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*Faculté des Sciences Sociales et des Relations Internationales*

## PROJECT: INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM

**Date:** 06-09 April 2009

**PLACE:** YAOUNDE – CAMEROON

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**Organization:** African Institute for Peace Communication and Development (AIPCD) of the Faculty of Social Sciences and International Relations (FSSIR) of the Protestant University of Central Africa

**Financial responsibilities of the AIPCD:** transport, lodging, feeding, per diem to all panelists according to the international standard.

**THEME:** The problematic of Peace and Development in Africa:  
Balance Sheet and New Stakes in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Millennium

### **1. Introduction**

Following the creation of the first international Peace Research Institute in 1959 in Oslo, Prof. Johann Galtung did not only offer a new epistemological orientation to Peace Studies, but above all, enriched them with a new analysis paradigm, which is the concept of **Positive Peace**. At the academic level, the concept of peace no longer simply refers to a state of the absence of war (Pax Romana), non-violence, or non-conflict (**Negative Peace**), but it is also analysed from the perspective of the absence of exploitation, of social injustice and of structural violence in all its forms in a given society. When reference is made of *Amani* in *Kiswahili*, of *Irene* in Greek, of *Shalom* in Hebrew, and of *ping* in Chinese..., the concept of **Peace**, as the total well-being of Man, thus, becomes a sacred litmus test for all the humanity. This litmus test is even greater when correlated to the problem of development as stated by Harry Truman in his inaugural speech on the 20<sup>th</sup> of January 1949. Thus, to envisage that development would happen within a context of war is an apparent Sisyphean task. This is the case of Africa which, at the beginning of this 21<sup>st</sup> century, is still embroiled in an environment of conflicts as well as multiple forms of political and socio-economic crises, to the extent that the following examples oblige us to question what has gone and is going wrong on the African continent.

How does one understand that Kenya, one of the rare countries which up until now, has been stable in the region of the Great Lakes, suddenly plunges into a bloody and deadly conflict against a background of partisan and ethnic cleavages following the presidential election of January, 2008?

How could Zimbabwe, former best student of the Breton Woods financial institutions, sink into an interminable socio-political and economic crisis, and today find itself at the brink of total collapse not only because of the question of land reforms issuing from a colonial past, but more because of the question of a simple but difficult political power-sharing between Robert Mugabe and Morgan Tsvangirai.

How does one understand that the old conflicts in Central Africa, in West Africa, in the Great Lakes and in the Horn of Africa seem to be prolonging and expanding more and more (Sudan, Chad, Central African Republic, DR Congo, Niger, Mali, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea ...), and the consolidation of the peace process in Ivory Coast is hampered by ethnic and political obstacles of all sorts?

How does one understand that youth descend on the streets of Douala, Yaounde, Ouagadougou, Niamey, and Dakar demonstrating their outrage, and setting fire on private and public property to cry out for hunger ('Hunger riots'), and that in the space of six months, the international financial crisis comes to compound the global food crisis, thereby exposing the failure of the neoliberal logic whose policies of deregulation and disengagement imposed on poor countries since the 1980s have not yielded the expected results?

How does one understand that the military overthrows a democratically elected president in Mauritania, while the accession of a '*Black man*' Barack Obama, to the White House gives hope of new perspectives in the treatment of questions of international peace and security?

When military was taken over the political power in Guinea after the death of president Lansana Konte, the successful presidential election in Ghana is giving new hopes to Africans in the continent and abroad. Despite this *exception Ghanienne* (the positive example of the people of Ghana and their leaders through during the whole election's process), the situation of Human Rights, of Democratic Peace, of Economic well-being and Ecological Balance between growth and the protection of environment is still a sort of untold sorrows through the continent.

The stakes of this debate around the problem of Peace and Development in Africa are complicated the more in the face of the question of forced, selective, or voluntary migration of people within the continent and of African youths drifting towards the West and all the drama it creates, brain drain and the threat posed by the high fertility of Africans in the Diaspora and within the continent, not forgetting the terrorist threats which spare no continent on the globe. All these events put together, demonstrate that the situation is sufficiently explosive and complex for the future of the continent.

It is, therefore, urgent for African and foreign intellectuals and experts to delve into the implications of these crises and cycles, in order to bring out new epistemological orientations and new paradigms of analysis and action that would enable the African continent definitely turn the page against the barbarity and human folly of the 70s, 80s, and 90s, so that it does not become, by the same token, a handicap for the rest of the world whose hopes of ecological survival beyond the 3<sup>rd</sup> Millennium repose on the natural resources of the dense tropical forests of the continent. Besides, it is clear that it is no longer simply and purely an Afro-African problem, but a question which derives its strength from globalization, and as such, should concern all of humanity.

Thus, we should ask if the genuine development of Africa (since this is what it is in substance) is compatible simply with the beautiful theories of Breton Woods Institutions and Western scholars. And in the face of the failure of conflict resolution strategies (political power-sharing), and taking into consideration the complexity of the problem of peace and development, wouldn't it be urgent to review the paradigms of analysis of the dominant discourse in terms of democracy (when access of the *demos* – or the different *demos* – to the

*cratos* is done in a context where political programs make way for ethnic platforms), of political economy, of reduction of poverty and gender inequalities; in short, to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals set by the United Nations Organization in September, 2000, and to propose suitable alternatives to the different realities of the continent. Is it not time to rethink an epistemology of action, of reinventing new models and mechanisms of the *polis*, in order that the dialectical trilogy between peace, development and democracy, is harmonized to give political actors in Africa the means and the theoretical framework to act efficiently.

The role played by the church as an institution and a moral person in the fight against racial equality in South Africa and during the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, challenges us more than ever before to this day when many African countries plunge into socio-political violence. The church and theological education must first of all address a number of questions:

What attitude should church men adopt in the face of the new cases of violence which crop up everywhere on the continent? What responsibility comes to the church when the African youth descend on the streets to express their outrage and their pains in the face of the high cost of living and unemployment in a context of extreme poverty and with future perspectives which are more and more bleak? What new theology should be taught in such a context, and what contribution should be awaited from the church in the process of social transformation, political reconciliation and economic growth in Africa?

This litany of questions fairly illustrates the fact that, the problematic of Peace and the struggle for Development on the African continent present themselves anew with more seriousness, and deserve being at the centre of this first international debate organized by the African Institute for Peace Communication and Development (AIPCD) of the Faculty of Social Sciences and International Relations (FSSIR) of the Protestant University of Central Africa in Yaounde.

It is not solely within this frame of questions and the ambition to offer new avenues of reflection, but also with the goal to present to the wide public of the sub-region in particular, and the continent in general, the existence here of a *Curriculum Studiorum* exclusively treating these questions and their implications on the future of the continent as a whole, the Protestant University of Central Africa organizes, through the AIPCD of the FSSIR, this intellectual colloquium from 16 to 19 March 2009 on its campus in Yaounde, Cameroon on the theme: **The Problematic of Peace and Development in Africa: Balance Sheet and New Stakes in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Millennium.**

## **2. Guideline for the contributions**

**Panel 1:** Historical and theoretical approaches to the Problem of Peace and Development in General (2 conferences and debates)

**Panel 2:** Contribution of Theological training and implication of churches in problems of peace and development in Africa (2 conferences and debates)

**Panel 3:** The implications of international politics and Finance, the African responsibility in conflicts and under-development in Africa (2 conferences and debates)

**Panel 4:** National politics, good governance, democratic participation and the stakes of peace and development in Africa (2 conferences and debates)

**Panel 5:** African Women, African Youth and Migration: what challenges for sustainable development and peace in Africa (2 conferences and debates)

**Panel 6:** International trade and the problem of fair trade with Africa and sustainable development (2 conferences and debates)

**Panel 7:** Protection of the environment, climate changes and the problem of peace and sustainable development in Africa (2 conferences and debates)

**Panel 8:** International actors (ONU, EU, G8...), instruments (UNPD, GTZ, CFD, SNV....) and Policies (MDG's, NEPAD, R2P...) of international cooperation for Development and Conflicts Resolution in Africa in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Millennium (2 conferences and debates)

**The objectives of this colloquium are :**

1. To establish the link which exists between the problem of peace and development on the African continent and in the world.
2. To resituate at the centre of the debate, the importance of theological training and the role of church men and women in the fight against poverty in Africa, by bringing to light the hope and comfort that the word of God provides in a conflictual environment, where the inflexibility, blindness and intrigues of Man have often ended fatally.
3. To offer new perspectives and avenues of reflection on the UN objectives of the MDGs and their implications on the questions of security and stability in Africa.
4. To enable researchers and university dons have an intellectual exchange on these questions, and to work in network in order to propose to decision-makers necessary theoretical openings to help the continent come out of this situation of conflicts and permanent wars, so as to concentrate resolutely on the path of development which takes into account the preservation of nature and traditions, as well as responsibility for future generations.
5. To analyse the impact of the current political trends on the continent and their consequences on the questions of Peace, of Development and of security in the next decades.
6. To question the causes and impact of selective emigration or not on Peace and Development in Africa.
7. To give the opportunity to students of the FSSIR of Protestant University of Central Africa to have direct contact with representatives of IOs and INGOs in order to establish their first links for their internships and may be future employees.

**NB:**

- The contributions during the colloquium will be published
- **Languages:** English and French (no translation)

**General coordinator**

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