutions (IFIs). The group also looked at issues of unemployment and their link to provision of basic services. The group was set to proceed and concretize its strategies in the afternoon although it emphasized the need for unity, to oppose and renounce as well as propose and announce.

Recommendations

The group rejected the privatization of social services which leads to the increase cost of basic social services and only benefits multinational corporations. Water, education and health should not be privatized. They called for appropriate management of resources, the need for transparency and consultation. They proposed the establishing national forums against privatization.

The Fifth Thematic Group focused on **Peace and Conflict Prevention**. Papers presented in the group looked at conflicts in the Sudan, Congo Brazzaville, Rwanda, Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia. Sources of war have been identified as natural resources in most cases. In Ethiopia competition over diminishing water resources continues to be a cause of inequitable development at local, national and regional levels with the Horn of Africa. Competition between small scale agriculturalists, commercial farmers and pastoralists fuels conflict. In Sudan oil production has exacerbated conflict. Forests are being destroyed as profits from charcoal trade in Somali increases poverty at local levels. Communities don't benefit from trade. The issue of pastoralists, access to land, small arms and violence increased in northern Kenya increased where the growth of commercial ranches.

The group went on to discuss the role of CSOs and the media in conflict prevention. There is need for CSOs to enhance conflict resolutions in society by initiating and promoting peace negotiations. The group identified 4 types of conflict -internal, external, international and terrorism. The group suggested resources and border sharing; and the combat of negative external influences on Africa:

The group further discussed and analyzed conflict on basis of testimonies of participants. They identified four actors for conflict. Population – ethnic conflicts due to fighting for political power and economic resources. Secondly conflicts generated by states and corporations. Thirdly conflict popularized by political parties. Fourthly foreign actors.

Recommendations

There is a need for strengthening civil society organizations and cooperation with the media. The need of establishment of courts for conflict crimes which goes without impunity. Encourage the destruction of small weapons. Emphasis was put on women involvement in peace building and preventing conflict and the involvement of the youth. The need to look for regional and sub regional peace initiatives such as the IGAD early warning and confliction resolution. Strategies. The group called for continuous dialogue amongst various stakeholders and the formation of a network on Conflict Resolution.

The Sixth Thematic group discussed **Participation, Democracy and Citizen Control** emphasizing the need to strike a balance between CSOs and state roles, so as to work together for development. They discussed the fact that CSOs are essential to the democratic process in Africa, especially on issues of multi-party politics, elections and resource distribution. The involvement of citizens in the democratic process is important for they demand state action in certain spheres and guarantee the efficient and effective use of resources. The group also discussed the question of how is democracy defined in the African context and who is responsible for the current situation in Africa today. The group also noted that many a times democracy is being used to advance authoritarian tendencies of the state.

The group briefly discussed strategies to be used to advance democracy in Africa. This included the need for self-mobilization by CSOs, and grass root capacity building through education and civic education. They also re-iterated the fact that there is need for CSOs to specialize in their fields of operation.

The **Gender and Equity** that was the Seventh thematic group discussed gender as a tool and women as a category. A presentation has been made on the historical background of gender and the diversity of approaches. They reaffirmed that it is not the sex war. They discussed the real consequences of the neo-liberal economic context. They further received several reports from different countries on gender issues. The group discussed the relationship between gender and power. Female entrepreneurship was seen as a sign of women's resistance to social and economic exclusion.

Recommendations : The following proposals were made: -

- The need to focus on TRIPS and on ethical approach to it.
- Women should work closely with trade unions
- The establishment of a forum for African women and involving women in the mobilization of social forces.

The eighth thematic group focused on **Human Rights**. Three presentations were made in the group and discussion focussed on the violation of human rights in the context of imperial forces that have resulted in abject poverty and the extreme suffering of Africans. Crucial issues discussed at length included violation of international rules by the nation state, child abuse and exclusion, the violation of economic and social rights by the Transnational corporations (TNCs), the violation of women's rights through religious fundamentalism. The need for human rights education and strengthening of civil society role within the United Nations was also stressed.

Recommendations: The group proposed the creation of international legal instruments especially a statutory court against human torture to ensure fair trial of human rights abuses and crimes especially those committed by the North and its agencies which for a long time have remained in total impunity. A case in point is the International financial institutions that should be sued for the violation of human rights by giving wrong policies such as the Structural adjustment programs. The role of civil society should be strengthened within the United Nation system. They further called on civil society and the state to fight all forms of abuses against children. They emphasized the importance of democracy and the rule of law in relation to human rights. The African Social Forum should disseminate information.

The ninth thematic group focused on **Culture**. The rapporteur reported that the group consisted of writers, musicians, filmmaker and other artists. They discussed the impact of globalization on culture. They stressed the importance of free cultural activities and the role of the state to encourage it. They reported on the issue of piracy and the way it affects specially musicians. Artists called for legislation on this matter. The group elaborated on the experiences as artists in the workshop and further discussed the role of the media, the importance of education and intellectual property rights.

The tenth thematic group focused on **Production and Livelihoods**. They linked the agricultural development and the role of social movements. They discussed the impact of international agreements and liberalization of the African economy vis-a-vis public interest and food security. They noted that the protection of agricultural economies was resisted through globalization thereby promoting unsustainable development.

The group recommended that there is need to build partnership, cooperation as well as to help farmers to be more organized. They also noted the issue of land as a necessary to all African economies, the importance of small landholders and adequate national agricultural policy.

They identified the following pivotal role of agriculture in Africa.

1. Evolution of the agricultural environment. The place for generation of wealth has shifted from agricultural production to tertiary services. The position of agricultural products in Africa has weakened.
2. The Africa Social Forum called for the rules of the game to change from cash crop to food self sufficiency.
3. Empowerment of the peasants and farmers movements. The group called that this should be the basis of food security. Farmer concerned must be involved on policy making.

The eleventh thematic group to report to plenary focused on **Alternatives to Neo-liberal Policies** and trade agreements. The first question raised was on the approach of globalization.

The group called for the restructuring of the global system and the reform of institutions especially the IMF, World Bank and the United Nations.

At the micro-level the following were recommended

1. The need to act locally through the empowerment of people, capacity building and policy dialogue. They noted the need to change attitudes and habits of systems that oppressed us for years.
2. The need to integrate civil societies activities within the global level. Emphasis was put on the need of strengthening networks on an international level.
3. The need to put people before markets.

There were three programs of action proposed to counter neo-liberalism. First to further expose the underline assumption of the neo-liberal paradigm especially the manipulation of markets by corporations and powerful countries. Secondly, the need to use the space created by the neo-liberal paradigm such as the civil society participation on PRSPs to resist the same paradigm itself. Thirdly, to demystify the language of neo-liberalism and denounce it as unacceptable.

The Twelfth Thematic group focused on the **strengthening of Social Movements** and Africa's contribution to it. They discussed the objectives of the social movements which inter-alia should provide a space for diversity and flexibility based on common defined values. They were against constituting the Forum into a structured institution. They identified the strength of the social movement as invaluable human resources, existence of vulnerable groups especially women, youth and workers. We have created partnership with the UNDP, UNESCO and northern NGO. Democracy provides a space for the operation of social movements and where it does not exist we have engaged in political struggle to consolidate it. The weakness of the social movement are fragmentation, lack of resource mobilization and checks and balances.

Recommendations

They recommended that: 1. we should tap the different expertise of organizations involved in the movement. 2. create efficient communication and distribution of information. 3. we should be an example to governments on democracy and participation within our organization. 4. we should organize the forum on a regional, national and continental. 5. the recommendation and the conclusion of the Africa Social Forum should be distributed as wide as possible. 6. we need to maximize the participation of different NGO in the forum.

Thematic Group on African Initiatives focused on and reported on NEPAD

The advisor to President Wade, Shariff made a presentation on NEPAD, which was followed by a response by Sheila and Hassan. Shariff presented the history of the Omega Plan and Millennium African Plan of President Mbeki which later formed the New Partnership for African Development. They elaborated on the objectives of NEPAD. First partners are African followed by foreign investors. Sheila critically analyzed NEPAD and asked a number of questions. What type of development?. Careful with the concept of a new initiative. Africa should be the driver of development. We should not focus on outside forces and rely on foreign investment. Hassan Summoye use proverbs to criticized the plan and elaborated on the Lagos Plan which was developed by Africa in 1960. Most participants in the group rejected

NEPAD and suggested we should come up with alternatives. Recommended reject neo-liberal framework in which NEPAD was drafted and discuss alternative models for development. Group committed itself to study the document and discuss it with our constituencies. Create networks with other groups. Social movements resist this document. Exposed the deficiencies of the document. Discuss – how they going to follow-up on the proposal to create an alternative document. Proposal to identify a group o people to work on the document. Scenario – new document or revised and improve the current document. Process – Some organizations already working on NEPAD. Joint colloquim on document. Some continental conference on the document.

4.0 PLENARY DISCUSSIONS

There was a lot of discussion and supplementary information on the subject of debt. Some delegates felt that the importance of debt in African development is really a big issue and to that cause the conference could have been held under the auspices of debt cancellation.

- The demand for Reparations of stolen wealth and debt cancellation was strongly made. Africa must be compensated for slavery, colonialism, and all the effects of neo-liberal policies. The wealth and money stolen from Africa by the North in co-operation with corrupt regimes in the south must be restored.
- There was a call to explore other alternatives on debt cancellation such as the use of a fair and transparent arbitration court set within the auspices of the UN system.. most of the contributions around the debt issue called for total debt cancellation, reparations or repudiation since the whole issue of debt was largely called odious and illegitimate.
- There is need for the African social Forum to be a follow-up to the Durban conference on racism and slavery as human crimes.
- The need to protect agriculture and African industries through subsidies as well as make credits available to small holder farmers was emphasized
- There was a call to include on the aspect of democracy the need to promote popular education using all forms of the media and local/vernacular languages. A call for a new paradigm of democracy was made .
- On the issue of peace and conflict, one participant from the DRC requested that a declaration on the subject of peace and conflict prevention especially in Central Africa be made by the African Social Forum.
- A call was also made to pursue the issue of the establishment of an African Court on Human rights/A Criminal Court to deal with so many issues crucial to the continent have gone without impunity. There is need to re-visit legislation in Africa .
- There is need to lay emphasis on intra-state conflicts especially control of resources and decriminalize states in Africa. Some participants felt

that all blame should not be apportioned to the North but also African leaders' corruption and poor governance.

- Culture in Africa should address three critical issues –education, the media and the use of language.
- A total rejection of the use of genetically modified seeds (GMOs) at the expense of indigenous seeds was made. Participants felt that GMOs especially in the case of food aid were being used to expand markets for the North's products.
- A call for national and regional initiatives in conflict resolution including the involvement of the youth in peace building was made.
- The aspect of gender should not be just women-focused but include men. It is also necessary to link the realities of women and the challenges of globalization, and also set up mechanisms to monitor the effects of neo-liberalism on communities and women in particular.
- A call was made for co-operation between farmers and researchers, elite women and rural women,.
- There is need to support the informal sector in Africa.

5.0 . THE WAY FORWARD

The last day of the African social Forum was devoted to tackle the following issues;

1. Organizational issues of the African Social Forum .
2. Participation of the African Social Forum in World Dynamics including the World Social Forum in Port Alegre, Brazil.
3. To discuss and endorse the African Social Forum Bamako Declaration and Report.
4. Official closing of the African Social Forum Meeting.

5.1 Organizational issues of the African Social Forum

Taoufik invited delegates to begin the day's plenary by discussing the issue of how the African Social Forum was going to constitute itself in future, conduct regional meetings and organize annual events in different countries. He reminded the delegates that the Forum was not a power institution but an open forum that agrees on common principles and values. He also called upon the delegates to ensure that they use the World Social Forum as an opportunity for the African Social Forum to express itself in world dynamics. He pointed out that in the past Africa did not have a good representation and that the forthcoming World Social Forum should see an improvement and not the previous under-representation and humiliation of African civil society. Delegates should make sure that they are registered and have means to get to Port Alegre for the World Social Forum. There was need to African Social Forum delegates to be visible, organized and attend workshops, and more importantly contribute to issues of concern to Africa. Taoufik also explained how the Bamako World Social Forum was organized-preparation and funding.

He then invited the World Social Forum secretary from Brazil to brief participants on preparation and give some clues on the World Social Forum program. The secretary expressed her appreciation of the African Social Forum organization and urged participants to ensure that the voice of Africa is heard and built upon in the fight

against exclusion. She assured delegates of the support and collaboration of the African Brazilians and mentioned that a number of activities have been lined up in form of a reception and a program of exchange. A number of activities are scheduled for African women and youths. The World Social Forum will also take on board the issues and deliberations of the World Conference held in South Africa against racism. She urged the delegates to prepare for their travel in time to avoid hassles and hurdles that might work against their fully participation at the World Social Forum. Clarifications in regard to logistics of the World Social forum were made. Calls were also made by some delegates for the African Portuguese-speaking civil society to fully participate in the social Forum.

Delegates agreed to form a committee of 10-15 people to oversee the work of the African National Forum, especially the organization of the 2003 annual conference. However, details of the tenure, responsibilities and criteria of selection were to be agreed upon later. Crucial was for the Regional Networks to appoint such people and also to have sector representation in the committee. It was also announced that 50 delegates from the Bamako meeting could be funded so as to represent the Africa Social Forum at the World Social Forum in Port Alegre. Other delegates not included among the fifty were urged to source funds and attend the World Social Forum.

5.2 Conference Report and Declaration

The Bamako Declaration was presented by Prof. Yash Tandon and delegates presented their views in this regard. The Bamako Declaration was endorsed with amendments to the following comments ;

- The document did not have enough strong language commensurate of a good declaration
- There is need for the Forum to express its solidarity and support for all forces in Africa and elsewhere that genuinely fight neo-liberalism and imperialism.
- Only alternatives given at the conference and not the thematic issues should be mentioned in the document. The English version was not agreeing with the French version.
- The title of the document was to read African Social Forum declaration and not consensus.
- There is need to highlight and denounce American hegemony and bully-tactics in developing countries A case in point is the use of the fight against terrorism to attack civilians in Afghanistan and threats on Iraq, Somalia and others. The declaration was also supposed to make reference to previous African occurrences such as the Dakar Conference of 2000.
- The issues of gender as discussed were not highlighted in the document
- There is need to separate debt cancellation and reparations.
- The last part of the document should not be the participants' commitment pledge to the charter but rather an inspiration.

The conference report presentations were done by Nze-Guema Fidele Pierre and Charles Mutasa. The conference also endorse the report and requested the

rapporteurs to accommodate some of the key issues they felt were not well-captured.

6. CLOSING REMARKS

President Ahmed Ben Bella gave the final remarks of the conference . In closing he urged the participants to appreciate the work that was done in putting up the conference and work towards improving it. He draw similarities of the African Social Forum conference with the problems and prospects faced when the Organization of African Union (OAU) was formed way back in 1963.

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