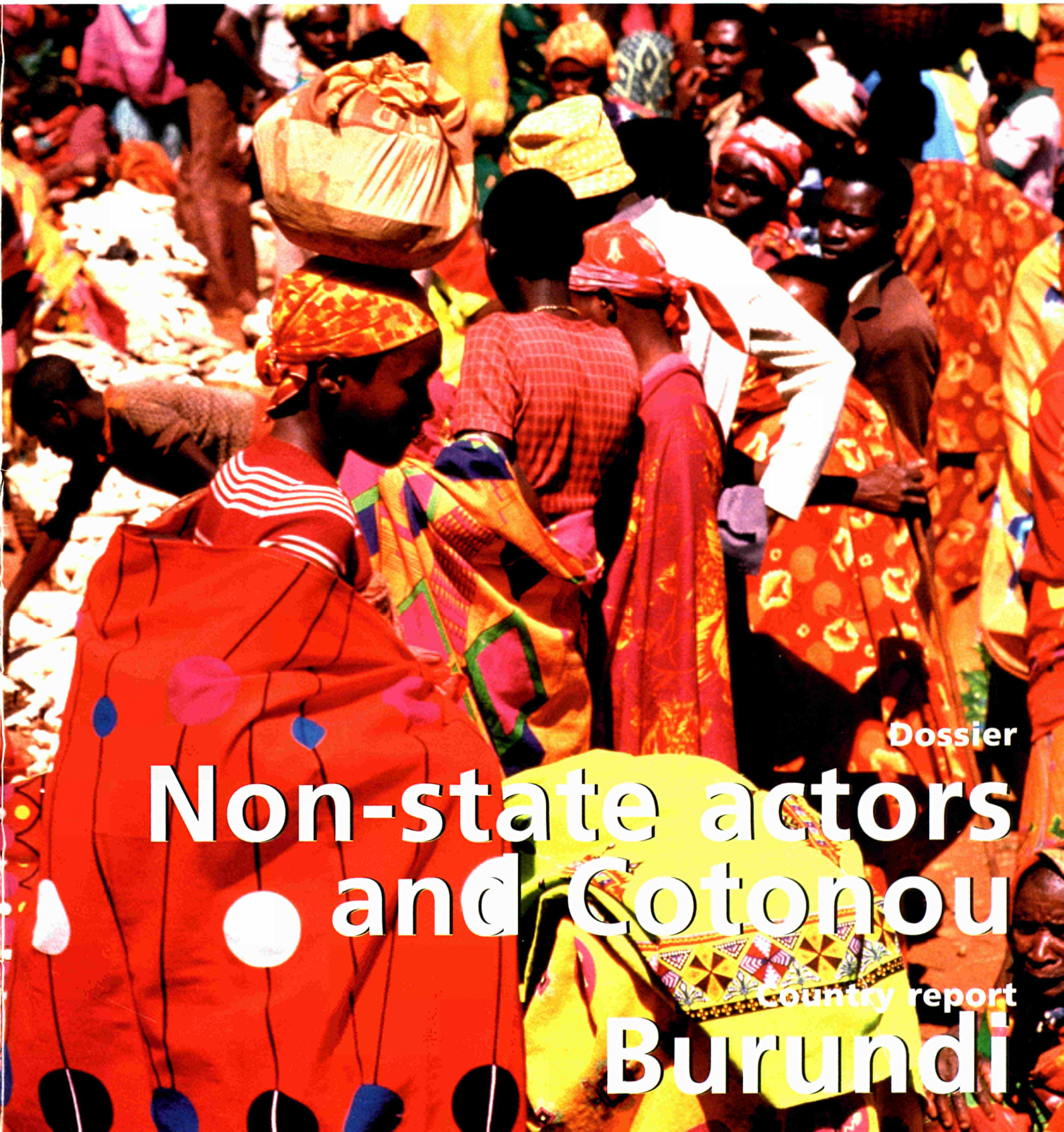


# the Courier

the magazine of ACP-EU development cooperation

N° 199 July-August 2003



Dossier

## Non-state actors and Cotonou

Country report

## Burundi



# Editorial

## African initiatives for dealing with conflict

Africa continues to have more conflicts than any other region in the world, and individual governments do not always have the capacity to solve them when they arise. Such conflicts take a toll on the population, and are a major cause of poverty and barrier to development.

In many parts of the continent, foreign troops are involved in peace operations; for instance, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), in Sierra Leone, in Liberia. Furthermore, private security forces have stepped into the breach in many cases, particularly where the state is weak.

Nevertheless, there are heartening examples of peace restoration initiatives, conflict management and resolution, where African leadership has been the decisive ingredient, such as in Burundi, Sudan, DRC, Cote d'Ivoire, and Somalia. African peacekeeping forces are also serving throughout the continent.

At the recent African Union (AU) Heads of State summit in Maputo, peace and security issues were high on the agenda. The AU's predecessor, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), was sworn to non-interference in the internal affairs of nations. However, the AU's Constitutive Act says there are instances in which the AU must act. Indeed, the second pillar of the AU refers to "the promotion of peace, security and stability on the continent" (the other two pillars are partnership with civil society and socio-economic integration).

Institutional capacity-building for peace is vital, and the AU has taken significant steps towards creating credible mechanisms for conflict resolution and arbitration. A Peace and Security Council (PSC) is being established and work is underway to get the necessary majority of countries to ratify the body's protocols. The PSC should have legal power to intervene in member states' domestic affairs in cases of violations of human rights or where the principles of good governance are flouted.

Africa's peace and security prospects were also given a considerable boost with the resolution in Maputo on a Peace Support Operation Facility, which called for an EU-financed instrument for long-term and reliable support for African-owned initiatives in conflict prevention and peacekeeping (see articles on pages 4 and 6). With conflicts and law and order breakdowns now recurring in the Pacific (i.e. the Solomon Islands), other ACP regions may consider whether such a Facility could be a useful instrument for them also.

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Burundi, crowd in market wearing traditional costume.

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*The ACP-EU Courier* is the voice of the ACP-EU partnership in political, economic and social cooperation. This relationship can be traced back 45 years to the Treaty of Rome. The two sides have set up joint institutions and are involved in an ongoing political dialogue. The partnership was last renewed on 23 June 2000 with the signing of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, covering a 20-year period. As well as the political dimension, this agreement provides for intense cooperation in the trade area as the EU seeks to ensure that the ACP countries do not suffer marginalisation in the current multilateral trade negotiations (Doha Round). The partnership has always focused on development assistance which targets the twin objectives of poverty reduction and sustainable development. Giving voice to men and women from ninety-three EU and ACP countries across the globe facing the future in a spirit of partnership: that is our mission.



# Population, poverty and choice: an interview with the head of the UN Population Fund, Thoraya Obaid

Nine years ago the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo agreed that slowing population growth could not be separated from economic growth, human rights and the reduction of poverty in the world's developing countries. The UN Population Fund (UNFPA<sup>1</sup>) has been central to implementing the conference's proposals since then. During her recent visit to Brussels we talked to Thoraya Obaid about its work and asked her first to explain the link between population and poverty.

François Lefèvre

There are two levels. There is the macro, national level, where, if the number of people increases, the ability of the national government to provide services, education, employment, and so on, becomes harder. There is also the link between population and environment: the larger the population, the more it depends on the natural resources; there is a degradation of natural resources, and so poverty becomes cyclical.

Also at the macro level, it's the poorest who tend to have more children, because of lack of education, lack of health services including reproductive health. So the impact of population growth is even harder on the poorest and that also creates a cycle of poverty.

On the individual level, the micro, family level, you have the problem of the ability of parents to provide education for all their children. The larger the family, the harder it is to provide quality care. If you are already in a poor country, where the national systems are weak and there are no employment opportunities, it becomes a cycle of poverty.

## *What has been achieved in the decade since the Cairo conference?*

We always say that population is a success story, so far. The trend for the past 40 to 50 years has been towards lower population growth globally. But according to the projections, between now and 2050 population growth could increase from six billion to eight or nine billion, depending on the scenario. And most of this growth will happen in poor countries, where the systems are already weak and cannot absorb it. Globally, it is a success story but we still need to take care of the poor countries where population growth is at a high level.

## *What are the most effective means of slowing demographic growth?*

The main emphasis is on quality of life, because population growth is a by-product. If all couples can have access to reproductive health services, they will be able to have fewer children and the by-product will be lower population growth. But the main emphasis, for the UNFPA, is on the ability of women to choose the number and the spacing of



their children as a right, and the universal access of women and men to reproductive health services. If you guarantee that right, the by-product is a slowdown in population growth.

## *What is the UNFPA doing to address the reproductive health needs of women, especially in sub-Saharan African countries?*

One woman dies per minute from birth or pregnancy-related problems. One of our targets is a decrease in maternal mortality, because, by doing so, not only the women but also the children will live.

This means ensuring that women have care throughout their lives, especially pre-natal, post-natal and later. This also means ensuring that there are birth attendants, because in many of the developing countries, women do not give birth in a medical or even paramedical setting.

In sub-Saharan Africa in particular, we focus on maternal mortality, on HIV/AIDS prevention – that's a very big issue. Furthermore, one of the major issues that impacts on reproductive health and the ability of women to be able to make choices, is violence against them.

The programme basically focuses on reproductive health, adolescent reproductive health, decreasing maternal mortality and insuring that there are commodities. You can't promote the concept of women being able to make choices (the number and spacing of their children) if the services are not available. You're building expectation without being able to deliver anything.

The issue of commodities is also very critical in the prevention of HIV/AIDS, to be able to prevent it through the three methods: abstinence, "be faithful" and condoms (ABC). Two years ago there was an estimate that in Africa, if the existing supply condoms were evenly distributed, three condoms would be available per man per year. You can't prevent HIV/AIDS that way.

## *Isn't education the key element in improving the standard of living of women?*

Education is part of it, but not all. There is a correlation between education and the number of children women have; so they don't get married at 12 or 13, have children



by the age of 14, and so on. Linked to education you need other elements of support. Education alone will not change things. It will give them awareness, but they will be very frustrated if they have the awareness but not the means.

*How does the UNFPA address religious and cultural beliefs or practices when it is developing programmes and projects?*

This is an area I'm very interested in. Some UNFPA programmes have used religion or cultural values as an entry point to deal with the problems, but it was never systemised, but project by project, and now we're looking at it as a system. We have succeeded in the past in mobilising religious leaders; for example, in Senegal, the Christian and Muslim clergy were involved in discussions about female genital mutilation. Senegal passed laws on the subject, a lot due to the fact that the religious leaders were able to mobilise the people.

Religious organisations provide about fifty per cent of social services, and they are at the community level. People respect them and listen to them. We try to find a way to work with them where we respect each other's borders. For example, in Nairobi I had a long discussion with the Archbishop of Kenya. We have a joint programme with them on HIV/AIDS and basically the agreement is that through the church where the young people go, they are provided with full information about HIV/AIDS and the three methods of prevention.

But the church cannot promote condoms. They counsel about abstinence and so on. Young people who do not want to go the abstinence route are referred to the government services or to an NGO that can provide other counselling and services for them. This is what I mean by respecting others' views.

Naturally, we are facing problems with the extreme interpretations of some religions, and we are trying to dialogue as much as possible with the more liberal or open areas. But certainly if we did not open channels of communication with those who are on the ground and doing good work, we would lose fifty per cent of the services that are already available.

*What has been the impact of the US decision to cancel its voluntary annual contribution to the UNFPA?*

Last year Congress allocated \$34 million to the UNFPA and President Bush did not give it to us. The sad part of it is that you cannot begin a programme, then stop it and then go back and say: "Okay, now we can continue". So we try to tell our partners: "You're getting the minimum, so we won't stop". But this means you're not expanding new programmes, you're not opening new areas. For example, in some areas we're not able to provide contraceptives or to collect data and do health surveys on quality of life and health problems. In our work, a little money goes a long way. When we cannot give a country some of that money, it makes a big difference in their lives. But we try not to create a panic.



*And, what about China?*

The issue in China is to demonstrate to the Chinese government that, in the 32 counties where we work, when people can have access to quality reproductive health services, when they can get good counselling and are not forced to use only one method – like abortion – and when they have many different commodities, they can make a choice. In the 32 counties, we also have figures showing that abortion has gone down. The Chinese have now decided to expand this model into the 880 counties. So it is a success story and we have made a difference.

The other reason for our presence is the fact that if you are not there to have a dialogue with the government and to keep on pushing the agenda of individual human rights, who's going to do it? But the US considers that just by being there we are promoting coercive population policies. All the investigations, including the one the US President sent – a three-member team that spoke Chinese and was not chaperoned by the Chinese – said there was no evidence that UNFPA was participating in the management of coercive population policies. But in spite of that the President chose not to give the funds allocated to us. Even so we are continuing to work there and beginning a new programme with the Chinese. And we're hoping to expand the human rights aspect of reproductive health even further.

*What is the Cairo consensus on abortion?*

The Cairo consensus says the following: "Abortion is not a form of family planning". It calls on governments to expand reproductive health services (prenatal, post-natal, maternal and so on) in order to decrease the possibilities of abortion. It calls on governments to insure that their health systems are able to cope with complications from unsafe abortions. And, finally, abortion is subject to national laws. So it's a national issue that each country has to decide on its own. Our mandate is very clear, we do not deal with abortion; we do not promote it nor do we provide it or assist in providing it, but we do work with governments to train people to deal with the consequences of unsafe abortion. ■

1. The UNFPA was founded in 1969 as the UN Fund for Population Activities. In 1987 its name was changed to the UN Population Fund but it retained its original acronym.



## African Union (AU) summit in Maputo Peace and stability dominate the agenda

A significant number of Africa countries are today torn by conflict. Therefore, the issue of maintaining peace and stability on the continent was high on the agenda of the second summit of the African Union (UA). Meeting in the Mozambican capital from 10 to 12 July, African Heads of State endeavoured to advance the Peace and Security Council and the African intervention Force. Two ambitious projects, which will be able to see the light of day only with strong political will on the part of the Africans and the support of their international partners.

Jordane Bertrand

A half-dozen chairs remained empty during the summit: leaders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritania, the most volatile countries, stayed away. Another absent figure was François Bozize, the self-proclaimed president of the Central African Republic, who came to power through a coup in March 2003: he was not invited by the AU, which remained firm on the principle adopted in Algiers in 1999 condemning all non-constitutional taking of power. The Liberian president Charles Taylor, under the shadow of an international warrant for his arrest for war crimes committed in his country, did not leave Monrovia.

These absences reflect the chronic instability of the African continent and provoked the heads of state to react at the Maputo meeting. Aware of the disastrous effects of conflicts on development projects, they committed firmly to working for peace. Mozambican president Joaquim Chissano, whose country will hold the presidency of the African Union for one year, was optimistic. "Consensus has been reached that peace and security are basic conditions for ensuring harmonious and sustainable development in

Africa". For supporters of the new Partnership for Development, NEPAD, presented as an overall development programme, it is obvious that continuing conflict will inhibit foreign investors and the economic takeoff of the continent. The heads of state were not satisfied to simply study the crises on a case-by-case basis. As well as the announcement made in the margins of the summit on sending ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) troops to Liberia, the innovation here was the setting up of permanent mechanisms for conflict prevention and management.

### The Peace and Security Council

After the Durban summit in 2002 which had officially ratified the transformation of the Organisation for African Unity (OAU) into the African Union (AU), the Maputo summit was charged with setting up the institutions of the new organisation. While the pan-African Parliament, the African Court of Justice, and the African Central Bank will have to wait, the Peace and Security Council is the most advanced of the institutions. Seventeen countries have already ratified the text; twenty-seven are needed for the Council to be created. From the very opening of the summit, South African president Thabo Mbeki urged his fellow heads of state "to do everything in their power so that the Peace and Security Council can be operational before the end of 2003".

Based on the model of the United Nations Security Council, this new body will have fifteen members elected in rotation, who will vote for resolutions and to send troops on the ground. A notable characteristic is that five personalities of the continent, apolitical but recognised for their moral authority, will form a Council of Wise Men, to direct the decisions.

"From a first-generation mechanism within the OAU, we passed directly to a third-generation mechanism, which goes much further. The fifteen members will be elected on well-defined criteria, and not in the almost automatic way which was the case up to now. The mandate will be more important, making it possible to send observation and peace maintenance forces on the ground, and, if necessary, intervention forces," indicated Saïd Djinnit, Algerian ambassador, re-elected during the Maputo Summit as head of the Commission on Peace and Security. He says that the project is fundamentally new for Africa and symbolic of the new African Union.



Jeel Chizane

Alpha Oumar Konare, former president of Mali, was elected to head the AU Commission, which oversees the day-to-day running of the organisation.



Logically, discussions also covered putting in place an African intervention force, which would serve as the military arm of the Peace and Security Council. Consensus was not reached on the form that this pan-African military force would take. Some countries, including Libya, favour a permanent continental force. The majority of the other sub-Saharan Africa countries, including South Africa, are in favour of regional forces consisting of national quotas, mobilised as emergencies arise. The heads of state finally opted to continue discussions during an extraordinary summit to be held in Syrte (Libya) in the coming months. The Syrte summit will be preceded by regional meetings during which defence ministers will submit reports on the capacities of their country to take part in the force.

### The Durban spirit

African initiatives to resolve the problems of Africa: the Peace and Security Council should reflect the new philosophy of the AU, which was launched in Durban in 2002. Similarly, NEPAD, which is to be incorporated into the structures of the AU in three years' time, favours economic development chosen by the countries themselves. The AU has created mechanisms to guarantee better governance on the continent. The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), an instrument voluntarily acceded to by AU members, envisages assessments on a country basis on economic and political governance issues.

Corruption, human rights, business ethics; as many areas as the applicant countries will agree to have appraised within their institutions. Sixteen countries have so far adopted this continent-owned evaluation system. The first volunteer is Ghana, which is expected to be subjected to the APRM before the end of 2003. A group of six "eminent" persons, including the Mozambican Graça Machel and the Senegalese Marie-Angelica Savané, will be responsible for overseeing the evaluations.

The election of former Malian president Alpha Oumar Konare to head the Commission of the African Union, following the withdrawal of the Côte D'Ivoire candidate Amara Essy, is seen as a strong signal. The bigger countries of the continent in particular wished to raise the profile of the executive, which has the formidable task of completing the setting up of the institutions. During his speech at the close of the summit, Mr Konare urged Africans to make a "permanent reference to their culture" in order to "to build the Africa of our dreams" and ensure that the rule of law and democracy had their proper place. Further evidence of this innovative spirit was the adoption of the principle of an equal number of male and female commissioners and the signature of a very innovative protocol on women's rights.

The boldness of the AU projects is matched unfortunately by meagre finances. More than two hundred economic development projects have been incorporated into NEPAD. But those which have come to fruition are only too rare. Despite the impressive work of the presidents of the five founding countries (South Africa, Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal) foreign aid is below expectations. "All the projects have been identified" said Senegalese president Abdoulaye Wade. "Now they need to be financed". In a similar vein, the African Force deployed in Burundi by the AU numbers only 1,250, of the total 2,870 envisaged. The South African quota is already on the ground, but the Mozambican and Ethiopian troops have not yet been deployed, because of a lack of resources.



Mozambican president Joachim Chissano (right), president of the AU for one year, and Amara Essy

### European Union support

"The ultimate aim is not to send peacekeeping forces here or there, but to bolster Africa's own capacity to deal with conflict situations and peace enforcement. The African Union's Peace and Security Council is crucial. It will provide the political authority and act as a focal point for external partners to coordinate their efforts", said Romano Prodi, European Commission president, invited to the summit by the African Union.

"The issue now is whether some development-assistance resources should be used upstream, to help with peace-support operations. This raises a number of political and legal questions. But I believe it must be a new shared goal."

Pierre-André Wiltzer, the French minister delegate for cooperation, also favoured a "global and permanent mechanism. The current interventions in the Congo and in Côte d'Ivoire are necessary. But they are expensive and done on an ad hoc basis".

The link between stability and development is now recognised by Africa's international partners. "For the first time, along with humanitarian aid, we are speaking about support for armed forces. Not in military terms, but with the clear political aim of aid for the maintenance of peace," said José Teixeira, head of the EU delegation in Maputo.

The African Union asked the EU to "examine the possibility of setting up a Peace Support Operation Facility (PSOF), to fund peace support and peacekeeping operations conducted under the authority of the AU, thereby enhancing the capacity of the Union to play fully its role in the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa".

In Maputo, there was a clear demonstration by African leaders that they do not wish to leave the responsibility for peace or war to others. The Mozambican president Joaquim Chissano, holding the presidency of the AU for the next year, and the Malian Alpha Oumar Konare, elected for four years to head the AU Commission, have the task of convincing Africans and their international partners to work together so that this principle becomes a reality. ■

President Prodi's speech can be found at the following address:  
<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/>



# “The EU-Africa dialogue is here to stay”

## Support in Maputo for a Peace Support Operation Facility

The Maputo summit was an African Union event, which paved the way to further integration of the continent. But it also proved to be a step forward in EU-African relations. European Commission president Romano Prodi and EU Commissioner for development and humanitarian aid Poul Nielson were invited to attend as observers. This provided an occasion for bilateral meetings between them and other African leaders. In the margins of the summit, an EU-Africa Troika meeting took place, allowing for a high-level political dialogue in an informal setting for the first time since the cancellation of the Lisbon EU-Africa summit last year. Commissioner Nielson spoke to *the Courier* about his satisfaction at events in Maputo.

Dorothy Morrissey

The cancellation of the EU-Africa summit in Lisbon was a low point in the dialogue, says Nielson. “It was a casualty of the Zimbabwe issue. But this was not equivalent to stopping the dialogue. We decided to produce a Communication on EU-Africa dialogue<sup>1</sup> to demonstrate the vitality of the different elements on the agenda, and that we are moving forward on them. We also pushed forward with the study on the debt issue. We take seriously the need for a broadly organised systematic dialogue on all issues”.

In the area of peace and security, a significant event was the support given to the establishment of a Peace Support Operation Facility. “It is a kind of Trust Fund, managed and decided upon by the African Union members themselves, in order to contribute to the funding of African peacekeeping operations,” explains Nielson. “The idea came out of my analysis of the problem of relying on ad hoc solutions for supporting peacekeeping operations in Africa. I was searching for something which would strengthen African ownership, based on the principle of solidarity. We have seen in recent years a fantastic performance by prominent African statesmen and women in carrying out successful mediation, and regional engagements in IGAD, ECOWAS, SADC to contain and handle conflicts. The idea is to fund the Facility by shaving off a small percentage of each country envelope, and this was met with clear, strong support from all African states. A resolution was adopted asking the European Commission to move forward with this and to engage with the AU Commission in working out how it can be done in practice. This is a clear signal from Maputo and, I have to add, it concerns all Africa, also the non-ACP parts of Africa.”

The Commissioner envisages that the PSOF will be presented formally towards the end of the year. Several issues still have to be clarified, such as the DAC (Development Assistance Committee of the OECD) definition of what is covered under Official Development Assistance (ODA). “The DAC has a relatively rigorous language on anything military, and this will have to be discussed within the DAC. But the relevance is unquestionable; we are not giving funds to arms, we are making it possible to carry out peacekeeping operations. In conflict situations we are blocked in our work of delivering assistance. We also have the problem of commitments not being implemented: very often conflicts,

failed states, chaos, disorder, and insecurity are a big part of this. Eliminating that obstacle will enable us to do more on poverty-oriented work”.

Another important issue for the Commissioner is ownership. He envisages that the Facility will be funded through a decision of the partner country. “It is the partner country that requests us to contribute to the Facility. Now that the Africans are ready to do this, the least we can do is to facilitate the funding of it. They have decided this collectively as a principal”.

He also sees it as a “special case” of capacity building. “This is not just about peace and conflict management, it is also about laying the foundation for society to function, creating the minimum conditions for governance and stability”.

As for the EU-Africa Troika meeting; “having this in a relaxed atmosphere, without formalising it but simply using the availability of both sides in the margins of the summit shows how we look at the need and importance of a close dialogue. The mood of the meeting was extremely positive and constructive, and the two sides want to continue this. This Troika meeting, as well as the discussion and the positive process on the Peace Support Operation Facility, demonstrates that the dialogue is alive and well. We have demonstrated an ability and a willingness to move forward together, and this is a very strong and positive signal coming out of Maputo. ■

1. Communication from the Commission to the Council: The EU-Africa dialogue COM (2003) 316 final. 23.6.2003

Ending wars and starting broad-based recovery are crucial for the African continent. The AU is taking steps to develop mechanisms for conflict resolution, arbitration, and peacekeeping.



©Carlinio NhularPamos Pictures



# East Timor becomes the 79<sup>th</sup> member of the ACP Group

At its 13 May 2003 meeting in Brussels, the ACP Council of Ministers welcomed a new member into the ACP Group, East Timor, bringing the total number of countries to 79. The accession was formally approved by the ACP-EC Council of Ministers on 16 May. East Timor is the world's newest democracy, gaining independence in May 2002.

Dorothy Morrissey

East Timor's accession was received with great satisfaction by the Secretary-General of the ACP Group, Jean-Robert Goulongana.

The country's Prime Minister, Dr Mari Alkatiri, also expressed his satisfaction in a speech during the 77th Session of the ACP Council Ministers in Brussels, on 13 May. He went on to express his gratitude to the ACP Group for assisting East Timor to become a member: "This positive response to our request translates the will of your countries to offer us the opportunity to accelerate our development process. This will no doubt contribute to the consolidation of our independence and our development", said Dr Alkatiri. "We are also aware that being an ACP member is not just about privileges but also about responsibilities. We would like to underline our conviction that with your help we will be able to fulfil our obligations. We are taking the first steps in the construction of our state. East Timor rose from a heroic struggle, and from international solidarity. East Timor will be an independent and solid country with the determination of its people and international cooperation. From today East Timor is part of the ACP family."

The country's accession to the Cotonou Agreement is subject to East Timorese ratification and to the temporary special arrangement that financial assistance provided under the Agreement be limited to article 3b of the current Financial Protocol (regional cooperation and integration) until the entry into force of the 10th EDF. Until then, the country will continue to receive national support under the Asia and Latin America (ALA) budget heading. Annex 6 of Cotonou will be amended by adding East Timor to the list of Least Developed ACP and Island ACP States.

## Nation building

East Timor is made up of the eastern half of a small mountainous tropical island in the Indonesian archipelago, about 400 miles north west of Australia. After three centuries of Portuguese colonial rule and 24 years of Indonesian occupation, Indonesia finally withdrew from East Timor in September 1999. Then, for two and a half years, the country was administered by UNTAET, the United Nations Transitional Administration. In East Timor, the UN had a unique mandate. For the first time in history, it took total control of a country, with all executive, legislative, judicial, and even military power vested in its appointed administrator, Sergio Vieira de Mello<sup>1</sup>. His mandate was to run the government while also transferring power to the Timorese. In May, 2002, the reins of power were handed over and the Democratic Republic of East Timor (in Portuguese; República Democrática de Timor-Leste) became an independent country.



ACP Secretary-General Jean-Robert Goulongana congratulates East Timor's Prime Minister, Dr Mari Alkatiri, on his country becoming the 79th member of the ACP Group.

East Timor joined the UN in 2002, becoming the 191st member. But it started life as a new nation in difficult circumstances. The UNDP's East Timor Human Development Report 2002 ranks it as one of the world's least developed countries, with the lowest human development ranking in Asia. It has a per capita GDP of just \$478, placing it in the same category as countries such as Angola, Guinea Bissau, Rwanda. Some 41 per cent of East Timor's 800,000 people live under the poverty line.

On the positive side, the territory has important oil and gas reserves, which lie beneath the sea between East Timor and Australia. Assuming that current EEZ discussions are successful and that the resources can be exploited and properly managed, the long-term prospects for the country's economy are relatively encouraging.

## EU-East Timor

Between 1999 and 2002, the EU committed €143 million to the Trust Fund for East Timor (TFET) and to international partner agencies for reconstruction and development. Now that the country has entered into a long-term development phase, the European Commission has developed a Country Strategy for the period 2002-2006, and expects to commit €25.5 million for rural development in 2003 and a further €8 million for health and for poverty alleviation through forestry and rural development for 2004. It is currently working on the National Indicative Programme for 2005-2006. Meanwhile, to get used to belonging to the ACP family and to familiarise itself with EDF procedures, East Timor is eligible to engage in regional cooperation with its Pacific ACP neighbours. ■

1. Mr Vieira de Mello was UN special envoy in Iraq. He was killed in the August 2003 terrorist bombing of the UN headquarters in Baghdad.





## First meeting of ACP Ministers of Culture

# Culture as a driving force for development

The first meeting of Ministers of Culture from the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries was held on 20 June 2003 in Dakar (Senegal). A Declaration and a Plan of Action were adopted, intended to herald the start of an innovative approach to development from the standpoint of culture and cultural industries. As a prelude to this unprecedented conference, cultural actors from ACP countries met on 18 and 19 June in a networking and professional workshop.

Alassane Cisse

In July 2002, the 3rd ACP Heads of State and Government summit, meeting in Nadi (Fiji), recommended the organisation of a ministerial conference to recognise the essential role of culture and cultural industries in development. The summit also advised culture ministers to undertake all actions aimed at promoting and implementing intra-ACP cultural projects. To give concrete expression to the Nadi resolutions, Senegal decided, with the agreement of the other ACP states, to host the event intended to reinforce cultural links within the ACP Group.

ACP countries have tremendous cultural riches, which could enhance their development and constitute a source of wealth and employment. Considering culture as the safeguard of their sustainable development and maintenance of peace and security, the ACP ministers decided to make cultural industries and creativity an essential element of their economic development and international cooperation policy, and an objective in multilateral trade negotiations.

In the framework of ACP-EU relations, the Ministers of Culture requested the EU to facilitate the movement of ACP artists and their work on EU markets, and recommended that culture and cultural industries be included in national and regional indicative programmes.

They also recommended that cultural industries be examined at national level, so that their potential to contribute to economic development can be assessed.

They further recommended participating in the elaboration of an international instrument on cultural diversity aimed at guaranteeing cultural pluralism and regulating trade in cultural goods and services, and defining common cultural strategies in order to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by globalisation.

Prior to the meeting, a two-day workshop/seminar brought together actors and cultural operators from the ACP countries in the Dousta Seck cultural centre in Dakar. The focus of this preliminary meeting was wide-ranging: to promote cultural industries and inter-ACP cultural exchanges, and the networking of actors and operators. The idea of "cultural zoning" was advocated, its principle being the combining of energies and activities within geo-cultural sub-regions through collaborative programmes. Following the principle of cultural affinities and geographical proximity, states could promote cultural cooperation within more restricted areas. For example, the West African sub-region could collaborate on projects and networks, just as the Caribbean countries could cooperate in areas concerning the cultural identities of their region.

### Wide-ranging debate

The aim of this first meeting of ACP Ministers of Culture was, in the words of ACP Secretary-General Jean-Robert Goulongana, "to enable the ACP States to examine the issues affecting the role of the ACP countries' cultures





in their development policies and... to seek the ways and means of promoting the cultures and cultural industries of the ACP States and regions”.

Topics such as cultural diversity, globalisation, trade in cultural property and services, free movement of cultural actors and operators were discussed, all with the central theme of how they relate to development strategies. Despite diverse opinions, there was a general consensus on essentials:

- culture must be restored to its role of underpinning development;
- creativity in all its forms must be reassessed;
- theoretical options must be translated into operational programmes;
- culture must become a development priority;
- training and improvement programmes must be used to build the capacities of private and institutional operators;
- the terms of international cultural cooperation must be redefined;
- new inter-ACP cooperation opportunities must be identified and exploited;
- finally, cultural goods and services must be accorded special status, given the World Trade Organisation (WTO) agreements.

#### Strategic orientations

In the Dakar Action Plan, adopted at the end of the meeting, ACP Culture Ministers commit themselves “formulate, where they do not exist, appropriate cultural policies and legislations, at national and regional levels, and ensure their integration into development strategies”. It also makes a commitment to “include the cultural sector as a priority in the development strategies of ACP governments, by working closely with National and Regional Authorising Officers (NAOs/RAOs)”.

The ministers adopted measures for the establishment of an ACP Cultural Foundation, and the organisation of an ACP Cultural Festival. They unanimously chose Haiti as the country to host the first edition of the Festival in 2004, to coincide with the celebration of the bi-centenary anniversary of Haiti’s independence. The major objectives of the event will be the promotion and development of cultural industries, strengthening of cultural cooperation between the ACP countries, and public-private partnership in ACP states. The ACP Festival will take into account all the other cultural events taking place in the ACP countries, with the aim

of harmonising the agendas. The second meeting of the ACP Ministers of Culture will be held as a prelude to the Festival.

As for the Foundation, the Ministers recommended that a study should be conducted in the very near future, especially regarding its financing.

The Action Plan proposes adopting appropriate measures in order to widen access to financing; by mechanisms such as guarantee funds, tax “joint-ventures” and incentives. It also favours co-production and co-distribution agreements to ensure the dissemination of ACP artistic productions on the international market, while safeguarding the intellectual property rights of the artists and inventors. Another proposal of the Action Plan: the organisation of an ACP workshop on developing a policy to combat cultural piracy.

The Dakar meeting received the support of a major international organisation: Unesco. That institution’s message, delivered by Mr Noureini Tidjani-Serpos, Assistant Director-General, responsible for the Africa Department, stressed the need to strengthen ACP cultural strategies and policies. Unesco would assist in the task of mapping out precisely what opportunities culture had to offer development, in terms both of areas of national sovereignty and at supra-national level. Mr Goulongana issued a call to intercultural dialogue protagonists, challenging the “uniformisation” of the world: “It is not our wish that the world should become completely uniform in every aspect of life, and that includes culture”. In support of this, the conference’s leitmotif, Mr Goulongana made reference to the abundant cultural potential of the ACP countries – their music, dance, gastronomy, fashion, etc.

One major stumbling block, however, remains: given that the ACP countries have Third World economies, how are they to finance actions that, in the view of the citizens of poor countries, are marginal and non-productive? This begs the question of how to persuade everybody to accept the idea that culture is a source of income and a creator of jobs. ■

More information can be found on the ACP Secretariat website:  
<http://www.acpsec.org>



# Poul Nielson: development is at the top of the EU agenda

## A letter from the Commissioner for development and humanitarian aid

The European Community, like any large donor managing public funds, is not exempt from criticism. When well-founded, this can be constructive. But criticism can also be misinformed, and based on an incomplete understanding of the issues involved. Here, we publish excerpts of Commissioner Poul Nielson's response to some recent criticisms of EC aid in the European press, where he outlines recent changes and evolutions in EC development policy.

"This is not the first time that EC aid has been criticised. Of course I accept, at any time, a discussion about how to improve Europe's contribution to the fight against poverty, as this has been the main focus of my efforts over the last three and a half years.

In recent years the European Commission has made fundamental changes to the way we carry out development cooperation. In the first general policy statement ever, which I presented in April 2000, the fight against poverty was made the main objective. We also introduced a new multi-annual programming system, improved quality in programming, and took concrete steps to improve ownership and complementarity. We have clarified our policy, pursued sectoral concentration, enhanced the participation of civil society, and introduced the progressive integration of performance indicators in programming. We have strengthened our delegations and reduced the delivery time.

As commissioner responsible for EU development aid, I have no reason to be complacent about our performance. On the contrary, I have continued to be very vocal on the need to make changes. Decisions and proposals to improve the situation have been flowing steadily since.

But despite recent successful changes in EC programming procedures it has not yet been possible to tackle the big problem of the unspent balances, whether it's the European Development Fund (EDF), which is part of the Cotonou Agreement between the EU and 77 developing countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP), or the programmes financed from the regular external aid budget.

### The EDF

Let me recall the main facts. The total figure for EDF funds allocated to ACP countries until the end of 2002 (6th, 7th, and 8th EDFs combined) is €32.4 billion. Of this figure €29.9 billion has been formally committed, meaning that decisions have been taken to go ahead on specific projects. Of these allocations and commitments, €21.6 billion has been disbursed. Accordingly, at the end of 2002, the "gap" stood at €10.8 billion. This gap is made up of €2.5 billion allocated but not committed, and the remaining €8.3 billion committed but not yet paid.

Let me deal with the €2.5 billion allocated but not committed. As a first step, funds are earmarked country by country. However, actual cooperation may subsequently be



The Therapeutic and Supplementary Feeding Centre in Bailundo/Hyuambo province Angola

Androulla Kaminara

suspended with a given country for political or practical reasons (civil wars, the security situation etc.). This means that no commitments (specific projects) can be approved.

To give an impression of the size of the problem, consider that €1.7 billion is allocated to past or current "crisis" countries such as the Comoros, Liberia, Eritrea, Sudan, Haiti, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, the Central African Republic, Zimbabwe, Angola and Madagascar. Cooperation with these countries has been, or is, frozen, and the funds cannot, under the present legal framework, then be spent elsewhere. Allocations remain frozen until the EU Member States decide to resume cooperation with the given country.

However, since the EU is legally obliged under the Cotonou Agreement to be present and active everywhere, including in countries where no other donors want to work, the Commission – unlike the Member States – cannot and should not walk away.

### "Unpaid" commitments

As for the €8.3 billion committed but not paid, all donors have large amounts of "unpaid" commitments. It simply means that a donor has to get programmes and projects agreed before contracting and payments can start. For the Commission, this amount is larger at the start of a new EDF cycle (ie in 2003 for the 9th EDF) where the Commission is



**The EU is legally obliged under the Cotonou Agreement to be present and active everywhere, including in countries where no other donors want to work: the Commission – unlike the Member States – cannot and should not walk away.**

putting emphasis on getting the projects agreed (committed). At the same time, I would like to stress that our unspent commitments are close to the average for EU Member States. Considering the budgetary and legal contexts, the Commission's performance could be considered comparatively good.

I do, however, see a problem with "a slow and old" share of the €8.3 billion in unspent commitments; the commitments approved (committed) before 1997 for which we have seen no disbursements. For the EDF, we estimate that this problem represents €1.4 billion – a rather small proportion of the total EDF money allocated to ACP countries. We are of course pursuing an active policy in reducing this figure. In 2002 the total amount was reduced by €310 million and estimates for the year 2003 indicate a further reduction by €470 million.

There is a lengthy time lag between the moment decisions are announced and when things actually happen on the ground. This was one of the first things I addressed on my arrival in September 1999. I have again and again made these problems clear to the European Parliament, to the Council and to the public, and I have received strong and broad support for the actions taken to address the problems.

### So what are the solutions we are pursuing?

Administrative reform must be implemented. On reform of the Commission administrative structures for external aid, the Peer Review undertaken by the OECD Development Assistance Committee concluded in June 2002: "The EC has made substantial progress since January 2001 with organisational and management reforms of its development and humanitarian aid system. Of particular note are improvements to accountability at all levels, the introduction of the Country Strategy Papers process, the speedy and efficient delivery of humanitarian aid, the clarification of the links between relief and development, improved evaluation systems, and progress in the decision-making process with Member States and with deconcentration of authority to field offices".

The reform of external assistance launched in May 2000 by myself and my colleague, Commissioner Chris Patten, led to the establishment of the EuropeAid Cooperation Office on 1 January 2001. The idea is to concentrate in a single Commission service all external cooperation programmes, with the exception of the enlargement countries.

We have improved budget execution and the pre-1995 backlog of old and dormant commitments has been cut by 76 per cent. A new Financial Regulation incorporates important improvements for the management of external assistance.

Decentralisation must be pursued. Since the EuropeAid Cooperation Office started the extensive work of "deconcentration", organised in three phases to cover gradually all EC Delegations concerned, we have gone a long way.

Decentralisation is today operational in 45 Delegations. Attention is now concentrated on the remaining 30 Delegations of the third wave this year, essentially in the ACP region, as well as on the so-called non "geographicalised" programmes such as food security, human rights, micro-projects and the rehabilitation and refugee budget lines.

In this context, it should be noted that, on average, Commission officials deal with a certain amount of resources measured in multiples of €10 million of aid per year. Their colleagues in a Member State administration handle an average amount that is three to seven times lower.

We are "decommitting" the "old and slow". To accelerate reduction of the backlog, the Commission has started to identify dormant commitments. We plan to use them quickly for new and urgent priorities. This could encounter some resistance from countries that lose what they would consider to be "their resources". But it is important to forge ahead with this and reallocate the currently unused funds to where they can be used more effectively. We need to reconsider procedures with our ACP partners.

Untying of aid. The important question of untying aid from national (commercial) interests remains an ongoing story. The Commission has made its proposal. We are waiting for the Council to play its role.

The EDF should be "budgetised". This is not a new idea, but it is increasingly urgent. The EDF is not an integral part of the general budget of the EU. This is an anomaly. The EDF is an important policy domain of the EU and should as such be subject to normal parliamentary control, as other policy domains are. Integration of the EDF in the General Budget would achieve this objective and bring about a single legal framework for the management of development funds.

Options for further administrative reform should be considered. Internal administrative structures can still be improved. The question is whether to do it now, or let the next Commission complete the job. The Commission, under the overall strategic authority of President Prodi, has decided to postpone further improvements of the system.

Member States should grant greater flexibility. In principle, the Cotonou Agreement has some built-in mechanisms to address this problem. Annual reviews allow for flexibility in the use of resources. But due to the slow ratification of the Cotonou Agreement by EU Member States, the Commission was not able to apply this mechanism for two-and-a-half years.

It is only since 1 April 2003, when the Cotonou Agreement entered into force, that all provisions have been operational. Similarly, the mid-term reviews of the country strategy papers can lead to a revision of the strategy and to a revision of the financial allocation. Those countries performing well will benefit from an increased allocation and low performers will have their allocations reduced. These mid-term reviews are due for the year 2004.

The Commission started, in 2002-2003, to systematically reconstitute reserves from unallocated/unused resources (countries with longstanding frozen cooperation or cooperation suspended for political reasons) in view of redirecting them towards global initiatives (debt relief, Global Health Fund, Education for All initiatives, etc) for which no other reserves were available.

Are Member States ready to relax control? EC development assistance is being managed through a complex system of financial regulations, which consumes an enormous amount of scarce Commission staffing resources. There is some room for improvement.



**Other policy areas**

It has been alleged that I have no influence on matters relating to trade, agriculture, access to medicines, and fisheries policy. My reaction to this is: "You can do a lot of good if you are prepared not to take the credit for it".

I am interested in what can be done. Visibility is fine – feasibility is better. Indeed, one of the main general weaknesses of the Commission in the area of development cooperation – and I could add, the European Union as a whole – has been the temptation to draw media attention to things that never materialised, simply because the announcement was considered more important than the implementation. This is in fact part of the reason why the Prodi Commission inherited a very large development aid backlog.

As to whether development policy concerns have been taken into account in various other policy areas, it is enough to look at the results. On trade policy, the fact is that since 1999 the European Commission has been pursuing a trade policy that puts the interests of developing countries at the centre of attention. Trade issues are dealt with at length in the Cotonou Agreement. The Commission also succeeded in securing agreement with the Council on the "Everything but Arms" initiative, giving the 49 least developed countries completely tariff- and quota-free access to EU markets by 2006. The offers submitted by the EC to the Doha Development Round are all explicitly development-friendly.

As to the reform of the common agricultural policy (CAP), I should note that the Commission has made a proposal, now adopted by the Council, allowing the EU to play a progressive development-oriented role in WTO discussions on agriculture. The EU offer on agriculture in the Doha round is definitely the biggest single undertaking in eliminating export subsidies for a long time.

On communicable diseases, the Commission's overall policy on dealing with AIDS, TB and malaria, including the policy on tiered pricing, was first set out in a policy developed by the Directorate-General for Development under my political responsibility. Following endorsement by Member States, it is still being pursued within this framework.

On fisheries policy, Commissioner Fischler and I jointly initiated the debate on this issue at an early stage of the Commission mandate. The relevant parts of the reform proposal on the common fisheries policy (CFP) have been

designed to my full satisfaction, ensuring that problems of European surplus capacity are not exported to developed countries with declining fish stocks.

**Defining the role of EU development cooperation**

On the question of whether there should be a "common European policy for the Third World" I should draw attention to the Treaty (art. 177), which says Community policy in the sphere of development cooperation "shall be complementary to the policies pursued by the Member States". However there has been some progress towards a genuine common European development policy. It has been my clear objective to define a role for EU development cooperation that complements the bilateral efforts of Member States.

This succeeded in November 2000, when the Commission and the Council reached a clear agreement on how to organise this division of roles. This agreement gives the Commission key responsibilities in areas such as macro-economic support; trade-related assistance; regional cooperation; economic infrastructure (roads); rural development and general capacity building.

In addition, leading to the UN Conference on Financing for Development, the 15 EU Heads of State decided to increase development aid in order to increase EU aid from the present 0.33 per cent of Gross National Income (GNI) to 0.39 per cent in 2006. The Commission is monitoring progress and has submitted first a report to the May Council of Ministers.

We are trying to see whether further coordination and harmonisation at EU level would make sense. In the context of the Monterrey follow-up, all Member States agreed that we should formulate proposals for taking this forward in four pilot countries (Morocco, Mozambique, Nicaragua and Vietnam).

In preparation for the Johannesburg summit on sustainable development, the EU agreed to launch common initiatives on water and energy. This naturally calls for close coordination of Community and bilateral efforts. The Commission recently proposed using €1 billion to set up a European Water Fund.

We can still do better. We need to ensure that the 50 per cent of world official development aid (ODA) that we deliver pulls in the same direction. It should not mean we all have to do the same. But to become more efficient we have got to work more in synergy and towards the same objectives, each doing what he does best. One instrument would be regional and country strategies agreed by the Union and framing our common action. For this, I see a need for some better Treaty language, and I have raised this issue in the context of the Convention on the Future of Europe.

My view on NGOs and/or multilateral programmes is that both have different strengths and weaknesses, and that actually we do not do enough to support broader sector programmes in coordination with other donors. In general, I would like to see an increase in the average size of aid programmes and their impact, the development of sector programmes further supported, transaction costs minimised and Commission staff employed more efficiently. This can notably mean working with UN agencies where they have a recognised comparative advantage for doing what Europe wants to do. I really cannot see the problem in this." ■

Syba/M. A. Leplandeur



"The EU offer on agriculture in the Doha round is definitely the biggest single undertaking in eliminating export subsidies for a long time."

The complete version of this letter is available on Commissioner Nielson's website at: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/commissioners/nielson/letters/>



# Non-state actors and Cotonou

One of the most innovative elements of the ACP-EC Cotonou Partnership Agreement is that it enshrines the principle of participative development. If ACP governments are still in charge of determining the development strategy of their countries, non-state actors must now be involved not only in project implementation, but also in political dialogue, planning, and evaluation of results. Non-state actors include the private sector, economic and social partners (including trade union organisations), and civil society “in all its forms according to national characteristics.” This also implies that “civil society” goes beyond only NGOs to include human rights groups, grassroots organisations, women’s associations, environmental movements, farmers’ organisations, indigenous people’s representatives, religious organisations, research institutes, cultural associations, and media. With this background in mind, this dossier provides a preliminary assessment of the involvement of non-state actors in the consultation process, which is the process by which resources are allocated to an ACP country (or region). In the first set of articles, after a general overview, Pa’o Luteru from the ACP Secretariat and Françoise Moreau from the European Commission show a certain degree of optimism about the involvement of non-state actors in the programming process. The second set of articles (Simon Stocker from Eurostep and an interview with the President of CONCORD Frans Polman) deals with the challenges that European NGOs face in the Cotonou Agreement. A more critical approach is provided in the third set of articles, which reports on the experiences of three ACP NGOs, all of them members of the ACP Civil Society Forum. The fourth set of articles focuses on the role of other non-state actors, and in particular the somewhat disappointing experience of the ACP Business Forum and the ACP Local Government Platform, while members of the trade unions movement are still fighting to be considered as stakeholders of development.

Maurizio Carbone





# The role of non-state actors in development policy:

## perceptions and changing practices

There are three ways to conceptualise power in society: the power of the government (the Prince), the power of the market (the Merchant), and the power of the people (the Citizen). This article reviews the role of civil society organisations (CSOs) in development policy, explaining why they became the favoured child of official development agencies, a magic bullet that could be fired in any direction and would still find its target; it also addresses some of the challenges they must face in the next decade if they are to survive.

**Maurizio Carbone**

In the past twenty years, the field of development has been dominated by the so-called New Policy Agenda. If the 1960s were the years of the “myth of the state” (the state could provide for all the needs of all citizens) by the end of the 1970s the “myth of the market” (the private sector could provide for all the consumption needs of all consumers) dominated development theory and practice. Finally, by the end of the 1980s, a new myth was found: “the myth of the market plus civil society”.

Despite the fact that civil society has come to play a major role in development policy, there is still a sort of terminological ambiguity. Some organisations may be called non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in one country, voluntary organisations (VOs) or non-profit organisations (NPOs) in other countries. The Cotonou Agreement refers to non-state actors and recognises their key role in the development process, which must be complementary to that of the state.

Farmers in Guyana. The debate on good governance called for more pluralism and for giving a voice to the people in national development planning.



IFAD/Horst Wagner

Such ambiguity derives also from the fact that there is not such a thing as a typical CSO, but this term can be applied to many kinds of organisations, ranging from large Northern NGOs to local self-help organisations in the South. This article refers to self-governing (able to manage their own affairs), private initiatives (even though they may receive a substantial amount of resources from governments), involved in development issues on a non-profit basis (any financial surplus does not accrue to owners but is ploughed back into the organisation).

### An associational revolution

The number and profile of CSOs, both in the North and the South, has grown exponentially since the 1980s, when they were still marginalised actors in the development process. Several reasons have been provided for what has been called an “associational revolution”, comparable in importance with the rise of the nation state in the nineteenth century.

First, policymakers had overestimated the capacity of the state to initiate and deliver development. In post-war thinking, the state was considered to be both the engine and guide for economic growth; under the rubric of structural adjustments donors looked for alternatives to the old principle “government-to-government aid”. Markets and private initiatives were thus seen as the most efficient mechanisms for achieving economic growth and providing most services to most people. The growing recognition given to civil society by international donors was meant as an essential counterweight to some of these market-oriented strategies: donors decided to support civil society because it was able to provide services to those who could not be reached through the market.

Second, as in the changing context of development cooperation new issues such as environment, gender, and social development were included, CSOs began to gain increased access to policymakers and demanded that their ideas would finally be taken seriously. Moreover, the debate on good governance initiated (some would say imposed) by the World Bank called for more pluralism and for giving a voice to the people in national development planning. Finally, a series of international conferences, held in the 1990s, contributed to giving CSOs more visibility and space for action.

Third, by meaning different things to different people, CSOs became an appealing concept to all the spectrum of politics. For liberals, they could balance state and business interests, preventing abuses from both sides; for neo-liberals, they were part of the private sector, advancing the cause for a sort of privatisation of aid; for the left, they were a promise of the dream of “new politics”, capable of offering the chance of social transformation.

### Service delivery and policy advocacy

CSOs play mainly two roles in development policy:

1. implementers, and thus they are involved in the delivery of goods and services, which may also entail being contracted by a government;



2. catalysts, defined as the ability to inspire, facilitate or contribute towards development change. This is not an either/or solution, but over the past few years, many CSOs have moved from a “supply-side” approach, which concentrated only on development projects, to also a “demand-side” approach, which seeks to help communities to articulate their preferences and concerns in order to become more active participants in the development process. The Cotonou Agreement acknowledges this change and for the first time in the history of the relationship between the EU and the ACP, CSOs are to be involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation stages of the cooperation programmes while, at the same time, they have greater access to funds and capacity-building support.

Four arguments have been advanced to show the comparative advantage of CSOs in development:

- Social argument: working at the micro-level, they are able to reach the most disadvantaged people, who are often by-passed by the larger projects of multilateral donors;
- Economic argument: being comparatively small in size, less bureaucratic, cheaper, and more cost-effective, they are very efficient at providing services because of both low labour cost and incomplete pricing (i.e. reliance on voluntary local inputs; lack of transaction costs);
- Political argument: they are immune from changing political tides, as they do not have hidden agendas nor are guided by political considerations; they can also reach countries that are deemed hostile for a donor and from which official aid is withheld;
- Cultural argument: they are particularly sensitive to the needs of the poor as they are embedded more in the local culture, with many people working permanently on the ground; furthermore, due to their relationship with local communities, they can foster participatory approaches to development.

## Threats and challenges

These assumptions about the comparative advantages of CSOs have been increasingly challenged. Indeed, at the beginning of the new millennium, CSOs experienced excitement tempered by anxiety. The excitement comes from the expanding opportunities for civic action that global trends are creating; CSOs can thus act as a sort of countervailing force to the expanding of markets and the declining authority of the state.

Anxiety comes from the questions they are asked to answer about performance, accountability, and legitimacy. It is clear that some “compassion fatigue” has emerged among donors.



Women running a credit union in Lomé, Togo. Donors decided to support civil society because it was able to provide services to those who could not be reached through the market.

This, though, does not mean that the total amount of money disbursed through CSOs has decreased, but donors are now more demanding. If in the past the question of effectiveness of CSOs was taken for granted, now it can no longer be assumed. Governments and international donors also wonder why they should fund or listen to CSOs. In other words, are these self-appointed organisations legitimate representatives of the poor?

This question is linked to the issue of accountability. If, legally, CSOs must be accountable to patrons, be they trustees, donors, or governments (upward accountability), morally they are accountable to their beneficiaries and the community they work with (downward accountability). Because of the threat of withdrawal of funding, CSOs now tend more and more to focus on accountability towards donors rather than towards beneficiaries. As they get closer to donors, CSOs become more bureaucratic, using donor techniques for programming, implementing, monitoring and accounting, recruiting English-speaking people to satisfy the needs of donors, and ultimately even changing the culture of the CSO itself. This process is gradual, but potentially catastrophic.

If they are to survive, CSOs should concentrate more on “innovation”, which is still assumed to be an area of comparative advantage vis-à-vis the state. Indeed, in the past they have proved to be innovative in many sectors (e.g. microcredit, agriculture, participatory planning), but they still have a unique experience in development that could probably easily feed into new models of good practice and innovation, as well as policy making. The current climate calls upon them to play this new role if they want to find new relevance in the development field. But to do so they must work together, in partnerships among themselves, with research groups, and with donors. Only if they succeed will they continue to have an impact on both their international operations and the wider policy-making area. ■

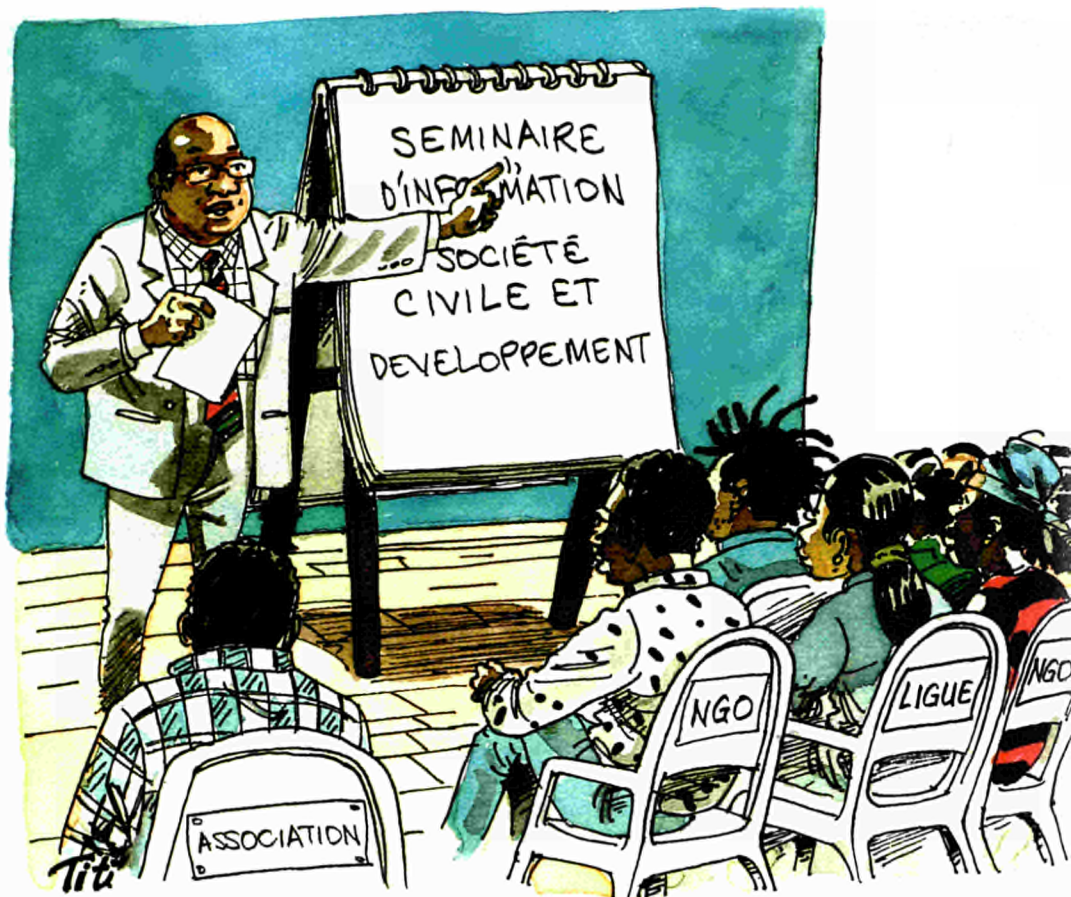


# A pioneer role

## for both the ACP and the EU

One of the most dynamic innovations of the ACP-EC Cotonou Partnership Agreement is the more visible and vibrant role envisaged for non-state actors. Article 6 of the Agreement defines non-state actors (NSAs) under three main categories: private sector, economic and social groups, "and civil society in all its forms according to national characteristics". The recognition by the ACP and the EU sides of non-state actors will ultimately depend on the degree to which they address the needs of the population, their specific competences and levels of organisation, and the extent to which they are managed in a transparent and efficient manner.

Dr Pa'o Luteru\*



Improved communication about and understanding of the provisions of the Cotonou Agreement will contribute to enhanced consultation processes and the ultimate objective of empowering non-state actors.

The promotion of NSA involvement in development cooperation is a dynamic issue which requires a dynamic response. At this juncture, the ACP Group is faced with numerous challenges, and is responding in a proactive manner to the many exciting prospects for the advancement of non-state actors.

### User's Guide for ACP non-state actors

Improved communication about and understanding of the provisions of the Cotonou Agreement will contribute to enhanced consultation processes and the ultimate objective of empowering NSAs.

In this regard, work is currently being undertaken to prepare a User's Guide for non-state actors. The Guide will serve as an information source for NSAs to facilitate their full involvement in the relevant provisions of the Cotonou Agreement. This exercise will have the added value of providing practical examples of NSA involvement in sectoral policy making, their participation in the programming exercise, good practices in the implementation of national and regional indicative programme priorities and their participation in the monitoring and evaluation of EDF projects.

### Eligibility criteria for NSAs' access to EDF resources

A notable achievement for both the ACP Group and the EU was the successful formulation of eligibility criteria for NSAs' access to EDF resources. The eligibility criteria document was adopted at the 28th Session of the ACP-EC Council of Ministers in May 2003, and is an important milestone.

The criteria will operate as a general guide for the identification of NSAs eligible for support under national and regional indicative programmes. A key feature is the stipulation that the operational modalities for NSAs' access to EDF resources are to be defined in accordance with national and regional characteristics. In terms of policy dialogue, the eligibility criteria endorse the principle that non-state actors should have clearly defined interests, be representative and should operate in a transparent and accountable manner within the broader framework of national and regional programmes. It is also accepted that access to funding will be limited to non-profit NSAs.

The criteria stipulate that Steering Committees will be created to take the final decision on eligibility in individual ACP countries and regions. The Committee is to comprise the National Authorising Officers/Regional Authorising Officers, the relevant ACP government authorities, a mandated non-state actor representative(s), and a representative of the EC Delegation.



In terms of resource allocation, discussions thus far within the ACP Group have reinforced the view that funds should be granted on the basis of NSAs' capability and capacity to deliver the relevant services effectively. This approach reinforces the provisions of the Cotonou Agreement, which stipulate that non-state actors are to play a complementary role in national and regional development.

The eligibility criteria is therefore a useful tool to facilitate the full participation of NSAs in the implementation process, and provides a solid foundation for further refinement in accordance with defined ACP national and regional priorities.

### ACP Civil Society Task Force

The Belgian Presidency of the EU and the ACP Secretariat jointly organised the first ACP-EC Civil Society Forum in Brussels from 6 to 7 July 2001. The forum focused on NSA participation in the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement. The proceedings concluded with a Declaration and a Plan of Action, which outlined the general objectives and the specific modalities to strengthen, inter alia, NSA structures, capacity-building, advocacy at the ACP national, sub-regional and global levels. As a follow-up activity, the ACP Secretariat is now engaged in discussions on agreeing with all stakeholders on a process that would ensure the effective follow-up of decisions arising from that first ACP-EC Civil Society Forum.

The ACP states remain committed to promoting the increased participation and involvement of NSAs in all issues relating to ACP-EC cooperation.

### A sign of the times – ACP NAOs and RAOs plan for more inclusive NSA consultation processes

A true indicator of the new and more visible role envisaged for non-state actors became evident in the discussions during the last two meetings of the principal ACP managers of EDF allocations – the National and Regional Authorising Officers (NAOs and RAOs).

The increased level of non-state actor participation was discussed at the 6th and 7th Meetings of the ACP National and Regional Authorising Officers, held in December 2001 and May 2003 respectively. On both occasions, the discussions acknowledged the importance of a well organised, accountable and transparent civil society, in the development cooperation process.

Following these detailed discussions, there was consensus on the need to establish effective coordination and consultation mechanisms for non-state actor involvement, as a high priority. The NAOs and RAOs discussions endorsed the principle of decentralisation at national and regional level, and further highlighted the urgent need to establish a national and regional policy framework, with related consultation mechanisms.

These conclusions confirm the commitment of ACP states to involve NSAs in the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement.

### Effective participation and involvement of NSAs in EPA negotiations

ACP discussions so far on the participation of non-state actors in the negotiations on Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) have led to the establishment of general principles and elements

to constitute a strategy for their effective involvement. The Group is of the view that existing mechanisms for NSA participation at national and regional levels in the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement are to be respected and further empowered for EPA negotiations.

This is seen as part of the wider goal to maximize the potential advantages of a coherent, united and inclusive approach to the negotiations involving all ACP actors. The Group recognises that a consultative approach will not only enrich the process, but will strengthen the commitment of all parties to the outcomes.

It is clear that whilst NSAs are organised in some ACP countries, this is not the case in others. To this end, the ACP Group supports the development of appropriate national and regional structures for NSA participation in the EPA negotiations, and the development of ACP capacity, as priority issues.

### Gender Focus

The Cotonou Agreement provides the framework to address the needs of one of the most vulnerable groups – women. The Agreement's gender sensitive approach is timely, relevant and therefore commendable, as it provides the required general framework, as well as a stable foundation to promote and consolidate the development of civil society organisations that specifically deal with issues relating to women.

The Cotonou Agreement states that development cooperation will support ACP states' efforts to develop general and sectoral policies and reforms that improve coverage, quality and access to basic infrastructures and services. In particular, account will be taken of local needs and the specific demands of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, thus reducing the inequalities of access to these services.

The Agreement's general objective of poverty eradication also makes provision for systematic account to be taken of the situation of women and gender issues in the political, economic and social spheres.

As such, the ACP Group will continue to invest its efforts in improving women's access to the required resources, recognising that this will enable them to fully exercise their fundamental rights.

### Determined to take up the challenge

The key challenge for all parties concerned is to ensure that NSAs are provided with the means and support to enable them to participate fully and effectively in ACP-EC cooperation.

The immediate tasks ahead are many and challenging. The ACP and the EU are committed to deliver in this vital area by advancing the justified cause of the NSAs. The mid-term review promises to be the next visible platform, where the challenges of a more inclusive approach to development cooperation are to be tackled in a forthright manner.

The ACP Secretariat remains resolute to continue to provide support to the ACP Group in its efforts to facilitate the full involvement of non-state-actors in the Cotonou Agreement's consultative mechanisms and implementation procedures. ■

\* Assistant Secretary General, General Secretariat of the ACP Group.



# Involving non-state actors in the programming process:

## a preliminary assessment

The Cotonou Agreement makes the participatory approach at all levels of cooperation a binding obligation for both the EU and the ACP States. This article looks at progress made in implementing the provisions regarding the involvement of non-state actors in the first stage of the programming exercise undertaken for the 9th European Development Fund.

**Françoise Moreau\***

The decision to make poverty reduction the central objective of the Cotonou Agreement, the democratisation process occurring in developing countries and the emergence of better organised non-state actors made it essential to ensure the widest possible participation of all sectors of society in the definition and formulation of development cooperation policies and priorities. The Cotonou Agreement, recognising the complementary role of state and non-state actors (NSAs) in the development process, contains innovative provisions to promote participatory approaches: non-state actors are now involved in the process leading to the definition of the development and cooperation strategies, according to each country's individual circumstances. This approach contributes to enhancing ownership of development strategies by the beneficiaries, consolidating accountable, sound and democratic institutions, exercising citizenship, and facilitating public-private partnerships. In the spirit of the Cotonou Agreement, participation starts at the level of the dialogue on national development strategies, sectoral policies and programming.

### The new programming process

The programming process, which is now being applied not only to the ACP states but also to all countries and regions benefiting from EC aid, is based on the Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) designed at country level. The purpose of the CSPs is to provide a framework for EU assistance programmes based on the partner country's own policy agenda, EU objectives, an analysis of the country's situation, and the activities of other major partners. The CSP points to where Community assistance will be directed and how it integrates with what other donors are doing. CSPs thus contribute to better planning of cooperation activities, improved donor coordination/complementarity, and greater overall coherence of external assistance policy with other EU policies. A flexible and regular review mechanism aims at making it possible to continuously update the CSP, the volume of resources and the indicative programme according to needs and performance.

In order to assess progress made in implementing the provisions of the Cotonou Agreement, the Commission services have produced a preliminary quantitative and qualitative assessment of the involvement of NSAs in the EC-ACP programming process undertaken for the period 2002-2006. Sixty-three Country Strategy Papers (about 80 per cent of the total) have so far been examined; thus the findings of this exercise should be considered provisional.

### A quantitative assessment

It appears that a consultation process was conducted in 59 out of the 63 CSPs analysed. In the majority of cases (50 out of 63), the CSPs describe the broad categories of actors which have been identified for the consultation. Traditionally, NGOs have usually been represented more than other NSAs. In 32 countries, social and economic partners were however also specifically mentioned.

To avoid duplication and strengthen coordination, most consultations have built upon existing national consultation mechanisms set up with the donor community (e.g. PRSPs). In some other countries, the EU took the initiative to launch studies or mapping exercises to get a better picture of NSAs, their structures, activities and potential contribution to ACP-EU cooperation (e.g. Namibia, Cameroon, Guinea Bissau). In other countries, the programming process has led to the creation of new functional bodies involving state and non-state actors (e.g. Chad).

In general terms, consultation during the first phase of the programming process has been satisfactory, but should be further improved in view of the review process. Following the consultation process, the draft CSP was modified in 36 cases. As for the remaining 23 countries, the following explanations were offered: in some countries consultation started at a too advanced stage of the CSP, making it difficult to reorient the process; in other cases coincidence of governments and NSAs views was identified; finally, in a limited number of cases the lack of capacity of NSAs to put forward concrete and coherent proposals was noted.

The analysis also shows that different types of strategies have been followed for planning the involvement of NSAs in the implementation of cooperation programmes. This variety probably reflects diverging political and institutional conditions at country level, including capacity constraints in EU Delegations. Three strategies can be identified for involving NSAs. First, in a number of countries the response strategy is geared at enhancing NSA participation in all sectors of EC cooperation and by different means (mainstreaming). Second, NSA involvement is mainly foreseen in the focal sectors. Third, support to NSAs in non-focal sectors is provided, either as a means for targeting poor population groups or as a contribution to good governance and conflict prevention.

As for the three possible sources of funding foreseen by the Cotonou Agreement (access to EDF funding, participation in the implementation of focal or non-focal sector programmes, EU thematic budget lines), in a majority of cases a provision for EDF funding is proposed.

### A qualitative assessment

As for the quality of the consultation process, the Commission services have identified three areas to assess the NSA involvement and identify constraints and best practices to overcome them:



A good example of participation of non-state actors during the preparation of the Country Strategy Papers is Cameroon. Involvement of NGOs in projects, especially in the area of urban social development, has also been very successful.



- 1) Information provided to NSAs. Information is a key to the consultation process. An effective dialogue is based on well-informed parties with the capacity to put forward ideas and proposals in a constructive way. However, in a number of cases, it was recognised that information was given out late, with the result that some organisations were not able to attend.
- 2) Criteria for the selection of participants in the consultation process. In some cases, the selection of participants was jointly made by the National Authorising Officer (NAO) and the EU Delegation who invited NSAs who either had an existing working relationship with the EU Delegation and the NAO or a strong reputation in the country; in other cases, studies were put in place; finally, in one case, a local NGO, appointed by the Delegation to organise the consultation process, proposed the list of participants.
- 3) Follow-up to the consultation process. Once the process was conducted, informing NSAs about the results of the consultation process was not an easy task: lack of communication and information-sharing mechanisms between NSAs is a major bottleneck for information distribution. E-mail facilities, websites of key NGOs or the media were used in a number of cases to disseminate information. Hard copies with relevant information were distributed. The strengthening of NSA platforms or NSA informal networks would facilitate and improve communication and information sharing.

In general terms, the qualitative outcomes of the consultation process are encouraging. NSAs have certainly shown that they have useful inputs to bring to the consultations.

However, NSAs are not always able to capitalise on the opportunities that exist to participate in the development process. They may have a fragile organisational structure, be inexperienced, or they may be operating in a difficult political environment. Their level of analysis and information can be weak, which results in a tendency to select larger NSAs based in the capital of the country, which are better informed and are well placed to have a more elaborated point of view. Further work needs to be done to ensure that NSAs bring forward the voice of the grassroots, and that those in urban areas can liaise with local communities in the rural areas.

Strengthening southern non-state actors is a long process. Past experience shows that the focus should be on internal structure and organisation, constituency building (broadening networks), the development of analytical and advocacy skills and sustainable fundraising mechanisms. Any NSA capacity-building programme must be discussed with NSAs themselves, with other donors and with the relevant authorities, in order to create local capacity-building strategies that are coherent and adapted to the country. Capacity-building support for NSAs will also assist in the identification of relevant partners in the consultation process and the implementation of development policies. Further progress may be expected as a result of lessons learned and the integration of best practices. The challenge is to progressively promote structured forms of dialogue. The rolling nature of the programming exercise could facilitate such a process. ■

\* Head of Unit "Development Policy, Coherence and Forward Studies", DG Development, European Commission.



# Making Cotonou work for people

The explicit recognition of the role of civil society organisations and other non-state actors in the Cotonou Agreement was an important step forward for development. It legitimised what was theoretically understood – that if the objective of development cooperation is to bring sustainable benefits to people, with an emphasis on those living in poverty, this can only be achieved when those people are themselves involved in the process.

Simon Stocker\*

Historically, development assistance is littered with examples of programmes that have failed, pursued no doubt with the best of intentions, but which were designed by experts and which had little participation of the “target” population. Not surprisingly, little ownership was felt and the ability to sustain such schemes was undermined.

The concept of partnership is enshrined in the very title of the Cotonou Agreement, and has enormous implications for the way in which the EU’s cooperation with the ACP countries should be conducted. The concepts of partnership and participation are clearly set out in the fundamental principles of the Agreement, including a commitment to the “equality of the partners and ownership of the development strategies”. As the Agreement recognises, this can only be achieved when the development strategies of a country are firmly rooted, and owned by the people of that country. Democratically elected national parliaments must play a central role, but the dynamic and diversity of civil society organisations, representing the specific interests of their clearly defined constituencies, play an important complementary role.

## Consultation or participation?

So, where have we reached three years after the signing of the Agreement? One of the first tests for the involvement of non-state actors was the process to establish Country Strategy Papers for the EU’s cooperation with each country. These are surely central to the concept of ownership. Different assessments have been made about the level of civil society participation in this process – both by the official parties to the Agreement and by civil society organisations themselves. At Eurostep we encouraged civil society actors in a number of ACP countries<sup>1</sup> to make their own assessment of civil society participation in their national process. The conclusions were clear: while the basis for engaging civil society is being built, it is partial, and there is a long way to go. In too many instances participation is equated with consultation – which is not the same. These consultations were inadequately prepared, had little consistency, and participation often seemed to be based on an arbitrary selection of civil society representation.<sup>2</sup>

The process of engaging non-state actors needs to be open and transparent, predictable and inclusive. Participation can only be effective where there is adequate information provided on a continuous basis, and where there is a regular process that enables planned involvement by all stakeholders. It should be viewed as a means to strengthen visions and plans, which involves ongoing dialogue.

While it is always easiest to centralise these processes, there have to be the means to involve the interests of society and stakeholders from all parts of the country. Since the principal objective of the partnership is the reduction and eventual eradication of poverty, then representatives from these groups – and those sections of society that are most excluded and marginal – need to be involved. They must be central stakeholders in a nation’s development strategies.

## A learning period

This will not necessarily be easy, and given the diverse nature of civil society it is inevitable that from time to time tensions will arise between different interest groups, and between civil society organisations and the official parties to the Partnership. Ultimately this can help ACP governments in their negotiations with the EU, through strengthening development strategies and assuring real ownership.

A dialogue has been initiated with the Joint ACP-EU Council of Ministers, involving civil society participation both from the ACP and Europe. The dialogue may be limited in its scope – an hour-long session once a year with more than 110 people sitting round the table – but it provides a unique opportunity to project clear messages to both the EU and ACP members of the Council. The twice yearly meetings of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly also provide opportunities for ACP and European civil society to engage with Parliamentarians from both sides of the Agreement on issues relating to the implementation of the cooperation. While these opportunities for dialogue at the global level of the Agreement are important, they cannot substitute for vibrant participation regionally, nationally and locally. It is important to link the different

levels and to develop a partnership of equals between civil society from Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific with that in Europe.

## Role for European civil society

For European civil society organisations, a primary role lies in Europe; promoting a fairer world, encouraging Europe’s citizens to recognise that we ultimately have a common destiny with people all over the world. We have a role in holding our governments and elected representatives accountable, not only to the promises on which they have been elected, but also to the commitments that they have made as part of the international community. We also strive to hold corporations that operate from our countries accountable for their social, ecological and ethical responsibilities – wherever they operate, especially in developing countries.

As European development NGOs, we work with civil society organisation in other parts of the world towards achieving goals that we can agree in common. Within the framework of ACP-EU cooperation, this means building societies where people can live in peace and security, have effective control of their own lives, enjoy their basic rights and a sustainable livelihood with respectful use of the earth’s resources.

In Brussels, Eurostep convenes the Cotonou Monitoring Group (CMG) which brings together a number of European NGOs. Primarily composed of Brussels-based NGO networks, the CMG aims to strengthen collaboration between European NGOs specifically relating to EU-ACP cooperation. This covers many issues, including the trade negotiations on establishing Economic Partnership Agreements<sup>3</sup>, and different sectoral policies.

An important counterpart is the ACP Civil Society Forum, which provides a framework for ACP civil society engagement

with Cotonou’s institutions. Over the next few months, as CONCORD – the newly established confederation of European development and humanitarian NGOs – establishes itself, a Working Group on ACP-EU cooperation will be set up where the CMG will provide the core. The aim of this Working Group will be to encourage awareness among European NGOs, particularly those from the ten accession countries joining the EU next year, of the specific provisions set out in the Cotonou Agreement.

## Ensuring a flow of information

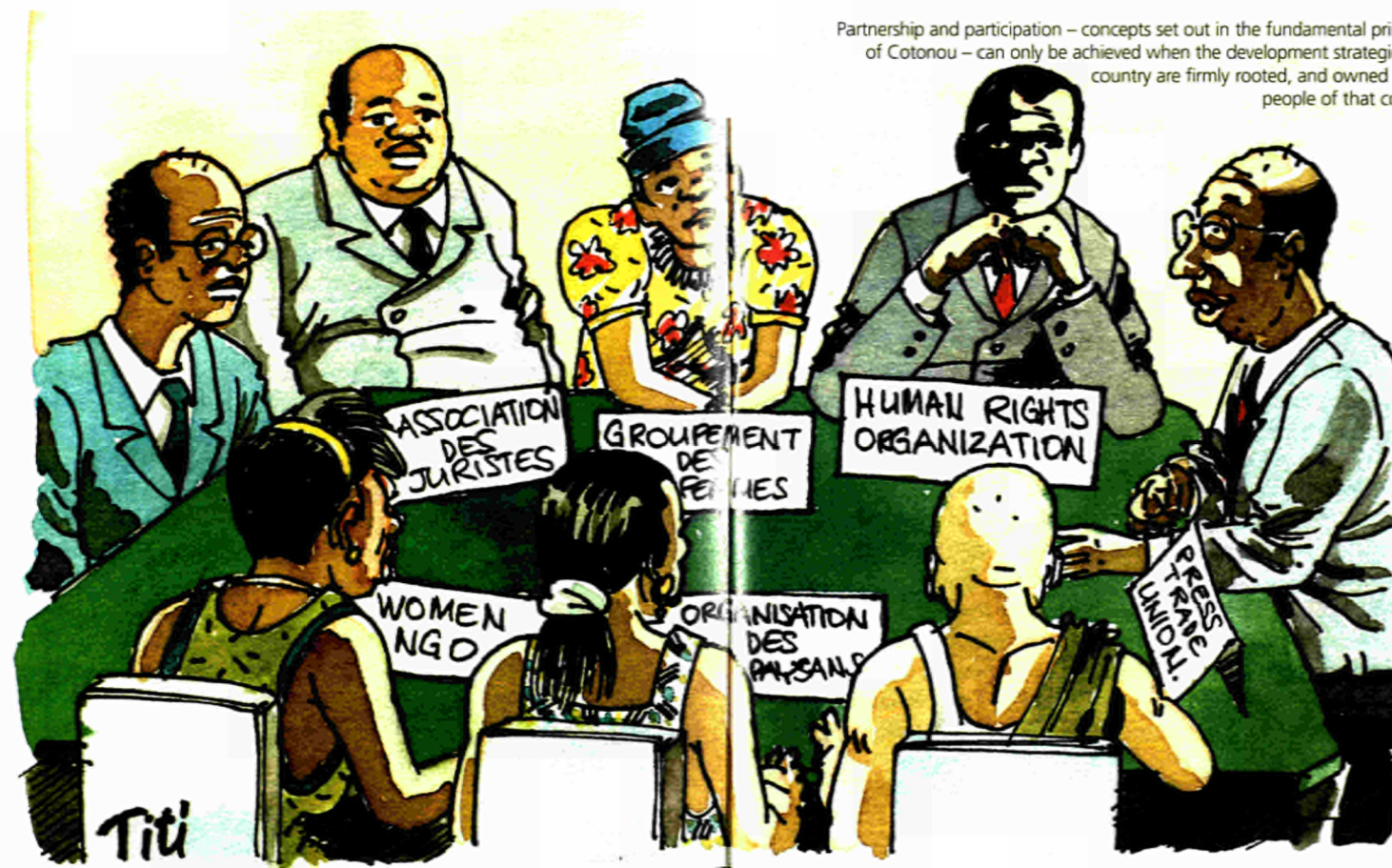
Ensuring that there is accessible information on ACP-EU cooperation is an important part of the partnership between European and ACP civil society. For this reason the European NGO networks, including Eurostep, helped found Euforic<sup>4</sup>, an internet-based portal for information on EU development cooperation policy. Euforic not only provides a gateway to information and analysis on EU development cooperation with the ACP and other developing regions, but also promotes discussion on key issues. A strategic aim is to encourage information and analysis from civil society in developing countries, as this is often lacking in Europe. Another key aim is to make relevant information on EU cooperation more accessible to civil society organisations in ACP and other developing countries.

## Mid-term reviews – next test

The next major test of the progressive involvement of civil society representatives in ACP-EU cooperation will be the mid-term reviews of the country strategy papers. Preparations are already being made, and we understand they will take place next year. We expect civil society and other non-state actors to be involved in this process in a way that reflects the “standards” of participation – about which there seems to be some increasingly common understanding. We expect the plans, timetables and criteria on which the mid-term reviews are to be conducted to be openly available well in advance of the process.

In conclusion, a full and effective involvement of civil society representatives in EU-ACP cooperation is a critical and necessary precondition to making a country’s ownership of its own development strategies more than mere rhetoric. This is in the interests of all of us and will be one more step in moving the EU-ACP partnership towards being one of equals. Clearly, the EU as the stronger partner will always be in a position of strength. That is why the EU has a responsibility to recognise that the way it acts, and the policies it pursues, have profound implications, not only for the people of Europe, but for the global community. Therefore, it should be recognised that the current debates about the future role of Europe in the world should be of great interest – and concern – for the governments and peoples of ACP countries. It is a discussion in which the views of people from all parts of the world should be heard. If, as the EU emphasises, its cooperation with the ACP and other developing countries is based on the principle of partnership, then the ACP must be involved in these critical debates about the future role of Europe in the world. ■

\* Director, Eurostep (European Solidarity Towards Equal Participation of People) is a network of European development NGOs. It advocates changes in Europe’s development policies and practice based on the perspectives drawn from direct experiences of and active involvement of its members and their partners in development in over 100 countries across the world.  
1. Benin, Cameroon, The Dominican Republic, Tanzania and Uganda.  
2. The five reports can be found at: <http://www.eurostep.org/pubs/position/acp/cotonou/index.html>  
3. On the trade negotiations there is a civil society website dedicated to providing information at <http://www.cpa-watch.net>  
4. Euforic can be found at <http://www.euforic.org>.



Partnership and participation – concepts set out in the fundamental principles of Cotonou – can only be achieved when the development strategies of a country are firmly rooted, and owned by the people of that country.



# "Participatory development

## in the Cotonou Agreement refers to both Northern and Southern NGOs"

Interview with Frans Polman, President of CONCORD, the European confederation of development and relief NGOs

Founded on 30 January this year, CONCORD represents about 1,200 development and relief NGOs in Europe. Its membership is set to increase with the enlargement of the EU next year: national platforms of three accession countries (Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Malta) are already members of CONCORD, while the other seven are expected to join in the near future. Its president, Dutchman Frans Polman, has a long experience on the ground. He spoke to *the Courier* about the challenges and opportunities for European NGOs in the Cotonou Agreement, and more generally about the role of Northern NGOs in current development policy practices.

Maurizio Carbone/Dorothy Morrissey

*Concord was founded in January 2003. What are its aims? What have been its main achievements in those six months?*

Concord has five founding principles: to ensure that EU member states meet their commitment to spend 0.7 per cent of their GNP on development aid; to reformulate the role of Northern civil society towards their Southern partners; to renew the partnership with the European institutions; to elaborate mechanisms to improve the legitimacy, representation and quality of NGO's work; and to assure the continuation of European responsibility towards the South in the process of enlargement and reform. But it is very important to note that CONCORD is an organisation of the members, and the members should be involved in their political agenda, in their working groups and activities. The added value is that we have two groups: the national platforms, which have a national basis, and the networks, which have more experience in special sectors. CONCORD as a confederation is only six months old, but our members have on average 30 or 40 years experience. We share information, experiences, and capacities, and will use them to influence EU policy on development. The relationship with the institutions of the EU, with the Commission and especially DG Development, Europeaid and the Development Commissioner, has increased in a very short time. So we have started a serious, open, transparent dialogue on different matters, the rationalisation of the budget lines, the future of the co-financing programme, the Convention etc.

*The Cotonou Agreement introduced the concept of participatory development, but it seems that the reference is mainly to Southern NGOs.*

*What was the reaction of European NGOs to that article?*

In the discussions we had with the ACP and EU there has never been an indication that Article 6 of the Cotonou Agreement refers only to Southern NGOs. There are different roles in participatory development. Dialogue at the national ACP level largely involves ACP civil society but not exclusively, as European NGO offices in ACP countries have also been involved in such dialogue. Dialogue on ACP-EU cooperation is carried out also at a broader level such as in the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly and in the ACP-EU Joint Council of Ministers. In these fora EU civil society is just as involved as ACP civil society. There are also mechanisms in Brussels that bring both ACP and EU civil society together with ACP and EU state actors to discuss global ACP-EU cooperation. Our institutional interest as Northern NGOs is not to stay alive, but to help ACP civil society. We must never forget that behind the Southern NGOs there are people, and that we are working for them.

*One of the main innovations of the Cotonou Agreement concerns the consultation of non-state actors in drawing up the country's development strategy. The first evaluations of this involvement have given mixed results. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this model?*

No model is perfect and implementation takes time. We are aware that when this process started, all EU delegations on the ground were not equipped to implement it in full detail. Some factors interfered, such as the country's political situation, the state of organisation of civil society, the size of the delegation. Identifying and launching consultation processes with civil actors takes time. This explains why the evaluation of the process by a number of civil society actors (including joint ACP-EU collaborations) had mixed results. However, the principle of consultation is good. Now, we hope that in countries where the Country Strategy Paper is still due, during the mid-term review and the next Country Strategy Papers the consultation process will be fully applied.

*Some say that Northern NGOs should move away from direct intervention at the operational level, or at least concentrate on a very small number of projects. Are they really ready to scale down?*

I do not think there will be much scaling down in a general sense. The very nature of development cooperation is "adaptation". When a population is on a trend of self-sustainable development, our job is done and we move out to focus on another area. This refocus may not necessarily result in scaling down, as



other areas to focus on require capacity as well. In some cases, scaling down might not be the right answer to the situation. When a humanitarian crisis strikes or in countries where civil society is weak, efforts of all specialised actors are needed. However, most Northern NGOs are aware of their responsibility, which in principle is temporary, until Southern NGOs take over. But this is not easy and will take time. This also means that the relationship between Northern NGOs and their Southern partners has to change. That's why, in our agenda, we have a review, a re-formulation of the relationship between North and South. Apart from this assistance and advisory role in capacity building, there is increasingly a need for European NGOs to focus on the European public in order to raise awareness. Lobbying Northern governments and international institutions on the impact of their decisions and providing them with relevant information is also an important role for Northern NGOs.

### *Another major innovation of Cotonou concerns direct funding to Southern NGOs. Is this a threat or an opportunity for Northern NGOs?*

There is a misconception that direct funding for Southern NGOs would create direct competition with Northern NGOs for the same funds. This is not true. The fund that will be opened up to Southern NGOs is the EDF, which Northern NGOs to a large extent never had direct access to anyway. Therefore, there will be little competition. The only potential friction is between Southern governments and Southern civil society. Actually, Southern NGOs' access to EDF funds could facilitate joint Northern-Southern civil society collaboration.

In fact, I am not so sure that Southern NGOs are able to cope with the eligibility criteria set by the Commission. This means that only big Southern NGOs will benefit from direct funding. Therefore, it is important for Northern NGOs to help civil society to get structured and to help smaller Southern NGOs build their capacities.

### *Public support for foreign aid in Europe is still high. EU member states have committed to increase their volume of aid. The European Convention has just released a draft Constitutional Treaty. How do you see the future of EU development policy from your point of view?*

The work of the European Convention is broadly satisfactory. Poverty eradication has been reaffirmed as the main priority of EU development policy; coherence between policies affecting developing countries has been reinforced. But we have some concerns about the link between development policy and the CFSP (Common Foreign and Security Policy) and the European Defence Policy. For CONCORD, development and humanitarian policies may not be used for military or security purposes.

Photo Bénédicte Maindoux



From left to right, former Belgian State Secretary for Development Cooperation Eddy Boutmans, CONCORD president, Frans Polman, who also works for the Dutch organisation Cordaid, and EU commissioner for development and humanitarian affairs Poul Nielson.

Furthermore, the abolishment of the Development Council and its integration into the General Affairs and External Relations Council is a negative sign. Aid to people in need is neither a tool nor a toy. Development issues are specific: they have purposes and objectives of their own that don't accommodate easily with other external policies. We are also worried about the disposal of DG Development or the possibility of having a "junior commissioner" in charge of development. The same considerations apply to the development committee of the European Parliament.

### *You have also been very vocal about including the principle of partnership in the scope of EU development policy.*

Injustice is the mother of tomorrow's insecurity and no army, no border can be resistant to deprived people. That's why we are reaffirming that, more than security policies, we need aid policies! Our hope is that the principles of the Cotonou Agreement will be plainly written into the coming Constitution and will apply to all developing countries. These principles are: partnership with Southern actors, ownership, empowerment and participation of civil society in their own development. The European Convention made clear during one of its plenary sessions that the EDF could be budgetised, which is a good thing. This was by consensus but it has not been written; however it will be proposed during the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC). But EDF money must be spent according to the principles of Cotonou that I just described. We hope that the new Commission and Parliament will put this reality high on their agenda and in the Constitution and that they will lobby their own governments. It's not only a political responsibility; it is a humankind responsibility. At our level, we will encourage them, and publicise their actions or non-actions in that respect. ■



# Civil society participation

## and the Cotonou process in West Africa

Cooperation between the European Union and countries in the South has in the past been the preserve of governments. The Cotonou Agreement provides a remedy for this lacuna by establishing participation as a "fundamental principle". However, the participation process has not been institutionalised, the form it should take being left up to governments and the various development actors. In this article, **Bibiane Mbaye Gahamanyi\*** looks at how this participatory process has developed in West Africa.

Within the context of post-Lomé negotiations and in an attempt to influence the process and the results of the negotiations, ACP civil society organisations<sup>1</sup> embarked upon a series of initiatives involving the setting-up of strategic alliances, capacity building and the establishment of lobbying platforms. With the Cotonou Agreement, the role of non-state actors is no longer limited to development project implementation, but it extends to the definition, implementation and evaluation of development programmes and strategies. It will also be associated with political dialogue. All parties face challenges because of the novelty of the phenomenon, and the resulting lack of experience and expertise, and, on occasion, the non-democratic nature of certain political regimes. Other difficulties arise from the institutional weakness of the ACP countries and the EU, faced as they are with the Cotonou Agreement's busy implementation schedule and the nature and diversity of non-state actors, and civil society in particular.

Civil society organisations realise that they need to take a proactive attitude if their participation is to be guaranteed. The strategy adopted includes, on the one hand, establishing and structuring frameworks for dialogue and, on the other hand, generating knowledge and promoting the acquisition of analytical tools and skills within civil society.

### The national level

The process of establishing a national platform and giving it a formal framework that represents all its components and is accepted by all sides is long and difficult, sometimes practically impossible. Civil society consists of a group of non-state actors representing a number of sectors with different, and possibly divergent, interests. Such diversity is a valuable asset, but sometimes generates the difficulty the various parties have in organising, in a sustainable fashion, a coherent framework for collaboration and dialogue, in choosing appropriate representatives and in adopting common positions. No one model fits all countries, and each one will identify and experiment with its own approach or its own path, depending on its social, economic and political context.

The local level is the basis of any participation process. Civil society national platforms are made up of a wide range of organisations (NGOs, trade unions, associations, youth organisations, women's organisations and other movements). Over the past four years these platforms have been set up in Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea Conakry, Niger, Senegal and Togo. The aim is to motivate all those involved to form a genuinely

## The ACP Civil Society Forum

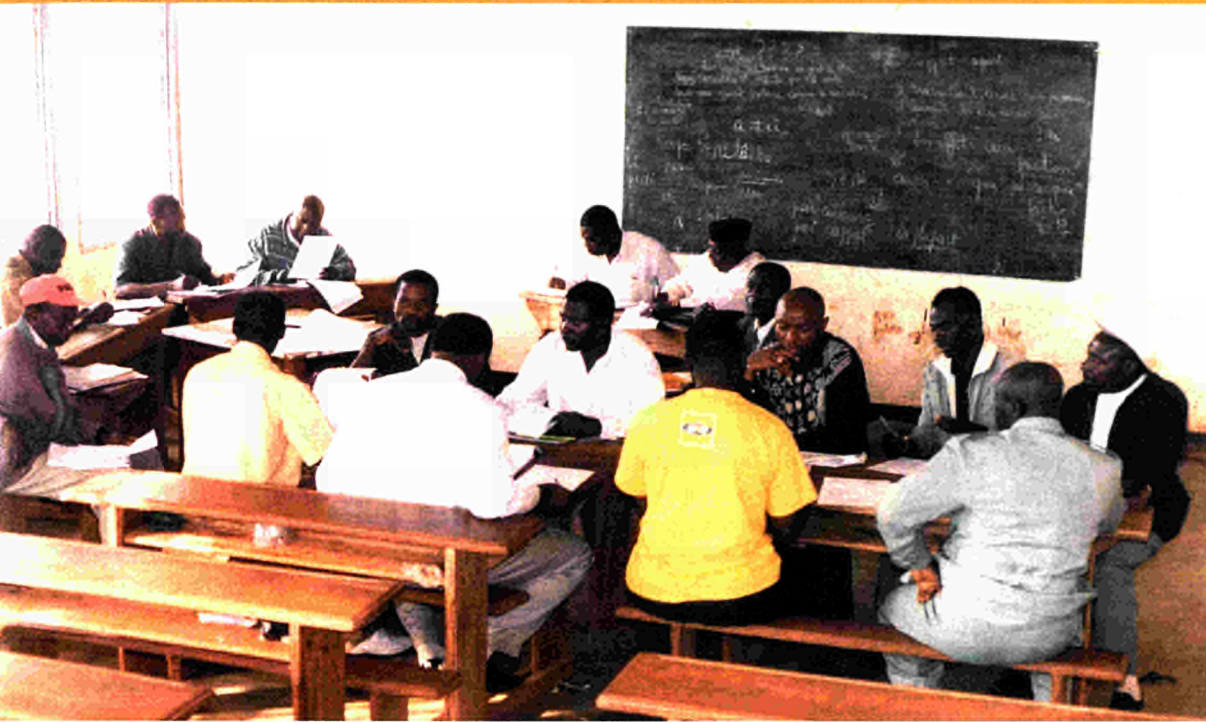
The ACP Civil Society Forum originates from a meeting of more than 30 civil society organisations held in Entebbe, Uganda in October 1997. Seven NGOs were selected as representatives of the three ACP regions: the Caribbean Policy Development Centre (CPDC) from Barbados for the Caribbean; the Pacific Concerns Resources Centre from Fiji for the Pacific; CONGAC from Cameroon for Central Africa, Econews Africa from Kenya for Eastern Africa, Enda TM from Senegal and Third World Network from Ghana for West Africa, Mwengo from Zimbabwe for Southern Africa.

The objectives of the Forum are to, inter alia: support and strengthen the participation of ACP civil society organisations in the ACP-EU development cooperation framework; provide a platform where ACP civil society organisations can not only share information, but also formulate common positions on issues relevant to ACP-EU cooperation; facilitate the dialogue between ACP civil society organisations and official ACP and EU institutions; promote the views and concerns of marginalised social groups in ACP countries.

During a meeting in Brussels in July 2001 involving about 120 ACP civil society actors, representatives of European NGOs, ACP states, the European Commission and the ACP secretariat, a declaration and plan of action were adopted. ACP civil society organisations stated clearly that their interest was not only "simply seeking funding", but that they wanted to participate effectively in the programming exercise. Those organisations that were the focal point of the Forum were mandated to continue facilitating the establishment of national platforms, building CSO capacities in their regions, and further structuring the Forum as the global platform to promote CSO participation in the Cotonou process in general.

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Civil society organisations in West Africa have taken into account the need to adopt a proactive attitude if their participation is to be guaranteed. This includes establishing national and regional frameworks for dialogue and, at the same time, generating knowledge and promoting the acquisition of the necessary analytical tools and skills to participate effectively in the programming phase.

representative national movement and to create a framework for consultation and dialogue between civil society organisations (CSOs) themselves, and between them and the authorities.

Each national platform has a focal point (which may be an association of organisations or a committee composed of several organisations) responsible for coordinating its activities. Three particular cases have emerged in the structuring process:

- In countries where there were no national platforms, the need to become organised in order to participate in the Cotonou Agreement has served as a launch pad for mobilising and organising CSOs into a federation. The platforms established in Guinea, Benin and Togo, for example, relate not only to the Cotonou Agreement, but also to all development-related frameworks, including the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Poverty Reduction Strategy Programmes and World Trade Organisation related issues.
- In countries where a platform already existed (e.g., Burkina Faso and Mali), either a committee or an organisation within that platform was set up or appointed as a focal point in order to monitor implementation of the Cotonou Agreement on behalf of the national platform.
- In some countries a thematic approach was promoted: in Ghana, for example, an agricultural workers' trade unions is in charge of coordinating CSO activities and promoting dialogue with the authorities covering all aspects of trade. In this case also, the framework goes beyond just the Cotonou Agreement.

Over the past four years national platforms have set up and implemented annual work programmes, conducted in partnership with experts from civil society, national governments or state organisations. There has been a series of national consultations on participation in implementing the Cotonou Agreement. National

seminars on the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) have taken place in Guinea Conakry and Niger, and most recently in Benin and Togo.

## The regional level

The West African platform of civil society organisations is formed by all the national focal points and national committees. The platform secretariat is the responsibility of ENDA T.M.

The principal activities of a regional platform are raising awareness of CSOs in the region, promoting CSO capacity building, planning annual national activities, political advocacy, dialogue with regional institutions, producing and disseminating information, and acting as liaison with social movements and other actors involved in political dialogue at sub-regional level. For example, these activities include:

- African (ministerial) consultation sessions on issues relating to the ACP-EU negotiations on renewal of the Lomé Convention. This informal fringe meeting within the official negotiation process took place in Paris in 1999. The result was a document that was submitted to the regional meeting of the African group as a prelude to the ACP-EU Council of Ministers.
- Evaluation of platform activities. Each year the platform meets to evaluate the work accomplished during the year and to deal with strategic planning and coordination.
- Participation in consultations regarding the Regional Indicative Programme.
- Participation in a preparatory regional seminar on the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) in February 2003 in Abuja, Nigeria. The seminar's aims were: to share the results of studies into the impact of the EPAs on sub-regional economies; to review the first phase of the negotiations; and to update the plan of action adopted by ministers in Cotonou.
- Participation in the preparatory ministerial meeting on the EPAs. Within the context of West African preparations for EPA negotiations with the EU, a meeting of experts from the Ministries of Trade and Finance was held in April in Accra, Ghana, followed by a West Africa-EU ministerial consultation meeting.

## Future prospects

ACP civil society is active and involved in implementing the Cotonou Agreement, but its level of participation is still minimal. Despite the efforts of CSOs and positive initiatives on the part of institutions and certain ACP and EU countries, CSO participation



in Cotonou is still merely symbolic. According to information gathered during national and regional seminars, in the majority of West African countries, participation in the National Indicative and Regional Indicative Programmes (NIPs and RIPs) has been unsatisfactory. Furthermore, participation in the first phase of the EPA negotiations is for the time being non-existent.

Yet there are encouraging signs: the various actors, authorities and civil society are aware of their low level of involvement in programming and preparing trade negotiations. Consultation between non-state actors and governments is under way to improve participation during the forthcoming stages, in particular by setting up thematic groups.

Regional integration is a high-profile political and economic choice in West Africa. Furthermore, the Cotonou Agreement – ratified by all West African governments – is a great encouragement for the negotiation of EPAs within regional groups. West Africa has already indicated that it would be willing to negotiate an EPA at the regional level through the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The negotiating mandate

has already been granted and a negotiating structure set up. West Africa has already passed through all the procedural stages leading to EPA negotiations.

The national platforms are stepping up their activities relating to capacity building and political dialogue in the run-up to the trade negotiations. A great deal of effort is still required on all sides to strengthen the various structuring processes in progress. However, given the timetable and the rapid pace of events, civil society's challenge now centres on the use that will be made of these, albeit imperfect, structures. A democratic debate on the EPAs needs to be encouraged and initiated; implementation of the NIPs and RIPs needs to be monitored; and participation in and monitoring of the trade negotiations needs to be guaranteed. Priority will now be given to the drafting and identification of national positions leading to region-wide positions and strategies. ■

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1. These are the following organisations: Carribean: Windward Islands Farmers' Association (WINFA); Pacific: Pacific Concerns Resource Centre Inc. (PCRC); Southern Africa: Mwelekeo wa NGO (MWENGO); Central Africa: Congac; East Africa: Econews; West Africa: ENDA T.M.

## A major shift for Pacific non-state actors

The Cotonou Agreement heralded a major shift in relations between Pacific non-state actors (NSAs) and their governments. This positive climate was never witnessed during the Lomé Convention, mostly due to the lack of information regarding ACP-EU agreements. Within the region, the opportunities available under the decentralised cooperation facility were virtually unknown to Pacific non-state actors.

Tupou Vere and Peter Emberson\*

Pacific civil society organisations (CSOs) had been advocating for years to have access and participate in dialogue processes with their own governments on matters relating to national development plans and strategies, budget formulation, development assistance programmes and public policies. With the inclusion of specific affirmative provisions for the participation of non-state actors in the Cotonou Agreement, Pacific CSOs are beginning to engage in ACP-EU dialogue processes that were earlier confined to government policy makers and officials. Pacific CSO representatives are now slowly being included in governmental delegations attending seminars conducted in the Pacific on the Cotonou Agreement and the Economic Partnership Agreements.

### Dialogue partners

The inclusion of Pacific CSOs in ACP-EU processes should also be attributed to their increasing knowledge of the Cotonou provisions and their own advocacy efforts in requesting relevant governmental officials to include them as dialogue partners. The increasing awareness amongst Pacific CSOs of the Cotonou Agreement was made possible through workshops organised between March 2001 and July 2002 by the Pacific Concerns Resource Centre (PCRC) in the 13 Pacific ACP countries.

The seminars and information sharing aimed at building the capacity of Pacific CSOs in implementing Cotonou in matters

relating to programming, the Economic Partnership Agreements and the essential and fundamental elements of respect for human rights, democracy, upholding of law and good governance. A list of CSOs and NSAs in each country was drawn up, national follow-up actions formulated and a national CSO identified that would act as the secretariat for CSOs' and/or NSAs' collective input into ACP-EU governmental processes.

In all the seminars, participants unanimously decided to establish national platforms that would regularly engage governments and the European Commission on matters such as the Country Support Strategy, the National Indicative Programmes, the Economic Partnership Agreements and political matters of human rights and so forth. At the regional intergovernmental level, PCRC and the Pacific Island Association of NGOs (PIANGO) are invited to participate in the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat Working Groups on Human Resource Development and Private Sector, Investment and Tourism for the 9th European Development Fund.

### Challenges ahead

Despite the promises of provisions for CSOs/NSAs engagement in ACP-EU dialogue processes, the challenges ahead include:

- Governmental institutions are still slow in creating policies and procedures that would institutionalise the participation of CSOs



and other NSAs. National CSOs/NSAs and regional CSO platforms' ability and chances of accessing resources either from the National or the Regional Indicative Programme are convoluted.

- CSOs are challenged with questions of legitimacy when they wish to dialogue further with governmental institutions or are not given much time to prepare their positions. In some countries, CSOs are not invited to make their inputs. On trade and economic matters (Economic Partnership Arrangements), the few Pacific CSOs that have a critical perspective on world trade compatible arrangements are not involved in national and regional meetings organised by governments.
- CSOs lack personnel and resources to effectively analyse proposed development assistance programmes, multilateral trading systems and arrangements; to conduct their own research and take their findings to the dialogue process; to acquire more knowledge of public sector planning and decision making processes and negotiation skills with relevant officials.

The empowerment process of informing Pacific peoples about the mechanisms within Cotonou, though gradual, is well and truly on its way with the ongoing seminars and training processes. The stage is now set for the provisions regarding CSOs/NSAs engagement to be "actioned out" through serious dialogue and practical implementation of the commitments made in the Agreement. But for this to work governments have to recognise the unique contribution every CSO has to make, that they represent a mosaic of views and the

interests of different groups in society: the norm – which is incorrect – is to group them all into a homogenous unit. As each CSO/NSA's views and experiences are different but equally important, it is essential that all parties be considered, because when ACP and EU governments are in dialogue over poverty eradication measures, a holistic representation from the grassroots level will be accounted for. ■

\* Respectively Assistant Director Sustainable Human Development and Assistant Director and Editor of the Pacific News Bulletin at the Pacific Concerns Resource Centre (PCRC), a Pacific NGO based in Suva, Fiji Islands.

1 These workshops were co-financed by the European Commission, ICCO in the Netherlands, Bread for the World in Germany, the Commonwealth Foundation in London and the French Catholic Committee Against Hunger and Development (CCFD).



George Goyver/DG Development, European Commission

For participation to work, governments have to recognise the unique contribution that every civil society organisation has to make, that they represent a mosaic of views and the interests of different groups in society.

## NGOs in the Caribbean: aspiring to a fuller role in public life

Elected leaders in the Caribbean, says **Cecilia Babb\***, are ambivalent about the role of ordinary people in public life. On the one hand they call for self-reliance and initiative from their constituents. At the same time they often resist the involvement of "non-state" organisations in decision-making processes. In this article she looks at how the aspirations of Caribbean people for a genuinely participatory role in the public affairs of their region are, or are not, being met.

In 1997, Caribbean political leaders adopted the CARICOM Charter of Civil Society – an agreement which sets out the role of all the social partners in the public affairs of the region and provides a framework for genuinely participatory democracy. Within this Charter each state commits to best practices in good governance and to fostering the appropriate environment for the exercise of responsible citizenship. The spirit of the Charter is consonant with Chapter 2 of the Cotonou Agreement, which recognises the complementary role of non-state actors in the development process.

### Reluctance to consult

NGOs are particularly eager to embrace the opportunities for partnering governments in the development of the region offered to them through the framework of the Charter of Civil Society and the provisions of Cotonou. Having agitated for recognition as social partners in development since 1991, NGOs are responsive to any gesture by their governments that might be construed as an invitation to work with them.

CARIFORUM<sup>1</sup> for its part has been inviting the social partners and non-state bodies to meetings on a yearly basis since 1996. However, these meetings remain at the level of information sharing and have not moved to the stage of consultation. Indeed, the manner in which invitations are extended and the conduct of the meetings themselves suggests that CARIFORUM does not view NGOs as more than observers. NGOs have never been able to put items on the agenda and their inputs at the meetings are persistently resisted. Invitations are usually late, and documentation often arrives later than the invitation, derailing the NGO principal of consulting with members so as to advance truly representative views and positions. This reflects, at worst, a lack of real commitment to partner NGOs in the development process, and, at best, a lack of understanding and skill in participatory processes.

As for the provisions of the Cotonou Agreement, the experiences of NGOs with the National Indicative Programmes have been even worse. The Technical Unit of CARIFORUM can be credited with regularly inviting civil society to meetings. But the National





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NGOs could, if they had access to funds, carry out a large number of social development programmes in which they have a comparative advantage. In Jamaica, for example, communities are being empowered to control and manage their water resources.

Authorising Officers (NAOs) in most CARICOM countries are invisible. The elaboration of the Country Strategy Papers is shrouded in secrecy instead of being the open, consultative and participatory process envisaged in the Cotonou Agreement.

### Failure to tackle the problems

While Caribbean NGOs take their governments and public officers to task, they also question the commitment of the European Commission to the principles of partnership enshrined in ACP-EU cooperation agreements. The former “decentralised cooperation” was not a success. Organisations that received decentralised cooperation project funds were almost crippled under the weight of administering these projects. Nor have the provisions for non-state actors under the Cotonou Agreement brought any better results so far. The problem of unused resources under the previous Lomé Convention was well recognised, but there has been little apparent effort to rectify the difficulties of access from the EU end.

By comparison, European NGOs have an integral role in the Cotonou Agreement and easy access to technical capacity building and financial resources. As a result, they are convening meetings and doing research in the Caribbean that could have been done by non-state bodies from the region if they had access to the resources. European NGOs are taking on roles in relation to Caribbean civil society that ought properly to be led by Caribbean governments with whom local NGOs are eager to work. Even the co-financing facility, the best feature of the cooperation agreement for Caribbean NGOs, is a relationship yielding benefits in a ratio of 60/40 in favour of European NGOs.

### Benefits to both sides

Unused resources from the 7th and 8th EDFs and the resources of the 9th EDF allocated to non-state actors under Cotonou can be used to fulfil all the governments’ commitments to the part-

ners at no real cost to the CARICOM states, bearing in mind that the private sector already has its own direct line of access to resources. NGOs would be able to carry out a large number of social development programmes that the departments of government are hard pressed to undertake and in which NGOs have a comparative advantage.

It is instructive that Cuba, which was seeking accession to Cotonou and which does not boast the high ideals of democratic governance, has since 1997 consistently facilitated

access to co-financing specifically for the work of NGOs. Jamaica, St Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago, are beginning to show an appreciation of what is at stake. In Jamaica communities are being empowered to control and manage their water resources. The multi-sectoral Jamaica Trade Adjustment Team is a step in the right direction as is Trinidad’s Change Management Unit for Poverty Eradication and Equity Building. A few NGOs in St Vincent are now discussing projects with the National Authorising Officer.

Governments have by and large missed the opportunity to advance the spirit of the CARICOM Charter of Civil Society and the letter of the Cotonou Agreement on several counts. If resources continue to be inaccessible within the Cotonou Regional and National Indicative Programmes, officers cannot fulfil the provisions relating to structured partnerships with NGOs in their countries and regions.

The CPDC has produced a Participation Guide for Policy Makers (2002) and distributed this widely across the region. The lack of capacity in analysis, planning, project management and related skills which NAOs admitted at their recent meeting in Brussels, could be easily overcome by closer collaboration with groups that have considerable experience of doing much with few resources.

Caribbean NGOs are always interested in raising their ability to carry out their developmental role, and remain willing to work in partnership with their national governments for the good of society. It is not too late for civil society to be empowered to fulfil its social development role; this would enable marginalised sectors, which might otherwise be deprived of essential help, to get more immediate attention for their needs. It is not too late for valuable partnerships to be forged among the social partners and for a new pool of expertise and skills to be acquired; models of participation could be tested; and governments could win public confidence and praise for the quality of governance in the region. ■

\* Deputy Coordinator at the Caribbean Policy Development Centre in Barbados.

1. The Caribbean Forum consists of CARICOM, the Dominican Republic and, since June 2001, Cuba.



# Trade unions are development stakeholders!

Trade Unions are stakeholders of development: this is an often ignored and sometimes disputed fact, surely as a result of ignorance of present social realities and the social history of the ACP States.

In this article, **G rard Fonteneau\*** calls for stronger participation and consultation of trade union actors in the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement.

The European and international trade union movement has since 1957 always attached great importance to the establishment of equitable cooperation relations between the ACP countries and the EU. Throughout the years, it drew attention to the gap between speeches and practice. At each renewal of the Yaound  and Lom  Conventions, the contracting parties seemed to have heard these criticisms and were making positive amendments to the text. In general, the Lom  Conventions had positive effects in several fields: infrastructure, equipment, various developments, and training. Through Stabex and Sysmin, the disastrous consequences of periods of low prices for raw materials were mitigated for producers and the countries concerned. However, there was a great lack of effectiveness and a significant disparity between the amounts allocated and the results, even if would be more accurate to nuance this on the basis of countries and regions.

## Mixed feelings about Cotonou

The Cotonou Agreement was received with mixed feelings within the trade union movement. In the presentation of the trade union dossier on the analysis and utilisation of the Cotonou Agreement published in September 2000, the Secretary-Generals of the ETUC, ICFTU and the WCL made the following observation: "The trade union movement is satisfied with several provisions of the new agreement, on condition that they are really implemented, in particular; the involvement of the stakeholders, including unions, in all the activities and in all the fields of cooperation; explicit reference to the fundamental rights of the ILO, as essential components of the validity of the cooperation, but also, as a criteria to be observed in trade cooperation; social objectives and sustainable development; transparency of the programmes; policy dialogue based on similar commitments made by the 15 States of the Union and the 71 ACP countries in the international institutions (UNO, ILO, WHO, UNESCO). On the contrary, international and European trade unionism is concerned about the ambiguities and lapses of this Agreement, in particular: the free trade aspects often seem to supercede the objectives and practices of cooperation; though made flexible and submitted for evaluations, the integration of the ACP States into global trade

poses serious risks to the economic and social development capabilities of these States; neglect of priority problems such as debt and structural adjustment; also, considering past experience, serious doubts remain on the determination and capacity of the contracting parties to apply the social objectives as well as the participative methods".

## Progress since Cotonou

Two years after the signing and one year after the conclusions of the national programming, it is difficult to conduct the first evaluation of the implementation, especially since the information is partial and often contradictory. One can however venture some observations. Development strategies embrace really relevant objectives, but then the contracting parties are currently unable to take stock of the social aspects of the programming. Given the catastrophic results in the social domain of the Lom  Conventions, it is normal to be doubtful. An indication; the lack of a real employment promotion policy. On several occasions during the negotiations and just before the finalisation, the trade union movement stressed to the negotiators that employment, the strategic objective, produces socially beneficial goods and services, generates income, and purchasing power for that matter, and that a specific programme should be created for it in collaboration with the "Decent employment" programme of the ILO.

The participation of non-governmental stakeholders is facing serious problems of implementation. It is an indispensable but ambitious objective whose implementation will have to be gradual. Given that the contracting parties have no participative culture and have to deal with organisations that, until recently, they considered subversive.

## Unsatisfactory participation

In 2002, the World Confederation of Labour (WCL) sent a questionnaire to its affiliates in some of the ACP countries where the European Commission Directorate General for Development had consulted civil society, to evaluate the effective participation in the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement. The first con-

The Courier



Employment produces socially beneficial goods and services and generates income; the trade unions believe that a specific programme should be created for it.





The Courier

The trade unions demand a more prominent role for social activities, such as launching of small-scale income-generating activities.

sultation took place in May 2002; the second one in December 2002. Answers were far from encouraging:

- the consultation of the trade union actors on the development and adoption of the National Indicative Programme (NIP) is not very systematic and almost insignificant; more generally, the trade union contacts with the on-the-spot leaders (national officials and head of the European delegation) are not frequent and profound enough;
- the trade unions wish to strengthen their role as actors of development and social partners with a view to a proper implementation of the Agreement, but the representatives of the European Commission seem to consider that this matter is not part of the funding priorities;

- the trade unions demand a more prominent role for social activities consolidating the human factor in the NIP: literacy campaigns and basic education, vocational training for those excluded from the school system, launching of small-scale income-generating activities for youths and women in the informal sector, development of individual handicraft projects and community interest projects.

Sustainable development, without real content or efficient resources?

The European Union's idea of development, beyond speeches, has shifted to the traditional options of neo-liberalism and recourse to the private sector, "economic growth fuels social progress" and "trade, a development tool", etc. These assertions would be correct if a strict supervision of the precise rules could compel the market to be a factor of social progress and a tool for sustainable development; but market forces defy all social and tax limitations and, through soft-law, contribute to the spread of private law to the detriment of public law.

Mobilised, by choice or constraint, to the options of globalised capitalism, the authorities know that real cooperation between partners of equal knowledge and power, as well as real sustainable development policies are impossible at the moment, because they come up against too many economic, financial and commercial interests, strategies of multi-national conglomerates and the power positions of the economic and political giants. ■

\* Coordinator of the Cotonou EU-ACP Trade Union Group, an outcome of the European Trade Unions Confederation (ETUC), the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the World Confederation of Labour (WCL), each of which has affiliated national organisations in all the ACP States.

## The ACP Business Forum: a platform to enhance private sector capacities and development

At the beginning of the negotiations for a successor agreement to Lomé IV, business representatives from different ACP regions created an ACP Business Forum. This Forum aims to become a network of key ACP private sector actors, and an effective platform for improved public-private sector dialogue and to build common positions and proposals leading to the enhancement of private sector capacities and development through ACP-EU cooperation.

Milagros Puello\*

The Libreville Declaration of the ACP Heads of State and Government (November 1997) recognised the need for institutional support to the ACP private sector. It called for "the establishment of an ACP-EU business forum of ACP and EU business institutions and enterprises". Building on this, a group of ACP private sector actors started an informal, bottom-up process aimed at preparing the ground for the creation of an ACP Business Forum.

In a first meeting in May 1998, the group agreed that existing ACP private sector networks did not truly and effectively repre-

sent ACP business interests. They therefore articulated an ACP private sector memorandum with priority actions for the negotiation process. They also defined the "rules of the game" for the gradual institutionalisation of the Forum aiming to avoid the creation of a heavy, non-representative, non-viable ACP private sector institution that would depend on donor funding. A second meeting was convened in September 1998 in Brussels. The main outcome was the formal launching of the ACP Business Forum as a light and effective network that could offer an added-value compared to existing ACP private sector institutions.



The objectives of the ACP Business Forum are: to promote linkages and collaboration among ACP private sector actors and their EU business partners; to strengthen the overall capacity of ACP private sector actors to effectively participate in the formulation and implementation of ACP-EU cooperation at national, sub-regional, regional and global levels; to build a new public-private partnership with ACP governments and with the EU, based on dialogue, a quest for complementary action and mutual accountability.

The primary target group of the ACP Business Forum is private sector representative bodies. The Forum wants to reach out to these constituencies, improving information and communication flows, creating opportunities for sharing experiences and defining common interests. However, the promotion of ACP private sector linkages is not an end in itself. It is a means to ensure the involvement and participation of ACP private sector actors in future ACP-EU cooperation at different levels. This, in turn, will help to build new public-private partnerships.

A major role that the ACP Business Forum seeks to play is dissemination of information. At present, ACP private sector actors are poorly informed on the overall Cotonou framework, its strategic importance, policies, mechanisms and instruments, including the special facilities available to private sector actors. It is equally difficult for them to obtain reliable and up-to-date information on the current process of ACP-EU cooperation and interaction, the issues at stake at a particular point in time, the different policy positions and future opportunities for lobbying. This is particularly disturbing, as the Cotonou Agreement contains several dispositions favourable to private sector development.

For progress to be achieved, the ACP private sector needs institutional development. With a few notable exceptions, the ACP private sector is not ready to enter into balanced partnerships with ACP authorities at different levels, nor to make the best use of the cooperation outlined in the Cotonou Agreement. Information flows at national, regional and global levels are still deficient. On the other hand, there are very few structured channels for communication and dialogue between ACP and EU business people. In many ACP countries, private sector organisations confront problems of legitimacy, funding and capacity.

The ACP Business Forum does not intend to duplicate the work carried out by existing ACP private sector organisations. Its aim is to



Benin, employees with bundles of cotton

complement existing efforts by producing a clear added-value. The Forum believes that its "niche" and comparative advantage lie in the promotion of ACP private sector interests in overall ACP-EU cooperation. The choice for a bottom-up approach – whereby member organisations themselves define and execute the mandate and work-plan of the Forum – may help to achieve such added-value.

## The way forward

The operation of the ACP Business Forum is meant to be an ongoing, all-inclusive and dynamic process. This inevitably implies the choice for a lean, participatory and decentralised institutional framework that can be adapted over time as new members join. The Forum will meet in September to review the formalisation of its structures, including duly-approved rules; the consolidation of an organisational set-up largely based on representation of the various ACP regions; the operationalisation of the ACP and ACP-EU Action Plans adopted in May 2002 with a view to the adoption of a Work Programme; and the adoption of an Action Plan, including a Brussels-based Secretariat; the adoption of inputs on the WTO and EPA negotiations, all leading to the achievement of a competent, dynamic and fully representative body of the ACP private sector and to a better use of ACP-EU cooperation for boosting private sector development as a catalyst for economic growth and poverty reduction in ACP countries. ■

\* President of the ACP Business Forum.

## The ACP Local Government Platform

In contrast to the Lomé Conventions, the Cotonou Agreement emphasises the importance of local governments in promoting economic and social development in ACP countries. Emerging as a distinct actor from central governments as a result of the decentralisation process in the developing world, local governments of many ACP countries are still fragile institutions, facing problems of capacity and lack of funds. Following the example of the Civil Society and the Business Forums, an ACP Local Government Platform was set up in 1999. The aim of the Platform is to raise the profile of ACP local governments within the EU and to build a network that could help them to be aware of, receive information on and access EU development funds, and play a role in ACP-EU development cooperation strategies.

However, if civil society, and in a minor way, the private sector, have been influential in the programming exercise, local governments have not been much involved. This is probably a consequence of the ambiguity of their status. The Cotonou Agreement identifies local governments among the actors to be involved in the programming phase; yet, they are not often considered "non-state" actors, but as part of central government. For this reason, the Platform is an essential element to facilitate dialogue and provide services to local authorities which would allow them to play the complementary role in promoting development in ACP countries as established by the Cotonou Agreement. MC



# The Couleur Café Festival, Brussels

## Culture: hand-in-hand with solidarity and development

From 27 to 29 June 2003, the organisers of the 14th Couleur Café festival brought together 65,000 people of 95 different nationalities, plus 350 volunteers on a 55,000 m<sup>2</sup> site in the European capital.

Eyoum Nangué

Over the three days of the event, a former industrial site in Brussels became a melting pot of sounds, smells and images from the four corners of the world. Credit is due to the organisers, who took a theoretically inhospitable location and transformed it into an oasis of fun and festivity for this highly colourful annual celebration. Four podiums were erected to accommodate jazz bands and other music groups. One souk, five bars and a gastronomic alley baptised "The road to good food" completed the décor. In the aptly named "Place de l'IndépenDanse" world rhythms vied with one another to be heard. Couleur Café was not found wanting by the crowds that came to drink, eat, dance and learn...

### Element: earth

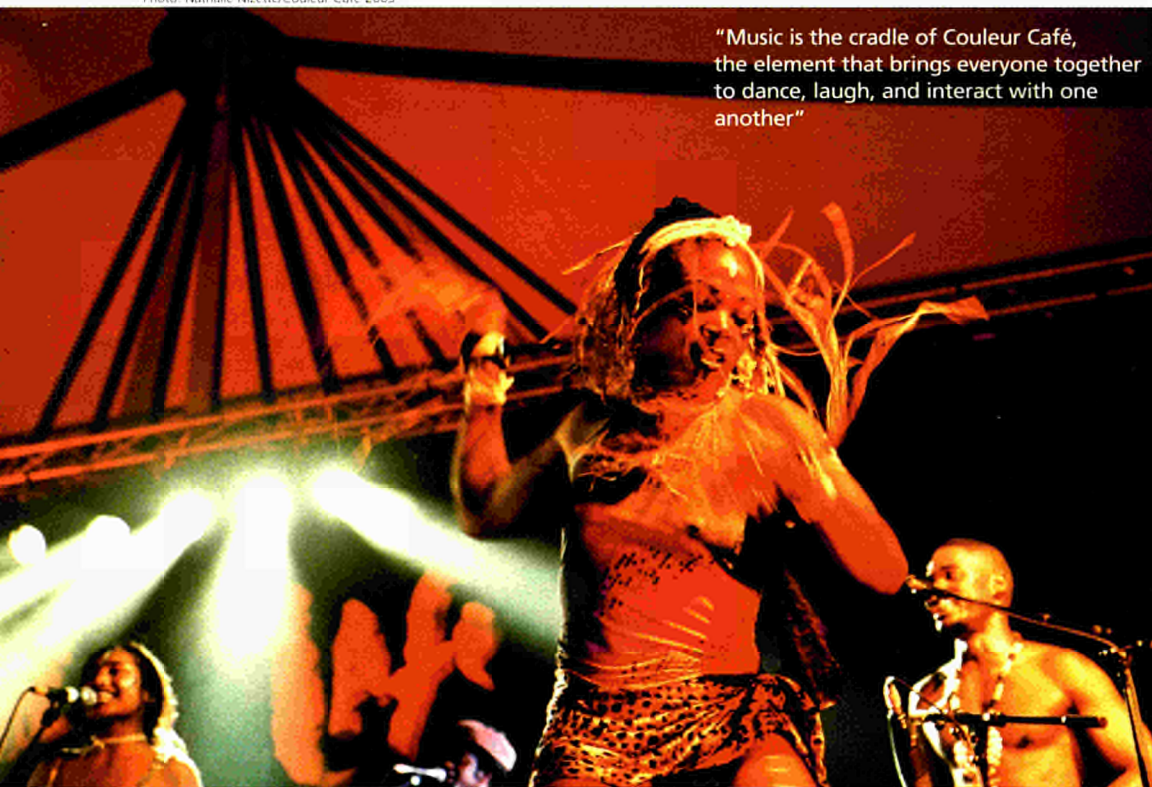
Earth was the theme chosen for the Cool Art Café exhibition, an area given over to the plastic arts. Among the pottery and ant-hills were photographs celebrating architecture based simply on earth. Below a huge painting of the Djenné mosque in Mali, people with their hands full of mud busied themselves building an earth hut. The head of this workshop, Belgian architect Sophie Brochart, told us; "We have here

two African earth huts. One is built using Belgian techniques; a wooden frame with straw packing, and the other, under construction, is being built according to methods employed in West Africa, using earth bricks dried by the sun. Africans sometimes tend to take a derogatory view of houses made of earth, building instead with concrete and cement. Paradoxically, at the same time in Belgium there is a resurgence of interest in using earth in constructions. It is important that Africans are aware of this – earth is a noble material, and it is so much more advantageous for them as a building material: it is less expensive, it keeps air cool more efficiently, and its use means getting the benefit of local know-how and construction techniques". All around her, the area is a hive of activity as people ask questions, or make their own small contribution to the building by laying a brick. Children, who were particularly attracted by the fun, constructive, educational aspect of the workshop, launched themselves wholeheartedly into the exercise, each leaving their mark on the roughcast walls: a drawing here, a daub of ochre there. Everyone was mucking in so as to get the hut built as quickly as possible. Interaction was an overriding

theme, centred around the element earth.

A few metres on, 80 craftsmen were exhibiting products from countries in the South. One such exhibitor, Senegalese Moussa Kane, was inviting curious onlookers to try their hand at his art. His technique, batik, originated in India, "but Africans made it their own for decorating loincloths. Thousands of women in the countries of the Sahel earn money from batik, making them financially independent". In front of him, Inge, a young Belgian, was absorbed in sketching a lizard on a remnant of fabric. Moussa explained: "You create a design in wax to produce

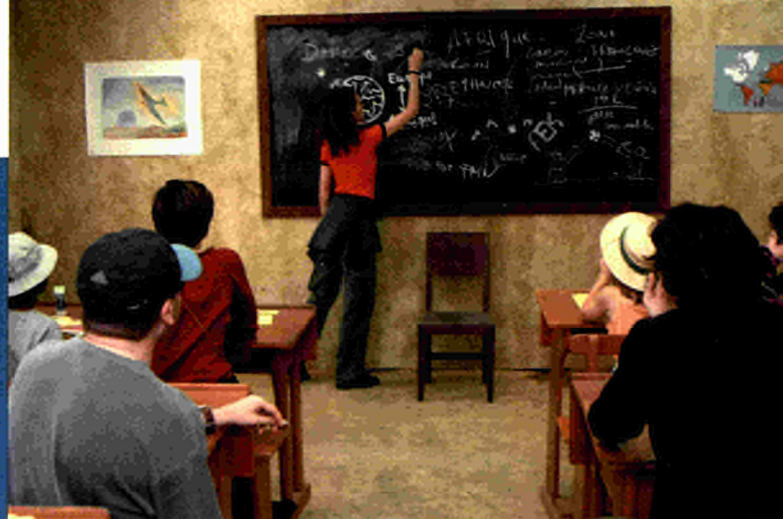
Photo: Nathalie Nizetto/Couleur Café 2003



"Music is the cradle of Couleur Café, the element that brings everyone together to dance, laugh, and interact with one another"



Amidst this colourful, festive atmosphere, many organisations set up stands to raise public awareness on some major issues. The European Commission's stand was arranged as a classroom in an African village, complete with six school benches, a blackboard, a cabinet and some engravings on the walls.



European Commission

protected areas. Then you make up a vat of dye, with natural or industrial pigments, in which to dip the cloth, which is then rinsed and dried. These days, more and more Europeans are seeking African fabrics for their clothing, fulfilling one of the objectives of the festival, which is to facilitate intermixing and intercultural exchanges”.

### Contact and awareness

Moussa Kane's view is shared by fellow Senegalese Mame Fatou Diakhaté, a 15 year-old DJ for Faggaru FM, a radio station in Dakar, who was invited to the festival by RTBF<sup>1</sup>. She told us, “We are a radio station by children for children. Our presence here allows us to do some reporting and make contact with potential future partners”.

Amidst this colourful, festive atmosphere, young people from the association Tam-Tam Sida<sup>2</sup> were distributing condoms, reminding festival-goers that AIDS is still rife. Several organisations (Amnesty International, Greenpeace, Unicef) had set up stands to raise public awareness on some major issues, including violence towards women in Kenya, pollution and the future of the world's children. We visited the stand of SOS-Faim, a Belgian association which has been taking part in the festival since 1998. The association's representative, Jacques Grodent, cast his mind back: “In that year, together with several other organisations, we set up the Lomé Village, a forum within the festival for discussion and exchanges of information on the EU-ACP Convention.” As for 2003, “we are offering an area where visitors to the festival can meet and discuss agriculture in countries in the South. We suggest that they find out more about the native social and economic context for artists from the South whose talent they admire. We use culture as a stepping stone towards a more in-depth knowledge of the lives of people in Southern countries: the causes of underdevelopment, unfair trade, etc. People are pretty amazed at the information we provide on the issue of aid for farmers in the North, and the problem of the credit system that penalises farmers in developing countries. The public can then better understand the problems facing rural Africans”. On SOS-Faim's stand, volunteers were showing visitors foodstuffs from Africa, such as cassava and peanuts, which they could taste. For SOS-Faim, the festival is a sort of recruitment fair. “People leave their address so they can receive more information. Later, some may decide to become volunteers for us. But the main question we ask on this stand is: ‘What can we do?’”

All this mental exercise was going on in the midst of a carnival-like hullabaloo. Manu Dibango, Salif Keita, Jimmy Cliff, the Coulibaly Brothers, Zaiko Langa Langa... big show-biz names alternated on stage with small groups, brass bands and other musical curiosities. As Michel Durieux, who was responsible for

the festival's communication unit, explained: “Music is the cradle of Couleur Café, the element that brings everyone together to dance, laugh, and interact with one another”.

### Getting away from gloom and doom

Set a little apart from this general racket was an unusual stand set up by the European Commission on the initiative of DG Dev<sup>3</sup>. It was arranged as a classroom in an African village, complete with six school benches, a blackboard, a cabinet and some engravings on the walls. Relaxed and casual, EU officials were distributing literature: for children, a bubble blower<sup>4</sup> and the “Mathias and Amadou”<sup>5</sup> book, while adults received the accompanying teaching manual<sup>6</sup>, together with other items relating to EU policy in development matters. A few visitors got into the spirit of things, pretending to be pupils or teachers. For example, taking the role of schoolmaster, with chalk in hand, Cameroonian Roger Zé gave his viewpoint on North-South relations. Fermina, from Equatorial Guinea, said she was delighted with it all but wished the Commission's stand had got a more central position in the festival. On this subject, the stand's manager Georges Eliopolis explained, “Our aim in taking part in this event is threefold: we want to attract attention, incite interest in what we do and induce people to visit our website.” Since 1 July, visitors to the website have been treated to photos taken on the stand by Raymond Dakoua, from Côte d'Ivoire.

When asked about the Commission's role in cultural events of this kind, Leonidas Antonakopoulos, head of DG Dev's communication and information unit, said “Couleur Café helps to promote culture in developing countries, and this is why we are here, to pass on the message and raise awareness among young people. Depicting the developing world in terms of artistic and musical creation means taking a very uplifting and dynamic tone, getting away from the morbid aspect many would attribute to it...”

This sentiment was echoed by Jean-Jacques Grodent, who says that “any development project that does not take account of the cultural aspects and desires of the people is doomed to failure”.

Raymond Dakoua who, as a photographer, performed his own analysis of the festival, gets the last word: “Couleur Café shows that differences are meant to be complementary”. ■

1. Radio Télévision Belge Francophone (Belgian French-language public broadcaster).
2. Belgian association for the prevention of AIDS, focusing on migrant populations and refugees. It also provides psychosocial help for those infected.
3. The European Commission's Development Directorate-General.
4. A gimmick produced by the Commission. The bubble blower tube bears the caption ‘Bubbles to awaken you... to development cooperation’.
5. Mathias and Amadou, *Awakening to Development Cooperation*, published in May 2003 by the European Commission for children in schools in Member States of the EU.
6. Mathias Amadou, *Teaching Manual on the European Union's Community Policy on Development Cooperation*, European Commission DE 115, May 2003.





# Burundi



©Crispin Hughes/Panos Pictures

A small, landlocked country in the middle of the Great Lakes region, Burundi is one of the continent's most densely populated nations. The landscape is characterised by hills and valleys, bound in the west by Lake Tanganyika and split by the Nile and Congo basins.

The country has experienced periods of intense turbulence since independence in 1962, marked by cyclical ethnic conflicts between the different groups. The current wave of violence goes back to 1993. But hope for peace was revived with the Arusha Agreement, signed in 2000. The Arusha peace process envisages the division of power between the two major groups in the country, the Hutus and the Tutsi. The ending of the international sanctions and the resumption of international aid gave a kickstart to a completely lifeless economy. In April this year, President Domitien Ndayizeye succeeded Pierre Buyoya, in accordance with the compromise foreseen in the Arusha Agreement on the transitional government. The transition took place calmly, but violence erupted a few weeks later, and the capital, Bujumbura, was the theatre of intense fighting. In this extremely volatile context, EU-Burundi cooperation concentrates primarily on humanitarian aid, socio-economic rehabilitation and support for the peace process. In other words, economic development and institutional support as a route to peace.

Report and photos (unless otherwise indicated): François Lefèbvre



# Time for peace?

The hope and anticipation that accompanied the signing of the Arusha Agreement appear to be turning to scepticism on the part of observers and resignation for much of Burundi's population. For 10 years, conflict bathed Burundi in blood, seemingly having its own dynamic irrespective of the efforts of negotiators and the suffering of its citizens. The spectre of a Rwanda-style situation haunts the country. Economic development, monitoring of the peace process and support for civil society are still the only effective weapons against the military option.

July 2003 saw Bujumbura in turmoil once again. Clashes in the capital's southern districts and bombardment of the city centre resulted in 200 civil, military and rebel casualties, with tens of thousands of the country's inhabitants fleeing the combat zones. Bujumbura was being attacked by a National Liberation Front (FNL) faction led by Agathon Rwasa, probably joined by members of the Forces for the Defence of Democracy (FDD), led by Jean-Pierre Nkurunziza. Although an expected prelude to any session of negotiations, this new upsurge in violence nevertheless surprised everyone – the rebels' strength had been underestimated and for several days they mounted an offensive against the country's nerve centre. Yet, in rural areas, far from the gaze of the media, lives are lost in recurrent clashes.

A small country in the Great Lakes region, since independence in 1962 Burundi has experienced almost permanent instability. The latest wave of violence dates back to 1993, when the Tutsi-minority-dominated army fomented a coup d'état. The Hutu President Melchior Ndadaye was assassinated, an act that unleashed a wave of inter-ethnic<sup>1</sup> massacres and threw Burundi into civil war and chaos. In 1996, another coup d'état put former Tutsi President Pierre Buyoya back in power. The international community's reaction was swift, and sanctions were immediately implemented.

## Hope and disappointment

With the start of peace negotiations in 1999 came a progressive lifting of the freeze on international aid. The peace negotiations were fraught with difficulties, but nevertheless led in August 2000 to the signing of the Arusha Agreement. The process brought together all political parties and ended with an – albeit minimal – political consensus that made provision for power to be shared between Burundi's two principal ethnic groups. Supporters of the Arusha Agreement maintain that they have brought together the majority of Burundi's representative elements around a basic text. However, other observers revile it as a “non-agreement” negotiated under duress, excluding the main rebel factions, based on a balance of strength and leaving issues such as free elections, the cantonment of rebels and reform of the army unresolved.

Despite a high level of pressure from the international community and signatures at the foot of the document, the weapons did not fall silent. Meanwhile, negotiations continued under the leadership of South African Vice-President Jacob Zuma. In 2001 there was agreement on a three-year transitional government, whereby Tutsi President Pierre Buyoya of the Union for National Progress (UPRONA) would hand over power, in mid-term, to the Hutu Vice-President Domitien Ndayizeye, General Secretary of the Burundi Democratic Front (FRODEBU). Elections are due to be held after Mr Ndayizeye's term ends. The handover of power took place without incident on 1 May 2003, although it was preceded by intensified military action on the part of the FDD and FNL.

Ceasefire agreements – unfortunately regularly violated – were signed in 2002 with three rebel groups. The Rwasa faction of the FNL, a non-signatory, does not consider itself to be bound by these agreements. Furthermore, African Union forces, present in Burundi since late April 2003, have to do the best they can with a lack of resources and a mandate that leaves them little room for manoeuvre: they are restricted to monitoring the ceasefire and to the cantonment of certain rebels. Out in the field, however, tension remains high, with constant interplay between rebel factions and short-lived, apparently “unnatural” alliances between Hutu and Tutsi extremists, which brings further confusion to the crisis in Burundi.

## Chess, Great Lakes style

The crisis, however, is not bound by Burundi's borders, and the country resembles a chess board over which other countries in the region move their pieces: former Rwandan Armed Forces (FAR) combatants and Interahamwe militias that took part in the 1994 Rwandan genocide have close links with Hutu rebels. They use the territory of Burundi (and of Congo) as a base camp. Some Interahamwe factions also took part in the July 2003 attack on Bujumbura, and the presence of FDD rebels in the Democratic Republic of Congo assisted the Burundian army's incursion into Kivu



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province. Furthermore, Hutu rebels are an integral part of the Congolese army. Uganda and Tanzania are only very moderately supportive of South Africa's having taken on the mantle of regional leader, and although there is no formal proof of Tanzanian support for the Burundian rebels, the lack of border control between the two countries and the presence of rebels in refugee camps cannot be denied.

The regional situation could hardly be more fluid, influenced as it is by other countries' politics and with deeply interconnected areas of unrest. A global solution to the civil war must therefore be based on a solid regional commitment – an essential condition, but far from being the only one, given that the internal causes of the crisis are still to be addressed.

### What conflict?

More than an ethnic conflict, Burundi is witnessing the "ethnicisation" of a conflict. Hutus and Tutsis share the same language, the same religions, the same culture and the same historical references. Tutsis are no more confined to the cities than the Hutus to the country. Acknowledgement of an individual's membership of a particular ethnic group is based more on his radical discourse than on simplistic evolutionary stereotypes. Furthermore, the army contains a number of Hutu military; leaders and parliamentarians from the UPRONA "Tutsi" party are Hutus, and so on.

Nevertheless, an ethnic group-based ideology does indeed exist: rooted in the pre-colonial and colonial periods, it was then exploited, made more radical, taken to extremes and largely internalised by Burundians. Membership of one or another ethnic group ended up being imposed by the State as a means of management, to the profit of the ruling elite. The majority arguments of some and the security-oriented words of others were used as justification for all the atrocities, and led to the massacres of 1972 against Hutus and 1993 against Tutsis. De facto impunity was established; indeed, some protagonists in the crisis are still involved in running the country. Again, through double-speak, the parties cancel one another out. No one faction has a monopoly on virtue: consequently, promoting the work of justice merely opens a breach in one's own ranks. Laws against genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity exist, but the conditions they require in order to be enforced currently render them inapplicable.



A degree of ethnicisation can also be found in the Arusha process negotiated by ethnic "groups", who, among other things, established quotas for ethnic groups' involvement in government. For that is where the core of the conflict lies – everyone wants a piece of the cake, but the cake is small and the number of those invited to partake of it is closely monitored. Nor is membership of a particular ethnic group sufficient when it comes to sharing out: this is the point at which regionalism<sup>2</sup> and even clan membership become superimposed over ethnic divisions.

As often happens, the first to suffer in this "politico-ethnic" crisis are the ordinary people who are, by turn, hostages, targets and shields. They were also the first victims of the sanctions (1997-1999), which, in combination with the war, caused the country's economy to slump. Social services are practically non-existent, levels of school attendance and healthcare provision have fallen sharply, all sectors of the population live in wretched conditions and in certain rural areas bartering has supplanted the use of money. Hundreds of thousands of victims of the crisis eke out their lives in makeshift villages, and currently Burundi is one of the world's five poorest countries, based on the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index.

There appear to be two principal ways out of the crisis – one based on negotiating exclusively with moderates and the other on inclusion of all rebel factions in the peace process. Cooperation can also make its own contribution by encouraging economic development, monitoring the peace process (not perfect, perhaps, but perfectible) and relying on civil society to rise above division. Not all bridges have yet been burnt and there are still links between the two communities who alone are capable of reaching a genuine consensus in Burundi. ■ FL



The civil war, as well as the sanctions, caused a contraction of the economy and a worsening of poverty: 38% of the children are affected by malnutrition and endemic diseases have increased by 200% since 1993.

1. Burundi, like Rwanda, is made up of a Hutu majority (85%) while Tutsis and Twas represent 14% and 1% of the population, respectively.

2. From 1971 to 2001, political, economic and military power was dominated by Tutsi groups originating from Bururi province, which is where Presidents Micombero, Bagaza and Buyoya originated. A north/south divide is also present amongst the Hutus.



# «Compliance with the Arusha Agreement is key to the re-establishment of trust in Burundi»

## Interview with Burundi's Vice-President, Alphonse Marie Kadege

Burundi's transitional government was set up in November 2001 under the Arusha Agreement as part of efforts to end eight years of civil war. It provided for power to be shared between the Tutsi minority and the Hutu majority. The second transitional stage was the transfer of power from Pierre Buyoya to Domitien Ndayizeye, which took place on 30 April 2003. Domitien Ndayizeye, himself Vice-President under Pierre Buyoya, is currently assisted by a Tutsi Vice-President, Alphonse Marie Kadege, President of the Uprona (Union for National Progress). In certain matters, such as those relating to security, the Vice-President's signature is required in order to validate the President's decisions, which enables Uprona to have a say in important decisions. With a doctorate in international relations, Alphonse Marie Kadege became a Member of Parliament in 1993, is a former communications minister, and has been leader of Uprona since December 2002.

### ***Given the country's current difficult circumstances, how do you envisage your mandate?***

Burundi's principal challenges are the continuation of the war and violence inflicted on innocent populations by the CNDD-FDD (National Committee for the Defence of Democracy–Forces for the Defence of Democracy) and FNL (National Liberation Front) armed groups, and generalised poverty and destitution.

To meet such challenges, the government has long opted for dialogue and negotiation. Unfortunately, the armed groups are being obstructive, and reject the peaceful route to settlement of the conflict. The CNDD-FDD, which agreed to negotiate, is systematically violating the ceasefire agreement signed on 3 December 2002 – and it is doing so on a massive scale. Therefore, in an attempt to reduce the widespread poverty and general wretchedness generated by the war, the government is pushing ahead with its efforts at mobilising both the population and the economic operators. It is also relying on action on the part of the international community, and has requested the release of larger amounts of the grants and credits promised for so many years.

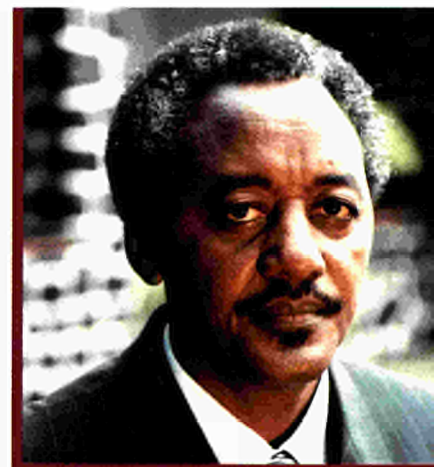
### ***The handover of the presidency took place smoothly. Is this an indication that peace is in the offing?***

The rotation of power took place calmly and serenely, a positive step in the right direction and proof that the transitional government is fulfilling its obligations. Nevertheless, rotation of power is not by itself sufficient to restore peace; the major obstacle to the advent of peace is the rebels who have opted for war and violence.

### ***How much progress has been made in implementing the Arusha Agreement?***

The government is pressing ahead with applying the Arusha Agreement. Specifically, the transitional institutions have been established and the armed factions that have signed and applied the ceasefire agreement have been incorporated into the government. Reform of the administration and the judiciary is also

well advanced. Parliament has already adopted a number of laws under the Agreement, such as those governing political parties and cracking down on the crime of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. However, it is because of the armed groups that essential clauses in the Agreement cannot be fully implemented: for example, reform of the defence and security corps, the repatriation of refugees and the re-integration of the many victims of the war actually inside Burundi, many of whom are still rotting in the camps.



### ***What is the status of negotiations with rebel factions that have not signed or do not comply with the agreements?***

In the case of the CNDD-FDD, negotiations have finished. We are ready to implement the ceasefire agreement, but they are refusing. In the case of the FNL, nothing has yet happened; as I said, because that particular movement is refusing to negotiate and is still perpetrating acts of terrorism, looting and general destruction. Our hopes lie with the region as a whole and the international community if we are to persuade these two groups to come to terms. If not, they will have to be constrained through the application of sanctions established under the agreement, which even the international community has endorsed.

### ***Do you envisage a global solution for Burundi without a global solution for the region, by which I mean one involving Burundi, Rwanda, DRC and Tanzania?***

There are countries in the region that are at peace; Tanzania, for example, and, although precarious, peace is a reality in



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Burundi's history has been marked by cyclical ethnic conflicts. Thousands have been killed, displaced, or escaped the country.

**PLUS JAMAIS CA!**



Rwanda. Burundi, too, could be at peace once again if certain regional protagonists were to withdraw their support for the rebels and if the international community were to agree to exert effective pressure on armed factions and their supporters.

It goes without saying that a global solution for Burundi would become a reality more quickly and more easily if the entire region could be pacified and were to collaborate. For the time being, however, terrorist and genocidal forces are able to move around the region practically with impunity. The Interahamwe are actively cooperating with the FNL and the CNDD-FDD.

### ***In the long term, how can trust and confidence within Burundi be restored?***

Respect for the Arusha Agreement is key to the reestablishment of trust inside Burundi. Basically, the compromises achieved under this Agreement establish the principle of power-sharing and joint administration of the country through political and ethnic balance involving the two main ethnic groups, Hutus and Tutsis, and also the Batwa people. The electoral system will have to be designed to guarantee that balance. There is no other way to eliminate exclusion and to ensure that all sides are involved. This is the cost for reestablishing calm and trust and, ultimately, conditions that are conducive to stability.

### ***Still on the same subject, and also that of combating impunity, does Burundi envisage an amnesty or perhaps action on the part of the courts and tribunals? What is the state of play regarding reform of the justice system and the setting-up of an international committee of inquiry?***

Combating impunity is yet another factor that will help restore confidence. In all groups there are still those who

would mount an attack on one ethnic group or another – an unjust approach that lets the true criminals off the hook. They exist in every camp, but will have to answer individually for their actions. Therefore, anyone guilty of murder must be tried and judged, and I naturally include those guilty of acts of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

To offer an amnesty would be to leave the way open to a repeat of the tragedies that all Burundians never wish to see again. To implement punishment is to adopt an “educational” approach which is likely to put an end to murder and to promote respect of the right to life.

Reform of the justice system is now largely under way via a review of a number of laws and the inclusion of all ethnic groups in the judicial system at different levels.

We have applied to the UN Security Council for an international commission of inquiry and, during a recent visit, it renewed its pledge to appoint one.

### ***Do you feel that the decentralisation and devolution of power will encourage citizens to become more involved in politics?***

The Arusha Agreement makes provision for the setting-up of community councils and for a degree of local autonomy. When the relevant clauses are implemented, the authorities will be better able to listen. The involvement of citizens in the appointment of the councils and the authorities will also increase their control. Nevertheless, poverty levels in most areas will restrict the consolidation of democratic progress of that type. Currently, a number of communities are unable to pay their representatives' wages, so they will find it difficult to take a substantial role in development efforts. The State will have to continue to pay out subsidies of greater or lesser amounts.

### ***Given the interim strategic framework, the issue of good governance has a high profile.***

#### ***What measures do you envisage to promote it?***

Good governance will mean greater involvement of citizens in supervising the actions of public servants, the use of public funds and proper management of the common wealth. Burundi is a country where corruption and misappropriation of funds have long been combated. But the war made such phenomena more deeply entrenched.

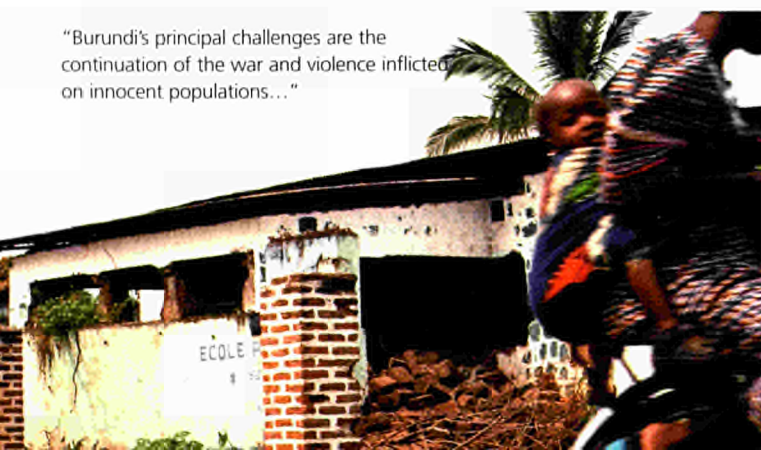
Supervision and surveillance mechanisms will have to be consolidated, so ethical committees composed of citizens must be set up locally and at government level. Greater calls must be made on the legal system to severely punish acts of corruption and embezzlement of public monies.

### ***What is your position regarding the organisation of elections during this transitional period?***

It is indeed our ambition to organise elections during this transitional period, and we will soon be embarking on an examination of the texts that govern elections, such as the electoral code and the post-transition constitution.

The only factors that could delay the elections are a continuation of the war, ongoing and entrenched ethnic hatred, and political intolerance, of which the CNDD-FDD and PALIPEHUTU-FNL (Party for the Liberation of the Hutu People-National Liberation Front) armed groups are guilty. ■

“Burundi's principal challenges are the continuation of the war and violence inflicted on innocent populations...”







# Stability must come first

## Peace, a prerequisite for Burundi's economic recovery

The threat is always present. Given that there is no war economy, any eruption of violence is a new blow to Burundi's production economy and further tears apart its social fabric. Bled white from 1993 to 1999, the country's economy regained a degree of strength after the suspension of international sanctions (1999) and the conclusion of the Arusha Agreement (2000). The prospect of a return to peace encouraged donors to re-pledge funds, and the improving law and order situation promoted renewed positive growth. This tentative recovery, however, remains precarious, and further unrest would signal its collapse.

The combination of the civil war, a decline in growth, the fall in coffee prices, socioeconomic stagnation and the reduction in external financial assistance has intensified poverty and stifled the Burundian economy. That economy is based essentially on agriculture and stock rearing, with 90 per cent of the rural population dependent on those two areas. Farming accounts for 50 per cent of the country's GDP. Decreases in production have resulted from the fragile security situation, displacement of persons and the vagaries of the climate. In addition, the population explosion and the division of land amongst family members has contributed to the increasingly small size of plots and degradation of the environment. Extensive agriculture in Burundi is insufficient to fulfil food requirements. Consequently, periods when food is available are interspersed with periods of temporary famine. Furthermore, access to credit is a pipedream as far as small producers are concerned. Interest rates are prohibitive, repayment terms inappropriate and the banking system non-existent in rural areas. In some regions of the country, "demonetisation" is taking root, with bartering replacing use of the Burundian franc.

### Cash crops lose their appeal

Cash crops, principally coffee, tea and cotton, account for 80 per cent of Burundi's export revenue, yet the drop in production generated by the crisis, the fall in world prices and

institutional management of various sectors of the economy mean that these crops are not currently an attractive proposition. In recent years, exports have been substantially eroded, putting considerable strain on foreign currency reserves.

Moreover, Burundi is still under-industrialised. The industrial sector suffers from a lack of human resources, under-financing and insufficient research. A number of food-processing companies do exist – Brasserie Brarudi, for example – but they are faced with the limited size of the market and consumers' weak purchasing power. Rare ore deposits, which include gold, are currently being mined, and there is a possibility that Burundi's soil contains other resources, such as the nickel reserves close to the border with Tanzania. Burundi is, in fact, an extension of the morphological structure of the Congo, but, as yet, no official exploration has yielded viable results.

### Resumption of external aid

The October 1993 crisis mortgaged the country's economy that was then brought to its knees by the sanctions imposed in 1996 in the wake of the military coup d'état. Between 1993 and 1999, external aid melted away, decreasing from €350 million to €50 million per year. The peace negotiations and the conclusion of the Arusha Agreement (August 2000) regenerated donors' commitments, those of the EU included. During a round-table meeting in Geneva



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in 2002, donors committed to funds amounting to a global figure of US\$905.7 million. Reactivation of multi-lateral and bilateral aid and the progressive stabilisation of the country have yielded a number of positive results. After negative growth in 1999 and 2000, GDP growth was back in the black, posting 2.1 per cent in 2001 and 3.5 per cent in 2002. Also in 2002, inflation stabilised at 8 per cent as compared with 24.3 per cent in 2000 and 9.3 per cent in 2001. Recently, the fiscal deficit has also been absorbed because of an increase in State revenue. Nevertheless, State fiscal policy is encountering opposition from a large part of the private sector that deems it counterproductive given that corporate taxation is so high.

### On the downside

Less encouraging, however, are signs that military spending is to be revised upwards, notably to finance the cantonment of rebels as stipulated by the Arusha Agreement. The trade gap, fed by the collapse in exports and rise in imports, continues to widen. Foreign investment still stands at an extremely low level, and privatisation of public corporations (a condition of part of World Bank aid) are understandably delayed given the country's delicate political situation. For the time being, the government appears anxious to avoid any confrontation with the trade unions. Moreover, accelerated trade liberalisation within the context of COMESA (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa) and the Regional Integration Facilitation Forum<sup>1</sup> has not yet generated positive effects. Indeed, the tariff and non-tariff barrier-related revenue loss has not been offset by a substantial increase in the volume of trade. In addition, Burundian companies are still largely geared towards import substitution. If a redirection of production is essential today, it will be even more so in the future since COMESA and the EU intend to negotiate an economic partnership agreement (EPA).

To cap it all, foreign debt – in excess of US\$1.1 billion – is literally unsustainable. The servicing of that foreign debt



Men waiting for work. Burundi is still under-industrialised, providing few employment possibilities in the formal sector.

accounts for 80 per cent of the volume of exports in goods and services. Consequently, the EU has decided to directly wipe out part of the arrears due to be paid by Burundi to the European Investment Bank (EIB). On the initiative of the World Bank, a Multilateral Donor Trust Fund has also been set up to service part of the debt and pay back arrears. If it fulfils IMF (International Monetary Fund) conditions, Burundi could also access debt relief via the Enhanced HIPC (Highly Indebted Poor Countries') initiative, leading to a reduction in its debt.

Faced with such wide-ranging challenges, the government is committed, with donor assistance, to stabilising the economy, achieving growth of five per cent from 2004, reducing the fiscal deficit, containing inflation and instituting major structural reforms, including privatisation and restructuring of State enterprises. Investment in infrastructure and social services is also on the cards. According to some observers, Burundi is capable of achieving growth in the region of five per cent by 2004, although two obstacles may stand in the way of this: poor climatic conditions and a resumption of conflict. One natural, the other "merely human". ■ FL

1. The objective of the RIFF is to integrate the economies of the Member States of the Forum by facilitating the cross-border flow of private investment, trade, payments, labour and capital. A number of eastern and southern African and Indian Ocean countries are members.

## Private sector Roses instead of rifles

In an economic climate haunted by crisis, certain companies are resorting to innovative schemes. One such company, ATB (Agro Trading Business), specialises in the export of roses. It has come up trumps. ATB was able to invest partly on the basis of equity. When it started up, €1.5 million was injected, 60 per cent provided by the family owning the company and the other 40 per cent in the form of a loan from a regional bank. The company also benefited from the EBAS (the EU-ACP Business Assistance Scheme, financed under the EDF) programme, which provides technical assistance to the private sector by helping companies finance projects up to 50 per cent of service costs. In this case, EBAS contributed 50 per cent of the fees of the consultant who advised ATB during start-up.



Set up in 1999, ATB produces three varieties of rose (Golden Gate, Sacha and Circus) on its three-hectare plantation. The production site is five kilometres from the centre of the capital, Bujumbura, and has its own irrigation system. The company employs 150 people – 80 per cent of whom are women – on glasshouse production and packaging activities. The flowers are air-freighted to the Amsterdam market three times a week, in consignments of 100,000 stems.

The cut-flower market is highly competitive and ATB suffers from three handicaps: obtaining inputs, the high cost of freight and the problem of finding quality technical assistance. One solution advocated by Thierry Nzohaboayo, ATB's young director, is for a number of operators to be grouped together: "The market is wide open, and demand is always growing. If we could group together a number of producers and explore new avenues, cost-sharing would be feasible. We could also charter our own transport".



# The State under the microscope

The Observatory for Governmental Action (OAG), an independent civil society organisation, scrutinises the Burundian government's actions. Set up in 1999, but officially recognised two years later, the OAG is presided over by the Ligue Iteka, a human rights defence organisation that is active in both Burundi and the Great Lakes region. The OAG is composed of 18 associations, six journalists and six parliamentarians. Its objective is to persuade Burundian leaders to be accountable for their actions and to encourage the people to require this of them. The OAG is attempting to increase citizens' participation in national affairs through studies, reports, enquiries, polls, awareness-raising campaigns and education. The OAG's President, Christophe Sebudandi, spoke to *the Courier*.

**You preside over an association set up by civil society. But does civil society really exist in Burundi?**

Indeed it does. It might still be weak, but it does exist, and there are some truly dynamic organisations that are doing a reasonable job. Yet it's rather on the government side that they are not recognised.

**The OAG's members include parliamentarians. Doesn't this risk getting in the way of an objective analysis of the government's actions?**

The parliamentarians who are members of our association join as individuals. We are particularly interested in having a link with parliament through the parliamentarians who are members of the OAG. The fact that they are in the minority safeguards us against any detrimental influence on their part: in fact, they put in the forefront the importance of ethics and their desire to make a commitment through the OAG.

The OAG also aims to build parliament's institutional capacities: for example, we hope that actions that have been implemented will help to improve oral questions, and that through our reports such questions will be more wide-ranging and more searching. Incidentally, we've had a degree of success through our monitoring of certain bills. We have assisted members of parliament in their work on reports dealing with subjects such as corruption, for example. Reports are important, but we try to ensure that they are not just filed away somewhere, never to see the light of day. We've found that it's possible to work genuinely with these politicians and



**Our work has an impact – leaders are persuaded to be more transparent and to lift the veil of mystery surrounding their actions, whereas they used to think they had a free hand.**

to act as a watchdog to stop them going round in circles.

**How can governmental action be scrutinised when one has the impression that the government is still very weak?**

Yes, that is a problem. Unfortunately, the terms of our remit are somewhat vague. The target of our scrutiny is very difficult to discern, its outline really imprecise. I regret to say it, but the State is currently in decay: making such an observation is also very much a part of our work. Paradoxically, representing civil society as we do, our desire is to be able to strengthen the State's authority by encouraging it to follow up on its commitments. I suppose what it amounts to is; "we have nothing better, so, as you are all we have, try to improve".

**The OAG wants leaders to be accountable. Isn't that slightly unrealistic given the current weakness of the justice system?**

The justice system is at the heart of State action. If it is weak, the repercussions are felt in all sectors. Nevertheless, we have already seen the impact of the

**Civil society is required to play an increasingly important role in contributing to greater social harmony, but also in pushing for positive changes in society. To be able to play this role, civil society leaders have to understand the place and the functions of civil society. But many grey areas surround the concept of civil society both on the part of its members and of the public in general.**





action we have been able to implement. In education, for example, we really felt that leaders were obliged to explain themselves. Indirectly, we have contributed to Belgium releasing funds for teachers, and we have made a direct contribution regarding the strikes organised in the education sector, thanks to a very high-profile awareness-raising campaign. In other areas, we've worked with the UK NGO International Alert. Our work with them genuinely had an impact – leaders were persuaded to be more transparent and to lift the veil of mystery surrounding their actions, whereas they used to think they had a free hand.

**You mentioned the OAG's work regarding corruption. Is corruption not inevitable? Does it not, in a manner of speaking, encourage a redistribution of wealth to a certain extent?**

You have to make a distinction between small-scale and large-scale corruption. Both exist and both restrict people's rights and cause them to become even more impoverished. They reinforce inequalities by enabling certain people to have access to more resources. For other people, there is a real problem of survival as conditions are extremely poor and wages ridiculously low. In cases like this, corruption simply helps make ends meet.

We, however, perceive this as an attack on people's rights, because if you want any service from the State you have to pay for it. If you do not have the financial resources to do so, you will be deprived of State services or will have to go through a great deal of red tape simply to enable them to relieve you of your money. If you do not pay, you get nothing.

This kind of corruption is rife. It's in every sector, and everyone contributes to the system. What is more, our government is composed of completely disparate groups, which means it is extremely difficult to achieve a common position on issues. As posts and appointments are, to all intents and purposes, temporary, everyone's first concern is to make what profit they can. Corruption here is like a cancer, yet the general attitude towards this issue is to play for time. Yet, Burundi was not always in this position – corruption used to be kept within limits.

Take the airport, for example, the country's main showcase. Perhaps you want a Burundian driving licence? Well, hand me BIF 35,000 [€30] and you can have one. Or an international driving licence, maybe? Give me another BIF 15,000 [€12] and it's yours. That is how things are, and it is truly depressing.



People need to be informed. "It came to our notice that the population was not aware of the Arusha Agreement".

**One of the organisation's objectives is to increase citizens' – both male and female – involvement in managing the country. Are your actions sufficiently well-publicised among the population? Do they have enough impact?**

No. We are currently putting together a strategy to enable us to publicise our actions better. We have, for example, entered into a partnership with two radio stations. Our reports will be broadcast over the radio in Kirundi so that people can be made aware of them. Otherwise, as we deal with complex issues, our work is perhaps somewhat elitist. Yet that, too, is important, as the elite can pass information on. This does not mean that we have had a change of heart about the people being informed. For instance, it came to our notice that the population was not aware of the Arusha Agreement.

**On that very subject, could you give us your thoughts on the implementation of the Agreement?**

Someone once said: "An agreement is very difficult to implement – what chance is there in the case of a disagreement?". As I see it, all the agreements were signed under duress. In the case of the Arusha Agreement, Nelson Mandela had to apply intense pressure and called on all the support he could muster worldwide, including from President Clinton, in order for the Agreement to be signed. The ceasefire agreement was also signed under duress. The protagonists have signed but they seem unwilling to comply. My feeling is that there are hidden agendas, things that people do not want to accept. Everyone has his or her own agenda. To be honest, I'm very pessimistic, but I hope I'll be proved wrong.

I also believe that the culture of war remains predominant and that the army is still convinced that, given greater resources, it can beat the rebels. Unfortunately, this is a course that will inevitably prolong the war. The rebels, on the other hand, are convinced that by weakening the State they can reap maximum benefit, even if they cannot quite take over power. My impression is that these agendas will continue to exist side by side. Then you have to factor in other countries' agendas – Burundi is not a case in isolation. There is manoeuvring on the part of Uganda, Tanzania, Congo and Rwanda, for example. We are in a kind of go-between system. ■ FL



# Coffee's bitter side

## Large-scale campaign to combat disease and implement a major restructuring of the sector

Burundi is living in a crisis situation – and its coffee sector is no exception. For the past three years, the fungal disease anthracnosis has led to a drastic drop in production and has undermined the quality of Burundian coffee. Already in crisis because of the rigid nature of its organisation and the fall in world prices, the coffee sector has no choice but to implement in-depth reforms. With Stabex\*-funded support, a major campaign to combat anthracnosis is to be launched before the country embarks upon a major re-structuring of the sector: continued lessening of State influence, dismantling of trade barriers, privatisation and rehabilitation.

Grown by 500,000 planters throughout practically the whole country on altitudes of between 1,250 and 2,000m, arabica from Burundi is considered one of East Africa's best coffees. Globally, cash crops (coffee, tea, cotton) provide Burundi with 80 per cent of its export revenue. Since independence in 1962, the State has administered the coffee monopoly and kept many growers in this single export crop. The sector has inherited an organisation that is still rigid, despite State attempts at lessening its influence and allowing tentative steps towards privatisation. The sector's main protagonists are farmers, traders/hauliers, washing stations (joint ventures or private undertakings), hulling and packing companies (joint ventures and private undertakings), tax officials, the Burundi Coffee Office

(OCIBU), exporters and the relevant ministerial departments. Levels of influence within the sector remain unbalanced, and reforms implemented in the early 1990s have proved insufficient. This has given rise to distortions and generated losses, but is not the only reason for the sector's current problems.

### A sector under threat

Burundian coffee production has no influence on world prices, which are desperately low. Furthermore, the fixed price for coffee cherries has remained the same for a number of years, despite galloping inflation. Consequently, coffee growers have abandoned their plantations in favour of more profitable crops. Foreign debt has forced the OCIBU

Coffee grains drying





to raise taxes – thereby adversely affecting the sector's profitability – and domestic debt levels have prevented the subsidising of poor harvests. The picture is gloomier still if one takes into account that plantations are ageing, access to credit is too restricted, the producers' trade organisation is still in its infancy, and diseases such as anthracosis have now taken hold. Production this year has fallen dramatically: in 2002 it was 36,000 tons, but in 2003 it is unlikely to exceed 12,000 tons.

Long regarded as a benign disease in Burundi, anthracosis has in the past not been targeted with large-scale chemical treatment. However, the last three years have seen an upsurge in the prevalence of the disease, and the extent of crop damage is considerable, as is the growers' loss of income. The Stabex system, in parallel with its support for the State budget, infrastructures and food production, and programmes in three major export sectors, is to finance a vast spraying campaign. From October 2003, 850 tons of copper oxychloride (a copper-containing fungicide) will be sprayed on crops in the regions most affected. The cost of the operation will be €2,533,000; 95 per cent of this amount will be provided by Stabex.

### Restructuring

Stabex funds have been used to conduct technical audits and studies, and the anti-anthracosis campaign has been judged the main priority in order to re-establish the sector's profitability. Nevertheless, in pursuit of the policy of lessening State influence, a more global strategy of withdrawal from the public sector, trade liberalisation, privatisation and rehabilitation is now advocated. This strategy is based notably on coffee growers being free to form organisations at local, regional and national level. To ensure representation at all levels in the sector, a consultation and regulation body could be set up. This combined trade council would in the future become the sector's decision-making body. Another proposal is for the process of privatisation of State enterprises to make special provision for coffee growers and for economic operators to be able to become freely involved in the sector at any level. Finally, with a view to increasing exports, quality control and management must be above reproach. ■ FL

\* Stabex, the European Commission's export-stabilisation scheme (for agricultural produce) was set up under Lomé I and lasted for more than twenty years. Its purpose was to provide the ACP countries with the financial resources to fund their agricultural sectors when these experienced difficulties owing to reduced export earnings. Under the Cotonou Agreement (June 2000), the Stabex scheme no longer exists as a separate instrument, but ACP countries can address fluctuations in export earnings through the overall programming process. Burundi, however, is still able to receive Stabex funds that were not used between 1990 and 1999, up to a global amount of €56 million.

The Centre Jeunes Kamenge (the Kamenge Young People's Centre) in Burundi, was featured in Courier n° 198, to mark the Right Livelihood Award the Centre received "for their exemplary and indomitable courage and compassion, which have proved that, even after nine years of murderous civil war, young people from different ethnic groups can learn to live and build a future together in peace and harmony". The centre has pointed out to us that the number of girls who attend is 25% (and not 5% as cited in Courier n° 198), and they are also supported by French, Belgian, and Italian cooperation, as well as the European Commission and Austrian, Canadian and American partners.

## Burundi-EU cooperation at a glance

The Commission suspended cooperation with Burundi in January 1997, in line with international sanctions against the country from 1996 to 1999. Following the peace negotiations, EU-Burundi cooperation has gradually been restored. The Commission provided, along with other donors, "enhanced humanitarian aid" through a €48 million programme (covering resettlement/reintegration of displaced people, actions in the area of justice and reconciliation, demobilisation programmes). Assistance under the 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th EDFs represents a total of €400 million.

Since 2000, cooperation has focused on:

- agriculture and rural development;
- infrastructures;
- support for balance of payments and for stabilisation of public finance;
- strengthening the institutional capacities of the State in the broad sense (Parliament, Justice, human rights, the peace process);
- support for the return of refugees and the reintegration of victims of the conflict

For 2003-2007 (9th EDF), the EU has made available an overall amount of €172 million (A and B envelopes). This will be used within the context of the "Temporary Strategic Context of economic growth and the fight against poverty" adopted by the Government and approved by the IMF and the World Bank in 2002.

A first budget (the A budget) of €115 million is intended for:

- rural development (€56,75 million);
- good governance (€17,25 million);
- Macro-economic support (€31.5 million);
- Non-focal areas: capacity-building of civil society (€9.5 million):

A second budget (the B budget) of €57 million is available to cover unforeseen needs (such as emergency aid, debt alleviation, support for export earnings, when these cannot be financed out of the A budget).

Burundi can also avail of the Investment Facility managed by the European Investment Bank.

Moreover, ECHO – the EU humanitarian aid office – has been present in Burundi since 1996.

For the period 2001-2002-2003, the sum allocated to ECHO is €52,2 million.

For 2003, ECHO is focusing on:

- Health (€4.9 million);
- Nutrition (€2.6 million);
- Food security and food aid (€2.9 million);
- Water, sanitation, first aid, education (€3.5 million);
- Security, coordination and logistics (€1 million).





## Burundi Rehabilitation Programme

# Bridging the gap between emergency aid and development

Burundi has been plagued by conflict since 1993. Its economy has collapsed and its population held to ransom. Conflict has created a new “category” of citizen: victims. The displaced, refugees, former soldiers, and the wounded make up the greater part of Burundi’s population. However, aid programmes are being re-established in Burundi, in step with peace negotiations. Against a difficult and extremely volatile backdrop, PREBU, the European Commission’s Burundi Rehabilitation Programme, is now taking over responsibility for emergency aid and responding to people’s demands.

Zacharie, chairman of a farmers’ association in Caruzi province in the north of Burundi, comments: “We had absolutely nothing left! Conflict and famine did so much damage in 1999 and 2000, and we had nothing to live on except World Food Programme aid. We were afraid to grow crops. When PREBU came onto the scene, the first thing that people here wanted was simply food security. After that, we asked for seed and livestock to sell on the market”.

First emergency aid, then rehabilitation. In theory, it looks simple. PREBU has been doing its utmost to link humanitarian aid and longer-term development since 2000. Endowed with a budget in the region of €68 million over five years and eight months, the programme focuses on helping victims of the conflict and rehabilitating the country’s economic and social infrastructure. “The aim is not to build or to hand out seed just for the sake of it”, says Juvenal Ntahomvukiye, head of PREBU’s provincial branch in the north of the country. “We aim to improve everyone’s standard of living – displaced persons, refugees, former soldiers and the poor. The objective is to reintegrate people into society in a sustainable way, to strengthen rural and urban communities and to relaunch income-generating activities”. An ambitious programme. PREBU’s activities range from the reconstruction and construction of schools and health facilities, water-supply points etc. to electrification of rural areas, support for the democratic transition process, as well as support for existing associations.

### Two prerequisites: security and responding to demand

When it started in 2000, PREBU focused on three “pacified” provinces (Kirundo, Kayanza and Ngozi). As Cyriaque Baricako, PREBU’s director, explains, “it’s impossible to build for the long term in a region that is prey to conflict”. Although most of PREBU’s activities are concentrated in the safest areas, all Burundi’s provinces currently benefit from its work, which is based on the involvement of the beneficiaries and the decentralisation of aid. Applications for assistance are lodged by the beneficiary communities to PREBU’s regional representatives, who analyse them along with the community and provincial development committees. The beneficiaries also commit to making a contribution to the project by providing equipment or their labour. The provincial authorities, also, have to back the approach and support it.



Rehabilitation and construction are the most “visible” aspects of the programme.

Infrastructures are the most “visible” aspect of the programme. Rehabilitation and construction are occurring at such a rate that it is impossible to draw up a comprehensive list, but work includes paths, roads, bridges, schools, banks, health centres, hospitals, markets, business centres, tile kilns, metal or tiled roofs, camps for displaced persons, electrical supply lines, water-supply points, pumping stations, and so on – with all the work carried out by local businesses selected on the basis of tenders. In addition to the direct advantages for everyone concerned, highly labour-intensive work is helping to relaunch the regional job market and the economy of the region concerned.

### Generating income

Less visible, but no less crucial, is the relaunching of income-generating activities. Aside from the work provided by infrastructure projects, PREBU also focuses on farming, stock rearing, fish farming, plant production for fruit and forests, increasing stocks of seed, reforestation, anti-erosion measures, production of tiles for damaged houses etc. The programme almost exclusively supports pre-existing associations that have proved their viability. “We have to avoid a situation where associations are just created for the

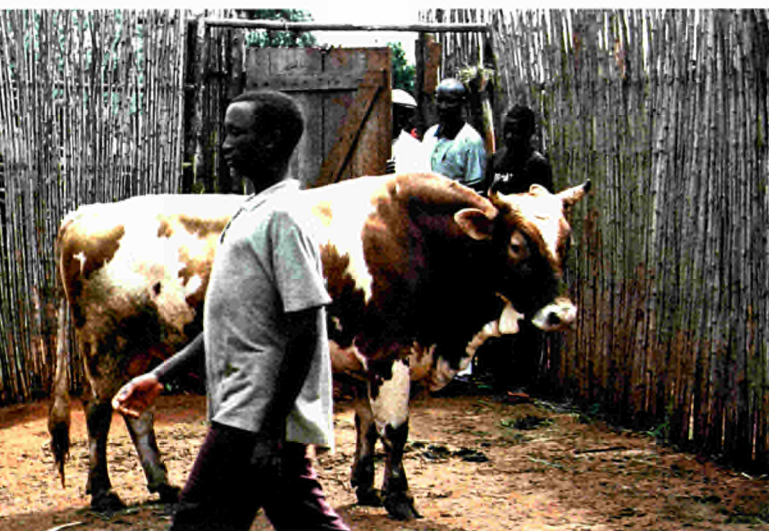




Conflict has created a new "category" of citizen: victims; the displaced, refugees, former soldiers, and the wounded make up the greater part of Burundi's population.

circumstances", stresses Sylvie Niyondiko, organiser in Ngozi province. PREBU also operates a system of rolling loans; in the case of stock rearing, this would consist of removing some of the new-born animals in order to hand them on to other beneficiaries, particularly the most in need, thereby generating a multiplier effect.

Is PREBU merely an idyll amidst devastation? Not at all. Like any programme, it is faced with problems of size: whether for infrastructure or support for associations, demand is such that the monitoring and supervision that are essential if the programme is to continue pose a challenge. A hospital, even when brand new, cannot function without doctors; nor a school without teachers; nor a water post without a tap. Such cases may be exceptions, but they do occur. Can this be put down to a lack of staff? Or to too little involvement on the part of the authorities? Insufficient awareness-raising? Incomplete ownership by the population? Or to people taking insufficient advantage of past achievements? Or to rivalry between beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries? The answer is undoubtedly a mixture of all these, to varying degrees depending on the problems



Less visible, but also crucial, is PREBU's emphasis on income-generating activities, such as farming and stock-rearing.

encountered. In addition, it is difficult to coordinate the various aid programmes on account of the multiplicity of people involved and of the procedures applicable to each programme. Although its level of success and budget are the envy of many, account still has to be taken of PREBU's wide-ranging mission and of Burundi's ongoing crisis.

What of the future? If the situation permits, Prebu would like to complete the essential rehabilitation work requested by the population and to continue supporting the agricultural associations in order to encourage rural development. Because, despite the resumption of aid to Burundi, the rural population remains impoverished. According to estimates, its buying power has decreased fivefold since 1993 for the least deprived (tradesmen, craftsmen, etc.). This is virtually zero for the majority of families. Moreover, the dispersal of the population does not make economic development easy. Consequently, strengthening rural urbanisation by encouraging people to settle around community infrastructures (primary school, college, health and trade centres, cooperatives...) seems an essential element in reviving the rural economy and ensuring security. Structuring rural society around medium-sized villages (5,000 to 10,000 inhabitants), makes it possible to organise harvests and storage, to better manage supplies of inputs and small agricultural equipment to farmers and to encourage the creation of small businesses and trade. Lastly, Prebu would like to be able to continue investing in the remonetisation of the rural environment so that the food sector can fully play its adjustment role in the general economic context of the country. Financing general interest activities – like rehabilitating rural tracks which are highly manpower intensive, trade centres and any activities which open up rural areas – makes it possible to inject money into the most disadvantaged areas and to initiate the remonetisation which is essential to development. ■ FL

### Evaluation at 30 June 2003

Work realised	N°	N° of beneficiaries	Remarks
Primary schools	71	350.000	Over six years  +300 (by 09.2005) +102 kms (by 09.2005) +150 kms to be achieved (through Stabex, for which the technical dossier is managed by Prebu)
Health centres	12	100.000	
Hospitals	5	100.000	
Provincial health offices	3		
Business centres	5	50.000	
Kms of water supply lines	455	100.000	
Kms of rural electrification	14	10.000	
Kms of rural roads	42	10.000	
Houses	2.500	15.000	
Supported associations	380	38.000	Each association has on average 20 members
Forest plants produced	12.500.000	12.500	
Hectares of forest planted	6.000		



# Burundi



## General Information

Area (square km):	26 338 km <sup>2</sup>
Population (million) :	6.8 (2002 est.)
Population density:	258 inhabitants per km <sup>2</sup>
Capital :	Bujumbura
Provinces :	Bubanza, Bujumbura, Bururi, Cankuzo, Cibitoke, Gitega, Karuzi, Kayanza, Kirundo, Makamba, Muramvya, Muyinga, Mwaro, Ngozi, Rutana, Ruyigi
Languages:	French (official), Kirundi (official), Swahili
Ethnic groups:	Hutus 85%, Tutsis 14%, Twa 1%
Religions:	Christian (67%), Roman Catholic (62%), Protestant ( 5%), Muslim (10%) and traditional beliefs (23%)

## Political structure

Official name:	Republic of Burundi
President (since 30 April 2003):	Domitien Ndayizeye (head of state) In accordance with the Arusha Agreement of August 2000, the Tutsi President Pierre Buyoya handed over power on 30 April 2003 to the Hutu Vice-President Domitien Ndayizeye (member of Burundi's principal Hutu political party, the Burundi Democratic Front [FRODEBU]).
Current Vice-President:	Alphonse Marie Kadege (Tutsi), President of the Union For National Progress (UPRONA).
Legal system:	Based on the Belgian civil code, the Transitional Constitution approved in June 1998, and on the Arusha Agreement.
Legislative branch:	A National Assembly constituted in January 2002 and composed of 178 members, 121 of which originate from the former Assembly. There is also a Senate, members of which are appointed on the basis of criteria stipulated under the peace agreement.
Political parties:	Burundi Democratic Front (FRODEBU), Union For National Progress (UPRONA)

## Economy

Currency:	Burundi franc (BIF) (€1 = 1,185.99BIF)
GDP per capita:	Purchasing power parity US\$690 (2001)
GDP growth rate:	3.5%
Inflation rate:	8%
Principal economic sectors:	agriculture; coffee, tea, cotton

## Social Indicators

Human development Index rating:	0.337 (171st out of 175 countries)
Population growth rate:	2.36% (2002 est.)
Life expectancy at birth:	40.4 (2001 est.)
Infant mortality per 1,000 births:	114
Gini index:	33.3 (1998)
Income poverty:	46.3%
Adult literacy rates:	49.2% (2001 est.)
Population using improved water sources:	78%

Sources: Economic Intelligence Unit 2003, UNDP (2003), CIA World Fact Book



# Letters to the editor

Dear Madam,

The Courier of January-February 2003 (p.38) had a boxed article entitled "Mining the Poor". It repeated the sort of things that people from the rich world (who are perhaps feeling rather guilty about the demands their lifestyle puts upon nature) expect to hear about mining. Yet almost all of the "facts" offered are wrong. This is doubly sad; there are some aspects of mining that need to be challenged, but none of them appear here. "Mining is the world's fifth largest industry, it is also, by its very nature, one of the most environmentally destructive" says the author. In 2000, the combined mining companies of the world had a capitalisation of about US\$220 billion. That was under half that of Microsoft's US\$550 billion dollars at the time. Even AOL/Time Warner had a capitalisation a third bigger than the world's mining industry. But Microsoft and AOL/Time Warner don't put their shareholder's money at risk in the poor countries of the world; the mining companies do. Never a good deed goes unpunished; for the last 25 years the rate of return on mining has been below the cost of capital.

The author says the mining sector is "one of the most environmentally destructive". The area of the earth affected by mining is very small in relation to its size (there are only about 40 significant operating mines in the whole of Africa between the Sabara desert and the Zambesi river). Rio Tinto PLC, one of the worlds biggest mining groups, says that its operations affected 102,000 hectares in 2000. It has a capitalisation of around US\$24 billion, or about a tenth of the sector's total, so at a first approximation one can say that the area affected by mining on this planet must be of the order of a million hectares. By contrast, the US has about 16 million hectares under roads or as parking lots.

"TNC's have increasingly moved to the Southern Hemisphere where... the environmental standards that are expected of the companies in the North do not apply in most of the South". First, public companies, no matter how small, fear weakening their share price by accusations of environmental abuse, so they maintain standards equivalent to, say, Australia's. In addition, the great majority of poor countries in the South have adopted rich-country style environmental codes provided by aid donors (many of which are actually inappropriate, but never mind). Finally, the Southern Hemisphere is relatively unexplored, and that is where most of the new mines are being found and started.

"During the last hundred years, mining has meant that probably 100 million people... have been removed from land where they lived and farmed." I don't know what the global figure is, but let us extrapolate from Zimbabwe's experience. In the past twenty years I can bring to mind only two significant cases of groups being displaced, one a gold mine (about 85 families) and one a diamond mine (about 140 families). Both were well compensated, given homes and farms greatly superior to those they left. In case I have missed some, let us assume that the total is 2,000 persons in the past 20 years, or 100 a year. The value of Zimbabwe's mining output (when things are going well, which, as you will probably be aware, they are not) is about US\$500 million annually. The value of the global output from mining is around US\$200 billion a year, or about 400 times as much. Four hundred times a hundred is 40,000 people a year, still too many, but hardly a million.

There are a number of areas in mining where informed criticism could be very constructive. However, the type of scattergun approach, with broad accusations such as the author has used, simply reinforces the conviction of the mining companies that they are dealing with ignorant riders of the environmental bandwagon who don't want to be get down off it to deal with the facts.

Yours sincerely

John Holloway

Dear Madam,

Thank you for the most interesting issue n° 196 of the Courier. In particular, I am interested in the industrialisation processes adopted by developing countries.

However, the article on pp. 36-38 "Transnational corporations and developing countries: big business, poor peoples" introduces partial truths, without discussing enough the roles and responsibilities of receiving country governments. I expected a more analytical approach, of both the problems and advantages related to FDI flows to the developing world. Development increasingly depends on achievements via FDI and international development grants and loans are more directed for institution building, inclusive of promoting and demobilising the FDI. This is healthy, an important aspect of the development trajectory and enables sustainability in the long term. The mineral industry, as a pioneer for industrial development and a means of "Resource-Based Sustainable Development" has very much changed its behaviour in the past ten years. In today's minerals sector, it is mainly the TNCs which have the technology and capital to develop nationally important resources and there are a number of cases where companies have fairly fulfilled even ambitious expectations of the society. The experience of many minerals-driven developing countries has shown that the "guilty TNCs" in this sector perform socially, environmentally and economically better than many ex-parastatals, which badly failed in all performance, or than many SMEs, which may act in a shortsighted way. By law, underground resources are worldwide a national resource, a unique opportunity for poverty reduction, and enterprises are awarded licenses (with negotiated terms and conditions) to develop this asset. Development cooperation agencies have an important opportunity and responsibility to encourage and advise governments to fully benefit from their minerals, avoid negative impacts, manage closures of mines, etc. Could some space in a future issue of the Courier be saved to analyse the possibilities for mining investments in the developing world and also the requirements for governments to properly accommodate to these investments? Whatever we would consider more ideal, the use of national resources has often been and will be the first step to industrialisation and certainly this can be done successfully.

Sincerely

Pentti Noras

Assistant Director, Geological Survey of Finland (GTK)

NB The contents of this letter do not necessarily reflect the views of the GTK

Having read the article, "Regional integration and development: the challenges facing SADC", in the March-April 2003 edition of the Courier, I am writing to enquire about the possibility of more articles about regional integration in Africa. Given the number of regional groupings in Africa, your article is well placed to highlight the strength of this organisation. I am writing specifically with respect to the West Africa Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA). The coastal countries - Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Senegal and Togo - and the interior countries - Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger - forged their destiny together in founding the UEMOA in 1996. Partly inspired by the EU, UEMOA has set itself similar goals of forging a large trading bloc to enhance the commercial competitiveness of its region. Since the signing of the UEMOA Treaty, this sub-regional organisation has achieved tremendous advancements in regional integration and development. UEMOA has created a free-trade zone among members by guaranteeing free movement of goods, services, people and capital. The Common External Tariff, in effect since 2000, and the common currency, the CFA franc-indexed on the Euro, all represent major achievements in the promotion of a dynamic investment environment. UEMOA is a formidable tool exacting coordinated national planning to achieve regional cohesion. The Union has drafted common sector policies in all areas of economic and social development with the goal of establishing a balanced approach to national and regional planning within the community. Common sector policies have been implemented, such as the Common Industrial Policy (1999), the Common Mining Policy (2000) and the Common Agricultural Policy (2001). And finally, harmonisation concerning competition is scheduled for 2003. These are no small achievements, and I hope that a forum in the Courier will allow more of your readers to learn about what is being accomplished today in West Africa. Moreover, the strong ties that exist between the EU and the UEMOA are today becoming even closer.

Katerina Sukovski



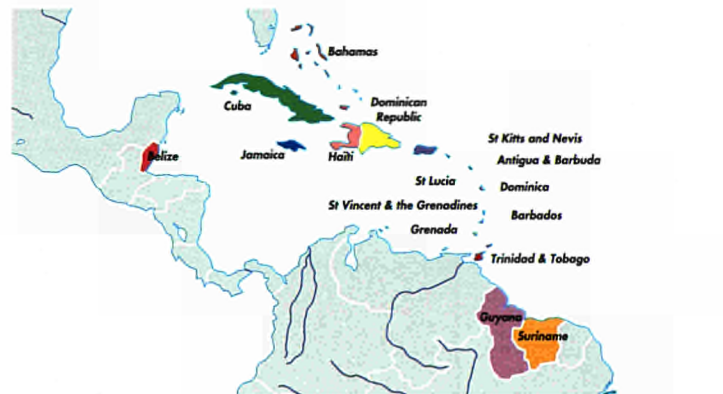


Austria  
Belgium  
Denmark  
Finland  
France  
Germany  
Greece  
Ireland  
Italy  
Luxembourg  
Netherlands  
Portugal  
Spain  
Sweden  
United Kingdom  
**France**  
Territorial collectivities  
Mayotte

St Pierre and Miquelon  
Overseas territories  
New Caledonia  
and dependencies  
French Polynesia  
French Southern and Antarctic  
territories  
Wallis and Futuna islands  
**Netherlands**  
Overseas countries  
Netherlands Antilles:  
Bonaire, Curaçao, St Martin,  
Saba, St Eustache  
Aruba  
**Denmark**  
Country having special  
relations with Denmark  
Greenland

**United Kingdom**  
Overseas countries and territories  
Anguilla  
British Antarctic Territory  
British Indian Ocean Territory  
British Virgin Islands  
Cayman Islands  
Falkland Islands  
Southern Sandwich Islands  
and dependencies  
Montserrat  
Pitcairn Island  
St Helena and dependencies  
Turks and Caicos Islands

## The European Union



## The 79 ACP States\*

Angola	Dominica	Madagascar	São Tomé and Príncipe
Antigua and Barbuda	Dominican Republic	Malawi	Senegal
Bahamas	East Timor	Mali	Seychelles
Barbados	Equatorial Guinea	Marshall islands	Sierra Leone
Belize	Eritrea	Mauritania	Solomon Islands
Benin	Ethiopia	Mauritius	Somalia
Botswana	Fiji	Micronesia	South Africa
Burkina Faso	Gabon	Mozambique	Sudan
Burundi	Gambia	Namibia	Suriname
Cameroon	Ghana	Nauru	Swaziland
Cape Verde	Grenada	Niger	Tanzania
Central African Republic	Guinea	Nigeria	Togo
Chad	Guinea Bissau	Niue	Tonga
Comoros	Guyana	Palau	Trinidad & Tobago
Congo	Haiti	Papua New Guinea	Tuvalu
Cook Islands	Jamaica	Rwanda	Uganda
Côte d'Ivoire	Kenya	St Kitts and Nevis	Vanuatu
Cuba*	Kiribati	St Lucia	Zambia
Democratic Republic of Congo	Lesotho	St Vincent and the Grenadines	Zimbabwe
Djibouti	Liberia	Sao	

### Corrigendum

In our article on the Natali Prize (published in the Courier N°169 of January February 2003), a certain confusion could have been introduced as to the resignation of the Swedish Minister Maj-Inger Klingvall. We take this occasion to specify that Mr Archer's articles did not lead to the Minister's resignation. Mrs Klingvall left her post in Spring 2002 for unrelated reasons.

\* Cuba was admitted as a new member of the ACP group in December 2000, but is not a signatory of the Cotonou Agreement. East Timor was admitted in May 2003.





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