

N. 2 N.E. - SEPTEMBER OCTOBER 2007

# THE C OURIER

THE MAGAZINE OF AFRICA - CARIBBEAN - PACIFIC & EUROPEAN UNION COOPERATION AND RELATIONS

REPORT

## Ethiopia

DOSSIER

Tropical forests:  
opportunities and risks  
for ACP countries

TRADE

Talking  
about EPAs



Development  
Days  
Lisbon, Portugal:  
7-9 November 2007



# THE COURIER

THE MAGAZINE OF AFRICA - CARIBBEAN - PACIFIC & EUROPEAN UNION COOPERATION AND RELATIONS

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# When it's JUST BUSINESS as usual



When one of the world's most prestigious art galleries – London's Tate Modern – sets aside space for five artists from the DRC, it's a given. No one bats an eyelid. Why? Well, it's just business as usual. The exhibition, 'States of Flux – Cubism, Futurism and Vorticism' sets out to trace the major movements that laid the foundations for 20th century artistic thinking. And as part of that journey, five of Congo's most celebrated artists were included, sharing gallery space with the likes of Braque, Diego Rivera, Gustav Klimt and Rodchenko. The importance of this cannot be stressed too highly as it is the end result of many decades of campaigning by cultural icons such as Picasso and Braque for the proper recognition of African artists and their work.

Chéri Samba, *Little Kadogo*, 2004. Acrylic and glitter on canvas, 205 x 246 cm. Courtesy of C.A.A.C. - The Pigozzi Collection, Geneva. Photo: Christian Poite.



But while some may see this as a cause for celebration and 'about time' recognition, for the curators at the Tate Modern it is entirely normal that these comparisons should take place – in fact it would be remiss of them, professionally incorrect, NOT to act like this. As far as they are concerned art is art – where it comes from is of no real importance. For them it is the celebration of art that is the key. As I said earlier, it is quite simply, business as usual.

A world away from the banks of London's River Thames and the glitz of the Tate Modern, business as usual takes on a whole different meaning. For while the acceptance of a continent's creativity is being recognised as part of a far greater artistic movement, Africa's desire for lasting peace is a different – yet much more vital – search for another kind of business as usual.

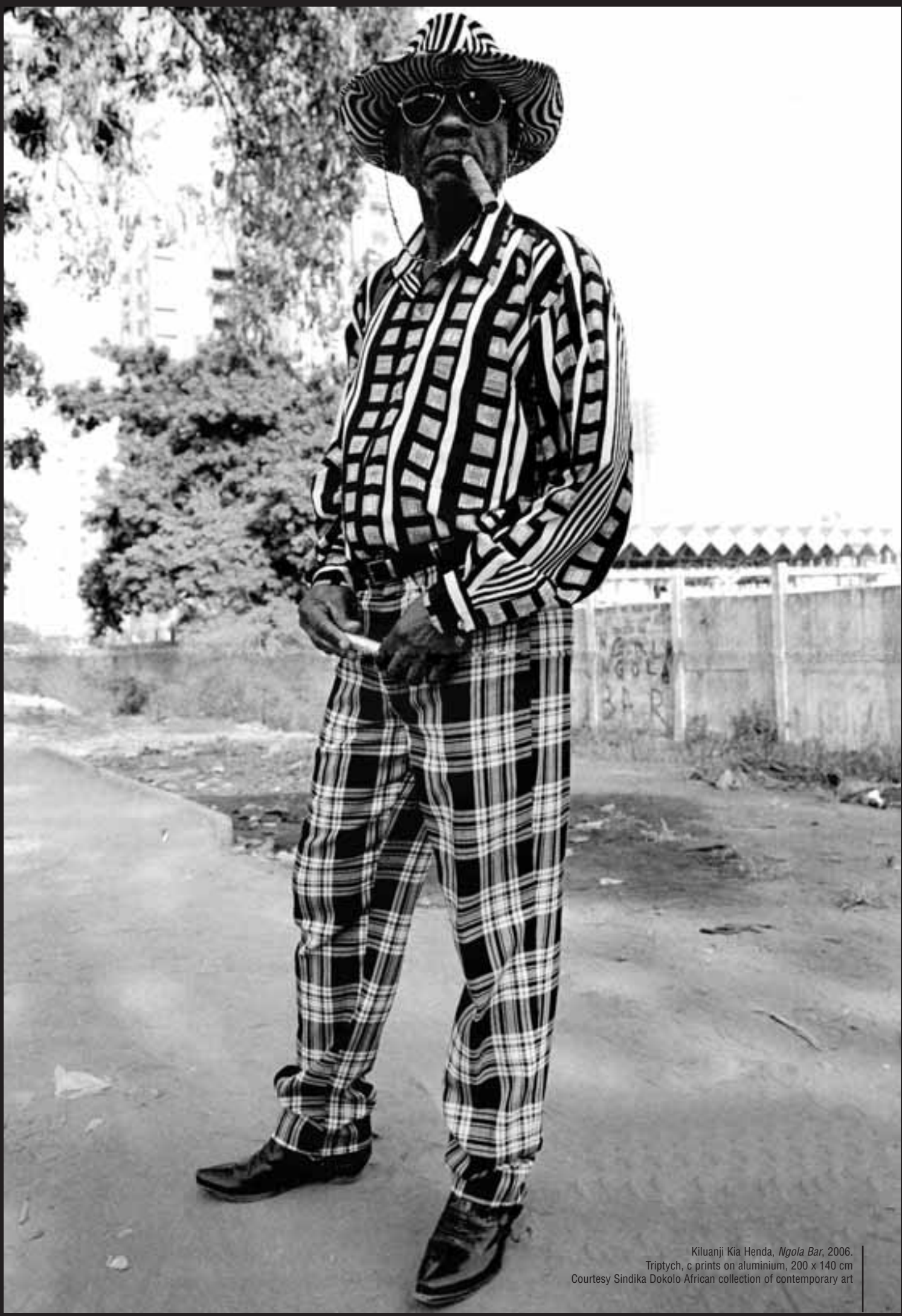
Encouragingly, in recent months there are signs that peace, of a kind at least, can be achieved. More importantly perhaps is that the peace process in many African countries is being achieved by Africans themselves. Often historically the sticking point is the recent ability and motivation for African leadership to take control that is giving new impetus and new hope to the peace process in many countries across the continent.

South Africa is continually approached by the European Union to act as the main driver for peacekeeping operations. In Darfur, this has translated into one of the most important peacekeeping forces, mainly comprised of Africans. Already nearly 600 South African troops and 100 police officers are serving under the African Union (AU) flag. And this time, Africa will supply logistical support as well for what will be a UN-AU hybrid force.

The UN Security Council has also requested that the AU maintain its presence in Somalia for a further six months, until the UN is able to deploy its own troops in the country. Additionally, the AU force in Somalia needs to be strengthened to undertake additional missions. These include protecting the transitional government and cooperating with other agencies in the development of a national security and stabilisation policy. In Sierra Leone's recent elections, voters paid special tribute to the AU forces for their proactive role in ensuring a peaceful and corruption-free process. Lauded for their exemplary transparency, AU observers were reported to have no hesitation in taking action whenever there was the slightest suspicion of election fraud or vote-rigging. As an example, one of our colleagues of *PanaPress* (a Pan-African news service based in Dakar) reported the comments of one voter who said, "election observers must not simply draw up reports, but must also avert conflicts and take measures to ensure peaceful elections the way the AU observers do." Praise indeed – and something the AU forces should be proud of.

It is comments like this that started me thinking. Are we on the way to seeing peace and democracy in Africa because of, not in spite of, Africans themselves? To come back to where we started in the Tate Modern in faraway London, wouldn't it be wonderful if instead of art imitating life, in this case life imitated art and we were just able to get on with it? Peace, regular elections, real democracy. Now that's business as usual!

Hegel Goutier



Kiluanji Kia Henda, *Ngola Bar*, 2006. Triptych, c prints on aluminium, 200 x 140 cm. Courtesy Sindika Dokolo African collection of contemporary art

François Misser

# GREAT LAKES: Aldo Ajello, PEACEMAKER

*For 11 years Aldo Ajello was the European Union's special envoy to the countries of the Great Lakes region. By the end of his mandate in February, the peace process had made major progress.*

In the end, the region's leaders had to get used to the straight-talking ways of this tried and trusted diplomat. Born in Palermo (Sicily) in 1936, Aldo Ajello became involved in politics at a very young age, becoming vice president of Italy's national association of students while at the same time pursuing a career as a journalist with the socialist paper *Avanti* and at the *Inter Press Service* agency. A member of the Socialist Party's central committee, and in turn a senator, Member of European Parliament and Member of the Italian Parliament, he was appointed UN Under-Secretary-General in 1992. He came to public attention most notably as the head of the UN peacekeeping mission in Mozambique.

*François Misser: Did your Sicilian origins facilitate your career as a diplomat?*

Aldo Ajello: There is a quite strong humanist current in Sicily. The island lies at the centre of the Mediterranean. Everybody has passed through there: the Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Normans, and so on. They all left their mark. Tomasi di Lampedusa's novel *The Cheetah* speaks of this. I know exactly what he means. It gives you a mental openness that other regions of Italy do not have and above all a better understanding of the world south of the Mediterranean. My experience among Sicily's peasants taught me that their reactions and ways of thinking were not so different to those you find in Africa.

*FM: Especially in Mozambique...*

AA: That was the great adventure of my life! I was so lucky to experience it. I took enormous risks and everything I tried succeeded, thanks to the then Secretary-General (Boutros Ghali) who gave me *carte blanche*. At first I had problems with the bureaucracy, receiving instruc-

tions that made no sense at all. My job was to implement the peace agreement reached between the government and the rebels and to correct the imbalance that disadvantaged the latter, as it risked causing the whole operation to fail. The risk was that people who had signed the peace agreement would think they had been tricked and start fighting again. Hence the need to give enough to the Renamo (Mozambique National Resistance) rebels for them to have something to lose by resuming the war. It wasn't easy because we had to explain to the government that by isolating Renamo every time it acted against the peace agreement, in response to this imbalance, it risked derailing the process. I therefore sought to understand why the rebels were violating the agreement and to remove the reasons for these violations. We disarmed 90,000 people in less than four months. In the Congo, on the other hand, with the World Bank, we still have a long way to go.

*FM: Why?*

AA: In Mozambique the UN was in complete charge of the operation and acted with total neutrality. We set up assembly centres where those who wanted to be demobilised were separated out from those who wanted to join the army. We managed these centres directly and it quickly brought results. But in Congo the World Bank has applied the principles of development aid to the demobilisation of troops, entrusting the government with the power to make the decisions. The result is that we have created a huge bureaucratic machine. In reality the decision making was entrusted to people who had no interest in achieving progress – a monumental mistake!

The Bank in fact had no idea how to operate. First of all it took charge of the management of the operation involving the disarming, demobilisation and reintegration. It then discovered that its own rules prohibited it from being involved in disarmament. So the Bank only took charge

of these people once that stage was completed. That created a bottleneck right from the beginning because until disarmament was complete you could not get on with the rest of the work. The other problem was counting the enlisted soldiers. The armed forces had no interest in doing this as there were all these 'phantom' soldiers – a whole imaginary world of men who had been killed or never even born – being paid a wage that the officers wanted to put into their pockets.

*FM: How would you assess the results of the 11 years spent as special envoy to the Great Lakes region?*

AA: At first I had big problems due to the fact that as EU Special Envoy I should have been representing a common position. But there wasn't one. The positions were varied and often completely contradictory especially on Rwanda, but also on Burundi. There were serious problems because it is not easy selling a product that does not exist. So I had to invent a common policy myself, taking into account the sensitivities of each of the parties. And this invention gradually became the effective common policy in the region.

*FM: How do you see Congo's future?*

AA: That depends on a lot of things. It is a rich country. The potential is there. For the first time we have a democratically elected government, but that does not mean anything because there is more to democracy than elections alone. You need education in democracy. That must be done with the careful flexibility and sensitivity so as not to offend and also to give everyone the feeling that the country enjoys full sovereignty. It is a country that has been under supervision for too long and that now has to learn to govern itself democratically. That is not easy. But if we decide to seriously set about helping then there are good prospects for success. And success in stabilising the Congo means sta-

bility for central Africa. To do that, the first priority is to reform the security sector, without which you cannot have development or anything else either. The army is poorly paid. It is neither equipped nor fed. It has no discipline. Above all it has officers without any military training whose main aim is to fill their pockets – having earned their stripes in the corridors of the presidential palace rather than on the battlefield. So all that must be cleaned up.

We have done a lot with the EUSEC (European security mission in the DRC, editor's note). Firstly, by sorting out the payment chain that was in fact the same as the chain of command. Payroll funds were transferred from the Central Bank to the Chief of General Staff who dipped into it before passing it on to the Navy, Air Force and Army Chiefs of Staff. By the time the money arrived at the brigades, there was nothing left to pay out. We completely disconnected the pay chain from the command chain. The Central Bank now sends money to the administration office that transfers it directly to the brigades. We have placed two European advisers with each integrated brigade to ensure that the system operates effectively.

Today the soldiers receive their wages in full. Now we are making an inventory of the Congolese Army and we will then draw up a model for the new army.

*FM: What was the finest moment in your career?*

AA: Election day in Mozambique (in 1992, editor's note), when we managed to convince Mr Dhlakama to take part (Renamo leader, editor's note) after he had declared the previous day he would not be participating because he had discovered that there was some trickery afoot.

*FM: And the worst?*

AA: That was two days before...

"To do that, the first priority is to reform the security sector, without which you cannot have development or anything else either. The army is poorly paid. It is neither equipped nor fed. It has no discipline." Transport conditions of soldiers in Kivu, DRC. © EUSEC



# URGENCY OVER DARFUR

**"A** substantive resolution", to quote Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) co-President, Glenys Kinnock on Darfur was the outcome of intense debate at the Wiesbaden ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly at the end of June, with backing for the, "...swift deployment possible deployment" of the African Union/United Nations hybrid force. The 20,000-strong force is expected to be in place by spring 2008 to avert further conflict. The JPA resolution also calls on Sudan to disarm the militia, including the Janjaweed, and to stop the bombing of Darfur and for the "fullest cooperation" between the Central African Republic, Chad and the Government of Sudan for the sake of regional security. Third countries are requested to cease exports on arms to the region. During debate, Commissioner Louis Michel called for a

"road map" on strategic steps to be taken by the international community for peace in the region. The JPA resolution calls on the Sudanese Peoples' Liberation Movement to help unify rebel groups and for the Government of Sudan to take up negotiations with all rebel groups. The role of China is highlighted in setting up the force and is asked to use its influence in helping the Sudanese government to bring rebel groups to the table. Sudanese Parliamentarian, Atem Garang, welcomed "the positive spirit of debate and the way the resolution has been negotiated." If the international community had given the same support to the country three or four years ago that it is now giving, the conflict would not have happened, he added. The resolution recognises that the root causes of the conflict were underdevelopment and people's economic and political marginalisation.

## > EU high-level salute for hybrid force

Javier Solana, the EU's High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) stated on August 1: "I call on all parties to work for a swift transition from the African Union (AU) mission in Sudan (AMIS) to the hybrid mission." This is in the wake of the adoption of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1769 on the deployment of a AU/UN hybrid force for the region. "The EU stands ready to step up its support to this end," added Solana, who gave his backing to peace talks to bring about a political settlement for a "sustainable solution."

[www.consilium.europa.eu](http://www.consilium.europa.eu)



Mario Benjamin, *untitled*, 2006.  
Mixed media on canvas.  
76 x 115 cm.  
Courtesy of the artist.

# AT LOGGERHEADS OVER ZIMBABWE

**W**ith no Zimbabwean Parliamentarian at the Wiesbaden JPA, there was debate on the country but no resolution. JPA co-President, Glenys Kinnock, said that no visa application had been made by any Zimbabwean Parliamentarian. Four had been expected in Wiesbaden including three from the ruling Zanu-PF as well as Nelson Chamisa from the opposition MDC Party who was violently attacked on his way to a Brussels meeting in March 2007.

Many felt that even debate was a step too far without any Zimbabwean to respond. Malawi's Ibrahim Matola was against the Assembly basing discussion on "media reports" whereas Boyce Sebatala (Botswana) said the opposition MDC was split and that "...they had their own gangs and not all violence was carried out by the Zanu-PF." Atem Garang (Sudan) said he regretted that the UK had a hand to play in Zimbabwe's problems. Democratic Republic of Congo Parliamentarian, Lola Kisanga, said that the situation in Zimbabwe concerned the whole of Africa and appealed for a peaceful, lasting solution. Louis Straker of St. Vincent and the Grenadines suggested it was convenient for Zimbabwe to absent themselves from the Wiesbaden meeting.

Nita Deeparsing (Mauritius) spoke out against a Zimbabwean regime that "... was unable to bring solace to a suffering population." Many European Parliamentarians cited facts and figures about the impoverishment of Zimbabwe. Rolf Berend of the European People's Party (Germany) said prices were going up hourly. Unemployment was 80%, he said, and a third of the population on food aid. "If we want to avoid a dissent into chaos we must act," he added. JPA co-President, René Radembino-Coniquet (Gabon) called once again for the Zimbabwean government to accept a JPA fact-finding mission, a request previously turned down. Where ACP Parliamentarians and MEPs did find common ground was in voicing their support for the diplomatic initiatives towards Zimbabwe of South African President, Thabo Mbeki.

## "CHINA'S diplomatic victory in Darfur"

**T**his is the title of a timely eight-page research paper by Jonathan Holslag, research fellow at the Brussels Institute for Contemporary China Studies (BICCS). Released on 1 August, it puts under the microscope China's role in negotiating a political deal between the Sudanese government and various other players leading the dispatch of a 20,000 hybrid UN/AU force. "Darfur was the first case in which Beijing could no longer stand aloof when it came to pressing a government to allow foreign troops on its soil," reads the paper. It adds: "With a Chinese belt of energy interests stretching from Libya to Ethiopia, all around Western Sudan, regional stability became of vital importance to China's energy security".

The paper examines the pluses of China's role so far; soft power and economic support to Sudan and clear pragmatic talks, and minuses; "a state-centric" approach that fails to consider other important actors in Darfur and continues to supply arms to the region.

[www.vub.ac.be/biccs](http://www.vub.ac.be/biccs)



## The positive side of migration

Migration can have a positive effect on sustainable development. Sir John Kaputin, Secretary-General of the ACP Group, stressed his conviction that this is the case at the opening of the Global Forum on Migration and Development, held on 10 and 11 July in Brussels. "In a global partnership centred on human dignity and mutual respect, issues of asylum, migration and mobility are central to the development of our countries and indeed are issues that link almost all the Millennium Development Goals", said Sir John Kaputin. He added that only a global and multidisciplinary approach will make it possible to enhance the positive side of migration. But for that, Sir John warned, there are many challenges that must be addressed, including the brain drain and its negative impact on the economies of the ACP countries, the real ability for people to move freely between places and the fight against illegal immigration. ■

# AFRICAN WINNERS of the European Commission journalism prize

South African Journalist, Tanya Farber, was the top African winner of 2006 for the Lorenzo Natali Prize, awarded annually for human rights and democracy reporting in the printed and online press. The award is in memory of the former European Commissioner for Development who was committed to these values. 'The Bulb of Life', recounts the story of Duma Kumalo who spent seven years on death row falsely accused of murder in South Africa. He received a stay of execution and was released at the end of apartheid, but died in February 2006 leaving his widow still struggling to clear his name posthumously. "Apartheid may have ended but there is still major fall out," Ms Farber told a press conference for the Brussels ceremony in May.

Prizes of €5,000, €2,000 and €1,000 go respectively to three winners in five regions: Africa; Asia and the Pacific; Europe; Latin America and the Caribbean; and the Arab World, Iran and Israel.

The overall winner for 2006 was HongKong-based Leu Siew Ying for an article on village protests in rural China, published in the *South China Post*.

In the African region, Robert Mugagga took second prize for 'Why it's dangerous being born in Uganda' for the *The Weekly Observer*, about preventable mother-to-child HIV infection in Uganda. George Lucky of Nigeria's *BusinessDay*, won third prize for his five-day series of articles on a five-day trek across West African nations about illegal immigrants seeking a gateway to Europe.

"Without the freedom of the press, there can be no lasting development," stated EU Commissioner, Louis Michel, at the prize giving. This year's jury, chaired by CNN television anchor, Femi Oke, also included members of Reporters sans Frontières and Amnesty International. Submissions for 2007 must have been published between 1 September 2006 and 31 December 2007 and be received by 31 January 2008. For more information and a full list of 2006 winners see: [www.prixnatali.eu](http://www.prixnatali.eu) ■

Ihosvanny, *Urban Sox*, 2007. Video artwork, 4 screens, #1\_1'45", #2\_2'05", #3\_2'56", #4\_0'13". Courtesy Sindika Dokolo African collection of contemporary art.



Mariène Dumas, *Big artists are big people*, 1987. Ink and wax on paper 31 x 22 cm. Courtesy Sindika Dokolo African collection of contemporary art.

## A code of conduct to avoid a duplication of European aid

Rather than stepping on people's toes, start cooperating and make the most of added values. Such is the European Commission's ambition in seeking to boost the effectiveness of EU aid to developing countries by avoiding counterproductive duplication. The voluntary code of conduct it proposed on 28 February aims to act on this ambition by providing the Member States and Commission with a set of guiding principles to ensure that their actions are complementary and provide a fair coverage of countries in need of aid. This is to avoid some countries being the 'aid favourites', while other needy candidates are neglected. Based on the goal of a better division of tasks, the code of conduct will guarantee increased complementarity of interventions within a single beneficiary country; the limiting of intervention by each donor country in any one partner country to two priority sectors, and finally the possibility for one European donor country to delegate to another the implementation of its aid programme in a specific field.

"There are too many donors active in the same country, in the same sectors. These overlaps generate unnecessary administrative expenditure," said European Development Commissioner Louis Michel. "It is not normal for one finance minister in a developing country to receive an average of 200 missions from donors a year and, in Kenya, for 20 donors to purchase medicines through 13 procurement bodies". The code of conduct was approved by Europe's development ministers on 15 May in Brussels. ■

## ACP bananas producers not to be pushed over edge, says MEP

A renewed challenge by Ecuador in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) over the European Union's (EU) 176 per tonne import duty on bananas from Latin America – challenging the duty-free entry of ACP exporters – has met stiff opposition in ACP circles.

Under the Cotonou Agreement, set quotas of bananas from ACP nations enter the EU market duty-free. Under free trade plans, these quotas will be abolished from 1 January 2008 allowing all ACP banana exporters quota and duty-free access to the EU market.

"They (ACPs) are small players that pose no threat to a country that dominates the world and European markets.

The EU must fight on in the WTO to ensure that small, vulnerable banana producers are not pushed over the edge," said co-President of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, Glenys Kinnock, at the June JPA meeting in Wiesbaden, Germany.

A joint statement from three ACP banana export bodies – CBEA, OCAB and ASSOBACAM\* – said of the Ecuador move: "The objective is to eliminate the production of ACP countries, which however represent only 19% of the European market, whereas exports of Latin American countries amount to 68% of the EU market." ■

\*Caribbean Banana Exporters Association (CBEA)  
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Cameroon Bananas Growers' Association (Assobacam)  
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# Dossier



## A threatened resource

© Greenpeace / Philip Reynaers

*The world's tropical forests, a large part of which are in the ACP countries, face a series of threats. Vast areas of forest still remain intact, rendering important ecological services to the planet. The fight to safeguard them is therefore far from a lost cause.*

Tropical forests in a number of regions of the ACP give these countries vital strategic value. Many of them have an important primary forest cover that provides essential services to humanity as a whole. First and foremost, in this age of standardisation introduced by genetically modified organisms, they are of great value as sanctuaries for biodiversity. This is true in central Africa (home to the world's second largest tropical forest after the Amazon), but also in Guyana and Suriname, South America, the Caribbean islands and the Pacific in Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste. In the Democratic Republic of Congo alone, the forests are home to around 400 species of mammals and as many reptiles, 80 amphibians, 1,000 species of freshwater fish and almost as many varieties of butterflies. Ten thousand species of plants, including 3,000 endemic species, have been identified in the Congo Basin alone<sup>1</sup>. At the end of the 1990s the tiny country of Belize (20,000 km<sup>2</sup>)

boasted 528 species of birds, compared with 650 for the whole of the United States, and over 6,000 species of plants grow in Guyana's forests. The second vital service rendered by these forests is their ability to capture greenhouse gas emissions. The third is their role in regulating the local and regional climate. It is partly due to the destruction of large areas of the Kibira<sup>2</sup> forest that Burundi has been hit by repeated droughts over recent years.

### ► Defoliants

A number of factors threaten these ecosystems, some of which have suffered terrible destruction. Deforestation in Haiti, prompted mainly by the absence of an alternative to wood as fuel, has already caused erosion and landslides. In Timor-Leste much of the vegetation was destroyed by the use of defoliants by the occupying Indonesian army in the 1970s. These exceptional cases aside, the main factor responsible for destruction is the unsustainable

logging that – even if limited to certain species – opens up access to the forest for poachers and dealers in wood for use as fuel. Such damage is also exacerbated by random events. In Timor-Leste (described historically by Chinese dealers as 'Sandalwood Island'), the occupation by the Indonesian Army (1975–1999) resulted in the destruction of 99% of these trees. This is according to reports by the 'forests' department of the interim UN authority shortly before the island gained its independence in 2002.

The 2006 report on the state of the forests in central Africa also identifies the oil industry as a potential threat because of pollution. At the same time the report issued a warning that this same industry's decline in Gabon could cause the resulting jobless to turn their attention to the forest for their livelihood, either through hunting or illegal logging. The report also stresses that the decline of fishery resources threatens to add further to the pressure on forest ecosystems.

### ► DRC: a progressive lifting of obstacles to forest access

However, vast areas of forest have been preserved. In DRC, the chaotic economy under the Mobutu regime and two wars, in 1996–1997 and 1998–2003, impeded exploitation of the Congolese rainforest (110 million hectares), which represents more than half of central Africa's forest cover. The congestion of the port of Matadi and, until August 2006, the absence of any marker buoys on the Congo River and its tributaries also helped protect this resource. Its rate of destruction has remained low at 0.26% a year, compared with 0.35% for central Africa as a whole. But the country's reunification and the return of peace are bringing a progressive lifting of these constraints and facilitating easier access to forest zones.

### ► Bad governance

In this huge country, marked by a long history of bad governance, the danger today is that we will see a repeat of what happened in Cameroon and Gabon, where in 2002 the World Wildlife Fund estimated that between 50% and 70% of the timber was logged illegally. In 2000, a French company was also forced to remove its equipment from the Lopé Nature Reserve in Gabon which it had entered illegally, while in Congo-Brazzaville the government had to crackdown on a Franco-Chinese firm that was engaging in "anarchic exploitation" of the forest resources without respecting tree felling quotas.

Already 90% of the forests of Lower Congo, close to the Atlantic, have been exploited, regrets Cosme Wilungula, director of the Congolese Institute for Nature Conservation (ICCN). "We are witnessing, episodes of drought never before experienced in this province," he told *The Courier*, "in particular a notable fall in water levels in all the rivers".

### ► Slash-and-burn farming; trafficking in wood fuel, gold washing and 'necrofuels'

In the DRC, the threats are growing: slash-and-burn farming, poaching, tree felling to produce *makala* (fuel wood) and invasion of the Kahuzi-Bihega National Park (South Kivu) by gold prospectors: the latter also observed in the French Overseas Department of Guyana.

In the meantime, potentially new threats are appearing on the scene: deforestation caused by the need to free areas for extensive breeding or to grow biofuels ('necrofuels', grumble some ecologists) in South America and Borneo, which have been condemned by European MP Dan Jorgensen.

Last February in Brussels at the international conference on the forests of Congo, co-organised by the Belgian Government, the president of the National League of Congolese Pygmies (LINAPYCO), Kapupu Diwa, condemned the unfair distribution of concessions in Ituri by tribal chiefs. He also protested the continuing illegal logging and trafficking in undressed timber bound for Uganda on the part of local warlords.



Illegal felling of trees threatens the sanctuary of the Bonobos, whose habitat is confined to a small area of just one country, the DRC.  
© Greenpeace

### ► DRC: ensuring the ban on granting new concessions is respected

The World Bank recognizes the risk of growth in illegal logging. The Kinshasa government introduced a ban on granting any further concessions in 2002, confirmed by a presidential decree in 2005 and the adoption of a forest code. "A gesture of strong governance", remarks the World Bank forests expert, Laurent Debroux. What is more, in May 2002 the Congolese Government cancelled the 25 million hectares of illegally allocated concessions. But the Congolese authorities are finding it difficult to enforce their decisions and the ban has been violated. Of the 156 concessions covering 22 million hectares, 107 were awarded after the ban, mainly to com-



With 110 million hectares, the rainforest of the DRC represents more than half of the forested area of central Africa.  
© 2002 EC / F. Jacobs

panies with Portuguese or German capital. According to the British Department for International Development (DFID), concessions were awarded following 'arrangements' reached with a number of members of the Congo's political elite during the time of the transitional government (2003–2007). One company owned by a Lebanese businessman is accused of illegal tree felling close to the Bonobo monkey sanctuary in Bandundu Province and felling afrodisia trees in the forests around Kisangani. The latter is a species listed in appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). To combat this situation, agents from the waters and forests departments charged with ensuring that the ban is respected have limited means at their disposal and are paid pitiful wages. In Bikoro (Bandundu) they do not even have transportation.

> **Legal review of concessions: the risk of a whitewash**

Currently, the World Bank supports maintaining the ban while ultimately trying to relaunch forestry activity following a legal review of the validity of 156 contracts – contracts that must be either converted into legal concessions or

cancelled. But the environmental NGO Greenpeace fears that the review will in practice simply amount to validating permits acquired illegally and thus will be no more than a 'whitewashing' exercise. Greenpeace has also expressed fears about the amount of the financial rewards for Congo, following a reform of the tax system for forestry companies and improvements to contracts where some of this revenue is going to the provinces and community development projects. These fears are based on the fact that during the past three years the money that should have gone to the communities has "evaporated," says Greenpeace. According to the Congolese Finance Ministry, 45% of taxes due in 2005 have not been paid. The compensation paid by the companies to the local communities has also been minimal. For example, Sodefor offered two bags of salt, 18 bars of soap, four bags of coffee, 24 bottles of beer and two bags of sugar in exchange for access to a vast concession!

> **Conflicts with the local communities**

Beneath the high canopy of the trees and in the clearings of the vast tropical forest, conflicts simmer and often boil over. In 2006,

the ITB logging company was accused by villagers of Ibenga of granting them derisory compensation after having used a bulldozer to destroy their manioc and cocoa plantations to open up access.

Local populations also complain of being neglected when drawing up forest policy. The president of the National League of Congolese Pygmies welcomes the desire for dialogue on the part of the Environment Minister but regrets what he regards as a lack of consideration on the part of other ministries. In the case of the Congo, conserving these precious ecosystems is a difficult challenge. At times the perfectly understandable cries of alarm from some environmental campaigners could induce defeatism or resignation. But much still remains to be saved.

In Central Africa, in Guyana, in the mangroves of the Caribbean, in Papua and elsewhere.

F.M.

1 *Les forêts du bassin du Congo : Etat des forêts 2006*, report co-financed by the Central Africa Forest Commission, France, the European Commission and US AID, [www.cbfp.org](http://www.cbfp.org)

2 *Burundi : Des lacs qui rétrécissent et des forêts décimées*, IRIN, 7 June 2007, [www.irinnews.org](http://www.irinnews.org)

Marie-Martine Buckens

# FORESTS UNDER CLOSE SURVEILLANCE



The EU is the highest-value importer of African sawn wood and unhewn timber. © Greenpeace

Since the Rio Summit in 1992, the protection of forests – and tropical forests in particular – has been a major environmental priority for the industrialised countries. This was confirmed at the last G8 summit in Germany which saw the adoption of the Carbon Forest Initiative that awards carbon credits to developing countries as a means of combating global warming. For the first time, the Rio meeting sought to link economic development and environmental protection. A tough exercise, but one that nevertheless resulted in the adoption of three international agreements: on climate, biodiversity and desertification. Unfortunately, at that same Rio meeting, the 100 or so heads of state did not succeed in agreeing on a binding text to ensure a sustainable exploitation of forests. They simply adopted a set of 'Principles regarding forests' – principles that have been eroded progressively at each subsequent conference. A lot is at stake over the forest issue. Forests are much coveted: by loggers who turn them into construction timber or pulp; by industrialists who destroy them to make way for other high-yielding species; by scientists who want to save these gems of biodiversity from human action and most recently by the Kyoto Protocol signatory countries ready to trade in their good deeds as carbon pools to meet their climatic obligations. Now, however, having been forgotten or overlooked at these international conferences, forest peoples are now making their voices heard.



Exploitation of forests could resume in the DRC after a legal review of the validity of logging concessions. © Greenpeace



> Multiple initiatives

The European Union has implemented and is continuing to implement several policies to try and respond to these challenges. Alongside its active participation in international forums, it was a leading partner in the famous pilot programme launched at the time by the G7 (the PPG7) for a sustainable management of the Amazon Forest in Brazil. This programme is currently dormant due to a lack of political will. Internally, it has put into place and there are many programmes dealing directly or indirectly with the problem of deforestation. These include the 'tropical forests' credit line, launched in 1990 at the European Parliament's initiative, which serves to finance projects ranging from sustainable development to conservation, research and the involvement of local populations. Two years later, following the Earth Summit, the European Union launched an ambitious regional programme to conserve tropical forests, known as ECOFAC, which currently concentrates on designating protected areas in seven countries of the Congo Basin. Under pressure from government ecological organisations, it has also decided to tackle the persistent problem of illegal timber imports into the EU. In May

2003, the Commission adopted its action plan for Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT). Finally, forests are increasingly included in international climate negotiations, as demonstrated by the Carbon Forest Initiative adopted by the G8 and to be implemented by the World Bank in cooperation with international institutions, including the EU.

> Good governance and sustainable timber

In terms of value, the EU is the world's biggest importer of African sawlogs and round wood and the second largest market for Asian sawlogs, while Africa and Asia are both regions where illegal logging and the related trade are common practice. European NGOs estimate that more than 50% of EU tropical wood imports and more than 20% of its boreal wood imports are of illegal origin. As a major timber consumer, the EU can play a major role in combating illegal logging and the related trade. This is not a new issue and there have been many initiatives to certify 'sustainable' origin over the past decade, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) being Europe's best known label. But to date the EU has preferred not to adopt a position in the

face of the variety of different labels. In 2003, following pressure from environmental and social NGOs, it opted for a voluntary system based on the partnership agreements concluded with importing countries. The FLEGT was thus born. Above all, this makes it possible to avoid a total ban on tropical wood which some NGOs are demanding as a last resort.

**“As a major timber consumer, the EU can play a major role in combating illegal logging”**

The Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs) are based on a series of undertakings, ranging from support for governance in the producing countries to the introduction of a licence system that implies first setting up a reliable administrative and technical structure to enable the timber to be traced back to the ports and ensure it was produced in a 'sustainable' manner. For many producing countries this presents a considerable challenge. This is why the EU plans to help these countries to respect their undertakings by including technical and financial assistance in the partnership agreements.

> Suppressing war timber

“The challenge”, believes Iola Leal Riesco, of the European Forests Network FERN, “is to strike at the roots of illegal logging: corruption, lack of transparency, bad policy or excessive influence of the forestry industry both in the processes and in drawing up the laws. Taking action against local communities or operators in the field will simply increase conflict and poverty. Also, the first step in the FLEGT process is to implement genuine political dialogue with the aim of introducing political reforms and strengthening the rights of local populations”. The FERN official stresses that illegal logging is particularly difficult to combat as it can be an inherent part of a country's economy, supporting political parties, the police and communities. She also believes that in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where 70% of the population (35 million people) depend on the forest, logging helped to finance the civil war that killed 3.5 million people. Finally, she points to the sanctions imposed at the time by the UN Security Council on exports of timber from Liberia: timber sold to finance the civil war that was raging in the country.

**“Illegal logging is particularly difficult to combat as it can be an inherent part of a country's economy”**

For now, the EU has initiated negotiations with Malaysia and Indonesia in Asia and with Ghana and Cameroon in Africa. Consultations are also planned with Congo-Brazzaville and Gabon. In 2004, around €17 million were allocated to support pilot projects aimed at ensuring an independent verification of logging activities. In 2006 a technical assistance programme worth €15 million was set up in Indonesia.

> A network of protected areas

On 31 January 2006, the European Commission gave the green light to include the DRC on the list of countries in the Congo Basin benefiting from the ECOFAC (Forest Ecosystems in Central Africa) programme. This is a long awaited decision as, despite having the largest forest cover in the Congo Basin, the DRC's political difficulties had prevented it from benefiting from the programme. The decision was accompanied by a further financial allocation of €38 million devoted to phase four of the programme. Another innovation is the declared link between efforts for forest conservation and development and the fight against poverty. The aim is to guarantee the forest populations their means of subsistence while also avoiding poaching made easier by the creation of roads by the loggers. ECOFAC now covers protected areas in seven central African countries: Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe and the DRC. With the return of the latter country, which represents half of the region's wooded area, the programme covers 180,000 km<sup>2</sup> of tropical forest and savannah ecosystems in a region that is home to the world's second largest tropical forest system, surpassed only by the Amazon Forest. But ECOFAC IV also awards more attention to the peoples who inhabit these forests. The European Commission recognizes that conservation of these forests is critical for the

development of 65 million people. The needs of local populations, who are extremely dependent on forest resources, are now a major component of a programme that has invested a great deal in the search for the strategies and means able to reconcile human development and conservation with complementary projects in rural development and micro-projects. The programme was first launched in 1992 in the wake of the International Convention on Biodiversity. Its aim is to contribute to the conservation and rational use of the forest ecosystems and biodiversity of central Africa. One of the programme's principal strengths is its regional approach as reflected in implementation of the Central Africa Network of Protected Areas (RAPAC) which seeks to transfer the ECOFAC experience to other protected areas in the sub-region. In all, more than €70 million were allocated during the first three phases out of the 6th, 7th and 8th EDF. ECOFAC IV represents the EU's biggest contribution to implementation of the Convergence Plan drawn up by the Comifac (Central Africa Forests Commission) countries and support for the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP), born of the agreement between donors and NGOs at the World Summit for Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002. Also, this new phase foresees a participation in the action plan on implementation of Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade, the FLEGT programme (see separate article).

To curb the illegal exploitation of forests, the EU has decided to sign partnership agreements with key importing countries, including those in the Congo basin. © Greenpeace / Kate Davison



The EU participates in the financing of 'eco-rangers', charged with guarding protected areas. © Wildlife Direct - EU / Filippo Saracco

> Climatic ambitions

“As a result of controls on the exploitation of our forests, our country has suffered a loss of earnings in the region of US\$1.5 billion”, declared the Congolese Environment Minister Didace Pembe Bokiaga on 28 February at the international conference on the sustainable management of the DRC’s forests, held in Brussels.

This is a sum that the Kinshasa government certainly plans to put into negotiations in connection with the Convention on Climate Change. The underlying idea is that the environmental services provided by the world’s tropical forests, notably due to non-deforestation, have a price.

It is a price that developed countries must pay as they bear most of the responsibility for global warming. How?

Through the market mechanisms foreseen in the Kyoto Protocol.

One of these, the CDM (Clean Development Mechanism) allows developed countries to earn emission credits by investing in sustainable projects in developing countries. But as yet only reforestation projects (mostly plantations) are recognised in the protocol.

The minister continued: “Another system that we are currently exploring consists of conservation concessions enabling people, companies and governments around the world to draw up contracts with the DRC and local populations to hire the forests and have the right not to exploit them so that they can be managed as protected areas while local populations and the government can draw concrete benefits from them”.

> A “Carbon Facility” for the forests

The request has been granted, at least in part. Last June the world’s eight most industrialised countries met in Germany where they approved a series of initiatives proposed by the World Bank to reduce the impact of greenhouse gases on climate.

They include the creation of a ‘carbon forest’ partnership designed to avoid deforestation, which experts believe is responsible for 20% of greenhouse gas emissions.

This partnership consists of a series of pilot projects implemented initially in a number of key countries such as the DRC, Brazil and Indonesia. Minister Pembe believes that the DRC could receive around US\$6 billion a year, a considerable sum when one considers that the country’s total budget is unlikely to exceed US\$2 billion in 2007.



Amanvi, *Blobo Bian, l'amant de l'au-delà.*  
© Lai-momo 2003

However, these projects will not be included in the market mechanisms (including the CO<sub>2</sub> exchange) provided for in the Kyoto Protocol until 2012 and the start of the protocol’s second phase where the greatest uncertainty remains. Forests saved by carbon markets? Some experts doubt it. Jutta Kill of the FERN ecological research organisation believes that this instrument that “depends on financing by industrialised countries to operate could be a failure to the extent that it does not tackle the real causes of deforestation but, on the contrary, risks increasing the conflict to the extent that the benefits will not go to the local communities”.

# ACP: A FOREST MOSAIC

*The ACP forests are many and varied: from the wooded savannahs to the tropical rainforests of central Africa, Suriname and Papua New Guinea to the Tanzanian mangroves.*

*Then there are the billions of trees burned down, made into furniture or serving as war timber leaving a lunar-like landscape in their wake, as in countries like Haiti. But where it is present, for the majority of ACP countries the forest continues to represent an asset of major importance. For the inhabitants, a vast majority of who continue in many countries to be dependent on forest products, perpetuate what is known as a ‘subsistence’ economy. But also the national authorities, attracted by the profits they can make from the industrial exploitation of their forestry resources and, more recently, the climatic exploitation of carbon pools.*

> The African “baobab”

Of the three ACP regions, it is Africa that has the lion’s share of forest resources. According to the latest estimates issued by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO, 2005 figures), forests cover 26% of the African continent, or around 627 million hectares. The regional variations are considerable. With 278 million hectares, central and West Africa tops the list (45% of the surface area), due not least to the Congo Basin that has the world’s second largest tropical forest cover. South-East Africa has 226 million hectares or 27% forest cover, followed by the countries of the Sahel with 123 million hectares, representing just 8% of the surface area. Most of the EU’s actions for conservation and sustainable management are concentrated in the Congo Basin (see main article).



© Marie-Martine Buckens

## Sustainable exploitation of the Tanzanian mangroves

Zanzibar has approximately 19,748 hectares of mangrove forests, including 5,829 hectares on Unguja Island and 13,919 hectares on Pemba Island. Historically, Zanzibar’s mangroves have been exploited for tannin, a wood used for both construction and fuel. Since 1965 all the mangrove forests have been under the direct authority of the forests department that has used various means to control their exploitation. Despite considerable illegal tree felling, over the past 50 years these actions have had some success. Mangrove resources are threatened indirectly by the growing demand for wood, falling agricultural incomes, the reduction of fish stocks, the absence of means of subsistence and demographic growth. This has prompted a number of initiatives to encourage conservation. These include: management by the population in the village of Kisakasaka; policy and legislative improvements; management, conservation and development of the coastal zone in Chwaka Bay; the Integrated Coastal Area Management Programme (ICAM) and the conservation project for Jozani-Chwaka Bay.

Study by Masoud, T.S., Wild, R.G. *Mangrove management and conservation: present and future*, 2004. CTA (Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU – www.cta.int)

> **The Caribbean mosaic**

With just 3.8% forest cover, Haiti is an extreme case. In the other Caribbean countries, the situation varies considerably. There is Suriname and Guyana, admittedly linked to the Amazonian Forest, where despite the growing presence of unscrupulous loggers the forest cover remains close to 94% in the former case and 76% in the latter. Then there is Belize in Central America where the European Commission financed a project for the sustainable management of the forests which still cover 72% of the territory. The ACP and Caribbean islands have 6 million hectares of forests, representing 26% of their total surface area.

> **Increasingly less peaceful forests**

Of all the Pacific ACP countries, Papua New Guinea has the largest forest mass (29.5 million hectares, or 65% of the surface area).

But it is a forest mass that has been under threat for the past decade due to the presence of loggers who often operate illegally. The EC recently financed a training development programme in this country (IRECDP programme) to enable local communities to benefit from their forest resources. The situation is scarcely any better on the Solomon Islands (2.2 million hectares of

forests covering 78% of the islands) where the EU supported a project advocating an alternative use of forests to counter destructive tree felling practices that result in a serious deterioration of the forests, environmental damage and social problems. Finally, there are the islands of Fiji and Vanuatu with a 55% and 36% forest cover, respectively. **M.M.B.**



## TREES 'OUTSIDE FORESTS' on small Pacific islands

For many small and developing island states of the Pacific the planting of trees outside forests, when combined with traditional agriforestry practices and the associated traditional knowledge, offers a remedy for deforestation. This can also help conserve biodiversity and sustainable development. In December 2001 a regional seminar on trees outside forests was held in Nadi (Fiji). This sought to give high priority to actions supporting the protection and planting of trees outside forests. Participants looked at the national records of Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Tonga, Samoa, Niue, the Cook Islands, Kiribati and Palau. Technically, trees outside forests include woods covering less than 0.5 hectares, tree cover on agricultural land, trees in an urban environment, trees alongside roads and waterways, as well as trees on common land, including in villages and farms. They include a variety of species, such as: breadfruit, paper mulberry, gardenia, casuarina, thuya orientalis, pine, cashew nut, sandalwood, coconut palm and mangroves.

*International Forestry Review* (RU), 2002, vol. 4 (4), special issue, p. 268-276. CTA (Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural cooperation ACP-EU – www.cta.int)

# Interaction

Debra Percival

# NO GAMBLING on the future of ACP

*Debate on Darfur and Zimbabwe was heated. Topical discussion on EU-ACP free trade agreements, migration, the management of natural resources and poverty reduction for small farmers at the 13th session of ACP-EU Joint Assembly (JPA) was animated. The excited talk belied the calm venue, the Kurhaus casino, in the German spa town of Wiesbaden, Hessen, 23–28 June.*

A sense of purpose hung over the gathering. Co-President Glenys Kinnock related sobering statistics on global inequalities in her opening speech. The mapping of the human genome is possible, she said, yet half a million women die due to pregnancy-related complications and childbirth, 99% in developing countries. One-third of the world's people do not have enough water to live.

"Two years ago the G8 Summit in Gleneagles agreed to double aid to poor nations to US\$50 billion and 100% debt cancellation. I regret to say that on the eve of the G8 Summit, held earlier this month, it was already clear that the rich world was well off track," she added.

The JPA is a consultative body but has increasing clout. Its activities are tracked by other decision-making EU institutions who attend the bi-annual Assembly of 79 Members of ACP national Parliaments and their 27 European Parliament counterparts.

In a scheduled debate on the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), the free trade agreements for the six ACP regions due to come on stream in 1 January 2008, ACP nations and many MEPs were firm that there must be no spinning of the wheel of fortune over content of the

accords. "The consequences (of the EPAs) are obvious for ACP countries which could lead to a perpetual and immense stock of imports," said co-President René Radembino-Coniquet (Gabon). Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) heckled "halt the EPAs" on the Kurhaus lawns putting their viewpoint loudly and clearly that the EPAs could have a hefty economic and social toll, in particular on the four African ACP regional groupings (see 'Trade' rubric). Germany's President, Horst Köhler, voiced an opposing view that EPAs would increase competitiveness, local processing and improve livelihoods (see 'Trade' rubric).



Opening of the ACP by Co-Presidents Glenys Kinnock and René Radembino-Coniquet. © European Parliament, External Affairs Directorate/ Tim Wilson

## Ecotourism on Dominica

The island of Dominica is rich in natural beauty and biodiversity. The mountainous terrain, abundant rainfall, clear freshwater streams, luxuriant forests and a unique variety of flora and fauna are all valuable assets in making it an ecotourism destination. About 65% of Dominica's surface area is covered in natural vegetation, including the most extensive rainforest in the Lesser Antilles. Recent years have seen a rapid growth in tourism, based principally on the island's natural resources. In the 1989–1993 period, Dominica recorded the highest annual growth of any of the Caribbean islands in terms of visitor expenditure. The island's economic future depends largely on the management and sustainability of its natural resources. Study by Hypolite, E., Green, G.C., Burley, J. CTA (Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU – www.cta.int)

## > Cotonou ratification lagging

There must be quick ratification of the Cotonou Agreement, urged Lesotho's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mohlabi Kenneth Tsekoa, without which the 10th EDF aid package (2008–2013) could not come on stream to provide a boost to funds underpinning the EPAs. Just 13 ACP and 9 EU states out of 27 have ratified the agreement. All EU and two-thirds of ACP signatures are required.

Climate change was never far from the minds of participants throughout the week's events. EU Commissioner, Louis Michel, announced it would be one of the prongs of the EU-Africa Partnership to be launched year end at the EU-Africa Summit in Lisbon, Portugal.

A workshop for Parliamentarians arranged at the nearby Darmstadt control centre of the European Space Agency (ESA) informed how its satellite monitoring of the climate and environmental change could assist ACP and EU policy-makers alike.

Parliamentarians were struck how nitrogen dioxide emissions had doubled over China in just eight years.

On the political front, a resolution on Sudan called for the speedy deployment of a hybrid EU/AU force. On Zimbabwe, there was no resolution as Zimbabwean Parliamentarians were not present, but a debate signalled backing for the diplomacy of South African President, Thabo Mbeki (see 'Round up' rubric).

Guest speaker, President of the Pan-African Parliament, Gertrude Mongella, remarked that in the area of fact-finding missions in African nations, the Pan-African Parliament had particular success.

Her presence signalled closer future ties between the EU and the ACP. Three key reports at this JPA put the spotlight on poverty reduction for small farmers in ACP countries, the effects of the migration of skilled workers on national development in ACP countries and good governance and transparency in exploiting natural resources.

In the wake of debate, the resolutions voted on put forward practical measures.

## > 'Brain waste'

Luisa Morgantini, of the co-Federal Group of the European United Left Party (Italy) also spoke for co-rapporteur Sharon Hay Webster (Jamaica), who was not in Wiesbaden due to electoral commitments, on the effects of migration of workers on national development. Parliamentarians cited figure after figure on the 'brain drain' of skilled workers from ACP nations, for example. Of the 600 doctors annually trained in Zambia, only 50 remained. Louis Straker (St. Vincent and the Grenadines) said 70% of doctors from the West Indies end up in the UK and US. Sixteen per cent of Jamaica's gross domestic product (GDP) is dependent on what the country's nationals earn in other countries.

The JPA resolution called for policies to mitigate the economic and social effects of migration on ACPs and better international mutual recognition of university diplomas to avoid 'brain waste'.

Longer, flexible contracts to make it easier for those working overseas to return to their countries and come back to the EU were called



Animated debates in a peaceful setting. The Kurhaus casino in the spa resort of Wiesbaden, Hessen. © Debra Percival

for as well as easier procedures to transfer money. Tighter regulation of ACP natural resources was called for in a report on good governance, transparency and accountability in the exploitation of natural resources in ACP countries. This was to ensure that the resources are for benefit of all citizens, said co-drafter, Evelyne Cheron (Haiti), rather, than as put in the opening speech of Germany's President Köhler, "...stashed away in bank for a few rich people."

A body of international standards was already in place, said Michael Gahler (European Peoples' Party, Germany).

A resolution also called for transparency of state budgets, independent auditing of budgets, and for all nations to subscribe to Kimberley Process on rough diamonds and further initiatives by companies to operate in a transparent way and be able to promote themselves as "clean companies".

The imperative of more local processing came through strongly in a report on poverty reduction for small farmers in ACP nations, particularly concerning fruit, vegetables and flowers, drawn up by Green Party member, Carl Schylter (Sweden) and Tanzanian Kilontji Mporogomyi, who was unable to be in Wiesbaden.

A resolution called for a bigger focus by the European Development Funds (EDF) on agriculture in the interest of food security and local production. And to avoid being swamped by cheap produce, it recommended selective ACP market openings for imports.

With the HIV/AIDS virus taking a toll in rural areas agricultural development projects should include provisions to fight the disease. The elimination of export subsidies and more funds for labelling packaging and meeting phytosanitary rules were also mooted and a study to assess the impact of climate change on trade liberalisation, food security and energy resources.

"Business as usual will not do and action must be scaled up now," Kinnock said in the opening of the JPA.

This sums up the resolve of this JPA to ensure its words are acted upon, a message to be carried through to 14th session in Kigali, Rwanda, 19–22 November 2007. ■

# DOMINICAN ENTREPRENEURS: Small businesses showing imagination

*The Dominican economy has revived extremely well over the last three years since being affected by a serious monetary crisis, and today there is a new vitality among the country's entrepreneurs. But this time, it is small businesses which are showing imagination, innovation and dynamism. The Courier recently met a film producer, Juan Basanta, who occasionally works with the big names in American cinema.*

## Globalisation. Appearing in film, too

Juan Basanta is a filmmaker who runs his own company. He studied in Cuba, where his teachers included Francis Ford Coppola, Jean-Claude Carrière and Gabriel Garcia Marquez. In 1995, he set up his own production company, which has been growing ever since.

### > State of the industry

It is a very young industry but is at a significant point. Technology is now accessible and has enabled the industry to blossom and given us the independence and freedom to create. We have a newly found confidence.

### > Your company

We are a very versatile company and do not keep to one film genre. Our portfolio includes documentaries and music videos. In one sense our company is the biggest in the field and in another sense the smallest. In music video terms, we are a big hitter. But it's not all about size. It comes down to intelligent decisions in the marketplace that open paths and allow continuity. That excites me. We try to work in a global context. Filmmaking is a universal language. Sometimes we fail – we have very original projects which reflect us but perhaps the 'dialect' is a little too local to be appreciated outside our country. We're an independent group. At any one time we can employ 90 people on set including craftspeople. On a monthly basis, 50 families depend on us for a paycheck.

### > Do Dominicans back their home-grown industry?

Dominicans do back their own film industry and buy its DVDs, but there's a constant need for new sorts of films to keep the public in cinema seats. We found people understand silence and a great image instead of a big word for example. We have to make sure that films do not become radio broadcasts. I'll give you a copy of my film *Dominicano*, a documentary which is a heartfelt portrayal of what my country is, so you can understand where I'm coming from here. It portrays my own journey.

### > Supporting the industry

It has always been very difficult raise finance. If you go any bank right now; mortgages are at 15%–18% interest. You have to do everything from scratch starting with finding understanding partners. It's a totally different dynamic. Even basics like electricity have to be self-funded. My business is not connected to the national power company and I have to generate my own energy. As filmmakers, you have to be prepared for everything. It's a very changing country in all respects. During the hurricane season, the weather can be sunny in the morning then the clouds come along in the afternoon.

Things are already in the pipeline. I have been working with the government on a few things like the development of a school for filmmak-

ers and laws to protect the industry and create funds. A covered set is being built. Taking on work outsourced by other film industries like Hollywood is an important step forward, too. We have the technical know-how and the kids now go straight from school into the first job on the set. This was not an option when I started. My first job was in advertising.

### > Where the industry is heading

We currently make about seven to ten films a year in the country at production costs of between US\$300,000–1 million. These films manage to cover their costs and make a profit. About 30 people are involved in film production in the country. Then there are the international productions filmed here like Michael Mann's *Miami Vice*. Ana Garcia and Robert de Niro have also made films here. There's also a potential to sell our product in the regional market such as Venezuela, Colombia or even the USA.

We need proper management of the industry. Sometimes politicians don't understand it. We need support at all levels, whether it's just to enable us to close a road when we're making a film, for example, or understanding the labour market. Those who work on set as craftspeople are ordinarily hairdressers or waiters.

I am full of hope for the film industry and tomorrow – perhaps in a few years time – hope to fulfil the beautiful dream I have. **H.G.** ■

**In next issues of *The Courier*: representatives of an association of small coffee producers FEDECARES (Federation of Coffee Growers of the Southern Region), who have a social and environmental agenda, and professional manager, Rafael Diaz, who quit a profitable job in the US to begin an experimental project producing biodiesel on a small scale.**

# EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT DAYS: maintaining the course of development in the face of climate change

## Interview with Commissioner Louis Michel

*Lisbon is the venue for the second round of European Development Days that take place from 7 to 9 November.*

*This is unique event – a Porto Alegre or Davos of Development Policy – brings together all the key players in the field. In this interview, the architect of the initiative, Louis Michel, European Commissioner for Development, explains the background to the event and his hopes for the future, as well as commenting on the next EU-Africa summit and the Economic Partnership Agreements with the ACP countries.*

Text by editorial staff

*What lessons did you take from the first European Development Days (EDD) and why have you decided to organise this second event in Lisbon?*

The first lesson is that thanks to this event, there is now a forum that brings together all the players in the development 'family': Heads of State, NGOs, professional experts, the European Commission, not-for-profit organisations and the business world. I am also aware that Europe is at the forefront of development and is happy to be so, both as the world's largest donor of development aid (48 billion euros in 2006 – 56% of the global total – and equal to €100 for every citizen of Europe) and as the leader of international thinking on cooperation with its partners, wherever and whoever they may be. To have, above all, a dialogue with our partners on the great issues of development: to put an end to poverty; to build constructive and balanced relationships.

In doing so, I recall the words of the Reverend Desmond Tutu: "The only way we can hope to be prosperous, ultimately, is together".

So you ask, "why hold a second event in Lisbon?". My response? Because the world needs dialogue in order to find answers to global problems – in particular to those brought about by climate change.

*Why this theme?*

Because it's urgent! Climate change is accelerating bringing with it the possibility of unprecedented catastrophes. We must anticipate the problems to come and begin to act against them while we can. We have a duty to talk about it, we cannot use the excuse that we did not know about it. All of us have our responsibilities in this. Europe today is leading the way with direct action on pollution, specific commitments, new regulations, finance for renewable energies programmes and so on.

Our message, which I want the politicians to take to heart is, "we must act now!".

In practical terms, the Commission has proposed a new global alliance on climate change, specifically to assist poorer countries in coming to terms with the phenomenon. This to include helping them adapt to changing climatic conditions; reduce emissions caused by deforestation; help developing countries take advantage of the global carbon trading market; help them to better prepare for natural catastrophes and to integrate climate change into cooperation strategies for both development and combating poverty.

The European Development Days in Lisbon will be the opportunity to debate all these issues. From there, we can develop innovative projects to meet the challenges of climate change: limiting emissions and developing renewable energy processes (solar, wind power, biomass, hydroelectric). Not forgetting our goal of combating poverty too!

Finally, it is not only up to the Commission to make concrete proposals. They should come from everyone involved – from the development 'family' and other in the international community.

*At the next EU-Africa summit the major issue will be the partnership between the two continents. What are the Commission's priorities in this regard?*

Everyone should be aware that Africa and Europe must map out together the path their common future is to take: the path of peace, of prosperity and solidarity. We have to cooperate with Africa both as partners and as neighbours. As far as foreign relations are concerned, Africa is the Commission's priority. Look at the figures: 60% of the total aid received by the continent comes from Europe, 85% of African agricultural exports are bought by Europe and 65% of the contributions to funds for fighting HIV, tuberculosis and malaria come from the



## Louis Michel, the willing optimist

Having imposed his direct style of working on numerous missions to the four corners of the globe – in the Congo this earned him the nickname 'Captain Haddock', Louis Michel, for three years European Commissioner for development and humanitarian aid, rarely needs any further introduction.

He expresses his opinions in very plain language, leaving no one indifferent to his views. Rejecting, for example, the arguments of opponents of GMOs (genetically modified organisms), he is also critical of those in favour of systematic sanctions against ACP countries suspected of reneging on clauses in the Cotonou Agreement. And although a determined advocate of budgetary aid he wants to make certain that partners have a strong sense of their own responsibilities. Above all, he sees his role as that of the man of politics, he was as head of the Mouvement Réformateur (liberal party) of Belgium, where he acted as Foreign Minister. "I am not a political eunuch!" he once claimed during a hearing before the European Parliament.

The Commissioner also has a strong, ongoing commitment to Africa, going back to when he was head of Belgian foreign affairs in 1999, when he fought hard for the re-establishment of peace in central Africa. Louis Michel is a man who believes strongly in what he terms "willing optimism". Those who know him well know that Africa lies at the heart of his professional life. His official EU website perhaps best sums up his views. **F.M. ■**

EU. Our eight priorities reflect the challenges facing us: peace and security; climate change; realisation of the Millennium goals for development, governance, democracy and human rights; migration, mobility and employment; science, the information society and space. Additionally, the European Union hopes to reinforce its partnership with the African Union and set the example that the prosperity we enjoy in Europe was created because nation states decided to co-operate and work together. But I also want to send out a strong message to Africa that they need to sweep away many of the old clichés about the continent! Africa is changing. Africa today is a place of unique natural resources, of cultural diversity, of developing technology. It is also a place of arts, music, biodiversity, sport and youth. Africa is indeed full of promise. Just look at Nelson Mandela. What an example to the rest of us in the world!

*There is some uncertainty hanging over the summit, namely the participation of the President of Zimbabwe. What is your feeling on this issue?*

My feeling is this summit is very important. This discussion between two continents is necessary and is long awaited.

*The Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) between the EU and the ACP regions are due to be signed at the end of the year. Some*

*African and European NGOs are concerned that this will weaken still further the ACP economies. How would you answer them?*

Aid is not the be all and end all of development. The poorest countries must find ways to integrate themselves into the world economy and use their assets to eradicate poverty. Look for example at the Asian countries. They have managed, step by step, to embrace globalisation, strategically position themselves in certain sectors, progressively open their markets and then finally compete with the major economic powers.

Our approach with the EPAs is a gradual one. It involves establishing regional markets between ACP countries, and to then open the EU to exports from these countries (an asymmetric, non-automatic reciprocity) at a pace which suits each side. It is an approach that must be intelligent, responsible and focused on development. With these agreements, our commercial relationships with the ACP countries become compatible with the WTO. In making this happen, the Commission is playing its part with a vision of a globalised – yet regulated – world, based on clear rules.

As we can recall, by adopting a regional strategy, a Europe ravaged by two world wars was able to rebuild itself. For today's challenges, as with those of Europe in the past, this must be accompanied by considerable development aid – a Marshall Plan for these countries. As part of this, an extra two billion euros of aid per year from now until 2010 is anticipated (the 10th European Development Fund for 2008–2013 will increase this by 35%).

In making this work, we must cushion the social impact of change and reform so that the benefits are much greater than the cost of adaptation. Simply put, it is necessary to create wealth in order to then redistribute it. This is the spirit of the Economic Partnership Agreements, – to be both constructive and optimistic. It is also something I personally believe in very strongly.

I have just returned from the Pacific Islands Forum, where I signed the first Country Strategy Documents with 13 states and I can, therefore, tell you from first hand experience not only how important, but how welcome Europe's presence is.

Hand-in-hand with our partners in the Pacific we are responding in practical terms to global problems (the environment, security, biodiversity, climate change, energy and so on) as well as using our influence to achieve political stability and a return to the rule of law and democracy in places like the Fiji Islands. ■

# DEV DAYS: Will Climate Change DEVELOPMENT?

Lisbon, Portugal: 7 to 9 November 2007

The following text is a communication by DG Development

The first Development Days (Dev Days) took place in Brussels in November 2006. The initiative met with great success and will be a key annual event in the calendar of development cooperation decision makers from now on.



## What is Dev Days?

DEV Days can be seen as the Davos of Development Policy. It is a gathering of the most prominent actors involved in development cooperation; it is intended to produce a rich exchange of views and ideas between those who are engaged in the world of development aid; it is designed to enhance devel-

opment policies and to ensure coherence and complementarity in the domain and, finally, it aims to enhance public awareness and to ensure that the general public are conscious of what the European Union does for development cooperation.

The rich range of EU policies including the European Consensus on Development, the steps taken toward greater aid effectiveness, the strategies focussing on Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, all of which contribute to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, must filter through to the general public.

Indeed recent surveys have shown that whilst European Citizens see poverty reduction as the most important objective for development policy, they are not always aware of the active policies being pursued by the European Commission or their own Member States with this aim in mind.

**DEV DAYS 2006** chose as its main topic 'Africa on the move'. It attracted a star-studded attendance including Bishop Desmond Tutu, over 20 African Heads of State or Government and more than a thousand European decision-makers.

High level officials from a number of international organisations, civil society representatives and acknowledged development experts also participated.

The event was hosted by the European Commissioner responsible for Development, Louis Michel.

**DEV DAYS 2007** has taken on a new theme. This time it will focus on Climate Change and Development. Discussion will target the implications of climate change on cooperation between the EU and its developing country partners. The main challenges Europeans and their partners are facing will

be addressed through a series of events organised by the Commission.

Climate change has become an issue of crucial importance worldwide. The link between this and extreme weather conditions is well known. Since July 2007 alone the European Commission has provided over €24 million to the victims of natural disasters worldwide. It is now generally accepted that there can be no further meaningful progress without pausing to think about the ill effects of climate change.

Which is why the Commission has chosen this theme for this year.

Following on from Montreal in 1987 and Kyoto in 1997, the Commission has played an active role in promoting international action to tackle climate change. In 2003 it launched a strategy and action plan to tackle the issue within the context of development cooperation. The Spring Council of 2007 put forward concrete proposals for a post-2012 international climate change agreement and committed itself to significant cuts in the EU's greenhouse gas emissions. In September 2007, the Commission proposed a global climate change alliance (GCCA) to help developing countries most affected. It proposes building a new alliance between the EU and the poor developing countries most affected and with the least capacity to deal with this new phenomenon.

**DEV DAYS 2007** will provide the first occasion to discuss the GCCA with developing country partners.

Taking place in Lisbon at the invitation of the Portuguese Presidency of the European Union, details of participants, seminars, promotional stands and all other information is available at the following web-site address:

[www.eudevdays.eu](http://www.eudevdays.eu) ■

# AFRICA, foreign policy priority of the EU Presidency

Interview with Manuel Lobo Antunes, Portuguese Secretary of State for European Affairs, EU Presidency



Seat of the Portuguese Presidency 2007. © Hegel Goutier

## ► On the major topics on the agenda of the Portuguese Presidency

It is an agenda filled with political and institutional subjects, questions linked with justice, home affairs and foreign affairs. But to summarise, the top priority is to produce the future Treaty on European Union. We have received the mandate to do it before the end of December from the German Presidency and we want to comply with that mandate. In fact not just comply, but fulfil that mandate. On external relations, our intensified dialogue with Brazil is a priority. We organised the EU-Brazil Summit here, an initiative by the Portuguese Presidency. The Summit was a great success. We expect to do the same with Africa in December. Of course social issues, which relate to energy, the environment and climate change feature high on the agenda. Issues relating to immigration, both legal and illegal are important as well. So the agenda is pretty full, but I would pick relations with Brazil and Africa for special emphasis.

## ► Points being driven forward by the Portuguese Presidency

I would mention all the issues relating to the new round of the Lisbon Strategy which concerns the guidance of economic and social development and relations with Europe. We must prepare the revision of the Lisbon Strategy as well as those relating to energy. But what qualify as real Portuguese initiatives are the first EU-Brazil Summit and the second EU-Africa Summit. As you know, the first EU-Africa Summit was held in Cairo under the Portuguese Presidency in 2000 and that commitment that is being revisited. It took seven years for this Summit in December, once again as a Portuguese initiative and I believe that it underscores the importance of the commitment that Portugal has to African issues. We will do everything in our power for Europe as a whole to engage with Africa and, of course, for Africa to engage in a structured dialogue with Europe.

## ► In parallel with the EU meetings with Brazil and Africa, we are seeing a rapprochement between Brazil and Africa. Did Portugal play a role in that?

Portugal has a special relationship with Brazil. Brazil is a big country, and we have a part in its history. It is a country that speaks our language. It is a modern-day power which has leadership, for example, in terms of the energy dialogue and trade relations. But Brazil is steering its own course. It is a good thing that Brazil, like Portugal, is engaging with Africa, and that it is interested in Africa. It is also important that global relations should be more balanced.

So we can only support the dialogue that Brazil wants to have with the large regional bloc, with the African continent. For us, it is important to ensure more regulated and more balanced globalisation. The fact that Brazil is Portuguese-speaking makes it even more special for us.

It is an emotional factor for us.

## ► On the Chinese breakthrough in Africa

Obviously, every country, every region and every continent has the right to choose its partners and to run its foreign policy. But I think that Europe, through its very special ties with Africa and its very close relations, must have a very special relationship. Africa is closer to Europe than to China. I think that Africans, when they travel or study abroad, go to Europe rather than China.

In Portugal, our businesses turn towards Africa rather than China. There is an obligation for us to do everything we can to ensure that these long-established links that are so close and so human between Europe and Africa are preserved and developed.

It is natural for Africa to diversify its relations and engage with new partners, but beyond that, Africa must continue to consider Europe as an essential partner.

### > On the absence of awareness in the EU of the desire for Europe around the world

Perhaps Europe is not fully aware of certain things. Today, we are still feeling the full impact of globalisation.

We all need to adapt to it. I would almost go as far as to say that to an extent, we have overlooked Africa and not given it all the attention it deserves. Perhaps it is because of a degree of indifference that Africa is looking for other partners, or that others are focusing on Africa. There has been a sort of vacuum, which can only be filled with a firmer commitment from Europe. It is also our intention to draw our partners' attention to that, as this oversight must not continue.

We must turn our attention to it urgently. Personally, I view relations with Africa from the viewpoint of globalisation.

It is just not possible for Africa to be left out, that cannot be allowed to happen, and I will fight to prevent it.

That is a new challenge of globalisation. In particular, for civil society, the youth of Africa, its intellectuals, all Africans. We need to make major efforts along those lines, because it is in Europe's interest.



Miquel Barcelo, *Noyau Noir*, 1999. Mixed media on canvas, 230 x 285 cm. Courtesy Sindika Dokolo African collection of contemporary art

### > The good news concerning the African economy

The situation is actually rather paradoxical. While there are a number of shining examples and things that are moving, civil society which is becoming stronger and democracy that is consolidating, unfortunately there are still seri-

ous conflicts and problems with development. There are still conflicts in Darfur, Somalia etc., which continue to pose challenges and regrettable problems. And there are things that are moving in the right direction.

But the contrasts are ever-present, and these are the contrasts that we will try to eliminate. **H.G.**

## EU Presidency 2007

[www.eu2007.pt](http://www.eu2007.pt)

### *The most important political gathering, according to the Portuguese Presidency*

#### EU-Brazil Summit 4 July

The Summit launched a strategic association between the two parties, with one of the aims to strengthen EU-South American relations. One of its conclusions was a commitment to "rescue Doha". This likely attracted attention from the ACP countries, who may have been interested in the type of rescue planned.

#### European Development Days 7-9 November

After Brussels in 2006, this will be an opportunity for open discussions about EU development policy, avoiding once again the staid character of the international political

forums. The theme: 'Will climate change development?' [www.eudevdays.eu](http://www.eudevdays.eu)

#### 2nd EU-Africa Summit 8 and 9 December

The European Commission's proposals for the agenda include energy, climate change, migration, mobility and employment, democratic governance, the institutional architecture and joint EU-Africa policy.

The African Union emphasised the importance of putting urgent issues in African development on the agenda, including agriculture and food security. The majority of heads of state and government of both parties will attend, including President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe. Despite the reluctance

of certain MEPs and some EU Member States, the Portuguese Presidency felt it important to invite all heads of state with no exceptions. This view was shared by the African Union.

#### Intergovernmental conference for a new EU Treaty 13-17 December

The conference aims to bring an end to the turmoil in the European Union following the failure of the draft Constitution. The Portuguese Presidency will have a tough task, although it is determined to demonstrate its ability to rally the Member States around the proposal. **■**

Joan Ruiz

# Fez: a trace of EU-African union



© Catherine Bendayan

**T**he two shores of the Mediterranean, Morocco and Spain, rub shoulders. But do they understand each other? Here are two peoples who, by holding out their hands, could easily bring together two worlds, two universes only 14 kilometres apart.

As the ocean is to the sea, two vast areas of water, of the same blood. But time after time boats and poorly constructed rafts drift across, overflowing with people risking everything for the opportunities of a better world: sadly, often with the worst possible consequences.

And yet in Fez, a little further south from where these two continents face each other, each year at the same time for the last 13 years, a light shines. The Festival of Fez is a trace of a geographic link between the European Union and Africa, and the meetings that take place here become a bridgehead between North and South built on hope and dignity. So much so that today this festival is recognized as one of the most important events on the international musical and cultural scene. And so each year, Fez, the most holy of cities, still remains faithful to its history and its roots. Beneath an ancient oak tree in the gardens of the Batha Museum of Fez, artists and men of goodwill, peace and hope from all over the world appeal to the best in all of us.

As long ago as the 9th century, the great Ibn Rushd called on man's ability to behave in a responsible fashion. In 818 AD, 20,000 political refugees expelled from Cordoba founded the Andalusian quarter. Some years later, 300 Tunisian families (originally from Kairouan) settled in Fez and gave their name to the Karauin quarter.

Long renowned as one of the largest medinas in the Mediterranean world and home to many famous dynasties, Fez continues to fascinate and intrigue. It is, as always, a place of extremes, where order and disorder live side by side, as do luxury and poverty. Most of the dwellings emanate a timeless quality from their walls.

In this city, home to the oldest and most prestigious Islamic University, the festival of Fez celebrates the interior beauty of cultures through art,

music and meetings, with an emphasis on the sacred. By introducing spiritual and cultural elements into the globalisation debate, the spirit of Fez goes to the root of the world's economic and social ills. In this time of globalisation, in the face of people who feel driven to make the ultimate sacrifice, the Festival of Fez and its meetings are a world-renowned testing ground that cannot be ignored.

Globalisation also means information available to all in real time. Fez will without any doubt leave 'traces of light' in this respect.

Man reduced to the mere condition of consumer or man reduced to a hidebound religious identity is by definition incomplete. Today's notion of the universal is synonymous with the interplay of multiple identities, and in our modern epoch there are no longer any buffer zones: neither deserts nor mountains, the speed of movements of people and information leaves less and less time for reflection.

The Festival of Fez and its many meetings have created a space where difference is primarily brotherly. Thus this event takes up the challenge of making a better world through knowledge and recognition.

From this perspective everything makes sense: escape the anthropological triangle of sacred-truth-violence, or a school that propagates institutionalised ignorance (see prof. Mohammed Arkoun, emeritus professor of the history of Islamic thought, President of the CCEFR) yet still another past that couldn't exist without a better future.

It's not a question of settling for a litany of good intentions to quickly ease the conscience, but rather of contributing to a teaching in which ignorance will no longer be allowed or supported. One in which the sacred, in whatever form it takes, will be given sanctuary, and in which on the pretext of being the holder of absolute truth, nobody will use violence, even if it is structurally and economically organised or founded on absolute despair.

"The modus operandi is to understand differences and act from similarities" (Andrius Masando, African National Congress). **■**

George Lucky

# TURNING to desert and sea, AFRICAN MIGRANTS



Nigerian journalist, George Lucky, gives a personal account of the plight of West Africans seeking a better life in European Union (EU). He was winner of the European Commission's 2006 Lorenzo Natali prize for reporting on Human Rights and Democracy for an article which tracked those risking their lives to reach the EU's shores.

In recent times, the number of Africans who head overseas has doubled. Across the continent, throughout West Africa and Nigeria in particular, there is hardly a family without a member living overseas either legally or illegally. It is now a status symbol to have a family member overseas.

The contributions of these people to the economies of their countries, especially remittances, are growing daily. A report recently released by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) shows that Nigerians in the diaspora remitted US\$8 billion in the first half of this year alone, a figure expected to double by December 2007.

Decades ago, Africans were begged or lured to travel overseas to acquire Western education. This was the case in the years before and after independence when states needed manpower to run their affairs and offered scholarships to bright, young Africans. There's a different trend today. The door to the Western world is no longer the prerogative of educated Africans, but to anyone who can afford the fare.

It is common knowledge across West Africa that money and fortune don't grow on the streets of Europe. What migrants seek is the abundance of opportunities lacking in Africa for both skilled and unskilled Africans. The harsh economic situation is the principal factor that pro-

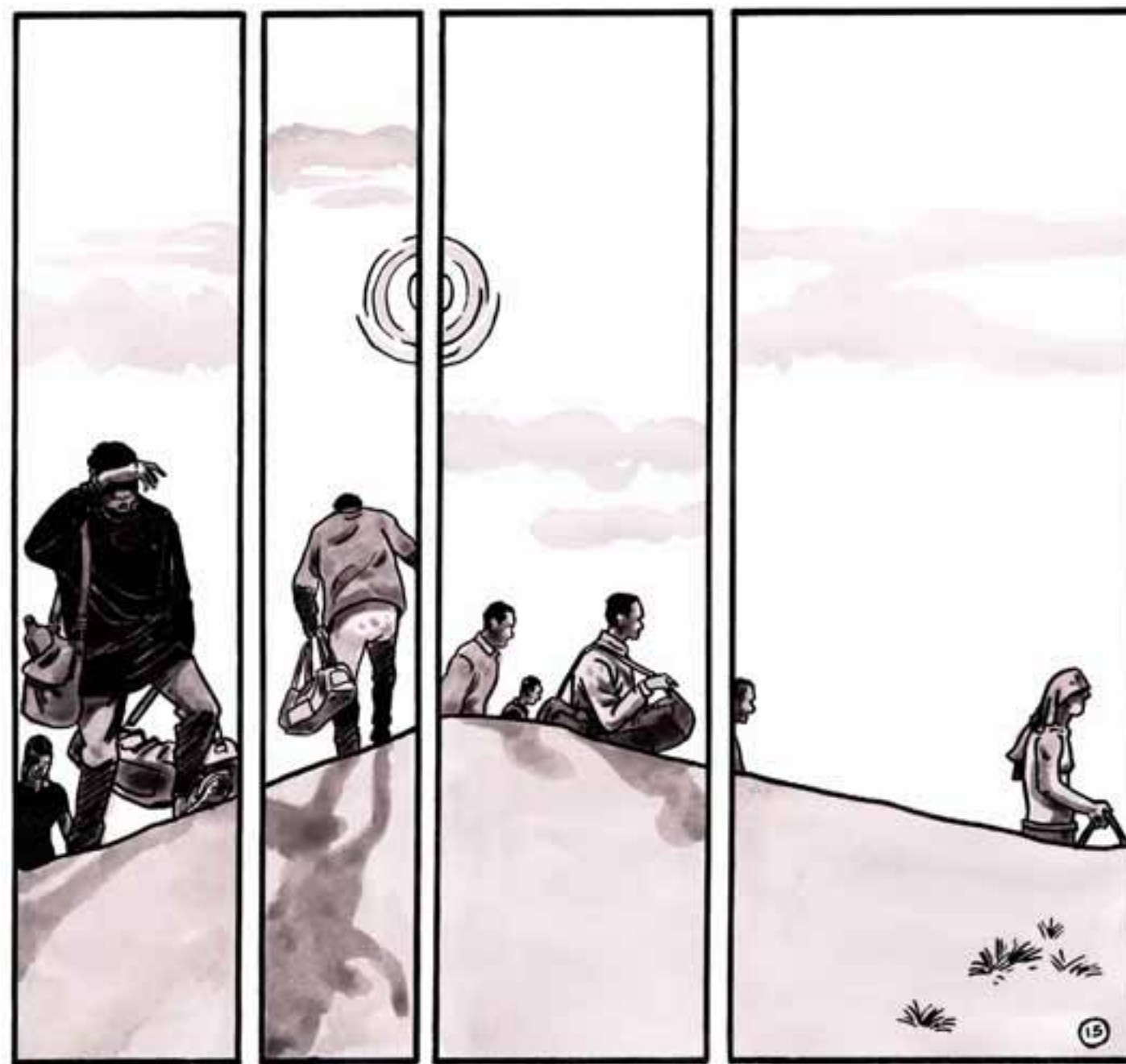
Signed in 1985, the Schengen Agreement has abolished border controls between all participating member states. Thirty states – including most EU states and non-EU States, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland, but exempting EU members, the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom – have to date signed. Fifteen are implementing its provisions which include common border control and a unified visa policy. All non-European areas of Portugal and Spain, including Ceuta, Melilla and the Canary Islands, implement the accord.

pels many young Africans to migrate at all costs. The few that have succeeded are living better than those back home. Since the early 1980s, unskilled West Africans have been moving voluntarily in large numbers to Europe for economic reasons with Spain, Italy and Malta the destinations of choice.

Also on the move are those displaced by war and crisis from Liberia, Sierra Leone and more recently, Côte d'Ivoire.

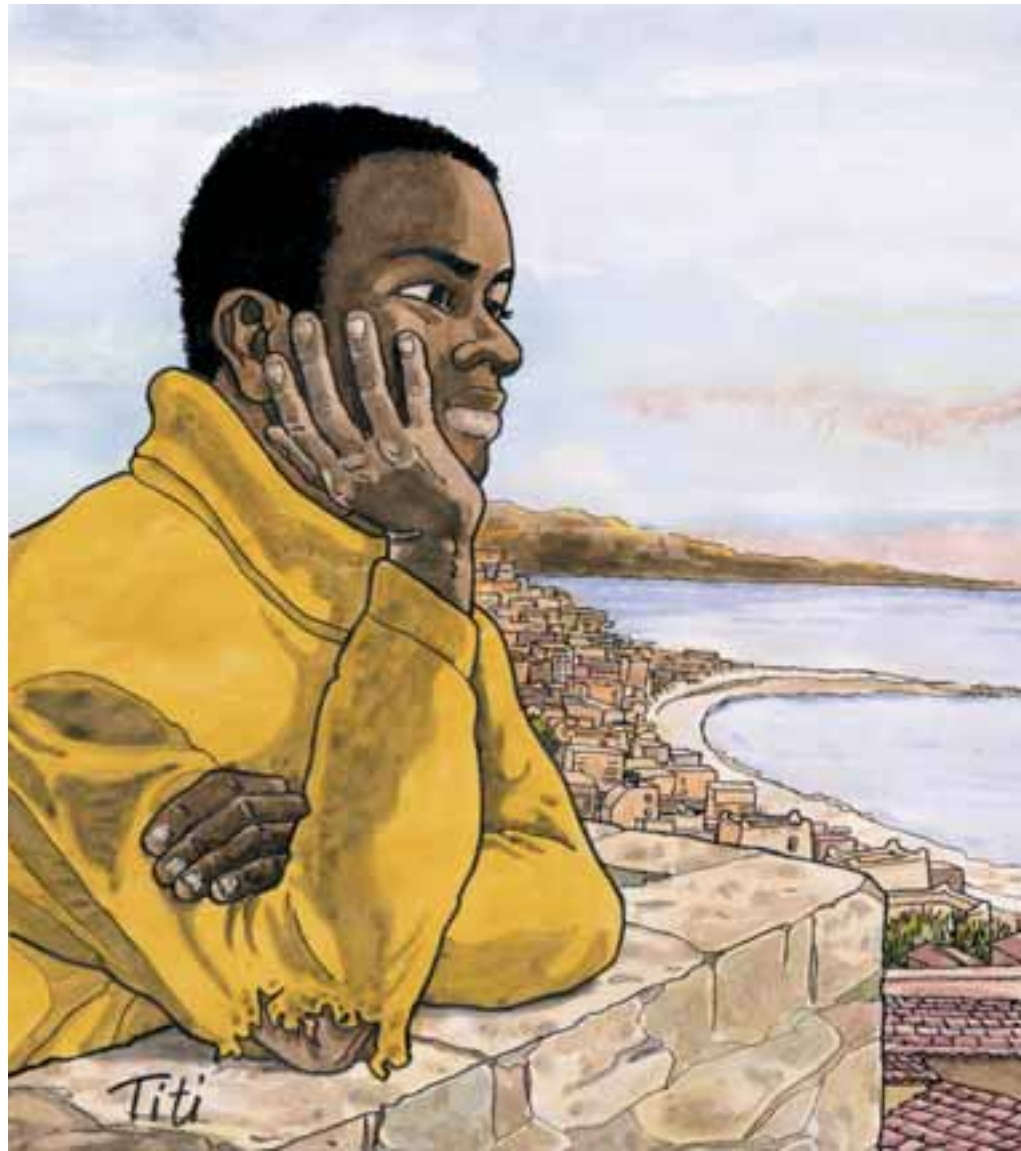
## > Daring to dream

Many of these travellers, who cannot secure visas directly from the embassies of Western countries, are now turning to the desert and the sea. Risking everything, they believe that the EU, under the Schengen arrangement, does not want them. As a result, they have chosen to move to countries they perceive as having a level-playing field for all who dare to dream. The new set of immigrants, male and female, is comprised of poorly trained carpenters, bricklayers, mechanics, and



Illustrations  
Faustin Titi *Une éternité à Tanger.*  
© Lal-momo





some without any form of vocation. According to the Nigerian embassy in Spain, of the 18,000 Nigerians there, nearly 10,000 of them can neither read nor write English, Nigeria's official language, because they never had any form of education. The same applies to Ghana, Senegal, Mali and Cameroon, the main illegal immigrant-generating countries in West Africa. Many African immigrants who are today considered a security risk to Europe have made it there the hard way. They either paid exorbitant amounts to secure visas or entered

through various roads and sea routes. To embark on this trip, many sold their properties or took loans that must be repaid within a stipulated time. Failure to repay often means dire consequences for families back home. To avoid this, immigrants are often forced into the 'fast lane' in Africa: criminal activities, prostitution and dealing hard drugs. These illegal immigrants, uneducated and largely without any vocation, find it difficult to integrate. They face language and cultural problems, making integration difficult, if not impossible. In spite of the threat of imprisonment, racism, cultural barriers and the status of second class citizen in some overseas countries many are still defiant, embarking on the journey to better their economic condition.

### Disquiet in the EU

The migration of Africans by the thousands is causing disquiet in the EU. The trend has become an issue for electoral campaigns with some parties proposing tougher measures to check the flood of immigrants. Rumours making the rounds include several patrol boats deliberately targeting and sinking illegal immigrants' boats as a way of stopping them from reaching Europe as well as recent revelation of brutality of African children in the Canary Islands cannot solve the problem.

For a safer Europe, jobs and assistance should be given to such people to lure them away from committing crimes across Europe. Similarly, the Schengen visa requirement should be relaxed if Europe wants immigrants coming from Africa to be under less pressure. Whether skilled or unskilled, some of the best minds have left the continent in search of better life overseas thereby creating a void in all strata. African leaders are responsible for the huge human capital flight overseas. There is no gain in saying that life in Africa is nasty, short and brutish. Political stability, security of life and property, first class infrastructure, opportunities to actualise one's dreams are some of the things that attract Africans to Europe, America and Asia.

A conducive environment would not only lessen the tide but also encourage Africans in the diaspora to return home to take the continent to greater heights. ■

# Calendar

## October - December 2007

### October 2007

- **8-10** ACP Trade Ministers meeting. Brussels, Belgium  
*An EPA stocktaking by the six regional ACP group*  
[www.acp.int](http://www.acp.int)
- **22-26** ACP Ministers responsible for EPAs and Trade meeting. Cotonou, Benin
- **25-26** 28th Conference of Ministers of Justice organised by the Council of Europe on 'Emerging issues of access to justice for vulnerable groups, in particular migrants and asylum seekers'. Lanzarote, Spain  
[www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)
- **28-2/11** 12th World Lake Conference. Jaipur, India  
*From the science to the culture of lakes, Jaipur, India, hosts the 12th World Lakes Conference, organised by the non-governmental organisation the International Lake Environment Committee*  
[www.taal2007.org](http://www.taal2007.org)
- **31-2/11** International Conference on Coastal Management. Cardiff, United Kingdom  
*Climate change issues and development pressures on coastal areas make this a timely event bringing together NGOs, civil engineers and governments*
- **23-7/11** 8th Session of the Conference of Parties to the conference on Combating Desertification. Madrid, Spain  
[www.unccd.int](http://www.unccd.int)

### November 2007

- **7-9** European Development Days, devoted in particular to the study of the effects of climate change on developing countries. Lisbon, Portugal  
[dev-days@eu.europa.eu](mailto:dev-days@eu.europa.eu)  
[www.eudevdays.eu](http://www.eudevdays.eu)
- **14-16** 10th session of the ACP Parliamentary Assembly. Kigali, Rwanda
- **17-22** 14th session of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly. Kigali, Rwanda  
[www.acp.int](http://www.acp.int)
- **23-25** Commonwealth Heads of State Meeting. Kampala, Uganda  
*'Transforming Commonwealth Societies to achieve political, economic and human development' is the theme of the meeting in Kampala of the 53 Heads of State comprising the Commonwealth. Includes business, youth and people's fora.*  
[www.chogm2007.ug](http://www.chogm2007.ug)  
[www.thecommonwealth.org](http://www.thecommonwealth.org)

### December 2007

- **3-4** Conference: 'Diasporas and transnational communities'. Wilton Park, United Kingdom  
*In what ways do diaspora communities contribute to their host countries and countries of origin?*  
[www.wiltonpark.org](http://www.wiltonpark.org)
- **8-9** EU-Africa Summit. Lisbon, Portugal
- **9-13** ACP Ministers responsible for EPAs meet. Venue to be confirmed
- **To be confirmed**  
86th Session of the ACP Council of Ministers. Brussels, Belgium ■

Oladélé Bamgboye, *Still life*, 2003. Series of 4 digital print, 122 x 91.4 cm. Courtesy Sindika Dokolo African collection of contemporary art



Aminata Niang

# BREAKTHROUGH IN NEGOTIATIONS on the ACP-EU Economic Partnership Agreements

A successful outcome in sight



Alfredo Jaar, *Muxima*, 2005. Video digital artwork, 36'. Courtesy of the artist

There is light at the end of the tunnel. The session of the joint ACP/EU Council of Ministers on 25 May 2007 in Brussels took a big step forward to concluding Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) between the EU and six ACP\* sub-regions, at a standstill since 2005.

On this memorable day in the history of these extremely laborious negotiations – which were initiated in September 2002 with the ACP group as a whole – the ministers of the 27 EU Member States and their colleagues from the 77 ACP countries effectively confirmed that they would be sparing no effort in concluding on time, thus before the end of 2007, EPAs compatible with the rules of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The aim is for these new trade agreements, designed to help development in the ACP countries, to enter into force on 1 January 2008. This is the expiry date for the exemption to the WTO rules authorising ACP countries to enjoy unilateral preferential trading terms for their access to the European market by the terms of the Cotonou Agreement.

## > Gradual market openings

Better still, the ministers jointly approved the formal offer made by the European Commission on 4 April. By virtue of this offer, unveiled by European Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson, all countries that negotiate an EPA will be granted from 1 January 2008 duty-free and quota-free access to the European market for virtually all their products. This includes agricultural products such as beef, dairy, cereals and all fruit and vegetables. As a transitional measure, there will be certain exceptions for rice and sugar. In short, the ACP and European ministers

agreed to a system that is very close to the one already enjoyed by 40 Least Developed Countries (LDCs) known as ‘Everything except arms’. These would not be conventional free trade agreements, as this offer does not suppose a mutual opening up of markets. But first and foremost the development of regional markets between the ACP countries as a prelude to the progressive liberalisation of trade with the EU, with very long transitional periods of up to 25 years, safeguard clauses to enable ACP countries to protect their most sensitive products against European competition and more flexible rules of origin, affirmed the European Commission. Nevertheless, there is also a need for the negotiations to find a solution that gives the ACP countries the assurance that they will retain the advantages guaranteed to date by the protocols on basic products of vital importance to them – such as the Sugar Protocol that the EU is threatening to dismantle unilaterally – as is stipulated by Article 36.4 of the Cotonou Agreement. The ACP ministers have made clear demands for this, and the European Union has accepted these demands while not yet indicating the means.

On 15 May the Council of EU Development Cooperation Ministers had already expressed in unanimously approved written conclusions the EU’s determination to reach agreement on time and confirmed its intention to allocate €2 billion a year to trade aid for the developing countries from 2010, given that the ACP countries would be the principal beneficiaries. ■

\* West Africa via the CEDEAO, Southern Africa via the SADC, Central Africa via the CEMAC, Eastern and Southern Africa via the ESA, the Caribbean via the CARICM, and the Pacific.

**SEE MORE ON THE WEBSITE**

# “NO PLAN B”, says EU Commissioner LOUIS MICHEL

As time ticks away to the due date of the European Partnership Agreements (EPAs), the free trade agreements for six ACP regions, the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) in Wiesbaden, June 25–28, drew out sharp differences among participants on what they will mean for ACP nations.



© Debra Percival

Many ACP Parliamentarians are worried that timetables for liberalisation of goods and services are still unknown. On the one hand they fear a rush to sign by year-end and on the other, should the EPAs not be in place by then, a loss of the standing trade preferences contained in the Cotonou Agreement when the World Trade Organisation (WTO) waiver for these expires on 31 December 2007. With timetables for opening of markets and accompanying aid packages still unknown, Parliamentarian Boyce Sebetela (Botswana) said he did not know what to tell his Parliament about how an EPA will affect Southern Africa. For Spanish MEP (Socialist),

Josep Borrell, “hasty liberalisation cuts off the possibility of a country planting roots to join the world economy”. It was up to Peter Thompson, Trade Director at the European Commission, to allay fears. He highlighted his view of all the pluses of the future accords. He told the JPA that under the EU’s April 2007 proposals ACP goods from all six regions, except for rice and sugar, would enter the EU duty-free and allow the ACPs to “determine their own future free of the WTO waiver.” Parliamentarian Nita Deerpalsing (Mauritius) feared her country’s loss of a guaranteed quota and price for sugar in the EU market. Thompson said the new sugar proposals would distribute the benefits a lot more evenly

## “My Fair Trade World”

Banana hair and chocolate belly buttons: just two of the photos taken by children to promote EU-wide fair trade. These children entered into a competition, ‘My Fair Trade World’, organised by the ‘Network of European World Shops’. The winner of the first prize, announced by Germany’s Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Heidmarie Wiczorek-Zeul, during the JPA, was 8 year-old Levy Hanekamp from Dronten, the Netherlands. ■

since other non-Least Developed Countries (LDCs), like the Dominican Republic, and other LDCs would now be able to export sugar to the 27-member state EU bloc.

### > Autumn panic?

Come November there will be panic, said MEP Carl Schlyter (Green, Sweden) regarding the lack of progress in EPA talks. He said small farmers would be hardest hit under the new accord. This led to a philosophical spat with EU Commissioner for Development, Louis Michel, on the fundamentals of development policy.

“When you open the market, you will benefit unless you think that global self-sufficiency allows you to survive,” argued Michel. “If this challenge isn’t met then perhaps one should continue to be involved in charity work.”

He said, “There is no plan B. One per cent growth in trade in developing countries would match all the aid given,” he told the JPA. Michel also hinted that the Commission may unveil additional funds to those already in the pipeline to help underpin the EPAs.

To reassure ACP states, Germany’s Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, said that a close eye would be kept on the texts of the respective EPAs to ensure they are in line with development policy goals. A revision mechanism in the agreements is foreseen, she said. Some non-governmental organisations (NGOs) were indignant, enacting sketches on the lawns of the Kurhaus, the venue for the JPA, which suggested that African countries were being coerced into signing the EPAs. In one of many NGO anti-EPA papers handed out during the week, Alexandra Burmann of Germany’s ‘Bread for the World’, describes how imports of cheap chicken and tomatoes are already pushing local producers out of their own market in West Africa. Bidding industries in ACP countries will suffer as EU rivals will be able to cherry pick services like banking telecommunications, energy and water services. Studies show that ACP exports will raise little should the EU open its markets, as these are already mostly open for ACP products, argues the Burmann paper. Liberalisation of services and the so-called ‘Singapore’ issues such as the investment, competition policy and public procurement will also hit ACPs the hardest.

D.P. ■

[www.ec.europa.eu/trade](http://www.ec.europa.eu/trade)  
[www.brot-fuer-die-welt.de](http://www.brot-fuer-die-welt.de)

# TALKING ABOUT EPAs...

*Those in the thick of EPA negotiations – namely technical experts and politicians – give their views on some of the most complex topics of the EPA talks so far, such as lost import taxes, meeting the 1 January 2008 deadline and assistance packages to underpin new trade measures.*

**Gilles Hounkpatin is Director for Trade, Tourism and Customs at the Economic Community of West African States\* (ECOWAS) and a chief negotiator for the region.**

#### *A good agreement*

A good agreement places the emphasis on regional integration and making the sub-region more competitive so we can gain better access to the European market.

#### *Joining the global economy*

The EPA will enable us to join the global economy. To this end, we must first join the regional economy. We must have access to the European market, and then there is the matter of health and plant health standards, etc.

#### *Supporting resources?*

The emphasis must be placed on companies/industries and improving our infrastructures so that we can engage in development.

#### *Lower import duty*

Initially, incomes will fall. The budget of our Member States depends on tax revenue. We must resolve this or there will be a social crisis. We believe that we must make an effort at the economic level and in terms of restructuring. We must envisage a fiscal transition towards a system based on internal and indirect taxes, but that will require supporting measures.

#### *Meeting the 31 December 2007 deadline*

I place the emphasis on a good agreement. ■

\*Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d’Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo.

**Mohlabi K. Tsekoa is Lesotho’s Foreign Affairs Minister and current President of the ACP Council.**

#### *EPA readiness*

We cannot say we are entirely ready. This is a process. We cannot postpone these agreements just because some regions are not ready while others are. The most important thing is that we get into the Agreement, pull up our socks and ensure that our regions and the ACP can continue to benefit.

#### *What’s a good EPA?*

A good EPA should be one that is responsive to the challenges and needs of ACPs: poverty abolition and peace and security on the ground so that development can take place in a conducive environment. ■



© IRIN / Manoocher Deghati

**Junior Lodge is the Brussels representative of the 16-member state Caribbean bloc of nations, Cariforum\*.**

#### *Development aspirations*

We want an EPA that corresponds with our development aspirations addressing the Cotonou policy objectives of poverty eradication, sustainable development and a new trade regime. We need a development cooperation package to increase competitiveness, innovation and for fiscal and business adjustment.

#### *Services*

The Caribbean is very strong on services and we need greater access. One is a quota for skilled and unskilled workers to come to Europe. This will improve delivery of services to European consumers and allow Caribbean workers to return home with improved skills sets.

#### *Import tax losses*

For Eastern Caribbean countries, border taxes account for 60% of government revenue. The Caribbean has some of the most highly indebt-

ed countries in the world. In the context of high indebtedness and loss of fiscal revenue, countries are cautious. It is precisely because of this concern about taxes, but also about domestic and unfair trade practices by the EU that we have negotiated a transitional period of 25 years for the most sensitive Caribbean products. We are also making sure that we link market openings to the Europeans with their support on reform of our respective tax regimes.

#### *WTO compatibility*

To secure market access we have to make sure that it is World Trade Organisation (WTO)-compatible and that we are not subject to further litigation in the WTO.

We’ve already seen this on bananas and sugar. We cannot afford to be removed from the global value chain. This is what happens when you have a threat of litigation. When we have contracts with supermarkets, they want to know that these are being honoured.

As a fall back, we must use some of the flexibilities that are currently entrenched in WTO rules and in the jurisprudence to test those flexibilities.

**Billy Miller is Foreign Affairs Minister of Barbados.**

#### *Respecting the deadline*

All ACP regions are committed to striving as hard as they can together, along with the Europeans, to meet the artificial deadline we have set ourselves.

If we don’t make it, I don’t think the sky will fall. I think that people will encourage us rather than cut us off at the knees to reach an EPA.

#### *Caribbean interest in an EPA?*

Continuum. We have had four Lomé Conventions. We now have the Cotonou Agreement which goes up to 2020 and the EPAs will now take us beyond 2020. It’s an important step we must take to engage with the European economy. Our survival depends upon it.

#### *Will the EPAs dilute ACP solidarity?*

The ACP has always been a regional organisation and we have respected our diversity and understood our strength, and that will continue. ■

Comments gathered by H.G.

#### *Assistance package*

It is a package deal. On the one hand you want market access – because we are trade dependent and the EU is a major export destination – and on the other hand, we need technical assistance, joint ventures and access to relevant technology.

#### *Unfair practices*

We must be able to address unfair trade practices and have a special safeguard mechanism where a surge in imports can be addressed to domestic product producers.

#### *Deadline*

We need to avoid seeking a waiver and subjecting Caribbean exports to a Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) where additional import taxes would be applied.

The risk for us is too severe to tolerate the thought of not completing the negotiations in time. ■

\*Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago.

# A day in the life of Ben Arogundade, a Londoner of Nigerian origin

Profession: man of many talents  
and celebrity in his specialist field

IN 2007 FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY 50% OF PEOPLE ON EARTH ARE LIVING IN CITIES

Just 34 years old and already he has a career as an architect, model, actor, journalist, singer, writer and creator of rare books to his credit. Author of the bestseller, *Black Beauty*, he has just published his latest book as 'creative director' – coordinating the work of other famous 'creatives' – that is devoted to soccer legend Pelé. But it is doubtful if many *Courier* readers will be able to treat themselves to this jewel of the Gloria Publishing House. With a limited edition of just 2,000 copies, they sell for €2,500 each. And for the wealthiest of collectors, the 150 copies of the de-luxe 'carnival' edition were snapped up in the first weeks following publication at the price of £4,500 a copy.



Some of these are now changing hands in Asia for up to £10,000. For the general public, Ben Arogundade is the author of *Black Beauty*, already acknowledged as a reference work. The original edition published in 2001 was revised to coincide with three BBC programmes on the book. But when we met, it was painting, not books, which Arogundade began to talk about. We had arranged to meet at the Tate Modern Museum to visit the exhibition devoted to Congolese artists in one of the wings presenting the museum's permanent collection entitled 'States of Flux'. He then turned to the second book-objet d'art to be published by Gloria he is currently working on, which will be devoted to yachts. This will be followed by a third, still at the very early stages, that about the Big Apple itself, New York City. It was ten in the morning at the Tate Modern, on London's Bankside running alongside the Thames. Street artists, who spend long hours posing as statues, and the crowds may well be passing

by a Ben Arogundade's building on the Southbank, a mark of his former life as an architect. A day in the life of Ben Arogundade is a chance to discover how this public figure who seems like an extrovert from a distance is in fact rather reserved. He's doubtlessly at ease in society circles but comes across as almost shy. Our day began well before the Tate, at 6.30 for his daily 5-mile jog around the municipal playing field in Wandsworth before going back to his home in Battersea for breakfast. After the Tate and a quick lunch, Ben Arogundade was to interview one of the many yacht owners he has to meet before later dropping in at Gloria Publishers in Kentish Town, North London, where a small team of 10 designers are looking for his guidance on these luxury vessels. At the end of the afternoon he will return home to work on a film scenario based on his unpublished novel, *Loveless*, in cooperation with Hollywood actor Laurence Fishburne.

It was of all of this, of his life as a model and of his talents as a singer that the public man spoke very privately to *The Courier*, with a modesty that is in marked contrast to his popular image as the extrovert star.

H.G. ■

## > "Eclectic identities"

I am a born and bred Londoner via Nigeria. I would like to think that I have the dual consciousness of an Englishman in a Nigerian guy's body, or something like that. My name's Nigerian and a lot of my values are from there. What's interesting is the struggle to be two things. Are you English completely, are you from the home country entirely, or both of those things? That is the big cultural/racial question now for minorities and a lot of other places, too, especially since 9/11 and 7/7 attacks in London.

How much you are prepared to shed your culture is something which every individual himself has to decide. A lot depends on what you do for a living. If you're in certain professions; the media, music business or any of the creative fields, there won't be the same pressure to conform. In fact, difference is what is requested in those areas.

But if you're in banking or any of the more conservative industries then there'll be even more pressure to assimilate values, the aesthetic and cultural ones of the dominant people in those industries.

## > Simply a celebrity in the British media?

The press is only interested in where I'm from in the normal biographical way. People don't usually interview me about my 'Nigerianess'... In a way it's good for people simply to be concerned with the issue on the table. When you've written a piece of work as with *Black Beauty*, people are interested in where the focus of the book comes from, not in me as a Nigerian.

## > Black Beauty

I think the problem of image for black people is acute everywhere. I focussed on US black stars because readers could relate to them... If you talk about representations of beauty by using Sidney Poitier as an example, or Halle Berry, etc. this garners more interest. The message reaches more people than if you talk about people you don't know. All of the things I talk about in *Black Beauty* through the prism of celebrity are the same things that happen to black people on a day-to-day basis everywhere.

## > Lack of self-confidence amongst some migrants

You've hit on something that is very important, the correlation between a lack of a particular aesthetic confidence in schools and in the workplace. If you look at the position of women in general, they're squeezed more. Take black women... they're being squeezed not only by white male culture but also by the black male culture.

## > Continuity between Black Beauty and Pelé and architecture and writing

*Pelé* in a way is a completely different kind of proposition and yet similar in another. *Pelé* was one of the first guys who began to realise that sportspeople could be as powerful as politicians and this is even more the case today; Michael Jordan in basketball, etc. Sportspeople people now have the power, influence and money of politicians and some leaders of industry. I had to produce this book

with a team of people and research the best material. For me, it's an extension of architecture... The creative mechanics of what I'm doing are the same... *Pelé* was like building a tower block in terms of volume. It is very architectural.

## > Loveless movie project

This was a departure from *Black Beauty* and I wanted to do something that would take me out of what I had been associated with before... The novel is currently being finished along with a screenplay of the same project... It's about the whole culture of dysfunctional relationships within modern London, a psychological relationship drama.

## > As a fashion model and a singer

Modelling was something that I did to help me financially when I was writing *Black Beauty*... and also to be in a position where I could get to grips with the aesthetic hierarchy in modelling and way that aesthetics determined who got what work... and use these to understand the politics of the industry.

I have been very interested in singing for a long time and am interested in doing something lyrically as much as vocally. I don't have too many ambitions in this area right now even though I'm drawn to the idea of doing something musically creative. H.G. ■

## SEE MORE ON THE WEBSITE

Ben Arogundade, *Black Beauty*, Pavilion Books Limited, London 2000  
[www.pavilionbooks.co.uk](http://www.pavilionbooks.co.uk)



# Bounty from the SUN

Kenyan John Maina, has carried off the 2006 Global Energy trophy for sustainability, awarded this year in the surroundings of the European Parliament in Brussels. It is the top accolade amongst the annually awarded prizes going to the best environmentally friendly projects making a major contribution to save the world's depleting energy resources.

Using sunshine to dry fruits and vegetables, the solar dryer made in Kenya by his company, SCODE, not only saves energy but also improves food security, diet and has a big export potential, says its developer, Maina. All of this without harming the environment. Farmers increase yields without using additional water resources.

Founded by Austrian engineer and environmentalist, Wolfgang Neumann, a pioneer in energy saving, the awards have to date been given nine times at



Ruth Sacks, *Don't panic*, 2005. Video artwork, 4' 54".  
Courtesy Sindika Dokolo African collection of contemporary art

ceremonies held in a different city around the world. They go to mainly small-scale, low-priced projects that are making a careful and economical use of resources with the use of alternative energy sources. The dryer came out tops amongst 732 projects across 96 countries.

"It's two minutes to midnight and we have to act," stressed Hans-Gert Pottering, European Parliament President on the "environmental emergency" facing the world.

A star studded line-up of personalities known for their environmental commitment including US actor Martin Sheen; UK singer Robin Gibb; Indian environmentalist, Maneka Gandhi and Somali writer, Waris Dirie, handed over the prizes. There were three winners in five categories: Earth, Fire, Water, Air and Youth. Adding to a first prize in the Earth group, Maina was also the overall winner.

## > Simple design

The sides of his cabinet solar dryer are made of wood, the bottom from papyrus mat and the top of UV-treated polythene sheet. The papyrus mat is covered with a heat-absorbing material.

The UV-treated polythene sheet allows the sun's rays into the cabinet, creating a greenhouse effect in the dryer. Any produce for drying is

loaded into the dryer using a tray made of wood and plastic net.

When harvests of fruit and vegetables are plenty during the 3-4 month rainy season, surplus with a high moisture content like pineapples, mangoes, tomatoes, cabbage, paw-paw, banana and cassava, which would otherwise be wasted, can be dried and put on the local market during the hot, dry season when yields are low. Says Maina: "Kenyans do not have a tradition of eating dried fruits and/or vegetables. However, the project has successfully encouraged an increasing number of

families to include dried vegetables and fruits in their diets."

The simple construction is cheap and easy to make, operate and maintain. It costs just 3,000 Kenyan shillings (ksh) or €31.25. A commercial version – a tunnel dryer – is sold at ksh15,500 (or €161.50). It contains 6 trays and takes higher loads, for example, drying up to 18-20 kg of freshly sliced pineapples at once.

Maina now wants to export the dryer: "Due to lack of resources to market the technology, we've not been able to market it to other parts of Kenya. We're looking for financiers to assist us in marketing the dryers more widely in Kenya and the East Africa region. Currently we've not sold any dryer outside of Kenya because people outside the pilot areas do not know about the dryers."

He's also looking for partners to market the Kenyan-grown fruit and vegetables, keen on tapping into the ever-growing EU market for organic produce: "When I was in Brussels for the Energy Globe award ceremony, I met with people interested in dried fruits to make eco-chocolate in Europe. We're following these contacts seriously with a view to exporting dried fruits to such companies wherever they may be."

Email: [scode@africaonline.co.ke](mailto:scode@africaonline.co.ke)

Website: [www.energyglobe.info](http://www.energyglobe.info)

D.P.

# R eport

## ETHIOPIA

Venerable Ethiopia, the eldest child of independent Africa – and a nation often ravaged by famine and war – has just celebrated another 11 September. This date is a symbol of hope, as it marks the start of the third millennium in the Ethiopian calendar. The celebrations, which continue for a year, provide a unique opportunity for visitors to explore the country and its culture. Ethiopia is home to several World Heritage Site treasures and has produced a succession of remarkable artists as well as athletes who have won gold at the Olympics.

But this proud nation has much more to offer the world than just nostalgia for a great history. It has shown an incredible capacity for change to overcome the scourge of poverty caused to some extent by a lack of resources and a certain fatalism imposed by decades of dictatorship.

Ethiopia's will to succeed is highlighted by its dynamic economy, which will grow even stronger when freedom of enterprise goes hand in hand with the freedom of speech. It is this flourishing Ethiopia of today that *The Courier* has set out to discover.

# The MILLENNIUM building site

Ethiopia celebrated the advent of the third millennium in the Julian calendar on 11 September, celebrations that will continue for a year. According to the Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Ato Mekonnen Manyazewal, this is an opportunity to take stock and to set out the development objectives for a country that today is enjoying an economic boom.



Buildings under construction in front of the Medhaneielem de Bole church (Addis Ababa). © François Misser

Addis Ababa, the capital city with four million inhabitants, was buzzing with excitement months before the event. The capital's millennium secretariat was working on some 20 projects including the creation of a bookshop, schools and health centres as well as the organisation of festivals involving street children and people who are HIV-positive, and were aimed at increasing public awareness of their situations through various events. These included theatrical performances and a huge concert planned by the country's richest man, Sheikh Mohammed Alhamudi, owner of the Sheraton and the Midroc group. But Addis Ababa still looks like an enormous building site. Our hotel, situated in the Bole District near the airport, was surrounded by buildings under construction, most of them new office blocks, a symbol of the economic boom. Ethiopia achieved 9.6% growth in GDP in 2006–2007 and the same rate is forecasted for the next financial year. In June, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said that economic performance of recent years had contributed significantly

to the reduction of poverty, generating an annual increase of 7% in income (taking into account the demographic growth rate of 2.7%).

## > The Chinese in pole position

In view of the increasingly important role of Addis Ababa as capital of the African Union – with more than 110 embassies the city is becoming the 'Brussels' of Africa – China is investing US\$150 million in constructing an annex for the African Union. Having already built the capital's orbital road, Chinese companies recently won 60% of the contracts awarded by the Ethiopian Roads Authority. The Addis Ababa House Development Project Office estimates that 225,000 new homes will be built between now and 2010. Addis Ababa's international standing is also enhanced by the fact that it is the continental hub of Ethiopian Airlines (more than US\$1 billion turnover this year), described by the American ambassador, Donald Yamamoto, and many others as the best airline in Africa.

However, this spectacular growth – driven by direct foreign investment that has risen from US\$149 to US\$365 million a year since 2001 – is not without its downside. It was impossible to buy a SIM card in July, as Ethiopian Telecoms was unable to satisfy demand. The only option available was to hire one. Traffic jams in Addis Ababa and in particular on the Debre Zeit motorway, 50 kilometres to the south, constantly produce excessive levels of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. There is heavy traffic in the direction of the Port of Djibouti from the industrial areas along the route, where there is a proliferation of tanneries and textile, shoe and furniture factories owned by Chinese, Pakistani, Ethiopian and Turkish companies. Even a Fiat Regata assembly plant. Past Debre Zeit, in the direction of Nazareth, the road can only be described as dangerous. To make up for lost time, the drivers of the 'Al Qaidas' – the little Isuzu trucks – hit breakneck speeds to reach Djibouti or Kenya, often causing fatal accidents. Lack of cement is another problem. However in this case, a solution

country that has two million extra mouths to feed each year, and insufficient seed production. However, according to Tim Clarke, the EU delegate in Ethiopia, the situation is not irretrievable. Clarke said: "The country can be self-sufficient". One key factor is improving the management of the country's most precious commodity – water. Each year for four months, the *Keremt* unleashes a flood on the highlands, making possible the miracle of the rise of the Nile, without which Egypt would not survive. But this natural phenomenon remains underused. Nevertheless, there have been some positive developments such as a recent US\$100 million loan from the World Bank for a 20,000 hectare irrigation project in the region of Lake Tana and India's decision to invest US\$640 million in various agricultural projects to capture rainwater and to increase the production capacity of the sugar industry. A paradox concerning water in Ethiopia is that while the rate of access to drinking water is 70% in Addis Ababa, it drops sharply to 16% in Afar, 13% in Ogaden and 18% in Gambela.



Construction workers on an Addis Ababa building site. © François Misser

would seem to be on the horizon, as 14 cement factories are being built in Dire Dawa, Wuchale and other towns. Yet there is still room to improve economic performance. Only 54.3% of the manufacturing sector's capacity is being used because of constraints such as a shortage of raw materials and poor water and electricity supplies.

## > Agriculture: "the country can be self-sufficient"

The economic boom has not rid the country of its chronic problems. GDP per capita is just US\$170. This is a country that has known terrible famine, and providing sufficient food is still the main challenge. Ethiopia still has a cereal shortage of 600,000 tonnes a year, which is causing serious inflation (19% in February 2007, according to the IMF). This in spite of an increase in production from 8.7–11.6 million tonnes between 2001–2002 and 2005–2006. The causes of the problem include poor agricultural yields, the subdivision of farmland in a

Agriculture in Ethiopia has considerable potential. Thanks to an agreement in May with the American chain Starbucks, Ethiopia – the leading African producer of coffee, with an average crop of 300,000 tonnes a year has found a way of maximising its income because the intellectual property of the planters and the labels of the 'Sidamo', 'Harar' and 'Yirgacheffe' arabica beans are to be recognised. Production in Harar increased by 20% last year according to the cooperative farmers' association.

Additionally, producers of oil and horticulturalists are enjoying a spectacular period of growth, in particular floriculture, which employs 50,000 workers (mostly women) near Addis Ababa and in the Rift Valley. Exports doubled last year to reach US\$60 million. According to Anat Harari Degani of Jericho plc, the sector has a bright future providing quality equivalent to Ecuador, one of the leaders in the world market, and with lower costs than its Kenyan competitors.

> White gold

Ethiopia fully intends to harness its significant hydroelectric potential (between 30,000 and 40,000 megawatts), the second highest in Africa behind the Congo basin, which allows it to meet the requirements of its booming economy and the needs of its neighbours (Sudan, Djibouti, Kenya).

According to the Minister of Mines and Energy, Alemayehu Tegenu, four hydroelectric power stations are under construction (Gilgel Gibe II, Amerti-Neshe, Takeze and Anabeles), with a total output of 880 megawatts, and will double the country's current power generation capacity between now and 2010. In September, the Italian company Salini Costruttori will start work on the Gilgel Gibe III power station (1870 megawatts), a US\$1.6 billion investment. Also, the World Bank has just approved a US\$130 million loan to provide electricity in 295 towns and villages.

> Waiting for black gold

Ethiopia, whose geology bears similarities to Sudan and the Yemen, also hopes to become a supplier of petroleum and gas. The Malaysian company Petronas is carrying out exploration work in the Ogaden (where gas reserves of 4,000 billion square foot have been identified) and Gambela basins. Elsewhere, the British company White Nile is conducting a geophysical study in the Omo river region in the south of the country. The Malaysian-owned company Pexco, Lundin East Africa (Sweden), which owns several blocks in Ogaden, and the American company Afar Exploration in the north of the country are also in the hunt. According to Abyi Hunegnaw, head of the ministry's petroleum operations department, the centre of the country and the Mekele region in the north will also be opened up for exploration in due course. However, the true value of the Ogaden finds will not be fully known until peace has returned to the region<sup>1</sup>.

Revenue from the mining sector has doubled in a year, which is partly explained by the formal incorporation of gold prospectors into the

sector by the ministry. The subsoil, which has been under-explored, is attracting the attention of Indian, Chinese and Ethiopian companies in search of gold, platinum, coal, tantalum and precious stones such as olivine. Around 20 licences were granted last year according to the ministry's director of mining operations, Gebre Egziabher.

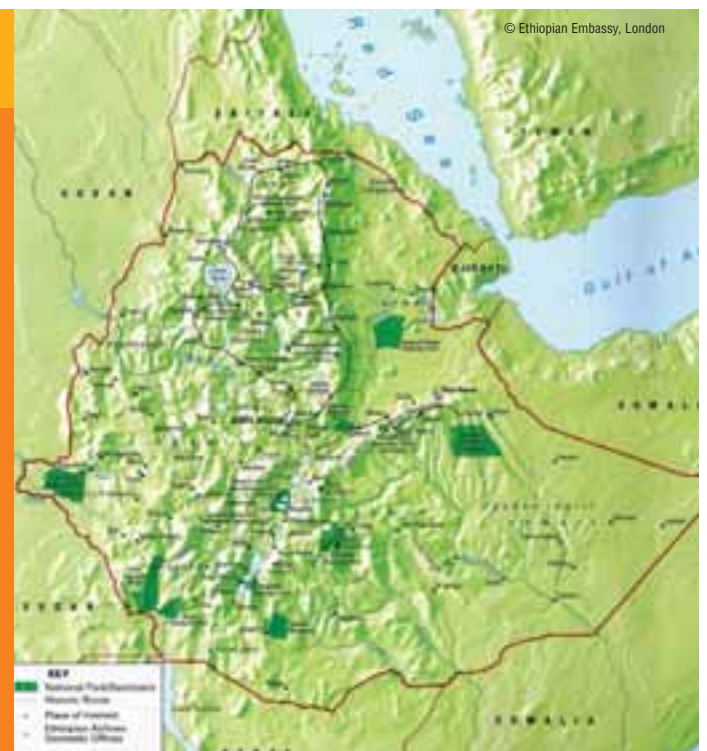
Exports in 2005–2006 (US\$1.08 billion) were exceeded in 11 months in the following financial year. The World Bank says that this performance should continue to improve at the same rate thanks to regulatory reforms introduced in various sectors. Assistance from the Ethiopian diaspora, which amounted to more than the total export revenue in 2006–2007 (US\$1.1 billion in the first nine months) is another important factor. There was an exodus of intellectuals, a third of whom are doctors, under the Marxist dictatorship of Derg.

Tourism is another sector enjoying growth thanks to the country's cultural richness and its exceptional diversity of flora and fauna. The persistent tension in the Afar region and on the border with Eritrea, which partly explains why 8% of the budget is spent on defence, is hardly noticeable in the capital and the rest of the country where crime rates are low. As a result, there has been an increase in the number of visitors from 139,000 to 227,000 between 1997–2005, a period which has seen revenue from tourism triple to reach US\$134 million. The government is also aiming to make the most of the key factor in development – the Ethiopian people. It aims to increase the rate of primary school education from 79% to almost 100% between now and 2015 and to invest heavily in training and university education. The number of universities has risen from 1 to 8 since 1991 and 13 more are under construction.

The country is undergoing a complete transformation thanks in particular to the government's policy of devolution of power to the regions. In 2007–2008, almost a third of the budget was allocated to the regions, 55% more than in the previous year.

F.M.

<sup>1</sup> In April 2007, an attack on a petroleum plant by the rebels of the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) forced a Chinese company to stop prospecting work it was carrying out on behalf of Petronas.



Ethiopia

Key facts

Area: 1,133,380 km <sup>2</sup>	GDP growth rate: 9.6% (2005–2006)
Population: 77 million	Main exports: coffee, oil-producing plants, leather, flowers, maize, cement, clothing, manufactured goods, khat
Main cities: Addis Ababa, Dire Dawa, Harar, Nazareth, Gondar, Mekele, Bahar Dar, Dessie, Shashemene, Debre Zeit	Infant mortality rate: 77 in 1000 (in the 1st year)
Languages: Amharic (official language), Guaragigna, Oromigna, Tigrigna, Somali, Afar, Sidamo, Anuak and others	Children in primary education: 79.8%
Religions: Ethiopian Orthodoxy, Muslim, animism, Protestant, Catholic, Jewish	Access to electricity: 16%
GDP: US\$13.1 billion	Access to drinking water: 19%
GDP per capita: US\$172	Life expectancy: 49 years
	Sources: PASDEP, IMF, World Bank

# The EU–Ethiopia main DEVELOPMENT PARTNER

*The EU is the principal development partner of Ethiopia, which receives the most European aid of all ACP countries. Brussels is involved in political dialogue with the government of this strategically important country on all issues, including the most sensitive.*



Priests of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church carrying the Arks of the Covenant. © Tsigie Shitew

According to the Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Ato Mekonnen Manyazewal, “the EU is Ethiopia’s main development partner” thanks to its support of the 5th five-year plan launched in 2005. Ethiopia is also the largest ACP beneficiary of European aid with a €540 million allocation under the 9th European Development Fund (2002–2007) and a sum of around €650 million for the 10th EDF (2008–2013). European aid is concentrated on improving infrastructure (€211 million from the 9th EDF) and this trend is set to continue with the emphasis on projects aimed at facilitating regional integration. “The objective is to create the foundations for facilitating direct investments to make us more competitive”, said Ato Makonnen Manyazewal with regard to the conclusion of the latest

Economic Partnership Agreement between the EU and Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA). Besides the repair of the Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway, the main projects concern highway infrastructure. Ato Makonnen Manyazewal said that following the completion of the Addis Ababa-Awasa highway and the construction of another to Jima in the north, which is currently underway, the aim is now to build main arterial links to the north (Addis Ababa-Debre Sina and Kombolcha-Gondar). The European Investment Bank (EIB), which is funding the construction of the Gilgel Gibe II hydroelectric power station (428 megawatts), is also looking at the possibility of funding the building of one of the continent’s biggest dams (Gilgel Gibe III, 1870 megawatts). Work on this was expected to get

underway in September 2007. The second most important form of assistance (€96 million under the 9th EDF) provides for macro-economic support. Ato Makonnen Manyazewal explained that it aims to fund the promotion of basic services (agriculture, education, health, water) in the *woredas* (districts) in order to support the ongoing process of devolution of power from the federal state to the regions. Finally, rural development and food supply, (see box), which received €54 million under the 9th EDF, remain priorities. In addition to those mentioned, other programmes have been introduced for non-governmental players: good governance, conflict prevention, mine-clearance operations, assistance for the coffee sector and the conservation of cultural heritage.

> **Adopting a sectorial approach**

Cooperation is increasingly shifting from a project-based approach to a sectorial one, which is more institutional and involves greater sums of money. It is a development appreciated by Ato Makonnen Manyazewal, the Ethiopian partner. He said, "It's good for us as it reduces transaction costs and allows for more flexible use of resources".

However, the suppression of demonstrations by the authorities in June and November 2005 following the May elections – which were tarnished by irregularities according to European observers – has led the European Commission to review the way it provides financial assistance.

193 people died in the disturbances, according to a commission of inquiry set up by the Ethiopian Parliament. EU delegate, Tim Clarke, explained: "In terms of money going through government machinery, we became much stricter in the way in which we released resources".

In the framework of the 10th EDF, the Commission intends to carry out meaningful political dialogue with the government concerning support for its Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP). Tim Clarke pointed out that a key challenge in meeting the Millennium Development Goals between now and 2015 is to double foreign aid to reduce the proportion of the population suffering from malnutrition (15%).

Funding providers are willing to increase their assistance, but progress is necessary in the field of good governance, said the EU delegate. Tim Clarke said: "The legal system here has still many weaknesses.

In certain prisons, 80% of the detainees have not been charged. Security of contracts is a huge problem for European investors.

But it's a real credit to the government that they agreed to get involved in a reform process like that, producing a guide with specific indicators. It is really impressive!"

Ato Mekonnen Manyazewal, noting that Ethiopia has adhered to the African Peer Review Mechanism since its creation under the management of the government, said: "Nobody understands better than us the need for good governance".

Tim Clarke said: "If there was seen to be stability and security and if there was an enabling environment that covered not only economic but also political issues, the flood gates would open much more than is currently the case".



> **Political dialogue that is sometimes fierce**

According to Addis Ababa, one of the main stumbling blocks in relations with the EU is the attitude of the European Parliament, which passed a resolution on 21 June deploring the guilty verdict pronounced against Hailu Shawel, President of the Coalition for Unity and Democracy, and his 37 co-defendants. The European Parliament called on the European Council to impose sanctions against the



Ethiopian government officials responsible. However, the release of the detainees on 20 July may help to thaw relations.

Tim Clarke believes "bridges need to be built". The European Parliament must not be perceived as "anti-development" in Ethiopia. While conceding that there are problems regarding respect for human rights in Ethiopia, he also believes that the minister of justice is a man who really wants to change things. Ato Makonnen Manyazewal considers the vote of the European parliamentarians to be unfair. He says it was based on misinformation and did not constitute a "concrete and balanced analysis", and he hopes that there will be "a better understanding of the situation" in due course. The Minister said: "One has to take into account that we are trying to build institutions. They are imperfect but our long-term objective is to build a democratic and inclusive political system".

> **"A proud country" and "a key player"**

Tim Clarke said: "Ethiopia is a proud country, with 3,000 years of history and I think it is right not to accept being given lessons by people from the outside. The elections which took place in 2005 were by far the most democratic that ever took place in the country".

"At the same time there are universal principles that must be respected. Human rights are part of them. And I know from having spoken many times with the Prime Minister that he also wants to have in place international standards relating to human rights and good governance".

Clarke also underlined the need to take into account the strategic role of Ethiopia. Addis Ababa is the diplomatic capital of Africa and Ethiopia plays a key role in pan-African institutions. He added: "Ethiopia is a key player at a regional level. It plays a very important religious and cultural role". Diplomats in Addis Ababa point out that Ethiopia possesses the region's most powerful army and, in the view of NATO, it is doing well in the fight against terrorism, in particular with regard to Jihadist activity. The Ethiopian army has been deployed in Somalia since the end of 2006 to support the transition government against the Union of Islamic Courts. Clarke added that wherever you go, Ethiopia is seen as a key player.

F.M.

Above and below: Restoration work on the Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway line at Metahara. © François Misser

# GOOD NEWS FOR THE RAILWAY IN THE EAST



Station and tracks of the CFE (Ethiopian Railways). © Vecturis



The legendary Djibouti-Ethiopian railway, which began construction in 1898 and opened in 1917 by the Negus Menelik, is to be repaired thanks to EU funding of €50 million. The railway runs from the great port of Djibouti to Addis Ababa. The project is a priority for Ethiopia. The railway is, together with a road link, the country's only transport corridor, as access to the port of Massawa on the Red Sea has been blocked since the conflict with Eritrea (1998–2000).

At a ceremony to mark the start of the work on 9 July in Metahara, the Transport Minister, Juneidi Sado, said that without the repair of the railway the country's transport network would have been overloaded within the next three to four years.

The repair work is badly needed, as the dreadful state of the railway has led freight companies to switch to the motorway despite chronic congestion and high number of accidents. The repair work, which is being carried out by the Italian group Consta, should be complete by mid-2009. It involves the repair of the most badly damaged sections of track.

A total of 114 kilometres of track and nine metal bridges will be replaced. Additionally, 40 other bridges will be strengthened and the

section of track which crosses Beseka Lake where the black, obsidian waters are overshadowed by the Fantale volcano, will be realigned. When work is complete, day-to-day operation of the railway will be put out to tender and there will be the introduction of new rolling stock and possible additional funding from the European Investment Bank (EIB). The modernisation of the railway is expected to have quite an impact.

It will make the transportation of fuel safer and less expensive as well as make the coffee and textile sectors more competitive and boost the exportation of livestock (cattle, sheep and goats) to the Gulf countries. The railway also provides an opportunity for the regions through which it passes to make their economies thrive rather than just survive. Finally, the modernisation of the railway is vital for Djibouti, where the Dubai Port Authority has invested heavily in the construction of the deep-water port of Doraleh. The port provides the country with its main source of income.

Finally, it is hoped that the completion of the work will consign the bandits – who sometimes disrupt journeys in the Djibouti border region – to the annals of history.

F.M.



# Combating 'green famine' in 'HAPPY ETHIOPIA'



More and more young women benefit from family planning. © François Misser

Despite an annual 10% growth in GDP of, Ethiopia is still confronted with the challenge of providing enough food for its population, particularly in the Ogaden region which has been threatened by famine since the beginning of September. According to Tim Clarke, the EU delegate in Addis Ababa, the country could become self-sufficient; however, sharp increases in the population have reduced the amount of land available for cultivation in rural areas where there are six or seven children per family. As a result of this, food aid is still necessary. In 2006, the European Commission and the Member States of the European Union provided 30% of total food aid received by Ethiopia – 90,000 tonnes of which went to the most vulnerable and a portion of the aid was purchased within Ethiopia to ensure that the price of local foodstuffs did not fall. Development measures are increasingly being used to tackle the problem. These measures primarily in food supply but also for product diversification and commercialisation of other products (coffee, flowers, spices) as well as the creation of an infrastructure to improve the

management of water resources support government initiatives. The Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Ato Mekonnen Manyazewal, said: "We are introducing at household level water harvesting techniques, the preparation of ponds ensuring that they can plough during dry years and that they can produce diversified crops such as fruits and vegetables through small irrigation projects". In 2005, a programme designed jointly by the government and aid providers created social 'safety nets', making available both food and money to people in trouble in exchange for their contribution to public work schemes. In 2006, 7 million people benefited from this €220 million programme, 60% of which was funded by the EU and its Member States. The paradox is that there are still pockets of malnutrition in Ethiopia, even in the most productive areas. This is the case in the southern region where, thanks to EU funding (€817,760), the French NGO Inter Aide is supporting an integrated development programme in the *woredas* (districts) of Damot Gale and Kacha Bira. Sometimes referred to as 'happy Ethiopia', this fertile, well-irrigated



Archaic cultivation techniques: use of the swing plough is still very widespread in the Wolayta. © François Misser

region, where hillside terraces are farmed, still suffers from what is known as 'green famine'. Although settlements are scattered the density of the population is very high (300–600 inhabitants/hectare) and the cramped smallholdings (0.5 hectares on average) are not productive enough to ensure there is sufficient food. Half of the families in Damot Gale have total annual incomes of between €30–100. In this area, which is at an altitude of 2,000 metres, agriculture is traditionally based on the cultivation of 'false banana trees'. This is considered a miracle plant and is relied upon as a major food source for humans and animals alike. Cereals and vegetables are the main cash crops; however, combining cultivation with cattle rearing – indispensable for ensuring long-term success – is made difficult today by scarce availability of fodder. The practice of leaving land fallow has disappeared, due to population pressures and agricultural techniques are archaic in their application.

Farmers find themselves in extremely precarious situations and several families share an ox or a donkey. They hire their labour to each other and in times of food shortages have to sell their capital (their cattle). Today, the mortality rate of cattle has now reached 40% in the first year. The landownership regime (as the land belongs to the state, farmers only have



Anti-erosion mounds, an effective way of breaking slopes. © François Misser

use of it) is a handicap because the farmers can only use their future harvest or livestock as a guarantee to obtain loans, often made at exorbitant rates.

In view of this situation, Inter Aide has implemented an integrated programme. Firstly, 1,800 families benefit from the agricultural part of the project, which is based on cooperation with the *iddirs*, the traditional farmers' co-

operatives. The NGO helps the farmers to dig ditches and to build up the sides of the basins to reduce the slope and prevent fertile land being swept away by the rains.

They cultivate vetiver (a perennial grass) to stabilise the defences. This enables food to be provided for the livestock in the dry season and assists in reducing debt levels and increases dairy and manure production. The project encourages the use of new seeds and the introduction of better seeds.

The results have proven decisive. According to Christophe Humbert, project leader, the yield has doubled in the first year alone in Damot Gale. The project also involves improving rural hydraulic systems.

Since the beginning of April 2007, more than 14,000 people and 5,000 cattle have benefited from the installation of new hydraulic systems. Thirty-one water points are managed by committees, which become self-reliant after two years. The target is an improvement in the health of both people and livestock.

Finally, the programme also covers family planning in line with the national strategy on sexual health.

The aim is to reduce the ratio of population to resources and to give women – key players in development – control of their own destinies. Initially, the programme provided support mainly for older mothers wanting to prevent further pregnancies, but it now involves more and more young women.

In April 2007 1,500 new beneficiaries were registered. The method used is an injection of Depo Provera, which provokes less opposition from the region's priests, pastors and imams than the use of condoms.

F.M.



Distribution of food aid in Lalibela. © François Misser

# From MYTHOLOGY to the NEW WAVE

*Ethiopia occupies an extraordinary place in the history of mankind, stretching from the origins of the human race to today's new wave of artists, who are striving to overcome the desolation left behind by 17 years of Marxist dictatorship under Derg.*



The painter Geta Makonnen loved to say, "In this country, when you travel in space, you travel in time". Lucy, our common ancestor *australopithecus afarensis*, lived several hundred kilometres from Addis Ababa in the Rift Valley. The National Museum of Ethiopia recently discovered traces of our distant relative, a hominid who lived 3.9 million years ago. And, in the north of the country, the Pount civilisation flourished in the 3rd millennium BC between what is now Eritrea and the region of Tigray. The Egyptians of the lowlands spoke highly of their myrrh, incense and ivory and, according to Ethiopian tradition, it was also in Tigray where Menelik I, son of the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon, founded the civilisation of Axum in the 1st millennium BC. Their steles and obelisks, cut from blocks of stone, are still defying the laws of gravity today (one that was taken by Mussolini's army

in 1937, 24 metres high weighing 170 tonnes, was returned in 2005 to rejoin its fellows). It was also in this mountainous area that Ethiopia became one of the cradles of Christianity after the conversion of King Ezana about 330 AD. It had its own rites and doctrines, which affirmed the union of the divine and mankind in Christ as a single being, its own Ge'ez alphabet and its own Julian calendar enriched by contributions from the Syrians, Armenians and Egyptian Copts. Much later, it was also in the Kingdom of Axum that the disciples of Mohammed found refuge in the 7th century after being driven out of Mecca. Nearby, in what is now the province of Wollo, the King Lalibela of the Zagwe dynasty built the famous monolithic churches in the 7th century, which UNESCO defined as a World Heritage Site in 1978. Currently, the EU is funding work to conserve them.

## > A history of fascination

Axum and the Kingdom of Prester John have fascinated the Europeans, Greeks, Germans and Portuguese for many years. In the 16th century, the Vatican acquired manuscripts, from which, together with other treasures, art historian Jacques Mercier is drawing up an inventory thanks to financial assistance from the EU. An invaluable heritage is also an irresistible temptation for illicit dealers. European fascination is also underlined by the solidarity shown by the Portuguese *arquebusiers* who fought to save the kingdom from attack in the 16th Century by the Emir of Harar, Ahmed Gagn, known as 'the left-handed'. They inspired the splendid castles of Gondar with their great crenulated walls. However, Ethiopia's cultural heritage is not based solely on Christian contributions. The country is also an ancient home to two other

major monotheistic religions, Islam and Judaism. According to Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, the members of the *falasha* community are the descendants of the lost tribe of Dan. Ethiopia was also home to the Muslim Kingdom of Shoa between the 10th and 16th centuries, the vestiges of which were discovered in 2006. Rimbaud was enchanted by Harar – a holy city of Islam – the walls of which are still standing. The country's rich cultural heritage includes the traditions of the *Afar* shepherds, driving their camels through the most arid plains,

Somalis and *Surma* dancers from the Sudan border region whose animistic rites go back to the mists of time. No fewer than 80 ethnic groups inhabit this vast country with such varied landscapes from the scorching lowlands of Danakil to Mount Ras Dashen (4,620 metres).

## > New forms of spirituality

In this eternal Ethiopia, which is celebrating its second millennium in the Christian era (Julian calendar), spirituality – manifest in the furtive sign of the cross made by the taxi driver on the way to every church – is being expressed in new forms that are very much part of the 21st century. In his own way, this peace activist, a 23-year-old farmer, is the embodiment of these new forms of spirituality. He had walked more than 1,600 kilometres from his native village of Humara in Tigray when we met him on the road across the Metahara plain, displaying the Ethiopian flag and a white flag on his rucksack. He expressed the wish of many of his compatriots to see an end to the cycle of wars that have ravaged the region. Ethiopia is also the holy land of the Rastafarians and home to the Shashemene community, 240 kilometres from Addis Ababa. Three hundred thousand Rastafarians, fans and tourists flocked to Meskel Square in Addis Ababa in February 2005 for a concert which paid homage to Bob Marley. The display of devotion shown to the late Negus Haile Selassie, revered as a god, left the locals a little bewildered. The modern age has witnessed a strange paradox of Ethiopia opening up to



© François Misser

the world, but also withdrawing into itself. Ethiopia has seen some heady days since the explosion of jazz in the 1950s, followed by the arrival of rumba, rock and calypso. The Academy of Fine Arts was established in 1957. One of its figureheads was the Armenian-Ethiopian, Skunder Boghossian, the founder of abstract art in the country. However, the 'red terror' of the Derg regime (1974–1991), under which a curfew was enforced, put an end to the effervescence of the *Addis Ababa Nights*, a story told by the novelist Sebhat Guèbrè-Egziabhé. The regime completely suppressed the creative spirit that had flourished in the last decades of the empire. The only forms of art permitted had to take their inspiration from the socialism of the day, as illustrated by this Gebre Luel Gebre Mariam painting (1979), depicting a revolutionary patrol. This is to painting what the *Red Detachment of Women* was to the work of Mao.

## > The one hundred flowers of Addis Ababa

Since the end of the regime, we have seen the dawn of an eclectic range of artistic expression, ranging from naïve art inspired by icons and applied to profane subjects, like these paintings by Getachew Berhanou, to scenes of everyday life depicting the hustle and bustle of Addis Ababa and the markets of Harar in the most diverse forms (symbolism, impressionism, neo-cubism, etc.). Berhanou, himself the son of a master of iconography, paints the *Surma* fighting with *donga* sticks just as well as a slightly risqué scene of intoxication by Rimbaud. Artistic developments are not unlike those in another great orthodox nation, Russia, with whom Ethiopia has much in common – iconography, an imperial tradition and Stalinism, before experiencing a 'new wave since the end of the 1990s'. One of the most original new wave works is that of Geta Makonnen whose self-portrait contains pages from the Bible, mirrors, parts of a Kalashnikov rifle and a skeleton, symbolising the fear and intimidation that is part of the modern Ethiopian identity.

## > From Swinging Addis to cinema

Francis Falceto, the author of a number of books on Ethiopian music, laments the fact that since the end of the dark days of Derg, modern music is a long way from rediscovering its éclat of yesteryear and in particular of *Swinging Addis*. But the existence of a local record industry, which distributes the work of



Orthodox priests during the festival of the cross (Meskel). © Tsique Shiferaw

the veteran Mahmoud Ahmed, may herald a renaissance. Ahmed's mixture of jazz and oriental music is held in high esteem by fellow musicians and music lovers abroad. We have also seen the emergence of talent like the melody-maker Gigi and Teddy Afro, the new king of the Ethiopian protest song, appealing to his compatriots for reconciliation. This industry, which sells CDs at US\$3 each, provides an economic foundation for artistic development. The same goes for cinema. Of course, the purists turn up their noses and are critical of the lack of quality. But just remember how Indian cinema, which had to go through a similar process, developed. One of the latest releases is *Hermela*, a kind of 'injera' thriller', directed by Yonas Berhane Mewa and produced by Ethiofilm plc. It is the story of a man whose assiduous pursuit of a girl around town and the campus is quite disturbing. The filmmaker Haile Gerima also picked up an award at the Fespaco film festival. Around a dozen films are produced each year, and, according to the African critics, the film industry is performing well. The 2,000-seat *Kobeb* cinema opened on 8 July, adding to the dozen or so that already exist in the capital. All the national productions are shown, and with tickets priced at around 15 birr (US\$1.7), there is a significant cinema-going public. Eternal Ethiopia, nation of icons and crosses— will it experience a cinema boom?

The new millennium holds the answers.

F.M.

1 Sebhat Guèbrè-Egziabêr, *Les nuits d'Addis-Abeba*, Actes Sud, Paris 2004.  
 2 'Splendeurs et misères de la musique éthiopienne', in *L'Éthiopie contemporaine*, CFEE et Karthala, Addis-Abeba - Paris 2007.  
 3 Injera: national Ethiopian dish



Above: Entry of the church of St George of Lalibela. © François Misser

Below: Motif on one of the churches of Lalibela, this swastika suggests the possibility of ancient links between the Christian churches of Ethiopia and of the coast of Malabar (India) where the symbol originates. Yet another mystery to unravel. © François Misser

## The salvation of the churches of Lalibela

Created from pink volcanic rock under the reign of Lalibela between 1167 and 1207 AD, the 11 churches are the most important place of pilgrimage for Ethiopians. The names of the surrounding hills – Mount Tabor, Mount of Olives and Mount Sinai and the nearby River Jordan are an indication of the royal will to create a 'second holy land' in these areas to spare their subjects the dangerous journey to Palestine at a time when crusaders and Muslims confronted one another there. The churches' design was heavily influenced by Axumite style, but also by Syro-Palestinian and Copt styles.

Through the centuries, these places of worship, interconnected by underground passages, have endured wind, rain and climate change, causing severe wear and tear. After several attempts of restoration, the Ethiopian government called on the assistance of the European Union to help save them. The work, which is being carried out by the Italian company Teprin at a total cost of €9 million, was inaugurated by the patriarch Abuna Paulos in February 2007 and should be completed by the end of this year. The restoration includes the construction of new covers for the monuments, the erection of support columns and the building of a new conference centre and security barriers around the site. The programme also involves conservation work, the creation of a documentation centre and the involvement of the local population in this salvage mission.



Tsigue Shiferaw

# STARS of the TRACK

Ethiopia has made its mark in the world of athletics and one man, Abebe Bekila, has played a significant part in the country's rise to prominence. Winning gold in the marathon at the Rome Olympics in 1960, this soldier became the first African athlete ever to have won a medal. Four years later, he won a second gold at the Tokyo Olympics to become the only runner ever to have won two Olympic marathons. Many athletes from Ethiopia's high plateaus have excelled since then in the 10,000 metres, 5,000 metres, 3,000 metres and the marathon and legendary figures have emerged in women's athletics as well as in the men's events. Haile Gebreselassie, Derartu Tulu and Berhane Adere will be familiar names to the over-thirties, while the younger generation will recognise Kenenisa Bekele, Turunesh Dibaba and Meseret Defar.

This high level of success owes much to the Ethiopian Athletics Federation (EAF) which was established in 1949 and is the country's most efficiently-run sporting federation. Between 2003–2007 its budget increased from US\$777 to more than US\$3 million. Elshaday Negash, spokesperson for the EAF, said the federation's success comes down to the fact that it is the only Ethiopian sporting federation that does not depend on government funding. It is completely self-sufficient thanks to grants from the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) and support from its main sponsor, Adidas. All of these runners are extremely popular figures because of their charity work as well as for their achievements in athletics. Most of them are ambassadors for UNICEF or the World Food Programme, and they are well known for their generosity. Last year many of them helped the victims of the Dire Dawa floods. In contrast to their predecessors in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, the current crop of



Negus of the marathon, Ghebray Haile Selassie salutes the crowd of runners. © Nahom Tesfaye

athletes is also making a great deal of money for themselves. In the past, any profit made by the runners ended up in the state's coffers, but today they pay the state a 10% tax and receive bonuses from the state for victories at major international championships. This has allowed some of them to invest in profitable business ventures. Haile Gebreselassie is a pioneer in this, owning a sports centre, a cinema and a property portfolio in Addis Ababa. His business empire is estimated to be worth 75 million birr (around US\$8 million). Kenenisa Bekele has also invested in property. This exceptional athlete is believed to have made US\$1.5 million in the last three years and he plans to build a sports centre in Sululta – 30 kilometres from the capital – with a track, swimming pool and accommodation. Sululta is one of many places where athletes train before taking part in major competitions. The women are not being outdone, but they are much more discreet about their investments. We do know though that Turunesh Dibaba amassed a fortune of US\$450,000 in 2005 at the age of just 19!

There are however still a number of problems in Ethiopian athletics. The spokesperson for the EAF believes there are too few talented young athletes and says there are not enough clubs or privately run projects in the regions. In spite of these concerns, Ethiopian athletics is in a healthy state and enjoys mass participa-



Kenenisa Bekele. © Nahom Tesfaye

tion with young and old training regularly. 'The Great Run', a 10-kilometer run, which aims to raise money for humanitarian aid, has been held every year since 2001. Thirty thousand runners made their way through the capital's hilly streets for charity in September's 'millennium' run. And Ethiopia's athletics stars hope to shine when the country hosts the African Athletics Championships in 2008.



# Portugal: an eagerness TO ACCOMMODATE

Long a key gateway to Europe, Portugal has for centuries reached out to the five other continents and returned with treasures, goods and skills from every corner of the globe. Currently the holder of the EU Presidency, today Portugal's aspirations are to put Europe on a firmer footing and join with its partners on achieving a more harmonious balance with the rest of the world. More than that, Portugal seeks to remind its fellow EU Member States of the rich heritage they all have in geography, resources and culture.

## > History of Portugal. The gateway of the Algarve

Portugal is one of Europe's oldest countries, possibly the oldest to be established as a nation-state, and has hardly changed at all in territorial terms since its creation in 1143 AD. In reality, the country has had its own identity for a great deal longer than that.

Already in 139 BC, Roman occupiers called it 'Lusitania', acknowledging the primacy of the Lusitanians in the region who lived in the western part of the country when the Phoenicians arrived. They were followed by the Greeks (between the 9th and 7th centuries BC) and they remained for six centuries. Each of these occupiers (Phoenicians, Greeks and Romans) arrived through the Algarve. Later the Greeks were usurped by the Visigoths, who in turn were defeated by the Moors in 711 AD. The Moorish kingdom had as its capital Silves (*Xelb* in Arabic), known today as Faro. The region was called 'al-Gharb-al-Andalus' (to the west of Andalusia), which was later pronounced as 'Algarve'. This period was marked by prosperity, a vibrant culture

considerable religious and political tolerance. As Clara Borja, current spokesperson of the EU Presidency, stresses to *The Courier*, contemporary Portuguese society continues to live up to and celebrate these open-minded principles that are a symbol of the country's sense of self-restraint.

Marriage to the daughter of Alfonso VI – then king of León and Castile – enabled a French knight, Henry of Burgundy (who was engaged in the Crusades), to succeed in becoming the Count of Portugal in 1095 (this involved some political and courtly intrigue). His heir, Alfonso-Henry, who had pursued the campaign against the Moors, proclaimed himself King of Portugal in 1143 creating, along with a new nation, the beginnings of the Burgundy dynasty. The final Moorish bastions, those in the Algarve, succumbed in 1249. A few years later in 1254 AD, Alfonso III abandoned part of eastern Portugal, including the Algarve, to Castile and the country's borders have remained virtually unchanged ever since.

The arrival of the Avis dynasty in the late 14th century was the signal

for almost 200 years of exploration and discovery. This was a truly golden age for this tiny country, whose population at the time did not exceed 2 million, but succeeded in creating an empire that spanned five continents on which sun never set. Owing to the drastic shortage of manpower, the Portuguese authorities sought to govern by a combination of understanding, attentiveness, creativity and diplomacy, while employing their new subjects to enforce their policies.

This immense enterprise got underway in 1385 AD when the first Avis, John I, hero of the war of liberation against Castile, came to the throne – first in 1415 AD with the conquest of Ceuta and then at sea, with John's son, Prince Henry the Navigator, at the helm. In 1417 AD Henry gathered together the most learned people of the time in Sagres, in the Algarve, where they considered the feasibility of sending expeditions beyond the southern parts of the Atlantic. This resulted in expeditions to Madeira, the Azores and the Cape Verde islands, and after John II came to the throne in 1481, Portuguese seafarers reached as far as Namibia and Angola (1487). Then in 1488 the Portuguese succeeded in rounding the Cape of Storms, which was subsequently named the Cape of Good Hope.

Not all was good news. In 1492 Portugal lost a major struggle with Spain to claim America. Ironically, Christopher Columbus had first approached the Portuguese with his proposal but they rejected the plan. However, they quickly recovered from this setback, settling in Brazil, parts of the Indian Ocean, Kenya, Ceylon, Ormuz, Goa and Macao.



But Portugal's golden age was drawing to a close. Within a short period the population declined from 2 million to less than a million and the risk-fraught adventures of the Crusaders dealt the final blow. By 1580, Spain had achieved supremacy over its great rival and was to dominate Portugal for the next 60 years.

Finally shaking off the Spanish brace in 1640, Portugal sought a safer long term solution and signed a treaty of friendship with England (regarded today as the longest lasting treaty in history), and reflected (to cite just one example) by the English names of port wines. Napoleon made Portugal pay for this alliance in the early 19th century when he forced the Portuguese king to seek exile in Brazil. In the meantime, the 18th century was marked by the earthquake of 1755 and the dreadful tsunami that claimed hundreds of thousands of lives. The death toll was particularly heavy in the Algarve (located near the epicentre), along the coast and in Lisbon. The 18th century was marked by the Portuguese baroque period which dominated the arts, theatre, music and architecture. The 20th century saw the emergence of a military dictatorship led by António de Oliveria Salazar and his successor

## Little dictionary of Culture

**AZULEJO:** Portugal has turned ordinariness into rich treasures with tiled roofs and pavements becoming genuine works of art. These tiles, Azulejos, were introduced by the Moors and were ideal for the local people's need for cleanliness. They were then taken up by inspired artists who turned them into exciting creations. A must visit is the Palácio dos Necessidades, which houses the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Lisbon – if you manage to get an invitation, that is.

**BACALHAU:** the Portuguese name for [dried] cod, the national dish that often forms the basis for long, drawn-out mealtime discussions among family and friends about art and life.

**LUIS DE CAMOES:** poet and adventurer (circa 1524 -1580), the author of *Lusíades*, an epic poem, which the Portuguese believe is one of the cornerstones of their culture and character.

**FADO:** if you can define this you must let us know! Songs that feature the moods and lament of Portuguese sailors as they travelled to Brazil, Macao, Mozambique and all the old *feitorias* of the Portuguese colonies. You should make a point of listening to the best of the Fado interpreters: Amália Rodrigues, Mariza, Misia, Carlos Paredes and Madredeus.

**FEITORIAS:** Portugal's former trading posts established across five continents – melting pots of trade and cultural exchange.

**FUTEBAL:** an expression that may be inserted into even the most intellectual of conversations. Other words in this context are: Selecção Nacional, worshipped, semi-final of the World Cup in 2006; Luis Figo, captain of the team at the time; Eusebio, an icon; Benfica, in the Guinness Book of Records for largest number of fans for one football club.

**THE GULBENKIAN FOUNDATION:** Created in Lisbon in 1956 by the multimillionaire entrepreneur and a wonderful museum of art and culture.

**ANTONIO LOBO ANTUNES:** a writer with a fond regard about dry subjects and much appreciated by the Portuguese. His works include *Fado Alexandrino* (1983) examining the situation 20 years after the Carnation Revolution; *The splendour of Portugal* (1997) about the fondness and otherwise between Portugal and Africa.

**MANUEL DE OLIVEIRA:** who is symbolic of Portuguese filmmaking, little noise, lots of brilliance and a great deal of affection from cinema-goers in return.

**MANUÉLIN (art):** Portuguese Baroque, at the height of its glory in the 19th century, symbolised in particular by the typical twisted columns.

**MOSTEIRO DOS JERÓNIMOS (Hieronymites Monastery):** a monastery listed as a World Heritage Site. See also the Alcobça and Batalia monasteries, among many others.

**FERNANDO PESSOA (1888–1935):** an intricate universe of his very own, several individuals and several characters in a single being, each with their own psychology, their own artistic and literary aspirations, all located in the context of a so-called "heteronymy". A textbook case studied everywhere in the world. For Alexander Search, Alberto Caeiro, Ricardo Reis, Álvaro de Campos, Raphael Baldaya, see Fernando Pessoa or vice versa.

**JOSÉ SARAMAGO:** Nobel Prize for Literature in 1998.

**VINHO:** see the following classification: Verde, do Dão, do Douro, do Alentejo, da Barraida and so on. But in the case of Port or Madeira try an English glossary. It was, after all, originally created for the British palate. ■

Marcelo Caetano. Then in 1974 came the Carnation Revolution and hopes of democracy began to be rekindled to the sound of Jose Alfonso's popular song *Grandóla Vila Morena*, which was banned during the dictatorship. The song gave the signal to revolutionary members of the armed forces to take to the streets, closely followed by the civilian population who put carnations in the barrel's of the soldiers' guns. A bloodless revolution was won in Portugal and its colonies within one day. Freedom!

What then ensued was the return of many exiles and various periods of uncertainty – only to be expected after such an upheaval. But it concluded with the consolidation of democracy and, 12 years after the revolution, EU membership.

> **Territory**

The country is 560 km long and 220 km wide, sharing a land border with just one country – Spain. The river Tagus is divided into two separate parts for quite a distance from north to south-west, where it runs into the sea at Lisbon. The mountains in the North are the source of the Tagus and the country's two other major rivers, the Douro and the Guadiana. The Serra de Estrela mountains reach almost 2,000 metres. To the south of the Tagus is the start of the Alentejo plateau buttressed in the south with the mountain foothills of the Algarve. The North is more heavily populated and is the main area for cereal crops, vegetables and vineyards. The arid centre and south are known for their olive trees, almond trees, citrus fruits and figs, not forgetting that revered tree, the cork oak that provides a riot of colours during its spring flowering season. Beautiful scenery is enhanced by a wide variety of flowers and fragrant plants: white iris, the lemon tree, the carob tree and the palm. There is also a wide range of fauna in this region, providing a seemingly endless variety of birds. There are numerous national parks, like the splendid Ria Formosa in the Algarve or Sintra Forest near Lisbon, which the English poet Lord Byron described as "Glorious Eden".

> **The Beautiful Algarve**

The idea that the Algarve being cemented over to cater for the mass tourism industry is certainly a gross exaggeration. You can see this for yourself by taking a stroll along the heavenly Ria Formosa beaches near the regional capital Faro or visiting the Romantic Moorish town of Tavira. Tiny townships, like Olhão on the coast or Monchique in the hills, are packed with charm and surprise. Even in the most popular areas of the south-west, the new developments bear no comparison with the 'bunkers' along the Belgian coast or large parts of Spanish Mediterranean. The region is focusing more and more on resort-based tourism, in new small or medium-sized luxury developments, where retired people from northern Europe can live within walking distance of their boats or golf clubs. One example is Villamoura, where middle-class retirees can rub shoulders with show business personalities or royalty from Spain. Faro at night is like an operatic setting where people can walk around in complete safety – strolling down one alleyway after another, from one square to another surrounded by Baroque, Moorish, Art Nouveau or Neo-Classical ambience. The countryside is idyllic and the natural parks are enchanting. ■

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# COMMENTS about history, culture and geography

## Victor Reia-Batista, a professor at the University of the Algarve's Faculty of Communications

The Algarve has a culture similar to North Africa, as underscored by the word 'Algarve', which means 'the West' – in this case, the westernmost point of Europe.

In the wake of the 1974 revolution, Portugal saw a mass movement of people. Many were heading back from the colonies their heads full of colonial ideas. Others were refugees with a mixed bag of needs and expectations. All of this created huge problems.

As for myself, I was compelled to live in exile in Sweden because I was regarded as a deserter. Almost every family was affected by separations of one type or another. Eventually, however, the attempts to reconcile and bring together the different positions and views in this new society proved to be successful. At the same time the immediate post-revolution period was beset by serious difficulties. Luckily these lasted for a comparatively short period of time. As to our current problems, they have more to do with the fading memory of the past than anything else and it can be quite a struggle to persuade today's students to adopt an historical approach to these issues. Perhaps this is because of a tendency to conceal the tragic aspects of our recent history. Speaking specifically about Portugal's integration into Europe, the Algarve has had some problems with its farming and fishing industries, but also identification with Europe and its values is part of the people's legacy. ■



Victor Reia-Batista.  
© Hegel Goutier

## Clara Borja Ramos, diplomat, spokesperson for the Portuguese EU Presidency



Clara Borja expresses herself here more like a career diplomat and an intellectual than a spokesperson for the Portuguese EU Presidency.

Portugal's key characteristics are the result of centuries-long trading activities of all types and with all corners of the globe. Portugal's culture and civilisation has been enriched via its contacts with other continents: not only with nearby Africa but also with South and North America. The first seafarers to set foot in North America are said to have been Portuguese, long before Christopher Columbus arrived. They were very definitely the first Europeans to explore Japan, hence Japanese has many words adopted from the Portuguese such as "arigato" (thank you), which is derived from the Portuguese "obrigado". We must not overlook all the materials, goods and ideas that

Portugal brought home from its expeditions. Items which were then eagerly sought after by other European countries, such as tea from India and China that the English discovered through Queen Catarina prior to her marriage to the King of England.

Today there is no sign of any strain in Portugal's relationships with its former colonies, and perhaps one of Portugal's virtues are the result of a lack of resources – simply not being powerful enough to dominate the colonies it developed. I am sure that this is true to some extent.

Portugal did not have enough financial or human resources to fully dominate the places they colonised.

With such a tiny number of people in charge of running their colonies the Portuguese were compelled to integrate. But I do not believe this is the only reason, even though this is a widely held view. I also think the welcoming and integration minded character of the people also has to be factored in. I believe it is due to a tolerant attitude. Some say Portugal did its best not to resemble Spain.

Portugal, or *Lusitania*, was a separate, specific colony during the Roman times. It is a different race, which obviously shares characteristics, such as the Arab invasion. Portugal now enjoys an excellent relationship with countries to the south of the Mediterranean Sea.

The nearest capital to Lisbon is not Madrid but Rabat, fewer than 600 kilometres away. Portuguese people are at ease in Morocco and vice versa. They have a lot in common, such as the architecture and the Arab roots of many Portuguese words. Portugal also has close ties with the Portuguese-speaking African countries, ties of affection. And these relations are now becoming stronger. ■

# Key aim for the Algarve: decentralisation equals improved development

Interview with José Apolinário, President of the Faro Municipal Council

> **Algarve priorities**

The current priority for the Algarve is preparing the framework for the launch of the 2007–2013 structural plan, and as we no longer qualify for the Objective 1 Region Category,

we can no longer rely on support from the European Structural Fund. Because of this we need to involve the private sector in the creation of new funding for our initiatives. Portugal's municipal authorities have had little in the way of power and influence, which has

traditionally been concentrated in Lisbon. However, we are now in the process of developing decentralised systems. For example, here in the Algarve region we are keen on creating a practical structure for our 16 municipalities. Another key is the regional framework on the development and

> **The environment**

Water quality is an important issue in view of the current drought conditions. A significant level of Structural Fund resources have been concentrated in recent years on building dams to ensure adequate water supplies for the region. Equally important, however, is the organic farming industry, which is the region's key economic activity. Also, technological innovation is critical, but the level of investment in the new economy is still too low. Only two Portuguese regions, Lisbon and Porto, are the focus of the technological innovation drive, while the others tend to be overlooked when central government investment decisions are made.



Faro. Tourism, the economic mainstay of the Algarve.  
© Hegel Goutier

> Algarve's economic situation

Faro is the regional capital and the city's international airport is the key entry point. In recent years, low-cost flights from other European countries have helped to fuel the tourist industry.

The local economy is booming. The number of tourists visiting has increased (5 to 6% this year) with the main attractions being residential tourism, golfing holidays and, to a lesser extent, water sports. The region is heavily dependent on the tourist industry. Farming is a lot less important but more significant than the fishing industry. The tourist industry is geared not only to foreigners but also to the local population. Our tourism portfolio also includes activities focused on eco-tourism, sports and culture, while emphasising quality of life as much as possible.

Traffic congestion in Faro is a serious problem that needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

The city itself has a population of just 60,000 habitants, but the surrounding area brings the total to 300,000 and many people work in Faro or pass through the city on a daily basis.

Right now, our regional public transport system does not have enough capacity to cater for the present needs and we require our own transport authority, similar to what is available in Lisbon. Hopefully, as part of the government's decentralisation process this situation will improve in the near future.

> Immigrants

Purchasing power in the Algarve municipalities is average in comparison to other Portuguese regions. However, poverty is widespread among the unskilled and uneducated sections of the population and in the migrant communities.

Portuguese-speaking people from Africa used to be the most vulnerable, but they are now better integrated and the main problem at present is with migrants from Eastern Europe.

> The region's specific ties with the Portuguese-speaking African countries

Although Lisbon is the centre of formal ties with Mediterranean and African countries, here in the Algarve, thanks to the university and the municipalities, we have many twinning initiatives with cities in Morocco and other parts of Africa.

This is especially with African cities where Portuguese is the official language. Additionally, our university has study centres specialising in the Mediterranean or Africa.

Several cities in the Algarve are heavily committed to forging cultural ties with Africa, and Faro holds an annual festival with large input from African artists, who also feature significantly in the many cultural activities organised throughout the year.

> Tribute to Faro and Algarve

How do we differ from other European cities? I believe it is the light. It is a special kind of light and it has an influence on the city and its inhabitants, even if they do tend to complain about it a lot! But it is unrivalled elsewhere. Also, the people of Faro always keep their doors open. It is an open town, with a social and cultural status that has always been extremely important. The Algarve is an open-minded region; it has a strong regional identity and a common approach to its problems and needs. Particularly (he laughs) when it is a question of arguing against Lisbon's centralist tendencies!



## Interview with António Pina

President of the Algarve Tourist Board

The President of the Algarve Tourist Board (RTA) is elected by the mayors of the region's 16 municipalities and government representatives, including representatives of the ministries of health and economy. Also represented are the hotel and catering industries, travel agencies, transport operators, trade unions and the University of the Algarve. António Pina was elected one month before his interview with *The Courier*.

António Pina explains that today's tourist industry is only one small part of the globalisation process to which the Algarve has grown accustomed of many years. It was back in



## Protecting a natural and living heritage: The water dog

Ria Formosa nature park

Carla Peralta speaks about her driving passion. On the floor, her three year-old son is rolling around on the floor, with three puppies standing over him. These fluffy balls with jet-black soft and silky hair look like large poodles. But they aren't poo-



Carla Peralta and a Portuguese water dog, biological heritage. © Hegel Goutier

dles – these are water dogs and they need protection. This is the Ria Formosa Nature Park in Quinta de Marim, Portugal, home to the Marim Environment Education Centre. The centre features many examples of the park's ecosystem: salt marshes, dunes, a pine forest and traditional farming methods. It also boasts a working farm, an auditorium, a library and a research laboratory.

This is also the setting for Carla Peralta's driving passion – water dogs. Water dogs, you see, are unusual. Thanks to their webbed feet, the animals are excellent at gathering fish and guid-

ing them into nets. Unfortunately, until now it has been a breed that is rapidly dying out.

Then along came Carla. A long-time professional dog-handler who has worked with various animals until she came across this breed. Carla's aim is to safeguard waterdogs, which first appeared in the region over 2,000 years ago. Although there used to be hundreds of thousands of such animals not so very long ago it is now reduced to less than 3,000. But the good news is that lots of people are keen on having one because the dogs are highly intelligent, good with children, active when required and excellent companions.

"These dogs do not obey you for a reward" says Carla, "nor are they particularly keen on swimming; they simply feel they are being useful. That's why they want to help with fishing." In a world dominated by huge fishing ships that have sonar to detect schools of fish, does anyone really care about a dog with webbed feet? "Environmentally-friendly fishing with dogs? Why not? Challenges Carla. "After all, organic farming is a big hit isn't it?" She concludes, "Organic fishing – yes, I'll give that some thought!"

the 15th century that ships set sail from here to discover Africa, India, Japan and China. Today, the Algarve seems to have a lot of cards stacked in its favour and is an ideal location for tourism development.

At present 80% of the Algarve's economy relies directly or indirectly on the tourist industry. And while this sector is important for the whole of Portugal, it is the Algarve that is the top tourist destination, well ahead of Madeira and the Lisbon region.

The idea for the Algarve is not to be the biggest in volume, but the best in quality.

Quality is at the front of the minds of investors and those buying second homes in the region, and it is particularly appealing for the over-55s from northern and central Europe.

Indeed, for the local economy, the Algarve without tourism would be inconceivable, according to Mr Pina.

A one-sector economy is a risk that obviously has to be avoided.

"We are aware of this problem, hence our drive to promote industries, particularly innovative, ecologically-sound industries, such as solar energy. To this end, priority is being given to businesses eager to establish themselves in outlying areas where the economic situation is more difficult.

These areas are the home to most of the craft-based industries, wine-making and other key elements of the economy. We feel that it is important to maintain this balance for the future of the overall economy in the Algarve, stresses Mr Pina.

Sandra Federici

# AFRICA in VENICE



The African Pavilion at the Venice Art Biennale international exhibition has been considered one of the greatest innovations of the 2007 edition of this major event. Born at the end of the 19th century, the Biennale not only attracts art specialists' attention, but also a large number of spectators. The African Pavilion raises several questions: why have Andy Warhol and Miguel Barcelò in an African Pavilion? Why give space to a single art collector? And where are the usual corporate sponsors?

But let's start from the beginning: the 52nd Biennale Director, Robert Storr, wanted to showcase the African continent. During the professional week of Dak'Art Biennale in Dakar, Senegal, Storr visited several exhibitions, including peripheral ones – which made up the 'off programme' – and participated in numerous conferences. He also collected catalogues and publications. The result of these investigations is the diverse representation of African and African-American artists in the **Biennale International Exhibition**, entitled 'Think with the Senses – Feel with the Mind. Art in the Present Tense'. This exhibition is marked by a large number of political artworks focusing on issues such as war, terrorism, migration, borders and death. The display is marked by a slow and thoughtful succession of artwork: well-placed photographs, paintings and videos with a clear and simple setup where African artists' works hold a dialogue with the surrounding displays, producing mutually enriching meanings. Artist Adel Abdessemed's blue neon signs, placed by the exits in the Arsenale's rooms, indicate the 'Exile', instead of the expected 'Exit'. The geometrical abstractness of Nigerian painter Odili Donald Odita brightly shines with African colours. Chéri Samba's paintings tell sad stories with bitter irony. The wonderful black and white photo portraits by Malian Malick Sidibé, awarded with the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement, represent the proud participants in an art project to fight AIDS. The most amazing work: the two incredible tapestries made of metal cans and bottle caps by Ghanaian, Nigeria-

based El Anatsui. These are ably set up in the 'Arsenale' between two rows of enormous brick columns sparkling with sea salt, creating a single gigantic installation. All spectators stopped to admire it. Another remarkable event was the presentation of African comic works, which were a first at the Biennale. A sorrowful migration story was the theme of the 46 plates of the comic album *Une éternité à Tanger*, by Faustin Titi and Eyoum Ngangué. The comic was awarded with the 'Africa e Mediterraneo Prize for the best unpublished comic strip by an African author' by the association of the same name.

Storr made another key choice for the Biennale: the creation of an **African Pavilion**. While it's true Africa has had some individual and collective presence at the Biennale since the 1920s, only Egypt had traditionally had a national pavilion until now. To prepare the African Pavilion, Storr diffused a 'Call for ideas', which was criticised but gathered more than 30 projects and aroused considerable expectation. A jury comprised of African and African-American curators and artists decided to entrust the pavilion to Simon Njami and Fernando Alvim. Njami, is a Cameroonian critic, writer, founder of *Revue Noire* and curator of 'Africa Remix', an important exhibition on 'the continent'. Alvim is an Angolan artist and curator of the Gallery 'Camouflage' in Brussels and of the Luanda Triennale international art exhibition. Their project was to show a selection, a 'check list', of Sindika Dokolo's art collection, with the addition of other artworks commissioned for Venice. The name of this young Congolese businessman started reverberating in the contemporary art world. The first criticisms came from those who in the past undertook important initiatives on African art in Venice and now felt dethroned. Then came an article by Ben Davis, published by *Art Net*, a New York web art magazine, which accused the collector of rather shady business during African wars.

Alvim's answer: "If we come to ethics, many should feel shameful: Italy and the USA, who attacked Iraq without justification; bank, owners of most of the artwork, with their unreliable investments; and big collectors with mysterious wealth. Let's put ethics aside and let's go deeply in the artistic projects. For the first time ever you see a totally African project, managed and financed by Africans in Africa." Dokolo already owned an international collection of contemporary art. In 2003 Fernando Alvim persuaded him to buy Hans Bogatzke's Brussels collection to prevent his family from selling it to European galleries after the collector's death. Dokolo and Alvim involved some Angolan companies and banks, which financed the acquisition, creating the most important private collection of contemporary art in Africa. This collection formed the basis of the Luanda Triennale, held in 2005/2006.

"We added 'Luanda Pop' to the initial title 'Check List'", Alvim explained during the press conference, "to underline the direct connection with the energy springing from the adventure of 2005 Luanda Triennale".

"It is not only a cultural project, it is a political statement", Simon Njami added during the press conference, "We don't aim at showing an exhaustive portrait neither of the whole continent, nor of 'African contemporary art', a rather indistinct concept. We simply propose our choice. That's why the posters around the Pavilion show persons such as Franz Fanon, Bob Marley and Ghandi. They are not Africans, but people who talked about a free Africa and who built Africa, not as a place but as a philosophy".

This is also the reason of displaying Andy Warhol and Miguel Barcelò artworks in the African Pavilion, side by side with works by young Angolan authors such as Yonamine and Ihosvanny, or by internationally recognised artists such as Yinka Shonibare, Marlene Dumas and Kendall Geers. "This is not a collection of African contemporary art", points out Sindika Dokolo, "but an African collection of contemporary art. An African vision. I consider the creation of my collection a political gesture because Africa cannot access its past aesthetics, whose best pieces were taken off the continent. Compared to Africa's basic needs, maybe art is not the priority, but I think we have to act on African human beings. If they don't know where they come from, if they don't learn how to exercise their critical ability, there won't be progress. Now we have to consider how to achieve a concrete impact on the people. This is just the beginning. We have to get moving ourselves, both artists and public, including the govern-

ments, education, museums, galleries, collectors. If we cannot tell the world who we are, if we do not show them the best of what we are capable, we will never see an end to incomprehension, condescension and prejudice". This is, at last, Africa who chooses, Africa who watches.

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Above: Yinka Shonibare MBE, *How to blow up two heads at once*, 2006. Installation, dimension overall: 175 x 245 x 122cm.

Below: Bili Bidjocka, *L'écriture infinie #3*, 2007. Installation, variable size.

Page 59:  
Andy Warhol, *Muhammad Ali*, 1978. Two screen-print on paper, 114 x 89 cm.

All images courtesy Sindika Dokolo African collection of contemporary art



## 52nd Venice Art Biennale. International art exhibition

### CHECK-LIST LUANDA POP African Pavilion - Arsenale

- |   |  |                                     |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Ghada Amer</b> , Egypt                   | <b>Kendell Geers</b> , South Africa      | <b>Ingrid Mwangi</b> , Kenya        |
| <b>Oladélé Bamgboye</b> , Nigeria           | <b>Kiluanji Kia Henda</b> , Angola       | <b>Chris Ofili</b> , UK / Nigeria   |
| <b>Miquel Barcelò</b> , Spain               | <b>Ihosvanny</b> , Angola                | <b>Olu Oguibe</b> , Nigeria         |
| <b>Jean Michel Basquiat</b> , United States | <b>Alfredo Jaar</b> , Chile              | <b>Tracey Rose</b> , South Africa   |
| <b>Mario Benjamin</b> , Haiti               | <b>Paulo Kapela</b> , Angola             | <b>Ruth Sacks</b> , South Africa    |
| <b>Bili Bidjocka</b> , Cameroon             | <b>Amal Kenawy</b> , Egypt               | <b>Yinka Shonibare</b> , Nigeria    |
| <b>Zoulikha Bouabdellah</b> , Algeria       | <b>Paul D. Miller Aka DJ Spooky</b> , US | <b>Minnette Vari</b> , South Africa |
| <b>Loulou Cherinet</b> , Ethiopia           | <b>Santu Mofokeng</b> , South Africa     | <b>Viteix</b> , Angola              |
| <b>Marlène Dumas</b> , South Africa         | <b>Nástio Mosquito</b> , Angola          | <b>Andy Warhol</b> , United States  |
| <b>Mounir Fatmi</b> , Morocco               | <b>Ndilo Mutima</b> , Angola             | <b>Yonamine</b> , Angola            |

# POPULAR PAINTINGS from KINSHASA

“The States of flux” Exhibition - Tate Modern Museum, London



Bodo, *Turbulent World!!! Where are we going?* 2006. Acrylic on canvas, 153 x 440 cm. Courtesy of C.A.A.C. - The Pigozzi Collection, Geneva. Photo: Maurice Aeschmann.

Under this heading ‘The States of Flux’, the Tate Modern, one of the world’s most prestigious venues for contemporary arts, has devoted one of the 15 rooms to ‘popular painting’ from Kinshasa. The exhibition is focused on key artistic movements woven into the fabric of the 20th century – specifically Cubism, Futurism and Vorticism. Vorticism is regarded as an English-style of Cubism, whose aesthetic approach owes a huge debt to the tools of technology and industry. Showcasing some of the museum’s collection, the exhibition will run until March 2008.

“The school of popular painting” from Kinshasa, as its originator Chéri Samba calls it, comprises five leading figures, all showing at the Tate Modern: Chéri Samba himself, Cheik Ledy, his brother, Bodo, Chéri Chérin and Moke. The eight works on display are a striking reflection of both the artists’ modernity and their intensity of approach. They are all in step with the major artistic trends of the century, both in terms of formal freedom and contemporary issues.

Bodo’s *Monde en tourbillon. Où l’on va* (*Turbulent world. Where are we going*) is a dense panoramic painting, using a post-9/11 allegory depicting the disembowelment, ripping apart and penetration of the world. It shows an African dimension through the pres-

ence of vehicles and high-tech machinery, indicative of the shadows of human bombs without brains as well as the darkness of the electronic age. Everything is placed in the context of a riot of colour but with man-made technology sexually assaulting Mother Earth and then committing suicide. An affinity might be sought here with the English Vorticists and the omnipresence of technology.

Similarly, Chéri Chérin’s *Où va le monde* (*Where is the world going*) also raises questions in a work that may be a bit more impressionist but is equally cataclysmic. It focuses on a moral cataclysm against the background of the @ of the Internet.

Chéri Samba’s exhibit reflects upon the violence of the fratricidal war that has devastated the Democratic Republic of Congo and the terrible plight of the child soldiers. But his other two works are highly symbolic, as in *Une peinture à défendre* (*A painting to fight for*) where he uses his body in a Christ-like position as a screen to defend a painting.

But it is to the ancestral art of the Congo the master pays respect in *Hommage aux anciens créateurs* (*Tribute to earlier creatures*). An opportunity to portray himself in front of traditional sculptures, as though paying homage to the artists of yesteryear and a reflection of the high esteem in which contemporary African art is held today. **H.G. ■**

Chéri Samba, *A Tribute to Earlier Artists*, 1999. Acrylic on canvas, 151 x 201 cm. Courtesy of C.A.A.C. - The Pigozzi Collection, Geneva. Photo: Patrick Gries.



## We liked... The life and the work of Jean-Claude “Tiga” Garoute: painter, poet and creator

Any other tribute pales in comparison with the one André Malraux paid to him in the book *L’Intemporel* when they were both alive. This, however, was followed by others like André Breton and Jean-Paul Sartre (who went on a pilgrimage to Haiti to meet him), not forgetting the myriad honours bestowed upon him during his lifetime. Complete pages of *L’Intemporel* were used to make it clear that the socio-pictorial-philosophico-esoteric movement that he led at Saint-Soleil in the mountains of Haiti, where the disciples were other artists, the mentally ill and young people. This

was probably the world’s most innovative artistic project. “The heir to so many *génies maudits*, this outstanding painter is an artist who has been blessed,” wrote Malraux.

And it was here in Haiti’s mountains that Tiga and Madam Robart (Tiga’s companion) provided this strange community (who were more their followers than their students) with basic material, paints, canvases, paper – props for creating performances rather than listening to lectures and teaching.

Tiga was never a guru, or if he was he could have been called a guru of freedom, because he never sought to exert any influence on any of the young creative artists he encountered. He would adopt a person, offering affection, support, self-confidence but never advice. He was forever faithful to his own harmonious approach to the existence of the Earth and being. He believed that “being is a dream, possession, creation and folly”.

And this is what he sought to decipher throughout human creation: his own being, that of his acquaintances, the mentally ill and children. Towards this end, he immersed himself in a variety of philosophies, learned specific types of knowledge, such as the genetic code, and engaged in a variety of arts. His painting was tantamount to rhythm – the rhythm of life. Those stirring texts and improvisations were set to the music of Rachmaninov in which he was literally immersed. These stirring, spontaneous settings for showcasing his work became etched on the memory of his audiences. And his works are strokes of genius, fitting in perfectly with the surrealist legacy of the man.

His “burnt suns” are fervent enough to create the light of the shadows, the colours of burnt offerings and the detached joy of the soul’s grey tinges. Tiga died last December after suffering from cancer – this man who struggled to investigate the origins and implications of DNA and its control, or otherwise, over the human body.

He was sure to have had a tiny smile at the corner of his lips, which was like a tonic to us when marvelling at his paintings and hanging on every word, while sipping upon one of his rare rums.

So long Tiga-son!

**H.G. ■**



Tiga, *Martine and Liane*, 1999. Sketches on a paper serviette, 14 x 14. © Hegel Goutier

## LE PEUPLE n’aime pas le peuple

“A person who has been chased by a panther will tell a different story from someone who has seen a panther chasing somebody else”. This comment by the author (a young activist for sustainable family farming) from the Ivory Coast, serves to underscore the importance of this autobiographical story (*Le peuple n’aime pas le peuple* – *The people do not like the people*), which is a personal experience against the background of the Ivorian civil war. A victim of the racketeering of soldiers on all sides, Kouakou Gbahi Kouakou describes his odyssey, his travels between the Charybdis of the rebels’ acts of violence and the Scylla of the ‘patriots’ all fired up by xenophobic fanaticism. He speaks with sincerity about day-to-day excitement that is soon overtaken by new feelings of disillusionment. But he does not allow himself to be overcome by paranoid beliefs or blaming others for disaster. “We all helped screw everything up, each side making a generous contribution to its rapid decomposition”, confesses one of the characters in the book.

A young intellectual who did not complete his studies, Kouakou, the country boy from Béoumi, makes a cool appraisal of the situation that allowed power-crazy politicians to plunge his country into deep crisis. This is because his own age group is the most affected. As he writes, “the instability and harrowing living conditions of young Ivorians may not necessarily have been the cause of the politico-military uprising of 19 September, but they were the main reason for the popular success not only of the rebellion but also what is called in Abidjan the resistance”. He ends up finding a makeshift solution in exile and ultimately succeeds in reaching a conclusion coloured by hope. “I also knew it was still not over, not for me, nor for them, as long as we had not understood the natural need to live together”, he writes. And what is perhaps more of a pleasure is that the story reveals a genuine literary ability, full of quotations from the juicy *nouchi* dialect of Abidjan and the savannah of his childhood. Here is one example to make you think: “if a blind person says he is going to hit you with a brick, it means he already has one under his foot”. **F.M.**

Kouakou Gbahi Kouakou, *Le peuple n’aime pas le peuple. La Côte d’Ivoire dans la guerre civile*, Collection Témoins, Gallimard, Paris 2006



# We liked... The life and the work of **SEMBÈNE OUSMANE**



**S**embène Ousmane, who died on 9 June 2007, could claim to have created fictional cinema in Sub-Saharan Africa. While his title of “father of African cinema” is well deserved it is much more that earned him the love, respect and affection of his many fans. Sembène Ousmane was an influential writer, major filmmaker and a shrewd producer. First and foremost, he understood that the cinema was a not only a tool for cultural development but also a force behind economic development. This was something he realised long before it occurred to others.

He first tried his hand at the art that would put him in the public eye in 1960, at the age of 37, when he went to study film-making at the Gorki Institute in Moscow. Six years later he made his first real film, *La Noire de...*, which will go down in the annals of the cinema industry as the first African made feature length film. It was awarded the prestigious Jean Vigo Prize at the Cannes Film Festival, which was the first of many such honours. Before that, Sembène Ousmane had made three other films but these had failed to make the impact of *La Noire de...* The film tells the story of Diouna, who leaves her country (Senegal) to work as a domestic servant in France. In the film, Diouna ends up committing suicide and, as a result of her employer’s feelings of guilt, her employers set off for Dakar to explain her death to her family. The film illustrates that even at this early stage of his career Sembène Ousmane was able to show the extent of his wisdom and directorial control. As a campaigner for the black cause, he soon realised that the only way of being an activist in his art was to show compassion for

the trials and tribulations of all human beings, rather than seeking to equate activism with fanaticism. He stayed clear of using his works as simple signposts and strove to portray slices of human existence.

During the 1970s his honesty caused him some personal anguish with the film *Ceddo* (1977), which took aim at those selling African slaves, and was banned in his native land. In total, Sembène Ousmane made 15 films in his career as a director. His most well-known are *La Noire de...*, *Ceddo*, *Xala*, 1974 and *Faat-Kiné*, 1999. His last work, *Mooladé*, was released in 2004.

Some of the films were adapted from his novels, such as *La Noire de...*, *Xala* and *Taaw*, and his career as an author began a dozen or so years before he took up film direction. His first book, *Le docker noir*, (*The black docker*) was published in 1956 when Ousmane was 33 years old. Born in Casamance (Senegal) he was a very average scholar and attended the Marsassoum Ceramics School. From the age of 15 he worked manual jobs to help out the family, which was dependent on the small income his father made as a fisherman. From 1942 to 1944, during the Second World War, he served in the Free French Forces.

A much loved and respected artist, he was always ready to offer his time and lend a sympathetic ear to others.

More than a great artist: a great man!

H.G.

Above: Yonamine, *The best of the best*, 2007. Installation + video. Courtesy Sindika Dokolo African collection of contemporary art

## **F**or younger readers

# The Cotonou Club **AGAINST POVERTY**

**B**eing a member of the Cotonou Agreement between ACP and EU States is a bit like belonging to a club with your best mates, only they’re spread out all over the world in Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) and European Union (EU) states. To keep each other sweet, you give and share special things you wouldn’t with others.

Most of the ACP states that have signed the agreement with the EU were once colonies of, that’s to say ruled by, one of the now 27 EU countries like the United Kingdom, France, Spain, Portugal and Belgium.

Over past 50 years, ACP countries have become independent. But the EU wanted to keep hold of some of its special trade links and be friends with its old colonies and help them to grow. To do this, the EU decided on various ‘Conventions’ with all ACP states. The current ‘Cotonou Convention’ was signed in the capital of Benin in West Africa in 2000.

‘Cotonou’ will last until 2020. It groups some of the richest countries in the world like Finland where a person on average earns US\$29,251 a year\* and some of the poorest such as Sierra Leone, where a person makes just US\$561. This means that abolishing poverty is the goal of Cotonou.

Towards this, the EU gives aid which is called the European Development Fund (EDF). Each EU member state puts an amount into this money pot. ‘Cotonou’ also has a trade part to make sure that most of the produce and goods sold by ACP States can get into the EU market without tariffs payments which can make imported things more expensive to purchase and stops shoppers from buying them.

### ➤ Fresh roses, sweet bananas

You can buy fresh and colourful Kenyan roses – fairly cheaply – in shop shelves in the EU any time of year. This is mainly because there aren’t any tariffs on Kenyan roses under Cotonou. Kenya now supplies EU countries with half its roses compared to about a quarter 10 years ago! And those sweet short



Photos of the “My Fair Trade World” competition. © Debra Percival



bananas which fit neatly into school lunch packs are shipped in under Cotonou’s tariff-free trade arrangements for the product. It means a living wage for farmers in the Caribbean’s Windward Islands and other African nations where they are grown. At the moment, ACP and EU States are talking about how Cotonou can improve trade between the ACP and EU more and at a faster pace. The plan is for free trade agreements, or ‘Economic Partnership Agreements’, with the 6 regions of the ACP group; the Caribbean, Pacific, West Africa, East Africa, Southern and Central Africa from 1 January 2008.

The EU aid money pot for ACPs or 9th EDF (2002–2007), at the moment distributes €13.5 billion to all ACP countries over five years. The money goes to individual aid projects in ACP countries like building hospitals, schools, roads and airports to help countries develop more quickly and trade more easily. It also provides emergency food, shelter and

medical aid when there are natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods or conflicts, as is the case in Darfur. There is €22.7 billion in the new 10th EDF (2008–2013).

Many other smaller projects get money under the EDF such as training programmes and trade exhibitions. It doesn’t all go to national governments but also local governments and civil society such as non-governmental organisations. The EU doesn’t decide alone how it wants to spend the money. It discusses this with its ACP partners. For this reason, the EU has many offices in ACP states.

And then there are regular meetings in Brussels when ACP and EU Ministers get together to discuss what’s making them mad about Cotonou, what’s okay and how to do things better. They talk about political topics, too, like how to end the fighting in Darfur and human rights. Often they don’t agree.

It’s all about having respect for your best buddy, listening and helping him or her to advance the best way you can.

D.P.

# EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT DAYS

## Will Climate Change Development?

Lisbon, Portugal: 7-9 November 2007



# EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT DAYS

Journées européennes du Développement | Jornadas Europeias do Desenvolvimento [eudevdays.eu](http://eudevdays.eu)

### Provisional Program

#### > WEDNESDAY 7 NOVEMBER

9.00-10.00 OPENING CEREMONY

*Introduced by Louis Michel*

**José Socrates**

*Prime Minister of Portugal, Host country*

**José Manuel Barroso**

*President of the European Commission*

**Maumoon Abdul Gayoom**

*President of Maldives*

**Gertrude Ibengwe Mongella**

*Pan African Parliament President*

10.00-10.30 SPECIAL ADDRESS

**Yvo de Boer** UNFCCC Executive secretary

10.30-13.00 HIGH LEVEL PANEL :

**CHALLENGES AND CONVERGING VISIONS**

*Moderated by Chris Landsberg*

**Ogunlade Davidson**

*IPCC Co-Chair of Working Group III*

**Michel Jarraud**

*OMM Secretary General*

**João Gomes Cravinho**

*PT, State Secretary*

**Stavros Dimas**

*European Commissioner for Environment*

**Philippe Maystadt**

*EIB President*

*Speaker tbc*

13.00-13.15 SIGNATURE CEREMONY

*Memorandum of Understanding PALOP*

13.15-13.30 SIGNATURE CEREMONY

*Memorandum of Understanding CPLP*

14.00-18.00 PARALLEL EVENTS

18.00-19.00 SPECIAL ADDRESS

**Kofi Annan**

19.00 HAPPENING

#### > THURSDAY 8 NOVEMBER

9.00-9.30 SPECIAL ADDRESS

**Arkalo Abelsen**

*Minister of Health and Environment - Greenland*

**Georges Handerson**

*Minister of Sustainable Development - French Polynesia*

9.30-10.10 SPECIAL ADDRESS

**Kemal Dervis** UNDP

10.30-13.30 HIGH LEVEL ROUNDTABLES

**VULNERABILITY AND ADAPTATION**

**TO CLIMATE CHANGE**

*Protecting and empowering the poorest*

**GLOBAL PUBLIC GOODS**

**AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

*Moving the global interest forward*

**POVERTY, HUMAN SETTLEMENTS**

**AND MIGRATION**

*Promoting a human-centred*

*and holistic approach*

**MITIGATION, OPPORTUNITIES**

**AND FINANCING**

*Mainstreaming Climate Change*

*in National Strategies*

14.00-19.00 PARALLEL EVENTS

19.00 HAPPENING

#### > FRIDAY 9 NOVEMBER

9.00-11.00 HIGH LEVEL PANEL

**PARTNERSHIPS AND GLOBAL**

**ENVIRONMENT GOVERNANCE**

*Moderated by Tumi Makgabo*

**Louis Michel**

*European Commission*

**Achim Steiner**

*UNEP Executive Director*

**Valentine Sendanyoye Rugwabiza**

*WTO Deputy Director General*

**Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul**

*G8 Presidency*

**Ousmane Sy**

*Director of the Centre for Political and Institutional Expertise in Africa (CEPIA)*

**Glenys Kinnock**

*Co-chair of the EU-ACP Joint Parliamentary Assembly*

**Nuno Ribeiro da Silva**

*Vice-president AIP - Business Europe*

*Speaker tbc*

11.30-15.00 PARALLEL EVENTS

15.00-16.00 CLOSING CEREMONY

**James Michel**

*President of Seychelles*

**Luis Amado**

*Minister of Foreign Affairs of Portugal, EU Presidency*

**Andrej Šter**

*State Secretary of Slovenia (incoming EU Presidency)*

**Bernard Kouchner**

*Minister of Foreign Affairs of France (incoming host country)*

## Africa – Caribbean – Pacific and European Union countries



#### CARIBBEAN

Antigua and Barbuda The Bahamas Barbados Belize Cuba Dominica Dominican Republic Grenada Guyana Haiti Jamaica Saint Kitts and Nevis Saint Lucia Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Suriname Trinidad and Tobago



#### PACIFIC

Cook Islands Federated States of Micronesia Fiji Kiribati Marshall Islands Nauru Niue Palau Papua New Guinea Samoa Solomon Islands Timor Leste Tonga Tuvalu Vanuatu



#### AFRICA

Angola Benin Botswana Burkina Faso Burundi Cameroon Cape Verde Central African Republic Chad Comoros Congo (Rep. of) Côte d'Ivoire Democratic Republic of the Congo Djibouti Equatorial Guinea Eritrea Ethiopia Gabon Gambia Ghana Guinea Guinea-Bissau Kenya Lesotho Liberia Madagascar Malawi Mali Mauritania Mauritius Mozambique Namibia Niger Nigeria Rwanda Sao Tome and Principe Senegal Seychelles Sierra Leone Somalia South Africa Sudan Swaziland Tanzania Togo Uganda Zambia Zimbabwe



#### EUROPEAN UNION

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