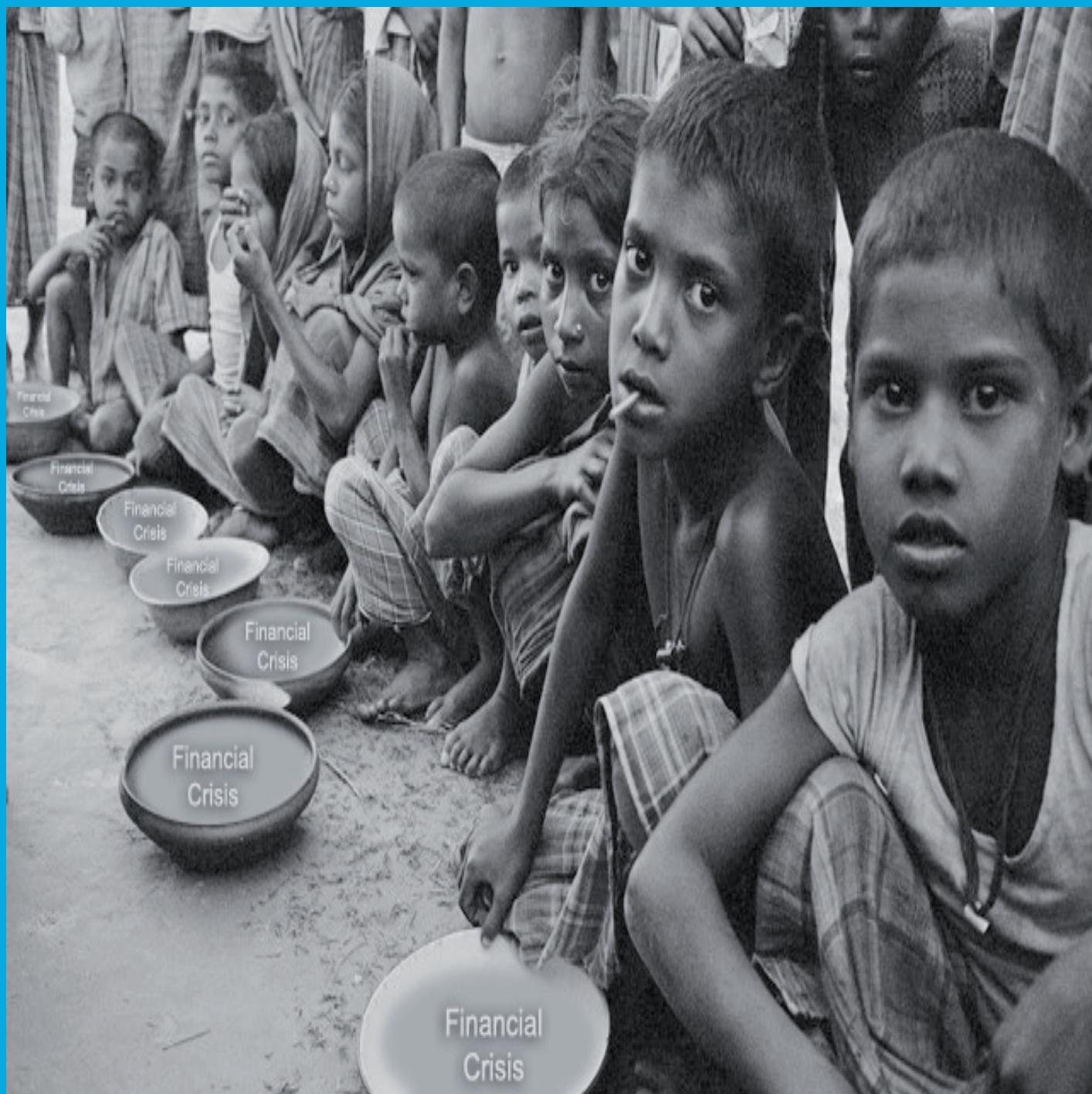


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- 1 03.12.2008 13:07:27 [UN: Islamische Staaten für unabhängige und starke Weltorganisation](#)  
*New York, 3. Dezember (IPS) – Für eine stärkere und von den USA unabhängige UN haben sich bei einer neuen Umfrage große Mehrheiten in sieben dominant muslimischen Staaten und im halb islamischen Nigeria ausgesprochen. Besonders schlechte Noten erhielt die Weltorganisation für ihren Umgang mit dem Konflikt zwischen Israel und Palästina.*
- 2 03.12.2008 12:58:06  [UGANDA: Mehr Einfluss für Frauen - Projekt drängt auf frauenfreundlichen Regierungsetat](#)  
*Von Joshua Kyalema Kampala, 3. Dezember (IPS) – In ihrem Dorf Kadoto im Norden Ugandas wird sie Stadträtin genannt. Doch die Bezeichnung ist irreführend, denn eigentlich ist Jenipher Nasugwere Mitglied eines Beratungsgremiums der Gemeinde Bolangira im Distrikt Palisa. Das Projekt will Frauen zu mehr Mitsprache in den nationalen und regionalen Haushaltspolitik verhelfen.*
- 3 03.12.2008 11:35:43 [PAKISTAN: Todesstrafe auf Internetterrorismus – Schlechtes Zeichen für Amnestiezusage](#)  
*Von Zofeen Ebrahim Karatschi, Pakistan, 3. Dezember (IPS) – Der pakistanische Staatspräsident Asif Ali Zardari hat Interkriminalität, die zum Tode eines Menschen führt, per Dekret mit der Kapitalstrafe belegt. Damit ist die Zahl der Verbrechen, die in dem südasiatischen Staat mit dem Tode bestraft werden, auf 28 gestiegen.*
- 4 02.12.2008 16:04:22  [VENEZUELA: Präsident auf Lebenszeit – Chávez will bis 2021 im Amt bleiben](#)  
*Von Humberto Márquez Caracas, 2. Dezember (IPS) – Der venezolanische Präsident Hugo Chávez hat Interesse an weiteren Amtszeiten bis 2021 bekundet. Er forderte seine Anhänger auf, ein Referendum zugunsten einer Verfassungsreform abzuhalten, die ihm erlauben würde, erneut als Präsidentschaftskandidat ins Rennen zu gehen.*
- 5 02.12.2008 15:52:59  [UREINWOHNER: Ausgegrenzt – Indigene Nationen gegen Winterolympiade in Kanada](#)  
*Von Jon Elster Vancouver, 2. Dezember (IPS) – Die Vorbereitung der nächsten Winterolympiade vom 12. bis 28. Februar 2010 in Kanada sind schon auszumachen, bevor die ersten Medaillen vergeben werden. Es sind indigene Völker, die nicht von der Landnahme ihres Traditionslandes profitieren und Vancouvers Anreise, die das aufwendige Spektakel teuer zu stehen kommt.*
- 6 02.12.2008 15:32:56  [KENIA: Muslima für Frauen – Konservativer Wahlkreis hat weibliche Parlamentsvertretung](#)  
*Von Najua Mushtaq Nairobi, 2. Dezember (IPS) – In Kenia ist ausgerechnet der konservativ-muslimische Wahlkreis im Osten der Insel Lamu durch eine Frau im Parlament vertreten. Shakila Abdalla wurde zwar nicht direkt gewählt, sondern kam über die Quote der oppositionellen Partei 'Orange Democratic Movement of Kenya' (ODMK) ins Abgeordnetenhaus, aber ihr Aufstieg ist dennoch eine kleine Sensation.*
- 7 02.12.2008 14:39:49 [CÔTE D'IVOIRE: Wirtschaftspartnerschaft mit EU abgesegnet – Gefahr für Regionalbindung](#)  
*Von David Cronin Brüssel, 2. Dezember (IPS) – Côte d'Ivoire hat als erster afrikanischer Staat und als einziges Land in der Gruppe der westafrikanischen Länderein Wirtschaftspartnerschaftsabkommen (EPA) mit der EU unterzeichnet. Oftmals sieht massiven Druck aus Brüssel im Hintergrund, fürchtet die ivoirische Isolation in der Region und warnt vor Verlusten aus Zolleinnahmen.*
- 8 02.12.2008 13:17:35  [JORDANIEN: Erstes weibliches Minenräumkommando im Einsatz](#)  
*Anman, 2. Dezember (IPS) – In Jordanien hat das erste weibliche Minenräumkommando der Region Nahost die Arbeit aufgenommen. Die 24 Frauen wurden im Monaten Oktober und November von der norwegischen Hilfsgruppe 'People's Aid' (NPA) ausgebildet und sind zusammen mit Dutzenden Männern im Einsatz.*
- 9 02.12.2008 11:19:38 [KAMERUN: Mikrofinanzierer groß im Geschäft – Gefahr des Wildwuchses](#)  
*Von Taerfu Hanson Garous, Kamerun, 2. Dezember (IPS) – In Kamerun haben Mikrofinanzierer Hochkonjunktur. Sie sind auf 42 Prozent des Staatsgebietes die einzigen Finanzunternehmen, die ihre Dienste anbieten, und eine große Hilfe für die Armen. Aber es gibt gerade wegen des immer größer und unübersichtlicher werdenden Marktes auch etliche schwarze Schafe. Allein 2006 wurden 250 unsolide Mikrobanken geschlossen.*

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**EDITORIAL****DIE WELT ANDERS SEHEN****OPINION | ANSICHT****Obama Reinforces the Great American Myth***By Shashi Tharoor***Revitalise UN Through the Power of Youth***By Daisaku Ikeda***"Globalisierung verringert Armut"***sagt Jagdish N. Bhagwati***MAGAZIN SPEZIAL****Nigeria - Deutschlands neuer strategischer****Partner in Afrika***Von Hendrik Schott***WINDOW ON EUROPE****Overcoming Division***By Philippe Martin***Democracy Brings Disappointment to Romania***By Claudia Ciobanu***COVER STORY | TITELTHEMA****What About the Poor in Developing Countries?***By InDepthNews***Development Funding Vital to Beat Crisis***By Global Perspectives Monitoring Unit***Indonesia Says 'No, Thank You' to IMF Loans***By Marwaan Macan-Marcar***Sri Lanka's Oil Futures Gamble Burns****300 Million Dollar Hole***By Feizal Samath***Uganda's Debt Crisis Could Resurface***By Elias Biryabarema***Crisis Threatens Congo's Timber Jobs***By IRIN***Africa in Active Response to Financial Crisis***By Professor Zhang Zongxiang***Crisis Begins to Bite Big NGOs***By Global Perspectives Monitoring Unit***WINDOW ON ASIA****Burma's Salt Farmers Battling to Rebuild Livelihoods***By InDepthNews***A Japanese Suburb Goes Mideast***By Katsuhiro Asagiri***WINDOW ON AFRICA****Südafrikas Landfrauen beliefern den Weltmarkt***Von Stephanie Nieuwoudt***Taking Up a Women's Agenda***By Najum Mushtaq***BUCHTIPP****Gebrochene Menschen in erbarmungsloser Stadt***Eine Rezension von Bettina Gutierrez***4 Revitalise UN Through the Power Of Youth**

Give me a lever and a firm place to stand," Archimedes is reported to have said some 2,200 years ago, "and I will move the Earth." His words go beyond an explanation of the principle of the lever. They indicate confidence in the potentialities of humankind, an assertion that, whatever crises we face, humans have without fail the wisdom to find a solution, writes Japanese Buddhist philosopher Daisaku Ikeda.



Page 9

**12 Development Funding Vital to Beat Crisis**

Two months have passed since the effects of the global financial crisis were first felt in Asia and the Pacific. Much has been said about them. And yet, one of the effects less spoken of is the impact of the crisis on the availability of public and private finance for development, a key issue for the region, where more than 900 million people are living in poverty, writes UN Under-Secretary-General Noeleen Heyzer.



Page 17

**16 Indonesia Says 'No, Thank you' to IMF Loans**

This abrasive attitude stems from lingering bitterness over the damage caused to this regional giant by the harsh prescriptions the IMF imposed in its rescue package for Indonesia, beginning in late 1997. President Susil Bambang Yudhoyono conveyed such a sentiment during the recent meeting in Washington of the leaders of the world's biggest economies, writes Marwaan Macan-Marcar.

Page 18

**21 Südafrikas Landfrauen beliefern den Weltmarkt**

In der Provinz Western Cape im Süden Südafrikas liegt die kleine Ortschaft Wupperthal. Sie wurde von der Herrnhuter Brüdergemeinde vor fast 200 Jahren als Missionsstation gegründet. Hier, wo die imposante Dorfkirche an das Wirken der frommen Siedler erinnert, produzieren Frauen Naturkosmetika aus dem einheimischen Rotbusch, die vor allem in Deutschland reißenden Absatz finden, schreibt Stephanie Nieuwoudt.

Seite 28

**26 Deutsche Redaktion**

Karina Böckmann



Heike Nasdala



Grit Moskau-Porsch

28

29

30

Titelbild: www.freewebs.com

Bildredaktion: Barbara Schnöde [Mail Boxes Etc.]

## Financing Destruction?



Is the European Union financing ecologically and socially destructive projects in Africa through its low-profile European Investment Bank (EIB) based in Luxembourg? Evidence gathered from projects that the Bank has funded in the region indicates that these are not protecting environment or alleviating hardship.

One of the largest projects the EIB has financed involves the construction of a 1,070 km oil pipeline in Chad and Cameroon. This project, to which the Bank allocated 144 million Euros in 2001, has resulted in the large-scale confiscation of lands farmed by peasants for which they have not been adequately compensated. In addition, rights activists in the region say, the discharges of oil from the project have polluted several rivers and streams. Gas flaring undertaken by ExxonMobil, one of the participating companies, is said to have caused severe respiratory and other health problems.

At a Brussels conference on Dec. 2, Thérèse Mekombe, president of the Association of Women Lawyers of Chad, claimed that revenue from the project is being used by her country's President Idriss Deby to increase military expenditure. Deby has been accused of supporting the *Justice and Equality Movement*, one of the groups involved in the violence in Darfur, across Chad's border with Sudan, which has uprooted more than 2.5 million people over the past five years.

"On Aug. 11 - Independence Day - the government was so happy to show off its war vehicles," Mekombe told a conference on the EIB's activities held in the Belgian Senate. "This is not what the population expected from the exploitation of oil. They wanted the revenue to be invested in development projects and to help the Chadian population get out of extreme poverty," an IPS report quoted her saying.

A separate project financed by the EIB relates to a gas pipeline in West Africa. Stretching more than 680 km, it starts in the Niger Delta and ends in Ghana, where it is expected to begin delivering energy in the coming weeks. In December 2006, the bank awarded 75 million Euros to the Ghana government for work on this pipeline, which brings together such companies as Shell, Chevron, Texaco and Nigerian National Petroleum.

Twelve communities in Nigeria who allege that the project will cause irreparable harm to the environment on which they depend filed a complaint to the World Bank, which has also been financing it, in 2006. Earlier this year, the World Bank Inspection Panel found that the communities had not been properly consulted about the consequences of the project.

Green campaigners contend that financing schemes that are reliant on fossil fuels run counter to the EU's stated objective of fighting climate change. Osayande Omokaro from Friends of the Earth Nigeria told the Brussels conference that European energy firms were eager to increase their investment in Africa in order to compete with China and to reduce their dependence on oil and gas from the Middle East and Russia.

"Europeans pride themselves as promoters of human rights, freedom and good governance," he added. "The Chinese do not really promote these values. The Europeans must live by what they practise at home, even if it means losing some ground to the Chinese. It is better to make sure you practise what you preach."

During 2007, the EIB became the first public lender to agree to fund the Tenke Fungurume mining project in Congo with 100 million Euros. Covering over 1,000 square kilometres, this will extract copper and cobalt, two materials heavily demanded throughout the world. Mobile phones, for example, rely extensively on Congolese cobalt. The project has left hundreds of families homeless as they were displaced in order to make for mining installations.

All this underlines the need for national parliaments throughout Europe to scrutinise the Bank's activities, particularly as the EIB is barely known by the public at large but provides enormous funds to developing countries and is the leading public financier to the extractive industries.

Ramesh Jaura  
Chief Editor

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## Bauern greifen zur Feder

**Buenos Aires** - Bauern der nordargentinischen Provinz Santiago del Estero wollen sich künftig mit Hilfe einer eigenen Zeitschrift gegen die Übergriffe von Großgrundbesitzern, Polizei und privaten Sicherheitskräften wehren. Ihr Stück Land ist ihre Lebengrundlage. Obwohl sie es schon seit Generationen bewirtschaften, ist es nicht ihr Eigentum. Die Angst, vertrieben zu werden, ist daher allgegenwärtig.

Die Zeitschrift 'El Ashpulitu' startete im Oktober mit einer Auflage von zunächst 4.000 Exemplaren. 'El Ashpulitu' ist Quechua und heißt soviel wie 'voller Erde'. Und die Erde ist denn auch zentrales Thema des Blattes. Es berichtet über den Alltag der Bauern in der Region: etwa über den Kampf gegen die Wasserknappheit, gegen Versuche, sie von ihren Parzellen zu vertreiben und gegen willkürliche Festnahmen durch die Polizei.

Nach argentinischem Recht können landlose Bauern, die eine besetzte Parzelle kontinuierlich über mindestens 20 Jahre bewirtschaften, Eigentumsrechte einklagen. Nach Schätzungen des Zentrums für Rechts- und Sozialstudien (CELS), einer auf Rechtsberatung spezialisierten Hilfsorganisation, trifft dies auf 73 Prozent der Familien in Santiago del Estero zu.

Die Provinz Santiago del Estero zählt rund 800.000 Einwohner. Von ihnen leben 34 Prozent auf dem Land. Das gesamte Gebiet gehört zum 'Gran Chaco' - eine Region mit Trockenwäldern und Dornbuschsavannen, die sich über den Norden Argentiniens, den Südosten Boliviens und den westlichen Teil Paraguays erstreckt.

Herausgeber von 'El Ashpulitu' ist die Landlosenbewegung MOCASE (Movimiento Campesino de Santiago del Estero), in der sich rund 9.000 Familien zusammengeschlossen haben. Ihr Ziel ist es, das Land zu verteidigen, das sie zum Teil bereits mehr als 20 Jahre bewirtschaften. Auch das argentinische Sozialministerium unterstützt die Publikation, die nun alle zwei Monate erscheinen soll.

"Hier auf dem Land leben viele Leute ohne Strom. Daher gibt es auch kein Fernsehen und kein Internet. Deshalb bekommen die Menschen hier kaum mit, was um sie herum geschieht", erklärt die Chef redakteurin von 'El Ashpulitu', Diana Gagliano. Die Zeitschrift biete nun eine Möglichkeit, die Dorfbewohner auf dem Laufenden zu halten.

So berichtet das Blatt etwa über die Ausbreitung der Monokultur des Soja, der sich in den letzten Jahren zum Hauptexportgut der Provinz entwickelt hat. Nach offiziellen Angaben wurden 500.000 Hektar Wald allein zwischen 2002 und 2007 für den Anbau von Sojapflanzen gerodet.

Die Bauern sehen damit nicht nur die biologische Vielfalt der Region, sondern auch ihre eigene Existenz bedroht. Viele von ihnen fürchten, von ihrem Land vertrieben zu werden, damit auch dort Soja angebaut werden kann. Die in MOCASE organisierten Landwirte hingegen setzen auf diversifizierte Landwirtschaft. Sie pflanzen zum Beispiel Baumwolle und andere Agrarpflanzen an und halten Ziegen und Rinder für die Produktion von Fleisch, Milch und Käse. ■

## Auf zu einer Fahrradkultur



[www.bicitecas.org](http://www.bicitecas.org)

**Mexiko-Stadt** - Seit über zehn Jahren kämpfen passionierte Biker in Mexiko-Stadt für die Entwicklung einer Fahrradkultur. Nun sind sie ihrem Ziel erheblich näher gekommen. Als offiziell anerkannte Berater sollen sie den klimafreundlichen Drahteseln zu mehr Bewegungsfreiheit in der Smogverseuchten Metropole verhelfen soll.

Seit September treffen sich die Fahrradfans, die im Eifer des Gefechts auch schon mal nackt durch die Hauptstadt radeln, mit Vertretern der Stadtverwaltung, der Nationalen Autonomen Universität Mexikos (UNAM) und dem Internationalen 'Institute for Transportation and Development Policy' alle 14 Tage, um den Zweirädern den Weg freizumachen.

### Ökologische Vorteile

Wenn die Behörden ihr Ziel erreichen, in den nächsten zehn Jahren den Anteil der Fahrräder am städtischen Transportaufkommen auf fünf Prozent zu steigern, hätte dies auch ökologische Vorteile.

So könnte der Ausstoß von Kohlendioxid um 2,4 Millionen Tonnen, der von Stickstoffoxid um 5.000 Tonnen, der von Kohlenmonoxid um 80.000 Tonnen und die Partikelbelastung der Luft um 100 Tonnen gesenkt werden.

Übergeordnetes Ziel von 'Muévete en Bici' ('Fahr Fahrrad') ist der Ausbau der Radwege in der mexikanischen Hauptstadt mit einem Fuhrpark von 3,5 Millionen Fahrzeugen, zu denen jedes Jahr mindestens weitere 300.000 hinzukommen.

Zusammengenommen erreichen die Straßen der Hauptstadt eine Länge von 10.200 Kilometern. Die Fahrradwege hingegen bringen es nur auf 80 Kilometer, sollen aber auch im Interesse der Sicherheit bis 2018 auf 600 Kilometer ausgeweitet werden.

Obwohl der Radverkehr lediglich einen Anteil von 0,7 Prozent an der städtischen Mobilität hat, sterben jedes Jahr durchschnittlich 30 Biker. "Endlich nimmt man uns ernst", freut sich Agustín Martínez von der 1998 gegründeten Nichtregierungsorganisation Bicitecas.

"Muévete en Bici motiviert die Bürger, auf das Fahrrad umzusteigen. Doch wichtig ist ein kultureller Wandel. Fahrräder sollten als Fortbewegungsmittel betrachtet werden, die schnell und ökologisch sind und Spaß machen."

Die Fahr-Fahrrad-Initiative wurde im vergangenen Monat mit dem Ehrenpreis 'Aktive Städte, gesunde Städte' der Panamerikanischen Gesundheitsorganisation (PAHO) ausgezeichnet.

Mit der Auszeichnung würdigt die PAHO die Entscheidung, Straßen im Zentrum von Mexiko-Stadt an Sonntagen über eine Länge von zehn Kilometern für motorisierte Fahrzeuge zu sperren. Einmal im Monat sind es 30 Kilometer, die ausschließlich Fußgängern, Fahrrad- und Rollschuhfahrern vorbehalten sind. ■

## Textilindustrie wird grün



Solarpanele der Firma 'RT Knits' Bild: Nasseem Ackbarally | IPS

*Port Louis* - Sonne und Wind gibt es auf Mauritius mehr als genug. Doch was bislang vor allem dem Tourismus der kleinen Inselrepublik im Indischen Ozean zugute kam, will sich jetzt auch die Textilindustrie als wichtigster Exportzweig zu Nutze machen. Der Einsatz von Solar- und Windkraft soll Kosten sparen und die aus umwelt- und sozialverträglich arbeitenden Fabriken stammenden 'grünen' Produkte konkurrenzfähiger machen.

Vor Besuchern aus Europa erläuterte Kendall Tang, Direktor von 'Richfield Tang Knits' ('RT Knits'), kürzlich die innovative Strategie seines südlich der Hauptstadt Port Louis gelegenen Unternehmens. "Uns bleibt keine andere Wahl als auf eine ökologische Produktion zu setzen. Die Märkte sind so weit entfernt, dass unsere Kunden uns manchmal vergessen. Die Handelspräferenzen sind aufgehoben, und Sonne und Wind sind die einzigen natürlichen Energieresourcen unserer Insel."

RT Knits soll zu einem Vorzeigebetrieb werden, wie der Projektmanager des Unternehmens, Patrick Koo, in einem Gespräch mit IPS betonte. "Durch die verstärkte Nutzung von erneuerbarer

Energie sowie durch Recycling und den Einsatz recycelter Rohstoffe benötigen wir weniger Wasser und produzieren den niedrigsten CO<sub>2</sub>-Ausstoß pro Kleidungsstück." Für die Investoren bedeute dies eine Reduzierung von Produktionskosten und für die 1.600 Beschäftigten eine bessere Arbeitsumgebung, erläuterte Koo. Die Kunden würden mit Waren beliefert, die so ökologisch wie möglich produziert werden.

"Schon jetzt können wir durch den Einsatz von Solar- und Windkraft 30 Prozent unseres früheren Kraftstoffverbrauchs einsparen, bald sollen es 50 Prozent werden", erläuterte Koo stolz. 150 Solarpaneale wurden bereits auf dem Fabrikgelände installiert. Regenwasser wird gesammelt und in der Produktion wieder verwendet. Mit Windenergie werden die Fabrikhallen belüftet und entstaubt. Koo versicherte, nicht erst die hohen Energiepreise hätten das Unternehmen dazu bewogen, möglichst ökologisch zu produzieren. Dazu habe auch die Regierungsstrategie beigetragen, Mauritius zu einer nachhaltigen Insel zu machen ('Making Mauritius a Sustainable Island'). ■

## Mideska will Machtstrukturen ändern



Bertkan Mideska

*Addis Abeba* - In Äthiopien ist eine junge Frau angetreten, die autoritären patriarchalischen Machtstrukturen des Landes am Horn von Afrika aufzubrechen. Erstes Ziel der Oppositionspolitikerin Bertukan Mideksa ist die Einigung der zerstrittenen Opposition.

Mit ihrer Wahl zur Vorsitzenden der neu gegründeten Einheitspartei für Demokratie

und Gerechtigkeit, die aus der oppositionellen Koalition für Einheit und Demokratie (CUD), hervorgegangen ist, verbuchte die 34-Jährige den ersten bemerkenswerten Erfolg: Sie hat sich als erste Äthiopierin an der Spitze einer politischen Partei katapultiert und gilt inzwischen als Sprecherin der politischen Opposition des Landes.

"Die Werte, die ich vertrete, sind Vertrauen und Fairness", sagte Mideksa im Gespräch mit IPS. Um sich eine breite Basis zu verschaffen, werde ihre Partei im ganzen Land 117 Regionalbüros einrichten und sich einem Forum anderer Oppositionsparteien anschließen, um auf die nächsten, für 2010 angesetzten Parlamentswahlen vorbereitet zu sein und mehr Mandate zu gewinnen.

Mit dem Entschluss, ihr Richteramt aufzugeben und sich im Jahr 2000 als unabhängige Kandidatin um einen Sitz im äthiopischen Parlament zu bewerben, hatte die studierte Juristin trotz aller Warnungen von Familie und Freunden einen steinigen und gefahrvollen Weg in die Politik eingeschlagen. Nach den auch international als irregulär kritisier-

ten Wahlen von 2004 und den anschließend gewaltsam ausgetragenen politischen Auseinandersetzungen geriet Mideksa als damalige Vizevorsitzende der CUD mit mehr als 100 anderen führenden Oppositionellen ins Visier von Ministerpräsident Meles Zenawi und seiner Äthiopischen Revolutionär-Demokratischen Volksfront (EPRDF). Sie wurden festgenommen und landete mit zehntausenden ihrer Anhänger im Gefängnis.

Drei Jahre später, im Zuli 2007, verurteilte Äthiopiens Oberstes Bundesgericht die junge Oppositionelle und 34 Gleichgesinnte zu einer lebenslangen Haftstrafe. Zu den Anklagepunkten gehörten Landesverrat, Verletzung der Verfassung, Missbrauch verfassungsmäßiger Rechte, Wehrkraftzerstörung und Anstiftung zu einer bewaffneten Rebellion. "Tatsächlich bestand mein einziges Vergehen darin, eine andere politische Meinung zu vertreten", so Mideksa. Ihr unverzüglich vorgebrachter Antrag auf Amnestie war erfolgreich und Staatspräsident Girma W. Giorgis unterschrieb schließlich das Gnadengesuch. "Diese bislang schwierigste Erfahrung meines Lebens hat mich stark gemacht", erklärte sie.

Die Oppositonsführerin bleibt zuversichtlich, obwohl die im April durchgeföhrten und als Farce kritisierten Lokalwahlen der EPRDF einen überwältigenden Sieg bescherten. Auch verschiedene Nachwahlen zum Parlament, bei denen jeweils 500 regierungsfreundlichen Kandidaten nur ein Kandidat aus dem oppositionellen Lager gegenüberstand, konnte die Regierungspartei für sich entscheiden. Mideksa setzt jetzt auf einen breiten öffentlichen Dialog, der ihrer Partei zu mehr politischem Spielraum verhelfen soll. Als hilfreich dürften sich in diesem Zusammenhang auch die 750.000 US-Dollar erweisen, die ihre Anhänger aus allen Teilen des Landes für die Finanzierung des nächsten Wahlkampfs eingesammelt haben. "In die Politik zu gehen", versicherte die Politikerin, "war für mich die richtige Entscheidung." ■

## Feminisierung der Budgetpolitik Venezuelas

*Caracas* - Venezuela berücksichtigt bei der Aufstellung seiner öffentlichen Haushalte zunehmend Gleichberechtigungsaspekte. Nicht verwunderlich, dass jetzt neben Posten wie Straßenbau oder Schulen immer mehr Ausgaben für Programme gegen Gewalt in der Familie oder Teenager-Schwangerschaften auftauchen.

Vorreiter ist der Bezirk Caroní im Nordosten des Landes. Hier wird seit etwa zehn Jahren der Haushalt zusammen mit der Bevölkerung zusammengestellt - und Frauen beteiligen sich wesentlich stärker an der Debatte als Männer und profitieren entsprechend davon.

"Gute Absichten oder Wünsche reichen nicht aus, um soziale Gleichheit und Gleichstellung der Geschlechter zu erreichen. Es müssen Räume geschaffen werden, um diese Ziele zu fördern. Dafür müssen dezidierte Haushaltsposten eingestellt werden", sagt die Parlamentarierin Flor Ríos, die auch den Vorsitz des Ausschusses für Frauenfragen innehat.

Im Mai 2005 verfügte der venezolanische Präsident Hugo Chavez, dass die Geschlechtergleichheit in Haushaltsentwürfen zu berücksichtigen sei "mit dem Ziel, dass die Regierungsarbeit Frauen, Männern, Jungen und Mädchen gleichermaßen zum Wohl gereicht", wie es in einer vom Finanzministerium übernommenen Formulierung heißt.

Damit sei eine Überprüfung der Budgets sämtlicher venezolanischer Institutionen angestoßen worden, meint die Wirtschaftswissenschaftlerin Masaya Llavaneras. Sie hat ein Projekt der Regierung Chavez koordiniert, um Haushaltsentwürfe unter Berücksichtigung der Geschlechtergleichheit zu entwerfen und zu implementieren. "Wir haben allein auf nationaler Ebene über 500 Stellen, die Haushalte schreiben und verwalten."

Die Parlamentarierin Ríos weist darauf hin, dass die Berücksichtigung der Geschlechter ein Budget nicht automatisch teurer macht. "Es geht nicht darum, Budgets zu verändern, sondern darum, sie so aufzuschlüsseln, dass die unterschiedliche Relevanz für Männer und Frauen deutlich wird. Zum Beispiel, indem eine Kampagne gegen Brustkrebs im Rahmen eines Gesundheitsprogramms deutlich hervorgehoben wird oder die Aufklärung über Teenager-Schwangerschaften innerhalb des Erziehungshaushaltes besonders markiert wird".



Präsident Hugo Chavez

Manchmal aber muss der Haushalt doch aufgestockt werden. "Zum Beispiel für unseren Vorschlag, dass in allen Regionen Gerichte geschaffen werden, die sich mit Fällen geschlechtsspezifischer Gewalt beschäftigen, oder Frauengefängnisse gebaut werden, anstatt weibliche Häftlinge in separaten Flügeln der allgemeinen Gefängnisse unterzubringen", betonte Ríos. Der Wirtschaftswissenschaftlerin Llavaneras liegt vor allem Entlohnung der Frauen am Herzen. "Es ist kein Zufall, dass in dem Jahr vor der Initiative des Präsidenten das Entwicklungsprogramm der Vereinten Nationen (UNDP) nachgewiesen hat, dass Männer in Venezuela ein jährliches Durchschnittseinkommen von 7.550 Dollar vorweisen können - 2,4 Mal so viel wie die Frauen mit 3.125 Dollar."

Der neue Denkansatz setzt sich nur langsam in den 23 Bundesstaaten und 335 Verwaltungsbezirken Venezuelas durch. Eine Ausnahme ist Ciudad Guayana in Caroní. Bereits seit Mitte der 1990er Jahre lassen die sozialistischen Bürgermeister in der Stadt und den Vororten die Bürger in allgemeinen Versammlungen bei der Verwendung der Haushaltsgelder mitreden. Das machte die Implementierung der neuen Richtlinien wesentlich leichter. "Zu den Versammlungen kamen wesentlich mehr Frauen als Männer", erläutert Solana Simao von der örtlichen Frauengruppe 'Fundación Mujer'. [Bild oben: Wikimedia] ■

## Fortschritte bei der Hungerbekämpfung im Irak

*Rome* - Im Kampf gegen Armut und Unterernährung hat der Irak einen gewaltigen Schritt nach vorn getan. Wie aus einer neuen Untersuchung der irakischen Regierung und des UN-Welternährungsprogramms (WFP) hervorgeht, sank die Zahl der Hungernden in den letzten drei Jahren von vier Millionen auf rund 930.000.

WFP-Landesdirektor im Irak Edward Kallon führt die positive Entwicklung auf einen wirtschaftlichen Aufschwung zurück, der sich wiederum einer verbesserten Sicherheitslage und humanitären Anstrengungen der internationalen Gemeinschaft verdankt. Allerdings sei die Zahl der Hungernden für ein relativ wohlhabendes Land wie den Irak noch immer zu hoch, sagte er und räumte ein, dass sich die Erfolge bei der Bekämpfung der akuten und nicht bei der chronischen Unterernährung eingestellt hätten.

Kallon gab ferner zu bedenken, dass die Ernährung weiterer 6,4 Millionen Menschen von sozialen Sicherungssystemen wie dem staatlichen 'Public Distribution System' (PDS) abhängig ist, das unter häufigen Ausfällen und Verzögerungen bei der Verteilung leidet. "Die Situation bleibt unbeständig, jede Störung kann den gesamten Prozess unterminieren", warnte das WFP, das derzeit im Irak 750.000 von rund 1,5 Millionen Vertriebenen mit Nahrungsmittel versorgt. ■



Bild : © WFP | Imed Kganfir



Former UN Under-Secretary-General, Dr. Shashi Tharoor was the official candidate of India for the succession to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in 2006, and came a close second out of seven contenders in the race.

bring themselves to put a black family in the White House. By voting their hopes and not their prejudices, Americans outdid themselves and earned the admiration of the world. This was, quite simply, the soul of a great nation being reborn.

The election of Barack Obama will, I have no doubt, have a transformative effect on the rest of the planet. I have written earlier in this space about how it will dispel the negative stereotypes about America, while reinforcing the great American myth of a country where, quite literally, anyone can become anything. Obama's election will make it impossible for America's critics to caricature the country he leads, and provide an invaluable public relations boost to America's "soft power."

But what about India? On the one hand, Indians, as people of colour ourselves, largely share in the enthusiasm for Obama. There are other details that are breathlessly passed around — the miniature Hanuman locket he carries with him, the portrait of Mahatma Gandhi from which he derives daily inspiration in his office, his fondness for *daal* (which he has said he can cook pretty well himself, though he is unlikely to be given the chance in the next four years). My mother read his autobiography and excitedly noted the references to *samosas* and *chapattis*. Given that the president-elect's own late mother had worked for the Ford Foundation in New Delhi, and that his friends and classmates include several *desis*, it's clear that Obama is more sensitive to, and knowledgeable about, India than any previous American president.

On the other hand, there are those who argue that Obama, as an idealistic Democrat, would not be "good for India" in the way that his Republican predecessor has been. They point to three areas. First, the entrenched Democratic support for nuclear non-proliferation, and a corresponding disinclination to support exceptions for India. Second, the risk of increasing protectionism: many worriedly cite Obama's comments that he would reward American companies that keep jobs in the US, a potential threat to India's outsourcing businesses. And finally, some see in his references to Kashmir — he has cited the need to resolve Pakistan's differences with India on Kashmir so that Islamabad can focus on the threats of its homegrown militants — the potential for unwelcome meddling in our neighbourhood. Let's look at each of these.

# Obama Reinforces the Great American Myth

By Shashi Tharoor

Sometimes mere words are not enough to capture the feelings associated with a particular moment. The election of a black American president on Nov. 9 has defied the skills of the most gifted word-smiths. Historic, epochal, the dawn of a new era — each syllable has tripped over its own inadequacy to do justice to this momentous event. I met prominent white Americans who had grown up in the racially-segregated South, and they had tears in their eyes, because they were witnessing a moment they had never believed would come to pass in their lifetimes.

When the American television networks called Barack Obama the winner at 11 pm, I was struggling to cross Times Square in New York to get to a TV studio, and I found myself consumed by the excitement and emotion of the throngs around me. My own reaction, after 32 years of watching American presidential elections up close, was of wonder, mixed with a palpable sense of relief. Because like many who wished for this outcome, I had still feared that too many white Americans, in the privacy of the voting booth, would be unable to

bring themselves to put a black family in the White House. By voting their hopes and not their prejudices, Americans outdid themselves and earned the admiration of the world. This was, quite simply, the soul of a great nation being reborn.

On the nuclear front, Obama voted for the Indo-US deal, as did McCain. The only additional issue that might arise on his watch could be a new American thrust to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), which the Bush administration and Republicans in Congress had been unwilling to do. If the US signs, pressure will undoubtedly fall upon India to do the same, especially since the Treaty cannot come into force without India's (and Pakistan's) signatures. But what's wrong with signing the CTBT? Former prime minister Vajpayee had already promised to do so years ago. And CTBT or no CTBT, any responsible Indian policy-maker knows perfectly well that a de facto test ban is in force, because any nuclear test we conduct will instantly attract the kind of sanctions that nearly crippled our nuclear programmes in the wake of the Pokhran blast. Signing the CTBT will change literally nothing in reality for us; in any case, if the US signs it, it would be unthinkable for India, the land of Mahatma Gandhi, to be the lone holdout on a vital step to make the world safer from nuclear war.

The threat to outsourcing is also exaggerated. Obama will certainly keep his promise to provide tax incentives to American companies that keep their employees in the US. But at a time of economic downturn, few companies are going to be able to afford to overlook the benefits of getting business processes conducted abroad — benefits likely to be far greater than the tax dollars gained by not doing so. Instead of over-reacting to a campaign promise, we should wait and see how it is implemented. It is unlikely the actual numbers will provide any cause for alarm.

On Kashmir, some worry that Obama's comments suggest he would be more intrusive on Pakistan's behalf, thereby emboldening those in Islamabad who think they can enlist Washington's support for their view of the conflict. [ . . . ] this is an over-interpretation of his remarks. My reading of Obama's position is that he sees all too clearly how Pakistan's creation and encouragement of fundamentalist terror in the name of Kashmir has turned into a severe threat to Pakistan itself.

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# Revitalise UN Through the Power Of Youth

By Daisaku Ikeda

Give me a lever and a firm place to stand," Archimedes is reported to have said some 2,200 years ago, "and I will move the Earth." His words go beyond an explanation of the principle of the lever. They indicate confidence in the potentialities of humankind, an assertion that, whatever crises we face, humans have without fail the wisdom to find a solution.

The metaphor of Archimedes and the lever was famously cited by US President John F. Kennedy in his 1963 address to the United Nations General Assembly: "*My fellow inhabitants of this planet: Let us take our stand here in this Assembly of Nations. And let us see if we, in our own time, can move the world to a just and lasting peace.*"

The UN provides us with "a place to stand" for the great challenge of moving the Earth, using our commitment to the welfare of all humankind as a lever. Our world today is weighed down by a bewildering range of global issues - from climate change, economic crisis, poverty and wealth disparities, to terrorism and food shortages.

## Maximising the potential

How do we begin to untangle this complex of interwoven problems? I believe that the fundamental avenue for resolving these challenges is maximising the potential of the UN, the framework of solidarity that was born out of the tragic experience of two world wars. What alternative site is there for pooling our resources, for transforming our way of thinking from the pursuit of narrow national goals to working together for the benefit of humanity?

This planet does not exist to serve the interests of any particular state. Rather, each state exists to contribute to the common interests of the planet. There is a great need for all nations to reaffirm this self-evident truth. Of course, the UN faces numerous problems. If it is to fulfil its promise, it needs to be powerfully revitalised and rejuvenated.

To function in the 21st century the UN must be supported by three pillars that transcend national borders: a shared sense of purpose, a shared sense of responsibility, and shared action.

I believe it is the creative engagement and innovativeness of young people around the world that holds the key to breaking existing moulds and affirming these principles. The world's youth increasingly have a sense of global identity. They are united by a common concern for the fate of our planet, and are connected and networked through new communications technologies.

Young people under 24, as defined by the UN as "youth and "children" now constitute nearly 50 percent of the world's population. Youth represent a source of limitless promise and potential for change. If we neglect the issues facing us today, it is the next generation that will have to face the tragic consequences. No one has a greater right to speak out. And it is the special privilege



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of youth to rise beyond the narrow limits of short-term gain, to burn with the fervour of justice and strive toward long-term goals.

I believe it is vitally important that we establish further structures for the active participation of young people in UN deliberations and in the activities carried out by its specialised agencies around the world. Participation in decision-making is one of the key priority areas of the UN's agenda on youth. This year as many as 14 countries included youth representatives in their delegations to the General Assembly, a sign of hope and an acknowledgement of the valuable perspectives youth can bring. Such initiatives should be encouraged and expanded. *I would like to propose that steps be taken to enhance the status of youth within the structures of the UN. At present, there is a "focal point for youth" within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) that handles issues related to youth. This could be upgraded into an Office for Youth. Another suggestion would be for the appointment of a Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, or of a UN High Representative for Youth.*

In recent years, there has been an increasing stress on the participation and role of youth at international conferences and meetings organised by the UN, as well as the Annual DPI/NGO Conference.

I would also like to support the strengthening of the annual Youth Assembly, which brings together representatives of the world's youth, so that its deliberations feed directly into the UN General Assembly. More opportunities must be created for young people to bring their concerns to the attention of the world's leaders. I have faith in young people.

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# "Globalisierung verringert Armut"

sagt Jagdish N. Bhagwati in einem Gespräch mit Bettina Gutiérrez

Ein Ende des Lamentierens und die Entwicklung neuer Konzepte, die der Globalisierung ein menschliches Antlitz verleihen, fordert der international anerkannte Ökonom Jagdish Bhagwati [Bild: [www.cfr.org](http://www.cfr.org)]. Es sei wichtig, auch im Interesse der Armutsbekämpfung, die Chancen zu ergreifen, die der internationale Markt zu bieten habe.

Wer ständig dem Gedanken verhaftet sei, dass Globalisierung schade, werde nicht richtig handeln können, warnte Bhagwati, Wirtschaftswissenschaftler an der New Yorker Columbia-Universität und Berater der Welthandelsorganisation (WTO) und der Vereinten Nationen in einem Gespräch mit Bettina Gutiérrez für Kommunikation Global | Global Perspectives (KG-GP).

*KG-GP: In Ihrem Buch 'Verteidigung der Globalisierung' vertreten Sie die These, dass sich die Globalisierung positiv auf die soziale Agenda ausgewirkt habe. Die im Rahmen der Globalisierung stattgefundene Handelsliberalisierung, so sagen Sie, habe zu mehr Wachstum und folglich zur Verringerung der Armut geführt.*

**Jagdish Bhagwati:** Ja, das stimmt. Das kann man am Beispiel von Indien und China sehen. Ich denke, dass Indien und China bis zu den 80er Jahren - China aus politischen Gründen, Indien aufgrund seiner Wirtschaftsphilosophie - grundsätzlich nicht an der Außenwelt interessiert waren.

Als in Indien 1991 die große Reform eingeführt wurde, fiel der Anteil des Bruttoinlandsproduktes unter ein Prozent. Derzeit haben wir nur geringe Handelsanteile und beteiligen uns weniger am internationalen Handel. Ich meine nicht den Freihandel. Aber die Investitionen, die über multinationale Unternehmen ins Land kommen, belaufen sich auf etwa 100 Millionen US-Dollar. Das sind vielleicht eine oder zwei Nullen zu wenig, aber es ist trotzdem sehr positiv, dass so viel investiert wird.

Als wir mit den Reformen begonnen haben, betrug das Wachstum nur 3,5 Prozent. Das Problem in Indien ist, dass es zu viele Menschen gibt, die ausgebeutet werden. Die Investitionen kommen der Bevölkerung nicht zugute, die Armut ist sehr groß. Deshalb wurde die Strategie entwickelt, durch Wirtschaftswachstum mehr Jobs zu schaffen.

Unsere Wirtschaft ist zwar nicht sehr stark gewachsen - in den letzten 15, 18 Jahren waren es um drei Prozent. Das lag an der schlechten Politik. Dennoch, eine ausgewogene Volkswirtschaft bietet der Bevölkerung im Allgemeinen neue Chancen. In diesem Punkt sind sich linke und rechte Politiker einig. Ungefähr 200 Millionen Menschen sind so der Armut entkommen. Das bedeutet nicht, dass sie nach westlichen Standards leben können, doch sind sie nicht mehr so arm wie vorher. Wachstum ist also ein wichtiges Instrument der Arbeitsplatzbeschaffung. Es hilft den Menschen.

*KG-GP: Nicht alle Formen des Wachstums helfen den Armen.*

**Jagdish Bhagwati:** Hier liegt noch viel Arbeit vor uns. Wir können zum Beispiel das Geld, das durch Investitionen in unser Land kommt, durch Besteuerung an die Bevölkerung verteilen. Und wir hatten eine Landreform, an der wir noch weiter arbeiten müssen. In einer wachsenden Wirtschaft steigen die Einnahmen. Diese können wiederum dazu genutzt werden, Schulen und ein Bildungswesen für Arme zu finanzieren. Das Problem in Indien liegt meist in der Umsetzung. Schon früher, in den Jahren 1955 und 1956, gab es konkrete Pläne zur Behebung der Armut. Die Frage ist nur, warum wurden sie nicht umgesetzt? Sie wurden nicht umgesetzt, weil die Politik nicht adäquat gehandelt hat.

*KG-GP: Und wie beurteilen Sie die Situation in China?*

**Jagdish Bhagwati:** Im kommunistischen China gibt es, wie in jedem sozialistischen Land, keine Demokratie, was schwerwiegende Probleme zur Folge hat. Ohne eine Demokratie ist der Fortschritt nicht zukunftsfähig.

Ein Beispiel hierfür ist die Landreform. In Indien gibt es viele Menschen, die Land pachten wollen und sich deshalb an den Staat wenden. In diesen Fällen entscheidet die Regierung darüber, wer wann und zu welchem Zweck ein Anrecht auf staatliches Land hat und wie die Entschädigung aussehen soll.

In China verhält es sich damit ganz anders. Es gibt keine Zivilgesellschaft, kein Klassensystem, keine freie Rechtssprechung und keine oppositionellen Parteien. Die vier wesentlichen Elemente der Demokratie sind nicht vorhanden. Wie soll es da zu einem gesellschaftlichen Wandel, wie sollen die Menschen zu ihrem Recht kommen?

Wenn man kein Ökonom ist, kann man diesen Aspekt von zwei Seiten aus betrachten: Ich bin arm, habe zwei Kinder, die zur Schule gehen, drei Kinder, die für mich arbeiten, produziere Reis – dies ist ein aktuelles Beispiel aus Vietnam – und plötzlich erschließt sich ein neuer Absatzmarkt für Reis. Also, so folgere ich, kann ich jetzt sehr viel Geld verdienen, wenn ich Reis exportiere. Ich nehme meine zwei Kinder aus der Schule und lasse sie für mich arbeiten, damit mein Einkommen steigt.

Obwohl China gute wirtschaftspolitische Ansätze hat, bietet das System keine grundlegenden Lösungen an. Dennoch zeigen beide Länder, Indien und China, dass es sich positiv auswirken kann, wenn man die Chancen nutzt, die der internationale Markt bietet.

*KG-GP: Es gibt auch weniger Kinderarbeit, sagen Sie.*

Jagdish Bhagwati: Wenn man kein Ökonom ist, kann man diesen Aspekt von zwei Seiten aus betrachten: Ich bin arm, habe zwei Kinder, die zur Schule gehen, drei Kinder, die für mich arbeiten, produziere Reis – dies ist ein aktuelles Beispiel aus Vietnam – und plötzlich erschließt sich ein neuer Absatzmarkt für Reis. Also, so folgere ich, kann ich jetzt sehr viel Geld verdienen, wenn ich Reis exportiere. Ich nehme meine zwei Kinder aus der Schule und lasse sie für mich arbeiten, damit mein Einkommen steigt.

Wenn man ein guter Vater ist, denkt man anders: Ich verdiene jetzt viel Geld und kann noch zwei weitere Kinder in die Schule schicken. So handeln gute Eltern. Es ist allerdings eine Tatsache und das überrascht mich nicht, dass bei steigendem Wachstum mehr Eltern ihre Kinder in die Schule schicken. Sie nehmen sogar in Kauf, dass ihre Kinder täglich 50 Meilen hin und zurück zur Schule fahren.

*KG-GP: Werden die Frauenrechte durch die Globalisierung gestärkt?*

Jagdish Bhagwati: Hier gibt es viele Bedenken. Die meisten Bedenken kommen von den Menschen in den entlegenen Gebieten. Sie fürchten, dass ihre Töchter ausgebeutet werden, wenn sie in den Städten arbeiten. Für traditionelle Eltern ist es oft sehr schwierig, wenn ihre Töchter nach zwei Jahren wieder nach Hause kommen. Sie sind selbstständiger geworden und nicht mehr so leicht zu kontrollieren.

Viele junge Mädchen gehen von zu Hause weg, um möglichst viel Geld zu verdienen und an der Universität zu studieren. Sie arbeiten sehr hart, weil sie einen Universitätsabschluss machen und ein normales Leben führen

möchten. Sie kehren nicht mehr zu ihren Eltern zurück. Ich halte das für gut. Wie immer gibt es natürlich auch in diesem Fall Argumente, die dafür und dagegen sprechen. In meinem Buch bemühe ich mich um eine ausgewogene Sichtweise.

*KG-GP: Im Hinblick auf den Klimaschutz, so sagen Sie in Ihrem Buch, hat sich als Folge der Globalisierung der Wettbewerb bei den Umweltstandards unter den einzelnen Ländern verschärft. Außerdem plädiieren Sie für eine Neuausrichtung des Kioto-Protokolls.*

Jagdish Bhagwati: Die Entwicklungsländer haben einen klaren Standpunkt zum Kioto-Protokoll. Sie argumentieren, dass in den letzten 100 Jahren vor allem die westlichen Länder zur Umweltverschmutzung beigetragen haben. Das stimmt, fast 90 Prozent der Schadstoffemissionen kamen aus dem Westen. Daher sei es nicht fair, wenn der Westen nun für seine derzeitigen Emissionen bezahlen soll, obwohl er in der Vergangenheit Umweltschäden angerichtet habe.

Ich bin der Ansicht, dass jeder für seine Umweltverschmutzung bezahlen sollte. Auch Indien und China sollten für die Schäden, die sie verursachen, aufkommen. Ich plädiere für die Gründung einer internationalen Aktiengesellschaft, mit deren Hilfe die westlichen Länder Umweltschäden der Vergangenheit auffangen könnten.

Wissen Sie, wie viel die Industriestaaten zur Zeit in die Weltbank einzahlen? Sie haben sich auf die Zahlung von fünf Milliarden US-Dollar innerhalb der nächsten zehn Jahre verpflichtet. Das ist nichts. Gleichzeitig arbeitet der US-amerikanische Kongress an einer Gesetzgebung, die Indien und China mit Gegenmaßnahmen droht, falls beide Länder die ihnen auferlegten Verpflichtungen nicht akzeptieren. Das ist nicht fair.

*KG-GP: Sie schließen Ihr Buch mit der Feststellung, dass die Globalisierung mit institutionellen und politischen Herausforderungen verbunden sei, die ein ganzheitliches und kohärentes Vorgehen verlangen.*

Jagdish Bhagwati: Wir müssen über neue politische Strategien nachdenken. Die Globalisierung fördert zwar die Frauenrechte, aber nur unzureichend. Wir brauchen ergänzende Gesetzgebungen. Und auch wenn die Globalisierung dazu beiträgt, dass mehr Kinder zur Schule gehen, so müssen wir sicherstellen, dass die Kinder, die nicht zur Schule gehen, nicht in ausbeuterischen und gefährlichen Industriezweigen arbeiten.



Wir müssen mit Nichtregierungsorganisationen und der Zivilgesellschaft kooperieren, um sicherzustellen, dass die Eltern Schulen für ihre Kinder finden – es gibt nicht genug Schulen. Man könnte noch viele andere Punkte anführen, die Agenda ist sehr groß. Wir brauchen zusätzliche politische Konzepte, die der Globalisierung ein menschliches Antlitz verleihen. Das ist eine unserer wichtigsten Aufgaben. Wenn wir ständig denken, dass die Globalisierung uns allen schadet, werden wir nicht richtig handeln können. Wenn wir begriffen haben, dass die Globalisierung auch zur Verbesserung sozialer Missstände beiträgt, sind wir fähig, entsprechende politische Konzepte zu entwickeln.

KOMMUNIKATION GLOBAL ■

Jagdish N. Bhagwati, *Verteidigung der Globalisierung*. Mit einem Vorwort von Joschka Fischer, 528 Seiten, Pantheon Verlag, München 2008, 16,95 Euro.

# Nigeria – Deutschlands neuer strategischer Partner in Afrika

Von Hendrik Schott\*

"Sehen Sie, bei uns ist es doch nicht so schlimm!" Usman Baraya, Nigerias Botschafter in Brüssel und bei der Europäischen Union (EU), reagiert erfreut, als ihm während eines Gesprächs bei den Europäischen Entwicklungstagen in Straßburg Mitte November die Eindrücke einer Reise in sein Heimatland geschildert werden.

Zweifellos besitzt Nigeria im Allgemeinen einen schlechten Ruf. Nicht nur in Europa, sondern auch in Afrika. Der Botschafter und seine Landsleute wissen, dass das Bild von ihrem Land durch die Konflikte am ölfreichen Nigerdelta sowie durch Korruption bestimmt wird. Auf Grund seines Rohstoffreichtums und der vorsichtigen Reformbemühungen unter Präsident Umaru Musa Yar'Adua wächst jedoch auch in Deutschland das Interesse an dem bevölkerungsreichsten Staat Afrikas.

Außenminister Frank-Walter Steinmeier war bereits im August 2007 dort, sein Staatssekretär Heinrich Tiemann im April dieses Jahres. Vom 7. bis 12. November 2008 besuchte Bundespräsident Horst Köhler im Rahmen seines sechsten Staatsbesuchs in Afrika ein Land, dessen Probleme aber auch Zukunftschancen enorm sind.

So ist es nicht verwunderlich, dass sich das deutsche Staatsoberhaupt viel Zeit für seinen Aufenthalt in Nigeria nahm. Begleitet wurde Köhler von einer umfangreichen Delegation aus Politik und Wirtschaft. Außer den Bundestagsabgeordneten Uschi Eid, Hartwig Fischer, Hans-Ulrich Klose, Patrick Meinhardt sowie der parlamentarischen Staatssekretärin Dagmar Wöhrl waren auch Vertreter von Lufthansa, E.ON, Schott Solar, EnBW und Bilfinger Berger nach Nigeria gereist.

## Vielseitiger Partner

"Nigeria ist mit über 250 Ethnien und mehr als 430 Sprachen und Dialekten, mit seiner geographischen und religiösen Vielfalt ein Mikrokosmos des ganzen Kontinents." Beim Empfang in der deutschen Botschaft in Abuja betont Bundespräsident Horst Köhler den besonderen Charakter seines Reiseziels. Mit 140 Millionen Einwoh-

nern und enormen Erdöl- und Gasvorräten gilt das Land am Nigerdelta in Berlin inzwischen als einer der wichtigsten strategischen Partner Deutschlands in Afrika.

Zum Auftakt seines Besuchs nahm Köhler am vierten Afrika-Forum seiner Initiative 'Partnerschaft mit Afrika' teil. Europas Nachbarkontinent liegt dem Bundespräsidenten seit Beginn seiner Amtszeit besonders am Herzen. Im Rahmen der diesjährigen Veranstaltung beschäftigten sich die Teilnehmer mit den Hürden, mit denen Afrikaner und Deutsche auf dem Weg zu einer echten Partnerschaft konfrontiert werden.

Zugleich sollte in der nigerianischen Hauptstadt Abuja darüber diskutiert werden, wie diese Hürden überwunden werden können. In drei Arbeitsgruppen beschäftigte man sich mit den Barrieren auf politischem, wirtschaftlichem und gesellschaftlichem Gebiet. Im Bereich der Politik wurden insbesondere Doppelstandards seitens der EU angeprangert. Die Kluft zwischen Theorie und Praxis bei der Durchsetzung demokratischer Prinzipien wurde bei der AU bemängelt. Fehlende Infrastruktur und Bildung in Afrika wurden von der Arbeitsgruppe 'Wirtschaft' als die wichtigsten Hemmnisse angesehen. Misstrauen, Angst und Vorurteile wurden im gesellschaftlichen Bereich als die entscheidenden Barrieren genannt.

## Dialog fördern

Mit seiner Afrika-Initiative möchte der Bundespräsident einen offenen und unvoreingenommenen Dialog zwischen Deutschen und Afrikanern fördern: "Die Sichtweise des jeweils Anderen zu kennen und anzuerkennen, ist eine wichtige Voraussetzung, um Misstrauen und Vorurteile abzubauen."

Die Gastgeber, Nigerias Präsident Yar'Adua und Bundespräsident Horst Köhler, zeigten sich während der abschließenden Pressekonferenz mit dem Verlauf der Veranstaltung zufrieden. "Es hat sich gelohnt. Ich habe dazugelernt", so der Bundespräsident. Sein nigerianischer Amtskollege sprach von einer "extrem wichtigen Initiative" und "sehr fruchtbaren Diskussionen".



Bundespräsident Köhler

Während des anschließenden Staatsbesuchs in Abuja, Lagos und Kano standen die Wirtschaftsbeziehungen zwischen beiden Ländern im Mittelpunkt. Nigeria ist der achtgrößte Erdölexporteur der Welt. Trotz des Reichtums an Energieressourcen ist jedoch die Energieinfrastruktur in Nigeria unzureichend.

## Kooperationsvereinbarungen

Im Rahmen des Staatsbesuchs konnte eine wichtige Vereinbarung zur Energiepartnerschaft sowie ein Abkommen zum Ausbau der Zusammenarbeit mit der Lufthansa unterzeichnet werden. Durch die Kooperation im Erdgassektor und bei der Stromversorgung soll der nigerianische Energiehaushalt bis 2020 mehr als verdoppelt werden. Deutsche Firmen liefern Nigeria ihre Expertise für den Ausbau der Energieinfrastruktur. Traditionelle und alternative Formen der Stromerzeugung sollen beim Ausbau der nigerianischen Energieinfrastruktur gleichermaßen zum Zug kommen.

## Abuja zum Drehkreuz

Lufthansa möchte künftig häufiger nach Nigeria fliegen und Abuja zum Drehkreuz für Westafrika ausbauen. Den Nigerianern bietet man unter anderem eine Zusammenarbeit beim Ausbau der Infrastruktur des Flughafens und der Ausbildung des Flugpersonals an.

Deutschlands größte Fluggesellschaft unterstreicht, dass es sich um ein langfristiges Engagement handele und man hinsichtlich der zukünftigen Entwicklung des Landes optimistisch sei.

Die nigerianischen Gesprächspartner in allen Städten betonten gegenüber den deutschen Gästen: "Unsere Herausforderungen sind Ihre Chancen."

Sowohl der Gouverneur des südwestlichen Bundesstaates Lagos, Babatunde Raji Fashola, als auch sein Amtskollege im nördlichen Kano, Malam Ibrahim Shekarau, sehen vor allem in den Bereichen Energie, Infrastruktur, Abfallmanagement sowie im Gesundheitswesen große Möglichkeiten für die deutsche Wirtschaft.



Wenig bekannt war auch, dass 'Nollywood' mit 250.000 Arbeitsplätzen und ungefähr 2000 Filmproduktionen pro Jahr nach Hollywood und Bollywood bereits der dritt wichtigste Standort der Filmindustrie ist, schreibt Hendrik Schott, Deutschland- und EU-Korrespondent des südafrikanischen Medienunternehmens NASPERS.

## Deutsche Firmen mit Durchhaltevermögen gesucht

Die angereisten Vertreter deutscher Unternehmen hörten dies mit großem Interesse, wenngleich sie nur allzu gut wissen, dass Korruption und Misswirtschaft - trotz erkennbarer Reformbemühungen der Regierung - noch immer den Ausbau der Wirtschaftsbeziehungen stark behindern. Für gut vorbereitete Unternehmen mit Durchhaltevermögen bieten sich jedoch enorme Chancen.

Dies ist auch die Sichtweise der Vorsitzenden des Afrika-Vereins. Nach dem Besuch Nigers als Mitglied der Wirtschaftsdelegation des Bundespräsidenten fällt das Urteil von Bianca Buchmann positiv aus. Sie habe ein "verändertes, moderneres und offeneres Nigeria" gesehen, betont sie. Ihre Gespräche mit Unternehmensverbänden und dem nigerianischen Investitionsförderungsrat NIPC hätten gezeigt, dass man die Wirtschaftsbeziehungen mit Deutschland ausbauen wolle. Die Nigerianer seien sich jedoch bewusst, dass ihr Land ein Imageproblem habe.

Buchmann bedauert, dass durch politische Fehler der produzierende Sektor in Nigeria nahezu bedeutungslos geworden sei. Chancen für die deutsche Wirtschaft sieht sie insbesondere in den Bereichen Energie, Maschinenbau, Infrastruktur und Gesundheitswesen. Die nigerianische Regierung solle jedoch nicht erwarten, dass die Probleme des Landes allein durch private Investitionen gelöst werden könnten.

Deutschen Unternehmen, die in Nigeria investieren möchten, empfiehlt sie Durchhaltevermögen. "Vertragsverhandlungen sind in den meisten afrikanischen Ländern sehr schwierig", sagt sie und fügt hinzu, dass außerdem lokale Partner und eine umfassende Informationsbeschaffung wichtig seien. Ein großer Vorteil für deutsche Unternehmen sei der gute Ruf in Nigeria: "Von uns erwartet man nur Seriosität."

Oluwinka Akintunde, langjähriger Wirtschaftsjournalist und derzeit Mitarbeiter einer nigerianischen Bank, unterstrich, dass man Nigeria zu einem Rechtsstaat entwickeln wolle. Hinsichtlich der Beziehungen zu Europa seien Wissens- und Technologietransfer sowie freieres Reisen die wichtigsten Ziele der Afrikaner. Es gäbe die Besorgnis, dass die Finanzkrise zu einer Reduzierung der Entwicklungshilfe, geringeren Investitionen und mehr Protektionismus führen könnte. Bereits jetzt stelle man fest, dass die afrikanische Diaspora bedeutend weniger in ihre Heimatländer überweisse. Ferner gäben die sinkenden Rohstoffpreise Anlass zur Sorge.

## Arbeitsplätze in 'Nollywood'

Erstaunt erfuhren manche Delegationsmitglieder bei Ihren Gesprächen in Lagos, dass die ehemalige nigerianische Hauptstadt bereits im Jahr 2015 - nach Bombay und Tokio - die nach Einwohnern drittgrößte Stadt der Welt sein wird. Wenig bekannt war auch, dass 'Nollywood' mit 250.000 Arbeitsplätzen und ungefähr 2000 Filmproduktionen pro Jahr nach Hollywood und Bollywood bereits der dritt wichtigste Standort der Filmindustrie ist.

Für Kofo Adeleke, Direktorin von 'Community Conservation and Development Initiatives' in Lagos, ist dieser Erfolg trotz der schwierigen Rahmenbedingungen dennoch nicht

verwunderlich: "Es sind die Leute. Sie haben so viel Energie. Aus diesem Grund bin ich optimistisch."

Es ist bereits spät am Abend, als der Gouverneur des Bundesstaates Lagos am Flughafen kurz vor dem Abflug nach Abuja gegenüber deutschen und nigerianischen Journalisten erneut betont: "Unsere Herausforderungen sind Ihre Chancen." Auch im Bereich der Berufsbildung gebe es "eine Menge Möglichkeiten" für deutsche Unternehmen.

Ein nigerianischer Journalist der Zeitung 'Vanguard' geht danach auf das Problem der Korruption ein. Der Gouverneur räumt daraufhin ein, dass man sich bewusst sei, dass Korruption eine "schwere Last" darstelle. Der Bundespräsident betont im Verlauf seiner Reise mehrfach, dass das Problem der Korruption auf Seiten des Geberts und Nehmers bestehe.

Während des Gesprächs beim Gouverneur von Kano standen die Wirtschaftsbeziehungen ebenfalls im Vordergrund. Gouverneur Malam Ibrahim Shekarau nannte insbesondere die Bereiche Abfallmanagement, Gesundheit und Energie als Schwerpunkte einer wirtschaftlichen Zusammenarbeit mit Deutschland. Auffallend war jedoch seine Zurückhaltung in punkto erneuerbare Energien, obwohl beispielsweise die Photovoltaik für eine dezentrale Stromversorgung in den ländlichen Gebieten besonders geeignet ist.

Bei den meisten Delegationsteilnehmern überwog der Eindruck, dass man in Nigeria hinsichtlich guter Regierungsführung Fortschritte erzielen möchte. Dennoch gehören die mangelhafte Energieinfrastruktur sowie die Korruption weiterhin zu den Hauptproblemen, die den Ausbau der Wirtschaftsbeziehungen erschweren. Nigers Ölreichtum erweist sich dabei oftmals als Fluch. Das nigerianische und deutsche Staatsoberhaupt sprachen in diesem Zusammenhang bei Pressekonferenzen mehrmals von Blutöl - ein Hinweis auf gestohlenes und illegal exportiertes Öl. Den illegalen Handel mit Rohstoffen bezeichneten beide als eines der großen Probleme Afrikas.

Beim Treffen mit Ndagene Ndamele Akwu, dem Präsidenten der 'Nigerianischen Journalistunion' (NUJ), und weiteren nigerianischen Journalisten wurde zuerst das Thema Pressefreiheit angesprochen. NUJ-Präsident Akwu betonte, dass es in Nigeria im Gegensatz zur Zeit der Militärdiktatur Pressefreiheit gebe und Journalisten ihre Arbeit "ohne Furcht" erledigen könnten.

Von nigerianischer Seite wurde der korrupte Charakter der eigenen Gesellschaft beklagt. Dennoch gab es ein positives Fazit: "Im afrikanischen Kontext ist Nigeria sehr frei." Es wurde aber bemängelt, dass ausländische Journalisten oftmals einen leichteren Zugang zu nigerianischen Ministern hätten als die inländischen Kollegen. Von den Besuchern aus Deutschland verlangte man eine breitere Berichterstattung, die sich nicht nur auf die Probleme im Nigerdelta und das Thema Korruption beschränken sollte.

Vor dem Abflug nach Deutschland stand noch ein Besuch beim Emir von Kano, Alhaji Ado Bayero, auf dem Programm. Während des Aufenthalts im Palast des Emirs sowie bei der farbenprächtigen traditionellen Durbar-Zeremonie und der eindrucksvollen Reiterparade zu Ehren des deutschen Präsidenten fühlten sich die Gäste in eine Atmosphäre aus 1001 Nacht versetzt. Insgesamt stand die Reise ganz im Zeichen eines wachsenden strategischen Interesses Deutschlands an Afrika. KOMMUNIKATION GLOBAL ■

**History shows that severe crises can cause nations to become inward-looking, sometimes with negative consequences, says *The World Development Report 2009: Reshaping Economic Geography*, released November 6. The report argues that the most effective policies for promoting long-term growth are those that facilitate geographic concentration and economic integration, both within and across countries. The following essay appears in the report.**

# Overcoming Division

By Philippe Martin

*The day will come when you France, you Russia, you Germany, all you nations of the continent, without losing your distinct qualities and your glorious individuality, you will merge into a superior unit, and you will constitute European fraternity.* — Victor Hugo, from a speech at the 1849 International Peace Congress

Victor Hugo was laughed at when he said this, as were several of his predecessors who proposed European integration. It took the catastrophe of two world wars to get people to take the idea seriously and make policy makers ready for radical change.

The scale of devastation and misery is the key to understanding the drive for integration: on top of the horrifying death toll, the war caused enormous economic damage. The war cost Germany and Italy four or more decades of growth and put Austrian and French gross domestic products (GDPs) back to levels of the nineteenth century.

Overcoming division and its dramatic consequences was the objective of European leaders after World War II. Destructive nationalism- and its economic dimension, protectionism - were indeed partly blamed for the disaster. Economic integration was thus viewed as the best way to avoid another war. That it should come through peaceful means and with the main objective of maintaining peace was - and remains - a unique endeavor. In this respect, European integration is a clear success. But it was not clear in the 1940s and 1950s that this vision of "Peace through Integration" would succeed, particularly because it came at the same time as the Cold War's division between the East and the West.

Under American pressure, 13 European countries created the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) in 1948 to implement the Marshall Plan. Its mandate was to reduce trade barriers, particularly quota restrictions. Europe in the early post-war years was a tariff and quota-ridden economy. Removing trade barriers fostered the rapid growth of trade. Between 1950 and 1958, manufacturing exports grew by almost 20 percent a year in West Germany, 9.2 percent in Italy, and 3.8 percent in France. Additionally, average annual GDP growth was 7.8 percent in West Germany, 5 percent in Italy, and 4.4 percent in

France. Correlation is not causality, and reconstruction was a strong engine of growth. But the rapid growth as European trade was liberalized was changing the minds of European policy makers. European integration was not just a political project - it also made economic sense.

The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was launched by France and Germany, who invited other nations to place these two sectors under its supranational authority. The project was both political and economic because it applied a supranationality onto two sectors that were considered strategic for economic and military reasons. Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands joined the project in 1951, and these six would become the driving force behind European integration. The ECSC showed that economic cooperation was more feasible than political or military integration.

The Treaty of Rome in 1957 created the six nations of the European Economic Community (EEC). The move committed the six to unprecedented economic integration. Not only would a custom union remove all tariffs for intra-EEC trade and establish a common external tariff, but also a unified economic area would promote free labor mobility, integrated capital markets, free trade in services, and several common policies. This degree of economic integration was not feasible without deep *political* integration. So, in retrospect, "using economics as a Trojan horse for political integration worked like a charm."<sup>2</sup> As "guardians of the Treaty," the Court and the European Commission would control those countries (especially France when de Gaulle returned to power) that came to reject the level of supranationality implied by the Treaty. From 1966 to 1986, however, the deep integration promised by the Rome Treaty stalled. Europeans began to erect barriers that took the form of technical regulations and standards, fragmenting

markets - a classic reaction by lobbying industries to defend their rents.

The Single European Act (1986) re-launched the process of deepening economic integration—all the more stunning given the slow disintegration during the 1970s. Emphasizing the mobility of capital, the Single Act was also partly responsible for the birth of the European Monetary Union (EMU). Indeed, the fixed exchange rate of the European Monetary System implied, with free capital mobility, the loss of monetary sovereignty. This made the EMU more politically palatable for countries committed to fixed exchange rates.

Overcoming division means reducing the impact of borders on trade flows. Has this been so in the European Union (EU)? One way to answer the question is to compare the volume of trade within borders with the volume of bilateral trade between countries. The ratio of the two is the "border effect." Fontagné, Mayer, and Zignago (2005) do this for the EU-9, the six founders plus Denmark, Ireland, and the United Kingdom. The border effect for reported intra-EU trade fell from around 24 in the late 1970s to 13 in the late 1990s - a substantial increase in integration unmatched in the world. The border effect between the EU-9 and the United States, while decreasing fast during the period, remains more than twice that within the EU. Borders in the EU have become thinner, but they have not disappeared.

The European regional integration process has spread. As the EU deepened and enlarged, the cost of discriminatory treatment (the natural implication of any regional integration process) for outsiders increased, creating a "domino dynamic of regionalism."<sup>3</sup> Even European countries that most valued their sovereignty applied for membership. That the EU with its unmatched supranationality remains so attractive for outsiders is evidence of an enduring success. WORLD BANK ■



President Traian Basescu  
Bild: Wikimedia Commons

# Democracy Brings Disappointment to Romania

By Claudia Ciobanu in Bucharest

The chaotic political programmes of the parties and a new electoral system discouraged more Romanians than usually from casting a vote in Nov 30 parliamentary elections. The main opposition force, the Social-Democrats, obtained the best result, but with none of the parties achieving a clear majority, the centre-right forces might still coalesce to form the new government.

Voter turnout was below 40 percent, one of the lowest figures in all elections since 1989. The turnout in rural areas was about 4-5 percent more than in urban areas. Given that the older voters from rural areas are the traditional electorate of the Social-Democratic Party (PSD), the higher turnout in the countryside is one of the factors contributing to the better result of PSD, a party which has been the main opposition force in the parliament over the past four years.

The first exit poll at the closing of the ballot showed that PSD (together with their electoral ally, the smaller Conservative Party) got 36 percent of the votes for each house of parliament. The two main centre-right parties ranked second and third: the Democrat-Liberal Party (PDL) of President Traian Basescu got 31 percent, and the National Liberal party of Prime Minister Calin Popescu-Tariceanu 20 percent.

The only other party to make it to the parliament will be the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR) with 6.7 percent of the vote, while the extreme-right party will not pass the electoral threshold this year.

PDL and PNL, together with the Conservative Party and UDMR, had formed the government after the previous elections in 2004, but PDL was forced to go into opposition in March 2007 following a period of intense conflict between President Basescu and Prime Minister Tariceanu.

It is still not clear what potential governing alliance to expect. Given that the two centre-right forces, PNL and PDL, have a history of conflict with each other, it is not clear they will be willing to come together to push the PSD into the opposition. Furthermore, in 2007, parliamentarians from PSD and PNL voted together for the ousting of Basescu, who was accused of overstepping his constitutional attributions.

The expectation of tough negotiations in the days following elections was confirmed by Traian Basescu. Earlier December, the president (whose 5-year mandate expires next year) announced that he would not propose a prime minister until Dec. 6 (and a government could be formed as late as the end of December), after the results of the elections are legally validated. Analysts argued that, with this announcement, Basescu, fearing the possibility of a PSD-PNL governing alliance, wanted to show he has an important word in the forming of the government.

## Governing alliances

The volatility of the potential governing alliances is illustrative of the ambiguity of the governing platforms proposed by the main parties. Bucharest-based political scientist and parliamentary consultant with the Romanian Senate Oana Popescu says that "this lack of clarity as regards what would be the differences among the agendas of governments led by the main parties -- PNL, PDL, and PSD -- made it particularly difficult for the electorate to choose among the existing options."

According to the political scientist, while parties are usually inclined to turn towards "populist" rhetoric before elections, promising "leftist policies thought to bring immediate, palpable benefits to the masses," this year's campaign -- taking place against the background of the global financial crisis, predicted by analysts to hit Romania hard in early 2009 -- was particularly confusing in terms of the main propositions of parties on the two sides of the political spectrum.

"In this campaign, the right found itself in a more difficult position because of the global crisis deemed to be caused by unregulated capitalism," Oana Popescu told IPS. "PLD considers itself a centre-right party, but the candidate it puts forward for the prime minister position, Theodor Stolojan, openly embraced protectionist measures in his pre-electoral discourse."

A few weeks before the elections, the governing PNL rejected an October vote of the parliament to increase the salaries of teachers by 50 percent, arguing that such a measure would

destabilise the national budget in times of financial turmoil. At the same time, PNL approved other protectionist measures, such as increasing pensions by an amount which could not be supported from the Pension Fund.

Finally, according to Popescu, while PSD was best placed to promote its social-democratic agenda against the backdrop of the crisis, "they have always been keen to identify with a sort of New Labour, 'third way' type of politics, which claims to respect the mechanisms generating economic growth while striving for an equitable distribution of benefits." An agenda further left from the centre would have a hard time picking up broad support in a country only 20 years out of a dictatorial regime which called itself communist.

"Variations among parties on ideology (in these elections) were minimal, given that the neo-liberal golden rule of the overarching, fair market has been widely accepted (in Romania)," wrote columnist Mircea Marian in national daily Evenimentul Zilei just a few days before the election. "Taken off guard by the financial crisis and having no clear ideological alternative to the supremacy of markets, the parties did what they know best: they improvised...Slowly, the theme of the financial crisis started impacting support for the parties, acting in favour of the Social-Democrats."

Indeed, PSD managed to quickly take the lead in voters' preferences just over the past couple of weeks, after lagging behind PDL for a good part of the campaign. While the structure of the new government might take several weeks to clarify, what is clear is that "the electorate is tired and disappointed from too many changes of government since 1989, in which much hope was placed," Popescu said.

A further alienating factor was the new electoral system introduced at the Nov. 30 elections and the ensuing electoral campaign behaviour exhibited by the parties. The new system was adopted after a sustained campaign -- over the summer of 2008 -- from several politicians and civic organisations for the introduction of uninominal voting, thought to make politicians more accountable to citizens.

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Children in war-ravaged northern Uganda Photo: BETTY BIGOMBE CHILDREN OF WAR FOUNDATION

# What about the Poor in Developing Countries?

By InDepthNews (IDN)

**D**eveloping countries, at first sheltered from the worst elements of the global financial turmoil, are now seen to be much more vulnerable, with dwindling capital flows, huge withdrawals of capital leading to losses in equity markets, and skyrocketing interest rates.

GDP growth in developing countries - only recently expected to increase by 6.4 percent in 2009 - is now likely to be only 4.5 percent, according to economists at the World Bank. Some developing countries will be hit much harder than the average - experiencing growth which is negative in per capita or even absolute terms.

Real GDP growth forecast for developing regions (%age change from previous year)		
Region	2008	2009
East Asia and the Pacific	8.8	6.7
Europe and Central Asia	6	3.5
Latin America & Caribbean	4.5	2.1
Middle East & North Africa	5.7	3.5
South Asia	6.3	5.4
Sub-Saharan Africa	5.4	4.6

Coming on the heels of the food and fuel price shock, the global financial crisis could significantly set back the fight against poverty. A World Bank background paper prepared for the G20 meeting of heads of state held in Washington on November 15 notes that sharply tighter credit conditions and weaker growth are likely to cut into government revenues and governments' ability to invest to meet education, health and gender goals. The poor will be hit hardest.

## 100 Million in extreme poverty

As a result of high food and fuel prices, some 100 million people have already been driven into extreme poverty. With every one percent decline in developing country growth rates, approximately 20 million more people will be added to this rapidly swelling number.

A preview of the analysis for this year's Global Economic Prospects report shows that real GDP growth will slow down across all developing regions in 2009.

"The direct impact of the crisis is less dramatic in the financial sectors of the poorest countries," said Uri Dadush, Director Development Prospects Group, "but they will be hit nevertheless by slower export growth - global trade is expected to decline by 2.5 percent in 2009 - reduced remittances by migrant workers; and lower commodity prices that will affect commodity-exporting countries."

Like previous crises, this one will hit the poorest people the hardest. Many households, already weakened, are faced with having to sell assets like livestock to survive. Malnutrition could well rise, and school enrolment may well fall. The financial crisis will turn into a human one if the poor are left to fend for themselves.

Economists at the World Bank believe that "social safety net programs, particularly those that are well-designed, are a smart investment both for today and the future". These programs are affordable; Mexico's successful Oportunidades and Brazil's Bolsa Familia cost just about 0.4 percent of GDP.

*"Crises have given birth to some of the worst social protection policies, and some of the best,"* said Martin Ravallion, Director Development Research at the World Bank. *"Some developing countries, including Mexico, have turned crisis into opportunity by dismantling inefficient subsidies in favour of more efficient safety nets."* ■

# Development Funding Vital to Beat Crisis

By Global Perspectives Monitoring Unit

Two months have passed since the effects of the global financial crisis were first felt in Asia and the Pacific. Much has been said about them. And yet, one of the effects less spoken of is the impact of the crisis on the availability of public and private finance for development, a key issue for the region, where more than 900 million people are living in poverty, writes UN Under-Secretary-General Noeleen Heyzer in a column for the *Bangkok Post*. Heyzer is also Executive Secretary of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (Escar).

Public and private financing for development has been dramatically curtailed, and the simple fact is that Asia-Pacific cannot afford any cutbacks in this respect. With so many of the world's poorest in the region, any reduction will only compound their plight, adds Heyzer.

"To avoid this, we need to safeguard the Asia-Pacific region's hard-fought gains in reducing poverty and promoting development; and we need to continue seeking out new and innovative sources of financing for that development."

Heyezer continues: In tackling both these tasks, we need to think and act in unison.

The crisis poses a serious threat to the outlook for Asia-Pacific economies. Investment and consumer confidence has been shaken by falling corporate profits, credit squeezes and mounting concerns of job security and reduced household incomes.

The economic growth in our region's developing economies is expected to fall to 6.1 percent next year, from an estimated 7 percent in 2008. A number of countries, including Japan and Singapore, are officially in technical recession.

Our equity markets have fallen sharply – by more than 35 percent in the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, India and Indonesia, between mid-August and mid-November. In China, it fell by 21 percent. Of equal concern is the excessive currency volatility seen in recent months. The greatest losses since mid-August have been seen in South Korea and Indonesia, with their currencies falling by more than 20 percent, followed by India at 13 percent and the Russian Federation at 11 percent.

## How do we face the global financial crisis and its consequences?

The good news is that we are not starting from scratch. The regulatory reforms that were implemented after the 1997 financial crisis and the massive foreign exchange reserves that have been built up since, have provided a cushion to withstand the worst of the fallout.

The events of 1997 also propelled the region to look for mechanisms at reducing its vulnerability to crises. These include the Asian Bond Fund, through which regional central banks have set aside a portion of their reserves in a pool to invest in bonds issued by Asian governments; and the Asean + 3's Chiang Mai Initiative, which provides foreign exchange reserves support through a system of bilateral currency swaps.

However, more needs to be done as many countries are not included in these initiatives. There are also a number of other areas where regional cooperation in financial and monetary matters could be strengthened.

1. The Asia-Pacific region must play a leading role in the discussions on reforming the global financial architecture.
2. We should cooperate in the formulation of effective and coordinated macroeconomic policies at the regional level to reduce economic vulnerability.
3. A regional contingency plan needs to be established to respond quickly to liquidity and capitalisation problems of domestic banks.
4. Consideration should be given to a regional trade financing facility to address concerns that recession in developed countries will significantly restrict trade as trade credit has dried up.
5. Governments must take action to institute or to improve on the delivery of cash transfer programmes and other social protection mechanisms that promote gender equity, and are targeted to those who need it most.

If such measures are not taken, there is a greater probability that the crisis will distract us from the long-term development goals that our region is committed to realising. While several countries have done well in mobilising and utilising domestic and international resources for development – the region has accumulated foreign exchange reserves in excess of 4 trillion dollars - this is only a part of the story. There are many countries, which have done less well. ■



UNESCAP Executive Secretary Noeleen Heyzer  
Photo: UNESCAP

# Indonesia Says 'No, Thank You' to IMF Loans

Marwaan Macan-Markar in Jakarta

**W**hen the Asian financial crisis struck a decade ago, savaging South-east Asian economies, including Indonesia, Jakarta turned to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for help in getting the country back on its feet. But now, as a global financial crisis - triggered by the collapse of major United States banks - looms, the mood here is different. Most noticeable is the cold shoulder given by Jakarta to the Fund's offer of some two billion US dollars as a short-term lending facility to meet the growing pressure on the Indonesian economy.

It stems from lingering bitterness over the damage caused to this regional giant by the harsh prescriptions the IMF imposed in its rescue package for Indonesia, beginning in late 1997. President Susil Bambang Yudhoyono conveyed such a sentiment during the recent meeting in Washington D.C. of the leaders of the world's biggest economies (the G-20).

Indonesia will "not follow the IMF's formula in coping with the global financial crisis," the president was reported to have said, according to the local media. "We still need to learn from that experience (of a decade ago)."

It is a view echoed here by National Development Planning Minister Paskah Suzetta, who said, "We will not use the IMF programme, because the problem of overcoming the crisis is not of the balance of payments but on the budget deficit," according to Antara, the national news agency. "The IMF earlier offered to give loans to developing countries, including Indonesia, five times higher than their earlier loans for three months."

Such reservations towards assistance from the IMF are deeply ingrained here because it became clear that "with the IMF's involvement 10 years ago the crisis plunged deeper than necessary," says Rizal Ramli, former finance minister and currently a presidential candidate for next year's election. "Indonesians do not want to taste the same bitter pill again."

"The damage done was huge," he observed during an interview. "The economy declined from a seven-percent growth rate before the IMF stepped in to a minus 13 percent growth rate. It was an economic depression on a scale we had never experienced since independence (from the Dutch in 1945)."



President Yudhoyono  
<http://english.people.com.cn>

"Millions of people lost their jobs due to the 130 conditions covering various economic sectors that the IMF got the government to sign in order for Indonesia to get loans from the IMF," Rizal added. "It also recommended the closing of 16 banks without sufficient local preparation. That undermined the banking sector as people withdrew money from other banks and sent it abroad or kept it at home. There was a capital outflow of five billion U.S. dollars."

Similar sentiments were echoed by the 'Jakarta Post', an English-language daily, in a commentary last year to mark a decade since the Asian financial crisis. The IMF's multi-billion dollar rescue package, "with excessive policies," exacerbated the problem, the paper argued. "In Indonesia, the number of poor people jumped from 34 million in 1996 to almost 50 million in 1998."

But the country's economic landscape is much more healthy now, giving it the confidence to be selective about who it wants to roll out the welcome mat for taking outside funds to endure the current global financial crisis. Indonesia's foreign exchange reserves, for instance, are now at an impressive 51 billion dollars, far higher than it was during the '97 crisis. "The economy is not as vulnerable today as it was during the last crisis. And the attitude towards the IMF is a sign of confidence," says Satish Mishra, managing director of the consulting firm Strategic Asia.

"Indonesia has gone through a systemic change over the past decade. The reforms in the judicial, political and financial sectors have been a phenomenal achievement." The only worry is in the export sector, he told IPS. "Export prices have come down and that will have an impact. But it is not dependent on U.S. demand because the trade pattern has shifted towards Asian markets." The country's major exporting partners are Japan, the U.S., Singapore, China, South Korea and Malaysia. Exports in 2007 were estimated to have reached 118 billion dollars.

Indonesia's economic recovery since the '97 crash also saw it rush to get the IMF off its back ahead of schedule. In 2004, it paid up the debts it owed the Washington-based international financial institution, which was five years ahead of schedule. Indonesia, in fact, was one of the Fund's four major borrowers in 2004. The other three were Turkey, Brazil and Argentina, of which only Turkey remains a client.

Such early payments to the IMF, and an emerging view in Asia that there are other sources of funding to draw from, given the region's record of holding 3.5 trillion dollars in foreign reserves, have chipped away at the Fund's relevance in international finance.

Indonesia has warmed to seeking foreign funds through bilateral or regional initiatives than going, cap in hand, to the Fund. The Chiang Mai Initiative is one, which enables countries in South-east Asia to benefit from a network where bilateral financial swaps are possible.

"Indonesia and other countries are smart to reject the IMF's offers at this point. The G-20 meeting confirmed that, since the leaders didn't place the IMF as a significant institution at the centre," says Walden Bello, senior analyst at Focus on the Global South, a regional think tank. "They have more choices now like the money China can offer or Asian foreign exchange reserves." IPS | GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ■



# Sri Lanka's Oil Futures Gamble Burns 300 Million Dollar Hole

By Feizal Samath in Colombo

The Sri Lankan government is grappling with a costly 300 million dollar payout to Citibank and Standard Chartered Bank (SCB), following a disastrous oil futures contract between the banks and the state-owned Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC).

Sri Lanka's foreign reserves -- worth around 2.7 billion dollars or the equivalent of more than two months worth of imports -- is already under pressure from the global economic crisis.

SCB and Citibank have been accused of not properly informing the state petroleum supplier of the risks involved but vehemently deny any wrongdoing. Overseas officials from the two banks have been in Colombo over the past two weeks on 'damage control' visits.

Central Bank (CB) governor Nivard Cabraal said its guidelines in derivatives trading had not been followed. Negotiations are now underway between the CPC and the banks to re-structure the contracts and reduce the burden on the fuel supplier.

Analysts recall that 15 years ago these two banks were implicated in a huge stock market scam following flagrant violation of the Reserve Bank of India guidelines on portfolio management services and ended up paying fines totalling 21 million dollars.

The Sri Lankan crisis came to the fore two weeks ago after newspaper reports hinted that the CPC may default on its October (monthly) payment to the banks due to a cash problem, and that the banks had not properly advised the CPC on the risks involved in the hedging contract.

De Mel then called a press conference where, flanked by the CEOs of the two banks, denied claims that the CPC planned to default while also saying the corporation was made fully aware of the risks by the banks.

After the SCB and Citibank got involved in the futures contracts, three other banks also followed suit -- on a smaller scale however -- to get into oil futures contracts with the CPC.

The deals were made through a 'zero cost collar' instrument where no premium is paid by the customer and the risks shared with the banks. The CPC decision to hedge on oil as a protection against volatile oil prices came in January 2007 when there was speculation in the market that oil prices would rise to as much as 200 dollars a barrel in the coming months.

Under the zero cost collar option, whenever the price rises between 100 dollars and 135 dollars per barrel, the banks pay an agreed amount (up to a maximum of 1.5 million dollars a month) to the CPC. Any fall in prices below 100 dollars (without any restriction unlike on the topside) means the CPC pays the banks. Since January the CPC gained 24 million dollars (payment from the two banks) but lost 38.5 million dollars -- paid out just in two months -- and is set to pay another 300 million dollars (if the oil prices remain in the 50-60 dollar per barrel range) or more if it falls further.

A Sri Lankan who initially made a proposal to the Sri Lankan government at the end of 2002 to introduce hedging, said that there were warning signals that the zero cost dollar instrument was the wrong strategy. "I had personally informed them of the impending disaster," he said. "Neither SCB nor Citibank are specialised energy traders nor do they have the wherewithal to provide a hedge to the CPC for a huge exposure of two billion dollars."

De Mel admitted that payment at current prices would be over 300 million dollars.

On Nov. 21, the benchmark Brent world crude price fell to 46.47 dollars per barrel, a stunning drop of almost 100 dollars per barrel from 143.33 dollars on Jul. 11 this year.

According to international news agency reports, crude oil prices are poised to fall by another 15 percent in the next week while recording its lowest price since May 2005. Even though OPEC is cutting down production to stem the sharp price fall, demand growth has fallen to its lowest in 23 years due to the world economic crisis, international market analysts say.

#### Someone must be accountable

Dayasiri Jayasekera, Opposition legislator and member of the Parliamentary Committee on Public Enterprises (COPE), described the issue as serious. "Someone must be accountable for this huge loss to the country. We will be fully questioning Asantha de Mel (chief of CPC) on Nov. 20 (at a COPE meeting) to get to the bottom of this," he told IPS.

Newspapers and analysts have clearly indicated that the CPC went for the wrong hedging (futures) option where the payment on the downside (borne by the CPC) was unlimited while on the topside (liability for banks) was restricted and accuse the banks of selling the wrong option and not advising the CPC of the risks.

Upul Arunajith, a derivatives specialist based in Canada, said in an e-mail interview that if the wrong instrument is used, the hedge will sooner or later go in the wrong direction and will lead into a crisis. "This is what happened in this case."

Arunajith, a Sri Lankan who initially made a proposal to the Sri Lankan government at the end of 2002 to introduce hedging, said that there were warning signals that the zero cost dollar instrument was the wrong strategy. "I had personally informed them of the impending disaster," he said. "Neither SCB nor Citibank are specialised energy traders nor do they have the wherewithal to provide a hedge to the CPC for a huge exposure of two billion dollars."

At de Mel's press conference Citibank chief Dennis Hussey said the Sri Lankan government started the hedging process following a special cabinet approval, which has been carefully documented.

SCB's Sri Lanka chief Clive Haswell said the bank had received a written undertaking from the CPC that the latter was aware of the risks.

#### Issues of impropriety

But CPC's board of directors said no such undertaking was given and are blaming de Mel, a political appointee and associate of President Mahinda Rajapaksa and Petroleum Resources Minister Mohamed Fowzie, for taking decisions without full board authority.

Issues of impropriety are also surfacing with claims that some CPC officials got 'favours' from the banks. Attorney General Priyadas Dep told The Sunday Times newspaper that his department -- which normally scrutinises state contracts to check its legality -- was not consulted.

As pressure mounted on the government, Rajapakse summoned de Mel for a meeting. A Parliamentary committee had also summoned de Mel for a hearing but the latter did not turn up, requesting time for proper preparation.

Political observers say while de Mel and the finance minister must take the rap for undertaking to use a hedging option where the downside risks were greater, the powerful CPC chairman's political connections will come to his rescue.

This was clearly seen when CB officials, who had initially threatened to rap the banks for not following guidelines, seemed to relent later under pressure and are now guiding a re-negotiation of the payments.

As demands are being heard from some sections of the government to default payment on the basis that the banks misled the CPC, pressure has been mounting to pay up or face international repercussions.

Market analysts said that the two main foreign banks have hedged these instruments with the New York Mercantile Exchange (NYMEX).

"Any default to the NYMEX by the banks will be perceived as default of a sovereign debt which will be disastrous to the country's international rating and jeopardise Sri Lanka's standing internationally to seek foreign commercial loans," one analyst said.

The government has resorted to large scale borrowings in the international market over the past two years to fund state spending, including for costly war against separatist Tamil rebels in the island nation's north.

# Uganda's Debt Crisis Could Resurface

By Elias Biryabarema in Kampala

**W**hen Uganda, alongside 18 other poverty-stricken nations, had its foreign debts cancelled and the nation ushered into a near debt-free era, the mood turned effusively joyous but critics warned that the relief would be disappointingly fleeting before the same nations ensnared themselves in waves of fresh debt.

And now those critics appear to have been breathtakingly prescient. The Bank of Uganda reported to parliament's Finance committee on November 11 that Uganda's external debt had grown by a perplexing 30 percent in the last one year alone.

Stunned MPs subsequently warned the government to urgently adopt a "new external debt (management) strategy" and "stop borrowing unnecessarily as if there's no tomorrow," according to story published in *Daily Monitor* on November 12.

On the eve of the debt cancellation by the G8, in July 2005, when Uganda's international indebtedness had reached crisis proportions, the nation owed a crippling 4.7 billion U.S. dollar and was using up to 40 percent of its annual fiscal resources to meet its debt repayment obligations.

The cancellation wiped off a whopping 3.8 billion off that mountain and the Minister of Finance, Dr Ezra Suruma, elatedly talked about the enormous amounts of resources that the country would save and instead funnel into critical sectors like education and health.

Debt cancellation opponents had cautioned that

such an action would create a frustrating moral hazard: beneficiary countries would find it rewarding to borrow and accumulate debt because there was a strong hope it would be forgiven after all.

Now, the rate at which Uganda is snapping up fresh debt seems to validate this argument. Deputy Secretary to Treasury, Keith Muhakanizi, sees the disquiet over Uganda's external debt as unwanted. "All our loans are from multilateral lenders and they are concessionary, with a very low interest rate and long repayment periods." According to him the seemingly favourable conditions of these debts makes them manageable. However, most of the loans that accumulated to produce the crushing crisis



Dr. Ezra Suruma | World Bank



CIA World Fact Book

before the G8 magnanimity reversed it were made under the same terms, and there's nothing to suggest that the same won't happen with the current loans.

A researcher at Makerere University's Economic Policy Research Centre, Lawrence Bategeka thinks the rapid borrowing is problematic but that of greater concern should be the use to which the borrowed funds are put. Unfortunately, even by that yardstick, Uganda's debt would seem even more worrisome, he said.

For instance most of Uganda's loans are poured into social development sectors: health and education rather than economic productivity areas like agriculture and high-profile infrastructures. "Well, health and education have returns no doubt. But their returns are indirect and not immediate and so when you spend so much of borrowed money on them you can certainly expect to have a debt crisis soon because you're not growing the nation's capacity to repay the loans," he said.

Also, the cost of poor choice in spending loan money is compounded by waste and corruption. Large portions of loans contracted for specific projects instead end up in peripherals like office furniture, vehicles, fuel and consultancy instead of financing mainstream work.

Although he thinks Uganda hasn't slipped into another debt crisis yet, there are unsettling signs that it could in the near future. "You talk of a crisis when the debt becomes unsustainable i.e. when the country becomes unable to pay and Uganda isn't there yet," he said.

Even then there's widespread trepidation. In March 2007, Uganda's external debt stood at 1.1 billion dollar. A year later it grew to 1.9 billion dollar, just shy of half of what it was in 2005 before the cancellation. One notorious habit that nurtured Uganda's debt crisis was running wildly huge budget deficits, a habit that analysts think has in fact grown worse not better.

Although President Museveni often rails against donors and boasts of Uganda's capability to sail on its own, most analysts still think the country is still far from weaning itself off external support in form of loans principally because the government is addicted to extravagance.

**Daily Monitor ■**

# Crisis Threatens Congo's Timber Jobs

By IRIN from Brazzaville



Photo: Laudes Martial Mbon | IRIN

Timber destined for export at Brazzaville river port. The forestry sector is Congo's second biggest earner of foreign currency after oil

**Guy-Blaise Bakala**, a timber worker in Pointe-Noire in the south of the Republic of Congo, has been sleeping badly since his bosses first announced they would have to let some workers go because the financial crisis is hitting the key timber sector.

"Every single day, our bosses tell us that we are not sheltered from unemployment because of what the company is going through," said the 39-year-old, who is married with four children. Bakala fears what will happen if he loses his job.

"We would simply become homeless. We wouldn't have enough to pay for a new house," he said, adding that all four of his children go to a fee-paying school. "If I lose my job, the children will no longer be able to go to school."

The forestry sector is Congo's second-biggest earner of foreign currency after oil, which accounts for about 75 percent. At least 10,000 jobs have been created over the past decade in the timber sector, according to government figures.

The sector is the second-biggest employer after the civil service in a country where about 30 percent of the working population is unemployed, according to official data.

But now, because of the global financial crisis, wood producers are finding it harder to find markets for their goods and are cutting prices.

"There's no market, there's no demand," said Jean-Marie Mevellec, head of Congolaise Industrielle du Bois, one of the main timber companies in the northern Sangha region.

Mevellec emphasised the importance of forestry in keeping local towns alive. "Today there are towns and villages that owe their survival to the presence of a timber company that pays taxes and keeps the local administration going," he said.

"The situation of the forestry sector is aggravated by the level of the dollar and by the rise in the price of oil," said Henri Djombo, the Forestry and Environment Minister. He hoped the timber companies would keep their workers, despite the crisis.

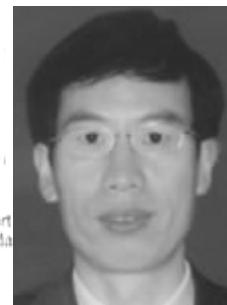
"They should not make redundancies just for the sake of it. Because when the situation gets back to normal, they might no longer be able to find qualified workers," he said.

"We are in a situation where we can no longer pay the timber taxes and all the other duties," said Martial Fouty, head of Société Forestière Industrielles de Bois timber company.

The companies say that if the crisis continues, several thousand workers will be affected by job cuts or loss of pay. ■

# Africa in Active Response To Financial Crisis

By Professor Zhang Zhongxiang



African countries have so far held a couple of meetings to discuss the impact of financial crisis on Africa and ways to cope with it. Although it was not much affected shortly after its eruption in the United States, the continent, however, can hardly escape it when it is spreading globally today.

First of all, foreign direct investment (FDI) shall shrink in Africa, which received record FDI inflows of 53 billion US dollars in 2007. Opinions on FDI prospects are not so optimistic with the increasing impact of world financial crisis.

Second, the current global financial crisis has directly affected the exports of raw materials and tourist industry in Africa. The income of some African countries has been reduced drastically, as crude oil prices have fell below 60 dollars a barrel since striking record high points above 147 dollars last year. Moreover, with the shrinkage of economy in developed nations, there is an obvious decline in the number of tourists coming to visit Africa.

Third, Remittances to some African countries from overseas immigrants have lessened by a significant margin. Sub-Saharan African countries took in 11 billion U.S. dollars in remittances last year. Once the income from remittance ebbs, the economy of African countries will be lashed quite seriously.

The devaluation of the U.S. dollar would exert great pressures onto local currencies in some Africa countries recently. The property prices in Kenya, Cote d'Ivoire and Mauritius have apparently lowered. And the government of Seychelles on October 29 demanded the resignation of 2,000 civil servants, or 12 percent of the country's functionaries, in a bid to help itself break through its economic barrier.

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF)'s World Economic Outlook (WEO) released on Nov. 6, African economic growth rate will slow down, and growth is estimated at 5.2 percent and 4.7 percent for 2008 and 2009 respectively, apparently much lower than the figure of 6.1 percent in 2007.

African economy has been in the best period of growth since the entry of the new century, and its growth has averaged over 5 percent, with a marked improvement in macro-economy, and a reduced inflation and a lesser burden from external debts. The ratio of Africa's total external debt to GDP has been trimmed to 30 percent from 80 percent a full decade ago. But the escalating global financial crisis has strangled a sound trend for economic development in Africa.

## Responsive measures

African countries have come to recognize the severity of the issue, and met to confer on how to go to actions and take responsive measures. The first EAC-SADC-COMESA Tripartite Summit was held on Oct. 22 in Kampala, Uganda at the Commonwealth Resort, Munyono, with the participation of the heads of the East Africa Community (EAC), the South African Development Community (SADC) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). At this tripartite summit, Deputy Prime Minister of Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya, the host nation, appealed for establishing the African free trade zone with an aim of alleviating the impact of world financial crisis on Africa.

Afterwards, the African Union Commission for Economic Affairs met on Oct. 29 to exclusively examine the impact of global financial crisis on African economies. Moreover, African finance ministers and central bank governors met in Tunis on Nov. 12 to discuss ways to limit the effect on Africa of the global financial crisis. Addressing the conference, Tunisian Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi called on African countries to promote their economic development with all viable means and to pay "enough attention to agriculture sector". "Focus on the financial crisis must not deflect attention from efforts" to achieve food self-sufficiency, he said, urging that input on infrastructure and public utilities be augmented, and the investment environment be improved.

African countries have risen in action to seek a sound strategy in their response to financial crisis. To withstand or avert its unfavorable impact, they also need the assistance of the international community, as Africa's efforts alone won't do. In 2007, the total GDP of Sub-Saharan Africa was only 842.9 billion dollars, whereas Mexico's economy aggregates reached 893.4 billion dollars in the year.

As a matter of course, it is out of the question for African countries to produce their bailout plans with approximately 100 billion dollars to stimulate their economies. In response to global financial crisis, the international community should at least not cut aid to Africa due to the deteriorating financial crisis, but heed and solicit views of African countries when conferring on the issue of how to revamp the global financial market. People's Daily Online ■

*Professor Zhang Zhongxiang, a noted researcher at the West Asia-African Development Research Centre affiliated to the Shanghai Institute of International Studies*

# Crisis Begins To Bite Big NGOs

By Global Perspectives Monitoring Unit

Aid agencies fear private charitable contributions will be hit by the global financial meltdown, and while for many it is still too early to feel the impact, some are already reporting a drop in contributions.

"Through June 2008, private revenue trends were positive, with significant increases for all types of donors. Since then, the situation has changed dramatically," said Mark Melia, deputy vice-president of charitable giving for Catholic Relief Services (CRS), which in the fiscal year ending this September raised 127 million dollar in private revenue for its work in more than 100 countries, ranging from earthquake relief to antiretroviral therapy.

"The numbers for August and September softened considerably, with August significantly lower in 2008 compared to the same month in 2007," he told IRIN. He declined to be more specific although he said that "significantly" meant by more than 10 percent.

"Though the decreases have been felt among all types of donors, this trend is most apparent for direct mail and annual giving donors. For these donors, the number of gifts has stayed the same, but the average gift is smaller," he added.

It is a similar story at CARE, whose US affiliate contributed 545 million dollar in fiscal year 2007 in support of over 1,000 poverty-fighting projects in 71 countries, reaching more than 65 million people.

"Yes, we are facing a shortfall, in part because of the huge hit on investment funds and in part because of a slowdown in giving," public relations director Lurma Rackley told IRIN.

The picture is anything but uniform, however, although even those who have not yet noted an impact are nervous. "Evidence from the past suggests that we may begin to receive fewer public donations but this has not started yet," Oxfam International media officer Louis Bélanger said.

## Negative growth

Oxfam UK also said it had not yet seen a decline in donations or overall income. "What we are seeing is not the growth we had originally planned for," spokesman Dan Timms told IRIN. "We're expecting that the overall

effects are our rate growth will be negative, and that's what we're having to plan for now."

Others have already felt some effect though apparently not on the level of CRS or CARE. The International Rescue Committee, which provides emergency relief, relocating refugees and rebuilding lives after a disaster, has reported a "softening" in donations since the end of last year. "Responses to some direct mail solicitations in the United States have not been what they were in previous years," vice-president for development Janet Harris said.

InterAction, the largest coalition of US-based international NGOs, said it was still too early to know the full impact. "Those with whom I have spoken replied that lag times in collecting and analysing data made conclusions premature," vice-president for humanitarian policy and practice James Bishop told IRIN. But, he added: "One with a modest endowment reported a sharp blow."

Across the Atlantic, it was a different picture for the Irish NGO Trócaire, which works on 127 programmes in 39 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, and raised over 33 million Euro (42 million dollar) in the financial year ending February 2008. Donations from the general public have not fallen.

"For the year to date our average donation has decreased slightly but more people have donated so the overall figure has not fallen," international humanitarian communications officer Conor O'Loughlin told IRIN. "We have always enjoyed very generous support from the Irish public and hope that this trend will continue. Often during times like this people are forced to tighten their belts and this will result in greater empathy with those who have nothing."

Save the Children UK also reported no fall-off. "Certainly on the corporate side we've not seen a drop-off as yet although that may well change come the new financial year," head of public relations Rosie Shannon said.

## Positive change

Perhaps one of the most visible campaigns is the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) Change for Good programme, a partnership with the international airline industry whereby passengers donate left-over notes and coins to benefit children, and its Christmas cards.

UNICEF UK has seen some impact on its fundraising in the last few months. "As the financial crisis has deepened over the past few weeks, we have seen a slower take-up of our cards and gifts in the UK, particularly by companies," Fiona Heselden, deputy executive director of fundraising, told IRIN.

But the Change for Good programme with British Airways does not appear to have been affected.

"Passenger donations this year are broadly comparable with last year, and we were delighted when the total income raised since the programme began in 1994 topped £25 million [38 million dollar] earlier this year," Heselden said.

The Japan Committee for UNICEF, which cooperates with Japan Airlines and All Nippon Airways in Change for Good, as well as running several other fund-raising operations, has also not yet experienced less support from the general public. "We do not foresee any fall-off in the near future," public affairs officer Hiromasa Nakai told IRIN.

He noted that donations from the Japanese general public have increased annually for the past 20 years even during the recession of the 1990s. "This trend seems to be in continuation in 2008," he said.

But if the impact so far is a variable, the general concern is certainly not.

"Our concerns really are beyond 2010 and it's too early to say [but] it goes without saying we're moving into very choppy waters, extremely unpredictable times," Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria spokesman Andrew Hurst said. ■

**IRIN** (Integrated Regional Information Networks) is part of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, but its services are editorially independent. Its reports do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations and its agencies, nor its member states. Based in Nairobi, Kenya, IRIN was founded in 1995 to improve the flow of vital information to those involved in relief efforts in the Great Lakes region following the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

**Salt is the key ingredient in dried fish, fish paste and fish sauce, which are already becoming more expensive. All three foodstuffs are staples and a particularly important source of protein for the poor people.**

## Burma's Salt Farmers Battling to Rebuild Livelihoods

By InDepthNews (IDN)

**S**alt farmers across southern Burma are slowly returning almost seven months after cyclone Nargis struck, leaving close to 140,000 people dead or missing. But they still need assistance. Because the multi-million dollar industry plays a critical role in the local economy, which was devastated by the storm on May 2 and 3 this year.

More than 9,712 hectares or 80 percent of all salt fields in Burma's badly affected Ayeyarwady Delta were affected, according to the Post-Nargis Joint Assessment (PONJA). The fields are particularly vulnerable to tidal surges such as accompanied Nargis, as they are on the lowest ground.

The cyclone caused maximum damage to stocks, as warehouses full of just-harvested salt were completely destroyed. According to the government-controlled *New Light of Myanmar* newspaper, 24,214MT of raw salt were destroyed. The PONJA report noted that some 35,000 farms, mostly private, were damaged, resulting in a loss of livelihoods for thousands.

An estimated 20,000 salt farmers and their families were living in the delta at the time of the disaster, many of whom died in the storm, the report said. "The storm destroyed all my property. Now it's time to begin salt farming, regardless of whether we get any loans from the government. Otherwise our lives will never return to normal," said Poe Sar, a farmer in his 70s, who manages a dozen workers on 14 hectares.

Fortunately, he lost none of his workers in the storm even though his fields and workers' accommodation, warehouses and equipment were damaged. Staff at Poe Sar's are working overtime to get things back on track, repairing damaged pumps, water containers and motor engines.

Poe Sar has no choice but to pay his workers double what he paid last year. "We need to pay them more this year as everything here is more expensive," he explained.

By some accounts, as many as eight out of 10 workers were killed in the storm - which will undoubtedly affect next year's harvest and profitability.

Farmers say they will try to recruit skilled workers from salt farms in unaffected regions, but will need to offer higher wages and are unlikely to be able to source enough staff to adequately replace the lost workforce in time.

Generally at this time of the year, the ground is being prepared to hold seawater for evaporation during the last quarter, with salt harvested from January until the onset of the rainy season in April/May.

U Than, another farmer in area, needs at least 15 workers to work his 16 hectares and has already doubled wages to almost two dollar a day.

At the same time, he has to spend thousands of dollars to repair equipment and warehouses damaged by Nargis - all of which will affect the price of his salt.

"Before the cyclone, the price of salt in the market was 200 Kyat [about 17 US cents] per viss [1.6kg]. Now the price is double," he said. Added to that is the knock-on effect of other food commodities for a population still reeling from the disaster.

Salt is the key ingredient in dried fish, fish paste and fish sauce, which are already becoming more expensive.

All three foodstuffs are staples and a particularly important source of protein for lower-income demographics, stated a report by Myanmar's Independent Mon News Agency at the end of October. ■



## A Japanese Suburb Goes Mideast

By Katsuhiro Asagiri | Photos: Shinichi Takehara

Koganei is a small town on the outskirts of Tokyo. It has a population of 113,389. Only some 2,418 of them are foreign nationals. One would not expect this suburb to bother about the rest of the world; certainly not the conflict-ridden Middle East.

But precisely this is what Koganei did last summer. It hosted nine high school students -- four Palestinians and five Israelis. They had all lost at least one relative: the Palestinians because of Israeli air strikes and the Israelis because of Hamas-inspired suicide bomb attacks.

Now that they were in far away Japan -- some of them had in fact no idea where the country was located on the world map -- would they jump over the long dark shadows of the grim realities that characterised their daily lives? Will they avoid contact with each other? Or, will they lay aside mutual hatred and distrust and communicate with each other?

These were some of the questions on the minds of Koganei's mayor Takahiko Inaba and Hiroko Suzuki, a member of the City Council. Also the residents of the Tokyo suburb and the chairperson of the Koganei City board of Education, Kiyotaka Ito were keeping their fingers crossed.

Aware of the complexity of the situation, Mayor Inaba did not want to leave it to chance. He made sure that Israeli and Palestinian youth participants 'paired' throughout the 'peace project' programme. Each pair 'home stayed' with a Koganei citizen whom the mayor had personally interviewed to ensure himself doubly that the host family would provide necessary assistances to youth participants.

The ninth participant stayed with a host family alone but in close neighbourhood of one pair so that the there of them moved around together.

Mayor Inaba also tried to make sure that both Palestinian and Israeli youth would be allowed to leave Tel Aviv together. However, the Palestinian delegates left through Jordanian capital Amman. But they joined their Israeli counterparts in Paris before they flew to Japan.

While in Japan they participated in various cultural exchange programs organised by Koganei City till August

2: Kimono wearing experience, tea ceremony, flower arrangement, and Awa folk dance. High school students from Koganei and citizen volunteers joined them in the programme as interpreters and supported these activities in other ways.

Koganei is a member of 'Sekairenpo Sengen Jichitai Zenkoku Kyogikai' (Council of World Federation Peace Cities) and Mayor Inaba has been deeply concerned about the future of this peace initiative. His commitment to peace derived from his personal experience as a child.

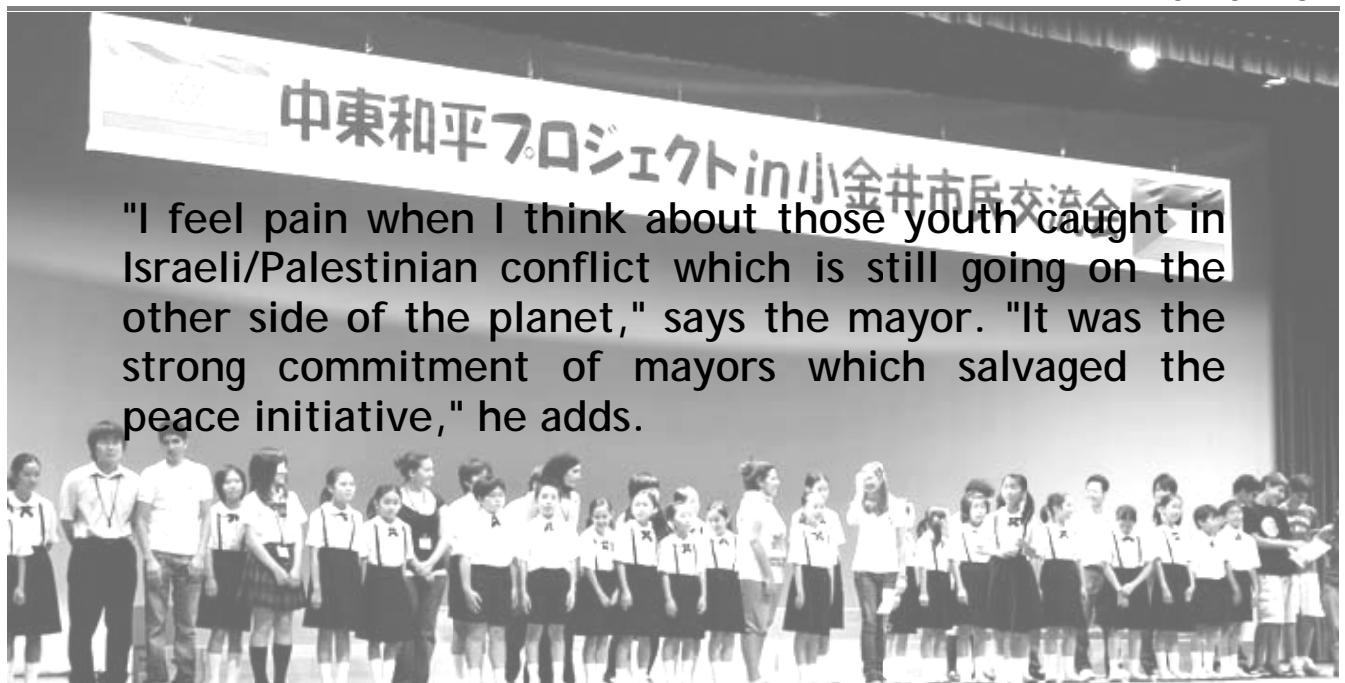
Takahiko Inaba was born in Manchuria towards the end of WWII. He was separated from his father and it was with great difficulty that his mother managed to bring him back to Japan under the chaos following Soviet invasion of Manchuria then under Japanese occupation.

"I cannot listen to his experience without shedding tears," says Koganei City Council member Suzuki. Joining the interview, she adds: "I think that Mr. Inaba's very strong feeling for peace based on his own experience motivated him to save this initiative." It is officially known as the Middle Eastern Peace Project.

"I feel pain when I think about those youth caught in Israeli/Palestinian conflict which is still going on the other side of the planet," says the mayor. "It was the strong commitment of mayors which salvaged the peace initiative," he adds.

In fact, the project was resumed after two years' interval. But it has left a great impact on the minds of both Israeli and Palestinian youth as well as all the Japanese citizens, says the Koganei mayor.

"I am very pleased that this project drew a great attention of people involved in this initiative after new prime minister Taro Aso referred to this project as something unique that Japan can contribute for reconciliation in his speech at the UN General Assembly session (last September)."



"I feel pain when I think about those youth caught in Israeli/Palestinian conflict which is still going on the other side of the planet," says the mayor. "It was the strong commitment of mayors which salvaged the peace initiative," he adds.

The prime minister did not name the city of Koganei. But he said: "I have just introduced one of the ongoing efforts by Japanese civil society to promote reconciliation. These high school students may have no chance to interact with each other when they are back home. But for the several days that they are in a faraway country, travelling in pairs made up of Israelis and Palestinians to here and there across the beautiful and verdant land of Japan, something changes inside them."

He expressed the hope that these young people had come to understand that religion and ethnicity make no difference when it comes to the sorrow felt at losing a parent, and they often cry tears upon coming to this realisation. "Through these tears of understanding they will come to see ties between their futures."

### Comprehensive peace

Prime Minister Aso said: "For comprehensive peace in the Middle East, what is necessary is the mental 'ground-work' that will make such peace possible. By investing in the young minds of high school students, Japanese civil society is working to foster this groundwork. As this example suggests, there is no doubt in my mind that there are certain types of diplomacy that Japan is uniquely able to undertake."

Asked about the future prospect of the initiative, Mayor Inaba said he had just participated in the annual meeting of Council of World Federation Peace Cities in Tokyo. Mayor Yasuo Shikata of Ayabe City, who initiated this project in 2003, has been in consultation with several member cities for hosting youth delegate next year and he is optimistic about their positive response.

One positive response from among the participants was expressed in a conversation between an Israeli and a Palestinian participant 'pair' hosted by Education City Board chairperson Ito and his wife. "Let's hope that we would not see each other with guns in our hands at the battlefield," 15-year old Noam Oren from Israel told the 17-year old Sameh Darwazeh from Palestine.

### Powerful message

"This dialogue conveys a very powerful message to Japanese hosts and everyone involved in this project," says Mayor Inaba. "Israeli/Palestinian youth participants provided Japanese citizens living under peaceful environment with a precious opportunity to think hard about the reality of conflict which is now going on in Israel/Palestine."

Therefore, the number of youth invited for this project may be small but the impact they left on Japanese youth and ordinary citizens to open their mind for the reality in the world and to think about the importance of peace was great.

The Japanese Middle Eastern Peace Project has an Israeli/Palestinian counterpart, called 'The Parents Circle - Families Forum' (PCFF) [www.theparentscircle.org](http://www.theparentscircle.org) made up of about 500 Israeli and Palestinian families who lost their relatives in Israeli/Palestinian conflict. They are engaged in activities to help break the vicious circle of hatred through reconciliation and compassion and passing on these messages to next generation. This organization has been coordinating the project on Israel/Palestine side and have been leading youth delegates since the first project in 2003. ■



Takahiko Inaba, Mayor of Koganei City

# Südafrikas Landfrauen beliefern den Weltmarkt

Von Stephanie Nieuwoudt in Kapstadt | Deutsche Bearbeitung: Grit Moskau-Porsch

In der Provinz Western Cape im Süden Südafrikas liegt die kleine Ortschaft Wupperthal. Sie wurde von der Herrnhuter Brüdergemeinde vor fast 200 Jahren als Missionsstation gegründet. Hier, wo die imposante Dorfkirche an das Wirken der frommen Siedler erinnert, produzieren Frauen Naturkosmetika aus dem einheimischen Rotbusch (Rooibos), die vor allem in Deutschland reißenden Absatz finden.



Bis vor kurzem gab es für die Einwohnerinnen des armen Weilers in der Region Cederberg nichts zu verdienen. Das hat sich geändert, seit sich einige der Frauen zusammenschlossen, um Rooibos-Kosmetika herzustellen und unter dem Markennamen 'Red Cedar' in den USA und in Europa zu vertreiben. In nur vier Jahren legte der Umsatz der bescheidenen Kooperative um 600 Prozent zu.

Als es die angesehene südafrikanische Biologin Marianna Smith aus Kapstadt 2002 erstmals nach Wupperthal verschlug, war sie begeistert von der dörflichen Idylle. "Ich sah aber auch die Armut der Menschen und beschloss, etwas dagegen zu tun", be-

richtete sie. Der hier weit verbreitete Rooibos (*Aspalathus linearis*) brachte die Biologin auf die Idee, die wegen ihres Mineralreichtums und ihrer Heilkräfte weltweit vor allem als Tee geschätzte Pflanze mit Hilfe einheimischer Frauen zu einfacher Naturkosmetika zu verarbeiten.

## In eigene Rooibos-Plantagen investieren

Das Startkapital für ihre dörfliche Initiative besorgte sich Smith bei der US-amerikanischen Entwicklungsbehörde (USAID). Inzwischen ist Red Cedar zu einem unabhängigen Unternehmen geworden und nicht mehr auf fremde Hilfe angewiesen. Zunächst beteiligten sich zwölf Frauen aus dem Dorf und produzierten Rooibos-Seife. "Weil ich aber nicht mein Leben lang Seife herstellen wollte, erweiterten wir unsere Produktionsreihe um andere Naturkosmetika wie Handcreme und Körperlotion", berichtete Smith. Anfangs kam sie einmal im Monat nach Wupperthal, um nach dem Rechten zu sehen. Inzwischen läuft die auf sechs Frauen geschrumpfte Produktionsgemeinschaft so gut, dass ihre Initiatorin nur noch zweimal im Jahr vorbeikommt.

Jede Frau ist mit 15 Prozent am Geschäft beteiligt, Smith mit zehn Prozent. Red Cedar ist inzwischen als Exportunternehmen registriert und liefert Kunden in den USA, in Großbritannien, Deutschland und den Niederlanden. "40 Prozent unserer Produkte gehen nach Deutschland. Die Deutschen sind ganz wild auf Rooibos", erklärte Smith.

Die Bilanzen der kleinen südafrikanischen Frauenkooperative können sich sehen lassen. Das Exportvolumen ist von umgerechnet 3.000 US-Dollar (2005) auf 8.500 Dollar gestiegen. Der Gesamtumsatz von anfangs 8.400 Dollar liegt inzwischen bei 24.500 Dollar. "In Wupperthal gibt es für Frauen

kaum Verdienstmöglichkeiten. Sie bleiben zu Hause und kümmern sich um ihre Kinder", berichtete Claudia Goes, eine der an Red Cedar beteiligten Frauen, IPS. "Als mein Mann krank wurde, war ich gleich dabei. Unser Leben ist leichter geworden, seitdem auch ich etwas verdienen. Außerdem bin ich froh, dass ich das, was ich hier lerne, an andere Frauen im Dorf weitergeben kann." betonte die 44-Jährige.

Die 27-jährige Jessica Mouton, die ebenfalls an Red Cedar beteiligt ist, hat von ihrem ersten Verdienst in der Nähe des Dorfes ein ein Hektar großes Stück Land gepachtet, auf dem sie Rooibos anbaut und als Rohstoff an Händler verkauft. Auch ihre Kollegin Anna Skippers hat Land gepachtet, das sie nur in einem eintägigen Fußmarsch erreichen kann. "Ich besitze keinen Geländewagen und übernachte unterwegs bei Freunden", berichtete sie IPS. Nach Untersuchungen von Smith hatte Benjamin Ginsberg, ein Einwanderer russischer Herkunft, als Erster das wirtschaftliche Potenzial des südafrikanischen Rooibos entdeckt. 1904 begann er mit dem Export von Rotbusch-Tee. Die Südafrikanerin Annique Theron machte den Rooibos-Tee richtig populär. Sie gab ihn ihrem an Koliken leidenden Baby, und die quälenden Bauchschmerzen des Säuglings verschwanden. Später baute sie innerhalb von vier Jahrzehnten ein Millionen-Dollar-Imperium für Kosmetika auf, in denen der heilende Rooibos-Tee verarbeitet wird. IPS | KOMMUNIKATION GLOBAL ■

# Taking Up a Women's Agenda

By Najum Mushtaq in Kampala

In her village they call her 'councillor'. But Jenipher Namugwere is no ordinary councillor elected by the people to represent them in the local council. She represents the women in her village, Kadoto, on an advisory council constituted by the Bulangira parish of Palisa district to assess and report their needs to a wider national movement that is seeking to involve women in the planning and budget-making process.



Palisa is one of three districts which is implementing a gender budget initiative spearheaded by the Uganda-based Forum for Women in Democracy (Fowode), with support from the UN women's agency, UNIFEM.

Namugwere says all the women in Kadoto want access to credit. While she wants a loan for rice farming, others want to start small businesses like poultry and piggery. She claims that following her report to the Bulangira parish development committee last year that women were walking long distances to fetch water, a borehole well was drilled at the village primary school.

"The money for credit schemes hasn't reached Kadoto," says Namugwere, but expectations are high among the women. Sarah Kagino from the Bulangira parish is frustrated by the delay. She says she has given up on promises made by the government to help women like her.

Instead she has put all her energies on a Friesian cow she got through Heifer International, a non-profit organisation. "I see women meeting in SACCO's (a cooperative society network), waiting for money and it hasn't come. They have been attending trainings for poultry, bee keeping, but I don't see them getting started on any project." Kagino is dismissive.

A former agricultural extension worker, Kagino says by concentrating on her cow, she can earn the equivalent of 25 dollars daily just from the sale of milk.

## Gender mainstreaming

Minister of Gender, Syda Bumba, believes this is a successful way to mainstream gender in the national planning process.

Julius Mukunda, director of the gender budget programme at Fowode, says the pilot project launched in the districts of Palisa, Kibaale and Kabale is set to roll out to several other districts. Fowode and UNIFEM have been working on influencing budgetary allocations to issues that affect women since 1999.

Mukunda explains they have conducted workshops with members of parliament, district councillors and other stakeholders as a way of influencing the budget processes.

In the 2008/09 budget for example the government has allocated an additional four million dollars to the education sector, to support the twin goals of universal primary and secondary education.

Taligoola is optimistic that some of that money will reach schools in his district. Palisa has a total of 197 primary and 37 secondary schools.

Patricia Munabe, executive director of Fowode, affirms that while the Universal Primary Education policy, initiated by the government in 1997, has significantly narrowed the gender enrollment gap, just 42 percent of girls complete their primary education compared to 55 percent boys.

Women in Uganda represent 80 percent of the agricultural labour force, and are responsible for the bulk of food crop production. But they have no control over the key factors of production like land.

Isa Taligoola, Palisa district chairperson, is convinced the money will come. "The most important part was to put the needs of women in the budget and this has been achieved. What is remaining is to disburse the money which we shall certainly do once the central government releases the money."

The main economic activity in Kadoto, one of the poorest villages in the district, is farming. The most common food crops are millet, potatoes, beans, bananas, simsim (sesame, sunflower, and cash crop, cotton).

Any investment in agriculture in Palisa district, aimed at improving production, will directly benefit women, district officials aver.

The Yoweri Museveni government has received international acclaim for putting in place an active affirmative action policy to reduce gender imbalances in higher education, governance, politics and management.

Palisa district has four government dispensaries, 25 health centres and one hospital. The health centre in Bulangira parish is run by a management committee, a majority of the members women as per the government's affirmative action policy.

She says dropouts are due to a variety of reasons including financial constraints, family responsibilities, illness, early marriages and pregnancies. She claims Fowode's gender budget initiative is designed to tackle such issues.

Results are already coming in from his district, according to chairperson Taligoola. Drop out rates have come down to 40 percent among girls in Palisa.

UNIFEM'S Christine Nankubuge Ndaula in Kampala tells IPS that there will be substantive change when the gender budget advocacy campaign expands to more districts. The gender budget initiative, according to Mukunda, was launched following intense lobbying and advocacy with members of parliament who first enacted a law giving themselves a role in the earliest stages of budget formation.

"We made sure that we enlist the support of members of parliament on issues of gender budgeting and that means that they are themselves aware of issues of gender and can input into the budget process," he explains.

The campaign calls for public participation in the budget process to develop a gender sensitive budget system. Fowode's Munabe sees the process as opening the way for a more transparent and participatory budget process.

IPS | GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ■



Foto: Foto Gürcan Öztürk

# Gebrochene Menschen

Von Bettina Gutierrez

Als schönste, gefährlichste Stadt der Welt, als eine "Stadt, die mit niemandem Erbarmen hat" bezeichnet Özgur, eine junge Türkin, Rio de Janeiro in Asli Erdogan's Roman 'Die Stadt mit der roten Pelerine'. Armut, Kriminalität, menschliches Leid und tropische Lebenslust findet man daher im Rio der türkischen Schriftstellerin Asli Erdogan vor, die seit August dieses Jahres Stipendiatin im Heinrich-Böll-Haus in Langenbroich ist.

"Rio ist der Hauptprotagonist meines Romans, Rio steht für Leben und Tod, es ist die Stadt, die Özgur umbringt. In dem Moment, in dem Özgur umkommt, ist Rio voller Leben", erläutert sie ihre ambivalente Darstellung. Özgur wird bei einem Raubüberfall getötet, doch das ist nur eine der vielen Szenen, in der die Autorin die dunklen Seiten dieser Metropole beleuchtet.

Bei ihren Streifzügen durch die Favelas, die Außenbezirke der Stadt, trifft ihre wurzellose Protagonistin auf Drogenhändler, Straßenkinder, Bettler und Obdachlose, auf Menschen, die der Gesellschaft den Rücken zugewandt haben oder in die Armut hineingeboren wurden. Es sind die einzigen Menschen, denen Özgur bei ihren Versuchen, sich durch die Erkundung der Fremde von ihrer türkischen Heimat zu lösen, begegnet. "Ich wollte, dass sich Özgur in einer Grenzsituation befindet, dass sie völlig isoliert und von ihrer Vergangenheit entfremdet ist. Sie sollte sich am Rand der Gesellschaft befinden, in der Gesellschaft der Erfolglosen. Ich denke, dass die meisten meiner Protagonisten so sind wie Özgur."

Ihre Vorliebe für gebrochene Romanhelden und die ihnen entsprechenden Sujets begründet sie mit ihrem literarischen Stil und einer vorherrschenden Tradition in der Literatur der Klassischen Moderne. So befasst sich auch ihr Roman 'Der wundersame Mandarin' mit dem Scheitern einer Liebe und dem Gefühl der Heimatlosigkeit. Sinnbild hierfür ist eine namenlose Türkin, die nach Genf auswandert und, als ihr Freund sie verlässt, ein Auge verliert. Ihre Einäugigkeit sei als Metapher dafür aufzufassen, so Asli Erdogan, dass man mit einem Auge nur die halbe Realität sehe und in die Dunkelheit blicke. In ihrem jüngsten, noch nicht veröffentlichten Buch geht es wiederum um ein bildhaftes exemplarisches Thema - um menschliche und politische Folter.

Aber Asli Erdogan, deren kosmopolitischen Romanschauplätze und ihre eigene Biographie - sie hat in Genf und Rio de Janeiro gelebt - in der Türkei als "nicht türkisch" kritisiert werden, ist nicht nur Schriftstellerin, sondern beschäftigt sich ebenfalls mit Politik. Der türkische Nationalismus ist ihr fremd: "Ich kann nicht erkennen, wo die türkische Denkweise aufhört und die kosmopolitische anfängt"

In ihren Kolumnen für die Zeitung Radikal hat sie über den Kurdenkonflikt, Menschenrechte, den Zustand der Gefängnisse, Hungerstreiks und die Behandlung von linksgerichteten und kurdischen Gefangenen geschrieben. Fragt man sie nach der Situation der Menschenrechte und der gegenwärtigen politischen Lage in der Türkei, äußert sie sich eher skeptisch.

"Die Europäer sind der Ansicht, dass die Türkei immer demokratischer wird. Ich glaube allerdings, dass alles nicht so positiv verläuft, wie es die Europäer gerne hätten." Als Beispiel hierfür führt sie an, dass die Polizei versuche, Demonstrationen gegen Menschenrechtsverletzungen in Istanbul mit brutaler Gewalt niederzuschlagen. Selbst die türkische Zeitung Hürriyet habe dieses Vorgehen im letzten Jahr mit der Schlagzeile 'Terrorstaat' aufgegriffen. Das solle man nicht unterschätzen, findet sie.

Den derzeitig andauernden "Krieg" zwischen der nationalistischen und der islamistischen Partei wertet sie ebenso als Rückschritt für die demokratische Entwicklung wie die Tatsache, dass der türkische Schriftsteller und Nobelpreisträger Orhan Pamuk in seinem Heimatland öffentlich dazu aufgefordert wurde, seinen Nobelpreis zurückzugeben, weil er sich im Jahr 2005 in einem Zeitungsinterview über die Ermordung von Kurden und Armeniern in der Türkei geäußert hatte. Und gerade deshalb, so folgert sie, hegt sie große Zweifel an der Zukunft der türkischen Demokratie und ihrem Weg zu einer europäischen, säkularisierten Gesellschaft. KOMMUNIKATION GLOBAL ■



Asli Erdogan, Die Stadt mit der roten Pelerine, Unionsverlag, Zürich 2008, 19,90 € | Der wundersame Mandarin, Galata-Edition, Berlin 2008, 14,50 €



## 25 Years North-South Dialogue 1983-2008



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