



**Wittenberg Center
for Global Ethics**



Africa Forum 2006 Fostering Entrepreneurial Spirit

Minutes of the 1st Panel: The Political Dimension “Building Global Cooperation – New Alliances with Africa” Monday, 4th December 2006

Convened by Andrew Young, WCGE

- Hon. Dr. Theo-Ben GURIRAB,
Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Namibia,
Former Prime Minister, Former President of UN General Assembly
- H.E. Dr. Ibrahim Said MSABAHA, Minister for East African Co-operation,
United Republic of Tanzania
- H.E. Fatoumata Siré DIAKITE, Ambassador of the Republic of Mali in
Germany

Introduction

Andrew Young, President of the Wittenberg-Center for Global Ethics (WCGE) and celebrated former US-Ambassador to the United Nations introduced the 2006 Africa Forum's first panel themed "The Political Dimension of Building Global Cooperation – New Alliances with Africa". In his introductory speech during the opening session, ret. Ambassador Andrew Young had already presented the basic idea of what the program "Building Global Cooperation" is all about: The purpose of "Building Global Cooperation" was to highlight mutual gains from partnerships with Africa that would arise by investing in the continent: While the West would gain by enhancing its employment potential, Africa would benefit from development and growth. To that purpose, the Wittenberg-Center for Global Ethics has put Entrepreneurship in the centre of that year's Africa Forum. But "Building Global Cooperation" was not about the Big Plan, said Young. The program instead was about planting seeds for Africa's development in order to gradually include Africa in the prosperous development of the rest of the world. Andrew Young recapitulated this fundamental idea by citing from the 19th century hymn "Lead on, o King Eternal" by Ernest W. Shurtleff:

[...]
*For not with swords' loud clashing,
Nor roll of stirring drums;
With deeds of love and mercy
The heavenly kingdom comes."*

After introducing the panellists, Andrew Young stressed that the panel was distinguished regarding entrepreneurial spirit not only for its credentials but particularly because of the countries represented: Both Namibia and Tanzania had made tourism and wildlife an important trade, while Mali was now famous for its fashion industry and designs which were even subject to copying by the French design industry, according to Mr. Young.

Subsequently, the distinguished panelists had the opportunity to shed light on their (political) perspective on potential new alliances and entrepreneurial visions in and with Africa.

Input by Hon. Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab

According to Namibia's Speaker of the National Assembly, **Hon. Dr. Theo-Ben Gurirab**, entrepreneurship was about creating relationships and networks and sustaining them by building trust. One famous example for entrepreneurial spirit had been Namibia's path to its first free elections and, finally, to independence in 1990. It was this very experience that Mr. Gurirab wanted to share with the audience, especially with the young generation.

To this end, Mr. Gurirab retrospectively looked at the late 1970s. In 1977, the representatives of the Federal Republic of Germany, the United States of America, France, the United Kingdom and of Canada forming the “Group of 5” had gathered at the UN to discuss the issue of how South Africa could be convinced to allow free elections in Namibia. At the time, several resolutions had already been decreed by international institutions:

- the formation of the United Nations Council for South West Africa (later renamed: United Nations Council for Namibia) in 1967,
- the "South West Africa People's Organisation" (SWAPO) had been recognized as an official and legitimate representative of Namibia at the UN,
- the South-African presence in Namibia had been declared illegal by the International Court of Justice in 1971 and
- Apartheid was considered to be a crime. The US Congress had adopted Anti-Apartheid Laws in the 1970s.

According to the former Namibian Prime Minister, the crucial ingredient for success had been the key feature of entrepreneurship: identifying the relevant players that could make the difference in pushing the agenda through networking and building trust among key players. In the case in point networks had been built with and between

- Southern African states PLUS Nigeria,
- Nordic countries which formed a network including Germany, France and Scandinavian countries PLUS the USA and Canada and
- NGOs in order to form an Anti-Apartheid movement worldwide. A famous example for this strategy were the “Sullivan Principles” developed by Rev. Leon Sullivan for multi-national corporations. These principles represented a binding mechanism for companies doing business in South-Africa not to comply with Apartheid rules.

Finally, 1990, these efforts had resulted in a free and independent Namibia, said Mr. Gurirab.

What was needed today, Mr. Gurirab reasoned, was networking to identify players that can make a difference in pushing the agenda of building new alliances with Africa. Additionally, the world needed leadership with wisdom, courage and compassion and a better understanding among nations in order to be able to invest in cooperation beyond national borders. Only these conditions could help to eradicate poverty, war, intolerance and the peril of contagion in Africa (e.g. HIV/AIDS). It was for this reason, that Mr. Gurirab reaffirmed its support to the Wittenberg-Centers’s program “Building Global Cooperation as it represented an initiative in fostering these very conditions.

Mr. Gurirab closed his speech with a personal note to the young generation: In 1963, the year of the “I have a dream-speech” and the civil rights movement, he had come to the U.S. and had been fascinated by the generation of daring, courageous and crazy young people of the 1960s. It had been precisely in that moment that he had lost the last doubt that through organization and creating relations one could make a

difference. In order to stress the point further, Mr. Gurirab reminded the audience that even when Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo and his friends had decided to set up a law firm, they were inexperienced young men that wanted to change things. “If those two village boys can do it”, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab addressed the assembled young leaders, “you can do it as well!”

Input by H.E. Dr. Ibrahim Said Msabaha

In referring to Andrew Young's speech that same morning, **H.E. Dr. Ibrahim Said Msabaha**, Minister for East African Cooperation of the United Republic of Tanzania, agreed on the role of individuals and ideas in history. Examples like Namibia, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Tanzania were a living testimony to the strategic role of individuals and ideas in history. The minister however did not agree with a perspective on human interactions that put the conflict of interests in the middle of analysis. Instead, he said, he believed “in boundless faith, in the good sense of men and in the capacity of intellectuals to enquire good results.”

According to Mr. Msabaha, the internationally adopted eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the numerous international initiatives that subsequently were launched in order to address the issues of poverty and development especially in Africa were a testimony to this conviction. Additionally, Africa had more and more resumed responsibility for its own future: the NEPAD program and the implementation of structural adjustment programs were a case in point. But despite these efforts, the MDGs targets were unlikely to be attained until 2015. In order to present reasoning for this failure, Mr. Msabaha argued:

1. Since the late 1980s, international donor agencies as the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had made foreign aid and loans to developing countries conditional to so called “Structural Adjustment Programs”. The purpose was to attain macroeconomic stability as a prerequisite to development. Tanzania, together with numerous Sub-Sahara-African countries, had achieved this goal. However, Tanzania and its peer group countries had not experienced rapid growth yet. Therefore, Mr. Msabaha concluded, macroeconomic stability was a necessary but not a sufficient condition for rapid development.
2. Sufficient conditions were a critical mass both of development assistance (ODA) and foreign direct investments (FDI). However, both ODA and FDI had been shunning Africa. This was particularly surprising and apparently irrational in the case of FDI, Mr. Msabaha said: Despite extraordinary returns on capital for investments in Africa, only a minuscule portion of the world's FDI had entered the African continent. Therefore, rapid development could not take place in most of African countries.
3. Africa could not achieve the declared development goals by production and trade of primary commodities alone. Conversely, the development experience of many countries showed that rapid growth could only be achieved by
4. investing in manufacturing industries that produced processed products for export.

In concluding his speech, Mr. Msabaha called for a new international policy. In referring to the Marshall Plan, he reminded the audience that contribution to Africa's development was in the best self-interest of the international community: "The Marshall Plan after World War II was never a gift to Europe; it was a policy of containment to prevent Soviet Communism from overrunning Europe", highlighted Tanzania's minister. It is in this very context, that fostering entrepreneurial spirit, building global cooperation, new alliances with Africa and Corporate Social Responsibility had to be discussed during the Africa Forum in Wittenberg.

Input by H.E. Fatoumata Siré Diakité

During her highly emotional speech, **H.E. Fatoumata Siré Diakité**, Ambassador of the Republic of Mali in Germany, focussed on necessary conditions for alliances and global partnerships.

According to the female Ambassador of the Republic of Mali in Germany, global cooperation would not be successful without Africa being included. However, inclusion had to be accomplished by Africa, not by others. Former efforts to include Africa were misleading because rules (i.e. structural adjustment programs) had simply been dictated to African countries without appreciating Africa's expertise in their own affairs and needs. Consequently, Africa's main problems were being ignored. Hereupon, Mrs. Diakité presented a number of examples in order to clarify the point:

- *Foreign Aid*: Within the practise of "tying aid" Africa had been misused as a market for exports. Foreign aid disbursements had been tied to the obligation of buying machinery and tools from donor countries. As a consequence, only little money had stayed in Africa and almost no knowledge transfer had been taking place.
- *Cold War*: The cold war had created a strong competition for Africa between East and West. Within this ongoing struggle for hegemony, Africa had been used as a tool. With the end of the Wold War, Africa finally got its independence and the opportunity to be a purpose in itself.
- *Resources*: Africa's resources had been utilized ("robbed") by others not least with the help of African leaders themselves. As a response, people had decided to make their leaders accountable and had enforced the feedback by forming a strong civil society.

According to H.E. Mrs. Diakité, today there were at least two good reasons why Africa and its problems should not be ignored on the international agenda:

1. *Immigration*: If the West did not consider Africa's problems as truly global problems, the West would experience consequences, Mrs. Diakité argued: "If you ignore our problems, we will come to you!"
2. *Markets for products and labour*: Yet today, Africa was an important emerging market, both for exports to Africa and for exports of primary resources from Africa. But due to economic and population growth, so Economist David Hay

argued, said Mrs. Diakit , Africa would even have the biggest market and the youngest workforce worldwide by 2050.

In concluding her speech, Mrs. Diakit  elaborated on the conditions for successful partnerships with Africa. Partnerships had to be based on:

- mutual respect and equality among partners,
- the recognition of African expertise,
- the young generation,
- especially women,
- civil society and
- the private sector.

Discussion

After the panellists' speeches Andrew Young involved the audience in the discussion. He asked the entrepreneurs in the audience to introduce themselves. Subsequently, more than a dozen young entrepreneurs from Nigeria, Cameroon, South Africa, Mozambique, Sierra Leone and Kongo got engaged in a vital discussion with the panellists.