

# **AFRICA AFTER THE JOHANNESBURG SUMMIT**

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It is not for Dutch men to speak about Africa. So, I will not speak about NePAD. I will say something about the international situation and NePAD in that framework - just a number of comments, because I am much more interested in a discussion than in presenting views.

## **THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE**

NePAD October 2001, it had been prepared for a couple of years not just that one moment. However, in this same period some other developments took place which perhaps has dwarfed the importance of the NePAD decision, officially in October. I refer particularly to the 11<sup>th</sup> September. You have to ask yourself the question as Africans. What is the importance of what we together with others, decided on the road towards October 2001 in the framework of world developments around 11<sup>th</sup> of September? 11<sup>th</sup> of September was not an isolated event, it had a huge aftermath which at the moment in particular refers to a new situation in the Middle East, Iraq, and a new American Foreign Security Policy.

### **What does that mean?**

African Security Policies should be discussed on the road towards NePAD in the light of the new World Security Policy which is different than before. It is no longer an international security policy resulting from multi-lateral discussions; it is a one-sided security policy dominated and decided upon by one country, the United States, which now is seeing other countries not as partners but as political potential threats to the American security. America has always been the biggest economical, political and military power in the world. But it always had been a partner with others, bullying sometimes others, but a partner within a world system. After the 11<sup>th</sup> September, and of course also on the basis of the development of the American Security Policy before the 11<sup>th</sup> of September, it is a country which would like to take its own decisions without listening to the outside world. Not Africa, not Europe, not others, but only to those which it has brought into its own alliance; bought with money, bought with political favours, bought with perhaps trade concessions and others.

It means that Africa and perhaps also Europe are now being marginalized from the world scene. This is because, African and European problems are no longer as important on the world scene as the new priority for security which is an American security concept and because of the fact that African countries and European countries are not rightly from the beginning an ally of the US - this is a new situation. It is important to reconsider African philosophies and African partnerships in that light, and as a former European politician I would say, within Europe we have to look anew at our European policies, European internal partnerships, European economic and political future in the light of the new world situation.

## **THE EUROPEAN SCENE**

### **What can you expect from Europe?**

Not much! Why not, at the moment? Europe has become quite inward looking which is due to a number of facts which people outside Europe should be aware of. The richer a country or a

group of countries becomes, and Europe has become a rather rich continent, the more vulnerable it is, or the more vulnerable it feels itself to be. That always results in a rather inward looking approach. That is Europe at the moment, which has consequences for instance also for Europe to look to the outside world not so much in terms of – as the American political military security fears, but economic security. Other countries may endanger us, may threaten our welfare. The richer you are the more you are afraid that something gets lost, and Africa is being seen as a potential threat, migrants, farmers etc. There is no movement at the moment different; it is an inward looking movement.

Europe at the moment is also being a victim of a recession, which is lasting. Europe is also very strongly politically inward looking. For right reasons, in particular security of the European continent, leading to the decision that many other countries also should become members of Europe - Poland, Czech etc, which is positive. However it will result in economic difficulties, within Europe because within the European integrated market you get some new countries which will create economic imbalances, and the results of those imbalances will be shifted onto the shoulders of other countries, in particular Africa. In the long run Eastern Europe and Africa could be economic partners but in the short run on the European market you are competitors, and that is a problem. There are also clear signs of fatigue in Europe - wrong, but anyway its effect with regard to Africa at the moment, the structural approach is not an approach towards partnership between Europe and Africa on equal footing as it politically was meant to be the case in the 60s and 70s. So the world scene is different and not positive. The European scene is different and not positive.

## **WHAT IS NOW THE PLACE OF NEPAD?**

You have to decide yourselves: NePAD is new; NePAD can be criticized; NePAD is –and I beg to differ with my friend Professor Salih- is not strongly linked to the Millennium goals, it is linked to the G8-goals. The G8 and the United Nations-goals, are different, and please do not mix them. You are not part of the G8 but you are part of the UN, and Millennium is UN. NePAD is partly an initiative coming from Africa itself, partly it is a condition put on Africa by G8-countries. G8-countries, led by the US- are not the countries which have poverty eradication and all the other Millennium development goals which are good, which are a result of a world process as number one priorities on the present agenda.

### **Should African countries continue to ask assistance?**

Assistance including access to markets has been put on the NePAD philosophy agenda together with the G8, as a condition. ‘You behave’ –that was YOUR terminology- then you get our assistance - that was a deal. Deals are possible in international negotiations but, how you behave – the criteria are not being set by Africans but by the other countries.

## **FOR THE FUTURE**

I think African countries together could choose a different path, namely the path of analysing the constrains for African development resulting from the world system, resulting from American policies, resulting from European policies, not asking assistance but demanding the other countries to take away the constraints for African development, which are many. I mention them. Don’t ask, don’t beg, but demand to take away constraints:

### *Constraint No 1*

Take away the pressure of IMF, Europe, and other countries to continue liberalisation, privatisation and adjustment. Of course, to a certain extent liberalisation, privatisation and adjustment are good, but let Africa decide how and when, rather than being made conditions by others. Take away the pressure; don't take away the philosophy in itself. Let Africa decide on the philosophy and the time path.

### *Constraint No 2*

Debts: What has happened in the 1990s HIPIC; was a small step forward. But again on the basis conditions which were so finance-macro-economic, so little oriented towards development of countries that it became a new straitjacket, debts, accumulated debts by countries to be repaid by a regime as a result of former loans given to former regimes is a major straitjacket also for reform income. Take away those straitjackets. Demand! That is not assistance; that is a condition.

### *Constraint No 3*

Agricultural subsidies/export subsidies is a constraint to development, not so much the subsidies to European farmers at home to reform themselves, their own agriculture; but the export subsidies which are distorting trade, which is a constraint to African development.

### *Constraint No 4*

Export by Europe and others of arms, small arms, and 2<sup>nd</sup> hand arms which is an even more important; all those leftover arms from past military policies in Europe including Eastern Europe being sold at low prices and which are creating mayor difficulties in African countries.

### *Constraint No 5*

Corruption: Take away the constraint which is the result of the fact that corruption still is a two-way-street - it is demand and supply. That still African companies and administrations are being bought by Western companies. If Westerners want Africa to take away corruption, it is very important that there is given a high priority to anti-corruption policies in Europe and that it is made punishable. Constrain foreign economic support to regimes which Africans consider to be problematic regimes in Africa itself. If Westerners want Africa to improve governance don't support regimes which are in an African view is distorting human rights.

### *Constraint No 6*

Cost of medication being fixed at levels which can only be afforded by rich consumers in the West belonging to the middle class but which cannot even be afforded by African upper class, let alone by all the other people. This is a constraint to human development.

### *Constraint No 7*

Use of Resources: Europe ought to publish what they pay for resources being extracted from Europe so that people from Africa know what money is coming in, so that Africans know what can be done with it rather than all these secret deals on the basis of important African natural resources which are not then being used for African development.

## **SELF-CONFIDENCE**

Such an approach is the approach of a continent of a group of countries which is self-confident. There is a good sign - Cancun. In Cancun, for the 1<sup>st</sup> time in international trade policies, developing countries as a whole –led by a small group- did say NO. And this ‘no’ of course does have some consequences for world economic development. Europe and the United States are going to send the message around that this was a stupid ‘no’ because it was not in the interest of Africa. But this is not true. It is important as an example of a new political feeling of confidence.

The North can not just make a deal amongst themselves and then ask developing countries to sign it because there is no alternative. That has been the message in GATT throughout, also the message in the beginning of WTO. Even if some African and other developing countries would be the victim of some economic recession due to the fact that there is no growth resulting from a new liberalisation policy; it would be a short term loss in a long term game.

Self-confidence in international negotiations in the new situation, whereby one partner is having a priority only for his own security and the other partner is becoming more inward looking, is a very important step. But for that self confidence to be effective in international negotiations, Africa has to be more or less united. Because if you are being manipulated (and that has been detected of many Western countries) and are brought into a situation that you can be divided amongst yourselves, you loose in such international negotiations.

So I don't say anything about NePAD and I know there are many discussions within Africa and also in the African Diaspora on Africa. I have been in discussions where the African representatives, coming from Africa to explain, were much more positive about NePAD than the African Diaspora. It is not for me to judge, I only would like to say that NePAD, despite misgivings, is a chance, it is an opportunity to negotiate - to negotiate, to make yourselves strong in an international setting. Despite the fact that it was to a certain extent a condition by the G8, you can use it as a point of strength in international negotiations. But then at the same time develop an African philosophy; develop an African time path; develop not only a situation of co-operation amongst leaders in Africa and amongst governments in Africa as a whole.

## **THE PROSPECTS**

I am quite pessimistic about the present state of world affairs economically and politically. The consequences of a situation which is going into the wrong direction very often are stronger and worse for poorer countries and poor groups of people within countries. You can only reverse this if you develop a philosophy of your own and if you develop your strength but it is going to be very difficult in the 10 years ahead. Don't ask - demand and become as self confident as is possible.