

Africans demand U.N. action on debt

In last week's issue, EIR highlighted speeches from the 46th United Nations General Assembly, challenging the concepts underlying George Bush's "new world order." We continue to present documentation here, from speeches by African leaders at the U.N., of the urgent need to address the economic problems facing that continent. While the speakers are diverse in their political views on many issues, they are all agreed on that fundamental point.

'Poverty is the father of dictatorship'

Ghana: Ambassador Kofi Awonoo, the ambassador of Ghana to the U.N., who chairs the Group of 77 in the General Assembly, told a meeting of the Second Committee of the General Assembly (economic and financial affairs) on Oct. 1:

"Poverty is the father of dictatorship. It is naive to believe that by merely institutionalizing multi-party pluralism and proclaiming free market systems, a poor country which does not receive adequate returns for its exports, is denied access to technology under intelligent concessionary terms, is overburdened by a crippling debt syndrome, or is virtually a charity case as it battles with the crushing impact of grim social disabilities, will survive as a democracy. The stringent ideological prescriptions of western capitalist democracy should be properly examined as a prescription for social and economic collapse for developing countries if the global atmosphere is not put in place for this ideology to thrive. We hope the purveyors and prophets of this surviving ideology are listening."

Botswana: External Affairs Minister Dr. Gaositwe K. T. Chiepe stated, in his speech to the General Assembly on Oct. 7, that poverty is the worst enemy of the environment. "Many people in developing countries live in abject poverty, and for the poor, long-term sustainability plays an insignificant role in decisions on production and consumption. What is uppermost in their minds is how to survive or live from one day to the next. Poverty breeds environmental degradation, which in turn reproduces and reinforces poverty. This first, world summit on environment and development should address these issues in clear and unambiguous terms."

Central African Republic: Foreign Minister Laurent Gomina-Pampali said in his speech on Oct. 7 that "strictly military security" is no longer a valid concept. "Everything is occurring as though the countries of the Third World, particularly those of Africa, must definitively remain ex-

cluded from development, and this, under the indifferent watch of the developed countries."

A 'Marshall Plan' for Africa

Nigeria: Ibrahim Babangida, President of Nigeria and chairman of the Organization of African Unity, called for debt relief and a Marshall Plan for Africa, in his speech on Oct. 4.

"Economic development nurtures democracy," he said. "On the other hand, under-development is a threat and obstacle to democracy. We commend the peoples of eastern Europe and the Soviet Union for their decision to build democratic societies. We also note the significant financial and economic assistance which the western industrialized countries and Japan have decided to offer them. This is in direct contrast to the virtual neglect of African efforts. If this neglect and this indifference continue, disillusionment may arise with democracy in the face of persistent and extreme economic hardship. . . ."

"Africa's indebtedness is the single major obstacle to development in the continent. . . . Africa's debt is crippling. The realities are as startling as they are depressing. Africa's total debt equals 102.3% of its GNP and more than 300% of its total exports. On the average, 30% of the continent's export earnings is used to service debt. . . . We cannot continue in this way. . . ."

"Beyond the issue of debt, what Africa needs is a special financial package, a kind of Marshall Plan, which would demonstrate the sincerity of the developed world for the plight of Africa, right historical wrongs, and set the world on the path of a new order that is just and equitable."

The debt crisis

Antoine Blanca, the U.N.'s director general for Development and International Economic Cooperation, delivered a speech on Oct. 1 to the Second Committee of the General Assembly in which he called for an emergency effort to deal with the "stark condition" of Africa. The continent lost \$50 billion in earnings on account of low commodity prices and declining terms of trade between 1986 and 1990 alone, he reported. Africa's debt increased sharply in the same period from \$212 billion to \$217 billion, with debt servicing amounting to \$23 billion in 1990 alone.

Ivory Coast: Foreign Minister Amara Essy said in his speech to the General Assembly on Oct. 3 that "the problem of the debt is inseparable from that of raw materials, whether they be of agricultural, mining or mineral origin."

"Ivory Coast considers that the law of supply and demand is justified in relations between countries having the same level of development, and not in relations between developed and developing countries. Liberty is not then conceived in equality. Between developing and developed countries, there is a great inequality. One cannot affirm that there is liberalism when one, alone, sets the prices of the raw materials one

imports, of the manufactured products one exports, of the freight rates and the conditions of transport of the technology necessary for the industrialization of the developing countries.

"The low price of raw materials, whether they be agricultural, mining or mineral, is justified today in economic analysis by the classic notion of overproduction on the international markets. But, from our experience, there is no overproduction, but rather underconsumption because of the high price practiced over finished and semi-finished products. . . .

"So the fundamental difference between developed and developing countries is that the former have the technology required to transform into finished products for their own consumption and for export purposes, our raw materials, which are insufficiently remunerated, whereas the latter, which do not have this capacity, are obliged to sell their raw materials in the raw state. . . . It would be desirable if in the years to come, an effort were made to carry out an effective transfer of technology to the developing countries."

Mali: Foreign Minister Tiebile Drame spoke on Oct. 7 about the crushing debt burden on Africa, and noted that "the approach adopted until now to find a solution to the serious problem of the debt, although encouraging in certain respects, are far from responding to the real economic preoccupations of the developing countries."

Congo: Foreign Minister Jean Blaise Kololo was one of several African speakers to call for a conference to discuss the African debt crisis. He stated in his speech on Oct. 4 that the debt has become "asphyxiating" and that together with "the net negative transfer of financial flows," it is crushing any attempt at economic recovery.

"For us, the African countries, the holding of an international conference on the African foreign debt merits more interest by the international community."

Rwanda: François Ngarukiyintwali, Rwanda's ambassador to the U.N., stated in his speech on Oct. 7: "Rwanda regrets that the idea of convening an international conference on Africa's foreign debt has not yet been the object of a consensus between the industrialized and developing countries." He noted that while Rwanda welcomes international support for the spread of democracy, "the western countries should do everything possible to ensure that economic development be the best support for this democracy, for, it must be stressed, it is illusory to want to install democracy without favoring the socio-economic development of peoples."

No to austerity conditionalities

Zambia: Lt. Gen. H.B.M. Lungu, Zambia's ambassador to the U.N. said in his speech on Oct. 2 that "while it may be fashionable to come up with conditionalities as a way of sustaining discipline, efficiency, and realism in the development process, let us always remember that each conditionality is actually a piece of advice. The question that



Nigerian President Gen. Ibrahim Babangida, who called at the United Nations for a Marshall Plan to save Africa.

arises is, do these conditionalities merely support outmoded and unviable models of development or do they illuminate a clearer and credible vision of development? This is particularly the case for the African continent. Championing certain conditionalities for the provision of assistance to Africa will not necessarily result in any meaningful development nor material gains.

"Conditionalities should not ruin economies. At the same time, it should be clear that conditionalities are not a substitute for deep research into effective models of development."

Malawi: Minister of Transportation and Communications D.S. Katopola, in a speech on Oct. 3, said that the situation for some African countries is "so desperate that their viability has become questionable." Efforts to redress the situation in many countries, he said, "have tended to be largely palliative in nature and selective in application. Moreover, the non-economic conditionalities built into some of the initiatives have made them appear as no more than an attempt by the economically strong to control and manipulate the weaker economies. . . . The tying of assistance to non-economic conditionalities does not yield the best results in terms of economic growth and development."