

Letter to the African Heads of State and the African Union

Sunday 25 October 2009, by [Collective / Multiple signers](#) (Date first published: November 2008).

Dear friends

You will find below and in attachment a letter to the Heads of African States which was written during the African Social forum in November 2008 in Niamey and was widely spread during the last WSF of Belem in Brazil

Please, sign on this letter which will be filed to the African Union in a future that it remains to determine

We would appreciate if you could forward this letter to your partners

To sign on, send an Email to reseauafrique.groupe@ankara.be by indicating NAME - FIRST NAME - ORGANIZATION - COUNTRY

Solidarity

Ibrahim Yacouba (RNDD Niger), Emilie Atchaka (CADD Bénin) and Olivier Bonfond (CADTM Belgium)

Letter to the African Heads of State and the African Union

Sir/ Madam,

We, as networks, organisations, social movements, NGOs, Human Rights associations, trade unions, religious faiths/ confessions, media professionals, women's organisations, students, young people/ youths, teachers, farmers, peasant farmers, or independent citizens, who fight for the social emancipation of the people(s), who fight against the scourge of external illegitimate debt, against the so called "economic partnerships" and against all the harmful and perverse policies and practices of the international financial and economic institutions (IMF, World Bank, WTO etc.), we are addressing you, convinced that the current capitalist crisis offers the opportunity for African people to regain their sovereignty regarding political, economic and social choices as well as control over their natural resources.

The global financial system is collapsing at an alarming rate, and this will further exacerbate other crises, one more serious than the next: the food, climate and energy crises. The swift reaction of governments in the richest countries who have taken action in order to bail out their banks and financial institutions painfully contrasts with their entirely ineffective reaction when faced with the permanent crisis which is shown through the poverty and lack of stability which for a long time has

been the reality for the majority of the global population. This is unacceptable and it is viewed as just another form of rejection. In a few weeks, these leaders have spent over 1500 billion dollars in public funds in order to bail out the banks and private institutions. Twelve years of "debt relief" initiatives have only amounted to 100 billion dollars of debt being cancelled, which has caused serious damage to the affected population, whilst/ since the "beneficiaries" have had to implement neo-liberal policies which have bled the African population dry.

These serious/ deep crises have led us into an uncharted waters and the situation will get increasingly worse. The population is feeling an increased sense of instability and is facing greater poverty whilst the most vulnerable sectors of the population will see their distress increase.

In the past decades powerful opposition movements against neo-liberalism have emerged. These movements will expand as the public becomes increasingly aware of the critical analysis of this crisis. There are already those who are furious at having public funds being used to foot the bill for something they are not responsible for, whilst they are also having to deal with an ecological crisis and unmanageable inflation, especially in the food and energy sectors. These protests will mount/ increase as the recession hits the population and the economy enters a depression. In Africa, throughout this period, poverty will deepen, abject poverty will become systemic and the problem of debt will once again become part of a vicious circle.

Sir/ Madam,

This crisis should open your eyes as to how a responsible state should behave: the state can and should intervene in order to avoid this collapse which we are experiencing and which we will be participating in unless we refuse the injunctions specified by the IMF and the World Bank, who have caused this country nothing but misery and grief. Need we remind you that the social indicators in Africa are the worst in the world? Must we remind you also that due to your policies of resignation and apathy, the natural resources which are so abundant in our country have in fact, in real and figurative terms, been pocketed by private foreign companies? Famine, continuous food crises, disease, illiteracy, wars and the ills of the past have become the daily lot of the African population.

We, as social organisations, signatories of this letter, call for you to radically break with these failed policies which condemn our continent to the lowest link in the chain of humanity. This would not show courage, but rather common sense and clear headedness. It is the well being of our people and progress within our societies which should be at the heart of our main concerns and alternatives should be implemented with urgency. This is why we are asking you, or rather, demanding that you:

- Repudiate public external debt
- Carry out an audit of all African external debts
- Implement initiatives which aim at recovering all the goods and capital embezzled by corrupt leaders and heads of state which have been invested abroad.
- Stop the privatisation of public services and renationalise strategic sectors such as natural resources; water, electricity, finance, health and education.
- To abolish tax exemptions of businesses in the fossil fuel and nuclear energy sectors.
- Massively invest in the health, education and public transport sectors and all other sectors catering for the basic needs of the population.
- Suspend all bilateral free trade agreements as well as EPAs with the EU and the ACP countries.

- Ban all speculation on staple food products and subsidise agriculture
- Promote agricultural policies with the aim of ensuring food sovereignty
- Control and/or subsidise staple goods prices
- Radically reduce military spending and use these resources to create quality employment.

The current regional and international financial and economic climate is providing a favourable atmosphere in which to make progress along this path, but perhaps this will not last long. We hope that you will be able to seize this historic opportunity so as to be able to commit to the only policy which matters: that of paving the way for progress and internal development in Africa and resistance to neoliberal policies, which further increases the poverty and misery of our peoples.

Yours Faithfully,

Signatories

Organisations

Afrique:

- Bénin : CADD (Cercle d'Auto promotion du Développement Durable - CADTM International) ; CCFD (Comité Catholique contre la Faim et pour le Développement)
- Congo Brazzaville : SOLIDAIRES - CADTM Pointe-Noire signe ; Compagnie Culturelle NDUNZI
 - Côte d'Ivoire : ROAD/ FNNDP
 - Mali : CAD- Mali ; AP-Mali (Agence contre la Pauvreté) ; RDL-AFEF (Réseau pour le Développement Local et l'Auto promotion de la Femme, de l' Enfants et de la Famille)
 - Maroc : ATTAC MAROC
 - Niger : RNDD (Réseau National Dette et Développement) ; SNAD (Syndicat National des Agents des Douanes)
 - RDC : COFAS Sud-Kivu (Conseil des organisations des femmes agissant en synergie) ; CADTM Lubumbashi ; NAD (Nouvelles Alternatives pour le développement) ; GRAPR (Groupe de Réflexion et d'Action pour la Promotion Rurale)
 - Togo: ATTAC TOGO
 - Tunisie : RAID ATTAC TUNISIE - CADTM International

Amerique :

- Argentina : EDI/UBA
- Brazil : MST ; Intersindical ; UNE ; PVC ; UFRGS ; C. MAIOR ; UNDB Brasil ; CESUPA-BRA ; FEAPA-BRA ; VJCC ; Semagri ; Associação ngômhrôkrê ; MST/PÁ ; MMC ; SESPA ; Santa Casa ; MST/CDVDH ; MAB/PJR ; PJ ; MPC/Resistencia ; RC Resistencia FM ; RC Palmares FM ; MAB-Tuc-PA ; MAB ; SINTRAF ; CDVDH - Acailandia ; Sec. Combatee Raécismo PT/MA ; Imprensa ; CAPOEIRA ; Teatro do Oprmido ; PJR ; PJR/PJ ; MTM ; SEMATUK-SF.Xngar ; Resistencia ; MCP ; FEAB ; TDBP ; Consulta Popular ; UEPA ; ABEEF ; jornal ; MTM-Movimento da garimpeyo n. ; UJCC ; CDVDH - Bon Jesus - MA ; CDVDH ; PSOL/CST ; PASCOM ; Instituto Trabalho Vivo ; Trabalho Viva ; Resistencia FM
- Canada : Uni-Alter Canada
- Colombia : Partido Comunista
- Cuba : ANAP
- Ecuador : Colectivo Feminista CADTM

- Haïti : Institut Culturel Karl Levèque
- Mexico : AJCOS
- USA : ISO/USA ; DRUM/GGJ ; APEN ; Detroiters working for environmental Justice ; United Students against Sweatshops ; Venderos Ambulantes Vamos Unidos
- Venezuela: Parlatino ; AFINCO-IALA

Asie :

- India : ICS/India
- Japan : Attac Japan

Europe :

- Belgique : CADTM Belgique
- France : Les Alternatifs ; CADTM France ; Educagri ; Mateo Posada ; ATTAC France ; ADM France
- Italia : Associazione per la decrescita
- Spain : Cordoba Solidaria ; Soldepaz Pachakuti

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