

International Expert's Meeting on Globalisation and Sub Saharan Africa

Notes from day 2 - Friday April 16

Morning session

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Keynote Address

Thank you. I would also like to thank our European partners for organizing this meeting. I am thankful because the meeting gives us Africans a chance to meet and talk amongst ourselves about our concerns and work. We do not get this opportunity enough. Since last night I have re written my paper which I was to present today in order to present a broader picture of the trade issue. Yesterday I said that when we begin to talk of writing a joint statement, we need to have clarity about the perspective and a clear analysis of the methodology. At this time in history we need to conduct a deconstruction of history as we know it. Our first task is a construction of a social theory because if we do not know where our ideology and our concepts come from, we are unwittingly trapped into that framework. And we go on thinking in the old terms while believing that we are making changes whereas we are actually running on the same ground. So our first task is to take an epistemological leap into a paradigm shift. I will start with the summary of Charles's presentation for those who were not here yesterday and also to prepare the ground for my own presentation. I agree with Charles in what he said. He said we need to have a perspective. He said we need five things.

1) The first of all we need to understand hegemony: There is no global system since time immemorial that has not been dominated by a hegemonic power. At this point in time there is one hegemon while there is one hegemon the US is not the only hegemon. Europeans in another context, in Africa, are also a hegemonic power. There is at this moment only one hegemon. But for Africa, Europe is the hegemon. And Europe is the empire. Even the Left in Europe does not recognize the fact that there is an empire and there is imperialism. Imperialism is for them a bad word. The moment you use the word you are regarded as radical because you come from another school of thought.

2) Africa's role in the global division of labour was not really tied down to production but to extraction of resources primarily. There was never a time the export-oriented strategy was applied seriously in Africa. All that happened was the extraction of natural resources - especially gas and oil. I will modify that further later on in my talk to bring in the differences within Africa.

3) The automatic trigger mechanism by which the empire controls processes and decision making in our countries, particularly with regards to budgetary controls. So the IMF would come down to our countries and say we will give you 50% of your funds now provided you fulfill the required conditions. Once we have assessed how you have performed we will give you the rest of the 50%. This may not be something that this audience may have experience with but I have seen this happen in Uganda, my own country which is highly dependent with regard to its current expenditure – where 49 % of our money comes from donor funding. So the donors come in, they say 'perform and then you will get the money'. That is what is important - the trigger mechanism for control.

4) The fourth point is the principle of non reciprocity – extremely important. There has been historically speaking no trading systems based on reciprocity. You can have reciprocal relationship only between symmetrical powers. When countries attain a certain equal relationship in their trading arrangement only then can you have a win-win situation. Short of that, every asymmetrical relationship produces only asymmetrical

results. It is not surprising therefore when there is an a-symmetrical relationship between north and south, there is also an increasing gap between the two. Unless you level the playing field you cannot have a trade relationship that can benefit both sides. Surprisingly when the EU was integrating itself within their own region, they were able to make non-reciprocal concessions to weaker members to like Portugal, Greece and Spain until they caught up. But with Africans, reciprocity is thrown overboard – we are asked to behave as if we were equal partners. This is a fundamental derogation of all norms of international trade. I'm just summarizing the points made by Charles.

The question of the empire is very important but not the only issue. We need to analyze the situation from three levels: - imperial factor, - governance factor, - social factor. Unless you analyze the global situation from all three levels you are not likely to understand what is happening in our countries. I'll give you an example from my adopted country Zimbabwe – where after the land reform the ruling party concentrated only on the imperial factor. It is right in analyzing the land situation as an inheritance from the past, it is right also in saying that the land reform was obstructed by the British because it was against their interest in Zimbabwe but it is not right in saying that it was the only problem. The opposition party, the NBC, only looked at it from the governance factor – the country was not run democratically and they did not have a chance to fight the elections. They were right. But they were wrong in that they ignored the imperial factor – in fact the NBC went to bed with the empire. It took the assistance of the British to fight their battles in Zimbabwe - unlike the opposition in Kenya who fought their war on their own. The opposition in Kenya fought on their own for democracy so that later they were able to bring changes that can be credited to indigenous forces. But the moment you go to bed with the imperial factor you are out – the NBC had de-legitimized themselves by doing so.

Coming to the social factor -both parties are negligent of the social factor. Justice equals social factor plus governance factor minus imperial factor because in our situation what we need is to start with policies that take care of the most neglected- the low section of society – the disabled, the immigrants, Netherlands please take note. The refugees, etc.. The social factor is very important because the government's legitimacy is dependent on their response to these people's needs who are the most vulnerable and the weakest. But that is not enough – and lot of the UN programs deal with the social factor and that is fine. They have only recently gone on discuss the governance factor – the World Bank and IMF are now talking about the governance factor which is important but I will later go into what the problem is with the way the UN and the World Bank defines governance issues.

The domination of the imperial factor in Africa is so powerful, more than in Latin America or Asia, that you can not understand the present situation in Africa unless you understand the imperial factor – impossible. And yet even in this kind of conference you cannot talk of the imperial factor – that is why Charles Abugre's presentation I found the basis of our discussions. Therefore there are two perspectives that we need to consider to come up with a statement. There is political economy as *if morality mattered* - that is perspective "A". And according to the second perspective, perspective "B", is political economy as *if reality mattered*. These are two very different perspectives. But your perspective on many issues will depend on what particular frame of reference you have. For example, under the first perspective one can say that debt is destroying Africa - that debt is very bad etc. etc. so let's cancel it. You then appeal to the people who are creating the debt in your countries to please cancel the debt and then they talk of

cancellation. For them debt is a necessary instrument of control by the empire, of Africa, not just in this century but throughout history and not simply between empire and their colonies but within our own countries too. Credit mechanisms are the basis with which the landlords can control the peasants in most societies. So credit and debt are not new but are needed by the empire precisely to in order to put into operation what Charles was talking about – the trigger mechanisms. They can use the debt and aid leverage in order to bring about a certain amount of predictability in the behavior of their colonies. Nothing new and therefore for those of them from this perspective cancellation is an absurd word to use in relation to debt. It should be debt repudiation. We are not able to pay debt – we can pay some debts perhaps but we are not going to use debt as a continuing sword of Damocles over our head for you to use when you please to control us. Abrogation - unilateral abrogation. And if it can be done – as somebody said from this panel – if it can be done on a united basis, on a continental basis as African, it is what we should do. If you look at trade – the fair trade perspective says: Africans have been getting poor terms of trade, let us give them a “fair” deal, and you have fair trade shops all over Europe. It is okay, but basically it only goes to help the conscience of the people from this perspective, the moral perspective.

For us from the perspective as if reality mattered, trade is a weapon of control and conquest in all centuries. Mercantilism has been the basis of society throughout. Its only for a short period in England that Adam Smith came out with his mercantilism and Dave Ricardo talked of the division of trade globally and the comparative advantages, basically arguing that mercantilism is bad, if everybody indulges in free trade then we have a win-win situation. That period lasted a very short time because it was clearly seen as unfair soon after by the Germans who reacted to Britain’s free trade with protectionist Acts to promote and protect their industries and market. Ironically the very argumentation that Smith used, namely free trade and individualism, those are the very arguments used today by neo-liberals today as a justification for mercantilism. Mercantilism is the basis of present day society as I will explain soon. Mercantilism is fine what we want is equal trade, equal opportunity. There are no reciprocal relationships that must be honored because historically speaking asymmetries have been built into the global structure. Unless these asymmetries are removed, we can not talk about equal relationships or free trade. But we are not asking for special favors. We are only asking for the same opportunities that you have. For the last thirty five - forty years, Africa has had concessionary access to the European market, but after the Doha round, after the waver we got in Cotonou, we have been told that we will have to dismantle those concessions by 2007 – and come to reciprocal relationships, because non reciprocity is incompatible with WTO agreements. Why did Europe take that stand in Doha? While Europe has for 37 years has had its agriculture based on subsidies, protected its farmers for almost 40 years to reform that and has yet not been reformed. A continent that has taken two decades to reform its agriculture and not done so yet and now they expect us to reform in a matter of four years. We are simply saying that you are not playing by your own rules. They built into the WTO mechanisms by which they can shift boxes – there are three boxes in agriculture: the green, the blue and the red.

Box one (Green)

You can give as much subsidy as you want.

Box two (blue)

You must reduce subsidies.

Box three (red)

Eliminate subsidies as far as possible.

Over the last three or four years, in absolute terms, Europe has in fact over the years given more subsidies but they say they are reducing it as they promised in the Doha Round. And yet these are not the subsidies that we can use in Africa – even the **dominimus** (what's this??) subsidy we can give- we do not have the money to give these subsidies. Why? Because of the interlocking mechanism that Charles was talking about. The conditionalities of the IMF that are put onto our countries are such that we do not have budgetary support to give subsidies to agriculture. So we are not saying that we want charity – we want this road but equal treatment. We want to do as you have been doing. These perspectives are going to be very important.

Similar to the social state which I will come to - here the line is that the social state must protect the human rights of the people. I agree with this. But our reality is that the state has been diminished and the policy options that are left to our countries are not there because of the trading regime and because the empire has conducted its relationship with Africa in such a way that they have deprived our governments of their ability/power to make policies related to health, education and so on. How do you deal with that reality – not by moral platitudes, but on what is the reality. Therefore my presentation is going to be based on what is political economy as if reality mattered because morality is okay and I think the human rights approach is important to remind states that they have a responsibility – it is a political demand. They must respect peoples basic need for food, health work etc. But the MDGs talk about giving education by the year 2015. Yet they deprive our countries of the very means of providing these services, though they put down goals of education in their development goals. How do we deal with that reality – political economy as if reality matters. The other perspective that we have to bear in mind is that when talking about poverty in Africa, you go to look for poverty in Africa. Reminds me of this story about a man who lost something precious in the dark and could not find it so he decided to look for it where the light/lamp was. He was looking for his lost thing and when he was asked where he lost it he said that he lost it there further on, but it was dark there and so he came to look for it where there was light. Our situation is quite similar. If you want to look at the cause of poverty in Africa, you have to look at Europe or the West. You need to look at the forces at work in their countries first, I am now talking to my sisters and brothers from Africa to understand why we are poor. There is no point to look for the answers in Africa – you would be looking in the darkness for the answers. We must lighten that darkness and I am going to throw some ideas on that:

1) The primary reason for globalization is the crisis of profitability. The crisis is endemic in the system. I do not have to be and Adam Smith, a Ricardo, or even a Marx to understand that there is an inner logic of capitalism itself which creates the crisis of poverty necessarily. If you look at 'value' - it is basically capital plus wages – if you throw the other details aside, i.e. transport, etc., etc. Even in neo-classical literature when they draw graphs they put labour on one side and capital on the other side and they work out a correlations. And in this situation then if you have a

Value = Capital + Wage+ Profit.

120 = 50 (capital) + 50 (wages) + 20 (profit)

SO your profit is twenty and your rate of profit is 20 over 100. But in a capitalist system the competition between capitalists necessarily drives them to reduce their wage costs and improve their capitalization of production, by the application of technology to production. Technology is a necessary part of the innovation of capitalism, the good part of it. Some people might find this difficult because of the arithmetic. But this is very simple. So increase capital to 70 and reduce your wages to 30 and your profit remains the same, then your rate of profit comes back to 20%. What they have done is to reduce wages and increased capital - nothing fundamental, nothing profound. Simple – the capitalist must do that to survive to compete against other capitalists.

What does this mean for international trade? In international trade it means that this capitalist we were talking about can take his capital to China Where he does not have to put 70 US \$ but he may put in 50 US \$ - and he puts wages as 05 because the wage difference between China and Germany is tremendous, and retains his profit of 20 over 50.5 – 40% profit. The profit goes up and the implications are immense. It helps him increase his profits and it also reduces the value of the thing produced compared to it being made in Germany – cheaper to buy in Germany.

The implications are profound:

One: it is not China that is looking for FDIs, but it is investors from Europe that go looking for a market in China because the profitability is globally speaking such that they have to average out the profit globally speaking. In Europe and America they make a profit of 1-3%, in L. America profit of 10-15%, Asia about the same, Africa about 30%. So when they say that Africa is getting about 2.3% of the FDI. Poor Africa, i.e. morally speaking. The point is that the westerners would like to put their money into Africa, because profit is very high, especially in the extractive industries. But they are not able to do so – why? Because the conditions are not safe for investments. Then when you look at the issue of governance – we should not take the moralistic view and say that the African governments are corrupt, and are not democratically responsible. There is not much difference between the governments of Uganda and Zimbabwe. Both are corrupt and equally authoritarian but notice that there is criticism of the government of Zimbabwe but not of Uganda. There are no moral norms – no. It is simply that in Uganda they can manage the process, in Zimbabwe they cannot. Governance is on the agenda of the empire. So unless they can create the conditions in our countries for safe investments for their corporations, they will continue to face the problems of the crisis of profitability.

People say that I am radical, perhaps I am being controversial. It's just a point of different perspectives and we need to resolve our differences. We can debate on it. Now the crisis of profitability of profitability is resolved differently in the North and in the South. In the North one way to address the crisis of profitability is to depress wages – if you look at the reality they have decreased wages and thrown people out of work. One way is this. The second way is through innovation - technology – one which can replace manpower. The third way is through rationalization of production - mergers and the taking over of industry (acquisitions). So there is no waste. Another way is to use cheap raw materials so as to reduce the cost of production. And that is the point of my lecture – that is when petroleum and oil become very important and they go to the South to get their materials. In Iraq in 2000, Saddam Hussein shifted the pricing of oil from US Dollars to Euros. Iran was thinking doing the same and other countries too. But ff you do that you are a threat to the entire US economy, because it works on a credit system and the domination of the US dollar. Now that capitalism has gone into the speculative phase, in

the whole speculative market there is calculation and leverage in dollar terms. You shift 20/30 or 40% of that into Euros and you no longer have control over the credit system. So by shifting to the Euro, Saddam Hussein was creating problems for himself. Not only that but the one billion dollars that was coming as relief - even those billion dollars he shifted to Euros. And he gave concessions to Europe, Russia and not to the US and Britain. So when the clash came it was not surprising that Europeans took a different position. They wanted to protect their oil interest. The first thing that the US government did in Iraq was to dollarise the economy (in 2004, after the war) – they regained the control over the credit system. The need for raw materials and to cheapen the cost of production is a major means to fight the crisis of profitability in these countries.

Then of course war has historically been a means by which crises are countered. Because in a war machine armaments are dispersed (also) and you can start production again. Since 1945 you see it was war that enabled their economy to pick up – there is an interesting correlation. The Korean war lifted the US economy, and so did the Vietnam war. So war is not fought for accidental, moralistic or democratic reasons. The reality is different.

In our countries in the south, first they must liberalize the markets, because their own markets are saturated – they cannot sell their consumer goods. Larger economy such as India and the Tiger economies were asked by the WTO to liberalize their markets. But the liberalization of the good market is only one part of the process. But it was more than liberalization of the market. It was the *liberalization of the services* which is the more important part, the GATS, that has opened an enormous area of profits for the west. The privatization of water, health, electricity, education etc. is not an accidental affair. From the point of the political economy where reality matters, they had to do it. How else can they maximize profits – by putting capital into water distribution, energy distribution. The reality is that these services had to be taken out of the hands of the state to make more profits. Now they have brought GMO as a mechanism for food production. Good and services has been used as the mechanism for prying open our markets, to maintain control over the market.

Goods and Services are not sufficient basis for protection of their industries. The primary thing is investments. If they only look at goods and services, in 10-15 years they are finished, because the Chinese will be able to lower their wages and they can not compete with China. By 2015 40% of consumer good will be provided by China and even if they open the Chinese markets they will not be able to compete with them. Even if they liberalize markets in Asia or Africa they cannot compete against China. It is not therefore surprising that even workers in the North are using the WTO to argue that the goods made in China not be used on the grounds that they use child labor, cheap labor or have poor working conditions. A moralistic argument again – they are not abiding by the standards laid in the WTO. They are just trying to protect their jobs. Their own capitalist that are taking their capital out of their countries to China and to this they say that our capitalist are not nationalistic enough. Why are they going to China? The nationalistic feelings in Europe are not incidental either even the corporate sector in Europe is involved in this.

Therefore in the situation that goods market will or can be taken over by China, the only strategy for western capitalist is to go for investments in the service sector. That's why there was so much pressure put by the OECD countries to multi-lateralise the investment agreement. Thus in 1997 they pushed for conditions where investments

could come and go as they wanted – in whatever sector they wanted to and became the major problem in the Singapore issues. Not because we wanted the FDIs but because they want to create situations in our countries so that FDIs can come to our countries in order for them to control production. Even in China they can only do that through controlling investments. And this is through the control of technology – proprietary technology where you have monopoly rights over that technology. You need only 10% investments in Chinese companies plus technologies, then you can control production. In China they dismantled the FDI. They said, we have enough money, and by the third year we want to produce the technology ourselves. Chinese are shrewd negotiators. In Africa we tell the foreign investor to bring his own blankets, bed sheets and towels, and that is the basis of their investment! Absurd! (said in humor) So that is the situation in Africa. But investments are now what they insist upon. They insist that they open their market to GMO because on that basis of seeds that they can control production in our countries. It is not trade – trade is a dependent variable. Investment is an independent variable. First produce and then trade. So these trading nations are becoming significant investment nations. That's why the significance of the MAI and why they are forcing such issues. And that is why India and Brazil were opposed to the investment issue. Suppose you create liberalized conditions and you bring in from outside investments with conditions you want to dictate to us, very soon you will control production in our countries. So therefore investment is a major issue.

Governance Factor

Coming to the governance factor we talked about earlier - is really to be understood in terms of the demand on the part of investors to create certain conditions in our countries for profitability. The demand on the part of the investors is to control the production. The biggest growth sector in the accounting field is that of risk assessment. How risky is S.Africa – there too much crime there. In South Africa, therefore they have increased police or paratroopers, so risk assessment has become an important part of the industry. How safe is our countries in Africa? Not safe – so we must send paratroopers there.

In that kind of perspective, I would define mercantilism in the 21st century as follows - it is a body of thought and state policies that enrich and empower one nation and its private corporations at the cost of other nations and their economies and its workers. Its role is to protect its industry and its workers too at the cost of other nations. For instance, its not that the German minister is not nice, he is not deliberately wanting to impoverish Africa, but they have to protect their own interest. There is a pension crisis in the west. Demographically speaking western countries are growing older and the pension funds are worried that they may not be able to meet their obligations when they are due in a few years time. If one looks at the pattern of investment only 10 years ago about 80% used to be backed by the state in UK. But now it only 20% and 80% is on stocks. And when the stocks have collapsed pension prices have gone down. They have a major crisis because they can not meet their pension commitments they take away from their own old, handicapped, poor people and put it in the stock. How are we to understand this pension crisis? The state takes away from the unemployed from the people and puts it into stocks – nothing moral about that. A simple mechanism. It is in that context we need to understand Cotonou and AGO.

Cotonou: is the trade agreement that is being negotiated between ACP countries and Europe, and AGO is purely a unilateral “concession”, in inverted commas. By the US to Africa. So there is a competition between these two but one that is unequal because the US is the biggest hegemon. So whereas the US can go ahead and have unilateral AGO

and impose conditions on African countries – not just economical – just look at the AGO, a fascinating document, it itself. It says that if any country is not in agreement with the strategic interest of the US, it will be regarded as illegitimate in terms of AGO. So the US can decide to write off any country at will. There is no negotiation – that’s how the king behave, the Europeans cannot behave in the same fashion. They say – we negotiate. They do negotiate but in a great hurry. Why are they in such a hurry? They have given us African only four years to adjust our agriculture while they have taken 37years to do so. Why the hurry? They have got to, they have no choice or if not the Americans will get there first. That’s the reason for their hurry. In Cotonou they talk about negotiating but they are in a hurry. They took 36 years with their agricultural reform but they give Africa 4 years. They are in a hurry because others, such as the US, will take over. That’s why I would say that the Cotonou Agreement are pure farce. Farce in the technical sense of the term. You have 48 African countries, of which 34 are LDC, of the other 14, 5 are SACU. That leaves 9 - of these nine countries 2 are alien (Mauritius and Sychelles – have very special arrangements on sugar and other things). That leaves 7. The LDC countries have nothing to gain from the negotiations at Cotonou, so why should they negotiate. So they are out. Which leaves 7 out of 48 countries and which are they? In East and Southern – Zimbabwe and Kenya, 2. In West Africa they have Africa there is Ghana, which could have been an LDC, there is Nigeria, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, and Senegal – five. Of these Zimbabwe is ungovernable anyway. Kenya is called a developing country which is absurd – it is not different from Uganda and Tanzania. But the other two listed as LDCs. They do not want to negotiate and it is a bad situation.

This is a farce added on farce – absurdities added on absurdities. You now have a ridiculous division of Africa, because in Eastern and Southern Africa “they” divided us in two groups – I use the word “they” as a pure simplification – it is never the empire that does these things – its always the African that do it of their own free will. Out of their own free will, they have created this geographic reconfiguration. Therefore SADC is redefined as a region consisting of SACO countries – the 5 countries of Southern Africa plus Tanzania, plus Angola and Mozambique. Why call them SADC? The original SADC consisted of Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi – all these countries, which were earlier part of SADC. All these countries are now put together under Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA). SO there are two geographical divisions now, both equally absurd. These are random groupings. When I talk with the ministers in these countries, one to one, they say admit that what they are doing is really silly and they then say that they expect the IMF team in June and they need budgetary support. And they also say that they see themselves as sovereign states and that they make these decisions themselves because they are part of ESA. This reduces the situation to a farce really.

SADC does not really exist, and the ESA is an absurd combination of countries within east Africa, including Kenya and Uganda but not Tanzania. While Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda have a customs union which is the only customs union in Africa and in terms of a union this East African union has gone even further that the European Union, much further. This is because unlike in the European context the East African legislative assembly can make a legislation that is nationally bound to Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. They can make supra national legislation and although heads of state can veto, it is otherwise binding. But in the present grouping East Africa is being dismembered. And when you talk to East African or to people in the EU here, they do not want to hear about East Africa anymore. They want to kill the East African community just as they killed SADC. So what is happening in Africa is a geographical reconfiguration. And this present geographical reconfiguration of Africa does not have

basis on the history or what the people want but because of the Cotonou negotiations. Despite Cotonou saying it will preserve regional integration by the people what is taking place is the regionalism is perverse – not wanted by the people but by forces outside. What is actually taking place is the geographical scale is the re-division of Africa on the scale of 1884, no less. That is what is taking place right in front of us and we do not recognize it nor do our governments recognize it and the divisions might be sectoral, so that Britain can take finance, France water etc. I need to do some empirical research on this. So this is not taking place on the basis of what people want but because of the demands of investment capital from outside. Political economy as if reality matters as Charles stated yesterday.

I am sorry I took so much of your time but I thought I had to do it because I do not think I will get another opportunity to address by African brothers and sisters in this manner again. So I have to tell you about the structure of negotiations in EPA -it is fascinating because SEATINI is involved in that and it is the only regional non-governmental organization involved with the ESA, and are familiar with the decision making processes. So the process goes as follows -there is a national trade policy making organization which includes Uganda, Kenya and so on. And these then go to the regional negotiating forum ESA office, in this case. Then there is a regional secretariat of EPA and what you have is that national positions come to the regional ones who then come to the EPA secretariat for consultations. These then go to work with the committee of ESA ambassadors in Brussels. Similarly the EC has a negotiating forum, the director of EC trade. So negotiations take place at the political level here. So before it reaches this level it is technical. It is very interesting how things work, because at every step of the way you have to do things very fast, sometimes within three or four years. I have enumerated at least twenty issues that are left hanging. For instance, we do not even know what are the revenue implications of these regional agreements. A lot of our countries derive revenue from tariffs, but if tariffs are lowered, what happens to revenue? Nobody has carried out an analysis of that for us. We have not carried out an analysis of what other options are there for us. So we do not have the capacity but the capacity at every level is built by the EU – so we get funding from them. Then they carry out technical negotiations and a joint technical position by these people. Farce added upon farce. Layers of ridiculous scenarios. And as the joint positions are taken to the politicians here, and to our ambassadors here. But they, the African representatives who are sent here are not here to negotiate many of them are here ...well (laughter). Unlike the ones in Geneva, in Geneva they are much sharper than those in Brussels on WTO. They are clear in Geneva unlike the ones in Brussels. For these joint positions that will be adopted politically here they come to our ministers and they will be signed. They have to be signed by the year 2006 because by January 2007 they have to sign the agreements – and then who signs the agreement? The ESA does not exist as a customs union – not the individual countries will probably sign it. But we do not know how it will be worked out. We will have to face that issue when it comes. We at SEATINI, are the only organization that was put here by invitation. And we started raising the questions - what happens to revenue, what are the options we have etc. They say, “no, no, we have no time”. So we are in danger of being thrown out of these negotiations because we ask too many difficult questions. But all we were doing is asking for time to think about our options. But they said ‘no’ that was not allowed. I asked an old friend of mine who is in these negotiations, what happened, and he said that he had started thinking. We are not supposed to think, we are supposed to do.

But I will not end on a note of despondency like this because we win every battle that we fight. We were there at Cancun and though there were differences amongst us Africans, we stuck together with the support of our European, African, Latin American and Asian comrades. What is interesting is that we felt absolutely devastated with the Doha agreement, the western press was saying that it was a victory for third world countries. The western press was putting it upside down. Now we are seeing it again with Cancun. Because when we came out of Cancun they said – ‘Oh no, they have put a stone on their foot. You will make it difficult for yourself. And therefore you have to hurry’. But who did the great job at Cancun? It was the women parliamentarians from east Africa who were better trained on trade issues than many people. And they put the East African ministers on guard – they said when you come home and you will be shaved. And it worked.