

## **Viriato Tamele**

Thank you. I was asked to highlight the issues of alternatives to the development paradigms. Then I got the programme and I saw that I need to respond to Yash's talk. So I got in touch with Yash and asked him what he was going to talk about. I finally did my research in Portuguese and wrote it out in English although I have problems with both languages. I am still responding to Yash and to what he has been saying all of these years.

What I am going to say is based on discussions in the International Forum on Globalisation which provides a creative space for developing ideas and possibilities and also the World Social Forum for debate and discussions and also in the forum is Another World Is Possible. I am in my own capacity and feel that it can help us if the harsh reality presents us with a difficult choice. The knowledge of our history and our society, its cultural diversity is indispensable if we are to understand the development paradigm and to make a contribution of an alternative. And from the comfort of our homes and offices we can easily forget what the daily lives are for the majority of our countrymen.

There are plenty of statistics that I can give you but will not do so except for some important figures. For instance, the world trade rules rob poor countries of 2.4 billion US dollars, four times what they get from international aid and 30 times the amount they pay as debt repayment. The trade is a powerful force and has the potential to reduce the poverty and improve the lives of millions of people but this cannot happen with the present trade rule because they are designed to make the rich countries richer and the poor countries even more poor. Developing countries are squeezed out of the international market, even their own markets. They are forced into international agreements that undermine democratic accountability by reducing the rights of their government in crucial areas such as in the financial investments and the provision of basic services. Before I talk of alternatives it is important to talk about globalization in Africa – it is important to say that from the days of slavery in Africa until today the situation has been a disaster for Africa both in terms of people's lives and in terms of its environment. Its role in world development is better understood in terms of Africa's contribution to world development – the continent went to agonizing slave trade and colonization. No one can fail to see the level of destitution of the people of Africa and the level of exploitation that they had to endure, the persistent problems confronting African people and those in the diaspora. The European conquerors, slave dealers and plunderers have done much damage – that have led to the settled forces of imperialism and disintegrated society so as to build what is now the most adverse economy in the world. The continent remains marked by crimes visited on it by the imperialists. Up to now its potentiality is restricted by underdevelopment, the debt trap, the inequalities of trade which all conspire to hold the continent now.

The first inroads of colonization affected profoundly the fabric of African society especially along the coastal areas through the massive impositions of the slave trade, to an imposition of trade where the agrarian and pastoral society used to be self-sufficient in most aspect of their lives. The progressive advent of the settlers and traders changed African society to a modern way of living and working which is now called underdevelopment. This has been totally incompatible with the traditional African way of living which has not been resolved till now. Globalisation in its latest manifestation of capitalism is a tyranny that is already embedded in Africa. The combination of modernization and globalization is lethal. It means for example to put a (???) into the

hands of modern technology owned and controlled by a large multinational company whose primary interest is to generate profit for themselves and not something social like food security of the people. So there is a need for the retaking of common goods such as bio-diversity in seeds, air and water that maintains the integrity of life, the ecosystem and a sustainable human society. Democracy and social sustainability are the basis of human rights. According to the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, all people of the world have the fundamental right to citizenship, to education, food and housing and a life of human dignity.

The time has come to debate the alternative to the current trade system. We can look back at the time after the Second World War - it was not determined that the rights then drawn up, the rights of people would be privatized and that they would be up on offer to the highest bidder on the free market. There is a need to retake the control of public power in civil society which is sacred to the life of the people. One of the basics of the ideology of capitalism is to say that there is no alternative and it is necessary to improve the organization in order to resolve the remaining problems. Also they say that the competition policy is needed to avoid monopolies. Others say that important areas of human activity cannot be brought under the market and there is a need for a minimal state role to have effective markets and legal frameworks to secure education, health, infrastructure and public water. In the face of the harsh reality of hunger and misery all agree on the implementation of the poverty alleviation program, and the need to improve the situation.

How to deal with alternatives? We need to recognize that the concept of alternatives is ambivalent – we can have alternatives within the capitalist economy or we can refer to the alternatives as a replacement of capitalism. So before we go to the concrete field of alternatives we must not forget three things. First - alternatives are produced by social actors and can all emerge through discreditation of the current situation i.e. capitalism. Second, we must not forget that the market is a social relations and can all be exercised in the new world working to a convergence of global resistance.

Third – the system must be changed and the mere alternative addition or even multiple is not enough to achieve the objective knowing that the people in the world are direct or indirect to the social relations of capitalism, direct to capital wage relations or indirect to the number of other mechanisms for macro production, for export of raw materials, debt service or free market, currency fluctuations or financial speculations. We must also add to the points above the three dimensions – the utopia, the middle term objective and the concrete steps. In those dimensions there are lots of ideas and suggestions and experiments. The utopia dimensions refer not to the illusions, not even the shown idea but a mobilizing project, rooted in reality and in time and space. We must dream of a better world and fight for it if not for us but at least for our children. We must keep in mind that capitalism emerged about 500 years ago and it took that time to take root. It can be defeated but we have to start now and we must keep in mind that we must keep dreaming. And between the fulfillment of utopia and the dream there is a reality. But the utopia needs to be realized by taking concrete steps.

About the middle term alternatives – these are general objectives but need to be translated into concrete steps. There are the economic alternatives and the political alternatives. First the economic ones – there are some human activities that cannot be part of market activities – like culture, education and even the means of communication. And in an open market there will be a space of manoeuvre for countries with weak

economies it must include people as a main priority. On the political alternatives – the economic alternatives cannot be materialized without the political alternatives. To counter-balance the political is crucial. At the global level, the global organizations must be democratized. There is a need to reduce the power and influence of the World Bank, IMF and the WTO by bringing them to the original functions of world economic system by other criteria and not just capital. A convincing case for the placement of the Bretton Woods institutions would be if they included in their plans for humanity the role of the state as a guarantor of social objectives and ecological concern. This inevitability leads to the reparations of the African countries and this will benefit both north and south. And the reparations of Africa are very necessary – not just for the slave trade, but they need to cover all periods up to the SAPs and the HIPC. The idea of compensations has to be considered – there are the cases like that of Iraq or the state of Israel.

Now going to the short term initiative – it is not all necessary to establish a medium post and formulate a middle objective but to make a short term objective for political programs. We need to look to the rules of sustainable of trade and financial systems. To reform and strengthen the global bodies and the existent UN bodies. There is a need to set up an international court that will arbitrate on financial matters between debtors and creditors. The arbitrations panel would make a final ruling. The institution will deal with international law. The IMF will work with the UN members to help countries to achieve and maintain a balance in their global relations in debt related matters. It will need to recognize the need for regional monetary funds and those institutions must be answerable to the region's own institutions.

In the field of culture, education and media etc. there is a need to protect culture and bio-diversity. To support national initiatives or corporate accountability through the provision of information and advisory services facilitating negotiation for bilateral and multilateral agreement. There is a need of an institution for corporate accountability at national and local level. As a conclusion, the proposal that are now put forward, they can see as realistic, while some will laugh. But if we had looked at the world 50 years ago, we would have seen that the ideas put forward then would have appeared also laughable.

We did not mention the failed alternative as we saw in the Soviet Block – but this needs to be looked for the multiple internal and external reasons. The ruin was natural and now capitalism is taking planetary dimensions and becoming more damaging. We know that change cannot come in one day. The failure of socialism has shown us that change is a long process. In the era of the Enron and other global scandals, global corporations have lost public trust. Cancun is the clear indications of the current trade systems and their market orientations. And the global critical forces have formed alliances and organized with success demonstrations around the world that brought millions of people on the streets. Many of them now gather around the World Social Forum and share their vision of a world without corporate greed. We are now talking of global solidarity and also of national governments who will take care of their citizens. There are alternatives and we must have no doubt that they make sense and we must work them out to make them a reality, to act in common and realize the middle and short term objective. We have to create a political will to make them happen. I am convinced that this meeting will contribute to the changing of the world, let us work for that.