International Policies
African Realities

REPORT FROM AN ELECTRONIC ROUNDTABLE

Economic Commission for Africa

Africa Action

International Policies, African Realities

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Electronic Roundtable*

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Foreword

Today's global issues, from HIV/AIDS to global warming, and from trade policies to the failure of international peace-keeping, have their most immediate and devastating consequences in Africa. Yet global policymakers rarely take adequate account of African realities, or benefit from the full participation of African voices. The resulting inappropriate or simplistic agendas have often been imposed on Africa, with minimal consultation.

Changing this pattern, through consultation among diverse African partners and through projecting African voices into the global arena, has been a central priority for the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). The Africa Policy Information Center (APIC, now a part of Africa Action), has in recent years been a crucial conduit for making African policy perspectives accessible to diverse constituencies in the United States and around the world.

Last year, from January to May, the two organizations co-sponsored "International Policies, African Realities: An Electronic Roundtable," which brought more than 500 people together, with African panelists and participants from Africa and around the world, in a structured on-line discussion on a range of African issues.

We are now releasing this new publication based on the Roundtable because we think it contains valuable lessons for the ongoing process of making effective and innovative use of new communication technologies to advance African shaping of continental and global policies. It contains selected extracts from the Roundtable proceedings brought together by moderators Dr. AbdouMaliq Simone and Karin Santi, as well as reflections on lessons learned from the moderators and Africa Action senior research fellow William Minter.

In recent years, on-line discussions have helped expand the range of participation and multiply the impact of Africa-wide meetings: notably the 40th anniversary meeting of the ECA in 1998 focused on women in development, and the ECA's annual African Development Forums highlighting information technology (1999) and HIV/AIDS (2000). The ECA/APIC Roundtable showed that, despite Africa's lag in internet connectivity, there is already a critical mass of Africans—in almost every African country—who are sufficiently well connected to participate actively in international electronic debates.

But we are still only beginning to harness the full potential of technologies already available to use to advance Africa's agendas. In order for Africa to confront the

enormous challenges it faces in the years ahead, Africans must not only communicate with each other across the national borders and vast distances of the continent. We must also find ever more effective ways to put forward Africa's distinctive voices and change the world's priorities on global issues that affect our future.

We must do that for Africa, and for our common humanity.

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Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)

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Preface

This book contains selected extracts from an extensive period of dialogue among some 500 persons in an electronic roundtable that took place from January to May 2000. The roundtable was conducted by the Africa Policy Information Center, Washington, D.C. and the Economic Commission for Africa and entitled, "International Policies, African Realities." The primary aim of this roundtable was to generate broad discussion on the various ways Africa is actively remaking its socioeconomic life. While taking into consideration unequal power relations in the global arena, the roundtable sought to enhance the visibility and use of the dynamic ways African countries actually contribute to the shaping of that global arena.

The Africa Policy Information Center (APIC), now part of Africa Action, is a non-governmental organization based in Washington, D.C. that has emphasized work in information dissemination as an instrument of progressive policy change and the mobilization of U.S. civil society organizations in advocacy for Africa. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, is a large multilateral organization concerned with monitoring social and economic development on the continent and elaborating policy frameworks to address existing realities.

The roundtable represents a unique partnership in the history of both organizations and, itself, demonstrates how electronic media can occasion collaborations otherwise likely to be inconceivable. APIC has a wealth of experience gathering, analyzing, synthesizing and disseminating information about Africa. ECA has substantial reach and access to a broad plurality of dimensions and institutions affecting African life. As such, this partnership reflects the extent to which organizations of varying histories, locations, and capacities can and will need to join forces in order to construct creative and viable virtual spaces.

The objective of the roundtable was to provide an electronic space for Africans, North Americans and others to discuss what policy perspectives and understandings of African reality should shape international engagement with Africa. It was initiated as part of APIC's program of public education funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Ford Foundation.

The roundtable was organized around four discrete themes, with discussion open on each theme for a one-month period. The themes were: Economy and Development, Democracy and Human Rights, Peace and Security, and Education

and Culture. Extracts from the first three dialogues are included in this book. Each thematic discussion began with contributions from a panel of experts who each made an initial presentation, and then discussed the theme amongst themselves. The roundtable was then opened for general discussion among all of those who registered their participation. A large portion of the extracts here are derived from prepared remarks by panelists and respondents.

While the Roundtable was open to participants from all regions, a special effort was made to encourage participation from those on the African continent. The majority of panelists were Africans residing on the continent. The discussions were moderated and summarized on a regular basis. Panelist presentations and summaries were translated from English to French, and from French to English. It is also important to emphasize that the bulk of African participation was "commissioned" participation. Select Africans were specifically invited to participate, and in the case of panelists, paid a token honorarium for their participation.

By the conclusion of the Roundtable, a total of 549 participants had signed up for the Roundtable. More than one-fifth, counting only from the two-letter country codes on e-mail addresses, were resident in African countries. The actual percentage resident in African countries was much greater, including participants using un.org, hotmail.com and other addresses lacking country codes. The number of messages a day, including panelists' presentations, and remarks by respondents and participants, averaged approximately 2 per day.

Bellanet, an international organization based in Ottawa, Canada, provided the computer hosting, using Lyris listserv software, which allowed participants to join the discussion by e-mail or from the web. The full archive of Roundtable contributions is available for public access on the web (http://www.africapolicy.org/rtable).

Roundtable co-chairs were Dr. K.Y. Amoako, Executive Secretary of the ECA, Dr. Julius Ihonvbere, the Ford Foundation, and Ms. Adwoa Dunn-Mouton, APIC. The principal moderator was Dr. AbdouMaliq Simone, assisted by Ms. Karin Santi (APIC) and Ms. Mercy Wambui (ECA) as co-moderators. Technical support to the moderators was provided by APIC and by Bellanet.

Dr. Simone and Ms. Santi selected and arranged the extracts from the roundtable presented in this book, and contributions the concluding reflections. Comments on practical lessons learned were provided by APIC senior research fellow William Minter.

Economy and Development

The first session of the Electronic Roundtable, covering economy and development, opened with panel presentations (January 11–16, 2000) and continued with discussion by panelists and participants from January 17 through February 9. This chapter juxtaposes the views of panelists and participants, in their own words, on the critical economic issues confronting Africa.

The full archive, including e-mail contributions and English and French versions of all panel presentations, is available at www.africapolicy.org/rtable.

Panelists

Taoufik Ben Abdallah, *Environmental Development Action in the Third World (ENDA), Dakar, Senegal*

Paulina Makinwa-Adebusoye, *United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia*

Yassine Fall, *Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD), Dakar, Senegal*

Thandika Mkandawire, *United Nations Research Institute on Social Development (UNRISD), Geneva, Switzerland*

Dominique Njinkeu, *African Economic Research Consortium (AERC), Nairobi, Kenya*

Jacqueline Nkoyok, *Confederation of Central African NGOs, Douala, Cameroon*

    Fall: Political economy issues are centrally important in development debates in Africa. Key to this global inquiry about Africa's evolution is the fundamental premise regarding the responsibility of the state for social and economic dynamics. Is the state responsible for allocating resources and determining which and whose wishes will be satisfied? Will African societies be better off if the mobilization and allocation of resources is left to foreign private firms primarily motivated by wealth accumulation? Is it better left to international financial and trade institutions or to bilateral development agencies? What is the potential of political intervention in promoting or impeding social welfare or striking a balance between public outcomes and foreign private interests?

Nkoyok: At first sight, our discussion theme reflects an indisputable paradox and it is therefore crucial for all of us to consider the dialectical relationship between the sovereignty of the State and the emergence of civil society. Is there need, for instance, for the sovereignty of State to give way to the emergence of civil society? In other words, could the civil society emerge if the State remains strong? One could even go beyond by posing the question of whether or not the ever-increasing role and space allocated to the civil society is tantamount to the suicide of the State and also contributes to its weakening? Or whether the current global environment condemns states to losing their sovereignty and condemns the population to silence?

Mkandawire: Perhaps the first important thing Africans can do is to reassume responsibility for plotting the paths of development in their respective countries. The tragedy of Africa's policy-making and policy implementation in the last several years is the complete surrender of national policies to the ever-changing ideas of international experts. Africans have lacked the confidence to consciously and vigorously craft and will a future for themselves.

The first attempts that Africans made at articulating a framework for their development were in the Lagos Plan of Action, the Final Act of Lagos, and UNECA's African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programs. Most African governments signed the documents, and, to date, none of these governments have publicly dissociated itself from the ideas espoused in them. But the World Bank virulently attacked those documents, and every African government that wished to have successful debt rescheduling or aid negotiations distanced itself from the principles in them. What is not often appreciated is that most of what appears today as new insights about the imperatives of poverty reduction, investment in infrastructure and education, the requirements of rapid industrialization, and the structural and institutional bottlenecks of Africa's underdevelopment are nothing but the rehearsal of old but disparaged ideas of African scholars and policymakers.

Njinkeu: If only Africans took themselves seriously and if only the international community listened, the long and costly learning curve could be minimized. The challenge is to blend macroeconomic stabilization cum adjustment under the SAPs with the detailed structural change and microeconomic and institutional transformations proposed by the Africans. The lessons from this costly experiment should provide the basis for future engagement.

Research in recent years, accompanied by the economic performances of countries with liberalized trade regimes, have definitely confirmed the benefits that can result from open trade regimes. The main policy prescription to African countries has therefore centered on openness in economic, social and political systems. Overall the policy regime of the typical African country, compared to the mid-1980s situation, can be characterized by improved market access to foreign markets for both goods

and services, lowered barriers to entry into African markets, and competitive exchange rates with an overall shift from import substitution to policies encouraging export-oriented growth. It is also characterized by the adoption of market-oriented reforms in other areas, an increased role for decentralized administration, and of non-governmental organizations and contested political systems.

Ben Abdallah: Although some view the forward march of liberalism as the solution to Africa's economic problems, the African economies are already the most open in the world. The ratio of external trade to gross domestic product is higher than that of many European and Asian countries. Openness by itself is a debatable remedy, because up to now it has not improved the position of Africa in global production and commerce.

Similarly, all-out budgetary austerity and privatization have not yet produced the anticipated results of growth and an improvement in the population's standard of living. Certainly, Africa as a whole has had positive per-capita growth over the last few years; but this growth, which has been accompanied by severe inequality in the distribution of wealth, fuels the frustrations of a population long marginalized. Nor has this growth resulted in an easing of the grinding poverty that afflicts the continent. Budgetary austerity imposed over many years has led to unmet social needs that the majority of African countries have great difficulty resolving.

Large-scale privatization of enterprises that were publicly controlled during the 1960s and 1970s has not yet led to the emergence of a private sector that can take the lead in terms of investments and the creation of employment and wealth. In many countries, privatization is accompanied—as in the Asian countries—by corruption. This has mainly enriched social groups close to those in power, and sometimes the powerful themselves.

The dismantling of customs barriers, together with the end of public subsidies to national enterprises, were supposed to foster competition between local products and imports, and lower the costs of production. But in the absence of a supply of high-quality goods produced in sufficient quantity, this policy led to the closing of some local enterprises. Thousands of people were put out of work and massive amounts of cheap goods were imported from abroad.

Fall: The dominance of neo-liberal ideology set in motion adjustment policies. These policies sought to promote export-led growth so as to generate foreign exchange and sustain foreign debt service payment. The need for outside markets, cheap labor costs, and easy circulation of trade and investment across borders is responsible for intensified privatization measures. Indeed, both the World Trade Organization and the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act, with formal rules and enforcement mechanisms, aggressively promote these policies to support the hegemony of transnational corporations.

Privatization essentially supports mergers and acquisitions. Privatization initiatives in Africa are mostly direct transfers from State monopoly back to the monopolies of former colonizers. In the process, corruption is boosted, usually through the enticement of government officials. For example, the privatization of utilities services like water, electricity, education, health or transport is a disaster. The rationale behind privatization includes promoting efficient management. In fact, African consumers experience a worsening of service delivery, more distortions, shortages and price increases. In addition, workers are unhappy because jobs and social security are shattered while expatriates are hired with huge salaries.

Njinkeu: At the global level, there has been substantial expansion in total trade in goods and services with trade volume growing by more than 3 percentage points above growth of real Gross Domestic Product. While these trends globally apply to developed and developing countries, it is important to note that African countries have been marginalized by these developments. Despite recent reforms in trade regimes, African countries have experienced a steady decline in their shares of world trade. At the international level, the share of export in total GDP increased from 17% to 21% between 1970 and 1990; while the share of African exports in world trade dropped from 0.8% to 0.3%.

This is due, among other reasons, to African concentration on a few primary agricultural and mineral products whose importance in international trade has been declining. It is also attributable to the low level of integration in dynamic production and distribution networks and weakness in industrial and technological bases. At the global level, trade in services has grown slightly faster than trade in goods. Trade in manufactures has continued its long-term historical trend of growing faster than trade in agricultural and mining products, both in value and in volume terms. World prices of traded agricultural and mining products have lagged behind those of manufactures, leading to significant terms of trade losses.

As a result the benefits from globalization and liberalization of world trade have been unevenly distributed. An important policy challenge to African countries and the international community is the creation of a balanced and equitable multilateral trading system, which benefits the majority of the world population. African countries are likely to face increased protection in their export markets through "contingent" protection mechanisms such as sanitary and phytosanitary measures, technical barriers to trade, anti-dumping and safeguard measures. These instruments are being used as substitutes for old-fashioned protection. The cost of abiding by the requirements of these measures is very high, as firms are expected to change their production and distribution infrastructure.

Mkandawire: We cannot overstress the role that international conjuncture can play in widening or further narrowing the road ahead. Africa must learn to compete

in this global arena. Such a learning process will be facilitated not just by developing and participating in regional markets, but also by adopting an active strategy for increasing and diversifying Africa's exports. Africa's natural resources may facilitate this process. But, we should recognize that only a strategy that relies on our human capacities would create a development process that can respond flexibly to circumstances in a rapidly changing world.

Our natural-resource endowment will only contribute to development if we add intellectual value to it and if we use the revenue earned from it to transform and modernize agriculture. Doing so, we would strengthen the development of an industrial sector made competitive by a strategically orchestrated exposure to competitiveness in international markets. The current wave of simply opening up more mines according to something akin to the colonial "enclave" model does not augur well for the use of natural resources for development.

Africa should know that it cannot integrate itself fully into the global economy by permanently depending on aid and preferential treatment. Neither of these has served Africa well. Aid has produced a dependency syndrome that stifles both imagination and initiative, whereas preferential treatment (especially under the Lome Convention) has provided incentives to fossilize our production structures in primary commodities. What Africa needs as it approaches the 21st century is not increased aid but a leveling of the playing field.

An important element in this is an unconditional debt write-off for all the indebted SSA countries. Tying debt reduction to perceived compliance with certain performance standards may amount to circular reasoning. Poorly performing countries could blame their performance on the debt burden, whereas, the high flyers may owe their growth to debt relief, which currently comes by way of increased official aid.

Ben Abdallah: These new norms of global commerce are intruding into every domain of human activity. They are bringing about changes in systems of production and trade of goods and services, and increasingly, in world governance. The wealthy countries and transnational corporations profit most from these changes. The corporations, in their quest for immense size, mergers, and control of the planetary market, have deployed all their know-how to influence the multilateral negotiations in pursuit of their own interests: open markets, equal access for foreign investors, and privatization of life forms .

The new rules of global commerce, extended to investment, the environment, and different ways of life, impose adjustments on governments and economies. These rules require new investments in research, infrastructure, and training that only the industrial countries are in a position to undertake.

In light of this situation, what choices does Africa have other than to submit to the international institutions, on the one hand, or to pursue policies that in no

way ensure integration into world trade, much less a sustained improvement in living conditions, on the other?

It is difficult to imagine Africa's integration into the world economy based on specialization in primary commodities, on scarcely diversified economies, and on devastated social sectors. Rather, the foundation must be massive investment in education and training and in economic and social infrastructure, together with the construction of stable and democratic institutions. Without these, no vision of sustainable development stands a chance.

Makinwa-Adebusoye: Recent decline in both fertility and mortality levels has shifted the demographic balance in favor of those in the 15-24 age group, which numbered 149 million in 1998, constituting about 20 per cent of total African population. Their sheer size and the rapid growth of this population sub-group, which is growing faster than total population, make them a group deserving special attention.

The decisions of this young population concerning when and how many children to have will determine the future size and the quality of life of Africa's population in the 21st century. But Africa stands to reap a demographic bonus, i.e., a wave of young people entering the work force without a wave of children following, when the present "bulge" of young people comes into the workforce. If adequately trained, and if jobs can be found for these prospective entrants into the labor force, the "workforce bulge" can be the basis for more investment, greater labor productivity and rapid economic development.

Nkoyok: By its very nature, the phenomenon of globalization opposes recognizing the specificities of the development process. On the contrary, the countries of the South could form regional groupings amongst themselves. They could set up markets of scale essential for any economic development and which are a stepping stone for competitivity. African countries, given the fact that they are languishing under the burden of external debt and rendered powerless by the distractive World Bank and IMF programs of debt alleviation, have no voices anymore. Only civil society organizations have their word to say. But how do they go about this, and through which mechanisms of dialogue? How are their voices taken into account and by which institutions?

How could African countries benefit from this popular movement in order to recover from their current situation and express their viewpoints calling for the democratization of international institutions? These constitute key questions for all of us. Why, one might ask, do States on the verge of collapse hide behind a conservatism which does not entertain popular expression?

What is most required in the current world context is setting up mechanisms for dialogue, policy conception, and the sharing of visions. Faith in the internal capacities of these States and the enhancement of these capacities is especially needed. Consequently, there is a need to create a strong and responsible civil society capable

of molding deliberative forums with governments and institutions. There is also need to establish states where the rule of law prevails and which could play the role of regulator. States can be an important impetus and creator of an enabling environment for development. Is it possible to have one without the other, and contribute effectively to overcoming the major challenges of our times?

Fall: The ideological choices of the Bretton Woods institutions determine the political economy of adjustment policies. The body of knowledge, economic models and socio-economic paradigms created outside African empirical realities are unilaterally presented as ideal solutions or "best practices" for all countries. Neoclassical economic theory guides the underlying assumptions of African economic policy formulation and development programs. It suggests that market relations, operative through individual property rights and the pursuit of self-interest to maximize desires are the most important of all social relations. Therefore, human wisdom and effort must be concentrated in facilitating market transactions because unregulated markets bring prosperity while economic intervention brings chaos.

Mkandawire: African economies are market economies. This means that although the state may draw up overarching developmental plans, implementing such plans depends on the responses of households, private entrepreneurs, and institutions. There have been two important lessons to be drawn from Africa's development experience. First, the failure to mobilize the resource-allocative functions of the market can only contribute to the inflexibility of the economy. Second, the failure to recognize the weakness of market forces in a number of fundamental areas can lead to failed adjustment.

Development policies will therefore have to be keenly responsive to the capacities and weaknesses of both states and markets in Africa and seek to mobilize the former while correcting the latter. Dogmatic faith in either planning or markets will simply not do.

Njinkeu: The marginalisation of African countries in international trade is also due to the fact that most countries face considerable administrative, institutional and financial problems at several levels. First is the lack of ownership of the rules and provisions contained in the multilateral agreements governing trade. "Ownership" of the rules is an important element in the functioning of a rules based system such as the WTO.where the central organization has limited power to enforce them. Building a solid sense of ownership of such rules among members begins with participation in establishing them.

In the context of the WTO, many African countries feel no sense of "ownership", mainly because they did not effectively participate in establishing them. These countries lack the capacity to substantively engage the wide range of WTO issues. Weaknesses are primarily at the following levels:

    a.   The Geneva-based delegations of these countries are often small and lack persons with the technical backgrounds needed to participate

effectively. Links between the WTO delegations and home governments are not well developed;

b. The involvement of stakeholders, such as the business community and civil society is minimal.

c. Because of the complexity of the entire system, African countries made commitments beyond their administrative and institutional capacities.

d. Conflicting policy recommendations arise from the WTO and other institutions involved in policy formulation and implementation, notably the Bretton Woods Institutions.

In summary, international trade accords must take into account the market disadvantage of developing countries. They must acknowledge the differences in circumstances between developed and developing countries, and the fact that developing countries often face greater volatility, Opening to trade in fact contributes to that volatility, especially since developing countries have weak or non-existent safety nets and high unemployment is a persistent problem. Furthermore, it should also be accepted that developed and developing countries play on a "playing field" that is not level.

Ben Abdallah: The recovery of macroeconomic equilibrium, the privatization of publicly controlled enterprises, particularly the banking system, and the reform of investment codes had, among other objectives, the goal of encouraging foreign direct investment. This investment sought to fill the gap left by the State's disengagement and the weakness of national savings and national private sectors. The record of actual investment is highly dubious.

Apart from certain countries which have succeeded in attracting investment in diverse sectors (especially South Africa, Tunisia, Mauritius, and to a lesser extent Cote D'Ivoire, Kenya, and Botswana). the countries attracting investment are those that have oil or mineral wealth. The majority of African countries remain on the margins of capital flows. A second finding is that there is a clear trend toward the sale of national enterprises previously considered part of strategic sectors. For example, electric power companies, drinking water suppliers, and telecommunications enterprises. Some observers wonder whether African countries may indeed have gone too far with privatization.

Overall, foreign direct investment remains weak. It is concentrated in a small number of sectors, is minimally diversified, and yields few transfers of technology. What is more, the effects on the physical and human environment have at times been disastrous. Examples include forest exploitation in Cameroon and oil exploitation in Nigeria. In the last few years, it has been possible to demonstrate links in several cases between certain foreign investments and the prolongation of armed conflict, such as that in Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Republic of Congo, as well as links with corruption.

Can foreign direct investment strengthen the economy if there A sufficiently dense network of enterprises doesn't exist at the local level with which this investment can connect? Can foreign direct investment establish itself firmly in a situation where purchasing power is weak and the market is small?

Njinkeu: Regional integration will assist this process, especially as it regards the exploitation of economies of scale and in overcoming the limitations of market size. Over the next three decades, African countries are committed to a gradual integration of the continent within the framework of the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community. Commitments made by African countries in international trade negotiations will therefore need to demonstrate consistentency with the regional integration objectives. But, they will also need a great deal of support in doing so. It is therefore urgent to develop a legal framework for entering into arrangements that could facilitate the long-term objectives of coordinating African economic behavior and integrating economies into the world trading system.

Ben Abdallah: Subregional integration, currently stalled in several parts of Africa, appears to be an essential stage in the long-term response to the challenges facing the continent. It offers the possibility of complementarity in infrastructure and training, as well as larger markets. But for Africa to profit from subregional integration, steps must be taken to diversify production and, thus, substitute the present overreliance on imports. Only the creation of wealth on the continent will allow Africa to overcome underemployment and poverty.

Subregional integration, however, is still on the drawing board. In the Southern African region, South Africa has not yet managed to build stable relations with its neighbors in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). Many potential conflicts persist. These relate not only to immigration and to divergent positions on armed conflicts, but also to the role of South Africa as an economic power in the subregion. These tensions were illustrated by the protests of the SADC countries following South Africa's signing of a separate accord with the European Union.

Similarly in West Africa, uncertainties persist as to relations with the Economic Community West African States (ECOWAS) despite the fact that the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) is a zone of monetary and trade integration,. There is also tension over the role of Nigeria, especially its military and economic role. Recent decisions to create a unitary currency for West Africa pose problems not yet entirely clear. These problems may jeopardize the stated commitment to integration.

Fall: Can we entirely trust bilateral and multilateral channels as means to address the major economic challenges of our times? My answer to this question is no. Any power when left unchecked loses accountability. However, it is within the power of governments and NGOs to abide by clear and simple rules, equity and governance. Transparent negotiations and agreements may determine the content of such rules. We

must understand the necessary and important contributions NGOs can make to keeping governments, development agencies and financial institutions under permanent check.

Despite their contradictions, NGOs have demonstrated their critical role in sustaining the growth of democratic values and shaping an alternative vision of a world different from what powerful market forces are trying to impose upon people-i.e., a vision of economic, political and social rights. In recent times, they have become synonymous with altering the balance of powers both nationally and internationally in spheres as diverse as human rights, economic and international trade policies, environmental health, gender equality, peace and knowledge sharing. The concrete results of NGOs are illustrated through their organized determination and success in making the Seattle WTO Ministerial Conference a failure, the banning of landmines, and the freezing of the OECD's Multilateral Agreement on Investment aimed at empowering corporations to the detriment of developing countries and endogenous people.

Mkandawire: For more than a decade, most of Africa has spent time and resources "adjusting" non-existent or defective markets. It was hoped that getting the prices and the monetary or financial fundamentals right would be the one medicine needed to ensure the health of African economies: poverty reduction, equity, growth, industrialization, macros/ability, and so forth. The plethora of micro and structural changes, the development of human capital and infrastructure, and the institution-building required for a modern capitalist economy were recognized only as important footnotes in the development model. Evidently, at least in most of Sub-Saharan Africa, the nostrums for all economic ills have been overwhelmed by the enormity of the ailment. The irony is that it has taken more than a decade for us to rediscover that, as the World Bank finally admitted in 1994, "adjustment alone is not adequate for long-term sustainable development."

Fall: Further, the centerpiece of Africa's struggle for equality, human development and peace lies in one of the most profound imbalances: the lack of equality between women and men. There is inequality in terms of the lack of recognition accorded to womens' contributions in building society's welfare, their participation in economic and political decision-making, their access to and control over wealth and the surplus asset generated. Economic policies from colonial times to the adjustment era have progressively developed mechanisms that aggravate gender inequality. Their impact is in many cases more alienating for women than the informal constraints of preexisting institutions. Gender equality is yet to move from backstage to center stage. The momentum successfully created in Beijing is very slow to take place.

What can make delinquent African governments change the way they do business with women? Are African governments and the world community serious about gender equality? Why is the application of formal rules for engendering resource

allocations and power sharing mechanisms so slow in taking place? Some of the answers lie in the fact that African governments and international institutions are led by conservative men with ideologies of the past. They surely deserve a failing grade for the gender biased policies they have been carrying out all over Africa. Women need and deserve more than literature and rhetoric in this new century. They want to see concrete, systematic and measurable change to reverse their situation for the better. Now is the time for them to set an institutional agenda.

African people hear often that information technology will make the continent develop and catch up with other regions. Well, the reality is that Africa enters the 21st century having the least developed telecommunication services and infrastructure in the world, with 26% of the world population sharing 2% of world telephone lines, and no control whatsoever on the content or nature of information being sold to its people.

Makinwa-Adebusoye: Women in African societies have subordinate status to men despite advances by some women – particularly, those who are educated and who usually reside in urban centres. The primary roles of most African women are those of wife and mother. Childbearing is an important determinant of social status. In most countries, children are the main source of old-age security for parents who have large families in order to ensure that a few of their children survive to adulthood. Children contribute to household income. They serve as farm workers and hawkers of assorted wares in the informal sector. Children are also relied upon to perform vital household tasks such as cooking and cleaning, as well as fetching potable water and collecting "free" fuel wood from forests, often from long distances.

Rapid population growth contributes enormously to over-utilization of resources and environmental degradation. In time, consumption of nearby resources like fuel wood results in increases in the time costs of their use. A household would need more child-hours to collect the same quantity of, say, water and firewood. This creates private incentives to have more children. Indeed, it results in a vicious circle in which child labor and rapid population growth lead to environmental degradation, which in turn, generates more work and the need for more children and thus, rapid population growth. The vicious circle reflects a child-dependency syndrome arising from unequal distribution of, and failure to ensure women's equal access, to wealth-creating resources.

Fall: Can African countries compete against European and American corporations and pharmaceutical companies who have the knowledge and power to patent seeds or medical products and prevent others from using them for developmental objectives? For instance, it was recently reported that South Africa has plans to manufacture medicine for HIV/AIDS patients in order to drastically reduce the costs for African AIDS patients. The pharmaceutical companies are using all kinds of intimidation against South Africa projects, including lobbying the US authorities to support them. This hurts every one in Africa. Particularly, it hurts women, who

suffer most from AIDS. If the international community is serious about its concern for Africa's security, it would reconsider the heavy burden export led growth policies place at the expense of resources badly needed to care for women and children victims of the AIDS pandemic. Similarly, the industrialized countries deserve some ethics lessons. They silently watch, or actively support, their arms and mine industries fuel war to sustain their market in Africa.

Makinwa-Adebusoye: Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have been hardest hit by the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and account for about 70 per cent of all HIV/AIDS cases in the world. The disease usually strikes males and females between 15 and 49 years. These are adults in their reproductive years and who constitute the bulk of the economically active population. The dramatic increases in AIDS-induced deaths among the most active population groups who are also most likely to leave behind young children have created about 10 million orphans.

Its negative effects on macro-economic performance through the loss of large numbers of the economically active population, creation of unschooled children (as most AIDS orphans are likely to become) who will lack competitive skills in the job market, and the national costs of treating victims, make HIV/AIDS Africa's number one development disaster.

In Africa, the number of the elderly population aged 65 years and over, though still relatively small, is increasing. Their number is expected to rise from 22 million in 1995 to 52 million in 2025.

Increases in the number of the elderly is occurring at a time when the traditional support system for the elderly, the extended family, is being eroded. The severe economic difficulties faced by many countries in the 1980s and the early 1990s have increased household poverty. Consequently, more women are working outside their homes to supplement family income, and are no longer available to care for aged parents. Moreover, massive rural-urban migrations and industrialization are reasons why working children are more likely, than ever before, to live away from older parents who are left behind in villages.

Yet, the elderly who are custodians of traditional values, and who, more than ever before, are being called upon (in some countries at least) to care for AIDS orphans, constitute a resource for development. Aging population can be expected to strain medical systems. Hence, there is need for planning to ensure a dignified and productive life for the elderly without jeopardizing the equally demanding needs of the young and adult population for education and health services, and employment.

Ben Abdallah: While governments concentrate on wooing foreign investors, little notice is taken that African economies depend fundamentally on informal activities, which involve a very large part of the population. Indeed, the informal sector is the principal source of jobs, allowing for a minimum creation of wealth and offering the main opportunities for a very young population to be economically active.

There is discrimination against those involved in the informal economy. This is reflected in terms of economic discourse. For example, the terms "investment" and "investors" generally apply only to the so-called modern economy, and of course to foreign investment. While many reforms are undertaken to attract foreign investment and create an economic, judicial, and institutional environment favorable to the private sector, the mass of small producers largely depend on programs to combat poverty.

The question, then, is how to strengthen enterprises within the informal economy so that they can increase their productivity, improve the lot of the population that depends on them, supply higher-quality products, and participate more fully in the overall economy. But can a strategy that implies favorable state action be implemented by governments that have lost their capacity to act in the context of an open economy?

Mkandawire: It has become commonplace to argue that measures adopted to deliberately accelerate development in other regions are inappropriate for Africa, not so much because things have changed but because of the alleged "peculiar" politics or culture of Africa. Our states are putatively more porous and vulnerable to capture than others. Our culture is not frugal enough or is downright antidevelopment. We invest too much in social relations to have any time for anything else. And on it goes. These views nourish the Afro-pessimistic stance that some have adopted. But they also nourish the arrogance of those who have chosen to assume the task of developing Africa without African involvement. As Ake has stressed, "the idea that a people or their culture and social institutions can be an obstacle to their development is one of the major confusions of current development thinking, and it is one of its most expensive errors."

However much we may loathe the attempts to locate Africa's poor performance on its supposedly immutable and peculiar characteristics, we must also recognize the need for fundamental changes in some of our attitudes, institutional arrangements, orientation to governance, and economic management. For example, the tensions and suspicion between the state and the capitalist class in many African countries that lead to massive capital outflows to safer havens are very unhealthy for the development of a capitalist economy. Furthermore, subordinating the national goals and development agenda to the narrow and often temporary interests of political survival or ethnic loyalty is hardly the best way to build a competitive and prosperous economy. In the end, there is no wishing away the sociopolitical issues that the transition to a market economy brings. Each country must, out of its own historical experiences, forge its own vision and design the requisite institutions to achieve development. Outsiders can assist, but this can never substitute for local initiative.

Njinkeu: Overall, the willingness of African countries to open their markets is real. The difficulties for doing so are mainly due to weak capacity (human, financial, institutional, etc). Accordingly, capacity building and technical assistance should be included in all international development initiatives. For example, this could take place through systematic

inclusion of relevant special provisions in all agreements for developing and least developed countries. The special and differential treatment should be linked to the progressive elimination of supply and other constraints to competitiveness of African firms. International agreements shall be commensurate with African capacities and their efforts at economic and financial reforms as well as the diversification of their production and export bases. Likewise, these agreements should ensure that there is consistency and coherence with other policy commitments and that these do not conflict with the development goals of African countries. There is a need for African countries to build strategic partnerships and form coalitions among themselves, or with other developing countries. Fortunately conditions are better today and there are several reasons to be optimistic.

Fall: Local NGOs should not hesitate to challenge the World Bank's major policy choices and assumptions. They should work with independent African academics and researchers to revisit issues from a gender perspective and not be overly concerned with donor priorities. The exclusive reliance on foreign consulting firms and expertise is wrong. Such expertise should not be preferred over the invaluable contribution of homegrown ideas and solutions from local NGOs.

Development and human rights NGOs must not compete with each other but work together to bring meaningful contributions in policy design, moving from the periphery of domestic and world affairs to the mainstream of economic decision making mechanisms. Public accountability and transparency depends largely on the capacity of local NGOs to monitor the way budget items are ranked, ministerial disbursements made or priorities determined. States, as well as international institutions must be prepared to accommodate informed NGOs and more demanding constituencies. These constituencies include youth, women, peasants, educators, environmentalists, and students, who are willing, able and ready to play a role in the management of resources, services and opportunities.

Mkandawire: Moving African economies onto a development path will require robust state and societal institutions. These, in turn, will require creative mechanisms to produce a truly developmental state—society nexus able to synergistically mobilize human and physical resources and address the many contradictions inherent in our societies and in any processes of rapid change.

Economic development is quintessentially a political process involving the distribution of not only economic resources but also power. It is a process that heavily taxes the political system. It involves sacrifices and commitments that can only be sustained through a sense of shared vision and common purpose. It calls for the mobilization of national capacities. We have argued that such a process must be democratic. This is not only because of the inherent value of democracy but also because, given the nature of African societies, their social pluralism and the artificiality of national borders and the current political conjuncture, only a democratic developmental state can acquire the adhesion of a citizenry as diverse as one finds in African countries.

Participants

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Kapijimpanga: Frankly, Africa has not been marginalized. We as Africa (governments and institutions) and Africans (as people) have marginalized ourselves. We have adopted or allowed our so-called leaders to agree and to adopt policies that have led to this marginalization. We as Africans at different levels must accept this position. We must not externalize the problems or relegate them to someone else. We should rather see ourselves as having contributed to these problems because it is within this knowing and acknowledgement of our mistakes that we begin to find meaningful solutions.

We must turn our language around so that in every problem that we have faced, we can see for ourselves new opportunities for change. We could say, for example,

that Africa accepted prescriptions, and that we have adopted policies that have marginalized us in the global trading system... etc. For within this, we can find alternative policies that will not marginalise us. Externalising problems shuts the door to our self-knowledge and self-determination and ability to define and manifest the reality that we want.

McNeely: Each of the panelists are keen to notice who is left out of programs and policies designed to "help Africa." Abdallah points out, none of the economic programs imposed on Africa from outside took into account the informal sector where women, children and the elderly are a major producers. Adebusoye points out in her paper that these sectors pay a high price, in terms of having no access to wealth generating resources, but they support a great number of people increasingly made unproductive by the spread of AIDS.

As Africa adjusts to each new program promising to reduce poverty and to bring development, people reel from environmental destruction, increased poverty and an increasing sense that they have no control over the "rules of the game." Civil society is left out in formal trade negotiations at the WTO as pointed out by Njinkeu through his discussion of how there is no real sense of "ownership." Civil society is also left out of a parallel economic system existing on the continent. Here, enterprising characters trade arms and diamonds, which, with the investment of foreign capital, have served to keep deadly conflicts going in countries like Angola and the DRC.

Odinkalu: Ben Abdallah's very rich and original contribution unfortunately ends at the point where it was beginning to get really interesting. Among many other useful points made in this contribution, he suggests that Africa "must, therefore, demand from the multilateral trading system as much access as possible for its products to the markets of the wealthy countries. It must seek to attenuate the effects of new rules of commerce on this trade. And finally, it must rethink its comparative geopolitical advantages in order to benefit from complementarity of resources under advantageous conditions that are necessary for its development", a point that is pursued in varying degrees by at least two other panelists.

This is quite interesting but seems to me, on closer examination to be based on a doubtful premise. For what are we going to be demanding access? You only demand access for what you produce. And by "produce", I mean value-added production by domestic enterprise(s). It doesn't help to demand access for the extracts from the earth which, excepting a few exceptions, we don't control anyway.

Kapijimpanga: Why are we stuck in primary commodity production? Answers to this question are very interesting, but it is becoming clear that it is because we have not implemented the Lagos Plan of Action recommendation on putting science and technology in the service of development, and thus reinforcing autonomous capacity of African countries in this field. Instead, we have tended to believe that the

transformation from raw material to manufactured products will be undertaken by foreign investors, especially the multinationals.

As is becoming evident in Zimbabwe, these multinationals have no interest in going beyond primary material production because completing the production process outside Africa is more beneficial to them. This seems to be the case of TNCs in the chrome industry, which have no interest in going beyond producing ingots of ferrochrome for which the price difference between the chromite ore and the ingot is something in the region of 1000 times in spite of the intermediary ingot process via furnaces. Zimbabwe could be the largest producer of stainless steel had the multinationals dominating the industry shown any interest at all. Africans tend to assume that TNCs have our interest at heart and this is totally misleading.

Thomas: The poor results from export oriented growth policy despite rapid growth in the volume of world trade is indeed troublesome. The issues of the WTO, the incalculable threat and limited opportunities from globalization, the slow pace of regional integration, low level of intra-African trade, and current poor prospects of having in place a balanced and equitable (and one should add transparent) trading system are all quite valid concerns. However, in reviewing these concerns, the passing reference to the "weak industrial and technological bases" of African economies leaves a major gap in the reflections on the trade issue and the overall theme.

What separates the rich from the poor are science and technology. This was duly recognized in the Lagos Plan of Action. Two decades later, there is still no action! Why? Technological changes in the advanced countries were designed to meet their development challenges and with a few exceptions, applications to the rest of the world have been largely incidental. Opportunities to close the gap between the rich and the poor, through the globalization of knowledge, have been limited, while the rapid technological changes in the advanced countries continue to amplify the gap.

Sokona: Liberalization of trade has not removed some of the barriers and constraints that most African countries face in gaining more access to Northern markets. The world economy is structured in such a way that it keeps African economies in a perennial state of dependency.

Africa's challenge of a multilateral trade system beneficial to the world community may appear a bit of a wishful thinking to cynics who argue that, in spite of the benefits of regional groupings, Africa has nurtured too many false hopes of regionalism and South/South co-operation. Creating a level playing field as Njinkeu rightly underlines is vital since trade imbalances, coupled with structural difficulties experienced by developing countries, would only serve to create greater poverty and create a even more distorted picture of the world economy.

The other challenge is also for NGOs and civil society to gain more insight into the politics of trade liberalisation and how it favors one group to the detriment of another.

The real winners at the Seattle World Trade Organisation Conference were not the American superpower with its arsenal of multinationals, nor the European Union, or even Southern countries united in their purpose. At Seattle, civil society, backed by NGOs, symbolized the biblical story of David and the Goliath and won the battle.

Odinkalu: This appears to me to return us to the age-old, and increasingly dated dichotomy between "import substitution" and "export promotion" and runs a risk of perpetuating the existing international "division of labour". The Lome Convention, which is cited as a possible panacea, has its history and origins in a desire to perpetuate precisely this division of labor in which Africa originally provided the raw materials for European industry. The tragedy is that Africa is no longer in a position to even provide these raw materials. Our environment has been devastated by it all. So much of what we offer under Lome these days is slave labour for the EU.

Kapijimpanga: People working in the trade area acknowledge that a broad openness has not led to increased access to foreign markets. On the contrary, walls are growing higher in the North. So, should Africa liberalize under the notion that this might result in increased external market access? As recognized by the Cairo Agenda for Relaunching Africa's Economic and Social Development, openness in Africa has been faced with consolidation of economic groupings, e.g. the single European market. So one would have to be careful in making such a link without understanding the possible negative consequences. While this is easy to say on hindsight, would this not be the case on analysis prior to policy adoption?

On the issue of lowered barriers to entry into African markets, again, people here have documented the fact that these have had the effect of de-industrialization in many parts of Africa. This is largely due to the sequencing problem and lack of accompanying measures to consolidate local industrial production.

On import substitution: this policy must not be condemned for the sake of condemnation. The key issue about import substitution was to close the glaring gap or divergence between consumption and production. In Africa, there has always been a gap between what Africa consumes and what it produces. It consumes what it does not produce and produces for trade what it does not consume. So, convergence of resource use and consumption, on the one hand, and convergence between resource base and consumption can be one element to the stability of any economic system. It is on this basis that, as a general rule, external trade must be an extension of domestic trade in order for the economy not to have severe external shocks.

Thomas: The focus of the four contributions on the series of flawed and costly policies and the shortcomings of policy dialogue and structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) are well founded. However, one important development, that needs to be acknowledged and further thought given to fostering it, is the changing nature of this dialogue. An important branch of government i.e. parliament and

civil society/NGOs, are getting actively involved by providing countervailing levers and making it possible to come to terms with African realities. Namely, that "getting the price right", "opening up the economies" or relying on market forces alone is not enough. Further progress would require well-informed and visionary leadership, mass mobilization and communication necessary to sustain and fan the flame of openness and tolerance.

The reference to the catastrophic results of various privatization programs is a valid example of the types of policy failures cited. The policy implication is that there is a need for (i) private/public sector partnerships, as market forces alone are not the answer, (ii) micro level perspective in macro policies and adjustment programmes, (iii) better understanding of the intrinsic differences between the productivity of African economies and those of the other regions of the World, and most importantly, (iv) the structural transformation of these economies.

Kapijimpanga: In responding to the issues of what strategies can Africa use to win national subregional and international markets in an environment of growing liberalisation, the first point to be made here is that the developed countries have been liberalising slowly and taking into account their national, subregional and international markets. Africa has to do the same and not just jump to the idea that international trade is the answer to development, even if one were to acknowledge the possible positive effects of external trade. The issues around trade have been well articulated in Africa and there have been adequate reasons for starting with internal then proceeding to subregional and then international trade. In other words, external trade is and should be an extension of domestic trade in order to avoid the consequences of external shocks. It is in this context that Africa has challenged South Africa's flirting with the European Community, as there is the potential of compromising regional integration.

Again, this boils down to analysis of a particular policy and its consequences. Africans know this already, but why do we think international trade is the answer to our questions. Why should Africa be carried away by growing liberalisation without having control over this process? We must exert ourselves and not leave ourselves vulnerable. We need to build up a critical mass of agreement that we must have a say in the global trends. "God only helps those that help themselves", as people in Africa tend to say. The Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos of 1980 provide the guidelines. Let us move on these now.

McNeely: Ben Abdallah asks if Africa can unlock the financial surpluses necessary to build the physical, human and institutional foundation it needs to diversify its production and become integrated into the world economy. This will require a large investment in education and in infrastructure. This is a central question that concerns other participants as well, but the prospects look bleak. As long as the global economy

seems focused on profit and people as consumers, it seems that there is limited interest in any type of "balanced and equitable multilateral trading system, which benefits the majority of the world population" as mentioned by Dominique Njinkeu.

Thomas: Empirical evidence abounds on how wealth-creating technological innovations have substituted knowledge for materials and other physical resources, and how knowledge tends to accumulate exponentially with one innovation creating opportunities for others. This issue is at the heart of the answer to the common question, namely, how does Africa become master of its considerable natural resources, transform them into wealth for the benefit of its own people, and compete in the global market? Africa needs this knowledge base in order to be able to benefit from the diffusion of innovation, innovate itself for sustainable development and be an active rather than a passive partner in the global economy.

Information technology, believed to offer an opportunity for bridging the gap in technological development, is constrained by ecological factors and the requisite knowledge is still not being globalized. Africa will have to make a conscious effort to nurture the seeds of its endogenous science and technology capacity by ensuring, for example, that the inequality in the educational space is redressed through investment in human capital. Africa must be seen not just as consumers of technology, but also as contributors to its advancement. In general, the top three priorities of Africa should be education, education and education.

Kapijimpanga: Growth must be a result of development, and we need to use those measures that reflect development and not growth. For example, we could begin to use indicators such as how many children are in school as compared to last year, or how many have access to clean water. The need to aggregate economic indicators into concepts like GDP growth tends to mislead people as to what is going on. So, the fundamental point here is that we must also use tools of analysis that reflect what we want to see. That it is fashionable to talk GDP growth rates does not necessary mean that the concept is useful. Over the past ten years, UNDP has been developing other ways of measuring development. We should now ask the ECA to further develop these tools in Africa rather than sticking to the usual concepts that do not reflect the African reality, such as economic growth or per capita growth. These concepts do not say how the ordinary people on the ground are fairing.

In responding to what resources governments can draw upon to meet social demands and social needs, it is important to dispel the notion that resources here refer simply to financial resources. I recall a report by Yoweri Museveni, President of Uganda, when he said that Africa's problem is not money but rather how to manage its human resources that Africa indeed has. I recall that soon after independence, most African governments attempted pooled all available resources together to provide education and health. Because adequate attention was not paid to the productive sector, expenditures on social services

were not sustainable. How can we make them sustainable? Let us go back to our own ideas as enshrined in the Lagos Plan of Action. Let us be more decisive in introducing economic policies that positively impact on increasing productive capacity. This is far from reliance on foreign or modern technology. You do not need multinationals to produce cooper in a country like Zambia. Modern technology is not necessarily the answer to Africa's technology problem. Again go back to Lagos and find answers there. They are embedded in the principle of our taking control over our own destiny.

Thomas: Poverty, not so much of means, but more of the mind continues to take a heavy toll on Africa's population. Although more than two decades have elapsed, and Africa is now afflicted by the HIV/AIDS pandemic more than any other region of the World, there is still some validity in the conviction of Sir Arthur Lewis that, " The LDCs (and in particular African countries collectively) have within themselves all that is required for growth. They have surpluses of fuel and of the principal mineral resources. They have enough land to feed themselves if they cultivate it properly. They are capable of learning the skills of manufacturing and of having the capital required for modernization. Their development does not in the long run depend on the existence of the developed countries, and their potential for growth would be unaffected even if all the developed countries were to sink under the sea".

McNeely: Paulina Adebusoye-Makinwa speaks of the "workforce bulge" that may be the "basis for more investment, greater labor productivity and rapid economic development." I agree that this may be the correct sequence, but I wonder whether poverty reduction naturally follows. With markets being extremely competitive, Africa has an ability, due to the failed programs explained above, to offer the cheapest labor, but will jobs alone alleviate poverty? As developing countries compete to offer the lowest wages, the question of ethics, as raised by Yassine Fall, becomes central.

Sokona: The rationale that a decrease in population will prompt a reduction in poverty needs to be demystified. While there may be a link between the escalating poverty trends and the rise in population, the one scenario only partially resolves the other. The issue of food insecurity is worsened by environmental degradation, fragile ecology, desertification and drought, unfavourable terms of trade and so on.

Sensitization programs on family planning and birth control need to be accompanied with real bottom up incentives and policies. Thus, instead of demonizing population growth, a more positive approach consisting of providing basic sanitation, health and educational facilities for the existing population should be adopted.

Governments need to take a holistic approach regarding population growth and develop population policies that take the constraints and risks that women are exposed to into account, e.g. child mortality. Women would be reticent to adopt birth control measures if government cannot guarantee the survival of their children. Therefore, proper antenatal and postnatal facilities must be put in place to support women and babies.

Religious factors that inhibit birth control must also be taken into Consideration, since for some people, this is a non-negotiable factor. On the other hand, decision makers must guard against the reverse trend of population growth, i.e. population decline. Such demographic shifts would be a new dimension of population growth and the socio-economic implications must be addressed on a longer time horizon. Rapid population decline will be a problem and society would need to change its perception and attitude towards child bearing. The reverse of population explosion will bring about an aging population like the situation in China. In addition, the benefits of population control will be lost if the reverse trend emerges. The work force and production will be seriously affected if a rapid population decline became the dominant trend.

Thomas: There is clearly need for the broadest perspective on population with commensurate attention devoted to critical issues of food and agriculture, famine, gender, youth unemployment in particular, the supply of skilled labor, improvements in knowledge and the translation of these into increased productivity. All of these and their correlates should inevitably lead to a re-examination of the over-population paradigm. Drawing attention to the gravity of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the threat to African economies is perhaps the most significant dimension of this first theme. But solutions to this threat to global peace and security were lacking, and so was the sense of urgency it definitely requires. High profile advocacy on preventive measures and access to affordable drugs are some of the issues requiring urgent actions.

Situating Africa's predicament in the global context and posing poignant questions about the role of external forces or exogenous factors are quite valid. But answers on how to transform the negative factors into positive forces for change, in particular, translating human needs into economic opportunities are lacking.

Sokona: Women need to be given greater assistance to enable their effective participation in decision-making structures. It is true that they are increasingly affected by HIV. Women are vulnerable to all sorts of respiratory diseases due to their exposure to traditional fuel and all its inherent problems. Better sustainable development options and clean energy objectives should be taken to reduce the drudgery encountered by marginalized sections of the community, such as women and girls, in their daily household chores and activities. Thus, they could devote their time and resources to income generating activities and gain better access to educational facilities.

Kapijimpanga: Although the issues of human development had been at the forefront of independence struggles and noted in the Lagos Plan of Action and the African Alternative, the ideas of bringing the human being to the center of the development process were consolidated in the Khartoum Declaration adopted in March 1988. The Declaration aimed towards a human-focused approach to socio-economic recovery and development in Africa. The Declaration also noted that, since

human beings are the center of all development, Africa's men and women are the main factors and the ends for whom and by whom any program and implementation of development must be justified. Among other things, the declaration focused on taking human conditions as the only final measure of development in Africa, as well as securing African people in terms of production, personal security, increased incomes, and access to basic needs..

In a further attempt to relaunch Africa's economic and social development, the Cairo Agenda for Action was adopted by the OAU in Addis Ababa in June 1995. Taking note of the experiences of the African people over many years, the Declaration noted that Africa must take new steps to ensure that it became an active partner in world economic system. Africa was to adopt a new vision for its development and translate this vision into appropriate programs. The same document recognized that for many years Africans had adopted many plans, strategies and programs for the development of our countries. It also recognized that these plans and program were not adequately implemented by the majority of our countries. To rectify this situation, African countries were to take effective measures within a specified time frame to ensure for satisfactory implementation and follow-up. The document requested us to adopt the Lagos Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos.

Thomas: As implied in Fall's contribution, how can Africa regain key elements of its past history, which was replete with remarkable creativity and major contributions to human civilization?

Kapijimpanga: Other questions that arise in relation to development policies are (just to mention a few): What are our principles of development? How can we have full control over our policies and not have outsiders dictate to us what we must do? Why are we allowing ourselves to be dictated at? Why are we allowing ourselves to have political leadership that does not represent our interests? How can we regain our development agenda? How far can we move on this? What have been the major constraints in securing popular participation, and how can we remove these constraints? How can we, as civil society movements, bring about this change? How can we put pressure on African governments and African intergovernmental organizations to accept agreements that benefit the people of Africa? Our main point of call is not the outside but our institutions and ourselves. These are the real challenges that we face, and this is the level at which the debate must engage; not just analysis and hoping that someone else will change things for us.

Thomas: Finally, I would like to flag just one more serious gap in the contributions. Leaving out the subject of military expenditure in our reflections on African realities constitutes the use of a marginal lens. Its role in perpetuating poverty and ignorance is quite considerable. If military expenditure is substantially reduced in favor of social sectors, winning the war on poverty stands a better chance.

According to the 1994 UNDP Human Development Report "the arms business is one of the most reprehensible sectors of international trade… with sales… to countries where millions of people lack the most basic means of survival." The eleven top arms exporters alone accounted for total sales of US$151 billion from 1988-92. Of these, the top five arms exporting countries which account for 86 % of the conventional weapons exported to developing countries from 1988-92, (including to trouble spots in Africa) are in descending order, the former Soviet Union, the United States, France, China, and the United Kingdom, all permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. According to the UN's arms register, some of the choices by LDCs in 1992 cited was Nigeria's purchase of 80 battle tanks from the United Kingdom at a cost that could have immunized all of the two million unimmunized children and provided family planning services to nearly 17 million of the more than 20 million couples who lack such services. There is clearly need for innovative ideas on appropriate institutional frameworks to help address this serious impediment to poverty reduction and sustainable development of African countries.

Odinkalu: All this leads up to regional integration as an option that deserves much closer examination. In a world of multi-mega combines, trade areas and territories, most of our states in Africa, even where they pretend to exist as political or quasi-political entities, are simply unviable economic propositions. To what extent are the problems Taoufik rightly alludes to the result of national elites who are afraid of being dwarfed or rendered politically irrelevant by integration? To what extent are those problems the result of the old spheres of colonial iInfluence and the mutual suspicions and recriminations between the different "phones"—Anglophone, Francophone, Arabophone, Lusophone etc.? How many of our governments are prepared to make the adjustments in educational policy or investment in skill levels, for instance, implied in making a right to establishment meaningful?

Okigbo: Julius Ihonvbere of the Ford Foundation has admonished us to "break the wall of intellectual and political silence, build viable networks … and make our discussions meaningful to policy." Silence is one of the greatest diseases afflicting us. We know what is wrong with our societies (including the ENDEMIC corruption that has stymied positive change). But most people are silent about these. We need to discuss how to break the thick walls of silence in Africa. Our silence provides the manure for nurturing inconsiderate leaders at all levels. We can't help but ask: So what, after all these beautiful presentations of the panel?

Hartuv: From what I've read it seems that many of us see similarities in the economic fates of African countries and do not comment about the differences between individual states. Four African countries have per capita GNP near or over U.S. $4000. Let us disregard the Seychelles, a country with less than 100,000 population and dependant on tourism. Let us disregard Gabon, a country that has

immense natural resources, but has regressed somewhat since 1982. However, we have Botswana and Mauritius that have progressed steadily each year since independence. Their social indicators, such as high school education, health, and longevity are similar to developed countries .Would anyone care to elaborate about the discrepancies between those two "lucky" states and most of the continent?

Up to the oil crises in 1973-4 and 1979-80, other African countries such as the Ivory Coast and Kenya (and Uganda up to the Idi Amin coup) developed steadily. Any comments? All countries that adopted state socialist economic regimes faired badly and declined rapidly. In 1970, Madagascar was more prosperous than Mauritius. In 1956 ,Ghana was more prosperous than South Korea. Any comments?

Hashi: I think that the Botswanan economy is based mostly on the resource wealth under her territory. Secondly, Botswana's political system was generally dominated by a particular elite that revolved around a particular social group. Its closeness to South Africa and its "realistic" foreign policy during the Cold War are some points to consider as far as political stability is concerned. I know a little about Mauritius so I will hold my comments about that issue.

On the whole, I think that it is important to assert that African countries do have differences. However, their commonality outweighs their differences. The countries that have exhibited political instability belong to the general pattern of international Keynesianism predominant from 1945-1973. The end of the post-war settlement and the rise of neo-liberalism have affected quite radically terms of trade for what remain single cash crop countries or mineral and oil countries. Internally, the lack of a truly capitalist African middle class has produced a predatory anti-nationalist group that is responsible for the current mess.

Njinkeu: Why is it so difficult for African countries to sustain positive growth rates over several years? About four years ago I visited Accra for the first time and was surprised that the city was not better than Douala or Yaounde in my home country, Cameroon. After discussing with friends I was told that in 1983 even if you had the money you could not buy salt or beer in Accra. A similar story could be said for Uganda around 1986. In 1983, Douala and Yaounde and the rest of Cameroon were prospering. If you step back in 2000 and look at the economic history of several African countries, you will see that periods of strong economic performances coincide with those when the leadership of the country was committed and supported by a public sector capable of designing and implementing sound policies. Weak performance also coincide with periods when these two attributes were not simultaneously present. I will then suggest that ensuring sustainable development should give some priority to these two dimensions. Let me say that leadership does not only mean the character of the president alone. We have several cases where a well-intended heads of state have changed because of other forces trying to weaken their authority.

I would also want to say that the issue is not necessarily socialism versus capitalism, even if on average those countries that went the capitalist way performed better than those that opted for socialism. If the attributes above are met, we shall acknowledge that a strong private sector, where local entrepreneurs work in harmony with foreign partners, should come as a third important component.

Important constraints to African sustainable growth/development are the high transactions cost of doing business in Africa. In each of the success cases indicated, a consistent effort toward private sector development was made.

Alpman: I had the good fortune of living in Uganda until 1986/7, and must respectfully disagree with you, albeit from a perspective that does not diminish nor obviate your observation. If 'you had the money', you could get beer and salt in Uganda. It just had to be a lot of money, paying your own way or sponsoring someone to drive to Kenya, where almost anything could be bought.. With the right amount of money, you could even get a Rolls Royce and one or two were indeed making their way around the innumerable potholes of Uganda. The debate about the waste of foreign currency on luxury goods, be it Heineken, Loewenbraeu or Carlsberg beer, some Single Malt whisky or a Mercedes Benz, seems to have dissipated in the past few years, possibly so as not to upset our "friends" in Lome or at the WTO. But perhaps new leadership has had to accommodate post-colonial cultural standards regarding the contemporary symbols that are associated with leadership.

Nonetheless, I think such consumption patterns deserves some attention, if only because it is just one example of how African national and regional economies still do, and possibly must, offer some restrictions to trade in and with foreign currency. It would certainly be interesting to hear from other participants on how these restrictions have affected and should affect international trade agreements, and whether there may be undue pressure on African economies from more industrialized countries.

Benamrane: It is true that Africa is plural, with different countries with different human and material resource sizes. But Africa is one as a poor, dependant, sacked and plundered continent. Saying that, all African countries in the North, the South, the East and the West share the same injustice. If the oil crisis of 1973/74 and 19979/80 stopped the development dynamic of many African countries, one must add that these crises have been, thanks to the recycling of oil revenue/rent, the cause of the debt problem in the poorest countries. If countries that adopted so called socialist systems in the 1960s and 1970s failed, one needs to explain why those which did not follow this underdeveloped socialism also failed and did not become like the "Tigers" in Asia.

Do we really think that after 20 years of structural adjustment, Africa is in better situation than that attempted by 20 years of state planning? And if we need to go further, why is Africa today in worse situation than 40 years before, under the

colonialism rule. Yesterday's populations were under state colonialism; today they are under Bretton Woods institutions and multinational firms—a new colonialism more dangerous than the former one.

Njinkeu: To Atilla Alpman, the most important consideration is not whether you could find a good on a market or not. Your information on Uganda exactly proves that the situation was quite comparable to Ghana. I was saying that prior to the period associated with some economic growth in Uganda or Ghana, the economic conditions had substantially deteriorated. In relation to Hartuv's query, I say during that period both countries did not have a development promoting strategy. If we consider the period when these economies have been growing, several people will accept that a somewhat development oriented leadership prevailed. I then insist that leadership needs to go beyond the individual.

For those countries that have been lucky to have a development oriented leader, they need that leadership to be broad-based. This is not related to whether the leader is socialist or capitalist. Interestingly enough, the two leaders during periods of positive growth rates in Ghana and Uganda used to be socialist! This seems to apply at the individual levels. I know several cases where prominent businessmen die with their activities partly because the leadership of the portfolio remained concentrated on the individual.

Moemeka: Without a conducive local environment, no amount of internal or external investment will succeed. We need to understand the relationship between investment and the socio-cultural realities of local conditions. This is what Taoufik Ben Abdallah has in mind when he asked: "Can foreign direct investment have any kind of strengthening effect of the economy if there does not exist at the local level a sufficiently dense network of enterprises with which this investment can connect? Can foreign direct investment establish itself firmly in a situation where purchasing power is weak and the market is small?"

Development is a multi-faceted endeavor; so are solutions to its problem. No one is suggesting that trade agreements, global commerce, regionalization and foreign investment are not important. They are, but their utility lies in being able to view them in relation to what local capacities can put to effective use; in the light of the presence or absence of selfless leadership and a committed citizenry. I stand to be corrected when I say that it is hard, as of now, to find more than a few countries in Africa where the good of the majority overrides the interest of leaders, their select few, and the local elite. Only education, especially adult and non-formal or positive development oriented public enlightenment, can produce the necessary conducive attitude and behavior change that makes for effective utilization of investments and development efforts. Once again, Ben Adballah shows his understanding of the multi-faceted nature of the problems of African development and how to effectively begin to solve them. He says, "The foundation must be a massive investment in education

and training and in economic and social infrastructure, together with the construction of stable and democratic institutions. Without these, no vision of sustainable development stands a chance."

Leege: Yes, per capita income and economic growth say little about income distribution. True, Botswana has been richly endowed with mineral wealth. But other nations have also been richly endowed with relatively small populations for their landmass. Angola, for one, comes to mind. Nevertheless, I would imagine that most Angolans would still be quite pleased to escape their misery and live like those who are below the poverty line in Botswana. At least the resources in Botswana have been invested in a useful manner, whereas in Angola, billions of dollars of oil and diamond revenue have been frittered away in a senseless war or looted by corrupt politicians in the ruling elite.

Good governance and peace have a lot to do with progress. How to get from point A (Angola) to point B (Botswana) is the real question (no pun intended). Alas the answer to that question remains elusive.

I am fortunate to have had the opportunity to work in both Africa and Asia. While comparisons are difficult to make due to differences of history and culture, I cannot help but contrast the trajectory followed by Angola and Cambodia in the 1990s. Both countries entered the decade in shambles on all fronts. UN peacekeepers were sent into both of them (albeit in much larger number to Cambodia) to bring peace, help organize elections and usher in a prosperous, new democratic era.

While Angola has failed miserably on all counts in two separate processes (Bicesse and Lusaka), Cambodia has managed through fits and starts to become almost a normal country again. People are still poor, and the country does not have the benefit of a large amount of natural resources, but there is peace now, and life has improved measurably for most people (more for some than others, of course). Foreign investment has occurred, especially in the garment industry, and exports from those factories have taken off thanks to preferential trading agreements with the U.S. (though they were recently capped because volume became too high), generating a fair amount of jobs. Tourists have now returned in droves to the famed Angkor Wat temples in spite of bad roads and poor facilities, bringing significant revenue into the country with them, and also creating jobs.

Cambodia is no star when it comes to good governance. There is still a great deal of corruption, the prime minister brooks little opposition, and the judiciary is still in an embryonic state. But there have been elections; there has been a will to work toward reconciliation and political coalition through innovative "win-win" solutions, and the private sector is given the space it needs to grow and create employment opportunities. Are there some lessons here that could be applicable in the African context?

Benamrame: I would like to contribute to the debate concerning the capacity and willingness of African governments to design and implement perspective, plan,

strategy and economic policy. For those who work in the field, in countries yesterday and today under adjustment programmes and tomorrow under Programme/Facility for Growth and Poverty Reduction, it is a fact that the leadership of this exercise is taken by the Bretton Woods Institutions in accordance with their major contributors, i.e., the G7 country members. Concerning the ability (sovereignty) of those dependant countries, the best way forward is concerted African expression. But here, we start another debate—debate on regional integration and its status in the ongoing process of "globalbalkanization". One part of the solution will depend on the structure of the future United Nations System. I do think that we are now embarking upon a new colonialism driven by transnational firms, which configure the real global power in the global village.

Richards: I totally agree that privatization has failed to deliver expected results. But what is the answer to an ailing, highly centralized state machinery, unaccountable and incapable of satisfying the basic needs of the general populace.

In Zimbabwe, for example, where the mass of the "wealth" is in the hands of white people, and most, if not all, of the significant black Zimbabwean owned wealth is that which is held by the state, privatization seems to lead on a path of further transferring that wealth into the hands of whites, both inside and outside the country.

Is the call for privatization running along a track to benefit the people in African countries, or is it a call running along a track to benefit non-Africans? Is it a subtle (and not so subtle) move at recolonization through control of wealth? Certainly an answer can be found which doesn't support such recolonization?

Alpman: Firstly, we should not afford other nations, particularly those whom continue to benefit from the legacy of colonialism and from the economic dependency on loans and other such dubious charity, the luxury of absolution. It is also the responsibility of the "West" (or "north", or whatever you may want to call "it") to achieve a modicum of justice in redressing historical wrongs, however difficult it may seem to articulate these past injustices. It doesn't take much to concede that Africa is still being exploited, though it may be awkward to tell moderately well-intentioned "Westerners" that they are "imperialists-by-default".

Secondly, we should not be so naive as to expect that anyone would help us if such help is not in "their" best interest. We certainly need to make the case that peace and prosperity on the continent are a better long-term investment than fostering or feeding off war, poverty and illiteracy—and I don't believe we are doing very well in that regard.

I don't believe that helpful to propose, explicitly or not, that Africans have the political or economic autonomy to assume all responsibility for developing an "adequate macroeconomic framework".

Njinkeu: What I am saying is the following: The ideal situation is that each country design and implement its policies and in this framework ask for possible help. Remember, I was responding to somebody who claimed I should not have said that Africa is marginalized or that African countries have received and implemented policies prescribed by third parties.

This is why I stressed that one key element of sustainable development in Africa is capacity building in the design and implementation of policies. If this is done we will more forcefully articulate the responsibilities of third parties. See how difficult it is in this forum to ask the correct policy question and discuss it! Yes, for some issues (e.g. debt) solutions should be put in an historical perspectives after situating responsibilities.

To your second reason, I will just respond that if we have the capacity to formulate and implement policies the issue of somebody taking care of our interests will not arise. One point I alluded to in my previous interventions is in fact that our international policies account for the need of Africans to (as you conclude) " have the political or economic autonomy to assume all responsibility for developing an "adequate macroeconomic framework".

With this can I then suggest the need for our governments to give priority to capacity building in their negotiations of international agreements. In which case I would like to listen to proposals on what exactly should be included in such agreements.

Alpman: Certainly, I would agree that capacity-building is perhaps the best terminology to date for improving administrative, managerial and enterpreneurial skills. This is possibly what development theorists and practitioners have tried to do for the past few decades more or less successfully.

What I was trying to stress was simply that we cannot avoid "articulating the responsibilities of third parties", and may feel hamstrung by the courtesies of international relations or, worse still, are blinded by our own rage. Of course, I may have stated my case a little too strongly and agree in principle that "if we have the capacity to formulate and implement policies, the issue of somebody taking care of our interests will not arise". Autonomy, political or economic, may in principle be a worthwhile goal, but it should not distract us from articulating, particularly in international agreements, an embrace of interdependence and mutual benefit as the primary alternative to dependency. I guess my point could best be summarized by stating that there is too much emphasis on autonomy. Focusing only on peculiarly African solutions may deny us the opportunities to seek collaborative solutions beyond the continent and place us in a position of perpetual antagonism to and competition with others. Again, I should add that I believe we have to present more coherent strategies to convince most non-African governments, policy-makers, business, media and civil society that peace and prosperity in Africa are in the best long-term interest of all. Silly, or sad, as it may seem, we've presented little for "Westerners" to get excited

about since "Free Mandela" and we need to be conscious of having to also appeal to a constituency that demands—at best—sound bites.

Bobbie: I have been listening to the discussion with great interest but totally amazed that perhaps the predicament of Africa is caused by her own citizens—all of us.

Please let us talk about to WHAT AREA(S) Africans must immediately direct our human resources (capacity to use our human brain power) to advance ourselves for our own good—the destiny one said we should take into our own hands. Remember, "no one is an island ...", so we must advance and merge with the global advancement.

I believe that unless we as African shift from our usual desire to show-off by talking big, criticizing the past to the extent that we forget that we need to move on, referring to God/Allah-knows-which-documents-or-Plans and this conference and that conference; unless we forget for a moment that we are big-shots and work at the high-powered office or group, and get down to some real solutions, this millennium will pass us by and we Africans will be blamed for our inaction.

Gomera: Your contention that we need to go beyond words is certainly on target. Yes, we can talk all we like about the inadequacies of our history, and the potentials of this and that technology, but unless we get to do something about it— another millennium will pass us by! Doing something about it requires a complete change of the African mind-set. That requires taking responsibility for our own actions and the consequences thereof, rather than finding comfort in expedient slogans. (Ever noticed how many times political leaders mention the words "democracy and governance", yet do little about them?)

One writer rightfully pointed out the impediments to entering markets that Africa faces and the low levels of investments in product research and development in Africa. These, plus the shortage of an appropriately trained African labor force and the many "idle" workers in Africa's rural areas, leave us in an uncompetitive position (compared to other "emerging" markets). Getting out of this requires large financial investments (in product research and development, market development and human resource capacity building) and sacrifices (sometimes big political sacrifices).

Mebratu: On Lagos Plan of Action (LPA), yes, the self-reliant and self-sustainment philosophy enshrined in it can provide a strong basis for development in Africa. The problem with LPA is that it is not designed and promoted as a 'bottom-up' process with the active participation of all development stakeholders and with adequate responsiveness to diverse local conditions and realities in the region. It is more of a transplanting process having governments as the key player rather than being a transformational process involving all sectors of the society, including government. The lack of the necessary conditions at the national level is the major hindrance for the success of the effort made to promote and implement

LPA at the regional level. In this context, LPA requires a fundamental reorientation if it is to be more than a political document and have an impact on the development process in Africa.

Brooks: There are four principles that are universal and must be recognized:

1. There is no such thing as "African" economics. There is economics, period. Ninety percent of Africa's problems stem from poverty created by unbelievably unrealistic economic policies (often foisted on African countries by well-meaning but clueless Western development "experts".)

2. When it comes to democracy and human rights there is no such thing as an "African Way". African states MUST enshrine basic human rights and regular, free and fair plebiscites to establish the legitimacy of government.

3. Trade is always good for BOTH partners. There are NO losers in the long run to increased trade. Trade is ESSENTIAL for Africa's prosperity.

4. Economic and political change in Africa must come from the bottom up. Even subsistence farmers ain't stupid (many African presidents and pundits will be surprised to hear this!). People KNOW what is best for THEM. Forcing inane economic policies on "ignorant masses" just don't work anymore (if it ever did!). Giving citizens opportunities to improve their lot themselves (though opening world markets, ending urban food subsidies, or freeing internal markets from commodity boards) WILL let them make their own economic choices that are ultimately correct. Allowing free elections will let them decide when it is time to throw useless bums out of political office. Stop trying to impose change. Set the right conditions and allow change to happen.

Ignoring any of these principles means continued disaster for this continent.

Yes, this means that many social safety nets will have to be suspended, but in too many cases these nets are financially unrealistic anyway and are paid for through foreign loans that enslave the country in long term debt. The safety nets can be rebuilt once the state can afford them in the future. Yes, this means that many entrenched workers will either be made redundant or will see their salaries fall drastically, but it also means the next generation of Africans can expect a much more prosperous future. Yes, it means an end to dreams of self-sufficiency, but no country in modern history has ever achieved that anyway. Yes, this means an end to one-party states, to governments founded on a single "big man", to the blurring of party, government

and treasury, but only the political elite are going to whine about those changes and we should have little pity for them since they got Africa where it is today . . .

Mebratu: Prescriptions for Africa are abundant. But providing the right prescriptions would require making the proper diagnosis which in turn requires the right mix of diagnostic tools and knowledge systems. That is why the methodological focus becomes very important. There are two methodologies that have been competing for dominance in Africa's policy domain. The first one is the reductionist simplification that tends to see issues in terms of either black or white. This provides the basis for broad generalizations and prescriptions within the framework of a "one-fits-all' model. Such an approach usually generates solutions with limited scope of application and collides with the continuously evolving multiple realities on the ground.

The second approach is one that attempts to overcome the limitations of the reductionist simplification by taking a more 'holistic view' of the development process. Such an approach, even is it sounds better than the reductionist simplification, has led to a situation of "detailed complexities", where the root causes (fundamentals) were either misrepresented or were overshadowed by long list of symptomatic solutions.

We have seen the global economic system becoming much more complex within the last few decades. Neither the "reductionist simplification" nor the "holistic summation" would enable us to understand the dynamic complexity of the global socio-economic transformation. In this context, I believe that the evolving "systems-evolutionary" approach as a systems science may provide a sound basis for understanding the dynamic complexity of global and African realities and the overall development challenges.

Ekundayo: In Africa, policies for the generation, distribution and marketing of electrical energy have historically put all those functions in the hands of governments. As a result, the government serves as one single source without competition. The effect has been an effective failure of development, improvement, growth or even service to the populace. As a result, there is an artificial depression in the demands of the populace for services, products and processes which will utilize electric power. Thus, there is depressed production overall. And we wonder about why there is poverty (as defined by us). The underlying reason for this state is that there is no motivation. There is no motivation because the government has no competition in a area of national life, where it has business only as a watchdog, not as a producer/supplier. The people are not motivated to perform or support performance because they have no reason to do so. They do not prosper from government patronizing them. This can be turned around by governments realizing that people must produce by themselves for themselves what they find appropriate for their needs.

Let us take Nigeria as an example. Nigeria (about 1of 6 Africans on the planet) has more than 100 million people in Nigeria and over 3 million nationals outside the country. For the supply of electric power, Nigeria has only one entity, NEPA. In the

post colonial history of the country, 99% of the citizens have never had adequate or constant power supply. Yet, governments have refused to consider creating competition for NEPA in any way, shape or form; citing "security." They considered "privatization" a euphemism for changing the producer and leaving production with only one entity.

Various efforts have been made to make this system work, with complete failure. This situation can be addressed, however, by allowing states and local government to issue licenses to small scale producers. The power needs of Nigeria were last estimated at about 12.5 gigawatts based on current demand, which itself is artificially depressed. This means that at about 2 to 20 megawatts production, the country would require, for about 70% of its current needs, at least about 500 producers. If one adds five hundred, up line and down line services and producers next to this number, we have about 1,500. To create competition and therefore enhance development, multiply this by five and we have about 7,500 Nigerian owned, Nigerian run power and power related enterprises engaged in the business of power alone.

Let us for once assess the probable effects of this situation on the economy. Employment (which will, combined with other auxilliary enterprises, take up to 1 million citizens), research and development, bankruptcies, streamlining, diversification, mergers, expansions, acquisitions and other real economic activities will increase exponentially for at least ten years. Of course, government revenues will expand exponentially. After this, we will begin to see economies of scale. Other demands will be generated for products and services, which will create more enterprises, jobs, and prosperity for more people.

Okigbo: First, on "what it is about the way in which ordinary African citizens take care of survival and livelihood ...and questions about the applicability of normative prescriptions for economic development and growth"—it is important to note the very wide variation among African peoples. So, be cautious in interpreting "ordinary African citizens" as if there are certain standards for judging ordinariness. It is hard to picture "an ordinary South African or Kenyan"—let alone "an ordinary African." If we have to generalize, we can say that for many Africans, there are two forces that impinge on their survival and livelihood. The first force is the state, which is supposed to improve the conditions for survival and livelihood (but in fact often creates more obstacles than solutions). The second force is comprised of primary groups and community associations (the primordial public of kinship relations, according to Paul Ekeh)—which is generally accepted as supportive of the individual's survival and livelihood.

As long as normative prescriptions for economic development come from the state and its associated agents (e.g. The World Bank and public institutions) the so-called "ordinary Africans" will not completely accept the precepts. The notion is pervasive in Africa that the state is to be "cheated' whenever the opportunity presents itself. This colors the perception of the civil service, public utilities, and similar services

in the eyes of ordinary Africans. It is artful to avoid public obligations, such as taxation and official levies. Contrast this with the situation in other parts of the world—where state directives are adhered to, as routine behavior.

Kinuthia-Njenga: As individual Africans, do we have a set of values we strongly believe in? Do we have a value system on which we can base our vision for the development and growth of our continent? What are our basic principles? Do we have any standards by which we expect every human being to live? What are the minimum needs that an African human being requires in terms of food, clothing, shelter, health security, knowledge, association and movement? Mahatma Gandhi once said, "God has provided human beings with all that they require for their needs but not necessarily their wants". It pains me when I see so many homeless African people, starved children and adults, ethnic cleansing/conflicts. It pains me even more when we have to stretch out our hands to the rest of the globe (the Bank, Fund, bilaterals, etc) begging/borrowing to provide for our basics needs. What has gone wrong?

MacDevette: While there are many things that we cannot control, let's focus on the areas where we can make a positive contribution. We can use the Internet to mobilize African expertise to work on African development projects and to contribute to policy development. This allows us to draw on the rich experience of Africans all over the world in a practical manner. I believe that this is an area that we need to continually build on.

There is a huge pool of creative talent in Africa based on our very varied and unique histories. We need to use this valuable resource to come up with innovative solutions in development planning and product development. The whole world is struggling with the challenges of globalizsation and developing sustainable livelihoods. We can compete globally if we get our act together. Building on the past as a resource is more valuable than being trapped by it.

Put your energy into a few worthwhile initiatives where we can make an impact and beware of wasting time on conferences, meetings, strategies, and deliberations. Let's share learning and experience, but also spend time trying out new ways of doing things. Let us build on small successful initiatives rather than grand plans to save Africa. So my primary contribution will be to my home and province (Cape Town and the Western Cape) and then to the rest of Africa. If we can make small contributions here we will be making Africa a better place.

Kapijimpanga: Survival strategies are generally very creative. One sees this all over Africa in terms of the variety of things (products) that people create during the process of making their livelihood.

I would suggest that one of the key constraints to Africa's economic development is our inability to remove constraints that people in the productive sector are faced

with. And yes, Malimu Nyere was right by saying that people develop themselves. But, people are faced with various constraints that institutions like the state are expected to remove. The notion of constraints is a pragmatic one, which would enable us to put into place policies that would remove such constraints and enable these activities to upstream themselves, even in the market place. How do we identify them? They will identify themselves to be of value beyond pure survival. In any case they are already there. We are blinded by our own notions of modernity largely. But they are there! You see them everywhere!

Greenstein: How do people really gain access to land, labor, credit, skills and Jobs? This is the real starting point for analysis. How can one build on the features of African economies, in which for the most part, the informal sector is strong, the formal sector is weak, and the state apparatus is bloated, inefficient and concerned more with extracting resources from society than facilitating the society's development?

Ranting and raving against globalization is not going to help. What is needed is a concrete attempt to examine how these features can be used to bolster the positions of individual countries within the world system. It is doubtful that there can be one African solution, because different countries possess different assets and stand in different relations to global forces. However, discussion of common problems and possible ways forward—encouraging the growth of the SMME sector, providing support to the informal economy, exploring small scale cooperative arrangements, establishing regional links, etc.—is essential.

Kwiatkowski: I have not seen in the discussion thus far proposals for less confiscatory state tax policies in African countries. The informal sector, mentioned as a major and necessary offset to abject poverty for many in Africa, remains informal often because of anti-business tax codes, unreliable legal codes for property and marketing rights, and an in some cases, a contempt held by the state for small business. The fact that women, in many cases, lead and contribute their energies to the small business sector may have something to do with the sense of state contempt for these efforts. When governments decide to "build wealth," they can only do so by unleashing the wealth producing capacity of their citizens.

Kinuthia-Njenga: On a different point—my good old friend, Taoufik Ben Abdallah in his paper raises the issue of the informal sector. We do need to learn some lessons on the evolution of this sector, particularly from the Asian economies. OSCAL in collaboration with UNCHS(Habitat) recently held an expert group meeting on the subject of "promoting value-added activities in the informal sector in Africa", and I do wish to share some of the sentiments of the participants (drawn from Africa and Asia) and some lessons learned in Asia.

Some of the critical ingredients to the success of Asian economies were rural development and distribution of land ownership. Such is the case with Japan, Taiwan

and South Korea as well as China and Vietnam. Rural development was placed high on the agenda of these countries, as no amount of industrialization was expected to absorb the population in the non-agricultural industries. Still the most successful efforts in Asia focused on the overall efficiency of the economy.

Thus, while strong policies in favor of the informal sector have been implemented for decades in Asia, many of these have seen to it that efficiency in the market is nurtured and maintained at the same time. Asian experiences point most fundamentally to the importance of a culture and environment that nurture local entrepreneurial activity for which policies play more of a supportive role. Since most successful experiences of Asia involved the exercise of good governance, strong state and interventionist industrial policy, it remains a question whether the weaker governments in Africa, and indeed other Asian countries can follow the example of the former. However, it is also important to note that an important lesson that can be derived from Asia and indeed most developed economies is the strong priority given to the creation of human capital, in terms of education and training (A point that Dominque Njinkeu has emphasized—capacity-building). The strong performance of the private and public sectors in East Asia belies a capability that is honed through universal and high quality education, which has led to high levels of cognitive skills among secondary school graduates.

Okigbo: The same forms of economic activity that address survival strategies are needed for situations at higher levels of livelihood. Our target should not be to discover high order economic activities that show we are now "developed." Rather, we should incrementally build on our present achievements by seeking ways to sustain today's economic growth. The survival targets are, among others, to feed ourselves and provide shelter and gainful employment in areas deemed important by our societies. These are also necessary beyond the level of mere survival. The strategies that can move us away from want and poverty can also take us to higher levels of sustainable development. All our public policies are eloquent about such strategies, but most of them fall short in the delivery.

There is no doubt that (generally speaking) a market of 700 million people is more attractive than one of 70,000 people, if these people constitute a viable economic market. We should develop the constituent internal (national) markets, without which neither conventional nor unconventional activities can promote integration. When the individual economies develop, official policies (no matter how detrimental they might appear) will not stop commercial intercourse between suppliers and consumers. The failure of integration in Africa is PARTLY because we lack the 'legislative, implementing, and enforcing" institutions that characterize the EU. For now at least, we have only poor and competing countries. When these countries develop complementary national economic competencies, even in the absence of

official integrating policies, private business people and associations will champion inter-country business operations and activities.

Peterson: Last month I visited Somaliland, where I was struck by the apparent prosperity of the economy despite the region's relative isolation from the international community and development aid. I was told that 90 percent of the economy is based on the export of lamb and goat meat to the Arabian Peninsula, and indeed I saw thousands of livestock being shipped from the port of Berbera, and the wealth created for the pastoralists who dominate the society. Taxes and customs duties are minimal or non-existent, and corrupt rent-seeking officials are resisted by businessmen and community leaders. The main lesson of Somaliland seems to be that a relatively weak and non-interventionist government as opposed to the statist and bloated civil servant models that still predominate in Africa is a potential alternative to unleash the enormous enterprise of the average citizen.

I contrast this to a trip I took last year by road from Abidjan to Lagos, most of the way on buses or shared taxis with petty marketers. At every border they were hit up for bribes by customs officials which drastically increased their cost of doing business. We counted ten checkpoints between Cotonou and Lagos alone, almost every official demanded some payment. It was obvious that the border controls served no other purpose than extorting income from mostly honest traders. If these border obstacles within ECOWAS were curtailed as they should be in a free trade area, the economic benefit would undoubtedly be major. I've heard similar accounts throughout Africa. It seems to be easier to export to Europe than across the border within Africa. This is purely a matter of vision and leadership. Dismantle the controls and the useless bureaucracies, unburden the small entrepreneur, stop the wars, and Africa is perfectly capable of feeding and enriching itself. No more need to beg for crumbs from the West.

Tandon: Dave Peterson's snapshot of Somaliland exports points to the fact that African small-scale exporters are often crippled not just by taxes and customs, but also by high standards requirements, particularly by markets in EU and North America. This is especially the case when it comes to food products, whether processed or "live". Trading between African countries means that product standards can be regulated to fit in with expectations of both supply and demand, and it is something that can be regulated between business partners. Take the example of women in Cameroun, who are able to trade in textile products, dried fruits, dessicated coconut, concentrated fruit juices, dried meats and fish with their neighbours in Guinea, Mali, Tchad, Benin. This is a lot easier than exporting these same "organic" products into Europe. If and when they do break into, say, the Swiss market, the tariffs and standardization procedures are the biggest hurdles to jump.

Wanyeki: An end and indicator of gains in the struggle against poverty is the ability to choose between livelihoods, between modes of production that we ourselves

own and control. Therefore, it is appropriate to focus on sustainable livelihoods and how our choices of livelihoods are being decreased by the national and international policy choices we are making with regards to finance, trade and investment.

What do we mean by sustainable livelihoods? In the south of Tanzania, in Lindi, there is a center called the Mtwara Media Center. This center has been using participatory video with traditional fishing communities. A ban on traditional fishing practices was imposed by the Ministry responsible. There was a decrease of fish available to traditional fishers due to large scale dynamite fishing for commercial sale to urban markets and for export. Through participatory video, villagers documented their experiences, the decrease in real incomes and their inability to continue to survive on fishing, for both men and women, even though the kinds of fish traditionally caught by men and women, the fishing areas, and the methods were different.

Participatory video enabled the local communities to share their experiences from one village to another. It was an eye opener and enabled them to decide to challenge the ban collectively. They decided to used participatory video to show how traditional fishing methods protect coral, fish eggs and young fish in their reef environment and compared this protection with the devastation of dynamite fishing. With the help of the center, they shot and edited the video and sent representatives from different villages all the way to Dar es Salaam. They managed to get an audience with the Minister. The Minister was impressed by what he saw and lifted the ban on traditional fishing practices.

The result, although positive, created conflict between those who wished to continue with traditional fishing practices and those who wanted to continue with dynamite fishing. What the story does not address is why people within the communities involved were forced to go into dynamite fishing, which is detrimental in the long term, to get money from commercial sales and sport. But the story is an example of how a ministry initially made a policy choice based on the lack of information. It is also an example of how that policy choice was corrected with information.

Another story, also from Tanzania, concerns the Orkonerai Integrated Pastoralists' Survival Program. This program was initiated by Maasai people in Terrat who were facing severe land alienation from wildlife conservation projects, large scale commercial horticultural farmers, and mining. They established a community resource center and entered into contact and information exchange with indigenous people across the world. Based on experiences shared, they engaged with human rights organizations and put forward a case for challenging the forced removal of their community from the Mkomozi game reserve. Last year, they won their case—a historical and precedent-setting case which has recognized that their removal was wrong and is granting restitution. They are going back to court to seek restitution in the form of their original communal grazing lands. They have thus played a part in

getting the right to have communal land recognized and protected more explicitly in Tanzania's recent land law review.

The first lesson for us, from these two stories, is that the concept of sustainable livelihoods has not featured in economic planning in Africa. Our economic planning tends to address the commercialization of agriculture for export, which does not address everyone's needs. The second lesson is that national economic policy choices are actually often at odds with the concept of sustainable livelihoods. National economic policy choices are increasingly limited by international commitments and obligations. Why else the investment in fishing for export, in wildlife preservation over people's preservation and large scale horticultural farming over food production?

Yet, these two examples also show that communicating experiences can validate experience and build solidarity. Despite national level constraints, experiences of threats or wrongs and the solidarity so created can find expression in organizing at the local level in a manner that impacts the national level. Organizing at the local level can be successful if it is done with an awareness of national policy objectives and of the context in which national policy is made. For there are other international commitments and obligations which can be utilized. In the case of Terrat, the people drew from international human rights standards and law. These standards were the basis on which they won their case. Other international commitments that can be drawn upon are international labor standards and law and, of course, international standards and law relating to women's rights. From the examples cited, it is also evident that even though the process of negotiating interests, both at the local and national levels, is complex, it can be done.

DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The second session of the Electronic Roundtable, covering democracy and human rights, opened with panel presentations (February 10-16, 2000) and continued with discussion by panelists and participants from February 17 through March 15. This chapter juxtaposes the views of panelists and participants, in their own words, on the critical political issues confronting Africa.

The full archive, including e-mail contributions by participants and English and French versions of all panel presentations, is available at www.africapolicy.org/rtable.

Panelists

Tade Aina, *Ford Foundation, Kenya*

Dede Amanor-Wilks, *South African Development Community Centre of Communication for Development, Zimbabwe*

Ezra Mbogori, *MWENGO, Zimbabwe*

Patricia McFadden, *Southern African Political and Economic Series Trust, Zimbabwe*

Chidi Anselm Odinkalu, *InterRights, London*

Aina: I believe that it is imperative to begin our discussions on democracy and human rights in Africa with a very basic question: democracy for what? By asking this question, we will free ourselves from the overwhelming confusion that surrounds the use of several concepts such as "democracy", "human rights" and "governance". These notions have not only become trivialized today, but have been misappropriated by a wide range of interests such as some donors and multilateral institutions.

To answer the question stated above, my position is that, democracy is for the promotion and advancement of the individual and collective well being of the different peoples of our nations and continent. This means that, whatever structures and processes that we struggle to put in place for democracy and human rights, these must recognize and embody the basic principles of inclusion, participation, freedom, justice and equity for all who find themselves in any of our African countries at any given time. This is important. These basic principles cannot be compromised even in one single case.

Odinkalu: The relationship between human rights and democracy in the very complex milieu of Africa is embodied in the dynamic tension between stability and justice. It pits the interests and expectations of an overwhelming majority of the continent's pauperized peoples for better living conditions and accountable leadership on the one hand, against the desire of a powerful minority of entrenched local and international elite for predictability and privilege on the other.

Regimes offering "stability" are rewarded with effusive international support that is often prepared to gloss over egregious violations of the most basic rights. It is also often prepared to relativize the goal-posts of acceptable political behavior, including, where necessary, conscious complicity in patent electoral fraud. In seeking to trade off (structural) justice for short term stability, the partnership of domestic and international interests that has so far shaped Africa's destiny succeeds in damaging the prospects of both justice and stability. As a result, human rights and democracy in Africa are also damaged.

Severely steeped in the history, politics, cultures and economics of the continent, it is impossible to disinfect the fates of human rights and democracy in Africa in peroxide of political "neutrality" and economic illiteracy. Although not interchangeable, human rights and democracy are cousins in a relationship not much different from the proverbial chicken-and-egg conundrum. In Africa, these concepts represent the project of realizing both economic and political justice for individuals as well as groups in the aftermath of colonialism. It is the search for a just stability.

McFadden: I want to approach the discussion on Democracy and Human Rights as an opportunity to interrogate and unveil the relationship between:

a. The identity of being African and the notions of integrity and autonomy;

b. The historical discourses that construct democracy and rights within narratives of community and collectivizing traditions; and, the growing demand for a recognition of the African as a person who must have entitlements and who can and will exercise choices; and

c. Making the linkages between claims of authenticity (related to gender/spatial location/and appearance) and "Othering", on the one hand, and the reification of exclusion which perpetuates or facilitates undemocratic relationships and practices. These relationships and practices continue to undermine or violate the human rights of African persons on the continent and elsewhere.

I interpret the discourse about democracy and human rights as an exciting opportunity to interrogate old paradigms and political stances regarding these notions. This is the case whether one is positioned within the civil society (with all its possibilities to craft commonalities and proclaim differences), or whether one

approaches this engagement from a "nationalist" stance, driven by often unacknowledged yet well known feelings of loyalty and bondage.

Mbogori: While I do not have any empirical data to back this up, I would like to suggest that democracy is more actively discussed today than has ever been the case before. Yet, there is a more noticeable lack of democratic practice today than ever before.

Let me try to illustrate this, beginning at the micro level. Taking the household as the most basic unit of analysis for our purposes, I have often wondered about the ways in which the notion of democracy can have practical meaning and application. Take a household in some rural setting anywhere in sub-Sahara Africa. In whatever village we may want to situate ourselves, poverty will be an ever-present The notion of democracy, where this might be interpreted to mean participation and the ability to exercise one's free choice, would appear far removed from reality.

Take the village dweller that is largely dependent on subsistence agriculture for their livelihood. Besides selling off whatever limited surpluses they might get from time to time, they can only offer their labor occasionally, if they needed to raise cash to meet other needs that they might have, besides the food they grow. In instances where the weather is not favorable over a sustained period, they cannot even raise sufficient food for their subsistence. Their labor then, is all they have.

I am reminded of one such household in which I learned that a six year old child was known to have asked her eight year old sister if there was any way the sister could get her a job in the city, or indeed anywhere away from home. We will quickly think that this is tantamount to promoting child labor. What we may not appreciate is that in this household meals are served only occasionally, and even then, most times amounts to only a small cup of porridge. The desperation exhibited by every member of the household sets fertile ground for violence, which is itself, a common occurrence. No one in the household even thinks about their rights, let alone respects those of others. Inevitably the rights trampled upon are those of women.

The question for me in these circumstances is; how do you impart an understanding of the concept of democracy and the need to respect human rights to members of this household. Lest we all dismiss this as an extreme example, let us remember that more people live below the poverty line on the continent than those living above it. The glaring question here is whether human rights include economic or indeed basic rights for that matter. What is it that people who do not enjoy these can do?

Amanor-Wilks: On February 12th and 13th, Zimbabweans will be asked to vote yes or no to a new draft constitution, which will replace once and for all the much-criticized and amended Lancaster House Constitution. This constitution reflected the historic compromise balancing the rights of minority whites with those of majority blacks, and that ushered in Zimbabwean independence in April 1980.

Controversy has raged, however, over whether the new draft constitution captures the sentiments expressed at public meetings convened by the constitutional commission across the country during a three-month process of consultation. In particular, the debate has centered on the powers of the executive and the commissioners' interpretation of whether "the people" expressed their wish to have an executive or ceremonial presidency. In the run-up to elections in April, attention has understandably focused on the separation of powers between the executive and the legislature and between the presidency and the proposed office of prime minister.

Much overlooked in the process has been Chapter III of the new constitution, which sets out the country's fundamental human rights and freedoms. The new constitution considerably strengthens civil liberties, including the areas of personal liberty, personal security, freedom from torture and inhuman or degrading treatment, the right to dignity, freedom of speech, and—not least of all—equality before the law. This section of the proposed new constitution needs to be carefully combed by civil rights organizations for indications of how it might advance or compromise the rights of their various constituencies.

Interestingly, Zimbabwe's human rights record has attracted the most attention where it has been, perhaps, the least wanting, in practice at least. The international media, together with some local media, have been preoccupied by issues such as last year's arrests of journalists and Mugabe's "gay- bashing". When viewed from the perspective of Zimbabwe's human rights record as a whole, these amount to isolated incidents, though still serious infringements of civil liberties (in the case of the arrests, and a now familiar posturing in the case of the verbal abuse of gays). But, they pale into insignificance when compared to the disregard of human rights for an entire segment of Zimbabwe's population, namely agricultural workers, who make up 25% of the formal sector labor force and between 11% and 18% of the total population. These are laborers working for commercial farmers who contribute about 40% of foreign exchange earnings and 15% of the country's GDP.

Aina: Democracy as a participatory and inclusive social institution that guarantees freedom and social justice is a very recent occurrence in human history. It is also very fragile and subject to sudden reversals, threats and attacks from competing allegiances and identities that define the human condition in terms of bondage to the dictates of creed, race, ethnicity, class, social status and other narrow interests. We see the trends of such attacks and reversals every day in Africa. In many African countries, governments and regimes flagrantly breach the rule of law and human rights, which they have not only sworn to defend, but, in certain cases, they had themselves established.

Attacks also come from sources beyond governments and regimes. The enemies of democracy are not only in governments. They are in churches, mosques, temples and shrines, and also in homesteads, kraals, shantytowns, high-income estates,

communities and in civil society. These enemies are everywhere that intolerance, exclusion, injustice, domination and unmitigated exploitation and victimization of others occur. They not only use the resources of governments, but also use weapons such as guns, knives, clubs, "pangas", petrol and other bombs, "necklaces" and lynching to pursue their goals. As a result, we get the genocide in Rwanda, the ethnic riots and killings in Burundi, Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya and Uganda. This is why in Africa today, democracy and human rights are not only about governments (though these are the greatest culprits!).

Odinkalu: To be fair, democracy was always going to entail hard toil and committed leadership. The tragedy of Africa is that we got neither. Across the continent, direct colonialism ended without resolving or even addressing the explosive problem of power sharing in the multi-national, multi-ethnic and, in some places, even multi-civilizational masterpiece of cartographic arbitrariness that became Africa. The elite of Africa's nationalists, who inherited the raft of dictatorial powers, legislation and attitudes that sustained colonialism, were quick to experiment with their new-found powers with an impatience only matched by the enthusiasm of a child trying out a new toy.

In less time than it took colonial administrators to leave the continent, the high sounding, high-minded rhetoric of the independence movement—perhaps, the second truly popular human rights movement with its origins or inspiration in Africa, the first being the anti-slavery movement—was replaced by the instinct of political leaders to survive in power as the raison d'être of government. Towards this objective, the enormous powers of the post-colonial African state, together with all the goodwill that could be wrung from Cold War belligerents and post- colonial metropolitan powers, not to mention (in some countries) the odd presidential shaman or marabou were pressed into service.

Political patronage privileged persons with the right ethnic origins at the expense of merit. Dissent was criminalized, and the judiciary was abolished as in Sekou Toure's Guinea, emasculated into irrelevance as in Banda's Malawi or intimidated into obsequiousness as in Nkrumah's Ghana. Onto this canvass, the unfinished, even virgin business of post-colonial power-sharing exploded with a vengeance, accounting for the cycle of zero-sum politics, military adventurism, gross human rights violations and instability that all appear to characterize Africa.

Amanor-Wilks: Zimbabwe's farm workers are a particularly acute example of how easily a significant sector of a population can be by-passed by worldwide trends towards greater human rights and democracy. The example also suggests a critical role for civil society in bringing human rights abuses, so commonplace within a particular sector as to have assumed the appearance of normalcy, to the fore. The agricultural sector is also guilty of the more obvious forms of rights abuse, such as

physical beatings and the degrading treatment of workers, although the full extent of this is not generally known. Within farm worker communities themselves, women are particularly vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse.

Farm workers have remained outside the normal governance structures available to other Zimbabwean communities largely because they have traditionally been viewed as "aliens". This is the case even though many of them are in fact Zimbabweans, and a good number second, third or fourth generation Malawians, Mozambicans and Zambians who have no other home but Zimbabwe. Because of high levels of illiteracy and lack of political representation, they may not have regularized their status in the country. Indeed, it was the failure of the colonial policies to procure and retain local labor for settler farmers that led to the policy of labor recruitment from neighbouring countries, such that by 1966 an estimated 54% of male agricultural labor was foreign.

Aina: No outsider can build democracy for Africans. We must build our democratic institutions and values by ourselves, not by reinventing the wheel or pretending to create some special or exceptional "African democracy" but through struggle and mobilization. We must make demands on ourselves that recognize that democracy, while expanding human well being and progress, is essentially subversive of existing conventional social and political orders and relations.

We must reconstruct the state. Fortunately, some of these "artificial" states are disintegrating and imploding. In many other cases, the clamor for constitutional review all over the continent is a sign that Africans want to be involved in redesigning the conditions of their co-existence. No matter how flawed some of these efforts are, they constitute a beginning. They show that more Africans want to be part of constructing their "social contract". In cases where these inclinations have been blocked or hi-jacked by powerful interests, people have resorted to violence and wars. The lesson is that there can be no peace without building democracy. Yet, to build democracy requires peace.

What needs to be impressed on outsiders, particularly the powerful societies of the West and the dominant international financial institutions and multilateral agencies, is that propping up unpopular African regimes is no longer acceptable. These powerful interests must also contribute to the design of global governance norms and institutions that advance peace, reduce poverty and promote social justice and equity.

Amanor-Wilks: Many of the proposed changes to the current Zimbabwean constitution deserve to be hailed for their expansion of human rights in the country. For instance, Article 41 on freedom from torture and inhuman or degrading treatment specifically states that "cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment includes gender-based violence." This is a great leap forward in terms of verbalizing the need to protect women from various forms of domestic violence.

But what do the proposed new constitutional arrangements mean for agricultural laborers who have fallen between the cracks of development policy? In what way can the constitution's pledge of dignity for all serve farm workers (or indeed other segments of the society) who live and work beyond the public domain in a realm inaccessible to most?

According to Article 34 of the draft Zimbabwe constitution: "Human beings and juristic persons are entitled to the rights and freedoms set out in this Chapter to the extent that those rights and freedoms can appropriately be extended to them." It is not clear to what extent commercial farm workers would be considered as an "appropriate" target group for the extension of such rights, given that they work and reside in a sector that has hitherto largely governed itself. Moreover, they work in a sector with which the government has been at odds over its land reform program and that, for this and other political reasons, has been reluctant to invite government intervention by way of welfare provision.

McFadden: Most Africans are not yet citizens, either in the manner they perceive themselves (at the level of the individual with an identity and an agency to interact with her/his socio-political reality) or in terms of inter-personal relationships. Citizenship plays little role in how these individuals relate to each other via the most critical sources of identity in their societies (gender, race, class, ethnicity, age, spatial location and other statuses). Nor are Africans citizens in terms of their relationships with the state, civil society organizations, and other key institutions that mediate between persons and critical resources in political, economic, cultural and religious terms.

However, becoming a citizen is not only dependent upon one's own conception and embrace of the notion of citizenship (and thereby accessing the rights, resources or entitlements associated with this notion, especially its feature of inalienability). Becoming and being citizen is also about being someone whose agency is driven by the ownership and exercise of human rights. More importantly, it is refers to specific mechanisms for acting on these rights that persons can use in their daily existence and through which their creativity and energy as social beings can be expressed..

Human rights are reflected in and through:

a. The products of social and political struggle; civic phenomena that arise out of the political realities and the visions of entire communities of persons;

b. Civic spaces which we have crafted through our interactions with other human beings; and

c. The relationships which express themselves in material and aesthetic structures, formulae and systems, what we call institutions and organizations —i.e., the pathways along which we traffic in life which are encoded with our values, prejudices, assumptions and expectations;

Amanor-Wilks: Two of the big issues facing farm worker communities are their lack of land rights and the problem of national registration. Farm workers who lack land access rights in communal areas are vulnerable to abuse on farms because they reside on the property of their employer and, therefore, depend on the continuation of their job for a place to live. Women employees are vulnerable because they are rarely employed as permanent workers in their own right and rarely qualify to be housed independently on farms. Retired farm workers face a particularly acute social security crisis. This is particularly the case when they are foreign migrants with no links to their countries of origin and no rights in Zimbabwe. Children represent a captive labor force for seasonal work and child labor is still prevalent on many commercial farms.

In many ways, the right of farm workers to be protected under the new constitution is complicated by their unclear citizenship status. The new draft constitution provides for citizenship by birth, descent or registration. But citizenship by birth can only be bestowed if either parent was a citizen at the time of a person's birth. In terms of citizenship by registration, the draft constitution deals only with legal adoption, minors born of Zimbawean citizens by registration, and the acquisition of citizenship through marriage. Other categories are not covered by the constitution, and an act of parliament is required to provide for them.

While the new constitution upholds the right of children to "have a nationality from birth", in the case of farm workers, children continue to be born each day to workers who themselves have no legal status and, therefore, no nationality to bequeath to their children. Many farm workers, even second or third generation workers, carry national identification cards bearing the designation "alien". An alarming number of them have no national ID, much less birth certificates for their children. Without a birth certificate, children born on commercial farms cannot obtain a national ID. Nor can they sit Grade 7 examinations qualifying them to enter secondary school, assuming that such facilities exist within walking distance of the farms on which they reside.

Aina: To reclaim democracy and human rights in Africa, we must return to the foundations of democratic development. I link democracy with development, because, they are both closely connected and we can not have one without the other. This is the case in Africa and any part of the so-called Third World today (see: Thandika Mkandawire's paper to the CODESRIA's 1995 General Assembly on "The Democratic Development State" and Armatya Sen's 1999 Development as Freedom). If the goals of our struggles are the promotion of the collective and individual well being of Africans, then we can not have one without the other.

In this case, we are not talking about development merely from the perspective of the increase in Gross Domestic Product or per capita income. Development includes these two, but must entail a more holistic notion incorporating social and

physical infrastructure, the meeting of basic needs and the condition of peace, security and minimal good health.

Odinkalu: It is not for nothing that the widely advertised recent wave of democratization and non-governmental human rights initiatives in Africa roughly coincided with the end of the Cold War, the decimation of Africa's middle-classes by post-colonial dictatorships, and the popularization of kitchen-ware for high intensity political violence. Across much of Africa, it is not unusual to hear advocates of pluralism being blamed by local communities for inflicting instability on the people. This sentiment deserves close examination.

To many of our people, the "wave" of human rights and democratization that "swept" through Africa only meant optimal political turbulence and hardly a ripple of positive difference to their well being. These notions offered a terminally endangered middle and intellectual class a limited facility of protest, where in the past, they were actively complicit in or indifferent to bad government. Anxious to preserve something of shrinking aid budgets from the weight of expectation imposed by domestic electorates unburdened by Cold War appropriations, Northern "philanthropies" made common cause with recently articulate voices of mainstream protest in Africa. They consecrated them into ready beneficiaries of the post- Cold War dividend.

With the venom of a bushfire, the fate of Africa's democratization was tied to the city-dwelling parvenu or disgruntled ex-apparatchik in country after country. For them, democracy meant replacing existing power with a different face, and human rights represented the prerogative to realize this ambition as theirs. They prosecuted the project of democratization "for", defended human rights "on behalf of", and sought power "in the name" of the "people" rather than "with" them. Newfangled national constitutions entrenched partial franchise conferring the right to vote on everyone. But they tended to restrict the right to be voted for to only those few who had gone to school and spoke English or French. l There was limited access to the basic education that met the constitutional threshold for access to public office.

Preferring the devils they know to unfamiliar and distant angels, our people have, where they have been allowed to do so in free and fair elections, mostly responded by voting with their feet in conferring electoral legitimacy on existing, defunct or resurrected dictatorships. Thus, democracy, which in the rest of the world represents, among other things, a choice between different visions of organizing society and protecting rights, is, in Africa, an experience that offers neither choice, nor change to our people. Moreover, democracy in Africa is still portrayed as an electoral event rather than a process of making society more just and government more respectful of law and our rights.

Mbogori: Regarding the mounting of elections—which in most community settings is the ultimate display of democratic practice—I would like to draw my examples from experiences in the NGO sector. For most membership organizations, the

mounting of elections is always a very dicey exercise. For a start, hardly any member has knowledge of others regarding, for instance, what qualities they may have that would be useful at the leadership levels of the organization. Making distinctions between opportunists and those who bring genuine leadership and commitment to the organization is a difficult task. Often, NGOs do not see it as their role to conduct a voter education exercise prior to the election. Yet, they expect the membership to elect the best leaders into office. Is this not a case of expecting the impossible?

The experience is not much different at the broader levels of local or national government in any country. Opportunistic politicians make their appearances when they want to be elected. They take advantage of the poverty that grips the electorate. They put their best face forward (and sugar coat this with a small bribe) and convince voters that they offer outstanding possibilities for impacting positively on the development of the community. In all this, hardly anyone gets to question the values by which these people are guided.

There are numerous examples in our midst of political leaders who, in some settings are heroes, while in their homes, where their real characters are well known, they might be tyrants. The question is, can doctors heal themselves? At what point do we apply the general definitions that are given for democracy and human rights to ourselves? Lately, for instance, there has been a proliferation of Human Rights organizations in our midst. While there are a variety of internal, as well as external reasons for this, many of these organizations fall far short of the standards expected of them when it comes to observing the basic tenets of democracy and human rights. So, have we really internalized these values?

Aina: What then are the foundations of democratic development? In my view, these are peace, economic well being, the rule of law and an environment of social justice and equity. Given the limited space here, I will quickly run through each of these in terms of the concrete means by which they could be operationalized. I leave the discussions open for deepening and expansion by other participants.

Beginning with peace, it is obvious that there can be neither democracy nor development without peace. Africa today remains one of the biggest arenas of civil wars and internal and external conflicts. Under conditions of war, there is little meaningful and beneficial economic production. As such, human rights are denied and the rule of law is broken down. For democratic development to occur, Africa's wars and conflicts must be ended. It is Africans who must do this through dialogue and effective mediation, peacekeeping and peace building.

Fortunately, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) has finally recognized the principles of interference in the affairs of other sovereign states to prevent genocide, gross violation of human rights and suffering. What is needed is the political will and resources. But ending wars is a political act to which good governance and an inclusive

and participatory framework is essential. As for the outside factor, it is obvious that most of the wars and conflicts of Africa are not fought with weapons made by the protagonists. Reviewing the sales of weapons of war at the international level becomes an important question here.

An equally important foundation is that of economic well being. That is, building an economy that provides access to the market both for production, consumption and distribution for all our peoples. This involves a sustained and systematic war against poverty through freeing the energies of the African small producers, the informal sector as well as organized capital for effective production to meet the needs of Africa. This demands rebuilding and incorporating the African private sector into current economic challenges and finding means of building and channeling the vast wealth that current globalization makes possible to African sources.

An important aspect of this is a return to an effective and efficient social policy to support the poor in liberating themselves from poverty. Again, there are internal and external factors involved in this. The external factor involves being part of the global struggles to reform both the international financial institutions and the global financial and economic architecture. What is clear from the point on the economy is that extensive poverty most times does not promote a culture of democracy and human rights, as it leaves too many people vulnerable and open to manipulation by several forces and interests.

McFadden: Human societies have created their most lasting and most socially relevant institutions and "spaces of belonging and identity" through the mobilization of human agency and knowledge. We have defined such moments as "democratic" because they express and speak to the innermost desires for peace, fairness (justice) liberty and a consolidation of what makes us social.

It is through the extension of these commons—the civic spaces where rights and entitlements have emerged and where they most openly reside, and, through their extension to all those who occupy social spaces (regardless of what ever differences fragment and separate us in our specificities as gendered, classed, raced, and ethnicized beings) that rights become inalienable. They become the "natural" outcomes of democracy in its conceptual and practical senses. They become basic to the existence of all human beings.

However, these notions have been deeply embedded in exclusionary paradigms. Women in particular have been excluded from this process of becoming "righted" and therefore of entering the transformative experience of knowing and exercising ones rights and of being citizens. Therefore, the process of democratization and "righting" in our societies has remained severely truncated and deeply contested.

Patriarchal constructions of women's labor deems it as being without value or equivalence to that of men, Therefore, women's bodies become the private properties

of men (as wives, daughters, sisters, nieces, etc); women's knowledges become mere gossip or "subjectivities" that cannot be included in the knowledge stock of male-referencing societies. Through legal systems which continue to define women in relation to sexist, supremacist notions of inferiority and subordination—each of these mobilizing culture as a weapon and a resource that excludes women from the most critical sites of social creativity whilst privileging and pampering males as the "knowers" of our societies—women still have to struggle to break into the most critical sites of contestation in all African societies, without exception.

Therefore, a key question that we need to engage with is how to initiate a process that enables us to reflect on our relationships as Africans (via the highly contested issues of authenticity) that seem to be so intimately linked to the exclusion and Othering of Africans who are female, young and located in the "rural" spaces of the continent.

Aina: Consequently, with a few exceptions to be found mostly in the women's movement and the faith-based, social justice initiatives and networks, Africa's contemporary pluralism advocates—as human rights or pro-democracy advocates or opposition politicians—share a core of values as members of a narrow urban protest movement with approximately similar or convergent political outlook. They are inspired and actively supported by Northern watchdog and advocacy initiatives in a marriage of convenience, and underwritten almost exclusively with funding from outside. These advocates are economical in cultivating genuine domestic legitimacy outside a core urban, literate constituency, and have little real existence outside the cocktail, media and workshop circuits.

Amanor-Wilks: Since the mid-1990s, and with the emergence of new civil society groups working to buttress a historically weak agricultural union, there is a gradually discernible move in Zimbabwe from a purely welfarist, essentially piecemeal approach towards a more transformative approach. This approach attempts to get the state to recognize the rights of farm workers, hitherto seen almost exclusively as "aliens", to land access and national registration.

Thus, for the first time ever, the government's 1999 land policy framework acknowledges the need for farm workers to be resettled alongside land-short peasants. At the same time, civil society lobbying since 1996 has resulted in the setting up of an inter-ministerial committee to look into the national registration issue and a recently established pilot registration program. As of now, the government's position is that those who entered the country as indentured laborers during the Federation years from 1953-1963, and their children, are entitled to citizenship. The government does not yet recognize the rights of workers who came into the country after 1975. This was the year of the creation of the Mozambique National Resistance (Renamo) by the erstwhile Rhodesian state. To date the perception remains that many of the agricultural workers

who entered the country from Mozambique over the past 25 years were members of Renamo and should be returned as aliens along with other former refugees.

On the side of farm employers, greater pressure from civil society—and of course worries about the possible application of social clauses under new WTO arrangements—has also recently resulted in a movement among commercial farmers themselves to introduce ethical standards. Thus, the Horticultural Production Council of Zimbabwe recently established a code of conduct and has taken the lead to convince other agricultural sectors that low standards of health and hygiene in the sector mean "bad business". Increasingly farmers are coming to the realization that if they don't adapt and change they will be hit in the pocket.

While there is now a quite discernible trend to include farm workers in government policy, and a new progressive tendency among especially younger commercial farmers, much work remains for civil society groups in the area of strengthening the voice of farm workers at the level of local government. Though given the franchise at the end of 1997, it has been practically difficult for farm workers to participate meaningfully in the Rural District Councils. The councils are dominated by commercial farmers unused to sharing power or ideas with their employees. Indeed, until the unprecedented and violent 1997 nationwide strike by farm workers, the agricultural sector had been seen as composed of largely docile workers lacking the means or vision to press for democratic change. In the absence of minimum standards governing the sector and with the sectors still characterized by master-servant relationships, farm workers need to be given the means to articulate their own demands and to set the pace for democratic change in their sector.

Aina: We must build the conditions for the rule of law and an environment of social justice and equity. My honest view is that most African countries have little space to avoid doing this for too long. Africa today is not the Africa of the 1960s. Communications, social awareness and a readiness to resist have increased significantly. We must change or be destroyed through endless conflicts, balkanization and the disintegration of states and national boundaries.

The choice is between transformation and chaos. While the political elite pretends not to know this, many citizens and communities are aware of the urgency of the threats. The wave of struggles for constitutional change, political reforms and democratization is an indication of this. The key is the setting up of acceptable and legitimate processes of dialogues, consultations and discussions on the future of nations and nationalities, the rights and obligations of citizenship and the role and relative power of democratic institutions. Other issues include the patterns of power sharing, the place of majorities, minorities and marginalized groups such as youth and women.

In many parts of Africa, these discussions are proceeding with more or less a degree of freedom and openness. These are led and promoted by intellectuals,

some politicians, workers, peasant groups, civil society institutions, the media, the professionals and faith-based groups. All of these actors have a stake in some form of orderly transformation. We have all seen too much chaos, insecurity, conflict and tension at close quarters, to know that they are not the conditions under which democratic development, prosperity and happiness can thrive. This realization and the struggle for effecting transition from the old to the new, although slow and often inconsistent and little sustained, provide both optimism and a window of opportunity for intensifying the fight for democratic development in Africa.

McFadden: The position of Africans is determined in many instances by socialization, cultural practices, conventions and social status laws that have become legalized as so-called customary laws. These laws are now becoming enshrined in the constitutions of most African countries as expressions of our difference from the Europe. When we consider this position, we see that these "authenticators" of "Africaness" have assumed a "common-sense" character in our language, interactions and presumptions about each other, especially across the gender divide. It is the making common what in actuality were patriarchal privileging mechanisms that poses a critical test to modernizing Africans. Commodifying rituals and practices, which over centuries became "cultural" practices and which, therefore, have not entered the market and or come under civic or public scrutiny, have become barriers to the realization of full citizenship by the majority of Africans.

"Otherness" has too often become reified and uncritically accepted by those who are excluded from modern contestations and discourse about the meanings and the exercise of democracy, human rights and entitlement. This presents a key challenge to activists and scholars.

Odinkalu: Towards the end of the last century, the slogan of the international human rights movement invited activists to "think global and act local". Ostensibly underlying this slogan was the perfectly valid claim that human rights as norms asserted a universally valid common denominator of human values. In practice, however, this slogan also represented the co-option of the legitimizing language of human rights by a motley crowd of new incarnations of hegemony. It furthermore expressed the domination of both the capital for and the identity (including the language and methods) of human rights advocacy everywhere by Northern organizations. Little respect has been shown for the divergent local realities confronted in different parts of the world.

Unlike their African counterparts, whose mostly unviable national boundaries have been elevated to a form of unregulated geo-political ideology, the operations of Northern-based human rights activists and institutions are regulated by strict laws, trust deeds and mandates in deference to which they think local but act global. For Africa's contemporary advocates and activists for pluralism and human rights, it is

now more important to think economic and act political. We must be prepared to contemporaneously think global, think regional, think local and think the people. For, as long as we are encouraged to think of the global in opposition to the local, we and the rest of the world will also think of stability in opposition to justice. And for so long will Africa's people know neither democracy nor human rights.

Mbogori: Let us imagine for a while, that by some stroke of luck, the children from really poor households find themselves in school. What they invariably find is treatment from their teachers that reinforces the environment prevalent at home. Sometimes, even the violence that they are so familiar with in the home is a part of the experience at school.

But worse than this is the fact that teachers, who take responsibility for molding these young minds, are themselves not particularly sold on democracy and human rights as fundamental concepts. Apart from the electoral exercise that all adults become involved in occasionally, they see democracy and human rights as luxuries that do not apply in the local setting. While they might acknowledge them as being important, they certainly do not consider them to be priority considerations for the children that they get to teach. Is it not the case that important opportunities to inculcate important values and attitudes are lost here? It is my view that democracy and respect for rights begins from the institutions that every individual is exposed to during their formative years. Yet, these institutions have not so far been at the center stage of most discussions that explore these concepts.

I would venture to suggest here that unless democracy and human rights can be treated with the urgency that HIV/AIDS is beginning to be treated now—or indeed with the emphasis that was accorded to population control in most countries during the decade of the eighties—there is little chance of creating a critical mass of people who truly subscribe to these ideals.

The other venue worthy of mention for the household that we are observing, is the local religious "shrine"—whether this is a church, mosque, temple or some similar setting. It is no secret that religion plays a significant role in the lives of most Africans. Here again, there are certain attitudes that remain dominant.

The example I would like to pose here is that of the "training for transformation" movement of the eighties, which faltered after the church leadership, which had played a vital role in nurturing it, insisted on its disbanding. The main reason for this move was that parishioners were beginning to demand accountability from their leaders; to insist on their rights and generally to speak with greater confidence than had been the case previously. So, in a short time, what was taking the form of a citizens movement in which ordinary people were conscientized was nipped in the bud largely because it posed a threat to those in the leadership. The sense of equality and expectation of tolerance that people developed as they became more aware of their rights became unacceptable to those in authority.

McFadden: The discourse on democracy, governance and human rights has become universalized and thus more accessible and collectively owned, making it more open to the diverse interpretations of those who contest its definition and direction. But the implicit assumption is that each constituency of human beings (distinguished by gender, class, race, geo-political location, age, ethnic identity etc) will have to resolve the myths and culturalized distortions of these critical human resources in the context of their specific realities in order to access a universalised notion of rights. This resolution has become the urgent imperative of African activism and scholarship.

We can struggle for democracy and rights at the global level because we live in globalizing/globalized world. But the most critical struggles lie in the reality of Africa as a continent largely unprepared for the 21st century. It is unprepared because the majority of its people have not become persons with a recognized and respected integrity. This integrity is expressed through the guaranteed right to be full citizens and owners of the continent in local, regional and continental terms.

That for me is the challenge of the 21st century—a century which will have to be the turning point in the shaping, mapping and realization of Africa as a democratic and right-full space.

Mbogori: Despite all these despondent examples, I would hasten to add that I do see signs of hope—hesitant in many cases, yet positive. The Well-known struggles undertaken in several countries by citizens seeking to assert their choices are clear signs of changing times. It is hopefully becoming clear to those leaders that appreciate the need for a different style in leadership that disagreement is not a basis for enmity. Civil societies are increasingly insisting on their right to participate and, in some instances, the continued refusal of this right has led to the downfall of governments. NGOs too, have played a useful role both in conducting civic education but also by seeking to engage policy makers on these issues. The question is, however, will this create the critical mass that is needed? Indeed, is it possible to teach enough old dogs new tricks?

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Aidoo: Tade Aina poses an interesting question: "Democracy for what?" The question is interesting because most ordinary Africans, who are long accustomed to crushing poverty, are wont to ask: "What use is democracy if it doesn't improve our lives?" This is legitimate, but posed in such a direct instrumentalist manner, the question is also problematic for it places an absolutist or fundamentalist burden on democracy that is neither warranted nor feasible in certain circumstances. Take any African country that has been destroyed by war, for example: At what point can one reasonably expect "developmental dividends" from democracy (whatever democracy means in that context)? Might democracy not be simply an end, a social-political good in and of itself in such circumstances? I am not sure there is an easy answer to this.

Friedman: We know what we do not want, and that is important. But do we yet know how to get what we do want?

The contributions reflect the appropriate skepticism among African intellectuals at the continent's 'wave of democracy' and the assumptions which underpin the role of international actors in it. But they suggest too that we still have much to do before we are able to offer coherent alternatives.

The panelists offer a compelling critique of international fads which, among other flaws, tend to mistake democratic form for substance. This is a theme in all the contributions, whose most important insights offer a critique of what Karl and Schmitter have called the "fallacy of electoralism"—the assumption that elections are sufficient for democracy. The point is made explicitly by Odinkalu and Mbogori, implicitly by the others: Aina, Mbogori and McFadden remind us that obstacles to democracy are found not only in the state but in non-state institutions and mores which remain intact when the state form changes.

Mamdani: Tade Aina argues that democracy cannot be reduced to a process that may be appropriated by one and all; it needs to be linked to a purpose, "the promotion and advancement of the individual and collective well being". He thus insists that the pursuit of freedom be linked to that of social justice. Chidi Odinkalu agrees. He sees "the dynamic tension between stability and justice" at the heart of Africa's current predicament, the former reflecting "the desire of a powerful minority of entrenched local and international elite for predictability and privilege", the latter "the expectations of the overwhelming majority of the continent's pauperized peoples for better living conditions and accountable leadership."

Friedman: Another important theme is the insight that democratization strategies are focused primarily on visible—usually urban—elites. Amanor-Wilks, Mbogori and McFadden point to sections of society—farm workers, the poor, rural

women—still beyond democracy's reach: Odinkalu goes further, labeling the current brand of rights and democracy as the agenda of a "terminally endangered middle and intellectual class." Enthusiasm for constitutionalism in form rather than substance is also challenged by Odinkalu and Amanor-Wilks. Aina points out the centrality of peace as a central, albeit elusive, precondition for progress. Several contributions note the corrosive effects of poverty on democratic participation and the exercise of rights.

Aina also does the discussion a service by pointing out that, contrary to international conventional wisdom, democracy is not a "natural" political equilibirum reached by all but the deviant and "undeveloped". It is, he reminds us, fragile and often elusive: even when it is achieved, its survival cannot be taken for granted. This is an important warning against assumptions and strategies which assume that the "norm" can be achieved in Africa merely by pasting elections, constitutions, and a modicum of funding for "civil society" onto a jagged social fabric.

Aidoo: There is also the related issue of who is going to build democracy. Tade routinely talks of "We". But who are the "We"? One of the ironies of the "democratization" project in Africa is that the political orientation, the language of discourse, and the institutional supports of this project are simply unconnected with anything to which some 80 percent of our people can easily and enthusiastically relate. Simply put: What are the cultural foundations of the democratization project in Africa? Can there be any Africa cultural foundations for this project? This raises issues of language, concepts, traditional practices, and the entire normative framework that guides the lives of most Africans.

Obibi: McFadden raises significant questions in her piece on the notion of citizenship that I feel are at the center of the debate relating to human rights and democracy, and civil societies' participation in it. McFadden writes, "in order to have an active citizenship—a body of agents who engage with power and issues relating to power—one must first become a citizen... most Africans are not yet citizens, either in the manner in which they perceive themselves or in terms of inter-personal relationships and how they relate to each other."

While, Dede illustrates the lack of citizenship through the denial, until 1997, of voting rights to rural farm workers, who are in effect "...second, third, fourth generation, Malawians, Mozambicans and Zambians who have no other home but Zimbabwe... high levels of illiteracy and lack of political representation may not have regularized their status in the country."

One must acknowledge that the denial of citizenship rights to sections of the community has always been a strategy of governments who see the involvement of these communities as a potential source of tension. Further examples include the denial of citizenship to the children of women who are married to foreign partners. Others include the exclusion of second, third and fourth generations from

participating in politics, running for president (not that we all want to be one) and other such exclusionary tactics.

Mamdani: McFadden writes of women, and Amanor-Wilks of aliens, or those constructed as such. Both categories, "women" as well as "aliens", cut through the divide between exploiter/exploited, even that between oppressor/oppressed. To the extent that these are legal constructs enforced by law—that "women" are to be treated as juniors, or that "aliens" do not have the same rights as those considered "indigenous"—they need to be understood as political identities. They have the potential of explaining to us political divisions through which both the poor majority and the rich minority become divided and fractured along lines of gender and ethnicity. To realize this potential fully, we need to make an analytical distinction between market-based identities (e.g., class) and political identities (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender), before understanding the mediations between them.

Citizenship is about rights and entitlement. The discussion on rights has focused on three generation of rights: civic, political and socio-economic. But citizenship also involves another question: not just which rights, but whose rights. It is also about the construction of the political subject. Who is the post-colonial subject? Who has a right to justice in the aftermath of colonialism? For it is clear that not everybody does. In my view, this is where we need to return to the colonial legacy, for the post-colonial subject was constructed in the colonial period by the colonial state. This is why a successful struggle for social justice requires, first, a political struggle to redefine the subject of rights and entitlement or, to put it differently, the member of the new political community.

Colonialism constructed the political subject under a discourse that claimed to be "customary" and "authentic." The overarching claim here was that there was in the colonies a single and undisputed source of "custom", and the point was simply to identify that source and enforce its version—subject to the "repugnancy test" of the power that presented itself as the custodian of "civilization"—as a "customary law". That source of custom was said to be chiefs. They were defined by three attributes: gender, age and ethnicity. The authority of chiefs represented the force of patriarchy (gender, age) and of ethnicity ("indigeneity"). The first part of this proposition is the subject of McFadden's contribution, and the second, part of Amanor-Wilks. While the former has been pressed home by a growing body of feminist scholars, the latter needs more attention.

Friedman: But, if the panelists are united in their skepticism of current international notions of democratic progress, they are not at one in their proposed antidotes. This is no criticism—on the contrary, intellectual ferment is an exciting and encouraging aspects of our current condition. But they do highlight the important point that alternatives to the "false dawns" partly inspired by international actors are far from clear.

Constitutions and constitutionalism are one point of difference. Odinkalu dismisses "new-fangled" constitutions as products of English and French-speaking elites and their international reference groups. Aina, while recognizing some flaws of "the clamor for constitutional review all over the continent", hails it as "a sign that Africans want to be involved in redesigning the conditions of their co-existence". Amanor-Wilks avoids a critique in principle of constitutionalism, but points to its inability to address the circumstances of neglected social strata—and highlights a key flaw in current democratizing projects, a failure to come to grips with Africans who find themselves on the "wrong" side of (often arbitrary) national boundaries.

Both sides have questions to answer. For the skeptics, are the new constitutions simply cosmetic? Do they not, despite their limited capacity to ensure rights and participation for all, create political space that did not exist before? Are strategies which seek to give substance to new constitutional forms not more appropriate than those which dismiss them as fig-leaves for elite domination? For Aina and other African constitutionalists, from whence is the "clamor" emanating? Are Odinkalu and Mbogori not right to suggest that it is not "the people" but the intellectual and professional classes which see rights and political procedures as more important than peace and bread? And is a synthesis between the two positions not possible—one which recognizes constitutions' elite inspiration and limited effects, but which seeks to use the opportunities they provide to add substance to democratic form (an approach which seems to inform Amanor- Wilks's contribution)?

Another difference is that between competing conceptions of the potential for grassroots mobilization for democracy. The need for it is a clear theme: Odinkalu wants activists to "think the people"; Aina urges "struggles and mobilization"; McFadden exhorts activists and scholars to struggle against "culturalized distortions". But, while Aina talks of increased pressure from "citizens" and "communities" for democratization, Mbogori suggests that grassroots people see democracy and human rights "as luxuries", and Odinkalu notes that "it is not unusual to hear advocates of pluralism ... being blamed by local communities for inflicting instability on the people". McFadden's reference to "distortions", and her assertion that Africans are "not yet citizens" implies that grassroots enthusiasm for democracy is not a given but a goal.

Mamdani: Amanor-Wilks tells us that 11-18% of Zimbabwe's total population are agricultural laborers. By 1966, 54% of these were foreign in origin; a good many were 3rd or 4th generation Malawians, Mozambicans or Zambians. In spite of the fact that every child is supposed to have a nationality by birth as a constitutional right, it is part of "customary" law in Africa that rights be conferred not by birth or residence, but by descent and ancestry.

Yet, the fact is that the politicization of indigeneity is a colonial tradition. It is colonialism that politicized indigeineity, first perversely—as a right of settlers over

natives—and then as a native self-assertion. Is it then surprising that most struggles for rights and entitlement, indeed for social justice, have come to divide the ranks of the poor between those indigenous and those not, whether this is within the borders of a state or a Native Authority? So that those who are defined as "settlers" in post-colonal Africa come less and less from outside Africa, and more and more from neighborhoods next door? Is not more internal conflict in Africa between those constructed as indigenous and those not?

My general point is that the notion that "custom" was both unchanging and unchallenged was an ideological creation of the colonial period. Historical investigation to date tells us otherwise. It tells us that there was not a single but multiple authorities of "custom"—not simply chiefs, but also religious groups, clans, age groups, gender groups—each with authority in a different social domain. There were not only different notions of customs, but also different sources of custom. Even where there was a religious law with a single domain, as in the Islamic Sharia, historical research tells us that the substantive content of Sharia changed through the practice of judicial interpretation (ijtihad) which made for changes in jurisprudence in response to changing political and social conditions. The notion of a fixed and unchanging Sharia, just as that of a fixed and unchanging "customary" law, was a colonial construction, upheld by despotic forms of post-colonial power.

Friedman: The debate raises crucial questions of analysis and strategy. Are the grassroots available for democratic mobilization but constrained by poverty and the indifference of democratizing elites? Or do they have to be "won for" democracy? If the former elites—McFadden's "activists and scholars"—need to mobilize, the grassroots and international actors must support them. One example may be Amanor-Wilks's relative optimism about a "transformative project" in which (presumably middle-class) civil society groups support a weak agricultural union to win rights for farm workers. But if those outside the elite remain skeptical of—or hostile to—democracy, let alone broader emancipatory projects such as McFadden's, difficult issues arise.

There are echoes here of the Menshevik-Bolshevik debate: are grassroots preferences expressions of popular democratic will or symptoms of false consciousness? And, while intellectuals are entitled to attempt to impart their values to the grassroots, whether we are talking of "civic education" or emancipatory feminism, is there not the danger that "liberatory" projects may be another vehicle for the urban elite to impose its perceptions on the grassroots—an activist version of the elitism that Odinkalu attacks?

The point is illustrated by the question of tradition and its social understandings. McFadden is most explicit in rejecting them as obstacles to progress: describing herself as a "modernizing African", she dismisses "cultural practices, conventions and social status laws that have become legalized…" in most African constitutions as "patriarchal

privileging mechanisms", which "have become barriers to the realization of full citizens by the majority of Africans." Aina and Mbogori note that extra-state institutions and practices obstruct democracy, but seem to urge not their destruction but, by implication, their democratization. McFadden is correct to note that tradition contains important elements of patriarchy, and other forms of domination. But is the issue this simple? Can a viable African emancipatory project be built on "modernizers" destroying the oppressive myths of the traditionalists?

There are strategic and normative grounds for questioning this. Post-independence African history and current trends in many parts of the globe do not suggest an optimistic prognosis for attempts to demolish traditional norms: phenomena as seemingly diverse as the partial restoration of the Buganda monarchy, resurgent Islamic fundamentalism in Asia and the USA's "culture wars" suggest that tradition is more stubborn than its critics once assumed. In these contexts, the most interesting—and, probably potentially effective—feminist projects are being conducted within traditions, not against them; their weapons are re-interpretation, not rejection. More generally, the same challenge may face African democratizers: to recognize but seek to reshape tradition, a task compatible with Aina's and Mbogori's concerns, even if they do not specifically advocate it.

The normative point is of even more general application: democracy is a means of recognizing difference and it is surely the suppression of difference that lies at the heart of Africa's travails over the past four decades. This is increasingly being recognized by African intellectuals as respect for ethnic diversity is now firmly on the democratization agenda—appropriately so, since the attempt to obliterate these differences has been responsible for the conflict and domination we have witnessed these past decades. The Jacobin attempt to destroy the differences that colonialism was seen to have created merely repeated the colonial pattern of domination. But does respect for difference also extend to institutions and understandings which intellectuals (including this one) might decry as pre-modern? Is there not a great deal of productive ground between tolerating "tradition" where it violates rights and simply dismissing it as an oppressive excuse for elite power? It is perhaps worth noting that the continent's only two long-term democracies, Botswana and Mauritius, accommodate tradition, the one by allowing traditional institutions a space complementary to the democratic system; the other, through a complex ethnically-weighted electoral system.

Mamdani: My appeal is that there is an alternative to junking custom as patriarchal and ethnic. It is to democratize our notion of custom. Just as we recognize that democracy means recognizing that there are choices within modernity, that modernity is plural and not singular, so we need to extend the democratic perspective to the past. The result would be to recognize that custom, too, was the subject of

contention, which gave rise to plural—and even at times opposed—perspectives. Custom should thus cease to be the political counterpart to the Structural Adjustment Program, and Customary Authorities the internal counterpart to the Bretton Woods institutions, whose writ we are supposed to either throw up or swallow, but never to submit to a democratic process.

My concluding comment is on the question raised by Ezra Mbogori, since it bears on the question of the democratic process. He comments on those who lead civil society organizations, and how they divide between "opportunists" and "genuine leaders." He then wonders how "doctors can heal themselves." When I was at the University of Dar-es-Salaam in the 1970s, our formulation of this dilemma was: "Who is to educate the educators?"

Just as it is useful to look at educational institutions when focusing on the process of education, I suggest we begin with the changed nature of civil society organizations when discussing the shortcomings of its leadership. Over the past ten years, a total overhaul of civil society organizations has taken place. Before that, we had a more popular and democratic tradition—the cooperative, the trade union and the welfare union were the prototype. No matter the corruption and the irregularities, the principle—even if observed in the breach in many cases—was that leaders are supposed to be accountable to members in some way. Our struggles were about realizing this accountability in practice.

Friedman: There has been an important shift in Africa's intellectual climate from a paradigm which, with its emphasis on "nation-building" and African specificity, justified democracy's negation to a paradigm centered on democracy and human rights. But isn't there also a risk that this shift may repeat the errors of that which it challenges by imposing on African societies a new elite construct, i.e., a particular idea of democracy, rather than the earlier notion of nation? I do not mean by this to repeat the folly of claiming democracy's alternatives as "African", but to suggest a need for a democracy which understands, acknowledges and builds on grassroots social arrangements and understandings, both in its attempts to mobilize and in the institutions it devises.

An element of the gap in understanding, as well as action, that separates the democratizers from the "masses" may be a failure to accept that understandings and arrangements at the grassroots do not conform neatly to Northern notions of the rationality maximizing citizen. Yet, democratic impulses within these grassroots arrangements may be just as strong as those of the instrumental citizens of much Northern political science (that are themselves largely the figments of academic imaginations).

Indeed, there may be a great irony in much African intellectual critique of Northern approaches in that it risks mirroring the assumptions it purports to reject. Aina seems to imply that one of the problems of current Northern assumptions is a democratic

teleology that Guillermo O'Donnell has identified and criticized as the assumption that democracy is some sort of end-point to which the sophisticated and developed naturally gravitate. If this is the case, then the same critique can be directed at African approaches that see the grassroots either as natural allies of the Northern liberal democratic state, or as poverty-stricken and tradition-bound non- democrats who will be brought into the democratic sphere by a healthy dose of education or development.

So part of the way forward may well require, as Odinkalu argues, elites willing to work with the grassroots rather than on their behalf. But that begs our earlier question: how available are the grassroots for mobilization, given the poverty and lack of organizational resources which Mbogori and Amanor-Wilks describe and the reality—hinted at by some contributions but not tackled head-on by any—that people at the African grassroots have often coped with the assaults of colonial and post-colonial elites by insulating themselves from the state rather than engaging with it? Aina is the panel's firmest optimist, arguing that "communications, social awareness and a readiness to resist have increased significantly". But the cautions raised by other panelists confirm that this judgement is hardly clear-cut.

Aidoo: Amanor-Wilks' presentation is the most interesting I have read so far. I think we have, here, a very practical strategy for enhancing the rights of ordinary Africans in an enduring way. I was very intrigued by the issue of citizenship and all of its trappings—identity documents, etc. Clearly on this issue, even the best constitutional provisions for human rights in Africa are inadequate, for they always focus exclusively on citizenship rights. So-called "aliens", who are simply other African working people, are simply disenfranchised. The Zimbabwean case amply demonstrates that we need a much more encompassing coverage and application of human rights law, and also highlights the need for human rights activists to heighten the struggle to broaden the frontiers of the current rights paradigm.

Mamdani: The new NGO culture operates on an opposed principle: they operate on a principle of noblesse oblige, as charitable institutions and not democratic institutions. If the leaders of NGOs are said to be accountable at all, it is to donors, never to members. In fact, most NGOs do not have members; they have recipients. NGOs think of the population on the ground as welfare recipients with needs, not members with rights. They see themselves more as on-the-scene "reps" of foreign donors, less as expressions of local initiative. I suggest that if we find the leadership of civil society organizations problematic, we begin with a critical analysis of NGOs as institutions, and not leaders as individuals. Tade Aina is right: outsiders cannot build democracy, neither in Africa nor anywhere else. Rather than a turnkey project, we better start thinking of democracy as an outcome of internal mobilizations and internal struggles.

Friedman: Some tough choices and conundrums confront us. It seems reasonable to suggest, as some panelists do, that poverty and economic exclusion

explain low grassroots propensity to mobilize and claim rights. But what is likely to change that? The social policy that Aina urges? Yes, but without grassroots organization, who will press for that? An extension of markets, which he also advocates? Yes, but from whence is this likely to come? Contrary to some Northern economic recipes, markets cannot work, even for elites, without states—which are built not merely by governance techniques but by links between government and the governed. While East Asia may have experienced a period of top-down market extension followed by democratization, is African economic modernization really likely to be driven by elites in the absence of democratization? Has not the post-independence period shown that, the Musevenis, Aferworkis and Zenawis notwithstanding, non-democratic rule in Africa produces not economic take-off but a division of spoils among elites?

The dilemmas do not end there. Only Aina draws attention to a point which seems axiomatic—that there will be no democratic revival in Africa without a reconstruction of the state. But—again the "New African" leadership notwithstanding—who is to build the state without a citizenry able to hold the state-builders to account? And what role is there within the African state for those—and there are many—who are not notional citizens of those states? The greatest contradiction of all is that, as Aina points out, there can be no democracy in Africa without peace, but no peace without democracy (because it is the attempt to suppress difference and the politics of exclusion and of particularism that have destroyed peace). Perhaps, as Aina vigorously argues, forces are beginning to build which will break these Gordian knots. But if they do, progress is likely to be slow and littered with setbacks.

What does all this mean for African democratizers and international understandings? For the former, it suggests a need to confront two related challenges—the need for greater rigor and the need for a deeper understanding of grassroots realities. The first requires more thought on the domestic impulses—and obstacles—to democracy. We have perhaps only begun to address the really hard strategic and analytical questions. What sort of coalitions for democracy—economic as well as political—can be built? Which social strata are available for the project; which are bound to frustrate it? What are the preconditions for strengthening the former rather than the latter? Similarly, given that any viable strategy is likely to be lengthy and incremental, what spaces and opportunities are created by current developments? Is critique of today's "democratization" enough without a nuanced evaluation of the openings it provides (among our panelists, Amanor-Wilks's analysis of the forces creating opportunities for farm workers' rights is a useful example)? But none of this is possible without a more detailed and nuanced understanding of grassroots realities than we have been able to achieve thus far.

Given the work still required of us before we are able to develop a diagnosis of democracy's constraints and possibilities, it might seem implausible to begin formulating recipes for international understandings. Yet, there is much that the North in particular can learn from the African intelligentsia. While we still know not enough about what will produce democracy, we know much about what will not. We know that elections alone will not suffice, that state-building requires more than textbooks on good governance, that the "democratic forces" and civil society beloved by many international actors usually do not extend much beyond the middle class, and that much of Africa's social life has been barely touched by current international understandings. We know that without peace there will be no progress and that, even if its preconditions remain elusive, international interventions still do much to obstruct it. And we know that democracy will not take root in Africa unless grassroots economic participation also takes does too and that a Northern approach which dispenses textbook recipes behind high protectionist walls will not achieve that.

But perhaps the most important lesson is that, for international actors as well as African intellectuals, democracy cannot be achieved simply by assuming a democratic path—and a citizenry—which resembles an idealized version of Peoria, Illinois. Africa—like Peoria (or Glasgow or Baden-Wurttemburg)—has its own specificities that offer potential for as well as limits to democracy. Any serious democratization project will need to recognize them. As African intellectuals embark on a journey to a more rigorous understanding of the route to democracy, serious international actors will join us on the adventure, listening and learning on the way.

Ekundayo: The discussions tend to view African realities as bound, for the purposes of posterity, prosperity and happiness, to move along the European path through the corridors of time. While current conditions and comparisons do put pressure on Africans and their world to look at the cosmos from this perspective, the core African cosmic views are still largely intact.

The question therefore arises: to the African, what actually is democracy and what do we assume are human rights? I would hazard to challenge us to look critically at these assumptions and see what can be done about them. Is democracy a government of the people by the people for the people? Does this definition assume a consensus of the majority? How does the majority arrive at a consensus on one idea out of many others of equal weight in different places at the same time? How do the priorities coincide for consensus? If my worldview is different from yours, can our collective decisions be democratic? If the answer to the last question is yes, how do we set the grounds for the appropriate processes to develop and thrive? And how do we manage my own priorities when yours are being addressed at the moment? African values and cultures have been largely been ignored by so-called intellectual Africans themselves.

Mutaboba: Democracy and human rights are values that are not alien to Africa. They sound strange and foreign to some foreigners and some of our fellow Africans simply because those two words have been defined and taken up in a purely narrow western view.

Democracy to me and most people means making a choice: a choice to say what you want and a choice to do what you think is right to do for you and for your people. Human rights, on the other hand, is a notion that is not strange or foreign to African either. The only problem is that once the notion was brought "as new" to Africa and African people, much as Christianity was, the whole concept was completely taken out of context.

Right to live: sacred and that is why vengeance and hanging were practiced everywhere. Right to eat and to free expression: common and that is why sharing food or a word was imperative to all, never mind where and between whom, be it children among children, women among themselves and men between men. Sexism or some sort of discrimination in Western terms may exist, but not human rights violations in terms of African cultural practices then and today.

The only difference is that so-called human rights in the Western view have not been taught to Africans when Western colonizers came over. Until today, they do not know them as such. They were taught what to do (obligations) and never what they should expect to be done for them (rights). Such an imbalance grew larger than the usual practices (simply because the post-colonial rulers did worse than their colonial masters) and made us believe that we are doing worse than those who taught us about "Human Rights". You cannot blame anybody for not being taught, but rather blame those who chose not to teach us what our rights were—never mind hammering what our obligations were/are.

Ninsin: African societies lack the ideological and material capacity to construct and control their own government. The latter is poverty in scientific and technological knowledge to transform our lives and the institutions that regulate them. Both external and internal colonialism have succeeded partly because of this social deficit.

Ideological capacity is a function of material capacity. Put differently, the capacity to articulate and defend the ideology of freedom is a function of one's capacity for autonomous action. The poverty of the latter accounts for the pervasive "politics of the belly", which has enabled pretenders to install fabricated democracies throughout the continent, despite the resurgence of so-called civil society. Democracy cannot thrive on a backward continent, where poverty is increasing unabated. Here, only tyrants and demagogues triumph.

Mbogori: I fail to see the emergence, let alone the relentless pursuit of a holistic vision for the development of the continent. I fear that a coherent vision does not exist even at the level of most countries. The reactive nature of most leadership on this continent leaves Africa well disposed to the continued exploitation that has been our lot, as far back as we care to remember. In fact, with this reality in mind, I have

been convinced for some time now, that we are all afflicted by what I call the "poverty syndrome". This manifests itself in an almost burning desire to escape from the effects of poverty by any means possible. This inevitably leads to our acting irrationally.

I would venture to suggest further that the conflicts that prevail on most parts of the continent are in some way associated to this syndrome, as indeed is the criminalization of dissent that has been referred to in some contributions. Asked what I see as the way forward, I would suggest that we seek a remedy for this syndrome and consciously commit ourselves to acting rationally. Anyone who genuinely cares about Africa, her people, her wealth and her future has a responsibility to identify a role and perform it. There is a need for confidence building on the continent. We have to convince ourselves that we can act in the interests of the whole continent. We can be proactive, and this is part of a new culture that we must embrace.

Friedman: The current intellectual climate among African democrats has produced many articulate and eloquent denunciations of the present and also a broad vision of the future—one in which all the major social groups fashion a new society. But it has produced far too few rigorous analyses of the strange opportunities—and, of course, constraints—which face this vision. Like many South African intellectuals during part of the apartheid period, we are in danger of assuming that moral denunciation is all that is required. We do need to move now to engage with the strategic questions if we want to begin making progress towards our goals. For those who insist no change or progress is possible, that is exactly what all the "experts" said about apartheid, at least until the 1980s.

Okigbo: Can we achieve development in Africa if the people do not feel a sense of nationhood and patriotism? How committed is the average African to contributing his/her quota to national growth? McFadden was correct in noting that most Africans are not yet Citizens. Development is more difficult to achieve in our present situation where many feel disconnected in their relationships with our societal structures. Many feel like outsiders—within our countries. This is evident in our treatment of public property, public office, national wealth, and anything that belongs to the state. Our so-called leaders demonstrate this by where they keep their valued assets (houses and money)—usually outside their home countries. McFadden expressed the tragedy of our situation very clearly:

After all these beautiful analyses that will make our alma mater so proud of our linguistic and communication skills, we still have to ask—so what? What to do? For Aina, the best solution appears to be continuing the discussions which are led and promoted by various interest groups. These are yielding some optimism and windows of opportunity for intensifying the fight for democratic development in Africa. This is an echo of Julius Ihonvbere's admonition to break down the walls of silence in African countries. Discussions are vital—but they must be guided,

purposeful, goal-directed, and action-oriented—if they are to break down the walls of silence and ignorance.

Friedman: If all the key forces and interests in any African state can agree on the basic political rules, the prospect that they will become ways of settling conflicts rather than of simply creating new forums for them is enhanced. There clearly are precedents for this—of which South Africa is obviously the most oft-quoted. I agree that this line of thought is persuasive but would simply warn that it raises two key problems. The first is how this process is to be achieved in societies where there is insufficient popular pressure for it and leaders that are resistant to it. The second is how inclusive such a process would be unless grassroots citizens in the particular society are part of the process. Inclusion requires either leadership which is firmly in touch with constituencies or strong organization among the citizenry (and not only the middle class). (The South African process was, I would argue, helped by the fact that it was negotiated by parties with real support bases although, even in this case, the link with the grassroots was not nearly as great as we are often led to believe) Both of inclusion and organization are are weak in many African states. I am not sure it is possible to create inclusive and representative constitution-making processes unless grassroots participation in public life is much strengthened (whether through parties, social movements or civil society organisations). Therefore, I wonder whether, at this stage, we are not better advised to be talking about how to achieve this than to debate the precise form of the processes and institutions which that would follow from it.

Ekundayo: Democracy assumes checks and balances. Africa, as presently composed, does not have that luxury. In order for democracy to thrive in Africa, there must be forces in critical numbers, depth and strength, which will nurture, maintain and safeguard it. It is this ability that translates into "rights". Does Africa have that base? The answer is no. Therefore that base needs to be developed. How? It is through making large (critical) numbers of African prosper, with their own native ideas. These will be the stakeholders who will protect and expand their gains. Let these "acquisitions" be defined by Africa in terms of who owns what. Communism and Marxism are also European ideas which may actually be anti-African. The challenge, therefore, is to study what are really African interests and strive to nurture it. For the final edification of human rights takes place in democracy only when all the diverse needs and views are satisfactorily addressed, and in a way that excludes none.

Okigbo: If, as Tade Aina rightly affirmed, "democracy is for the promotion and advancement of the individual and collective well being of the different peoples of our nations and continent" and must be based on "the basic principles of inclusion, participation, freedom, justice and equity for all...", how do we bring this about more successfully? What are the main catalytic forces and constraints to watch out for? Aina is right in linking democracy to development, which he correctly characterized as more

than national income or GDP. Perhaps the strongest point in Aina's presentation is the assertion that "no outsider can build democracy for Africa."

Minter: It seems to me that profound influence by outsiders on the state of democracy and human rights within a local community or a state is hardly a new phenomenon, for Africa or anywhere in the world -- witness the slave trade, colonialism, Cold War patronage, etc. Nor is its direction (and value) any more easily judged than struggles "inside" a local community or state—witness the influence of anti-slavery campaigns, the anti-apartheid movement, the international connection to the Nigerian pro-democracy movement, oil companies, and the Niger Delta.

What the new "global" context does is to change the parameters within which this influence takes place. Among other things, it creates the option for greater transparency and accountability by all involved. But of course this won't happen "naturally." To me, this means the sites of contention for the fate of democracy and human rights in any particular local community, state—or continent—are inevitably world-wide, both "inside" and "outside."

Those involved—all of whose actions need to be examined for their potential positive or negative contributions and "right" to be engaged—include not only residents and citizens. It also includes diaspora communities—significant through their networks, skills and campaign finance even when excluded from voting "at home." And, it includes Western donors and other "donors"—multilaterals, foundations, NGOs (whether donors or activist). "Pro-democracy" efforts, in my view, should demand transparency and accountability from all these actors. (In practice, of course, "results will vary.")

Owusu-Ansah: While other newly emerging nations, Malaysia and South Korea, for example, are reducing disparities and spending resources judiciously on issues that help make life worth living, African countries south of the Sahara engage in what I would describe as the politics of chemosmosis.

Chemosmosis is the chemical treatment of a surface. Because the treatment is concerned with surface appearances, it lacks depth. Chemosmosis rears its head in African politics when the leaders emphasize unimportant, abstract things of little or no bearing on the issues affecting people's well being. Leaders often engage in rhetoric and embark upon haphazard measures that fail to tackle the root causes of illiteracy and poverty, two major factors in Africa's under development. Thus, in the absence of democracy, leaders engage in trivialities and often remain unchallenged.

Democracy may not be a-cure-all medicine for underdevelopment. However, given the level of development, progress, and prosperity in Malaysia, the country that attained political independence from the British in the same year with Ghana, it seems clear we have no choice but to practice democracy. The fact is we have not practiced

democracy long enough. We have not given democracy a chance, compared to the one-party system, which has dominated the African political scene in the past four decades. Characterized by arrest and imprisonment without cause or trial, the one-party system, championed by Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, is itself a violation of human rights.

That the one-party ideology of the Nkrumah-Nyerere era has, to a greater extent, derailed democracy and stigmatized Africa's human rights record cannot be overstated. The evidence is overwhelming. A cursory examination of the African continent shows that African countries that blindly adhered to the one-party system are almost invariably worse off than they were at independence. Kwame Nkrumah's Ghana, Sekou Toure's Guinea, Modibo Keita's Mali, Leopold Senghor's Senegal, and Julius Nyerere's Tanzania all exhibit concrete evidence of the havoc created under the one-party ideological concept. Sierra Leone under Siaka Stevens, Uganda under Milton Obote, Zambia under Kenneth Kaunda, Zaire under Mobutu Sese Seko, and Emperor Jean Bedel Bokassa's Central African Republic are equally victims of intolerance under the one-party system. Before independence in 1980, the Zimbabwe economy was among the best in the world. Today, barely two decades later, under Robert Mugabe's one-party dictatorship, the economy is in the doldrums. Inefficiency is at the highest levels.

Shepherd: There are many admirable attempts underway to protect people against abusive governments and even genocide. But these cannot succeed without getting our priorities straight. The right to "Sustainable Development" means that a basic attack on poverty must be undertaken that places the rights of people to food, education, and a clean environment on a equal plane with freedom from disappearances and "crimes against humanity." Some human rights advocates are beginning to do this. The role of the Sierra Club and Amnesty International in the recognition of the needs of the Ogoni people against Chevron oil exploitation was a beginning. The new Nigerian government needs to be supported internationally by the major human rights advocates and NGOs, in its attempts to bring equity and a solution to this problem of human and environmental need. The reduction and cancellation of African Debt as proposed by Jubilee 2000 is a central step to be taken if the social welfare structure is to be rebuilt. Unfortunately the recent African Summit failed to place this first.

The failures of Structural Adjustment to provide the basis for African recovery should now be obvious. A massive Marshal Plan for Africa in cooperation with African states should be launched. Then, there may be much hope for improving trade and investment. These are the priorities and programs that need to be undertaken along with assistance in the holding and monitoring of elections and the strengthening of international and national tribunals on war crimes. Those of us in the Africa field who

propose to help Africa meet basic human needs and the democratic aspirations of its people need to get our own priorities straight. Then, we may be able to persuade our Governments to undertake these humanitarian, global sustaining programs. These could as Tade Aina suggests, go a long way toward "supporting the poor in liberating themselves from poverty."

Concluding Statements

Odinkalu: The exchanges during this panel have been so insightful, any number of them deserve to be treated in their own right as set- piece contributions. So many different but related themes emerged during these exchanges, including dialogues on citizenship and the nature of the post-colonial African state, inclusion, exclusion and social justice, the purpose of democracy, custom, women, gender, and identity, to name only a few. We have also been invited to interrogate the appropriateness of "Africa" as the template for our exchanges. I do not pretend that I can respond to all of these. And I don't attempt to do so.

Since our exchanges began last month, several events of relevance to the subject matter of our panel have happened across the continent. I propose to call some of these events in aid of an attempt to elaborate the difficulties, methods and challenges that have been highlighted by these exchanges. What I end up with will perhaps be an eclectic collection of verbiage that, I hope, will not fail the test of trade description if you choose to call it "remarks".

The flip side of Tade's very pithy question "democracy for what?" is another equally fundamental poser, "democracy for whom?" We could easily adapt these questions to the related notions of human rights and (social) justice. In addressing these questions, Suren Pillay counsels that "we move away from broad general solutions like "Africa needs so and so" to local, specific studies that tell us about the distribution of power, along the various cleavages that separate and overlap...", and asks "[I]s it not useful that those who study societies and the many (sic) across this continent tell us what these lofty ideals mean to those around them?"

While I agree that generalizations about Africa in any field of endeavor are more than likely to be unsustainable, I am unable to subscribe to a suggestion that the interpretations of Pillay's "those who study societies" (whoever they may be) are a substitute for narratives constructed by those who inhabit the experiences described. The outcome of the recent Zimbabwean Referendum arguably attests to this. The document voted down in that referendum was drafted by a commission that included some of the best known of "those who study societies" among Zimbabwe's intellectual and professional elite. That draft Constitution was the product of what was supposed to be a process (however flawed or inadequate) of consultation with the people of Zimbabwe.

The outcome of that referendum has been portrayed the world over as popular reprobation for a bad and out-of-touch President and his ruling party. I would argue that the outcome of that referendum, including the low turnout evidencing its inability to excite most Zimbabweans or, perhaps, its irrelevance to their scheme of things, was an equally damning verdict on the intellectual and professional experts recruited by the President to legitimize his self-perpetuation. The ex-post facto allegations of governmental interference in the drafting of the constitutional document were half-hearted at best. They also confessed to a naive assumption, not uncommon in current intellectual exchanges on constitutionalism in Africa, that the government itself should be a "neutral" party in the politics of constitution making.

Professor Mamdani challenges us to "democratize custom", a point which is both radical and, in implementation if not in conception, quite controversial. For with custom, as with organized religion, it's impossible to demarcate where the temporal ends and the transcendental begins. The democratization of custom would entail working out a modus vivendi with those whose interests are served by retaining its more oppressive manifestations. To this challenge, Patricia McFadden and Muthoni Wanyeki, among others, contributed meaningful insights that demonstrate that we cannot democratize custom, or, indeed, Africa unless we also democratize identity.

I hear it said that (our) people are mad to kill one another for ethnic or religious differences. And I say really? That's not helpful. Why is it that our people, most of whom can't be bothered to raise a voice in protest against injustice, are nevertheless sufficiently worked up to kill in industrial proportions for appearances of Allah/God, skin pigmentation, height difference or the imagined shape of another's jaw-line? Why is it that our compatriots who cannot be excited by the worst excesses of government, nor stirred by blandishments about patriotism and nation-building, are easily roused to episodic outbursts of psychiatric epidemics over identity and sectarian differences? I, for one, believe that there is more at work here than passionate irrationality or the cynical exploitation of ignorance.

Since Nigeria's transition to civil rule (I decline deliberately to call it a 'transition to democracy') in May last year, the country has experienced more violent killings than anything wrought by the combined excesses of the military governments of the past one and a half decades. Nigerians, who could not be worked up by the crimes of the successive military regimes, have experienced a succession of rapidly deteriorating identity-fuelled carnage. The response of the Obasanjo regime to this worrying situation is a mixture excessive military action, deliberate encouragement of police excesses, denial, and confused gestures to the "investor" and so-called international communities. It appears committed to a line that suggests that it owes its existence and legitimacy as a government to the foreign investor and the international community. Instead of political imagination, the Nigerian government prefers police action.

Events such as the ongoing violence in Nigeria teach that we can deconstruct identity and traditional or sectarian institutions until we are black and blue in the face, but we dismiss or deny their potency at our own peril. If we can find a way of tapping the passions that drive our people to the kind of identity-based, low-tech, high intensity violence most of our African societies experience now and again, we would have taken the first steps in the right direction.

But we cannot begin to do this unless a different generation of ideas and participants are prepared to get our aprons dirty in creating a new but realistic framework for political engagement. The attempt at democratization in Africa has managed somehow to defy the continent's generational and demographic trends. In the euphoria of the close results from the recent (but yet inconclusive) election in Senegal, very little has been said about the intriguing relationship of inverse proportionality between the age of the various contestants and their electoral appeal. Although not unmindful of the positive interpretations that we can salvage from those results, I fail to see—not for want of trying—how the prospect of a 75 year-old former law professor and minister replacing his 63 year-old former boss and benefactor necessarily represents the much-touted "change" on whose brink we are invited to believe Senegal's 'democracy' now is. Democracy in Africa will remain a pie in the sky unless the project excites our youths. Building a politically credible and ethically regenerated leadership potential among Africa's young people remains one of the eternal challenges of our democracy project.

Mamdani (and many other participants) rightfully warn against the unaccountability of a majority of the new NGO-cracy. And I believe it was Tade who asked the question "[W]hat use is democracy if it doesn't improve our lives?," inviting us, implicitly at least, to eschew the arrogance of fundamentalisms in approaching democratization and social justice in Africa. I would call attention here to the dangers of human rights and NGO fundamentalisms too. The framing of human rights norms is increasingly done in multi-lateral forums in which consensus documents reflect lowest common denominators having disparate impact in disparate contexts. Increasingly, there is an inflationary trend in international human rights standards whose mutual coherence is quite doubtful.

Only recently, the Appellate Chamber of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) ordered an alleged leading genocidaire to be freed without bothering to examine the allegations against him because he had been in pre-trial detention for nineteen months. This was a form of what I choose to call due process fundamentalism that can only discredit the values of human rights, making it at best a marginal enterprise. The notion of "indigenous peoples" coined in very particular circumstances is in many places around Africa increasingly used to differentiate superior and inferior claims of citizenship and its perks that invite all forms of unacceptably violent self-

help in settling perceptions of historical injustice. Such tendencies damage the basis and context for remedying historical exclusion and privilege by discrediting the means of activists without acknowledging the ends they seek to bring about. Universality is no excuse for uncritical and uncontextualized fundamentalism in the cause of texts negotiated, after all, by governments.

It bears restating that NGOs in Africa are no substitute for the state, nor management a substitute for participation. Tade suggests that the choice we have in Africa is one "between transformation and chaos". I do not personally see chaos and transformation as mutually exclusive. Chaos, like beauty, is in any case, in the eyes of the beholder. If we begin from the premise that democracy is messy, then we must accept that it entails a degree of chaos. The business of sorting out the disjunctures and injustices of Africa's past in today's world can't be pretty. The challenge for Africa—and for its friends around the world—is not to despair or, even worse, apologize for our difficulties. One choice we definitely don't have is to trade in the prospect of long term transformation for short term appearances of order and convenience.

McFadden: Several commentators mentioned the need to retain culture and or accommodate tradition as an essential feature of remaining African in a modernizing world. It is absolutely true that all societies carry something of the past into every experience of the present and future—that is the nature of existence in any form (material or social). However, for me as a feminist activist and scholar—the more critical questions are: what do Africans want to retain and who is carrying that past? What is it that authenticates the notion of that which is "African", and what are the consequences for particular groups of persons and or individuals.

In my view, this is where the tension lies and we must have the political and personal courage to engage with the challenge this presents. Africans must become modern, and African intellectuals must remove themselves from the outdated claims that modernity is about being European. Africans have to move into the present time—and this will not mean that we become less African in any way. We will (if we begin to work on it) become new Africans—and that for me is the critical qualitative issue.

Modernity is about acquiring the ability to thrive (not just to cope) in the present time—at the local, national, continental and global levels. It is about embracing those things which are critical to the empowering identities of the times—becoming citizens in the fullest manner; exercising democratic rights and engaging in democratic practice in the public and in the private; extending rights in their fullest meanings to all who live in our immediate and global context; and being aware of the critical and central importance of entitlement in our lives as individuals who are Africans in all the senses that this notion connotes and means.

People can only become citizens when they have a consciousness of themselves as entitled to certain "products"—rights, which come out of their struggles to be free and creative; services—which enable them to develop a consciousness through which they can demand access and accountability. The notions of governance and democracy can only become "real" and sustainable if the majority of Africans move out of the 15th century (in material, cultural and social terms) into which they have been locked—and which so many intellectuals reify as "authentic" and untouchable.

When one exists in a material reality where one can access modern utilities (basic things like portable water within ones home, electricity, waste disposal, etc) and through which one can experience the ability to purchase such commodities and thereby demand accountability and efficiency from those who should provide them—one develops a sense of entitlement.

The process of entitlement awareness also comes from the engagement with commodity exchange and with being valued as the possessor of labor through which one can access other social products. Because most African women are not paid for their labor, their awareness of entitlement remains low. They tend to accept things as given—as unchangeable, and therefore are easily mobilized as the custodians of archaic notions of patriarchal privilege. I know that I am treading on dangerous ground by making so many generalizations. Nonetheless, I am making these broad statements because the very act of raising new questions is in and of itself pleasing and personally enjoyable.

 Those of us who are articulating the notions of rights, democracy, and citizenship live in environs where we have been able to enter into "civic" relationships with structures and systems that shape our consciousness as "entitled" individuals and communities. Most Africans do not live in such environs. They do not have the experience of being "entitled" to facilities and to material and social products that they can purchase and therefore demand. I am not saying that poor rural people do not have a consciousness of what they need to make life possible. I am talking about a consciousness that can be mobilized to transform the African political scenario in new and different ways.

Most Africans, especially African women, live in the "privatized" spaces of the rural areas—where even the most basic elements of governance and civic expectations are often absent. While I as an urban based woman can access the law when I am threatened with violation—and I have been able to develop a consciousness about myself as a human being with an integrity of person and, thus a consciousness of the entitlement to security and wholeness—the rural woman is largely excluded from this experience. There is her exclusion from education and information and from property relations which are critical to a modernist consciousness. In fact, most African women are largely constructed as property within their natal and marital families.

Consequently, patriarchal practices which reproduce women's commodified status in rural environs persist, and activists based in the urban sites have not been able to "break into" these private, customized spaces, largely because the wider structures and systems of governance are difficult if not impossible to access. We want women (and rural men) to have a consciousness about their rights, about modernity, in a vacuum—without the trappings that are essential to the emergence and sustenance of a modern consciousness. Note the impact of education on the views of men about the education of girls. Most women who are educated come from families where their fathers recognized access to knowledge as an essential attribute of modern existence.

Therefore, we encounter the resistance and impenetrability of traditional and cultural practices that violate and exclude women and children (especially girl children). We have discourses about democratization and governance, about rights and entitlement. But, they continue to exclude the majority of Africans because they have not been extended the basic pre-requisites of modern existence.

I know that some people will counter that Africa had democratic practices long before the modern age. Maybe—but, democracy as we are defining it now was most certainly not the experience of women in the past—however that past is re-claimed and or reinvented. A contentious issue, for sure, and one which will enable us as Africans to further our creativity and engagements.

In conclusion, I think that we must begin to engage certain key questions which underpin the transition for Africa from coloniality,- whether it is pre-or post-, in order for us to actually make the difference we so desperately need.

Firstly, we must engage with the issues of property and how they exclude and silence the majority of Africans—and which are presently couched in notions of authenticity and culture. For women, entering into a relationship with property is central to their transformation from subjects to citizens—to use Mamdani's beautifully articulated argument, with a gender inclusive bent.

Secondly, we must engage the issue of infrastructure and access to services and systems of mobility in relation to economic, political, cultural, educational and wider social aspects. People cannot become citizens if they are excluded from the most critical material and social resources that shape their consciousness as citizens. The most basic of these is the positioning of the individual at the intersection between civic and market processes. When people interact within the civic sphere, they create new energies which can be mobilized and expressed as "social phenomena"'—notions of rights and access which underpin modernity and agency as far as I see it. The fact of the matter is that we live in commodified societies, and each and every African has the right to position her/himself in relation to both the "civic/public" and the "market" as they choose. Here I am obviously not talking only about the relationship with capital. I am also referring to

the fundamental relationship between the individual and the capitalist mode of production as a larger phenomenon with which we all have to engage.

Thirdly, Africans have to detach themselves from old notions of who we are in terms of our personal and public identities. We are Africans—and will be such to all else for a long time to come. We do not need to authenticate ourselves through the maintenance of exclusionary practices that only make the task of transformation even more difficult. We must embrace the modern because we are an essential part of it.

Africans have crafted and shaped modernity largely through our struggles and the demands we continue to make within our respective post-colonial societies, as well as through our engagement with patriarchy and exclusion at the global level. We have the right to be complete citizens—but to be such, we have to shed the past that has kept outside the most critical sites in our societies—sites where material, social and political resources reside.

In my opinion, it is only when we have the courage to be modern that we will be able to engage the post-colonial state effectively as gendered citizens. The challenge of making gender difference an expression of our diversity rather than the basis of our exclusion and violation will then become a foremost political issue for all Africans.

PEACE AND SECURITY

The third session of the Electronic Roundtable, covering peace and security, opened with panel presentations (March 16-20, 2000) and continued with discussion by panelists and participants from March 17 through April 25. This chapter juxtaposes the views of panelists and participants, in their own words.

The full archive, including e-mail contributions by participants and English and French versions of all panel presentations, is available at www.africapolicy.org/rtable.

Panelists

Anatole Ayissi, *United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, Geneva*

Jakkie Cilliers, *Institute of Strategic Studies, South Africa*

Mohamed Sahnoun, *Eminent Persons Group on Trafficking in Small Arms And Light Weapons*

Hussein Solomon, *ACCORD, South Africa*

George Wachira, *Nairobi Peace Initiative, Kenya*

Cilliers: By the 1990s, the military balance between state and society in Africa had changed profoundly. At independence, one could still argue that the post-colonial regime retained the balance of force through control over the security apparatus and the level of armaments at the unique disposal of the same. At the turn of the century, an increased number of African states have atrophied and weapons, spilling over from armed conflicts throughout the region, circulate virtually uncontrolled. Societies are allowed to arm and challenge the incumbent elite, while the security agencies themselves, in many instances, have decayed and lost their coherence.

As a result, a military victory by any of the various armed forces in a country such as the Democratic Republic of Congo is unlikely to have any impact on levels of social violence, social fragmentation and the nature of the economy. At the same time, state control, to the extent that it exists in the form of organized administration and the provision of services, has contracted inward, in many instances reflecting an exclusively urban bias and neglect of the rural populations.

Today, the surfeit of arms and lack of control over national territories has resulted in much of Sub-Saharan Africa being characterized not by the state's monopoly over

the instruments of coercion, but by a balance of force between the state and the community. The result, in a highly armed and violent continent, ironically, is the creation of a security vacuum. Within Nairobi, Johannesburg or Luanda, security is available to those who can afford it. To Angola, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo, war comes to those countries that have exploitable resources worth fighting over. In both instances the vast majority of the poor population are left to fend for themselves and forced to arm and organize to prevent their exploitation by local warlords, ethnically based politicians or criminals.

Wachira: First, I think peace and security must fundamentally be about improving people's quality of life and relationships. For this to happen, Africa needs a proactive pursuit of peace and security that must put in place structures, processes and institutions capable of forestalling the deterioration of tensions and conflicts into armed conflict.

Secondly, I think addressing the roots of conflicts in Africa is really addressing economic development, human rights and democracy and environmental degradation.

Thirdly, the nature of conflict-related emergencies, the multiplicity of their consequences, their persistence long after the conflict is terminated and the absence of tried and tested approaches in dealing with them, make conflicts a central concern in the continent.

Fourthly, (which could very well be the first) my focus is influenced by my work in the field of peace-building and conflict transformation for the last ten years. This work has involved mostly grassroots peace-building and reconciliation work in diverse places in the continent. As a result, my reflections are more from the perspective of a practitioner than academic

Ayissi: The immediate post-Cold War was characterized in Africa by two competing and radically opposed trends: On the one hand, we had a trend of Death and Despair, which was essentially marked by an important inflation of violence all over the continent. For many African people, the post-Cold War great expectations of a bright new era of peace and conviviality blew up at the very moment the rest of the world was celebrating the dislocation of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Iron Curtain.

On the other hand, there was an equally powerful trend of Life and Hope. Boosted by the windows of (peace) opportunities opened by the "new world unburdened by superpower confrontation," the international community in general, and the United Nations in particular, engaged in a major effort to tackle the scourge of mass violence in the continent. In Somalia, Rwanda, and other African "hells on earth," thousands of soldiers of peace were sent and billion of dollars were spent with the objective to "make peace" and "restore hope." Unfortunately, these substantial global endeavors remained relatively powerless. Despite genuine political will and commitment, peace was not rebuilt and hope was not restored.

On the contrary, the African universe of armed violence became "the bonfire of the vanities" of the international community. In Somalia for instance, the nearly "Hollywoodian" show of force by American Marines was sunk in a flood of blood and tears. In Rwanda, despite the presence of UN peacekeepers, Africa gratified the world with one of the last great human tragedies of the century: within a couple of weeks, hundreds of thousands of people were savagely slaughtered on the abominable altar of ethnic hatred. In Angola, experience continues to show that despite an indisputable global security in a world free from the collective threat of a nuclear holocaust, our "global village" is in fact an ambiguous universe of deeply fragmented security.

Sahnoun: An ever-expanding illicit trade in small arms thrives on the backs of Africa's youth. The mounting death toll, which results from large quantities of small arms in circulation, poses one of the great humanitarian challenges of our time. Yet, the international trade in small arms remains mostly unregulated. Future generations will judge us by our response to the challenge posed.

A whole generation of African children is being inducted into a culture of violence marked by violent death and injury. Of the 7-8 million fatalities in Africa's recent regional conflicts, 2 million were children. Four to five million children have been disabled, another 12 million left homeless. More than 1 million orphaned or separated from their families. This mental militarization will tear apart the last remnants of civility.

 Small arms violence undermines good governance. It disrupts trade, tourism and investment. As domestic conditions deteriorate, violent crime and general lawlessness increase exponentially, a phenomenon which has been termed "la criminalisation de l'etat en Afrique." It raises the cost of maintaining order, thus jeopardizing economic development by depleting budget resources. As a result, with human rights abuses on an increase and famine conditions exacerbated, democracy and development are put at risk.

Wachira: There is more or less a consensus with regard to the limitations of the traditional narrow military-and-external-threat understanding of peace and security. The "national security" doctrine especially during the cold war era focused on how a nation protects its "core national values" and "interests" against external threat through the use of military force or threat of it. In the developing world, and certainly in Africa, the doctrine was much more that of "state security."

Here, the focus was not so much the security of the nation and its interests as that of the ruling elite—perceived to be the link that symbolized and held the new and fragile nation-states together. This approach was aided by a ruthless state apparatus, which in turn enjoyed the support of super powers in the cold war arithmetic and was based on the assumption that African countries needed strong centralized rule in order to survive.

Unlucky countries like Angola and Mozambique had the super powers support different elite camps in the countries to wage some of the longest and disastrous civil wars in the continent. Support by super powers encouraged regimes to disregard

internal tension-generating realities that today should be the central concern of peace and security in African countries. These include, but are not limited to, the fragility of the African nation- states and their economies, chronic poverty, marginalization and exclusion from the political process, and inequitable distribution of resources, all of which are at the core of social justice. These tensions are exacerbated when interested parties organize around ethnic (or clan), racial, religious, linguistic and other differences to stake their claims. The result has been violent conflicts in one African country after another. Ironically, the very people that yearn for social justice end up hopelessly divided and at war with each other.

Ayissi: The tragic transformation of most of African armed conflicts into what Jakkie Cilliers and Greg Mills characterize as "complex emergencies" makes peace operations in the continent a very dangerous task. As a consequence, a new policy of downsizing African peace support operations succeeded to the exuberant "euphoria of the post-Cold war era of peacekeeping". In 1994 for instance—the "golden age" of post-Cold War peace support operations, with more than 80,000 troops from 77 countries scattered all over the world for a budget of 3.4 billions US dollars—70% of deployments were in Africa.

By way of contrast, five years later, in 1998, sixteen UN peace operations were going on in the world. Only four of these were taking place in Africa. This drastic shift is explained by the growing reluctance of Nations contributing troops to "expose their soldiers to unreasonable risks," as well as the "general unwillingness to become involved in operations costly in blood or resources." The ghosts of Mogadishu (Somalia), where eighteen American marines were killed in October 1993 and the nightmares of Kigali (Rwanda), where ten Belgian UN peacekeepers were to be executed a couple of months later, continued to haunt an international community increasingly terrified by African tragedies.

This combination of (1) the end of the Cold war, (2) the (global) rising expectations for peace and (3) the (regional) diving of Africa into the abyss of escalating mass violence has never really been understood by the traditional diplomacy of crisis management. This organic incapacity to understand the challenges ahead explains the unfortunate disengagement from Africa. Since the situation could not be understood, there was no reason for peacekeepers to remain engaged in a place transformed into a graveyard for well-established certainties.

Understandably, assistance, support, commitment and engagement for peace in Africa dramatically declined at the very moment they were badly needed. Some of the main actors in the international system strengthened this trend by making declarations that could be taken—and were actually taken—for "paradigms" for a "new theory" of UN peacekeeping operations. This was the case for the U.S. President, Bill Clinton, when, in his address to the United Nations General Assembly in October 1993, he

declared that "the United Nations must learn to say "no" to peacekeeping operations that were not feasible."

Sahnoun: The accumulation of power in the hands of those with guns has led to the collapse of states across the African continent. A dangerous strategic triad has developed between the trade in diamonds, oil and precious metals that have become a key means of funding illicit arms purchases. Throughout Africa, conflicts are being fueled in an effort by irresponsible and reckless profiteers to control precious natural resources that, rather than being means for economic and political empowerment, end up fueling the engines of war and annihilation.

More and more governments fail in providing for basic human needs. Increasing social iniquities further alienate the disenfranchised and contribute to sudden explosions of violence. Not surprisingly, virtually every low-income country in Africa has either undergone major conflict, or borders on one or more countries in conflict.

The oversupply of inexpensive small arms also heightens inter-state conflict, putting the nation-state system itself under attack. With armed guerilla groups proliferating and often dividing into warring factions, internal instabilities, increasingly, tend to evolve into larger regional wars. The conflict in Congo-Kinshasa involves the armed forces of eight countries.

Cross-border support for insurgent movements is also on the rise. As a result, large-scale wars are ongoing in Angola, Congo-Brazzaville, Congo-Kinshasa, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Rwanda, Somalia, and Sudan. Low intensity conflicts are being waged, inter alia, in Burundi, Chad, Djibouti, Senegal, and Uganda. Of the 25 major conflicts identified world-wide in 1997, all new ones were located in Africa. As a result, of the 22 million refugees globally, 8.1 million are in Africa. Throughout Africa, currently about 20 million people are displaced.

Cilliers: The response of the international community to the challenge of instability in Africa is generally hostage to the state-centered peacekeeping debate. It is to peacekeeping that commentators turn when looking for solutions to violent crises that are very different from those envisaged at the end of Second World War when the UN Charter was drafted.

During the Cold War regional conflicts were at once internationalized and subsumed within the superpower competition and controlled to avoid escalation into nuclear conflict. In the process, the strategic relevance of regions such as Africa was elevated as part of the global chess board—pawns in a much larger game. At the beginning of the twenty-first century the situation is much changed. Africa has lost its strategic relevance. Apart from humanitarian concerns, only selected areas with exploitable natural resources demand the attention of the larger and more powerful countries.

A blurring in the clear demarcation of roles between sub-regional, regional and international organizations—the UN in particular—has occurred after the end of the

Cold War. During the bi-polar era, the division of labor was clear. The UN mounted peacekeeping operations and deployed political missions, while regional organizations concentrated on preventive diplomacy. The proliferation of internal conflicts after the fall of the Berlin Wall have confounded this clear division. Almost as if to mirror this trend, the increase in the number and the nature of the various actors involved in internal conflicts have further complicated the ability of state-centered negotiations and mediation to succeed.

Wachira: Africa's conflicts have exerted such heavy tolls on the people and their cultures, economies, infrastructure and environment, that it is a wonder how some have survived. Everywhere, there are tales of heart-wrenching experiences in situations of conflict. Millions of deaths, displacement of people, psychological scars, starvation, destruction of community bonds, environmental degradation, and the proliferation of weapons—mostly in the hands of non-state actors—are some of the consequences of these conflicts.

More often than not, a conflict in one country triggers off other conflicts or insecurity in a region, thus making it difficult to distinguish between intra- and international conflicts. Regionalization of conflicts happens through movements of refugees, fighters and arms. Political activity among refugees becomes a major source of conflict as evidenced in the Great Lakes region of Central Africa, as do ethnic and cultural affinities along borders. These problems are heightened by perceptions of direct or indirect encouragement of political activity by host countries.

In the Great Lakes region, it is clear that one episode of a conflict creates the conditions for the next one. For example, Rwandans exiled in Uganda in the 1950s launched their comeback from Uganda in 1990. After the genocide in 1994, other Rwandans found refuge in eastern DRC. The current involvement of Rwanda in the Democratic Republic of Congo war is excused by Rwanda's need to neutralize politically active Rwandan refugees who might want to stage an armed comeback.

Cilliers: Direct conflict between African states has, in fact, been a relatively isolated phenomenon. Those that have taken place have not involved any substantial commitment of resources for peacekeeping operations. Virtually all African conflicts that have involved some type of peacekeeping effort have been conflicts within states. An important reason for this feature is the permeability of African borders and the weakness of African states themselves.

This does not deny the fact that virtually all of these internal conflicts have had a regional dimension. In many cases neighboring countries have involved themselves in the internal affairs of others or allowed their territory to be used as a springboard for such involvement. In others, countries do not control their own territory and cannot end cross-border actions, particularly when international boundaries cut through, rather than follow, broad ethnic and tribal divides.

Ayissi: In many past conflicts, obviously something needed to be done. But the traditional diplomacy of peacemaking remained voiceless, paralyzed both by the unprecedented scope of violence escalation and its structural impotence. All things being equal, nothing could logically be done. And nearly nothing was done beyond the management of (humanitarian) emergencies.

Certainly with a view to "explaining" this hardly understandable situation, the United Nations repeatedly mentioned the following self- evident truth: there is no peace without a local genuine will for peace:

This was the case for the Security Council when deciding that the time was ripe for leaving Somalia alone with its own evils. On that occasion, the Security Council recognized that "the lack of progress in the Somali peace process [.] in particular the lack of sufficient cooperation from the Somali parties over security issues, has fundamentally undermined the United Nations objectives in Somalia and, in these circumstances, continuation of UNOSOM II beyond March 1995 cannot be justified."

A couple of months earlier, when the same scenario was being reproduced in Rwanda, in much more dramatic circumstances, the Security Council expressed its "deep regret at the failure of the parties to implement fully the provisions of the Arusha Peace Agreement, particularly those provisions relating to the cease-fire." Consequently, the Security Council, "shocked [and] appalled at the [...] large-scale violence in Rwanda [.], deeply concerned by continuing fighting, looting, banditry and the breakdown of law and order [authorized] a force level as set out in paragraphs 15 to 18 of the Secretary-General's report of 20 April 1994 for that purpose."

In a much more explicit way, the "paragraphs 15-18" option did simply mean the scaling down of UN engagement in Rwanda. In those four paragraphs, the Secretary General recommended, as a possible option (among many), the reduction of UNAMIR from 2545 personnel to "a small group [of blue helmets] headed by the force Commander, with necessary staff." This "small group" was to "remain in Kigali to act as intermediary between the two parties in an attempt to bring them to an agreement on a cease-fire, this effort being maintained for a period of up to two weeks or longer, should the Council so prefer."

A couple of years later in Angola, nearly the same scenario would be repeated with the same implacable logic.

Obviously, African warlords had learned very well the lesson on the most efficient way to get UN peacekeepers out of Africa!

Cilliers: Globally, a new security paradigm seems to be emerging. This consists of regions accepting co-responsibility and sharing the burden to police themselves and a dilution of the central role that many had hoped the United Nations would play in this regard. This agenda is primarily, but not exclusively, driven by the United States,

which is seeking co-option and burden sharing by others in the hegemonic role that the demise of the Soviet Union had thrust upon it.

The most recent and arguably the most important indication of this trend is the US drive for NATO to undertake so-called non- Article 5 missions and U.S. support for a greater "European defense identity" as opposed to a transatlantic identity.

It is also becoming apparent that Africa is increasingly intent on engaging and dealing with its own challenges and that the phrase "African solutions to African problems" may yet come to haunt the continent. In this process, the debate within the continent is enthusiastic about the complementary role that sub-regional organizations can play in the maintenance of peace and security in the various sub-regions and the role that the latter can play in peacekeeping

Wachira: Due to the regionalization (and, ultimately, internationalization) of Africa's conflicts, it is now commonly accepted wisdom that one cannot address conflict issues in just one country and not pay attention to the regional and international dimensions. Thus, solutions to the conflict in the DRC cannot be sought without paying attention to the conflicts in the neighboring countries of Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda. The war in Sierra Leone was intimately connected with events in Liberia. Similarly, Kenya's increased insecurity in the urban areas and apparent arms race among its pastoral communities in the north is best viewed in the context of long periods of war and insecurity in the region, especially conflicts in Somalia and Sudan and the subsequent movement of people and arms into Kenya.

Cilliers: Yet, regional approaches bring little additional capabilities to bear, apart from the burden to co-ordinate and to collaborate. Regional alliances of the willing and able in Africa do not have the practical means to bring security to the continent. As part of regional peacekeeping forces, tentative democracies and de facto one- party states also find it difficult to transfer the values of respect for human rights and impartiality to the armed forces of neighboring countries when they have been unable to inculcate the same within their own borders.

To be fair, the thrust towards the provision of regional stability through indigenous peacekeeping forces in Africa by donor countries does not mean complete abandonment of the continent to its own devices. Although, Africa is barely at the margins of global security concerns.

Sahnoun: Conflicts have several political, economic, and social causes, but it would be much easier to prevent and resolve them if the availability of small arms was curtailed. For the supply of small arms and light weapons is the most important aggravating factor in conflict situations.

Most small arms originate in the industrialized North. The permanent members of the UN Security Council alone account for around 85% of the global arms trade. Forty of the worldwide flow of small arms is attributed to illicit trafficking and the

majority of illicit weapons are proven to originate in the licit trade. Getting these governments to exercise restraint and to tighten national and international controls on small arms exports should lend itself to significant reductions in supply.

Measures must be devised to limit access to small arms, to curtail the supply of small arms and to reduce the demand for small arms. The weapons of violence must be brought back into the control of the state, with the state itself being made accountable for its deeds.

This essentially means empowering the state at one level, and using all tools available to induce more responsible behavior on its part, at another. The two approaches must be mutually compatible.

Wachira: In itself, the proliferation of arms throughout the continent is of important significance to peace and security. As states engage in wars or fight rebels, keeping track of arms (especially those defined as "light" or "small" arms) becomes very difficult as control regimes collapse. Arms that are today in legal (government) hands easily become the illicit ones in tomorrow's wars, car-jacking and bank robberies. As already mentioned, ordinary herders in Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia and Sudan are armed with sophisticated weapons, ostensibly for the protection of their herds. In reality, these weapons have been a major source of insecurity in the area. They are used in raids and counter raids within and across national borders that the governments in the region might not be able to control save by deploying their combined militaries along the borders. For Kenya, the entire northern belt is a security nightmare.

A number of Africa's major conflicts have been funded through illegal trade in natural resources. Thus, in the DRC, Sierra Leone and Angola, diamond and gold mines, oil fields and even forests are always a major prize for any side of the conflict. With all its diamonds and oil and relatively small population, Angola ought to be one of the richest countries in Africa. Mineral wealth is often both the reason and the means for some of the long-running conflicts. Fighters on all sides benefit from the mineral wealth while arms merchants are only too happy to keep the fighters supplied for a cut of the mineral wealth. In spite of the UN ban on unofficial diamond sales these still find their way to Western capitals.

Cilliers: Regional peacekeeping capacity building programs will continue. They are domestically less controversial than the provision of direct assistance to the security agencies of African countries, provide high donor visibility at limited cost, and serve to strengthen the myth of African solutions to African problems. Many African governments will continue to accept such assistance using it for their own, as opposed to the intended, purposes as demonstrated by Uganda where its ACRI trained peacekeeping battalion is deployed on offensive missions deep into the territory of neighboring DRC in support of rebel forces.

In their efforts at wrestling with the challenge of helping Africa to become more secure at domestically affordable political and economic costs, the recipes of donor countries are becoming more varied. Limited logistical support and financial assistance will still be forthcoming to assist larger African countries such as Nigeria (and South Africa?) to enforce their own version of stability—often in their own interests and in their own backyard. Such support will be enough to assuage domestic political opinion that outside countries are "doing something" short of committing their own ground forces. Great Britain already provides limited logistic support to ECOMOG in Sierra Leone, while the US funds the same.

Wachira: A worrying trend in Africa that is gaining root is the privatization of security. In its more universal sense, this takes the form of mercenaries who wage wars on behalf of both internal and external actors in African conflicts. Its more localized version is the "hired thugs" who are used by political actors to visit violence on opponents. Urban insecurity has also been in the increase, leaving citizens to devise "self-help" security arrangements as the police can no longer cope. The rise in urban insecurity has been connected to the general deterioration of economies, thus forcing people (mostly gangs of educated but unemployed youth) into violent and daring crime. In Nairobi, for instance, well organized crime syndicates rival and often outdo the police in their sophistication. Indeed, Africa's unemployed and increasingly restless youth pose a major security concern.

Cilliers: A recent trend is also the increased use of private security companies such as Sandline International or Military Professional Resources Inc. in lieu of British or American combat formations. In the absence of meaningful institutions for the provision of security at the national level, a change in the debate regarding foreign private security companies seems to be emerging. Whereas the debate was obsessed with the historically emotive concept of "mercenaries", much contemporary writing and thinking is moving away from the often sterile attempts to judge actions as being mercenary or not.

Although perhaps not in the guise of Executive Outcomes, the privatization of security, war, and even peacekeeping in Africa will continue. Part of the reason for this is, of course, that a number of the governing elite are using their armed forces for activities that can best be described as being of a military commercial nature. In this process, the armed forces of a number of countries engage in entrepreneurial, often illegal and exploitative endeavors in neighboring countries. These endeavors are deployed in the interests of the elite to compensate for their poor resources and often merely to survive in a hostile environment.

Building African peacekeeping capacity and the use of private companies cannot and will not be much more than of symbolic value at a time when the fundamental challenge is that of state building. While such endeavors may help African armed forces

to build regional confidence and stability, the need for state-building inevitably means a return to basics and it is here that Africans need to recapture their own destiny in a concrete manner.

Ayissi: All of a sudden, the illusion of collective security as a collectively kept and enjoyed security lost all its power of illusion. The conditions that had made possible the discursive creation of reality did no longer exist. This time small countries with small wars without determinant impact on the legitimate configuration of world power had to face the now unhidden truth: (regardless of its moral weight and human cost) not every armed conflict could constitute what is called in the UN Charter "a threat for international peace and security:" Not every conflict could "endanger the maintenance of international peace and security" (articles 33, 34, 37, etc of the United Nations Charter).

Consequently and beyond the appealing rhetoric of "globalization" and the attractive hypothesis of a the world as a "global village," we did, in reality, witness a process of deglobalization—or regionalization—of conflict management, with an emphasis on regional security:

Wachira: But it is not all gloom and doom. There are some positive developments in Africa that need to be recognized and encouraged. Continental and regional groupings are increasingly involved in responding to conflict issues within and among their member states. From the OAU to IGAD to ECOWAS to SADC, conflict management and peacemaking have become a central agenda. This is an indication that the continents' institutions are beginning to rise to the challenge of conflicts. However, it would be interesting if these regional bodies could facilitate processes where more than just the armed parties in the conflict come to the negotiating table. In cases like Sudan, Burundi, DRC and others, attempts should be made to listen keenly to the people on whose behalf the wars are purportedly being fought. This is a move that could enhance the chances of implementation of any agreements. This could be a major innovation to African peacemaking.

At another level, ecumenical organizations such as the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) have also been closely involved in peace-building, working through the faith communities. (The AACC , together with the World Council of Churches, were instrumental in the negotiations and signing of the 1972 Addis Ababa Agreement between the government of Sudan and southern rebels). Cutting across all levels, but concentrated mostly at the micro level, are a host of NGOs and other civil society organizations that have sprung up in the continent in the last decade. These are indications that people are willing to claim security as a concern not to be left only in the hands of the state. In any case, the state has often been the main violator of people's security by either commission or omission.

Sahnoun: Important lessons can be learned from the small arms moratorium of Western African states. As President Alpha Oumar Konare of Mali states: "the

moratorium is not a legal impediment intended to restrict the sovereignty of states, nor reduce their freedom to provide for their own defense. Rather it is an act of faith, demonstrating the irreversible political commitment of our states."

Small arms proliferation is not merely a regional problem, germane to Africa, but global in dimension. It is, in the words of UN secretary-general Kofi Annan, "one of the key challenges in preventing conflict in the new century."

In 2001, the United Nations will convene an international conference on illicit small arms trafficking. This past month, the first PrepCom met at UN Headquarters in New York. Unfortunately, precious time is being wasted on modalities. In the interest of saving lives, efforts must be made to define objectives, means and goals for the 2001 conference. A plethora of initiatives notwithstanding concerns persist that political and economic interests of the few may impede humanitarian interests of the many.

Twenty world leaders, including the President of Georgia, the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, the former prime minister of India, and foreign and defense ministers of Brazil, Cameroon, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States, have joined President Alpha Oumar Konare of Mali and former prime minister Michel Rocard of France to make a specific contribution to the emerging global small arms effort.

The overall objective of the eminent persons group is to assist in efforts to curtail the proliferation and the unlawful use of small arms. Such an objective will require a constructive parallelism between a whole range of politically and legally binding instruments, involving operative and normative measures pertaining to the illicit as well as the licit trade, which must be dealt with both within the context of conflict prevention and conflict resolution.

Within the context of this overall objective, the group's goal is to promote a cooperative disarmament approach built around a small arms control regime (SACR), broad in scope and global in reach. The regime would consist of, on the preventive side, (1) an international transparency regime, (2) strengthened national export controls, and (3) an international code of conduct. On the reduction side, to consist of weapons collection programs as integral to peace agreements, demobilization programs, and post-conflict reconstruction. Cooperative disarmament must address security and developmental concerns as functional corollaries and must be integrated into national programs, as well as into international cooperation efforts.

Cilliers: The transformation from essentially predatory and antiquated security agencies to ones that can serve Africa's needs will not be accomplished simply by superimposing western concepts of "enlightened " military professionalism or police reform on Africa. Western concepts of military professionalism imply a perennial search for institutional autonomy that contradicts the notion of tight political control. The latter is in many instances essential for regime survival in the developing world.

This is bound to create a high level of tension where foreign training programs are prescribed as a key component of African security sector reform. Given the status quo, the major challenge in the proper regulation of Africa's security agencies lies first and foremost in appropriate role definition about what these structures are for, as opposed to what we were told they were against during the colonial era.

Wachira: Africa's leadership must bear responsibility for peace and security or its absence. There has been a tendency (mostly Western media-driven) to assess the performance of Africa's leaders in terms of how they compare to their predecessors or neighbors. From this perspective, President Moi of Kenya is judged at how well he has kept his country strife-free as compared to neighboring Sudan or Somalia, while President Museveni of Uganda is judged by how well he has kept Uganda together as compared to regimes before his. Not too long ago, the leaders of Rwanda, Uganda, Eritrea and Ethiopia were hailed as a new-breed and visionary, a harbinger of better things to come from Africa. Several years later, there is no immediate evidence of any innovation on their part that could provide long-term solutions to the problems of the Horn of Africa and Great Lakes regions. On the contrary, the regions' stability seems to have deteriorated and become more militarized. More objective criteria need to be encouraged. For example, how well do leaders nurture institutions that ensure stability, social justice and national cohesion in the long term. Peace and security would better be served if African countries spent less on armament and war preparedness and more on socio-economic development.

Sahnoun: Integral to cooperative disarmament, preventive measures must pursue two objectives: first, to limit and control availability and access to small arms (supply side) and secondly, to reduce the demand for such weapons (demand side). On the supply side such an approach necessitates measures aimed at controlling legal transfers between states, controlling the availability, use and storage of small arms within states, preventing and combating illicit transfers, collecting and removing surplus arms from both civil society and regions of conflict, increasing transparency and accountability, and support for research and information sharing. (enhanced accountability, transparency and improved market regulation). Correspondingly on the demand side, important factors include, the commitment of the international community to reversing cultures of violence, reforming and enhancing the security sector in those states most severely affected, creating norms of non-possession, enhancing demobilization and reintegration programs, halting the use of child combatants, combating impunity, tackling poverty and underdevelopment.

Also, reduction measures must be devised to secure, destroy or otherwise responsibly dispose of small arms that are already in circulation, inside or outside of legal possession. The international donor community should establish collection and buy-back programs, as well as other mechanisms to identify and promote best practices

and to ensure adequate financial support. The Organization of African Unity should be supported in its appeal to the international community "to render to affected African countries all necessary assistance to enable them to implement programs to deal effectively with the problems associated with the proliferation of small arms and light weapons." There are important lessons to be learned from the reintegration of ex-combatants into productive civilian life (Cambodia, Philippines), post-conflict reconstruction (Cambodia, Bougainville) and the reform of police, judicial and penal systems (Cambodia, Papua New Guinea).

What the victims of gun violence need urgently today is the immediate "reduction" of such weapons in the most affected regions of the world, and whatever assistance the UN or the donor countries can come up with in this regard.

Cilliers: There is a need to redefine security in terms that are relevant to Africa— as opposed to the cold war requirements of the former two superpowers or those of the former colonial countries and to design and manage accordingly.

Ideally such an approach should be rooted squarely within that of human security—an approach that refers to the safety and wellbeing of people, individuals and communities rather than that of government alone. Without it, territorial integrity and state security become hollow shells. As the necessary complement to state security, human security brings people-centered considerations into the core of the elements that constitute a peaceful and stable society. And while there is a growing number of definitions of human security and debates over its conceptual grounding, its people-centered focus remains its most powerful attribute. At the inter-state level the central strategic problem in Africa is not deterrence, as in the Cold War, but reassurance. Unlike deterrence, which relies on strategic interaction between opposing states, the key to reassurance is reliable normative and institutional structures.

The appropriate framework for weak countries is that of a comprehensive approach to regional security and stability that emphasizes transparency, confidence building mechanisms and co-operative engagement of its neighbors and that builds on an approach that provides domestic security first. The challenge is therefore not that of collective defense, but collaborative security. It is to this endeavor that regional capacity building efforts should turn.

Wachira: Reconstruction after conflict is often understood in the limited sense of rehabilitating physical amenities and infrastructure destroyed in the conflict. Indeed, this is very important as destruction of infrastructure and other strategic installations forms a central part of any war campaign. But reconstruction after conflict should be approached differently than if one were dealing with consequences of a natural disaster, paying equal attention to the human dimension of our conflicts (or reconciliation if you will.) While natural disasters can bring even sworn enemies together, united in grief and compassion, conflicts tear people apart and destroy bonds, leaving deep psychological scars.

Most of Africa's conflicts have been marked by very high civilian death tolls and some of the vilest atrocities imaginable. From Liberia to Mozambique, Sudan to Angola, Rwanda to Somalia to Sierra Leone, the conflicts leave indelible marks in the collective memories of the people. In some countries, generations of young people have grown up knowing only war. In Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Sudan children have been both direct targets of violence as well as participants in it. Many have watched as their parents, friends and relatives were killed and dismembered, or participated in these acts. There are thousands of women traumatized by wars. We therefore have war-scarred generations across the continent who must somehow fit in the reconstruction equation lest their experiences become the breeding ground for future atrocities.

With the exception of cases like South Africa, the important work of healing of memories and closure after protracted conflicts has been seen as incidental to the building of a sound, developing country and rarely features in peace agreements intended to end the conflicts. In many instances, healing work has been left to non-official actors such as churches and NGOs, whose relationship to the state is often one of mutual suspicion than one of partnership. Some of these actors are well intentioned and doing remarkable work, while others are simply opportunistic. We suggest that rebuilding of human relationships after conflict must be a central and deliberate process recognized as such by authorities. In this regard, South Africa's TRC must be looked to as an example of an attempt to bring closure to an atrocious past so as to create the possibility for a prosperous common future. Neither the offering of blanket amnesty (as in the recent case of Sierra Leone), nor the pursuit of a strictly judicial process (as in the case of Rwanda) may guarantee the kind of peaceable future that is desired.

Rwanda is a very sensitive case and one risks being branded insensitive for suggesting certain things. There is no doubt that, emerging as it is from the atrocious war of 1994, a process of accountability for the deaths is needed. Rwanda also needs to be assured of its security from possible attacks from the remnants of the former army. However, these are only short-term measures. The long-term solution for Rwanda's security lies in its leadership's courage to face up to the healing of the age-old conflict between its two main ethnic groups and working for meaningful co-existence between them. History places an onerous task upon the current leadership. Reconciliation constantly demands more of the "victim" than of the "perpetrator"; more so if, ironically as in the case of Rwanda, the victim is also the victor.

Knowing the sheer number of people killed in the Rwandan genocide and the atrocities involved in this and the Sierra Leone war, who dares to tell the victims to reconcile? And yet, who dares to tell them there is any other way forward? Repeatedly in Africa's conflicts, there are no victims and perpetrators, only victims. Especially

where the violence seeps downwards and infects not a few hundred people but entire communities, then we have to sharpen our tools for finding solutions. To refuse to face up to these questions is to condemn our countries to endless cycles of pogroms. South Africa, though not necessarily perfect and of a different history, is one example where the victim turned victor has shown tremendous magnanimity toward the former aggressor as a way of fostering national reconciliation, even in the absence of any significant reciprocation from the latter. We have to start somewhere to break the cycles of violence that are stifling our countries.

Participants

Shela Meintjes—*University of the Witwatersrand*
Professor Kwesi Kwaa Prah—*University of the Western Cape*

Meintjes: There is a temptation to take each presentation in turn, and respond to specific hypotheses and arguments. But I would like to respond to the issue of peace and security in general, and during the course of my discussion, some of the more specific points of agreement or disagreement raised in individual presentations will be covered.

As all the presentations suggested, Africa is a war-torn continent, and in some cases, as in Sudan and Angola, war is of a very long duration. Whilst in general terms, the issue of material interests was raised in the perpetuation of these wars, I think that participants in this discussion have drawn attention to why the wars haven't been stopped by outside intervention. There is a general focus on the international dimensions of peace diplomacy—including US-Africa relations, and the growing emphasis on the part of the Big Three of the notion that Africa should resolve its own conflicts and monitor its own peace-keeping. This begs questions of why, during the 1990s, conflict in the Balkans and in the Gulf could not be countenanced without the intervention and invasion of US forces, whereas in Africa, wars have been allowed to continue for decades?

Different explanations abound for the proliferation and long duration of wars in Africa. These include the fact that Africa holds neither material nor strategic interest for either the US or the other hegemonic powers of the UN (Cilliers). Another explanation was that these same powers are unable to contain the violence in war-zones and are unable to find diplomatic mechanisms to bring warring factions together (Ayissi). Sahnoun suggests that the illicit trade in small arms perpetuates a culture of violence that militates against "civility". Wachira points also to the resourcing of warring agencies from the proceeds of illegal trade and urges us to address the regional and international dimensions of conflict. A general trend is that internationally there is little understanding of, or even a desire to understand the politics of the conflicts in Africa.

Aid and peace missions sent to try and alleviate want and to cobble peace agreements, failed miserably, as in Mogadishu in 1993 and in Rwanda in 1995. As Anatole Ayissi shows, peace missions to Africa from the North nose-dived, "paralyzed both by the unprecedented scope of violence escalation and its structural impotence" (here "its" refers to the diplomacy of peacemaking). Perhaps of greater significance in explaining the reluctance of the North to intervene, is the fact that after the end of the Cold War, Africa lost its value. It was no longer a potential bastion or a weak link in the fight against communist infiltration—and hence an arena of interest in terms of maintaining the international balance of power, peace and security.

The continent could be relegated to the backwaters of the global mainstream. The conclusion is that whether the US or the UN really understand the causes for the proliferation of wars and civil wars in Africa matters not a jot. They don't want to become embroiled anyway, and as Ayissi suggests, the North in general remains baffled by conflicts in Africa. But they can now legitimately refrain from intervening based on the argument that because warring parties don't want peace, there can be no role for peace-keeping "blue helmets".

A further aspect to draw into our understanding is suggested by Cilliers, that the notion of and responsibility for regional "collective security", implicitly defined as different from global "collective security", is something that has been turned over to regional powers. The effect? A flurry of diplomatic intercession by regional powers in Africa, especially South Africa, and of peace-keeping capacity building in different regions since the 1990s.

Whilst the non-African international dimensions are clearly important in understanding the perpetuation of wars in Africa, I do not think that enough weight has been given in any of the discussions to the local and specific aspects of conflict. These need to take account of the political dimensions of the wars, the nature of the warring factions, their political, economic and other objectives. Wars are not irrational affairs. They involve conflicts that cannot be resolved politically. This does not mean that all acts during war are rational. They are often terrifyingly barbaric. But one still needs to understand both the behavior of participants in the conflict and the effects of that behavior. We need to understand the nature of particular conflicts, which groups in society are active agents (as soldiers or guerillas and as civilians), which groups are victims, and what their experience of the violence has been.

Much has been written of the terrible acts of torture and gross human rights violations perpetrated against ordinary people in conditions of war and civil war. These have to be part of what peace missions seek to discover, so that they can begin to interact with local communities in meaningful ways. Peace missions also need to be conceived of in less militaristic ways. Instead, they should take account of the particular experiences and needs of military personnel and civilians in host countries. Gender in

particular has to be a factor that peace missions begin to integrate into their training of both civilians and military personnel involved in the process.

For example, we need to consider the problems of demobilization not simply in terms of integrating soldiers (women and men) into civilian society once more. The issue is very complex, because often the reintegration occurs in the context of significant changes in gender roles in the family. Women largely take over responsibility for the survival of the family. Often, too, women and children have themselves experienced the most terrible forms of violence and depredation, such as rape, abduction, and deprivation. Returning soldiers often feel redundant and angry, compounding the difficulties of trying to cope with their own war experiences. In this context, the post-war experience of women has very often been one of renewed assault against their sexuality. Moreover, peace-keeping forces often behave much like invading armies, and soldiers do not resist taking advantage of women.

If peace efforts are to make any headway, whether they are by regional peace brokers or by outsiders, then the political and social problems of the aftermath of war in particular areas and the needs of reconstruction have to be clearly understood. Generalizations simply will not do. Peace missions have to be careful not to be an excuse for semi-colonial foreign occupation. Thus the political implications have to be clearly understood by all involved, military and civilian personnel alike.

Prah: The contributions for the discussion on peace and security that we have seen so far have been most interesting on two counts. Firstly, there appears to be certain shared concerns about what are perceived to be the principle root causes for conflict in Africa. Secondly, there is also in a number of cases pin-pointed suggestions as to how these sources of conflict could be controlled or stemmed.

George Wachira put his finger on one of the basic issues that in my view creates the conditions for conflict-proneness in Africa— that is, the general economic stagnation and retrogression on the African continent. What is suggested is the fact that the post-colonial state in Africa has invariably become an arena of contestation between rival factions of the elite in African countries for resources and material rewards in the face of diminishing collective social resources. The mobilization of ethnic solidarity in my view is not a reflection of an ingrained tendency for the elite to ideologically degenerate into ethnic reference points.. Rather, it is perceived to be, through experience, an easy and readily available reference point for the mobilization of tradition-bound, localized groups who serve as constituencies for the elite. It is arguable that members of the African elite are, themselves, not so easily carried away by ethnic considerations in their everyday lives. But, they find these solidarities to be an easy way of mobilizing support contesting the disposition of resources within the state.

What makes it easy for ethnic solidarity to be so easily mobilized is the fact that these passions have not been provided structures for democratic expression both

within the state and across state borders. We do well to remember that in no instance in Africa do the state borders represent nationalities or ethnicity. African ethno-cultural groupings have in all instances been partitioned by the borders inherited from colonialism. The historical and cultural affinities between groups, which from time immemorial, before the colonial encounter, have shared social, political, economic and cultural space have been suppressed. One of the surest ways of neutralizing ethnic solidarity as a source of conflict in Africa would be the creation of cross-border institutions that, while recognizing the realities of the post-colonial state, create novel linkages which transcend these borders on the basis of democratic principles. I mean Pan-African institutions.

A number of the contributors like Jakkie Cilliers and George Wachira make reference to the emergence of private armies, or as Wachira calls them "hired thugs" across the continent. This phenomenon feeds directly into the expansion of warlordism on the continent. For as long as the infiltration and rampant sale of arms across the continent continues unchecked it is difficult to see how warlordism can be controlled. Complicating this further is the fact that in places like the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Angola, Somalia and the Congo, both the acknowledged state authorities and warlords have become holders of enclaves from which the mineral wealth of the countries are extracted and used for fuelling wars. In some cases the state authorities themselves have become distributors of enclaves to their generals. In a curious way, this represents a replication of the African scenario on the eve of the colonial period.

A number of the contributors suggest the invocation of regional approaches to the search for peace on the continent. My view is that collective efforts transcending individual state borders are certainly crucial to the creation of durable peace on this continent. But, up and above such purely technical considerations, we need to recognize that economic well-being and prosperity, and respect for democracy and human rights are the fundamental conditions which promote peace. Peace cannot be maintained in a durable way through the establishment of state terror and militarism or simply through the imposition of internationally sponsored so-called armed peace forces. More is needed than this. Conditions of social justice, democracy and above all, economic prosperity are crucial for the creation of a peaceful society.

It is noticeable that in those African states where economic prosperity blooms, like Gabon or Botswana—even when conditions of corruption and graft may exist— peace is maintained. This is not to suggest that state authorities who ensure the maintenance of economic prosperity should be excused from transparency and social accountability. I want only to underscore the fact that without economic prosperity and social justice there cannot be peace in Africa. It is for this latter reason that I find Anatole Ayisi's point that "the United Nations repeatedly mentioned this self-evident

truth: there is no peace without a local genuine will for peace" inadequate. Certainly without a will for peace there can be no peace. But more importantly, the conditions for peace need to exist; otherwise, there will be no will for peace. I do not think Africans are inherently more peace-loving or less peace-loving than any other group in the human community. The point is that people resort to unpeaceful processes when peaceful solutions and conditions elude them.

Purely technical approaches like measures to curtail the supply of small arms and the reduction of "the demand for small arms" and the suggestion that "the weapons of violence must be brought back into the control of the state, with the state itself being made accountable for its deeds", as suggested by Mohamed Sahnoun, do not seem to me to be approaches that deal with the problem of conflict in Africa at the roots of conflict. They seem to me to deal more with surface phenomena and not root causes. Sahnoun suggests further that "this essentially means empowering the state at one level and using all tools available to induce more responsible behaviour on its part, at another". This argument presumes that, fundamentally, it is the post-colonial state that has to be defended, as it is, at all costs. It treats the state like "a holy cow" that must be defended at all costs, even when the post-colonial state has failed miserably as an instrument for the protection of democratic practice, the development of post-colonial economies, the respect for human rights and the cultivation of the cultures of the masses as instruments of popular empowerment.

What is holy is democracy, the quality of life, and the human rights of individuals and collectives on the continent. Whether the advancement of these holy objectives are achieved under one flag or fifty flags is in my view irrelevant. Furthermore, where the post-colonial state in Africa has been a miserable instrument for the achievement of these holy objectives, it is our duty to find solutions through the creation of wider structures that go beyond the state. In other words, the answers seem to lie through the creation of Pan-African institutions, collectively controlled and operated by Africans.

With two-thirds of Africa interlocked in war, we may, indeed, be seeing the process of what I call "the decomposition of the post-colonial state". The higher ideals that must guide us are democracy, respect for human rights, social justice and economic prosperity for the masses of Africa. These are the conditions that will promote the achievement of peace on our continent.

Practical Lessons Learned from the Roundtable

William Minter

Lesson One

Despite the fact that Africa still lags dramatically in access to internet services, it is possible now to have a global on-line discussion in which the dominant voices are African, including not only the "neo-diaspora" but also policy analysts and activists in a wide range of African countries.

A report on the pioneering electronic discussion on the World Development Report on Poverty, concluded in 2000 (see http://www.worldbank.org/devforum/ forum-poverty.html) noted that despite a total of 1,523 subscribers from 80 countries, and an active and diverse discussion, "the electronic medium inevitably yielded a disproportionate number of contributions from the North (56%)." Approximately 4% of the WDR contributions were from Africa (APIC estimate).

The evidence from the APIC/ECA Electronic Roundtable, added to that from, for example, previous on-line discussions hosted by the ECA (http://www.un.org/ depts/eca) and the African women's discussion Flamme (http://flamme.org) demonstrate that such an outcome is not an "inevitable" result of the medium. To achieve a different result however, requires explicitly making inclusion of specific marginalized voices a primary goal. It furthermore requires labor-intensive efforts to offset the natural tendency for over-representation of those with easier and cheaper access to the electronic medium.

While Africa was estimated to have only 2.6 million of the 304 million estimated internet users as of March 2000 (http://www.nua.ie), at the time of the Roundtable, the experience confirmed that there was already a critical mass of African scholars, policy analysts, and workers in governmental, inter-governmental, non-governmental and religious organizations—in almost every African country—who are sufficiently well connected to participate actively in international electronic debates. They will do so, however, only if they are persuaded that the effort is worth the expenditure of their scarce resources of time and relatively expensive internet access.

On-line debates anywhere in the world, moreover, suffer from the defect that those with the greatest inclination and free time to participate do not often coincide with those whose insights would contribute most to the debate. Even in the US or in

institutional settings where internet access is relatively cheap and unmetered, so that more time on-line does not cost more money, time is a scarce resource – particularly for those whose insights are most in demand.

That is why the principal hidden cost in launching and sustaining the Roundtable was recruitment of the panelists and selected respondents. Both the initial recruiting and getting the panelists' contributions in time required enormous expenditures of time and intensive use of the personal networks of the moderators as well as the institutional ties of the sponsoring organizations. The stature of the panelists and the quality of these initial contributions, in turn, was key to persuading others that it was worth their time to subscribe, follow the debate and perhaps make contributions themselves.

In order to create the possibility of similar results of inclusiveness of less-well-represented regions in global electronic debates such as the one on the World Development Report; it would be necessary to create specific mechanisms to elicit regional contributions through regional institutions. Such results can also be achieved through the building of "information communities." It is often presumed that electronic discussions only succeed when it is part of an internal, institutional network such as those of international donor organisations or to an event such as a conference. The Roundtable however is illustrative in that with careful planning African academics, policy makers and activists will share ideas and information without these ties being present

Lesson Two

Internet e-mail is equally or more important as a tool for information-sharing and dialogue than is the other major internet service—the web. While the Internet—the largest set of computers that are linked into one network through public "internet protocol" number—provides a number of different communications tools, the term is often mistakenly identified with only one of its most prominent services—the world wide web. In fact, more people throughout the world use internet e-mail than use the web. On average those with Internet access spend more time with e-mail than surfing the web. E-mail lists are often the preferred means of communication among dispersed groups engaged in advance software development. E-mail is a strategic tool in its own right, and not a second-class tool destined to be replaced by the web.

Most significantly for our topic, e-mail enables a larger group to participate more flexibly than would be the case for web-based interactive tools. With e-mail communication as primary, participants get messages in their inboxes rather than only when they remember to drop by the web site. And the debate is open to those who lack reliable faster connections suitable for access to the web.

The lyris software, while primarily an e-mail discussion tool, also has a full web archive. Both e-mail and web interfaces are available for moderators to approve messages and change software settings, and for participants to change their subscription settings. Of the 549 signed up for the Roundtable as of April 13 2000, 421 chose to receive each e-mail message, 106 chose to receive only an index or no messages at all in favor of visiting the Roundtable web site regularly.

The Roundtable experience, as well as the World Development Report discussion, using the lyris software, confirm industry reviews that single out lyris as the most flexible tool for discussion lists now available. While the interface still needs improvement, built-in provision for both web and e-mail access makes it superior to classical listserve software such as majordomo or listproc. In contrast to new web-based interactive systems, which may be appropriate for smaller groups with high-speed access to the web and the latest browser software, making e-mail primary opens the door for participation to a much wider group regardless of software platform or speed of connection to the internet.

Even for those having the most recent hardware and software however, e-mail has the advantage of reaching a participant in his or her inbox. It thus creates a more continuous involvement than that dependent on "dropping by" the discussion list. Unless there are strong incentives for regular participation (for example, work on a required project), it is likely that e-mail discussion groups will continue to provide a more reliable way for on-going involvement of a greater percentage of participants that web-based fora.

Lesson Three

Despite the cost savings from cheaper communications, as compared with print publications or in-person meetings, providing opportunities for on-line information exchange and dialogue is very labor intensive and skill intensive. The failure to provide adequately for costs such as planning, recruitment, editing, translation, moderation and animation is a major weakness of many on-line dialogues, including this one.

Once the threshold of basic access to a computer, a modem and reliable reasonably-priced internet service is passed, the costs of communicating electronically over long distances are dramatically lower than other communication alternatives—air travel, phone, fax, post or DHL. Efforts to improve connectivity for Africa have primarily focused on passing this threshold level, through provision of better connections, more computer hardware and software, and technical training. There is still the need for massive efforts of this kind, in particular to lower cost of access and to extend its reach beyond capital cities and beyond a small elite.

However, perhaps the greatest gap in existing efforts is in improving effective use of the hardware and software resources that are already available. This does not consist simply in basic training on the use of new hardware and new software, but even more critically improving the effective use of existing electronic communications tools. In the area of on-line interactive discussion in particular, there is a consistent underestimation of the need for skilled human resources directed to this issue.

What electronic communication does is lower the cost of exchanging information and viewpoints. In comparison to in-person conferences, it is possible to achieve enormous savings on airfares, hotel and meeting rooms. But the principal determinant of success is the same as when information and viewpoints are exchanged in person—namely who says what to whom. These factors require just as much—or—more effort as for in-person gatherings.

If the community of those to be engaged in the discussion is not preformed by previous personal contacts and/or a common institutional base, strategic recruitment of participants is essential to the success of the discussion. Once participants are recruited, skilled moderation of the discussion is essential in order to keep the discussion on topic and prevent domination by disruptive or long-winded participants. Moderators and animators need to take an active role in seeking contributions from participants who may not speak up even when they have important contributions to make. Some innovative discussions have brought input from off-line by taking selected contributions to public meetings and then bringing summaries of that discussion or other similar interventions by the moderators. Any discussion, which is going to be inclusive across the African continent, must provide for translation at least between French and English, and arguably Portuguese, Arabic and other languages as well.

The cost in staff time for these tasks is significant. The most successful on-line discussions – such as the discussion on women and development preceding the ECA's 40th anniversary in 1998, the Flamme discussion in 2000, and the World Bank's poverty discussion – depended on staffing for active moderation and animation, as well as other functions. The ECA on-line discussion preceding the 1999 African Development Forum suffered from the lack of adequate staff time dedicated to these functions. The APIC/ECA Roundtable, while benefiting from some staff time from personnel at APIC, ECA and Bellanet, had only one full-time-equivalent dedicated position, divided between co-moderators Maliq Simone and Karin Santi. This was sufficient to achieve a striking success in recruitment of panelists and participants (totaling more than twice those involved in previous ECA discussions), but left a shortage of time available for other tasks that could have further strengthened the debate.

Lesson Four

Content and community building are just as critical factors as access to technology in determining the prospects for electronic communications to serve as a powerful tool to counter Africa's marginalization. Pursuit of the latest technology may in fact divert attention from these essential factors.

As noted above, Africa's access to electronic communications still lags dramatically behind the rest of the world. Even with the existing levels of connectivity, however, there is enormous potential that is not being fully exploited. While efforts continue to provide the hardware and software infrastructure, and to spread it more widely within each African country, a primary determinant of the impact of electronic communications will be how existing tools are used.

The potential now exists, for anyone with a functional e-mail connection anywhere in the world, and software available free or for minimal cost, to produce an electronic newsletter distributed worldwide. The primary determinant of the success or failure of such ventures will be the quality of the content provided and the extent of the networks of those who provide information or contribute to the dialogue. There is no technical reason why African content-providers should not quickly become the primary world-wide generators of knowledge and debate about African issues, making full use of both e-mail and web-based channels available to them.

The exclusively web-centered perspective of many efforts to promote electronic communications may distract from much of this existing potential, which provides opportunities even for those who do not yet have the bandwidth to provide accessible web sites. The greatest obstacles however are whether those with the knowledge and the networks have the resources of time, money for basic connectivity, and strategic skills to implement such initiatives.

Whether the internet communications medium chosen is e-mail or the web—or, in most effective efforts, the two in tandem—the primary determinants of success are not the technological tools themselves but content, audience and networks. Among the most successful ventures aggregating African-generated news content for the web, for example, is allAfrica.com, building on decades of experience in the news industry.

Much of the non-computer-specific expertise that will produce other successful electronic communication ventures is also available in Africa, if one makes the necessary mental parallels with more traditional communication formats. E-mail newsletters require the same editorial skills and disciplined professional care in selection of content and adaptation to targeted audiences, as do magazines produced on paper. Web sites also require the same editorial skills as those producing books and magazines for different audiences. And on-line

discussion groups require the same skills as those for planning conferences held in hotels or conference centers.

Transfer of these skills into electronic media does not require waiting for the installation of the latest software. If too much organizational time is spent pursuing the latest upgrade, moreover, the result may be less rather than more effective electronic communications. In computer-industry jargon, the most critical and often neglected factor in effective use of new technology is neither hardware nor software but rather "wetware" – the human brain. The lesson is – yes, do invest in efforts for Africa to close the connectivity gap. But don't wait until installation of the latest hardware and the latest software is complete. Don't accept the inevitable dominance of Northern voices in global electronic debates. That can be changed, if one also invests in the human resources to take better advantage of the opportunities that already exist.

Reflections on the Roundtable:

Changing the Nature of the Dialogue?

Maliq Simone, Karin Santi

There has been a great deal of discussion about how information and communication technologies (ICTs) lessen the "distance" between different areas of the world, and how they can be used to make diverse peoples more aware and informed about each other. Knowledge and best practices can be shared, and such linkages can promote greater equality and justice. It is clear that access to knowledge is being substantially enhanced through the expanded use of information technologies.

It is however not as clear just what opportunity this really gives for African realities to affect "knowledge" about areas such as democracy and development, which is largely produced at some distance from those realities. Even within Africa, considerable gaps remain between official policy environments or structures of governance and the actual social practices used by citizens in the pursuit of survival and coherent lives.

Two decades of economic and political reform in Africa have restructured the formal domains of governance and economy. This has however not substantially diminished an overarching sense of crisis, social conflict and poverty.

"Development" is still commonly perceived as catching up by absorbing packages of lessons from outside.

The particular challenges that African societies have faced during the postcolonial period have prompted the elaboration of new public domains, economic practices, and survival strategies. Yet the extensive body of actual or potential knowledge generated from these realities has little impact on the dominant global discourse. Can electronic communication be used to change the nature of the dialogue rather than just replicate outside perceptions with local data? This is one of the fundamental issues the APIC/ECA roundtable was trying to explore.

The roundtable was clearly conceived as a pilot project. In other words, our intention was not to implement some definitive version or ideal use of ICTs as they concern Africa work. Rather, the roundtable reflected a decision to start somewhere and to actively construct a history of practice, knowing that there would many interruptions, silences, and problems from which there could be a lot to learn.

The emphasis is clearly on elaborating practices, rather than on exploring all the "windows" opened up by the technological parameters of ICTs. The expansion of

such practices can however not be done in isolation from an appreciation of the technological potentials and limitations. There are many assumptions about practices that seem to stem almost automatically from these technological developments and that require testing in the field.

There has been a great deal of understandable excitement concerning the application of ICTs to restructuring relationships among actors and contexts within Africa and between Africa and the rest of the world. What has been largely been experienced as a distant, sometimes impenetrable continent can now be rendered more accessible and engaging. The direct application of African sentiment to the demands of the ever-increasing speeds of decision-making and deliberation, and a more direct representation of African realities—all seem promised by the current capacities of ICTs.

Implicit in these prospects is a sensibility that the political and economic problems confronted by African societies might be largely attributable to past limitations especially in the ways in which these societies communicated with the larger world. Thus, by more comprehensively incorporating African actors within diverse networks of global interaction, what are conventionally viewed as intractable problems of development may be more accurately framed as the by-products of societies being "out of the loop."

Herein lie the problems in much of the excitement about the applications of ICTs. Instead of viewing the technologies and the practices that they enable as supplements to the restructuring of internal and external political and economic relationships, the enthusiasm embodies an assumption that they are both the content and means of such restructuring itself. While many enthusiasts would quickly downplay such an assumption, the intensity of policy and programmatic concentration and investment in ICTs "for" Africa belies any quick dismissal of such an assumption.

After all, there is nearly universal exasperation with either the lack of salient development interventions, the persistence of various forms of "bad" behavior—i.e., corruption, authoritarianism, civil conflict—and the indifference of the "developed" world to the intensity of African marginalization. For each of these different assessments or political positions, ICTs provide prospects for sweeping transitions.

At best, ICTs provide the possibility for substantiating the right to communicate and thus to construct ways of being social that can radically change the means through which knowledge is produced. At worst, the present enthusiasm for their use barely conceals a reiteration of the colonial preoccupation with a civilizing mission. That is the assumption whereby an untamed Africa, essentially relegated to superfluous positions in the accumulation of resources, is nevertheless, instructed to orient its attention to Western mores as the road to the "good" life. If only the world could be in more direct and continuous communication with Africa, then Africa would be more properly "socialized" in doing the "right thing."

This picture is even more complicated than this albeit somewhat harsh depiction of the current importance of ICTs to development work. Africa has been a distant object, not so much in terms of its geographical horizon, but in terms of its significance for what are considered the really important issues and dimensions of modern life.

In conventional renderings, this distance results in Africa being cut-off from the important flows of resources and knowledge. Being cut-off, Africa then makes itself present in our lives primarily through the economic migrants and political refugees that show up on our shores and the vivid depictions of political machinations and civil conflict that show up on our televisions. Africa becomes a "playground" for all the illicit, untamable, and diseased bodies and sociality that provide the convenient benchmark for our terrors.

Yet Africa is there. It assumes a reality, and not just one reality. Then, by making Africa and Africans seemingly more proximate to the rest of the world via a broad range of ICT applications, what is to be expected from this enhanced proximity? The issue concerns not only what Africans will say, but also, the implications for a wide range of African actors assuming very diverse positions in speaking within a new "closeness."

The nature of ICTs theoretically accords Africans from different walks of life an equivalent ability to participate within communication networks without their speech being filtered by the rules or structures that otherwise govern public speech in specific societies. If there is access to a computer and connectivity, there is nothing to stop a peasant from communicating with whom ever she wants wherever she wants. While this may be theoretically true, we know that practically, with the given distribution of phone lines, computers, and other factors of accessibility, this opportunity remains more that of potential than reality. These constraints remain both economic and political, as authoritarian states still loom large over what particular citizens believe it is possible or not possible to do or say.

Important as these constraints are, they are not the most important story here. African societies faced the interdictions of a more powerful outside world and the fragmentation occasioned by how they were ruled by external powers. As such, they have long histories of using the modulations of communicative practices as a means of producing opportunities for livelihood in contexts where political and economic resources were limited.

In other words, intricate practices for handling "what gets said by whom and under what circumstances" made up critical domains for producing "real economies" in highly contested and often impoverished societies. The paths of communication— of who communicated to whom—constituted important vehicles to ensure that Africans from different walks of life not only paid attention to each other, but sought

to establish some basis to operate in each other's lives. What ensued were highly intricate communicational webs that proved to be important circuits of economic accumulation and distribution capable of making up for some of the woeful deficiencies in the ways both public and private regimes ran economies.

This is not matter of making more visible the extent to which Africa is indeed far removed from the centers of power and authority. It is not a matter of showing the extent to which certain groups of Africans have virtually no opportunities to connect with the increasing number of institutions and mechanisms that incorporate African spaces within various development agendas, human rights machinery, or poverty reduction campaigns. Neither is it a matter of displaying, if not necessarily accounting for, the extent to which certain means through which livelihood is secured and social life reproduced may be incompatible with modern nodes and standards. Rather, in this interplay of closeness and distance occasioned by various instances of globalization, there are opportunities for those supposedly "left off the map" to navigate ways of being in the world that leave them neither marginal nor integrated.

ICTs represent an important means through which African actors, and Africa, are to be increasingly brought in to the "fold" of more globalized economic transactions and civil societies. However, the assumption tends to be that this incorporation will amplify the extent to which Africans are "just like the rest of us." But we also have to keep in mind that the extensiveness of global communications also amplifies—and seeks to amplify—distinctions and differences. This constitutes the elements through which new conjunctions and hybrids can be made, both as new objects for consumption and as new consuming subjects.

Thus, while ICTs hold out prospects for closer collaboration among actors in different contexts, there is also the prospect for greater dissociation. Faced with experiences, ways of speaking, and actors we find strange or who disrupt our sense of familiarity with them attained at distance, we often keep them "far away" the closer they come to us. In such a renewed distancing, people will not speak in terms of their experience but what they think that others will be willing to hear, and thus "dissociate" themselves from themselves.

We also can make the mistake of thinking that new, more direct forms of cooperation and knowledge production that diminish the importance of borders and mediating institutions inevitably advance the cause of political emancipation. But we must keep in mind that the expansion of economic capacity today increasingly thrives on circuits of mixture and movement and on the production of new territories and frontiers. It thrives not by leaving peoples or societies outside of some means of being "enjoined" to a larger world.

The expansion of capitalist economies operates through "differential inclusion", where the lives, and experiences of diverse people are incessantly being connected in

different ways under highly flexible systems of control and production. For example, peoples and societies who may have little, nevertheless, can be quickly accessed, engaged and used as indicators of a more "authentic" or "exotic" world—one with singular capacities and features that can become components of some form of the increasingly immaterial nature of global capital. Africa—its purported anarchy, invisible spirit world geographies, buoyant cities, and dynamic fashions—is increasingly something sexy and important.

Rather than viewing Africa as some marginality or distance that has to be bridged, we have to consider the various means through which it is already a highly visible present. It may be possible to demonstrate, through inventories of economic transactions and flows, that the continent is the least integrated within proliferating and heterogeneous economic networks at various scales. Yet, it is also crucial to consider the mechanisms through which Africa's intensified incorporation within these economies is taking place. In other words, if a "decision" has been made to accelerate the process of integrating Africa into the world economy, what form will this integration take?

Economic expansion requires both the increasingly "smooth" and friction-free" spaces of uninterrupted capital flows, homogenized consumption patterns, global civilities and the proliferation of local differences, capacities, and styles. This is key both as factors in re-calculating the costs of production and feeding the expanding production of immaterial "goods" and services.

What are the different positions different African actors, societies and processes assume in this global economy? Just as we assume Africans to be marginal actors in need of coming out of the "cold", we also have to assume that they may be the predominant actors within different versions of time and space. Because it is precisely these "Other" versions that increasingly become the "fodder" for the ongoing elaboration of global-level economy and rule. While these may be somewhat abstract considerations, they are crucial to the overall project of conceptualizing new judicious and empowering practices of the use of ICTs, either within Africa or between Africa and the rest of the world. Of course, progressive actors have to take their "openings' where they can.

The values of the dialogues

These discussions on economy and development, democracy and human rights, peace and security may not break any new conceptual ground. Rather, they reflect a broad canvass of ideas and sentiments, and they demonstrate the degree to which reflections on these issues are full of contestation and divergent approaches. Instead of presenting a "smooth" distillation of the key arguments and points of view, something else is allowed to run through this representation of the dialogues. These

interchanges do not move toward consensus or build-up an ever more proficient edifice of rationality. Rather, they are full of "stops and starts", awkward articulations, "knee-jerk" reactions, as well as solid efforts in presenting sensible depictions and arguments.

These awkward interchanges, as well as the prolonged silences that run through the dialogues and which are necessarily suppressed in a publication of this kind are as important in emerging projects and practices of electronic conferencing as are elegant efforts at making cases. For what this medium of interchange amplifies, is that all of us are something more than calculating individuals, representatives of institutions and civil societies, or members of specific religious, national or ethnic communities. We are also beings who don not fit into nor represent communities with their collective stories, and we are also beings, which are not simply persons who carve out a sense of individuality through more or less rational interactions.

If this is a medium without a necessarily identifiable grounding and place, then we who participate in it are not necessarily obligated or most usefully conversant with each other on the basis of having to represent or speak from a specific platform. Electronic dialogue is distinctive not as a more proficient aid to the ways in which we have been conversing in the past. Rather, it is a means to make new kinds of actors. Thus, these dialogues should be read not only to learn something about the topics at hand, but, rather to think through what will be an arduous but exciting process of constituting nothing less than, in this instance, new ways of being African.

It is important to progressively dispense with the assumption that such dialogues can produce solutions, consensus or better understandings. While these are certainly worthwhile prospects, they do not summarize or exhaust the potentials of these electronic encounters. For the desire to keep speaking and to keep "encountering" is not fulfilled in such resolutions. Rather, the desire to keep engaged is located in the process of keeping things open and in producing new openings, with surprise turns and unexpected events.

In this regard, such encounters are also about arguments without an end, which refuse to be "wrapped up." It is the disputes themselves which often keep the interaction going, that keep people involved in them, and that maintains a sense that no one kind of actor, nor any kind of majority of them, have either the right or capacity to declare anything resolved.

It is vital that the ongoing processes of experimenting with ICTs and evolving new communication practices not simply reiterate the predominance of a rationalist morality through which participants all come to make a "right choice." What needs to be acknowledged is that distinct communities live through various ways of understanding and talking about their lived realities. The task is not to reduce these differences to some kind of common denominator. Instead, the task

is to promote interaction among them so that the scope of their affects can circumvent the specific identities and places to which they have either been attributed or appropriated.

This interaction must go beyond "affirmative action", i.e. giving groups and communities an equal shot at "giving it their best shot." It must open up opportunities for participants to "try on" different ways of making themselves known, for finding different vehicles for inserting their experiences into larger domains—and to do this with the cooperation of unfamiliar others. When a community "comes to the stage" to make itself known, it does so not by claiming to be "special" or "extraordinary"—and therefore capable of being dismissed or rendered completely strange. They do it in the name of a specific way of being ordinary; i.e, something that allows them to stand out, but in a way that is not reducible to the social identification of an identifiable group.

The "problem" of the problems discussed in this dialogue is perhaps that it is only the existence of problems that brings these participants together in the first place. Even if the "problem of Africa" becomes an arena for participants to vent feelings that have little to do with the problems at hand or to simply display knowledge and other facilities, the "problem" still remains the primary organizing feature. If the "need" for the problem is to be displaced, then space for a broader range of desires and aspirations has to be made available.

This space is available only through an accruing process where many different "affects" are being created—i.e. participant actions operating on participant actions. In other words, where people are convinced that their capacities are being enhanced in the ongoing dialogue. . What we see in this book is just how closed off discussions about Africa conventionally are from such prospects. There remains a strong need to reign in the possible implications of an "affecting" dialogue—one which would re-orient participants to each other and allow something else to take place besides the well-worn invocations that usually accompany discussion of issues such as development and democracy.

Nevertheless, these dialogues do demonstrate a push toward something in the making. They reflect some tentative momentum toward creating a form of interchange that allows a highly disparate group of participants to feel the impact of each other's situation and experience. In this way, talk about democracy in Africa tentatively pushes toward exemplifying democracy. For what shapes and holds individuals and groups together as "citizens" and peoples are not specific contracts or agreements. Rather, it rests with the very process of them "calling something into being" through their inquiries, autonomous responses, mutual consultations, provocations, and experimentation—all practices applied to changing the ways in which people and their experiences are accorded value and significance.