



ADF TODAY

FOURTH AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FORUM

Governance for a Progressing Africa

Tuesday, 12 October 2004

ADF 'The Leading Forum For Serious And Intellectually Rigorous Discussion' - Meles

By Andrew Allimadi,
General Rapporteur's Team

The Ethiopian Prime Minister, H.E. Meles Zenawi, today opened the Fourth African Development Forum (ADF IV), taking place at the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The conference, organized by ECA in collaboration with the African Union (AU) and the African Development Bank (AfDB), will discuss the theme of "Governance for a Progressing Africa".

In his opening remarks to the conference, the Prime Minister described ADF as "the leading Forum for serious and intellectually rigorous discussion ... and exchange of views on critical issues related to the development challenges of Africa." He commended the ECA, AU and AfDB for their contribution in making ADF an important Forum for consensus building on a variety of issues affecting Africa's development, adding: "Without good governance and the full respect of the democratic rights of citizens and all sectors of society, it would be impossible to put in place conditions for durable peace and stability."

In his opening remarks, the Executive Secretary of ECA, Mr. K.Y. Amoako, explained that ECA had devoted this ADF to governance because of its critical importance to peace and security and economic development. "We focus on governance", he said, "because no matter what sectoral problem or national challenge we face, over and over again, governance turns out to be pivotal."

Mr. Amoako cited the HIV/AIDS pandemic as one such colossal challenge currently facing the continent. With several African countries losing their teachers, civil servants and military personnel faster than replacements can be trained, it is important to understand and pre-empt likely impacts on governance. It was to help mitigate these effects that the Commission on HIV/AIDS and Governance (CHGA), based at ECA, was studying the long-term impact of HIV/AIDS in Africa.

Governance was also timely, said Mr. Amoako, because many African leaders had also decided to prioritize it in their national policies, in the shared belief that a highly active and progressive state is required to meet the current challenges facing the continent. "Development is impossible in the absence of true democracy, respect for human rights, peace and good governance," he stressed. While commending the political will of key African leaders who have made governance a central issue, Mr. Amoako emphasized the critical

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ADF IV Opening Ceremony

By Kennedy Mambwe-Zambia

The Fourth Africa Development Forum (ADF IV) opened here Monday afternoon on an optimistic note that the state of governance in today's Africa is improving.

In his keynote speech, ECA Executive Secretary, KY Amoako, referred to a report due to be launched at ADF IV, which concludes that the situation across the continent is markedly different from a decade ago.

Mr. Amoako announced the partial results of a study carried out by ECA in 28 countries, that spells out evidence of improved economic management. "In country after country, people believe that their political space is being liberalized. They tell us that human rights and the rule of law are more widely respected and that the media and civil society are advancing," he said.

"Many of our countries are moving well to foster economic stability, promoting sounder public financial management and accountability systems, improving resource mobilization and reforming financial and monetary institutions," Mr. Amoako told the gathering.

Study findings also indicate that women's participation in the political process has increased markedly in several countries. However, the report points to low scores on the control of corruption and on the integrity of the tax system in most countries.

The 28-country-study found ten areas needing improvement, by strengthening parliamentary capacity, legal and judicial reforms, public sector management, credible and responsible media, and providing a conducive environment for the private sector. Others include the use of ICTs in governance, delivery of public services, the contribution of traditional modes of governance and better governance regarding HIV/AIDS.

People drawn together in more ways than one

By Ayenew Haileselassie

It is exciting to travel. In travel, people have found challenges and experiences and a sense of joy and oneness.

ADF IV and Beijing+10, which preceded it, have brought 1,500 to 2,000 people to Addis Ababa. For some it is the first time ever to travel from home, for others it is just the first time in Ethiopia's capital, while others have been to Addis Ababa and many other parts of the world. Whatever the case, people meet as many people as they have the time and the interest for. ADF Today talked to some while they were busy registering on the morning of October 11, 2004.

"It is a wonderful opportunity to meet different people," Chandranee K. Bhuckory said.

Mrs. Bhuckory, deputy chairperson of the Mauritius Council of Social Services, has been 34 years with the Mauritius Tourism Office. During the past three and a half decades and half, she has traveled to many countries. She had also been representing her country in the World Tourism Organization. "It is wonderful to see so many people from all over Africa; it feels like one big family," said Bhuckory.

Participants of the ADF, while busy in the main objective they have come for, find the opportunity to have a taste of each other's



H.E. Ato Meles Zenawi and K.Y. Amoako at the opening.

The study has also recommended effective and mutually accountable relationships with external partners. "We can distill from the review of issues an agenda for creating more capable States and underpinning institutions," he said. He called for a plan of action that addresses the capacity deficits that currently impede progress on the continent.

Under the theme "Governance for a Progressing Africa", ADF IV has been convened following the realisation that governance practices are pivotal among the many sectoral problems or national challenges facing Africa today.

ADF IV seeks to address the challenging situation whereby despite improvements in GDP growth terms, the continent is still fragile and well below what is required to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). "There is a fear that the gains of

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cultures and personalities. In meeting and talking to each other, most find impressions that they could not get from books.

Sanyang Saihou, a UNDP employee based in the office of the president of the Gambia, says that his travels have had a deep impact on him. "You may have read in books, but really meeting people and mixing with them is a different experience all together," he said.

Being in Addis Ababa gives him, and many others, the opportunity not only to meet people, but also to eat their food, hear their language and witness their feelings and the way they interact. And this is the case not just for Addis Ababa but also for any place people go to. Friends they met some time ago and have remained lasting friends. Bhuckory still keeps contact with friends she made in Kenya, South Africa, Gambia, Morocco and other places. And Sanyang was eagerly waiting to meet a friend in Addis Ababa. For many of the participants the ADF, as with other regional and international conferences, is a very happy moment of getting together with friends from many countries.

Going to so many places and meeting so many people of diverse cultures has impressed on Annah Colletah Chitsike of Zimbabwe the value of education, and she gives a lot of emphasis on her

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Opinion

Western Help: Do we need it?

By Tanja E. Bosch

Issues of HIV and AIDS are firmly on the agenda of this year's African Development Forum. Following last year's ADF, the Commission on HIV/AIDS and Governance was set up to track the long-term impact of the pandemic. This year, members of the global HIV/AIDS community and African NGOs will meet to discuss the impact of the disease on Africa's rural populations. In Sunday's pre-ADF Youth Symposium, a breakout session tackled the issue of youth and HIV.

While the evidence suggests that the pandemic may be sweeping across our continent, perhaps we should not be so easily swept away by it. This is not to deny the problem, or to dispute the excellent work in this area by NGOs, communities and international organizations. However, let us for a moment consider an alternate perspective, keeping in mind that a range of political issues surround the global AIDS epidemic, including conflicts around prevention and drug policies, discrimination and human rights.

When it comes to foreign aid to Africa, billions of dollars have been given to support HIV-related projects. But if we consider the history of aid from the North, why should this particular case be so special?

Controversial American filmmaker Michael Moore's allegations of the Bush Administration's hand in smuggling Saudi royal family members out of the US after 9/11, and the CIA training of Osama Bin Laden, are two extreme examples. There is no shortage of other examples from Africa and Latin America, to demonstrate how neo-colonial powers have thrown their support behind a leader, political party or coalition of elites, in order to enjoy disproportionate influence.

In other words, HIV may have been placed this resolutely on the agenda, not only because it is ravaging Africa, but also because doing so serves the interests of the North well. One has to ask, are groups in Africa initiating HIV projects out of necessity, or because foreign donors are driving their agendas? How easy would it be to obtain international funding to tackle equally se-

rious but more immediate public health concerns?

The pandemic has created thousands of jobs for so-called experts in the North. Western filmmakers have shot hours of footage on AIDS in Africa, immortalizing the dying. Media conglomerates based in the North set our local news agendas and continue to successfully manufacture consent and to use images of HIV/AIDS to perpetuate stereotypes about the South.

After all, isn't the face of HIV overwhelmingly black? The local press demonized South African Health Minister Manto Tshabalala-Msimang for linking HIV and poverty, and for suggesting good nutrition as an alternative to anti-retroviral drugs.

Moreover, we've all learnt the lessons of structural adjustment. Aid always comes at a price. Donors and foreign governments do not invest in the developing world purely in the interests of humanitarian goodwill. Their investments are often strategically limited to countries with rich natural resources; and their conditions of aid are designed to impose Western development models. More recently, British Prime Minister Tony Blair highlighted his 2004 Commission for Africa to ADF participants, while in the same breath emphasizing the importance of an "African-led approach." The North has learned to use the buzzwords of "partnership" and "development", but they still have a long way to go in translating these into action.

Of course, Africa cannot antagonize world leaders, nor can we extricate ourselves from the global political and economic system, characterized by neo-liberalism and the free market economy. But perhaps what we should say to all those "well-meaning" donors in the North is – thanks, but no thanks.

Keep your aid, keep your ethnocentrism and keep your troops. And in turn, we'll keep our poverty and disease, but also our oil, our diamonds, our dignity, and our own agendas.

Pastoralists search for role in governance

By Kennedy Mambwe

The long-neglected pastoralists of Ethiopia may soon be counted among active players in the nation's economic development, following a new wave of broader thinking. Sarah Lister of Britain's Institute for Development Studies says pastoralists, their lifestyles, governance and production systems have historically been misrepresented, misunderstood and marginalized.

However, with significant changes in thinking about pastoralists and their production systems as well as approaches to development and the role of the nation-state in that development, this marginalization may be a thing of the past.

In the recent past, there has been the adoption of an integrated and holistic approach to development, with emphasis on governance and livelihoods, reflecting adoption of more people-centered approaches to development. This shift in development thinking emphasizes the importance of increasing the influence of poor and marginalized people in the decision-making processes that affect their lives.

In the context of widespread disillusionment with formal political systems, researchers, policy-makers and activists have begun to emphasize direct popular participation. Activists argue that the move provides opportunities for citizens to play a more active role in policy processes and to increase state responsiveness. "There have been benefits from such direct democracy in many places," says Lister.

The IDS researcher observes that despite the potential for significant change through the functioning of democratic structures, there is limited understanding of how representatives of poor people can be encouraged to work more on behalf of their constituents within such structures.

Historically, States have attempted to impose institutions developed for a sedentary population, bringing strain into pastoralist lifestyles and souring relations. Successive governments have neglected the country's pastoralists, or tried to exploit them and the lands they inhabit.



Pastoralists often feel marginalised

This exclusion of pastoralists from development activities has been economic, political and social; across the board their interests have been ignored. However, studies indicate that there have been significant changes in the attitude of both the current government and broader society towards pastoralism, with greater acknowledgement of their needs and increasing recognition of pastoralism as a valid livelihood strategy.

The Pastoralists Communication Initiative (PCI) a DFID-funded project in Ethiopia, in collaboration with the Institute of Development Studies, aims to promote communication between all the actors engaged in the process of making and implementing policy that affects pastoralists. It operates on the assumption that improved articulation of citizen voices and generation of effective institutional responsiveness can impact beneficially on citizens.

It recognizes that between the citizen and the institutional response lies a complex terrain of politics, power, leadership, culture and representation. In the same vein, a study to support learning among members of the Ethiopian Parliament, pastoralist leaders and interlocutors in pastoralist policy in Ethiopia was conducted to document the process which has led to the current state of pastoral parliamentary representation.

The PCI also addresses how well federal officials represent pastoralists and attempts to assess the impact of this representation on policy processes.

ADF TODAY TEAM

ADF Today is an initiative of the Communication Team (CT) of the Economic Commission for Africa. It aims to provide news and analysis on the ADF process through an intense collaborative effort with journalists from around Africa. Please refer comments or questions to Akwe Amosu, Senior Communications Advisor, ECA.

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The ADF IV Exhibition

By Tanja E. Bosch

The ADF IV Exhibition opened Monday afternoon with an exciting performance by a local Ethiopian group. As delegates left the opening session to explore the exhibition floor, they were greeted by several young traditional dancers and musicians from Ras Theatre.

A wide range of organizations is taking advantage of the regional diversity at ADF to expose their services and products to broader audiences. While some of the booths, such as Ethiopian Airlines and the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants are designed to highlight products and services, most of the others share themes with this year's African Development Forum.

There is even an exhibition by a group of young Ghanaians, on the Asante traditional governance system.

The United Nations has strong represen-

tation, with exhibitions by most of their specialized agencies, including UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR and UN-Water. The aim of most of these exhibitions is to highlight UN plans for Africa and to raise awareness of UN projects.

Representatives from the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) explained how their exhibition aims to raise awareness about JICA's development projects in Ethiopia. A beautiful display of tie-dyed fabrics was on display at the booth of the Integrated Service for AIDS Prevention and Support Organization (ISAPSO).

Asayech Yirga explained how this project targets low-income women and commercial sex workers, training them to produce these fabrics in order to provide an alternative to commercial sex-work, and also training them as HIV counselors and care-givers.

Cultural dances

By Aaron Mweza and Ruth Nesoba

To judge by headlines alone, Africa's modern history would appear as an ongoing parade of horrors: famine, civil wars, racial strife and an AIDS epidemic that has claimed millions of lives.

In his keynote address to the Commissioners of the Commission for Africa, British Prime Minister Tony Blair said that what Africa needs to solve its problems are its own solutions to its own problems.

At the heart of African's unmistakable identity is its culture that is evident in its languages, customs and traditional dances. Aware of this fact, the ECA organized Hager Fikir Theatre group to perform at the opening ceremony of ADF IV, focusing on the theme 'Governance for a Progressing Africa'.

In its inaugural "Africa Governance Report", ECA proposes that given the en-

during vital role of traditional modes of authority in many areas of the continent, particularly in rural communities, it is important to constantly find ways to increase their role in the modern setting.

The preamble to the report suggests that traditional systems can complement the resources of government in providing such services as health, education and infrastructure.

More than 1,000 participants are meeting to gain a deeper understanding of the dimensions of governance, address key challenges, coordinate the various existing initiatives, and develop strategies for the implementation and monitoring of good governance practices at the national, sub-regional and regional levels in Africa. Perhaps, they should seek for solutions to the problems facing the continent by invoking their traditions and culture.

People drawn together

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children's education. "Education teaches you to think in a variety of ways," she said. Chitsike, a training and learning specialist, has easily mingled with people of different cultures during the numerous trips she was privileged to make. She has solved the confusion of cultural differences by asking for clarifications and explanations.

The differences appear bigger for some people. Lesley Holst, a Danish UN volunteer working in Malawi, still finds it hard to accept certain things. Working with small-holder farmers, she has come to feel that rural development is partly held back because of jealousy and avoiding working together for common benefit. "Another thing is because of poverty and high death rates and HIV/AIDS, people in Malawi think in the very, very short term. They think of this year, and next year, may be," she said.

"Unity in diversity, diversity in unity," was

how Saihou summed up his experiences.

"Human beings are beautiful," Bhuckory said. "That beauty is from the heart. European, African, black, white, Indian, when you come to know them, and you talk and smile, that is the beauty." She says life is more beautiful if we understand our neighbours. Failing to do that, some people have surplus while others starve and die, according to her.

Professor Alem Habtu, an Ethiopian sociologist at Queens College, City University of New York says that getting together broadens our horizons. "We begin to appreciate not only our similarities but also our differences. We learn to appreciate that we can respect each others differences and we also can collaborate on issues that are common to all of us."

While the ADF lasts at least a thousand people will be doing just that.

The Inter-African Committee against Harmful Traditional Practices is an international NGO that works in 28 countries and aims to eradicate traditional practices considered harmful to the health of women and children. Committee representative, Abebech Belay, said that the ADF exhibition affords them the opportunity to place these issues on a broader African agenda.

Batsieba Zerihun of the International Organization of Migration (IOM) is a Programme Assistant to IOM's HIV project. She believes that their exhibition will raise awareness of issues of migration and human trafficking.

A substantial exhibition on Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) was also present at the exhibition, reminding delegates of the continued importance and potential of ICTs in development.

There were several representatives from the Canada School for Public Service, which is part of a global e-policy resource unit that was launched at the World Summit of the Information Society in Geneva in December. Project Director, Raymond Lepage, explained that their exhibition is



Photo: UNECA/Florence

designed to raise awareness of the potential role of ICTs in Africa.

The parallel exhibition is an excellent reminder to delegates of practical examples of some of the issues on the agenda at the ADF. While ADF sessions and meetings will deal with issues on a theoretical level, the exhibition serves as a practical example of how many of these issues are being tackled and implemented.

This was clearly expressed by the Ethiopian cultural dance troupe the Hager Fikir Theatre group led by Haile Mariam Seifu, the Artistic Manager. In their well-choreographed songs and dances, the dance troupe conveyed a number of concerns through metaphors and role plays about the need to take responsibility in matters of governance and development.

Speaking to ADF Today, Mr. Seifu stated that through the dances and songs they seek to initiate the audience to best practices of good governance, by inculcating in them their culture and calling for behaviour change.

He identified cultural activities as a key tool of communication that can be used

to disseminate pieces of information of various types, including matters of governance.

Africa being a continent currently grappling with so many problems that are negatively affecting its development, cannot afford to miss the opportunity that cultural approaches can offer to development scenarios.

ECA Executive Secretary, K Y Amoako, said that governance is an initiative that requires consensus and culture affords the people of Africa this opportunity. He adds that culture gives the continent an opportunity to share cultural best practices and can help to spread the impact of good governance.

K.Y. on BBC Africa Live

The BBC will broadcast "Africa Live" from Addis on Wednesday evening. The programme is interactive and goes out on radio and the Internet and has a development brief. The BBC is delighted to have the Executive Secretary of ECA, K.Y. Amoako, as a guest, to answer questions posed by children and young people across the continent.

Presenter Vera Kwakofi will host Dr. Amoako and Samantha Mundetta, who was formerly in the Zimbabwean Youth Parliament. Young people will call into the programme and will also send SMS text messages and emails as Africa Live grapples with the subject of what the next generation wants.

The subject of Africa's youth featured in Mr Amoako's opening address to ADF IV. He referred to the fact that not enough jobs are being created for the young adding that "not only do young people make up half of Africa's unemployed, they are often marginal players in governance and their needs and concerns are poorly reflected in national policies".

Regional Executive Editor for the BBC's Africa and Middle East Region, Martin Davies, who is attending the conference, said the programme was pleased they could address the issues of youth here in Addis.

"Africa Live is all about people expressing their views on issues that matter to them", he stated, adding that it was great that young people from all parts of the continent were getting a chance to speak with someone like Dr Amoako, who is in a position to shape policy.

Africa Live is on the air each week at 16.30 and 18.30 GMT and among the issues it has discussed in the past are democracy in Africa, what Africa would be like if it were run by women, and various issues on HIV/AIDS, migration and the brain drain.

The programme frequently uses mobile satellite technology to broadcast live from Africa. Last week, the programme was also presented from Addis. It asked what role women have in protecting the environment and featured Nobel Peace prize winner, Wangari Maathai.



As women die, hunger thrives

By Ruth Butaumocho

Two years ago, the World Health Organization (WHO) came up with an ambitious roll-out programme to provide anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs) to millions of people infected by HIV and AIDS.

With the pledges to implement the famous "3 by 5 programme" - treating three million people by the end of 2005 - coming from several Heads of States around the world, it seemed that AIDS was no longer a death sentence.

Now, two years down the line, many Heads of African States have not kept their promises and thousands of people in Africa, particularly women, are succumbing to the disease, and can only dream of what might have been.

And while our Heads of States are still strategizing, women continue to die and the food security of these countries worsens. Women are the backbone of food provision in Africa where they work tirelessly to till the land, while ensuring that the family is well taken care of in other ways as well.

In several studies conducted by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), it has been noted that HIV/AIDS has a severe impact on food security, affecting all

of its dimensions - availability, stability, access, and utilization.

The epidemic is taking away years of slowly earned progress in rural development, where women were able to make progress, causing significant increases in rural poverty and destitution in the most affected countries. Beatrice Hezekiel from Tanzania says that by not making ARVs available to those who need them, women being in the majority, African governments are slowly destroying the backbone of food security on the continent.

She said; "It is the challenge of the Africa Commission to ensure that there is a sustainable programme in Africa, to ensure food security. By improving food security, we would be able to reduce poverty, and if we are able to reduce poverty then we are able to reduce the rate of HIV infection in Africa".

Health is a human rights issue. Nowhere is the denial of that right more visible today than in the failure to provide available treatment to millions of people living with HIV and AIDS in Africa and other developing regions.

Over the years, the weight of prejudice, taboos and poor socio-economic conditions have made most African women victims

who lack equal access to education, training, employment and information about health issues, among others.

This has not deterred women in their endeavour to continue fending for their families, despite mounting odds in the face of HIV/AIDS. In some cases, their roles have tripled.

However, despite their role in food security and their feat in helping to keep homes and nations intact, governments are not making serious commitments to provide ARVs to the infected, especially the millions of women who need the drugs across Africa.

Drugs have started trickling into some countries, but in most, millions wait patiently to get them and will probably die before accessing them. Countries are giving little or no attention to the plight of women, who constitute the majority of people infected with the virus in Africa. While a few women in urban areas have been able to get ARVs through pilot schemes, this has not been so in rural areas.

The drug that women find most often accessible in Africa is Nevirapine, which reduces the risk of mother-to-child transmission of the virus. The sad story is that nothing is forthcoming for millions of women across the continent who have the

virus and millions more who will get infected in the next few years.

According to the UNAIDS 2004 report, in Zimbabwe 18 per cent of women in the 18-25 age group are HIV positive, while 15 per cent of women in South Africa within the same age group are infected with the disease. In Zambia more than 11 per cent of women in that age group are HIV positive. The above statistics give a clear testimony of how bad the situation is.

Yet, in cases too numerous to mention, the provision of ARVs is now being used as a political tool instead of being managed as a health and as an economics issue.

"The availability of anti-retroviral drugs has ceased to be just a health issue. It is now a question of power dynamics and access to resources," says Patience Daapah from Ghana who is in the country to attend the Beijing +10 African Regional Conference.

She believes that women in Africa will get some reprieve from the pandemic only if governments subsidize the drugs or, better still, give them out for free. The non-availability of ARV drugs to women especially poses a great threat to food security in Africa, as thousands of women continue to die every day from HIV/AIDS-related causes.

Gender Dimensions of HIV/AIDS

by Amon Mulyorwa

The Seventh African Regional Conference on Women has noted with concern the gender dimensions of HIV/AIDS. In a session facilitated by Commissioner Nana Poku from the Commission on HIV/AIDS and Governance in Africa (CHGA), it was underscored that the lack of social and economic empowerment of women has led to the feminization of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Women make up over 50% of the world's population but they control less than 2% of its economic resources. In Africa, women do 80% of the agricultural work. In addition, the lack of gender equality and basic human and children's rights have disadvantaged women and girls' positions in African societies.

The Beijing Plan of Action set criteria and recommends measures to ensure equal opportunities for boys, girls, men and women and clearly showed the need for both sexes to build partnerships in the fight against HIV/AIDS. In many cultures, such partnership between the sexes is the exception, not the rule.

Monogamy is not a guarantee of not becoming infected as few can refuse to have sex with their infected partners. The 2003 Human Rights Watch report, "Just Die Quietly" highlighted incidences in Uganda where HIV-positive husbands are allowed

to infect their wives.

Monogamous women have also been blamed for infecting their husbands and are often ostracized and traumatized by their families and the community, but the men have not been similarly questioned about their sexual behaviour as having multiple partners is expected of them and may even be encouraged in their cultures.

In many countries, sexual violence and rape are on the rise with at least one out five women experiencing an act of sexual violence from an intimate partner. In some studies, 30% of young women said their first sexual encounter was forced.

But this is not all. "Many countries still lack access to HIV/AIDS transmission prevention information and materials such as female condoms. Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) services are still not widely available, anti-retrovirals are not available to girls and women, mainly due to the prohibitive costs and poor distribution mechanisms and infrastructure".

Laws are needed, that make education mandatory for girls and that establish care and supervisory systems and networks for the growing number of orphans and the persistent exposure of girls and women to harmful traditional practices that make them vulnerable to HIV/AIDS transmis-

sion and life-long suffering.

Governments should assign a minimum percentage of their budget for HIV/AIDS-related activities, prioritize HIV/AIDS interventions in a community-level participatory way, empower local community representatives and make local NGOs accountable for the implementation of their interventions.

First ladies and leaders' wives should get actively involved in supporting the prevention of HIV/AIDS. In Senegal, for example, the first lady has been an active force in bringing traditional and religious leaders to lower their resistance to acceptance of the use of condoms in order to prevent HIV/AIDS transmission. Furthermore, public officials must also get involved. The Ethiopian Prime Minister is head of the national programme against HIV/AIDS.

To help to counter the loss of agriculture knowledge and skills due to HIV/AIDS, and the pre-mature loss of lives, FAO has organized junior farmer field schools where youth can learn agriculture-related skills, which otherwise might be lost.

In Rwanda, an attempt was made to integrate gender equality in HIV-related programming with a mandate to have a 30% women's representation in all programme implementation. In Uganda grassroots

organizations were successfully used to disseminate HIV/AIDS-related information and behaviour change messages to the population at large. In Ethiopia, UNAIDS has initiated a successful programme called "Men as Partners", involving the military, peacekeeping personnel and government ministries to curtail the incidence/transmission of HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

In Congo Brazzaville, a multi-sectarian approach to the scourge has been adopted along with promotion of gender equality. Cost-sharing partnerships are in place with international organizations to provide ARVs to women who would otherwise have no access to them.

Similar actions were taken in Guinea where government-initiated assistance from WHO enabled them to provide ARVs to the 25,000 persons that needed them. In Zimbabwe, every pregnant woman is offered VCT. In the case of Tunisia, all 14-15 year olds are exposed to routine human sexuality information, education and communication (IEC) programmes.

These best practices should be commended. One tale of how anti-retrovirals (ARVs) sat on the shelves until they had expired because the country lacked the proper mechanism to distribute them evokes condemnation. What a shame.

If care, prevention and treatment mechanisms are in place, the HIV/AIDS infected of this world would have every chance to enjoy a healthy lifetime but without such mechanisms, "the present is miserable and the future is miserable".



Focus on the 7th African Regional Conference on Women

Globalization poses new challenges for women

By Jamillah Mwanjisi, *African woman*

Despite some achievements since the Fourth United Nations World Conference held in Beijing in 1995, globalization poses new socio-economic challenges for women, especially African women whose position in society might become worse.

Globalization, driven by competitive global markets and liberalization, is pushing away women who still struggle in rural areas and in informal sector activities to be recognized, assisted and given equal opportunities.

Gertrude Mongella, the President of the Pan Africa Parliament told ADF today in its opening session that if Africa does not improve its economic base to meet the globalization challenges, its women will become poorer and it will erode all the progress activists all over the world have been fighting for over the last 30 years.

"We are not trained to meet the global challenges," she said. "Will our products be able to compete globally? I don't think so. In this case, we might just end up being

exploited as cheap labour. This will erode decades of fighting for equality."

President Mongella, who was the Secretary-General of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing said that because women are not educated or trained to compete in global markets, liberalization in Africa will continue to make women more vulnerable to exploitation.

She also expressed concern over employment opportunities for African women who now have to face stiff competition from all over the world. In order to respond to increasing and intense global competition, corporations are creating various strategies to meet the challenges of their own survival. As a result, women are mostly left out from important opportunities.

President Mongella, who is in Addis Ababa to attend ADF IV, said affirmative action to open doors to women in employment, politics and other decision-making areas might end up not being useful for women anymore.

"We fought for affirmative action to give women a push," she said. "But now with global competition, job markets will be left for those few who can compete. We will be left on the receiving end."

She said that the borderless world, which is the development model being promoted globally, is increasing inequalities between the rich and the poor as well as between men and women.

Reports show that the richest 20 per cent of the world command 85 per cent of the world's income, while the poorest 40 per cent own only 1.4 per cent of that same income.

Statistics show that out of the 1.3 billion poor people in the world, 70 per cent are women, the majority of whom are illiterate with no access to basic amenities such as safe drinking water. Two-thirds of the 130 million children worldwide who are not in school are girls. Between 75 and 80 per cent of the world's 27 million refugees are women and children.

President Mongella stressed that these statistics only proved that there are new, emerging challenges that most activists did not foresee during the Beijing process. In fact, it was not even in our vocabulary," she said, as she urged everyone in Africa to address these challenges by finding ways of improving Africa's economic growth, to make sure resources are available to continue to empower women.

"Women in Africa do not only suffer from gender inequalities but they also suffer from the poverty in our countries," said Mongella.

With or without globalization, the question still remains whether women can move forward steadily. Although there is a general acceptance that women's rights are human rights, maternal mortality and HIV/AIDS continue to affect women's progress painfully. In Africa, a woman dies every minute due to maternal complications. At this rate, few women will survive to feel the impact of globalization.

Prioritising the Girl Child

By Diana Mulilo, *Africa woman*

The challenges facing the girl child in Africa are in total contradiction with the principles of existing regional and international laws, conventions and other instruments.

The immediate past chairperson for FEMNET, Sara Longwe who won the 15th annual Africa Prize for Leadership, and was also instrumental into bringing the girl child on the Beijing conference 10 years ago sheds light on why this continues to be so.

Longwe says she is not happy in the manner all the girl child issues have been highlighted. "Our leaders are playing double standards and that is why even women's rights are also still on paper have not been implemented."

Despite, the ratification on the AU Solemn declaration on Gender Equality (ratified on 17th July 2004), Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (ratified in July 2003) and Universal Declaration of Human Rights, nothing much seems to be on the ground.

Longwe observes that these leaders have endorsed the instruments on human rights and the girl child's rights and yet she ends up with all sorts of abuses.

What are women doing about the current status quo of the girl child? "Most women that understand these issues are not in strategic decision-making positions and as a result, they get little or no support from the men when fighting for their rights."

There are pockets of good news though. Countries such as Botswana, Zambia and

South Africa have programmes on the girl child going through voluntary testing and enlightenment on the protection against unwanted sex.

According to Gladys Nhekairo-Mutukwa, Consultant/Regional Coordinator for WiLDAF, almost all the countries in Africa have ratified the rights of a girl child, noting that Africa has the highest number of ratifications.

It is for this reason that Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF) a pan-African network of organisations and individuals working in the area of women's rights was formed in 1990. Its aim is to promote and strengthen action-strategies that link law to the development and empowerment of women.

The girl child's agenda was brought on the Beijing board because there was no voice from girls and that there was need to think the girl child's plight by bringing her voice to be heard at such conferences.

To fight for these rights to be implemented, Longwe says money is needed for the strategic decision-making and also a critical mass of women to implement the Beijing Platform Plan for Action.

It's high time governments curtailed the trafficking of women and girls by criminalizing the trade and also putting resources where the girl child programmes are.

The women at the Beijing +10 meeting want to remind governments of their commitments and hold them to account by insisting that they fund programmes that will facilitate freedom for the girl child in Africa.

Peace Torch

By Jenine Coetzer

The voices of African women were heard loud and clear on Friday, with the arrival of the African Women's Peace Torch at the 7th African Regional Conference on Women. Since 1995, the torch has traveled throughout the continent, where it has become a symbol of African women's quest for peace, freedom and development.

In a moving ceremony, four women from the Great Lakes Region, escorted by fellow African sisters from conflict countries and members of the Federation of African Women Peace Networks - FERFAP - presented the torch to the Congolese Minister of Women's Affairs and Development, Madame Jeanne Francois Leckomba Loumeto Pombo.

Regional Programme Director of the United Nations Development Programme for Women, Florence Butega, says the torch actually dates back to 1994, when women were getting ready for the 4th Africa Regional Conference on Women in Dakar, Senegal. The idea of the torch was similar to that of the Olympic Torch, Ms. Butega says, linking women in different countries who were pushing for peace and participating in conflict resolution. So it went from one country to another with women handing it to each other, urging themselves to continue to work towards peace.

The torch, which originates from Kenya, has actually traveled through South Africa, Angola, Kenya, Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, Mali, Liberia and Ethiopia, delivering messages of peace and solidarity to women in conflict countries, before being taken to Beijing for the opening of the NGO Forum of the Fourth World Conference on



Arrival of the Peace Torch

Women in 1995.

Ms. Butega says women have always been involved in conflict resolution. She used Somalia as an example, where women, at the height of clan wars, were the ones shuttling between different clan leaders, urging them to stop the fighting.

The same happened in Angola, Sudan, Liberia, Sierra Leone and many other conflict-torn countries. What has changed, she says, is that it is no longer only one woman operating informally; women are now setting up organizations and networks for peace, where they learn from each other and develop new strategies. They are now able to engage at regional and international level, right up to the level of the UN Security Council.

The torch will be present in the conference hall throughout the Ministerial Meeting of the 7th African Regional Conference on Women, to remind delegates that African women are calling for peace, that they need real strategies to end conflict and that women can contribute to the solutions.

What is the Commission on HIV/AIDS and Governance in Africa?

Amon Mulyorwa

Under the chairmanship of the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa K.Y. Amoako, the Commission on HIV/AIDS and Governance in Africa represents the first ever chance which the continent most affected by the scourge will lead the way in examining the pandemic in all ways and likely future implications.

The commission is steered by 20 commissioners who also serve as good will ambassadors or champions on issues. These are either African ministers of health, leading figures in the development world, academics and prominent leaders on the issue of HIV/AIDS.

The Commission for Africa in Addis-Ababa hosts the CHGA and a small secretariat has been set up to run its activities.

The commissioners are: H.E. Kenneth Kaunda and H.E. Prime Minister Pascal Macumbi. Other commissioners include: Seyyid Abdulai, K.Y. Amoako, Abdoulaye Bathily, Mary Chinnery-Hesse, Awa Coll-seck, Haille Debas, Richard G.A. Feachem, Marc Gentilin, Everlin Herfkens, Omar Kabbaj, Milly Katana, Madeleine Mukamabano, Benjamin Nzimbi, Joy Phumaphi, Peter Piot, Maphela Ramphele, Ismail Serageldin, Bassary Toure, Paulo Teixeira and Alan Whiteside.

Opening ceremony

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recent years could slip back, and that further gains could be jeopardized," the ECA Chief observed.

This year's ADF IV theme reflects governance issues that have been powerfully evoked by the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

NEPAD's democracy and governance component is based on the premise that development is impossible in the absence of true participatory democracy, respect for human rights, peace, and good governance.

Mr. Amoako said a manifestation of Africa's commitment to good governance is the Africa Peer Review Mechanism, designed to review country performance on governance issues. So far, 23 countries, representing 75 per cent of Africa's population, have agreed to take part in the process.

African Development Bank Director for Operations Policies and Review, Philibert Afrika, said implementation of policies and strategies that promote broad-based growth and poverty reduction cannot achieve sustainable development in the absence of good governance.

The Bank has provided a cumulative \$US 800 million for financial and technical assistance to improve systems of governance support in a number of African countries.

CHGA is an exercise in policy engagement aimed at key decision makers in African governments. The extensive research carried out underpins policy briefs and other tools to assist African governments to understand and respond to HIV/AIDS and its impact. It therefore provides data, clarifies the nature of choices facing African governments and helps to consolidate the design and implementation of policies and programmes that can help contain the pandemic.

CHGA does this by producing policies and programs to assist governments to formulate long-term intervention strategies to mitigate the likely developmental impacts of HIV/AIDS. CHGA works with the civil society such as associations of people living with HIV/AIDS, NGOs, community based organizations, public policy and advocacy organs and networks, research institutions and policy makers to name but a few.

A spirit of activism marks the Commission seeking to engage with a wide range of stakeholders at all levels during its life time, and thereby to spur action. Several of the commissioners are drawn from the civil society. The CHGA Interactive is an important component of this activism grounding CHGA with people and institutions on the frontline of the fight against HIV/AIDS.

During 2004 five Interactive forums will be organized across Africa and these will take soundings from NGOs, CBOs, associations of people living with HIV/AIDS, practitioners, policy makers, researchers and others, ensuring that CHGA's messages and findings are informed not only by research but also ground work.

The first CHGA Interactive took place in Maputo Mozambique in March 2004 and focused on the growing orphan crisis, on how to upscale treatment for people living with HIV/AIDS in resource limited settings, and on human and state capacity.

CHGA's main output is a final report which will be released in 2005 focusing on the challenge of governing a country including maintaining essential public service, keeping economic development on track, maintaining rural livelihoods, tackling the gender dimension of the scourge, and ensuring national security despite the fact that large numbers of adults are living with HIV/AIDS.



During CHGA's two-year life-span papers on various aspects of HIV/AIDS and governance will be drawn up. CHGA will also produce a series of fact sheets on countries' response to the pandemic and on issues related to HIV/AIDS and good governance, as well as other tools to support governments in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

But this will not be all. Given the complexities of HIV/AIDS, and knowledge issues which will have been accumulated by the time of the final report, there will be a follow-up period in which the commissioners and ECA, divisions continue to raise the issue of HIV/AIDS and good governance, utilising the final report as the basis for advocacy and policy engagement.

Maybe one day Africa will be free of HIV/AIDS, maybe!

Young artists exhibiting

by Jenine Coetzer

The work of 15 young Ethiopian artists is on display on the second floor of the United Nations Conference Center. The exhibition is supported by the African Youth Association, an Ethiopian NGO. One of the aims of the Association is to conserve African culture for generations to come.

Aklilu Temesgen, one of the exhibitors, says the artists involved in the group are between 20 and 26 years old. While they

are all based in Addis Ababa, only a few have access to art galleries to show their work. The exhibition at the Conference Center is a golden opportunity both for them to get exposure, and for visitors to the Ethiopian capital who would not otherwise have the chance to see these colorful paintings.

Around 120 pieces of work – all oil paintings – are on show. Prices range between 500 and 4 000 birr.



Photo: Peter Moczynski

ADF The leading forum

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importance of public and private sector stakeholder participation.

The Executive Secretary further enumerated challenges facing Africa as low and fragile economic growth, which is below the level required to meet the Millennium Development Goals; and the fact that economic reforms are not making a significant dent on the continent's poverty levels, or providing employment for the continent's youth.

Mr. Amoako explained that ECA had conducted a groundbreaking survey in nearly 30 countries in a bid to better understand the state of governance in today's Africa. The surveys are comprehensive and cover both political and economic dimensions of governance leading to policy recommendations. More than 2,000 experts and 50,000 households were involved in the survey, providing a reasonably accurate picture. The preliminary results of the

study will be presented to the conference on Tuesday.

Also speaking at the opening, Ms. Gertrude Mongella, Chairperson of the African Parliament, said good governance, the respect for dignity and human rights are not new themes but are deeply embedded in African history and culture. The challenge for current leadership was therefore how to resuscitate these values and bring the concept of good governance closer to the people. She also stressed the importance of empowering women to participate fully in the decision-making process as their concerns are often ignored, particularly in the economic empowerment discourse.

Ms. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Chairperson of Liberia's Governance Reform Commission, pointed out that even though seven years had elapsed since South African President Thabo Mbeki suggested the coming of an 'African renaissance', the

continent was still struggling to achieve the momentum and enthusiasm needed to make the vision a reality. "The lessons of experience suggest clearly that good governance practiced by a capable state is a pre-requisite for the achievement of those goals," she insisted.

Ms. Johnson-Sirleaf remarked that the legitimacy of many governments in Africa continues to be challenged due to fraudulent electoral practices and "the tendency of leaders to resist the good practice of limiting their term in office." Only bold leadership, based on the legitimacy established by the will of the people, could address many of the continent's issues. She concluded by stating that the continent needed to adopt a system of governance that could ensure a regular and peaceful transfer of power and consolidate progress in accountability and respect for human rights. Only then would the African renaissance become a reality.