

THE COURIER

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THE MAGAZINE OF AFRICA - CARIBBEAN - PACIFIC & EUROPEAN UNION COOPERATION AND RELATIONS

REPORT

HAITI Dawn of Hope

DOSSIER

Pacific Islands. Climate changes in full view

Africa to get more from its diamonds





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THE COURIER

THE MAGAZINE OF AFRICA - CARIBBEAN - PACIFIC & EUROPEAN UNION DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

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Of natural or political disasters... and other consequences of forgetfulness



There are disasters and disasters. There are those triggered by climate change and natural disasters - and then there are others like the torment into which Kenya, a model country, was plunged at the beginning of the year. Disasters of this type may not be predictable, but they are aided and abetted by negligence and above all by human nature's tendency to forget.

Our key focus in this issue of *The Courier* is climate change in the Pacific. Promisingly, the message is not completely pessimistic. Indeed, Tuvalu, a small country determined to protect itself in any and every way against the threat of climate change whilst holding on to its sheer joy of living, is a real lesson in optimism.

Another reason for optimism is cooperation between the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Group and the European Union in preventing natural disasters. The European Development Days in Lisbon at the end of last year saw the European Union committing itself fully to a loan to aid developing countries in the face of climate change challenges. A loan that will lend much needed strength to the strategies already adopted by the EU Council and the ACP-EU Council of Ministers.

The new EU-Africa strategic partnership concluded in Lisbon at the end of last year, also wrestles with various sources of disaster. Its 20 priority actions not only include climate change but peace and security, democratic governance and human rights, as well as other protective barriers against social, political and economic disturbances. The initialling - even "geographic patchwork" and even if some were eventually concluded without much celebration - of a number of economic partnership agreements between the EU and ACP regions - or individual countries - before the end

of last year, showed a realistic attitude by both sides in protecting ACP nations from being cast off from world trade dealings.

Then, came the crisis in Kenya; a picture postcard country where children filled the museums and whose Nairobi Stock Exchange offered some of the highest returns for investors - to cite just two of its distinctions. Obviously, the finger of accusation has been pointed at certain irregularities in politics and governance as the cause of the conflict. But while this could have triggered clashes, they do not alone go to explain the dreadful violence that has been witnessed by the rest of the world.

The major oversight of building a workable democracy in many countries has resurfaced: the tribe. In reality, there is no tribal problem. The problem is simply in forgetting the tribe. European-style democracy, including that practised by the United States, took account of the "tribal" element from the outset. Not necessarily in the ethnic sense - are Hutus and Tutsis different ethnic groups in biological terms? - but in the sense of belonging to a group. This system provided a counterbalance to the basic democratic ethos of "one man one vote" by creating bodies like the Senate where the minority and majority groups carry more or less the same weight, guaranteeing the protection of the vital interests of the former. If not, the minority would be forever reluctant to vote for a member of another group, whatever the respective merits.

ACP-EU co-operation undoubtedly has the means to reflect more deeply on these matters and to act against other disasters, both natural and man made.

Hegel Goutier
Editor-in-chief



View over Port-au-Prince in canvas from Bottilliers, 2007
Copyright Debra Perseiva

Andrea Marchesini Reggiani

ALWAYS TALK to one another

Interview with Giovanni Bersani

Giovanni Bersani was President of the former EEC-ACP Parliamentary Assembly from 1976 to 1989 and subsequently Honorary President. He has been one of the main proponents of European integration, particularly when it comes to EU relations with the African continent. He advocates the promotion of democracy through mediation, dialogue and peace bringing into play moral values and principles and the avoidance of military intervention.

A. M. R. – As a Member of the European Parliament you have been involved in Europe – Africa relations since the end of the 1960s. What can you tell us about the origins of the Lomé Treaty?

G. B. – I can let you in on the origins of the name. During meetings in Mauritius in October 1974, an agreement was signed on new institutional structures in a new Convention to replace Yaoundé II. Under it, a new Assembly of European and ACP representatives was agreed upon, with bigger powers than before and including the wider participation of African countries, from 18 to 46 nations. But the problem was finding a name for the new Treaty! Lagos and Nairobi were both in the frame, but there was opposition from francophone countries. I invited some of the main players of the Mauritius meetings back for discussions in Bologna (Italy), together with the Togolese Ambassador Dagadou. At our closing lunch, I casually came up with the suggestion of the ‘Lomé Convention’, in honour of Dagadou. At that time, Dagadou was the moderator and the chair of the Committee of ACP Ambassadors. The choice of a big country threatened the unity of the ACP group, but a small country like Togo was not so much of a threat. At the beginning this proposal seemed like a bit of a joke but then the idea got back to Brussels and gathered support.

A. M. R. – Since the 1990s there has been criticism of the Lomé Convention for its failure to solve the problems of poverty and under-development. What’s your view?

Giovanni Bersani.
© CEFA onlus

Le COURIER



Andrea Marchesini Reggiani, Giovanni Bersani and Ranieri Sabatucci during the presentation of *The Courier*, Délégation Culturelle – Alliance Française, Bologna 14th December 2007.
© Nikša Soric

G. B. – We first have to take into account that the challenge was an extremely difficult one. In 1957, 50 out of 53 African countries were colonies or controlled territories. The independence and the liberation movements brought non-democratic regimes to power. Between 1962 and 1989, only Botswana, Senegal and Mauritius had democratic governments, and this characteristic has been fundamental to their prosperity and economic growth in comparison to the other countries where the single-party systems, backed by one foreign power, have prevailed. We mustn’t forget that during those times, in Africa, the Third World War was being fought between the two blocs into which the world was then divided. The nuclear threat meant that it couldn’t be battled out in the North. It was fought out in Africa.

For the past 30 years, we have promoted the creation of parliaments in all ACP countries, and improvements to agricultural production have been achieved in many, notably in those where hunger and poverty previously resulted in many deaths. We fought against apartheid, until its abolition. From a dreadful colonial heritage, 45 years on, the African Union (AU) has its own constitution, a central government, regional governments and a Parliament. We have to consider where we started. I want to stress here that EU policy has taken a very different course from that of the US because it is not based on military intervention, but on using moral values and principles, on constant mediation which is often not visible but has been decisive in many situations.

A. M. R. – So, it’s a success story for the “export of democracy”. But the violation of human rights is still a problem in many of these countries. Perhaps the EU sometimes turns a blind eye to such issues?

G. B. We recognised the principle under Lomé III, but the problem was to decide who was to be responsible for looking into possible violations and subsequently deciding on sanctions. Neither the Council of Ministers nor the Commission could take on the task. In 1984, the Presidency of the Assembly decided to assume the role and presented specific cases of human rights violations to the Parliamentary Assembly.

In 1986, there was a difficult approval of the regulation. From that moment human rights issues have always topped the agenda of the ACP-EU Joint Assembly.

I remember the time when I called Siad Barre, the Somali President, during a meeting of the Assembly. He had pronounced death warrants for three opposition leaders. I requested respective pardons based on the Assembly’s principles. The following day as the Assembly met, he called me to say that the death penalties had been commuted to a decision to exile the leaders.

Another difficult negotiation was one with President Menghistu of Ethiopia, who was at the time holding the ninety year old sister of Hailé Selassié prisoner. In this case, the intervention of the Ethiopian co-President of the Assembly was very important. The lady was allowed exile in London.

A. M. R. – How have the 50 years of the Treaty of Rome been celebrated?

G. B. – There have been many celebrations but discussions have been sparse on the fact that the Treaty of Rome contained the essence of cooperation with third countries. It was an integral aspect of the text, Part IV. It was one of the most difficult and debated issues: France and Belgium wanted to transfer to the then newly founded European Economic Community the burden of colonial and post-colonial management. The Germans were opposed considering it “a poisoned chalice”. The solution was a model of “equal partnership” with colonial countries, involving lengthy discussions where nothing could be taken for granted and everything had to be negotiated! Back then the idea of creating a “Fund for the development of overseas countries and territories” had already surfaced. The problem is that the level of funding has never sufficed.

A. M. R. – You are familiar with the former ACP-EU Courier... What do you think about the new edition?

G. B. – Considering the media’s disregard for cooperation issues, *The Courier* has the possibility and duty of spreading innovative and different information to enhance mutual understanding between EU and ACP countries. I wish you all the best and I urge you not to stop in front of “the rocks that you may face during navigation” and to aim at courageous information which goes beyond the purely technical to reach readers’ hearts.

François Misser

TRAFFICKING OF CHILDREN

In Southern Africa: A proposed regional conference



Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC): back to Bunia (Ituri) © EC/ECHO/François Goemans

The European Commission, together with Southern African countries, wants to organise a 'high-level' regional conference on child trafficking in Maputo in June this year.

This initiative comes in response to general public concern and in particular those raised by the Southern Africa Network Against Trafficking and Abuse of Children (SANTAC). Patrons of SANTAC include Graça Machel, widow of the former President of Mozambique, Samora Machel, and the Nobel Peace Laureate and Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, Desmond Tutu. During a SANTAC-organised conference in Johannesburg in March 2007, the European Commission's Director-General of Development, Stefano Manservigi, pledged his political support for the war against child trafficking, to which the European Commissioners for Development and Communications Strategy, Louis Michel and Margot Wallström, have voiced their support. The challenge is a considerable one. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and UNICEF, the trafficking of children

is a phenomenon that involves several thousand people in the region. Furthermore, it is difficult to put precise figures on the scale of the problem, primarily due to the absence of a civil register (of births, marriages and deaths) in countries such as Malawi. Indeed, Malawi, along with Mozambique and Zambia, is seen as a child 'supply' and also a transit country for both South Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. The causes of the trade in children (a possible estimated global turnover of as much as US\$7 billion) are numerous, although SANTAC points to poverty and the HIV-Aids epidemic as major reasons. These twin scourges alone have seen a significant increase in the numbers of orphans farmed out to foster parents. These families, often themselves in dire need, are easily duped into handing over the children by criminal organisations that offer work or educational opportunities. Many, particularly young girls, are taken into prostitution networks or slavery. One of the major difficulties that these coun-

tries face in controlling this phenomenon is that they do not have the means to successfully police their own national borders. Neither have they signed all the international legal protocols and treaties to make that happen. Worse still, in Southern Africa there is no regional mechanism or plan in place to prevent or eliminate the traffic in humans and this is why a regional response is needed. The June conference in Maputo is seen as the first stage of the process and should produce a declaration, a strategy and a 10-year action plan. It is expected to be followed by a conference of sponsors organised by the Southern African Development Community (SADC), during which an action plan will be presented and the European Commission and the EU Member States will lend their financial support. The proposed measures will then be taken forward by drawing up programmes for judicial and law-enforcement cooperation and the sharing of expertise. ■

Debra Percival

THIRTY-FIVE NATIONS

initial new trade AGREEMENTS

As The Courier went to press, 35 out of 78 African, Caribbean and Pacific states had initialled European Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with the EU. All have previously enjoyed preferential entry into the EU market under the Cotonou Agreement.

The EPAs are reciprocal free trade agreements, but whereas the EU has agreed to open market to all ACP goods and produce, apart from sugar and rice subject to short transitional periods from 1 January 2008, ACP nations will only be required to open their markets gradually according to negotiated phased timetables of 5 to 25 years for the most sensitive goods, and covering 80% or above of all trade. Under World Trade Organisation (WTO) trade rules, signatories to any free trade agreement can omit certain goods provided that the whole amounts to, 'substantially all trade.' Many ACPs have hence chosen to opt their agricultural produce out of the EPAs. So far, only the Caribbean has initialled an EPA as a regional entity.² This agreement, drawn up with all Cariforum states, covers not only goods but also trade in services, customs, trade facilitation, technical barriers to trade, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, agriculture and fisheries, payment and capital movements, competition intellectual property, public procurement, environmental and social issues, and development funds, all of which will stimulate regional integration.

Other ACP states to initial agreements to date are sub-regions or one or two individual ACP states within a region. They have opted for 'goods-only' agreements with a commitment to continue negotiations on other aspects of the agreement in drawing up full EPAs by the end of 2008. Most, but not all, are middle income countries. They felt more of an urgency to initial due to the expiry of the WTO waiver for Cotonou's trade agreement on 31 December 2007. The alternative would have been to face tariffs under the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP).

Only a handful of ACP countries are now in this position, including Gabon, the Republic of

Congo, Nigeria and a group of Pacific Nations; the Cook Islands, Tonga, Marshall Islands, Niue, Micronesia, Palau and Nauru. EU trade officials indicate that whereas Congo and Gabon have voiced interest in an EPA, Nigeria has declined to negotiate an EPA at this stage. They add that due to the low level of EU trade with the Pacific, this region will not suffer as many losses from GSP implementation.

"The ACP calls on the EU to ensure that all measures are taken to guarantee the continuation of trade on the same terms so that the economic operators remain in the market and the welfare and wellbeing of the citizens of ACP states are not jeopardised," reads a recent statement from the Brussels ACP Secretariat. It adds that some of the 'interim agreements' had been initialled under pressure and that these should be revisited as full agreements are drawn up during 2008.

Many ACP Least Developed Countries (LDCs) are still undecided about EPAs. Senegal's President, Abdoulaye Wade, has indicated that his country is not ready for free trade. LDCs can still enjoy duty and quota free exports to the EU market under the EU's 'Everything but Arms Initiative' drawn up in 2001.

But an EU Trade Directorate statement continues to stress the benefits of full EPAs: "They bring the opportunity to support the progressive integration of the ACP into the international economy and to make sure that the unparalleled ACP access to EU markets brings real trade growth and broad-based economic development; in short, the opportunity to deliver what Cotonou has not been able to."

¹ There are a total of 79 ACP states but South Africa has a bi-lateral trade agreement with the EU and does not to become part of an EPA.

² See end of article for Cariforum members. ■

WHO HAS INITIALLED SO FAR?

(AS OF 3 MARCH 2008)

FULL EPA:

CARIFORUM regional grouping: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti*, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Christopher and Nevis, Surinam and Trinidad and Tobago.

'INTERIM' OR 'GOODS ONLY' AGREEMENTS:

CENTRAL AFRICA: Cameroon

EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY:

Burundi,* Kenya, Rwanda,* Tanzania,* Uganda*

EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA:

Comoros,* Madagascar,* Mauritius, Seychelles, Zimbabwe

PACIFIC: Papua New Guinea, Fiji

WEST AFRICA: Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana

SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC):

Botswana, Lesotho,* Namibia, Mozambique,* Swaziland

Source: DG Trade, European Commission www.ec.europa.eu/trade/

* Least Developed Countries (LDCs)

Marie-Martine Buckens

ACP ministers of health INTENSIFY COOPERATION

In the face of the many challenges posed by health development in the ACP States and regions, ACP health ministers decided to increase their cooperation when they met for the first time on 25–26 October, 2007 in Brussels.

Their “Brussels Declaration” sought to reaffirm the importance of intra-ACP dialogue in the framework of the Georgetown Agreement – and more particularly within the ACP-EU partnership – by placing health questions at the heart of their countries’ development programmes. Under this plan, priority will be given to combating transmissible diseases such as HIV, AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, particularly through the exchange of experience and best practice. The ministers also pledged to promote medical care services and treatment by strengthening current health systems, specifically for non-transmissible diseases, neglected tropical diseases and illnesses resulting from violence or trauma.



A clinic in Blantyre (Malawi), inaugurated in March 2006 by Comunità di Sant’Egidio.
© Joshua Massarenti

> Stopping the brain-drain

A further concern of ACP health ministers is the continuing migration to developing countries (especially the EU) of highly qualified health professionals. In an attempt to reverse this trend ministers “expressed their determination” to put into place concrete strategies to “train, recruit and retain local health professionals”. Following on from this, the ACP health ministers decided to promote partnerships with pharmaceutical firms to improve affordable access to patented medicines, as well as, raising funds for research and development for new medicines or diagnostic methods. ■

Dossier

PACIFIC ISLANDS. Climate change and vulnerability

By Hegel Goutier

Reports from Tuvalu, the Solomon Islands and Fiji

The Pacific is without a doubt one of the world’s most vulnerable regions when it comes to risk of disaster due to climate change, particularly several of the low-lying coral islands. Indeed, one of them, Tuvalu, has become a symbol of this threat. An ability to survive when challenged

by nature is common to other small volcanic islands lying along the “Ring of Fire”. It encompasses nations like the Solomon Islands which suffered the ravages of a tsunami triggered by an earthquake last April, which left dozens dead and tens of thousands homeless. Not surprisingly, the populations of these

threatened islands are angry at the reluctance of some rich nations, to reduce emissions held to be largely responsible for the pollution at the origin of climate change. An attitude described graphically by one politician from Tuvalu, as a “creeping terrorism” now threatening his country. ■

The wide of the main Tuvalu Island in the atoll of Funafuti.
© Hegel Goutier



Funafuti atoll. View of the sea.
© Hegel Goutier

Hegel Goutier

TUVALU, a worldwide symbol

Formerly known as Ellice Islands, Tuvalu has a gross land area of just 26 square kilometres - within an exclusion zone of 0.75 million square kilometres - and a population of just 10,000.

Amazingly, all it takes is a few waves a little higher than usual and you have to take a boat to get from the plane to the bar at the airport in Funafuti, Tuvalu's atoll capital. Tuvalu is one of those groups of islands that scarcely emerge above the waves of the Pacific. Consequently, it is under constant threat from tsunamis and other natural disasters.

28 th February 2006 was the date of a major scare for several of the nine islands of the Tuvalu archipelago - especially Funafuti. The Funafuti atoll stretches in an arc 12 kilometres long between the lagoon and the ocean with a maximum width of 400 metres, tapering at the two extremities. Its highest point is a mere 3.7 metres. That day, a wave 3.5 metres high - the highest ever recorded - broke on the island and even though it came ashore without much force it was sufficient to swamp a large part of

the island. Enough to put the airport underwater and leave in its wake pools of salt water that destroyed crops. Although this flooding was exceptional, high tides regularly mean that parts of the Tuvalu Islands are submerged - and the consequences are disastrous. The limited ground water is contaminated, salty and stagnant water seeps into the cesspools and mixes with the refuse that fills ditches dug during World War II. Agriculture increasingly becomes a hit and miss affair.

> Increasingly apparent deterioration

Not surprisingly, scientific studies confirm the worsening situation on the Tuvalu Islands. Data provided by an Australian tide monitoring system shows that sea levels around the atolls have

increased 7 centimetres over the last 13 years, exceeding the knock-on effect of melting of glaciers. Additionally, other factors such as El Niño must have contributed to the present situation. A clear sign of this deterioration is the submergence of the tip of Funafuti atoll, where the islet of Tepuka Salivilivili is now under water, having first lost its coconut palms to the sea.

The island's oldest inhabitants told *The Courier* how, in their lifetime, rain has become increasingly rare but at the same time heavier and more pounding when it comes. Now it beats down with a force that threatens to break up the soil in various spots like the sites of the trenches dug during the war and damages the pulaka crop - a tuber that forms the basis of the local diet. Normally growing a metre tall, the plant is now becoming increasingly weakened and is in the process of disappearing completely.

> Early awareness

Luckily, the population of Tuvalu realised early on the dangers they faced. As early as 1992 - when there was still controversy over whether or not climate change was actually taking place - Tuvalu's successive governments grew concerned about the possible disaster they felt threatened their country. At first their concerns received little attention, but their perseverance finally brought results.



This was mainly because Tuvalu's democratic system showed its commitment at this time and, despite very limited means, the government managed to shake up international organisations responsible for climate change. All this occurred long before the worldwide call for action. It seems that throughout the world, there was a real sense of sympathy for this small country.

> Consensus and collective involvement

The consensus of opinion in Tuvalu of the importance of climate change rallies both politicians and the rest of the population. TANGO - the Tuvalu Association of NGOs - includes almost 50 different groups, all of them relating to climate risk in one form or another. Each one of them stands united behind the government in the drive to increase awareness of the issue, both inside and outside the nation. Annie Homasi, a director of TANGO, and often present in global forums, was among those who spoke to *The Courier* about the coordination programme between the government and outside agencies.

> Discordant voices

Because of this cooperation, there is a very broad consensus in support of the government's positions in facing climate change, although the backing isn't always 100%. One of the few to strike a note of discord is the Reverend Kitona Tausi, for whom the climate

risk issue is more a subject of ideological dispute with the government. Despite being a party to the Kyoto Protocol, the government decided to opt for oil rather than solar energy in supplying electricity to the country's other islands. In his criticism, Tausi points out that his church uses solar panels. He also criticises the government for having accepted the possibility of relocating the population, a solution he sees as unacceptable, although he admits that some of his fellow clergymen in the country are of the same opinion as the government. Mrs Siuila Toloa - a teacher at the Nauti Primary School, who is also President of Island Care and Secretary General of the Tuvalu Red Cross for 21 years - stresses the need for collective responsibility in the face of climate threats. Her personal SOS is addressed directly to the major polluters. She says: "Global warming can be solved if we all work together. At least then we will reduce the damage. The cause of the damage is neither here in Tuvalu nor carbon emissions from Africa. I'm thinking about the countries that did not sign the Kyoto Protocol. I say to them: help us. If not, my country will sink." ■

Top:
Funafuti International Airport.
© Hegel Goutier

Center and bottom left:
Seawater desalination unit.
© Hegel Goutier

Bottom right:
Firetruck at the airport of Funafuti.
© Hegel Goutier

Living in **CONSTANT FEAR** of **CLIMATE CHANGE**

Mr. Lotoala Metia
Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Industries

> **Ongoing measures to protect the environment**

We have conservation areas, one on this island and two on the other islands. The idea is to conserve those areas. And we are also trying to promote an awareness programme so that people will try to keep the islands clean. Plastic and tins have to be put in a designated area, to be taken away so they don't litter the islands. We are also trying to seek assistance from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to help our attempt to address the erosion on our islands in Tuvalu.

> **Ambitious project**

As for the burrow pits*, there was a project funded by SOPAC (Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission) to dredge sand from the lagoon and to fill in the burrow pits but this project wasn't successful because of the environmental impact on the sides of the lagoon. For your information, the government is trying to put in place a concept paper to seek donor assistance to build an artificial island somewhere in the lagoon. If this project gets off the ground, we will perhaps use the opportunity, with the assistance of countries that helped with the original project by using sand, to bury the burrow pits. It is very challenging for us but I do believe that with a well-coordinated concept, we can convince donors to assist us in this project.

> **Overpopulation**

It is becoming a problem, not a serious problem so far, but we must address the different

levels of development between the islands and the capital so that we can stop urbanisation and more people coming here. We are trying to upgrade the other islands so they have the same facilities and the same kind of development projects to attract extra-funding. We are looking at ways and means of addressing the overpopulation we have in Funafuti.

> **Overpopulation and traditional culture**

In the case of Funafuti, we can say we have some small problems but in the other islands, this is not the case. Culture and customs still remain intact. Overpopulation and land problems do not affect everyday life and the culture of Tuvalu. And as far as security is concerned, we still have safe lands in Funafuti although overcrowding is becoming a problem. We have to address the waste management problem too.

> **Stay anyway?**

That's the general consensus at the moment. If we move, we will lose our identity and our sovereignty. So we try to protect our islands as much as we can so that we can stay here. But if worst comes to worst, contacts have been made with Australia and New Zealand to see if they can accommodate Tuvalu.

Thank you for the timely opportunity to put Europeans in the picture. We really have a chance to tell the world that although we are small in size and isolated, we are not doing badly compared with some big islands in the region. It is very important for the government

and people of Tuvalu to move forward, to try to live within our resources and means, and to consolidate financial reserves and invest in projects that are viable and have economic benefits for the people. Above all we want to maintain the concept of good governance which is a big problem for many countries in the world.

* Holes dug during the World War II where refuse was dumped. H.G. ■

Maatia TOAFA, Tuvalu's Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, 59th UN General Assembly 24 September 2004: "We in Tuvalu live in constant fear of the adverse impacts of climate change and sea level rise. With a height of a mere three metres above sea level, our livelihoods and sources of food security are already badly affected, with increased salinity in ground water, land erosion, coral bleaching and total anxiety. The threat is real and serious. And it is no different to a slow and insidious form of terrorism against Tuvalu. Tuvalu therefore accords significant importance to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol as they provide the most appropriate global framework to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG)." ■

A dynamic **CIVIL SOCIETY**

Annie Homasi is Executive Director of the Tuvalu Association of NGOs (TANGO) and was awarded the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in recognition of her unstinting support for the communities of Tuvalu and the South Pacific. She gives a brief outline of the work of her organisation.

TANGO has 47 organisation members. This membership is country-wide and includes various kinds of organisations. Tango is the umbrella organisation. There are Health NGOs, economic empowerment groups and humanitarian groups like the Red Cross, churches and many others. It is a truly broad representation of civil society.

We are working closely with the government on climate change issues. Our government has been flagging these issues in international arenas, also at regional levels. So as NGOs we formed the coalition. We also work with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) based in Fiji and with the Department of the Environment. We have held regional civil society forums. We looked at issues of regional governance, health and gender and made recommendations to governments. Through these fora we prioritise what we want to do and draw up action plans. We also work on media awareness. In areas where islands are being eroded, we have projects where we assist the community to plant traditionally grown trees and, for example, to avoid the loss of coconut trees, which also provide us with a livelihood.

We want the population of Tuvalu to help itself. Some aspects of climate change are beyond our control. We cannot control it, apart from being representatives who participate in the international arenas where we can voice our concerns. Instead of just being reliant, being told what to do, we also need to do something ourselves.

Countries like the United States of America and even Australia¹, one of our neighbours, are not so sympathetic towards the issue. They still have to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, the instrument which really highlights these issues. New Zealand is sympathetic. We have a migration scheme with New Zealand but

Australia is not opening its doors to us. We work more closely with New Zealand's civil society. For instance, in an upcoming meeting in Wellington we will discuss logistical preparations for hosting Tuvalu citizens.

¹ - Interview carried out before the change of government in Australia H.G. ■



Tuvalu flag.
 © iStockphoto.com/Utuk Zivana

Headquarters of the Solomon Meteorological Service.
© Hegel Goutier



TSUNAMI on the Solomon Islands

On 2 April 2007 at 7:40 am, a tsunami ravaged the coastal zones of Western and Choiseul Provinces of the Solomon Islands. Caused by an earthquake registering 8.1 on the Richter scale, its epicentre was just 45 km from the small fishing village and resort of Gizo (population 5,000), on Gizo Island (in the Western Province). Gizo is 205 km from Chirovanga, in Choiseul Province, the second most severely hit area, and 345 km from the capital Honiara, on the Island of Guadalcanal. Due to its proximity to the earthquake's epicentre, Gizo had no advance warning, but luckily the waves hit during daytime and, moreover, at a height of three metres they were lower and so less powerful than those of the Indian Ocean tsunami in December 2004. Nevertheless, they left dozens dead and thousands homeless, in Gizo in particular. Other places hit were the Naro and Taro Islands and, to a lesser extent, Vella La Vella, Kolombangana, New Georgia, and Simbo in the Western Province.

Loss in terms of human lives would have been a great deal more serious if the people in these areas had not benefited from projects to increase awareness developed following the Indian Ocean tsunami. "We were lucky it happened during the day and the people noticed that the sea had receded. That was a sign that something was not right and most people moved to higher ground", explained former Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare, who was still in office when *The Courier* visit in November 2007. On the volcanic island of Simbo, about 30 kilometres from Gizo Island, the sea penetrated 200 metres inland, releasing the sulphur from the crater of an underwater volcano. The tsunami was followed by 25 aftershocks that terrified the population who remained at the very top of the island's high ground longer than was necessary, for fear that another tsunami might strike. The flooding of the village church caused the death of the priest who was ordaining three worshippers.

> Destruction of marine resources

According to the report by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), the tsunami brought about the destruction of marine resources, both natural and at local aquaculture centres. This had a definite impact on the coastal communities as the aquaculture sector includes seafood, cultured pearls and aquarium fish, and most of the fish farms around Gizo were completely devastated. After meeting with fish farmers, the SPC's plans included arrangements to help them relaunch activities on the basis of stocks obtained from another island in the province, while, in the short term, supplying them with seafood so they could maintain their commercial activities. Among the hardest hit villages were Itana on Gizo Island (where lives were also lost), Rarumana and in Sagheragi where major stocks of ornamental fish were about to be transported to Honiara when the tsunami hit. In addition, reported the SPC, the local branch of the World Fish Center and the Gizo

sub-regional centre of the CoPSPSI (Commercialisation of Seaweed Production in the Solomon Islands) had to considerably reduce their activities. As part of the recovery process, a ban on catches was introduced to help reconstitute stocks of hundreds of fish varieties, affecting local populations for whom they are a source of revenue.

> The Coral Triangle

The damage caused to the underwater environment off Choiseul Island is still being assessed, but experts seem certain it is significant. This is one of the world's richest areas in terms of the biodiversity of corals (almost 500 varieties) and reef fish (over 1,000 species), as the Solomon Islands are part of the so-called Coral Triangle together with Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Timor Leste and Papua New Guinea. Damage to the coral is expected to have a knock-on effect on the underwater biology.

> Deforestation and climate change

Today, in the Solomon Islands 70% of state revenue comes from taxes levied on timber exports and the sale of logging licences. But this exploitation of the tropical forest is making the environment very fragile indeed. Logging is particularly intense in Western Province, the area hardest hit by the tsunami, and generally accepted forecasts predict that the forests here will disappear within no more than five years. Logging licences have already been issued for the limited forest cover that remains and logging companies are continuing to increase the rate of felling. This despite the fact that present logging rates are already three times what is considered to be sustainable. Already before the tsunami, Marovo lagoon in Western Province, the world's longest, regarded by experts as perhaps the most beautiful in the world, was in serious danger due to advanced deforestation on the main island. Presently there are almost no fish or shellfish. Worse still, a growing number of logging companies are working on sloping terrain, bringing the risk of erosion to coastal areas and accentuating the potential effects of rising sea levels. William Atu, Director of the Honiara Office's Project "The Nature Conservancy" www.nature.org, explained to *The Courier* how the deposits caused by erosion in a deep lagoon, as found in many locations on the Solomon Islands, can destroy the corals and have a knock-on effect on marine life.



Dugout canoe.
© IStockphoto.com/Longshots

The damage caused by the tsunami to the corals and marine life in the provinces of Isabel and Choiseul is the subject of a more precise evaluation to be published by the organisation, but Atu believes it is imperative, if only to protect the environment, for the government to legislate on the felling of the forests. Unfortunately, the government is either not doing this or is failing to implement

existing laws, as too many people in the province are backed by the logging companies and public and private interests in the timber trade are very important in the country. Fishing practices are equally unsustainable says Atu, with catches by the country's biggest commercial fishery, Solomon Taiyo Ltd, down by 20% since 1993. **H.G. ■**

Extract: Interview with former Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare

Manasseh Sogavare was Prime Minister from 2000 to 2001 and again from 2006 to 2007. Derek Sikua succeeded him on 21 December 2007.

The Courier: After the country was struck by the tsunami, did you receive enough support from foreign countries to help you return to a normal situation?

I'd say no. There were a lot of promises. That's the usual thing donors do. "We love you and we are sending this, we are going to do this." Now six months after this has happened we have yet to see these promises materialise. I think it's not only the Solomon Islands. I hear that the problem is the same with the Asia issue. They are still waiting now for this assistance to come. But, I must be fair. We have received assistance from those who made promises and effectively delivered. However, the problem remains that there are still would-be donors who promised assistance and have not yet delivered. **■**

ALL VULNERABLE: The tyranny of distance and the RING OF FIRE

The Pacific Islands are one of the regions of the world most likely to be affected by climate change. This is due to a number of factors including their small size, their remoteness (the so-called “tyranny of distance”), their geological structure (coral islands often barely above sea level) and their location on the fault lines of tectonic plates, making them prone to earthquakes and tsunamis (The famous Pacific Ring of Fire reaches all the way to the Americas, Japan and right down to New Zealand). Adding to the problem, their resources are often managed in a way that is unsustainable and nearly all are in a situation similar to, or scarcely less enviable than, Tuvalu or the Solomon Islands. There are others under threat also.

Kiribati is 87 metres above-sea level at its highest point, but many of its islands are coral reefs covered by between two and three metres of sand, without rivers or any other source of drinking water. Worse still, some of the Kiribati Islands, and Banaba in particular, have become even more fragile by phosphate mining by the

British Phosphate Commission, while in the Lines Islands nuclear testing by the United Kingdom and the United States during the colonial period has had serious effects. Tarawa Island (population 70,000) has the same problems as Tuvalu even though it is larger. To illustrate the issue, a recent report by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)¹ confirmed that two uninhabited Kiribati islets, Tebua Tarawa and Abanuea, disappeared forever beneath the waves in 1999.

The **Marshall Islands** include the coastlines of 19 eroded atolls. To protect them, as with Kiribati, the local population is resorting to desperate measures including depositing all kinds of heavy and bulky objects to serve as sea defences. These include trucks, old cars and other machinery that they then cover with stones to make a barrier.

To better illustrate the problem, the Marshall Islands and Kiribati already have their first ecological refugees on the small raised island of Niue.

Papua New Guinea has rivers as wide as the Amazon, despite flowing over relatively short distances. On 19 September 1994 an explosion of several cones of the Rabaul Volcano largely destroyed the town that bears its name. Now some of the neighbouring islands are also threatened with disappearance. This is particularly true of the **Carteret Islands** (with a population of around 2,000) where the locals are constantly rebuilding protective dykes and desperately trying to get the mangroves to grow. Now the decision has been taken to organise their relocation in small groups to the Bougainville Islands, four hours away sailing.

Nauru, once extremely rich due to the phosphate mines, has been devastated and rendered fragile by 50 years of over-exploitation of minerals that are now exhausted.

1 - Set up in 1974 by the South Pacific Commission, the SPREP has the mission of helping the region's countries to protect the environment and to practice sustainable development.

H.G. ■

PACIFIC ISLANDS face up to GLOBAL WARMING

Coastlines eroded, brackish groundwater and the first “climate” refugees on the move: global warming is already a harsh reality for many Pacific Islanders. As a result, priority has been given to programmes – supported by the EU – that enable those affected to adapt to new climatic conditions.

“The developing countries of the Pacific Islands are responsible for just 0.03% of the world's carbon dioxide emissions. Yet these countries are expected to be among the earliest and hardest hit by the effects of climate change over the next two centuries.” That was the conclusion reached back in 2001 by the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a group charged by the United Nations to assist countries affiliated to the International Convention on the scientific aspects of climate change.

By last year (2007), the IPCC's report was more specific. It stated: “On small islands, the deterioration in coastal conditions is expected to, inter alia, affect local resources like fishing and also reduce the value of these destinations for tourism. Rising sea-levels are expected to increase flooding, storm surge, erosion and other coastal issues. And this will, in turn, threaten vital infrastructure, towns and villages and facilities that support the livelihood of island communities. Furthermore, climate change will reduce water resources on many small islands, (especially in the Caribbean and Pacific), to the point where they are insufficient to meet demand during low rainfall periods.”

> Climate refugees

Tiny rocks thrown up and dispersed in the ocean by volcanic activity, most Pacific Islands are coral reefs that scarcely rise above sea level. Indeed, many actually lie below sea level like the Republic of Kiribati that consists of three archipelagos, 32 atolls and one isolated island. The highest point on Kiribati is Banaba, at just 81 metres. Similarly, Tuvalu,

an island nation in Polynesia, has eight atolls and its highest point lies a mere 4.5 metres above sea level. Half of its 11,363 inhabitants occupy land less than 3 metres high.

Climate change makes high tides – up to 3 metres above the normal level – increasingly common, making Tuvalu the first country in the world where people have had to abandon their land to escape flooding. Kiribati and Vanuatu are also having to rehouse populations affected by coastal erosion and rising sea levels. According to a UN report, this forced migration “implies an urgent need for coordinated plans, at regional and international level,

to rehouse the threatened communities and to put into place a series of political, legal and financial measures.”

In the face of these unstoppable rises in sea levels (as well as an increased number of hurricanes*) the European Commission has created the ACP-EU Natural Disaster Facility. [There are other funds earmarked for the same cause.]. Indeed, Asterio Takesu, Director of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), reports that the EU has already allocated €200M to assist with adapting to climate change and €150M to drawing national action plans.



View of Funafuti atoll. On the right the ocean sea, on the left the lagoon. © Hegel Goutier

The 14 ACP countries of the Pacific:

COOK ISLANDS

15 islands, 13 inhabited. Coral islands in the north and volcanic islands in the south; 240 km²; territorial waters 1,800,000 km²; population 19,450 (2000)

FIJI

332 islands, 100 inhabited and 2 large islands; 18,272 km²; territorial waters 1,260,000 km²; population 799,265 (2000)

KIRIBATI

28 atolls, 17 inhabited; 690 km²; territorial waters 3,600,000 km²; population 84,440 (2000)

MARSHALL ISLANDS

5 coral islands, 29 atolls and 1200 islets; 170 km²; territorial waters 2,131,000 km²; population 51,665 (2000)

FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

4 groups of islands totalling 607 islands, some volcanic and others of the coral atoll variety; 700 km²; territorial waters 2,978,000 km²; population 117,644 (2000)

NAURU

1 emerged coral island; 24 km²; territorial waters 320,000 km²; population 12,500 (2000)

NIUE

1 emerged coral island; 259 km²; territorial waters 390,000 km²; population 1,800 (2000)

PALAU

200 coral or volcanic islands, 8 inhabited; 487 km²; territorial waters 600,900 km²; population 19,485 (2000)

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

462,840 km², territorial waters 3,120,000 million km², population over 5,099,000

SAMOA

2 principal islands and 7 neighbouring islands; 2,857 km²; territorial waters 120,000 km²; population 169,900 and almost 100,000 living abroad (2000)

SOLOMON ISLANDS

6 large islands, 20 small islands and hundreds of islets; 28,446 km²; territorial waters 1,630,000 km²; population 416,200 (2000)

TONGA

169 islands, 45 inhabited; 699 km²; territorial waters 700,000 km²; population 98,850 (2000)

Funafuti atoll. © Hegel Goutier

The SPREP is an intergovernmental organisation responsible for promoting cooperation, supporting efforts to protect and improve the Pacific Island environment and encouraging-sustainable development. The SPREP's 25 member states include the four developed countries with direct interests in the region (France, New Zealand, Australia and the United States) and the 21 island nations and territories of the Pacific. They comprise the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Guam, Cook Islands, Northern Marianne Islands, Marshall Islands, Salomon Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, New Caledonia, Palaos, Papua New Guinea, French Polynesia, Samoa, American Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Wallis and Futuna.

> **Ecosystems in danger**

Espen Ronneberg, who is responsible for climate issues at the SPREP, views the Pacific as having a mix of challenges due to its topography, a limited ability to cope with environmental changes and a shortage of local skills. He believes that although there is a scientific consensus on the greenhouse effect and the reality of climate change, nobody really knows

whether global temperatures will continue to rise. Ronneberg's concern is that, although coral reefs and island ecosystems can adapt naturally within certain limits, nobody yet knows what happens when these limits are quickly reached.

One example of this is the mangroves – a precious ecosystem that is also of great economic value. According to a study financed by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) ("Pacific Island Mangroves in a Changing Climate and Rising Sea" – 2006), almost 13% of the Pacific mangroves are in danger of disappearing, with those on the islands of Fiji and Samoa at most risk. In this report, Kitty Simonds, Executive Director, Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council, explains that "due to the mangrove wetlands' functional links with other Pacific Island coastal ecosystems, and the important contribution of mangroves to nearshore fisheries production, the governments and local communities of the Pacific Islands must act now to ensure the sustainability of the mangrove ecosystems."

Simonds adds, "as part of that, the Council has already begun to replace its existing Fishery

Management Plans with integrated ecosystem-based plans for each island archipelago. The results and recommendations stemming from this study are contributing to the development of these new place-based Fishery Ecosystem Plans." **M.M.B.** ■

(*), including Hurricane Val that devastated the island of Samoa in 2001, leaving 13 dead and causing damage estimated at 230% of the GDP.

Destructions caused by the tsunami in Choiseul Province. © Robert Iroga



Course on climate change awareness. © Hegel Goutier

EU AND ACP COUNTRIES SEEK "ADAPTATION STRATEGIES"

The ACP's Pacific Island nations will not be alone in bearing the brunt of climate change. Island states in Africa and the Caribbean are also included in the countries set to be at high risk and are already suffering some of the consequences. Recognising this, the European Commission's acknowledgment of the responsibilities of the industrialised countries, led to a decision back in 2003 to assist developing countries in successfully meeting the climate change challenge. Since 2004, the EU Council of Ministers has adopted a climate change strategy (with an action plan for 2004/2008) that has increased the pace of progress.

As part of that process, climate change was chosen to be the theme for the 2nd European Development Days (EDD) celebrated last November in Lisbon, barely one month before the UN Climate Change Conference in Bali. There a "roadmap" was adopted to reflect the commitment of both industrialised and developing countries to press on with their efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions after 2012 – the date the first period of

the Kyoto Protocol is due to draw to a close. Last November in Lisbon, European Commissioner for Development, Louis Michel, called for a "global" loan to enable developing countries to address climate change issues. "Let's come up with a creative way to design this global loan which would allow us the resources to deal with these climate issues", suggested Michel. Adding that, "If we don't drive this forward through strong political decisions to get immediate results, we will find ourselves in the same place 15 years from now." The Commissioner explained that the loan, which could be managed by international institutions, would be wholly financed and supported by the developed countries.

> **Need for a global alliance**

The global loan would underpin initiatives featured in the strategy already adopted by the EU Council in 2004, as well as, the ACP-EU Joint Council in June 2006 in Port-Moresby, Papua New Guinea. Even more recently, the ACP-EU Joint Assembly on 19–22 November

in Kigali, called for the launch of a "time-bound comprehensive strategy to mainstream disaster risk reduction, disaster preparedness and climate change strategies" into national development plans, EU development policy and humanitarian aid. The ACP and EU countries are also being urged to set specific targets for renewable energies, with these at the centre of cooperation programmes. During the EDD celebration in Lisbon, Bernard Petit, Deputy Director General at the European Commission's Directorate-General for Development, acknowledged that the current flow of financial aid for adaptation strategies is "nothing" and indicated two main directions for an EU response. First, adaptation strategies need to be addressed and included in the EU-Africa partnership. Second, a more political approach, including all countries, is required. On that basis, the EU is working towards establishing a global alliance on climate change. A move that would involve the developing countries (particularly the Island States), while granting priority in development strategies to the climate change issue. **M.M.B.** ■

Destructed forest. © IStockphoto.com/Geralda

EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT DAYS

Sebastien Falletti

Tackling climate CHANGE TOGETHER

Close to the river Tagus, in the vast hall of the Lisbon International Exhibition Centre, NGO staffers, diplomats, African farmers and Heads of State happily mingled in an atmosphere similar to a university campus. This unlikely gathering – a potentially explosive cocktail – met for the second European Development Days (EDD) event in Lisbon, 7-9 November 2007. Following the first pilot-project held in Brussels in 2006, this initiative – the brainchild of European Commissioner for Development, Louis

Michel – gathered momentum in the Portuguese capital where a key issue was on the agenda – the impact of climate change on development. “If we fail to integrate climate change into our development policies right now, the benefit of all the investment we have made will be lost,” stated the Commissioner, setting a sober tone at the opening session of the event that was attended by José Socrates, the Portuguese Prime Minister in charge of the EU Presidency and whose presence marked the Council’s first involvement in the EDD.

This call for a responsible approach turned into a cry for help when the President of the Maldives, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, highlighted how global warming was threatening the very survival of his archipelago due to the threat of rising sea levels. He made a solemn appeal to developed and developing countries alike to commit themselves to compulsory targets to reduce carbon emissions. On the eve of the much-anticipated international conference on climate change held in Bali in December, the EDD had provided an ideal opportunity for the EU to show solidar-



Kofi Annan and José Manuel Durão Barroso, Lisbon, 7th-9th November 2007. Courtesy of the European Commission ©

ity with poorer countries and to increase pressure on other partners more reluctant to enter into negotiations. “Those who have contributed least to the causes of climate change are the most badly affected by it. I am thinking of the small island states and the African countries, in particular those in the Sahel region. It is important that their voice is heard in Washington, Beijing and New Delhi,” said José Manuel Barroso, the President of the European Commission. This appeal was upheld by the star guest at the EDD 2007, Kofi Annan, who used all his authority to remind the rich countries of their responsibilities. “We can’t afford to fail. We need a post-Kyoto agreement and that must start today, not tomorrow,” insisted the former Secretary-General of the UN.

> NGO village

Rather than a political platform, the EDD is first and foremost an opportunity for debate and for those working in the sector to meet the public, who were invited to visit the “NGO village” and take part in discussions. In the hall of the International Exhibition Centre, 650 Lisbon residents of all ages mingled with important figures working on the theme of climate change and from NGOs from North and South. Yvo de Boer, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change met with representatives of *Climate Action Network* and *Action Aid International*. With over 2,100 participants, “Lisbon this week is where Davos meets Porto Alegre,” said José Manuel Barroso enthusiastically.

Climate change was discussed from all angles at a series of roundtables, with a local approach taking priority. The ACP countries were not forgotten, with a debate held specifically on the consequences of global warming for their farmers. “It has been worthwhile coming. It’s an opportunity to exchange know-how, to make contacts and hopefully to find funding for our projects,” said Samuel, a farmer from Ghana. That is also exactly what the EDD is all about, an opportunity for those working in the development sector to meet, exchange views and do business. “It’s the place to be in the sector, especially for finding partners. It’s an opportunity to do business,” said a representative from Grenade, a media production company specialising in documentaries on developing countries. The stands of *Radio France Internationale* and *France 5* underlined just how important development is to the media. The EDD also provide a great opportunity for students interested in the aid sector to seek out opportunities for their first jobs.

> Showcase

The event was also used by countries to showcase their efforts to help poorer countries. All Member States of the EU with the exception of Bulgaria erected exhibition stands on the banks of the Tagus. There was even one from Cuba. The Member States that joined the EU in May 2004 were there and could not be distinguished from the “old” states. “We believe that we are achieving great things in terms of development and it’s important to show it,” said a represen-

tative at the Czech Republic stand. In the streets of the village, some stands fitted with state-of-the-art flat screen displays, were impressively designed, although they often belonged to states that have not always been the most generous in terms of development aid. But the sheer number of initiatives did not eclipse the main message of EDD 2007 – the urgency of helping the poorest countries to fight against climate change. “Some parts of Africa will be hit by extreme climatic events such as floods and storms, not at the end of the century, but in our lifetime,” predicted Kemal Dervis, administrator of the United Nations Development Programme. “It is the small people who are going to suffer most from climate change,” said Mamadou Cissokho, President of the Network of Farmers’ Organisations and Producers in West Africa. Louis Michel was soon turning thoughts into action proposing, during the closing session, a “global loan” to help the poor countries tackle climate change. The Commissioner said: “If we don’t drive this forward through strong political decisions to get immediate results, we will find ourselves in the same place fifteen years from now.” This was a challenge laid down to the decision-makers of Europe and beyond. It was also a reminder that the EDD event is a way for the EU – the largest contributor globally – to influence a development agenda still largely determined by Washington. The 3rd European Development Days event will take place in France in November 2008, probably in Strasbourg, where the much-awaited issue will be the promotion of the role of the regions in development. ■



European Development Days, Lisbon, 7th-9th November 2007. Courtesy of the European Commission ©

A new strategic PARTNERSHIP

A Joint Strategy and a 1st Action Plan 2008-2010, designed to launch the new strategic partnership between the EU and Africa, were the key results of the second EU-Africa Summit, held in Lisbon, on 8-9 December 2007. This Summit resulted in no-holds-barred, forthright debates, with a clear will to turn the page on a colonial past and to jointly tackle the challenges of the future.

Seven years after the first EU-Africa Summit in Cairo and the failure to hold a second meeting in 2003, due to a clash over whether an invitation to attend or not should be extended to Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe, the Lisbon Summit launched the new strategic partnership between the two continents. This new relationship and the new Joint Africa-EU Strategy will be implemented through a first Action Plan (2008-2010) with eight specific EU-Africa partnerships, covering more than 20 priority actions in areas such as peace and security, democratic governance and human rights, trade and regional integration, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), energy, climate change, migration, mobility and employment, science, information society and space. The initial results will be reviewed at the next Summit, scheduled to take place in Africa in 2010.

► Action plan

The 70-plus government leaders from the two continents undertook to ensure that the African Peace and Security Architecture becomes fully operational, while creating the required structure for the foreseen

funding of African peace-keeping activities. In the coming months, Somalia will provide an opportunity for this commitment to be tested out on the ground.

The partnership is also due to cover the promotion of the African Peer Review Mechanism and support for the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, while stepping up cooperation on cultural goods. The action plan also focuses on trade, regional integration and measures to strengthen Africa's ability to establish standards and quality controls and see the launch of an ambitious EU-Africa partnership on infrastructure that has been earmarked a €5.6 billion package. Other parts of the Action Plan include accelerating the progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and improving common energy security and energy access. Another key objective is to develop a common policy-making agenda for addressing the implications of climate change. Also featured are migration, mobility and employment where emphasis will be put on the implementation of the declaration of the Tripoli Conference on Migration and Development and the EU-Africa Plan of Action on Trafficking of Human Beings. In



The European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Louis Michel, during the EU-Africa Summit in Lisbon (8th - 9th December 2007). © EC

addition, the Action Plan also focuses on support for the development of an information society in Africa and on making special efforts to build scientific capability.

Within the broader EU-Africa context, and to implement the agreed priorities, the European Commission and 31 ACP States from sub-Saharan Africa in Lisbon, jointly signed cooperation programmes known as Country Strategy Papers for the period 2008-2013, valued in excess of €8 billion. Similar agreements will be signed with other countries in the coming weeks to bring the EU's commitment through the 10th European Development Fund to Sub-Saharan Africa countries to between €11 and €12 billion over 2008-2013. This figure does not include additional funding for contingencies, regional aid, European Investment Bank (EIB) financing and the separate cooperation programme with South Africa, the North African countries and other agreements, such as trade-related assistance. On top of these agreements, separate cooperation programmes have been concluded with North African countries as well as loans from the EIB.

► "Indispensable Alliance"

In the words of the Commissioner for Development, Louis Michel, the Joint Strategy, the Action Plan and the individual agreements all seek to forge an "indispensable alliance" between the two continents, jointly addressing the challenges of the future and transcending the different views that may have been expressed during the Lisbon Summit. It was a Summit that lived up to all its promises in terms of straight-talking, open discussion and relegating the one-sided donor-recipient relationship of the past to history.

An example was when Germany's Chancellor, Angela Merkel, took the opportunity to remind President Robert Mugabe about the universal scope of values such as human rights. He reacted to this by lambasting the "arrogance" of Germany and other countries that criticised him. Later, a call by Libya's President Muammar Gaddafi for compensation for colonial misdeeds was met by a refusal from Louis Michel, who spoke of the huge amount of development aid Europe had allocated in recent decades to the region. Seeking to unite both sides, the President of the African Union Commission, Alpha Omar Konaré, urged the leaders from both continents to "bury definitively the colonial past".

And now, despite these forthright statements, Euro-Libyan relations have broken new ground with the European Council's decision



of 14 December to open negotiations to concluding a cooperation agreement with Tripoli. Neither did the two sides shy away from sensitive issues, such as migration. An issue where Europe is concerned about an influx of illegal immigrants and Africa is anxious to stem the brain drain, but where both sides want to seize the opportunities offered by circular migration, employment opportunities and job creation.

The spotlight was also turned on the prospect of World Trade Organisation (WTO) - compatible trade agreements - known as Economic Partnership Agreements: EPAs. During 2008, these are expected to replace non-reciprocal trade preferences from which ACP States have so far benefitted under the Cotonou Agreement's trade clauses. Senegal's President Abdoulaye Wade expressed his opinion that Africa was not ready to create a free trade area with Europe. Two European leaders sympathised to some extent with this view. Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern said "more time" had to be given to the negotiations, whereas President Nicolas Sarkozy of France added his acknowledgement of the vulnerability of some ACP countries. Yet, other European officials, stress that such views do not reflect the position of the EU, which has given a mandate to the European Commission to negotiate the EPAs with the ACP countries.



Nonetheless, the East African Community, several Southern African and Indian Ocean states, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana have all concluded interim trade-in-goods agreements with the European Commission. The institution's President, José Manuel Barroso, pledged to hold consultations with the leaders of the four African regions before launching a new round of talks next February to finalise comprehensive EPAs with all sub-Saharan countries. Such deals will also cover trade in services, investments, intellectual property and the opening up of public procurement to outside competition. **F.M.** ■

José Manuel Barroso during the EU-Africa Summit in Lisbon (8th - 9th December 2007). © EC

José Manuel Barroso and Alpha Omar Konaré, Chairperson of the African Union in Lisbon. © EC

Aid for each country

The amounts earmarked for the national indicative programmes for the 31 States that have signed cooperation strategy documents with the EU are listed below.

(A and B envelops)	(Euro million)
Benin	340.2
Botswana	77.3
Burkina Faso	537.2
Burundi	202.1
Cameroon	245.9
Chad	311
Comoros	48.1
Congo-Brazzaville	85
Djibouti	41.1
Ethiopia	674
Gabon	50.2
Gambia	77.9
Ghana	373.6
Guinea-Bissau	102.8
Kenya	394.4
Lesotho	138
Liberia	161.8
Madagascar	588.2
Malawi	438
Mali	559.3
Maurice	63.4
Mozambique	634.1
Namibia	104.9
Rwanda	294.4
Sao Tomé and Príncipe	18.2
Senegal	297.8
Seychelles	6.3
Sierra Leone	268.4
Swaziland	63.9
Tanzania	565.1
Zambia	489.4

NB: Further allocations plus regional support and European Investment Bank funding may be awarded on top of these amounts to cover contingencies.

Source: European Commission's Directorate-General for Development.

10TH EDF BREAKDOWN

Of the €22.682 billion allocated under the 10th EDF (2008-2013), €21.966 billion will go to ACP countries, €286M to Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) and €430M to the Commission to organise programming and implementation of the EDF. The overall amount for the ACP countries includes €17.766 billion to the national and regional indicative programmes, €2.700 billion to intra-ACP and intra-regional cooperation and €1.500 billion to Investment Facilities. The EDF will focus more on regional programmes to underpin implementation of the European Partnership Agreements (EPAs) and also "incentive amounts" for good governance. ■

EPA issue sets SPARKS FLYING during Joint Assembly

"There is no plan B! The plan comprises WTO rules," Louis Michel said firmly in the charged atmosphere of the Serena Hotel conference centre in the heart of Rwanda's capital, Kigali, where over 100 parliamentarians from four continents were assembled. The European Commissioner for Development lent his full support to the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) which the EU is attempting to conclude with the ACP countries to meet the World Trade Organisation's (WTO) requirements. Indeed, the EPAs were the key topic of the EU-ACP 14th Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA), which took place from 19 to 22 November 2007 in Rwanda's capital, giving rise to stormy debates with the Commission and bringing out marked divisions between MEPs.

A few weeks short of the 31 December deadline set by the WTO for the conclusion of negotiations, the JPA acted as a forum for airing the concerns about the liberalisation of trade, as stipulated in the EPA process. Aided in their resolution by a number of MEPs, the ACP MPs took the opportunity to drive home their concerns, not only to the Commission, which is leading the negotiations, but also to the Council, thanks to the presence of Joao Cravinho, the Portuguese Cooperation Minister, whose country then held the EU Presidency.



Building site in the centre of Kigali (Rwanda).
© Andrea Frazzetta (Agenzia Grazia Neri)
Courtesy Andrea Frazzetta

> Kigali Declaration

Finally, in the wake of several days of debates and behind-the-scenes negotiations, a tangible outcome was achieved with the adoption of a *Kigali Declaration* that underlines the ACP countries' concern about the Commission, which had been threatening to impose a Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) that would provide a much less generous EU market access to countries that failed to sign the EPAs in time. The Kigali Declaration states that this system "would threaten the welfare and livelihoods of millions of workers in ACP States", and recalls the EU's undertaking in the revised Cotonou Agreement. This specifies that no ACP country should be left less well off at the end of any negotiations. However, after further pressure was applied by the

Boyce Sebetela from Botswana angrily. His statement was greeted with thunderous applause from the audience. Socialist MEP, Alain Hutchinson added, "This is what can only be called blackmail!"

Despite this flood of criticism, Commissioner Louis Michel did not back down. He re-emphasised his faith in the EPA, describing it as a "development tool" and sought to reassure the Assembly that the liberalisation of trade would be a gradual process backed up by a significant level of European financial support. "This is not crude liberalisation!", Michel pointed out, going on to refer to the failure of the trade preferences system that was launched several decades before. His belief is that it is high time for the ACP countries to embrace economic openness, using economic growth in Asia as a model.



Activité commerciale, Bamako 2007.
© Afrique in visu / Baptiste de Ville d'Avray

Christian Democrat and Liberal MEPs, the declaration included a reference to the need to comply with WTO requirements.

At the moment when the Commission's negotiators were seeking to conclude WTO compatible free trade agreements by 31 December 2008, the parliamentarians hit out at what they termed the "pressures" and the "dogmatic and dictatorial" stance adopted by the EU's executive arm. "Just as in the good old days of the colonies, we have been asked to be on our best behaviour and agree to sign in Brussels!" said

> China's monopoly

The subject of Asia and its emerging powers like China and India, now taking up strong positions in Africa, sparked off yet another spirited debate in Kigali, this time between MEPs and ACP MPs. The ACP parliamentarians wouldn't accept any criticism of China made in a foreign investment report adopted by the Assembly, much to the dismay of its co-author Astrid Lulling, an MEP from Luxembourg. She asserted that, "China is

monopolising the continent's natural resources and raw materials. This does not help the development process along but benefits Chinese companies. China's aid does more harm than good." This very direct criticism displeased African MPs, backed by the JPA's Co-President, Radembino Coniquet, and added to by a representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), who said, "Each country is entitled to develop its relations with anyone it chooses".

It was later pointed out that the ACP States did not need to be taught any lessons by Europe, whose companies prefer to relocate to the Middle Kingdom (China) rather than Africa. But these clashes revealed just how explosive these issues are and how much work still has to be done by the EU in its efforts to forge a 'three-sided' dialogue with China and the African continent.

The Assembly managed to come together again to put over its concern at the deteriorating situation in East Congo, where continuing clashes between the Congolese army and General Laurent N'Kunda's rebel forces have displaced 350,000 people in the last 12 months. In an emergency resolution, the Assembly called for the mobilisation of the international community and neighbouring countries. "Congo is the trigger of Africa," warned a DRC MP. German MEP Jürgen Schroeder believed that "the stability of the entire region is under threat owing to this crisis, involving the rape of women, the murder of children, as well as violence and pillaging for ethnic reasons." Sadly, the Assembly's warning was tragically borne out a few days later when fighting intensified around the city of Goma, close to the Rwandan border. Finally, the Assembly provided the opportunity for a wake-up call on an issue that may be less dramatic but still has major implications for the ACP countries: the delay in ratifying the revised Cotonou Agreement. This delay is now jeopardising the release of funds from the 10th European Development Fund, 2008-2013. The Co-Presidents, Glenys Kinnock and Radembino Coniquet, urged national MPs to take action to guarantee that the agreement is ratified on time so that European aid can be released. The 27 EU Member States and two-thirds of the ACP Group of States must ratify the pact before the Commission can draw upon the EDF's €22.6 billion worth of financing. Kinnock stressed how serious the situation was, warning that if the ratification process is not completed, funding for projects and budget aid would not be forthcoming. She hoped that this issue would be settled during the JPA's next meeting in Slovenia in March.

S.F. ■

Trade

AFRICA WANTS TO CUT its own diamonds

Following in the footsteps of the oil and gas producing countries of South America, so-called 'resource nationalism' is now being adopted by the diamond-producing states of Africa. They are demanding that the global diamond industry helps them to manufacture their products in their own countries, thus creating a major challenge in terms of profitability for the future.

At the most recent diamond conference requested by the African producer countries (Antwerp 15-16 October 2007), the focus was on cutting and polishing gems in Africa, which the South Africans term 'beneficiation'.

These demands for change have come about because leaders of Southern Africa's states argue that although Africa supplies most of the raw materials (e.g. diamonds, gold and platinum) to the world's jewellery industry, it

only receives the equivalent of 10% of the overall revenue generated (US\$150 billion). In contrast to a nation like Bolivia (which simply nationalised the petroleum industry by demanding that companies give up their shares to the State), the producers of Southern Africa with their significant shareholdings in mining companies, want to ensure that the added value from the cutting and polishing of diamonds contributes to the improvement of both their balance of trade and the local employment market.

And indeed there is a groundswell of support for this. Africa – including Botswana, South Africa, Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Namibia – accounts for 60% of the volume and value of global rough diamond production, and it intends to take advantage of the oligopoly situation of the mining production companies (the sub-

sidiaries of De Beers and the Angolan state-owned company Endiama) to impose their demands on the market.

> Occupying a niche in the market

In order to add value to their products, these States intend to convince the market that they should be given access to a minimum amount of big stones for which labour costs are proportionally lower than for small diamonds. They aim to occupy a niche in the market, leaving the processing of smaller gems to India, Thailand and China where the wage costs are unbeatably low.

In South Africa, an agreement between De Beers and the State Diamond Trader (SDT) grants the latter group the right to acquire 10% of all production so that it can be cut in the country, preferably by companies promoting



up the base of its strength on the global market – Botswana, South Africa and Namibia – share the same strategic objective and the renewal of its joint-venture agreements with these States is at stake.

> A new oligopoly

An African supply oligopoly is being formed to deal with the mass of the world's traders and cutters. Its position will grow even stronger from 2008 as demand will outstrip supply and the gap will continue to grow, according to the forecasts of the sector's other giant, Rio Tinto Diamonds, which admits that beneficiation is inevitable. Even though De Beers is planning



to invest some US\$2.6 billion in new projects, particularly in South Africa, Botswana, Namibia and Tanzania, there will still be a significant gap between supply and demand. And yet another heavyweight in the global market, Alrosa of Russia, has its president, Sergey Vybornov, estimating that global demand for uncut diamonds will reach US\$20 billion by 2020, while supply will only amount to US\$9 billion at current production rates. As a result of that, production rates are set to increase.

But, despite all these demands, expectations and changes, Gareth Penny, managing director of De Beers believes that beneficiation can only be achieved under certain conditions: low-wage production costs in Asia must be taken into account; cutters based in Africa must identify the market segments where they can be competitive and, finally, allow the Indian cutters to deal with lower-value production, which cannot be carried out cost-effectively in Africa.

On top of this, African governments have to create an environment to attract direct foreign investment in the sector.

Yet, Antwerp's diamond traders know that a major challenge lies ahead, in particular the lack of skilled labour currently available in Africa to meet these expectations. To put it in context, training a diamond cutter takes a minimum of five years.

And then there is the geographic component: prospects are not the same for the main producers (Botswana, Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Africa) as for the smaller producers like Sierra Leone or Liberia. In day-to-day reality, the first group has much more influence on global markets and finds it much easier to put pressure on the mining companies. **F.M.** ■

The images on pages 27 and 28 illustrate the different stages in the production of diamonds in a cutting shop in Antwerp. By courtesy of the Antwerp World Diamond Centre (AWDC)

black economic empowerment. In Namibia, another agreement between De Beers and the Namibia Diamond Trading Company (NDTC) guarantees supplies for 11 diamond-cutting plants between 2007 and 2011. The aim is that these cutting plants would handle quantities of diamonds worth around US\$300M by 2009.

Botswana hopes to increase the turnover of its 16 cutting plants from US\$200M to US\$500M over the next two years, the equivalent of a quarter of its uncut diamond exports (around US\$2 billion). This country is taking advantage of the fact that it is the world's largest producer and that from 2008 its capital city, Gaborone, will be home to the largest sorting and distribution centre of the Diamond Trading Company, the commercial arm of De Beers, which is relocating some of its operations from London to Botswana. The company will also be obliged to supply local cutting businesses under conditions that enable them to be competitive; in other words, by supplying them with both medium-sized and large stones.

Angola is moving in the same direction, boosted by forecasts that current production will double within the next 10 years from around nine million carats for export, worth US\$1.2 billion in 2006.

De Beers, the world's leading supplier of uncut diamonds, has no choice but to follow the trend. The three countries that still make



A day in the life of mimi BARTHÉLÉMY

Playwright, actress, storyteller, musician, writer

Traditional Caribbean tales reshaped as experimental theatre

Mimi Barthélémy is a name synonymous with storytelling. Indeed, there are very few playwrights or professional actors involved in the art of storytelling who haven't heard of this Haitian artist.

Barthélémy has succeeded in transforming an art - you could also call it traditional folklore - into an experimental theatrical experience of a very high standard. In doing this, she has travelled all over the globe receiving numerous awards and honours for her breakthrough work that borders on the magical. Her focus is on storytelling from every possible angle. She writes, she directs and she does this through a deep understanding of music, and sociology.

Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Mérite, France. Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, France. Becker d'Or 3ème Festival de la Francophonie (1989). Prix Arletty de l'Universalité de la Langue Française (1992). These are just a small sample of the awards that have been showered upon her during her career, not to mention her roles chairing juries and other honours.

Last November, she was in Brussels at *La Roseraie* theatre for a performance designed specifically for a young audience, "Quand les chiens et les chats parlaient" (When dogs and cats spoke). But, as is only to be expected with someone of her reputation, these performances are not confined to the younger generation. Adults, well versed in her ability to entertain, make sure they are part of the audience well before the performance begins.

Arriving in Brussels early in the morning, Barthélémy makes the time to enjoy a congenial breakfast with the show's organisers and then it's off to *La Roseraie* for some last minute fine-tuning and rehearsal. At the theatre it is a delight for her to rediscover acquaintances and many of her fans before she appears officially on stage. And when she does, her storytelling is delightfully relaxed and easy-going, delivered in her soft-spoken voice. An amiable, informal style that charms everyone present.

Barthélémy has that special talent of making you think you are the only person who counts for her at that moment.

Mimi, practically everybody calls her Mimi, is a huge stage presence. She effortlessly creates a chemistry that would win over any audience no matter how unpromising it might appear to start with.

She quickly involves the audience as extras in the performance and they join in enthusiastically, singing songs - often in Creole or Spanish - without having the slightest idea what they are about. The younger members of the audience are overawed, with mouths wide open, hardly daring to breathe. They hang on to her every word, every syllable, every breath.

"I use these simple storylines," she says, "and a universe of creatures (rat, mouse, lizard, sparrow and so forth) to create all the atmosphere of Haiti..." And, as she leads the audience on her journey, the fabulous becomes reality! After the performance, Mimi was - despite her many years of experience - walking on air because of the spell she had managed to weave around the youngsters who had marvelled at her performance, her words and music.

Later, she met with the Belgian side of the family of her deceased husband, Gérard Barthélémy, her co-author of many books and other works. Talking with her, she recalls her father, a senior member of the medical faculty in Port-au-Prince and a descendant of a former Maroon leader during Haiti's war of independence and her mother, the daughter of a former Haitian President in the 1920s. From the age of 10, Barthélémy travelled a great deal in the Caribbean and to Florida before studying political science in Paris. There she was to discover a sense of disorientation and disappointment. "When I was 16, having completed my secondary school education, I left Haiti for France and soon understood the painful meaning of the word exile," she remembered. "I had family ties with the French, I belonged to a cultivated mulatto family, but this was colonial France when the war in Algeria was in full spate.



Pages 29 and 30
Mimi Barthélémy during her show at La Roseaie theatre in Brussels (November 2007).
© Hegel Goutier

For the foreign emigrant, the sole choice in France was assimilation.” She gave up her studies and now married, travelled with her husband. First as he took up the post of cultural attaché with the French Embassy in Colombia, then the embassies in Bolivia, and Sri Lanka. Following this period, she resumed her studies in 1972, taking a degree course in Spanish literature. Then came a year-long stay with the Garifunas [tribe] in Honduras studying their unique culture. This tribe is a mix of Amerindian and African peoples, whose language, Garifuna, is the Africanised survival of the Arawak tongue, where speech differs according to gender (i.e. men and women do not speak in the same way). As an example, the nouns used to specify the same object are said differently depending on whether it is a male or female speaker. It isn’t, therefore, surprising after this experience that her doctorate in theatre, focused on the role the theatre plays in the identity of a cultural minority: the Garifunas.

“Latin America, and more specifically Colombia, offered me the opportunity to get in touch with many leading cultural figures of the 1960s,” she explained. “My initiation into artistic life began with my association with the TEC (*Teatro Experimental de Cali*), founded and run by Enrique Buenaventura and the *Casa de la Cultura de Bogota*, founded and run by Santiago Garcia. This enabled me to discover the works of contemporary European and Latin American authors, such

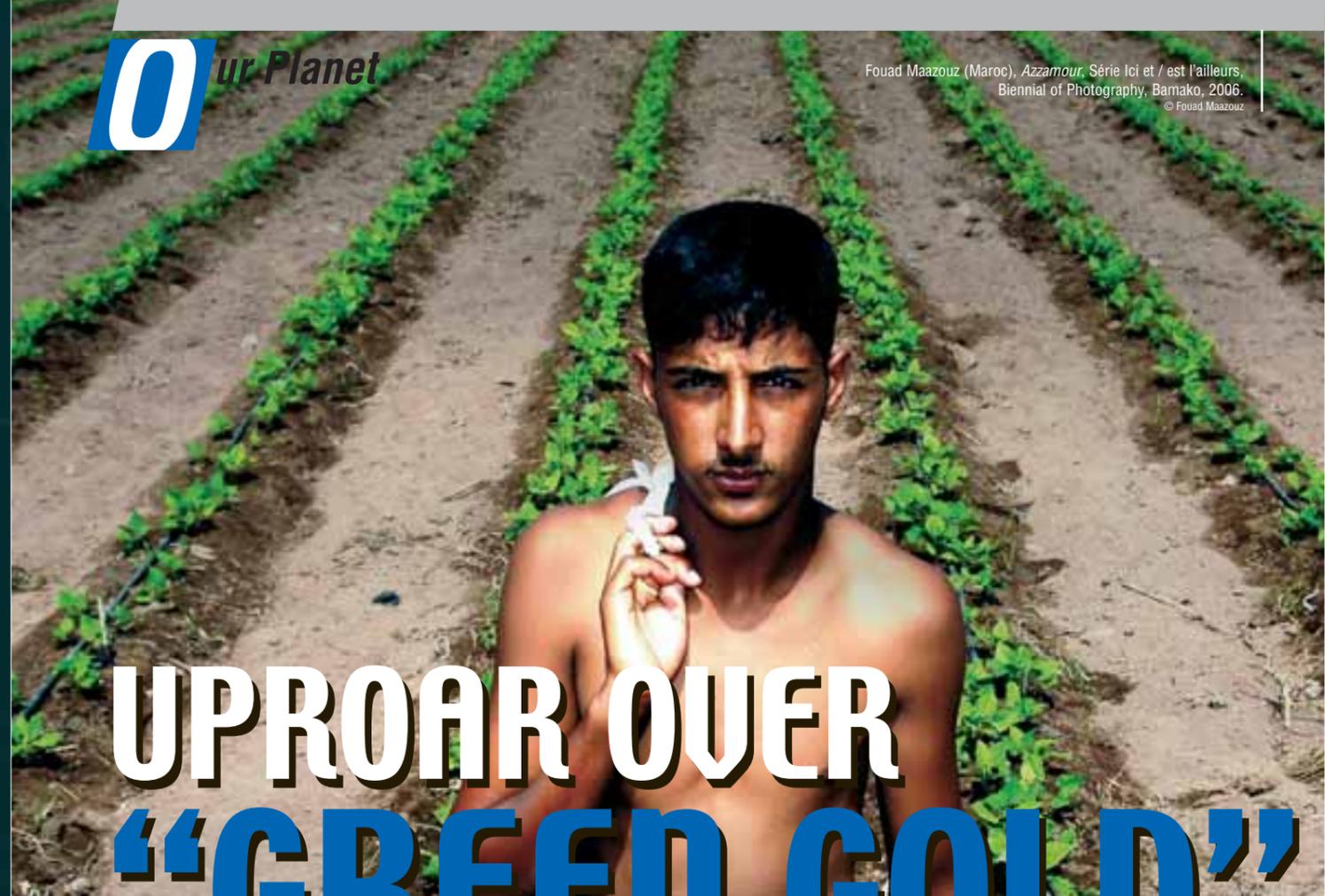
as Brecht, Kantor, Grotowski, Eduardo Manet, Jose Triana, Arrabal, Borges and Joao Cabral Do Melo Neto.”

She took a keen interest in a wide variety of theatre, such as those of Claude Alranq and Peter Brook, as well as, Eugenio Barba’s *Odin Théâtre* and *Mnouchkine Théâtre du Soleil*. She undertook training opportunities with Eduardo Manet and the Roy Hart Théâtre. Then she performed in France under the direction of Rafael Murillo Selva, well-known in Colombia. Later on, she was an assistant to the anti-establishment director Manuel Jose Arce, who was then producing theatrical works critical of the American military presence in Central and Southern America.

The majority of her university research was undertaken at the same time as these theatrical experiences. As she explains, “my first steps towards the theatre, my on-the-job training and my university studies led to a practice of theatre focused on the memory of my country. I had to fight against a loss of identity, the alienation I experienced as a result of my assimilation in France.” And Barthélémy concludes, “my approach to the theatre is based on the need to put up a display of resistance for the sake of my mental survival, to adopt a spirit of rebellion and activism.”

www.mimibarthelemy.com

Last work to appear: Book and recording “*Dis-moi des Chansons d’Haïti*”. Publisher: Lise Bourquin Mercadé. H.G. ■



UPROAR OVER “GREEN GOLD”

If 2007 was dominated by the climate change issue, 2008 is set to be the year of biodiversity. The 188 States party to the International Convention on Biological Diversity will meet together in Bonn, Germany 19–30 May. It will provide them with an opportunity to take stock of how they are faring in their attempts to save declining biodiversity, as well as, reaching an agreement on the thorny issue of the “fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from genetic resources”. On this tricky subject, the European Union is often called upon to play the role of mediator, helping heal the rift between the countries of the Northern and Southern Hemispheres.

Attracting much less media attention than its climate change big-brother, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was born as a consequence of the Rio Earth Summit in June 1992 at the same time as the Convention on Climate Change. In reality, the CBD is just as broad-ranging and aspires to conserve and guarantee the sustainable use of the biological resources we depend upon for our survival on the planet. However, rather than confining itself to acting as a watchdog, the CBD has a more ambitious goal. Specifically, with the arrival of biotechnologies and the extension of property rights (including patents) in relation to living things – the CBD is calling for a legal framework to guarantee the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits of genetic resources. And this applies to all kinds of resources such as plants, animal extracts and micro-organisms used to produce items such as the active ingredients in medicinal products. Consequently, in laying down this legal framework, there is a great deal at stake in both biological and economic terms.

► Depletion

The Earth’s rich biological resources are becoming depleted at a significant rate, the scientific community estimating that the total number of species to have populated the Earth being as much as 10 times higher than the current number. And although the process of extinction is widely agreed to be a natural one, the rate of decline has speeded up dramatically in recent times. Certainly, evidence of human-led extinction of many living organisms has been available for over a century and it is predicted that if the present trend continues, around 50,000 species are set to disappear every year over the coming decades.

As might be expected, due to their geographical location most ACP countries have either a tropical or subtropical climate favouring the proliferation of a wide variety of species. For example, the forests of Central Africa alone are home to a wide range of flora and fauna: 400 or so mammal species, over 1,000 bird species and more than 10,000

plant species, 3,000 of which are particular to that habitat alone. Moreover, plants and animals are at their most bountiful in the steppes and the savannah, particularly in Africa, thanks to a combination of natural conditions and alternating wet and dry seasons. Today, ACP States are working together with the EU to promote several initiatives designed to safeguard the rich continental and maritime resources. One example is the FISHBASE project for "Strengthening Fisheries and Biodiversity Management in ACP Countries". The aim here is to provide information to help the enforcement of policies that focus on conserving aquatic biodiversity, its sustainable exploitation and the equitable sharing of the benefits in keeping with the principles governing the Biodiversity Convention. Already, the project has established three regional centres in Africa and the regional coordinators have supervised project training activities and lent support to fisheries, scientists and specialist staff.

This law upholds the 'farmer's privilege', where farmers are allowed to keep some of the crops they harvest so they can be used at a later date. This privilege has become optional in other international discussions. This legislative instrument also acknowledges the part played by communities as the repositories of knowledge, reflected in royalties being paid for the use of this knowledge. Rules applied in the field in Africa are still quite rudimentary, as the authorities seem to be waiting for this issue to be settled within the context of the CBD. On that basis, they can expect a long wait as at their meeting late 2007, representatives of the 188 signatories of the Convention were still in disagreement over this question. As of now, major economic nations like Australia, New Zealand and Canada (the United States does not subscribe to the CBD) are rejecting demands by the countries in the South for access to the resources to be controlled. **M.M.B.** ■



Peasant.
© iStockphoto.com/Brasil2

> Sharing benefits

Apart from its aim of promoting the conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity, the CBD was the first international agreement to acknowledge the key role of traditional knowledge, innovation and environmental and sustainable development activities, while using intellectual property rights (IPR) and other tools to facilitate the protection process. Local communities are now seen as having a major part to play in enforcing the CBD. Unfortunately, implementation of these basic principles has led to clashes within the international community. Firstly, the very principle of IPR has spawned a variety of interpretations. For example, the African Union (AU) has developed a model law, to provide a frame of reference for biodiversity management, particularly in the case of managing commercially relevant species: seeds for farming and species of relevance for various industries, including the pharmaceutical sector.

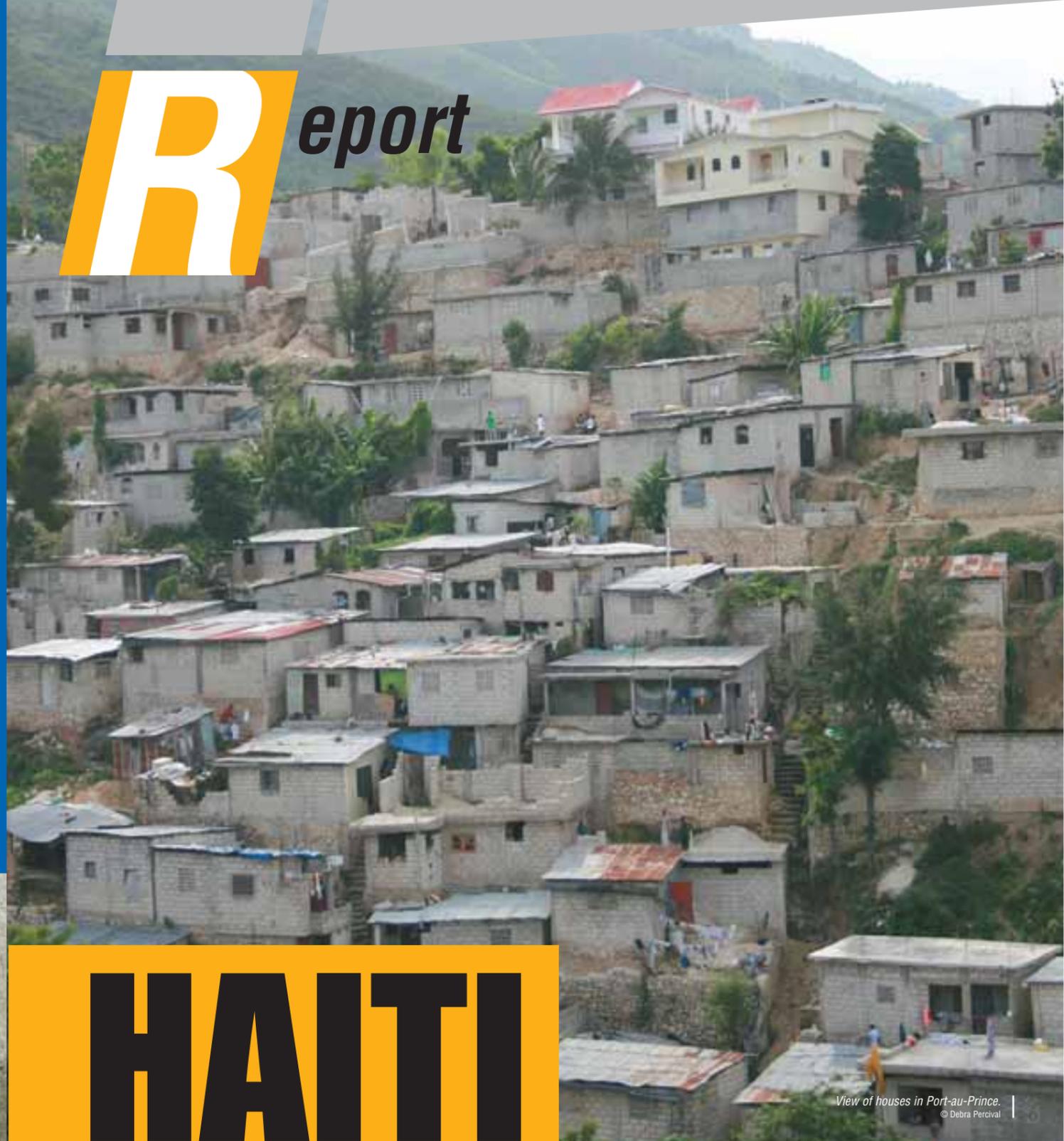


Thirst.
© iStockphoto.com/Vladm

BIOPIRACY

Countries in the South have expressed justifiable concern about their biodiversity and knowledge being taken away as a result of economic interests. Indeed, incidents of so-called "biopiracy" abound, as illustrated by the following examples. In 1995, the University of Wisconsin (United States) filed four patents for brazzein, a super-sweet, low-calorie plant. The exploitation of this plant is expected to yield profits of US\$100 billion a year, according to some estimates. Brazzein berries have been grown in Gabon since time immemorial, but the country does not stand to benefit at all as the holders of the patents sold the plant operating licences to several biotech firms, none one of which is from Gabon. In another instance in September 2007, the South African Government stepped in to ban the harvesting of pelargonium, a member of the geranium family, after hundreds of tonnes were harvested by foreign drug companies, one of which has patented its use to fight HIV/AIDS. Now the Department of Environmental Affairs of South Africa has said it will review all biological prospecting projects to make sure they conform to new regulations that protect the commercial rights of traditional healers. ■

R eport



View of houses in Port-au-Prince.
© Debra Percival

HAITI

Haiti has endured more political and social turmoil than most nations since it won its independence in 1804. The frequent upheavals have undermined economic and social well being. Over 50% of the population lives on less than a dollar per day. A degree of security has been put in place by the United Nations Stabilisation Force, MINUSTAH, since 2004. It means that the government can move forward with plans to re-start the economy and deliver to its people. Although lacking indigenous resources, it has trading potential surrounded by middle income countries,

including the Dominican Republic on the same island of Hispaniola. "The first condition for investment is peace and stability. That is why we have to put all our energy into maintaining peace and stability," said President Préval at the annual opening of Parliament on 14 January 2008. International donors are on board with a mix of project and budget aid to underpin stability. The dichotomies of this Caribbean country are many. Its statistics on poverty are brutal yet its astoundingly rich culture entrancing...

BUILDING ON STABILITY

A look at the political upheavals of the past puts into perspective the current relative stability in Haiti. For the government it is an opportunity, with needed donor support, to consolidate its administration and take steps to restart the economy to alleviate poverty.



Presidential Palace, Port-au-Prince.
© Dobra Percheval

Tainos, relatives of the Arawaks of South America arriving in 2600 BC, were the first known inhabitants of the Hispaniola Island. One of the most revered to this day was Queen Anacaona or 'Golden Flower' who ruled over Xaragua, one of the five kingdoms of the Hispaniola led by *caciques* (Chieftans). She was one of the last to succumb to Spanish influence on the arrival of Christopher Columbus in 1492 but at a meal for the Spanish new governor in 1503, her followers were arrested and executed. Anacaona fled but was captured and hung in Santo Domingo. It was estimated that originally there were between 100,000 to 1 million Tainos on the island who were gradually wiped out upon Columbus' arrival through epidemics and enforced hard labour. But still Haiti's Taino descent is still reflected in the country's culture whilst some Haitians claim blood ties.

African slaves were brought over by the French colonists in 1520 and inhabited the Western portion of the island. In 1731, the Spanish recognised the French colony Saint Domingue and a border was drawn up alongside two rivers.

Several slave leaders, including Francois Dominique Toussaint l'Ouverture won freedom from their masters and France abolished slavery in 1803.

The white heart was symbolically ripped out of the French flag by rebel leader Jean-Jacques Dessalines and the red and blue stitched together, and the Haitian flag, '*Liberte ou la Mort*' hoisted. On January 1804, after a decisive battle with the French, Dessalines announced independence in Gonaives and the African Haitians took control of the island restoring its Taino name 'Haiti', or "mountainous land."

➤ 20th century

Fast forward to the 20th century and the strategic importance of Haiti as a shipping route. Connecting the newly opened Panama Canal led to a US invasion in 1915, the occupation lasting until 1934. Several coups later, the dictatorship of Francois Duvalier took hold in 1957, his support coming from burgeoning middle class and rural poor. Reinforcing his power with the 'Tontons Macoute', named after the fictitious Uncle Knapsack who carried off children, they were allowed to extort cash and goods from the population and in return loyally protected their President. Jean-Claude 'Babydoc' Duvalier succeeded his father upon his death in 1971. In 1986 'Babydoc' fled to France. A period of instability followed from 1986 to 1990. Faced with the return of Duvalier's supporters, the Supreme Court

ordered elections in December 1990 when a young Priest, Jean Bertrand Aristide, broadly supported by civil society, came to power in September 1991 under the banner of 'Lavalas', meaning 'flood'. Current President, René Préval, was his Prime Minister from February 1991 to September 1991.

Just seven months in office, a coup staged by General Raoul Cédras was immediately condemned and an economic embargo was imposed and maintained until October 1994, when Aristide returned with US backing. Aristide was barred from seeking a consecutive term in the 1996 Presidential Election won by René Préval, who in 2001 became the first democratically elected leader in the country's history to complete a mandate. Aristide remained a popular figure forming the 'Fanmi (family) Lavalas' party, and the Foundation for Democracy giving interest free loans for business and support for health and education. He was elected President in November 2000 winning 91.7% of the vote. The 200th Anniversary of the country's independence was marked by civil protest forcing Aristide into exile on 29 February 2004, although he claims he was made to leave by US fear of unrest spreading. Boniface Alexandre became interim President with the task of organising elections within two years. On 7 February 2006, René Préval once more became President, elected for the period 2006 to 2011 under the broad movement of LESPWA (Hope) which pulled together several political parties and civil society groups. His was a slim majority of 51.21%, after blank ballots were counted, requiring the support of other parties to form a coalition government.

➤ A changing country

"Things are changing in our country. Politics can be done in a different way. The country cannot, at the slightest opportunity, topple over into instability," said Préval in his annual opening speech to Parliament on 14 January 2008. He outlined some of the main economic challenges and need for state modernisation to cement security, including changes to the justice system, the need for credit and investment (see article on industry) and reliable and properly priced energy.

The presence of the United Nations Stabilisation Force for Haiti (MINUSTAH) has largely been responsible for the return to stability. Although there are still too many kidnappings, said the President, whose perpetrators should be brought to justice.

Following the departure of ex-President Jean Bertrand Aristide, a UN Security Council

Resolution in June 2004 mandated a force to stabilise the and to help the transitional government hold elections. "Armed gangs were holding the country at ransom," said David Wimhurst, MINUSTAH's Director of Public Relations, speaking at its headquarters based in Port-au-Prince's former Hotel Christopher. MINUSTAH currently numbers 7,060 military personnel, mostly from Latin America, with a large contingent from Brazil and 2,091 police officers (UN figures November 2007) helping to build a Haitian police force. MINUSTAH's new commander since September 2007 is Tunisian Diplomat, Hédi Annabi. Wimhurst explained that some force was necessary to clamp down on gangs responsible for violence and kidnapping. "It took three months to break up the gangs, some lives were lost and 800 arrested in Cité Soleil," added Wimhurst. Since February 2007, it is easier to circulate in Cité Soleil. MINUSTAH's actions will, "create a space for longer term development to take place," added Wimhurst. "The only way we can leave the state is if a fully professionally equipped police force is at the service of the state." To date, 11,000 Haitian police officers have been trained whereas at least 20,000 are required. Wimhurst said that MINUSTAH is also funding 16 boats to patrol Haiti's Northern shores, a drop off point for illegal narcotics.

➤ Dynamic diaspora

A recent report by the NGO, *International Crisis Group (ICG)*¹, says that the government should encourage Haiti's 3 million diaspora to invest more in the country whose remittances came to US\$1.65 billion in 2006 amounting to 35% of the GDP. ICG's senior analyst, Damien Helly, said this economic contribution should be reflected in the political system by facilitating voting abroad and allowing dual citizenship and diaspora representation within Parliament, which is likely to require constitutional reform. The paper also calls for a diaspora task force mandated by Haitian officials, all political forces, civil society and the private sector, to draw up a 10-year strategy backed by international support.

Important too for the country's future is a binational strategy with the Dominican Republic despite international condemnation of the violations of rights of Haitian workers in its neighbouring country (see article by Gotson Pierre). In March 2008, the 3rd edition of a bi-national fair on eco-tourism and cultural links will take place in Belledère, Haiti, jointly organised by the Dominican body, *la Fondation Science et Art and 'Fondation pour le Développement du Tourisme Alternatif'* (FONDTAH) and *San Pont Ayiti*, explained Dr. José Serulle the Dominican Republic's Ambassador Haiti.²



Street corner in Les Cayes.
© Marc Roger

Statistical snapshot of Haiti

(figures for 2006 unless otherwise stated)



Area: 27,750 sq km

Population: 8.7 million

GDP: US\$5 billion

Annual GDP growth: 2.3%

Long term debt: US\$1.3 billion 2005

Life expectancy: 52 (figure for June 2005)

UNDP index: 146 out of 177 (2007-2008 report)

Per capita: GNI US\$480

Imports: US\$1.55 billion (2006 estimation) mainly food, fuels, machinery, manufactured goods.

Exports: US\$494M (2006 estimation) coffee, oils, mangoes, vetiver.

Politics

President, René Préval since 14 May 2006 (5-year term).

Head of Government, Prime Minister, Jacques Edouard Alexis since 30 May 2006.

Bicameral National Assembly and Senate Senate (30 seats) elections held every six years but candidate with the most votes in each of the ten departments serves 6 years, the next 4 years and 3rd placed, 2 years, meaning an election to replace a third of the members will take place in 2008.

Chamber of Deputies (99 seats), elected every 4 years – next election in April 2010.

Main political parties: Fusion, Merging of Haitian Social Democrats; OPL, Struggling Peoples' Organisation; Alyans, Democratic Alliance National; Front for the Reconstruction of Haiti; Artibonite in Action (LAAA).

Sources: World Bank, UNDP, European Union, CIA, Government of Haiti. ■



Decentralisation of government is progressing in stages following the election of mayors. Haiti recently hosted the 23rd edition of the World Mayors Conference in Côté des Arcadins; the subject, strengthening of municipalities.³ Individual projects such as the study of the InterAmerican Bank (IDB), by the Haitian consultancy *Société d'Aménagement et de Développement* (SODADE), on the development of Les Cayes from flood defenses to a marina, is but one example of individual projects country-wide aimed at developing regions explained SODADE's Marc Roger.

► Good administrative practices

In his speech to Parliament, Préval also stressed modernisation of ministries with technology and the need to register all business entities. "We need to regain good practices in administration lost during the Duvalier years," explained Price Pady, Haiti's National Authorising Officer (NAO), responsible for coordinating and approving donor projects. Budget support to improve the capacity of ministries is an important part of donor planning in Haiti (see article on 10th EDF). "We see budget support as an instrument of intergovernmental dialogue. This dialogue is about priorities and policies identified by the government," said the EU's Head of Delegation in Haiti, Francesco Gosetti-di-

Sturmeck, announcing additional budgetary support in October 2007.

Improved education is seen as key to building up the country's skills base. 40% of the population over 10 can't read or write, Minister for Education, Gabriel Bien Aimé, told us: "To change this we need more qualified teachers more adequate facilities, classrooms and teaching materials," that would complement the EU's funding for teacher training colleges (see article on EDF). Minister Bien Aimé wants to reverse figures whereby 80% of education is currently provided by the private sector and just 20 by the public sector. It will mean increasing the annual budget spent on education to 8% in 2008, 13% the following year, to gradually bring it up to 25%, putting spending on a par with most countries and achieve the eventual aim of "education for all," said the Minister.

1 www.crisisgroup.org

2 For more information contact FNDATH fondtah@yahoo.fr
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Fundacion Ciencia y Arte Inc
Fund.ciencia@codetel.net.do

3 World conference of Mayors
www.world-conference-of-mayors.org
National Conference of Black Mayors www.ncbm.org

D.P. ■

"Tap-Tap" is the most famous public taxi transport in Haiti.
© Hegel Goutier

"We've got to know WHO OWNS THE LAND IN THIS COUNTRY"

Interview with leader of the Fusion opposition, Serge Gilles

Serge Gilles is leader of the Fusion des Sociaux Démocrates Haïtienne (Haitian Social Democratic Fusion Party) with one of the biggest parliamentary representations; 6 out of 30 seats in the Senate and 20 out of 99 in the Chamber of Deputies. Fusion participates in the "coalition" or what Gilles subtly refers to as a "pluralist" government formed following the 2006 elections. With a vote of 2.62 per cent, he was one of the defeated candidates out of 33 who stood in the February 2006 Presidential election which brought President Préval to power. Secretary General of Fusion, Robert Auguste, is currently in charge of the Health Ministry. Gilles spent 25 years in overseas exile during the period of Duvalier dictatorships, returning to Haiti in 1986. On the mid-November day when we met, he was preparing

for an afternoon ministerial meeting with the cabinet to which all five opposition leaders had been invited by President Préval to discuss a World Bank evaluation of government. In our meeting in Pétionville, whilst applauding this open consultation, Gilles voiced concern that the current leadership of Prime Minister Jacques Edouard Alexis and President Préval had so far fallen short in, "dealing with the major challenges of the past."

► Functioning of the coalition

René Préval has previous experience of running the country. He is a former Prime Minister and also President and is not abusing his position. He understands the fragile state of things. To date, we've managed to overcome

security problems. The national police which broke up has been set up again, and supported by Minustah, the United Nations' Stabilisation force for Haiti is doing good work. This pluralist government has brought about political stability. There is some criticism but from people who are not represented in government. Everyone represented has accepted to stay in this government formed by consensus to guarantee the country's stability and with the help of the international community, make the construction of roads and rehabilitation of public services possible to give the government some peace of mind. This country has many problems. On the less positive side, after two years the government has not managed to overcome the major challenges of the past. What I'm telling you, I've also told President, René Préval. Our discussions are very frank.

Statue of the unknown slave,
Champs de Mars,
Port-au-Prince.
© Debra Percival

> Land reform

First and foremost, we need land reform. We've got to know who owns the land in this country. It's not normal that a country like ours has to import rice. It's vital to know who land belongs to before launching national production which is the number one challenge. A government that can't feed its own people is a government with a problem. Land reform means knowing who owns what land. If this happened, the person cultivating it would be a lot more interested in doing so since it would be his or her property.

> Lack of credit

The government hasn't done anything to put credit within the reach of the majority of Haitians. Credit here is prohibitive; it's not normal.

We have to re-capitalise the country. I agree with the government on the need to construct roads because with roads you are also creating a market but the government also has to get to grips with the issue of increasing output on a national scale.



> Fears about neo-liberalism

I feel that the President's background is very neo-liberal. We are in a world of figures controlled by trade and democracy. If we just sit on the sidelines, we will be gobbled up by international trade governed by big financial capital. We have to move quickly using democratic principles to fix the rules of the game, to control the market through state intervention.

> Minustah's role

Minustah was necessary because after Aristide's departure, the crises could not be

managed. At the time, there was no army and the police were corrupt. The Minustah option wasn't a bad one.

What we have to do now is to ready ourselves for Minustah's departure. We have to take advantage of Minustah being here to train the police force and establish another force – some refer to it as a 'gendarmerie' others a new army – no matter what the name, it is needed to patrol ports, airports and borders and to effectively fight the drugs problem.

> Weak administration

We have a very weak administration. When you've had catastrophes like we've had, a very weak administration is left behind. I support the Canadians who've invested a lot in training. I would like to see a training school for administration in each department and also two here (the capital, Port-au-Prince).

> Corruption in Haiti

You can't say that the opposition is corrupt, not at all. You can't say that René Préval is corrupt, this just isn't the case at all. I know of states that are corrupt from top to bottom. Where there is corruption in Haiti it concerns the drugs trade and a section of the justice system. Préval set up a committee to look into reform of the justice system and the Parliament has just adopted three laws on the independence and a purging of the justice system (laws passed on November 27 2007). There is going to be a training school for judges. All our Parliamentarians backed this reform.

> Decentralisation of government

I feel that decentralisation advances democracy but it's true that we have not yet drawn up a legal framework for decentralisation. Parliamentarians are working to move ahead with this so that the municipal authorities (collectivités territoriales) can take off. The functioning of a municipal authority is not only a matter of finding the funding.

D.P. ■



P.38 Views of streets in Les Cayes. © Marc Roger

P.39 From top to bottom: Opposition leader, Serge Gilles. © Debra Percival

Les Cayes. © Marc Roger

Map of Haiti Copyright Minustah

Gotson Pierre*

HAITIAN-DOMINICAN RELATIONS AND THE MEDIA

*Relations have not always been easy due to the rights of Haitian workers in the Dominican 'Bateyes.'** Moves to bring the countries together by opening up information channels can only contribute to better understanding. This will contribute to the bi-national policy being drawn up by the Haitian government aimed at closer mutually beneficial relations between the two countries.*

In the early years of the 20th Century, Haitians left home to work in the Dominican sugar cane plantations that supplied factories built or financed by the Americans. In the 1960s an agreement was concluded between the two countries for the supply of seasonal workers to gather the Dominican sugar cane harvest. After this agreement was condemned following the fall of the Duvalier dictatorship in 1986, many Haitians continued to migrate to the Dominican Republic, principally in search of employment.

Today, although no population census has been taken, Dominican officials speak of over a million Haitians living in the country. The Dominican Republic sees this migration as a burden and is continually repatriating Haitian migrants under conditions that violate the most basic human rights, including the breaking up of families, deportation at night with no coordination with the Haitian authorities, and other forms of ill-treatment. The background to this present situation is a long history of enmity and disputes. The Haitians have not forgotten the massacre of about 30,000 of their countrymen in the Dominican Republic in 1937 on the orders of the dictator Rafael Trujillo. For their part, the Dominicans remember the harsh regime of occupation imposed on them by Jean-Pierre Boyer's Haitian Government between 1822 and 1844.

There are also cultural differences between the two societies that fuel prejudices in the

Dominican Republic, whose population claims an Indian and Spanish heritage, while the Haitians invoke their African heritage.

This state of affairs does not favour understanding between Haitians and Dominicans and influences the work of the media, affecting information about Haitian-Dominican relations.

For a long time, the Haitian media provided only sporadic coverage of the Dominican issue, based on dispatches by international press agencies. While the Haitian press operated in almost total ignorance of their neighbouring country, the Dominican press simply reported the official line on Haiti held by the Dominican authorities.

► New technology

Over the past few years, however, the development of New Communication and Information Technologies (NICTs) and the activities of alternative sectors of the communication field have allowed information on Haitian-Dominican relations to take a new direction and acquire an increased presence in the Haitian media.

One of the agencies that has worked systematically on this question is *AlterPresse* (www.alterpresse.org), an alternative Haitian news network and member of the Groupe Médialternatif that started operations in 2002. *AlterPresse* gives priority to reporting on Haitian-Dominican relations, regularly covering key issues in both French and Spanish.

It has produced several hundred articles, some in cooperation with Dominican colleagues, mainly concerned with migration, border issues, bi-national trade, human rights, the environment, natural disasters, health, tourism, culture and so on.

With more than 20,000 hits a day and with its reports relayed by a range of media (radio, television, newspapers, Internet sites) throughout Haiti, the Dominican Republic and further afield, *AlterPresse* has helped to ensure greater media coverage of Haitian-Dominican affairs, as well as, influencing several decisions on these issues.

AlterPresse has professional and friendly relations with Espacio Insular, an alternative Dominican agency that came on line in August 2006. In February 2007, they signed a cooperation agreement and last November completed a study on Haitian-Dominican relations and how these are presented in the media in both countries, organising a meeting of Haitian and Dominican journalists in Port-au-Prince to discuss the issues involved.

The journalists realise that the two countries that share the same island also share a common destiny. Understanding and cooperation is therefore necessary to overcome any hostility, facilitate understanding and harmony, and create prospects for a common development rooted in a sense of solidarity. ■

*Gotson Pierre is a co-founder of the Groupe Médialternatif

**Town where sugar workers live in poor conditions

"WE NEED IRRIGATION, REFORESTATION AND INPUTS"

Everything in Haiti is captured on canvas and the bounty of the land is no exception, but is this merely artistic license? The real picture is of land degradation, weak investment and low production, prompting urgent calls for reform.

65% of Haiti's population still depends on the land for a living, yet the sector only raises 25% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), according to Jean-Baptiste Chavannes, President of the broad-based peasants' body, the National Congress of the Papaye Peasant Movement (MPNKP). Farming has been beset by years of neglect, argues Chavannes. This was hastened by liberalisation in the 1980s and an over-reliance on imports. A further element in the decline of local production was the economic embargo against Haiti, 1991-1994, cutting off import of inputs such as animal fodder needed for farming.

Chavannes says today's "dramatic situation" has deeper roots. Delayed agricultural reform is partly to blame, he says, with no proper sharing out of land since independence in 1804, when division of the land of poor slaves amongst the generals merely produced what he refers to as "neo-slavery".

"Agrarian reform is pressing", says Chavannes, pointing out that 80% of local court cases involve haggles over who has jurisdiction over which parcel of land.

Up to the 1960s however, Haiti was self-sufficient in food. After which the neo-liberalist regime began to bite and gradually destroyed local production, rice, poultry and eggs industry being examples. Since then, the

country has suffered from a lack of political commitment to the sector, he argues.

An ever-increasing population has also taken its toll. At independence, 85% of Haiti's half a million people was essentially rural in the centre, south-east and north-east. Today it stands at 8.7 million (EU figure for 2007) with 40% living in urban areas. High fuel costs mean that wood burning fuel is used by the majority, stripping forests and causing further degradation and erosion of land for cultivation. 50% of Haiti's land is currently unsuitable for cultivation. The upshot, argues Chavannes, is a mounting food import bill: "We import US\$300M of food every year. This is a catastrophe."

View over Lake Saumatre, Haiti towards Dominican Republic.

© Debra Perchal

> Credit lacking

Many others involved in the sector in Haiti agree the country could better meet its own food needs particularly of poultry and eggs. In the 1980s, industrial production of eggs took off. Then, 100,000 were produced daily in Haiti, according to Michel Chancy of the *Association Haitienne pour la Promotion de l'Élevage* Haitian Association for Livestock Rearing (AHPPEL), and also of the NGO *Vétérimed*. Now just 30,000 eggs per month are produced by Haiti's remaining large farms. With better infrastructure, credit and good supply of electricity, the Dominican Republic has filled the gap left in the markets, says Greet Schaumans of the Belgian NGO, *Broederlijk Delen*.

As for chicken production, from 6 million annually in 1980s, production declined sharply in the early 1990s due to the economic embargo. At the end of the 1990s, the market had been filled by massive imports of frozen chicken pieces, according to *Vétérimed* figures. Now, the country's chicken production is just a quarter of 1980s levels, or 1.2-1.5 million per annum.

Nearly everyone connected with the sector says what is lacking is credit to invest in technology and inputs to enable farming to fulfill its potential. Gabriele lo Monaco, counsellor at the EU's Haiti delegation says, "There is virtually no investment in agriculture by the smallholder." Adds Chavannes: "There's been a de-capitalisation of the peasant farmer."

Chavannes says that farmers in the Dominican Republic can access credit at 12% annual and as little as 6%. In Haiti, credit is either unaffordable or unavailable. Interest rates of 20-30% are common. He reflects "We need a political commitment to agriculture that is lacking. We need irrigation, reforestation and inputs. We will be calling for a diversified agriculture at the 35th Anniversary Congress in March 2008, also fair trade and reform of the land."

Serge Gilles, leader of the Fusion party of Social Democrats, also stated in an interview, the need for credit and land reform to enable people to own land which would encourage individual investment. He also feels that Haiti has a future in organic farming, this produce fetching much higher prices than ordinary produce in international markets.

> 'Lèt Agogo'

One agricultural project which has made a mark was set up by *Vétérimed*, the NGO of professionals specialised in animal health and

production whose aim is to help small rural farms increase income. Dairy produce such as sterilised milk and yogurt manufactured in 10 micro-transformation units are distributed country-wide by youth and rural organisations. 'Lèt Agogo', the marketing name for the products, has won a prize for best product in South America.

Agriculture is not a priority sector for the 10th EDF, but the EU has previously funded many projects with NGOs to promote food security and also launched an agricultural diversification scheme for the centre and south. A recently approved €3M project, with €495,000 from the government of Haiti, will draw up information on the vulnerability of those dependent on agriculture country-wide, to be carried out by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the Haitian Statistical and Information Institute, the aim being to develop strategies against food insecurity.

A few niche products like *Rebo* and *Haitian Blue* coffee and the Francis mango, popular with the Miami-based Haitian diaspora, have had some export success. Although poor infrastructure and the limited refrigeration facilities are obstacles to exports of perishables on a wider scale.

Some feel that Haiti should follow in Brazil's footsteps in growing more sugar cane to produce bio-ethanol. This would cut back on the country's fuel bill, argue some. But the Belgian NGO, *Broederlijk Delen*, says in a paper that before going ahead there should be questions about whether this would be the best use of land. More widespread use of land for bio-ethanol production globally will push up prices of foodstuffs, it argues. For import-dependent Haiti, this may offset any benefit from cheaper fuel in addition to the huge investment in water and infrastructure required for any bio-ethanol venture. **D.P.** ■



Passion fruit seller, Port-au-Prince.
© Debra Percival



Bounty of Haiti's land, canvas by Casimir hanging at the Villa Creole (Port-au-Prince). © Debra Percival

CREDIT sought for BUSINESS



With improved security on the streets and a stable government in power, Haitians are looking to a healthier domestic economy to deliver jobs and improve their livelihoods. © Debra Percival

If you're selling passion fruit, clothing or music and not up by sunrise, forget about finding a place to pitch in Port-au-Prince or the neighbouring commercial area of Pétionville. Every patch of sidewalk will have already been taken. Street traders eek out a living day-by-day.



"Need for credit and investment to boost production".
© Debra Percival

What appears to be a brisk business in a market of nearly 9 million consumers at street level hides a lack of organisation, poor internal demand, lack of credit leading to weak investment in the productive sectors, and little value added to products. Haiti's overall trade balance with the EU in 2004 was minus €77M, textiles being the only sector registering an export surplus of €2M to the EU market for the same year.

With improved security on the streets and a stable government in power, Haitians are looking to a healthier domestic economy to deliver jobs and improve their livelihoods. Security issues have recently prevented inter-

national companies from investing in Haiti but there are now signs of external investment. *Digicel*, the Caribbean-wide mobile phone network, is one major regional business realising there are big profits in the Haitian market, the company's red billboards commanding attention in the capital's public spaces.

Haiti's abundant creativity and potentially large domestic market, as well as, those on its doorstep in the United States and the wider Caribbean, are obvious assets but, as far as setting up smaller businesses goes, time and time again those met during our report cited a lack of credit as the biggest obstacle to getting started. The country's business profile is not enhanced by poor infrastructure, espe-

cially roads linking the capital to the rest of the country, frequent power cuts, and the fact that it has few indigenous raw materials.

► The PRIMA PROJECT

One European Union (EU) project assisting a push to stimulate national production is PRIMA or in Kwèyol, the 'Pwogram Ranfosman Entegre na sektè Komès an Ayiti'. The 4-year €8M project which runs from 2005 to 2009, is helping to give small businesses a leg up. It is already over-subscribed, says its Director, Klaus Dieter Handschuh, prompting the National Authorising Officer (NAO) Price Pady to suggest a follow-up project would be beneficial.

The programme has been inspired by the country-wide success of some Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), including INDEPCO for industry and the NGO Vétérimed (see article on agriculture) for the dairy sector, says Handschuh.

INDEPCO, the *Institut de développement et de Promotion de la Couture*, whose director is Hans Garoute, imports cloth to be made into school uniforms and other finished garments. Vétérimed has improved the livelihoods of farmers with units to process and market dairy produce (see pp. 41-42).

PRIMA offers a range of support to budding SMEs and business associations. Grants are available for items such as feasibility studies, workshops, technical assistance, training of individuals, and the purchase of office equipment, participation in tradefair exhibitions and the compilation and printing of promotional flyers. Handschuh says there is a lot of potential for the transformation of fruit and vegetables, and the production of cement and other construction materials.

The project is also funding the strengthening of public-private sector dialogue with the aim of launching joint ventures. "The two sectors were not talking to each other," says Handschuh. Aiming to reach as many as possible country-wide, in line with the government's overall decentralisation policy, PRIMA also has an office in Les Cayes in the south of the country. Handschuh says that the aim is for projects underway to eventually be backed by credit agencies. Availability of credit and insurance are currently especially dire in the agricultural sector.

► Optimism

Other initiatives in the business sector are underway. A Haiti Trade and Investment Forum (HITF) held in Port-au-Prince, on 15-16 November 2007, brought together representatives of the Haitian government and the private sector to look at how to do more business in Haiti, propelled by easier access to regional markets under the Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity Partnership Encouragement (HOPE) initiative. Areas thought to have potential include tourism, agribusiness, bio-fuels, telecommunications and handicrafts. Assistant Secretary General of the Organisation of American States (OAS), Albert R. Ramdin, who heads the OAS-Haiti task force, told journalists at the event that business generation would underpin democratic governance and security.

Haiti's Ambassador in Brussels, Raymond Lafontant Jr., also told us that improved rules of origin was one of the main points of interest of the country in the new Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), which the EU initialled at the end of December with all Caricom countries.* It will enable Haiti to use imported inputs in manufacturing, yet still continue to export the finished item to the EU, duty-free.

D.P. ■

*Haiti became a full member of Caricom in 1996 and is the only LDC in the group. Other members are Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, St. Kitts and Nevis, Surinam and Trinidad, and Tobago.



BARBANCOURT HAITI'S LEADING BRAND

Haiti's world renowned rum brand, *Barbancourt*, has gone from strength to strength despite recent insecurity in the country, says the company's Director General, Thierry Gardère. *Barbancourt* is recognised by drinks magazines as one of the best five rums in the world. Gardère says that white oak casks from France's Limousin region for maturing and the use of sugar cane, rather than imported molasses both make the difference to the taste of his particularly smooth rum. The company, with 250 employees, currently produces 3 million bottles of 4, 8 and 15 year-old rums annually, with sales especially strong in the US, Panama and Chile.

Gardère is the 4th generation in the family-company started in 1862. He explains that an EU regional project for Caribbean rum producers has boosted production. The €70M 4-year "one off" project for all Caribbean rum producers was originally started up to offset losses to the industry, for a deal done in the WTO in 1996 in Singapore on the opening of markets for white spirits. Launched in 2002, it was recently extended to June 2010 to use all available funding. ■

10th EDF TARGETS ROADS and GOVERNANCE

Work on the Port-au-Prince Mirebalais road financed from the EDF. © Debra Percival

Current political stability enables the 10th EDF (2008-2013) to be disbursed to key sectors of the economy crucial to Haiti's future. A total of €291M will focus on road building and governance, reform of the justice system and de-centralisation as well as some general budgetary assistance.

Eligible for the European Development Fund (EDF) for the first time under the Lomé IV Convention in 1990, a series of political and institutional crises in Haiti spanning two decades resulted in allocation of EU funds earmarked for key sectors of the economy to be mostly re-channelled into emergency, humanitarian and 'post-conflict' projects.

The coup against President Bertrand Aristide in 1991 delayed implementation of the €112.2M 7th EDF (1990-1995). Disbursement of the €148M 8th EDF (1995-2000) was beset by "an absence of government" resulting in, "appropriate measures" being taken by the EU in 2001 including re-directing funds to emergency assistance,

projects to be implemented through civil society and additional assistance by the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO). One of the few longer-term projects to get underway was support to the education sector in 1999. A €28M sum to PARQUE, 'Programme d'Amélioration de la Qualité de l'Éducation' (the programme to improve the quality of education) included the construction and rehabilitation of 17 teacher training facilities ('Ecoles Fondamentales d'Application et Centres d'Appui Pédagogique' - EFACAP), serving 350 schools across four administrative departments. This "tremendously successful" scheme says Price Pady, National Authoring Officer has recently been extended with €14M of 9th EDF's 'post conflict' funds (see below).

> Post conflict support.

By the time the 2004 political crisis ended, the 9th EDF was on stream (2000-2007). Its €167.6M budget was redirected for "post-conflict" support to the 2006 elections and rehabilitation of the country. The remainder of the 7th and 8th EDFs were pooled giving a total of €276M to the 'post-crisis' situation. The holding of elections (€18M), business support to education through PRIMA (see 'industry' article), some road building and

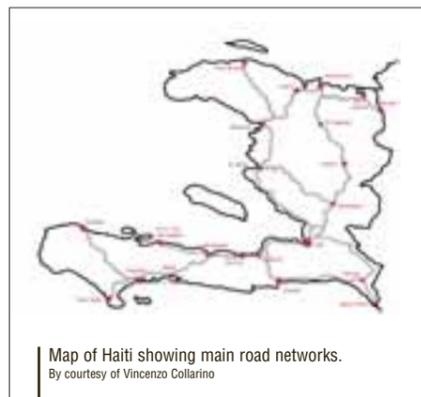
many diverse projects through civil society were funded (See Avsi below).

The stretch of road linking Port-au-Prince to Mirebalais was being asphalted when we visited although construction through the steep and rocky terrain which climbs from Port-au-Prince, has been difficult, explained Roberto Rivoli, road engineer with French company, BCEOM, which is overseeing the construction work. This stretch is one section of the road between the capital to Cap Haitien in the northern coast. An additional section of this road to Hinche and also the upgrading of the Cap Haitien to Dajabon road on the border of the Dominican Republic are also underway with 9th EDF funding.

Improved economic management by the newly elected government also attracted general budget aid of €36M for 2006 to 2007.

> Roads are key to economy

"All projects are a priority in Haiti," says Price Pady. The construction and upgrading of roads to stimulate economic growth is the main focus of the 10th EDF with an allocation of €175M. Of Haiti's total 3,400 km of roads, just 10% are in good condition. The stretches earmarked for the 10th EDF support are St. Raphael-Cap Haitien, ring roads around Cap Haitien and Mirebalais, and a road from



Map of Haiti showing main road networks. By courtesy of Vincenzo Collarino



Top: AVSI Education project for Children, Cité Soleil, a bidonville in Port-au-Prince. © Carlo Zorzi

The construction and upgrading of roads to stimulate economic growth is the main focus of the 10th EDF with an allocation of 175M. Of Haiti's total 3,400 km of roads. © Debra Percival

"RESPEKTE MOUN, Bati Kay"

"We can move around safely now," says Fiammetta Cappellini, socio-educational consultant for the Italian NGO, Associazione dei Volontari per il Servizio Internazionale (AVSI), which is running an EDF project to build peace in Cité Soleil to the north of Port-au-Prince, its shanty dwellings home to an estimated 350,000 Haitians. Previously controlled by armed gangs using violence and kidnapping, since February 2007 life on the streets is easier, many of the perpetrators of violence having been arrested with the help of Minustah.

The €1.2M three-year (2007-2009) project, "Respekte Moun, Bati Kay" includes peace building initiatives with an €200,000 allocation from the NGO Justice and Peace. It is teaching that, "there is an alternative to armed gangs," says Carlo Zorzi, AVSI's Haiti representative.

It's not difficult to explain the frustration of those who live in this 5km sq. piece of land without basic facilities, jobs and not knowing where their next meal is coming from. Bullet holes in some of the dwellings are evidence of the availability of weapons.

"It was at first difficult to put across the message of peace," explains Fiammetta Capellini since people were used to receiving something material as an exchange. The programme gives training to 'mediators of peace' who pass on the message to others who sign a, 'Declaration of commitment to peace.' Carlo Zorzi says it was difficult to impart a vision of the future on the young people, mainly aged 18-28. The programme is also giving more general support, for example, help with CV preparation.

It is also providing social assistance and psychological counselling to younger children. The surrounding unrest has engendered violence within families against women and children explains Fiammetta Cappellini.

Zorzi says that there is a lot of need for further work in 'Cité Soleil' and also in the slum of Matissant, to the south of the capital. An urban horticultural project in tyres and roofs could be useful, and he stresses the need to assist local authorities. Says Zorzi: "The mayor [of Cité Soleil] has been elected but has little influence or capacity."

www.avsi.org ■

Mirebalais to the Dominican Republic border. Budget support is expected to go to the sector together with a contribution to the national Fonds d'Entretien Routier (FER) towards the upkeep of the network. The World Bank and France are expected to upgrade a stretch between Hinche and St. Raphael (see map on p.46) to complete the artery between the capital and Cap Haitien.

The 10th EDF will also make funding available for good governance (€36M) a priority to underpin the country's political stability. "Reform of the justice system is in the short term the main challenge facing the government," reads the EU strategy paper for Haiti for the 10th EDF. There will be support for de-centralisation and to help implement the 'Document de Stratégie National pour la Croissance et la Réduction de la Pauvreté' (DSNCRP), the awaited government paper on its long-term plans for economic growth and poverty reduction.

Some €48M of direct budget support is foreseen in the form of an annual disbursements linked to the good management of public finances.

The 10th EDF will also fund various projects outside the focal sectors of roads and governance including projects in the fields of: assistance to non-state actors (€8.8M), cultural initiatives (€3.7M), the National Authorising Officer – the government official who manages donor aid in his country – and institutional technical support (€7.5M), bi-national strategies with the Dominican Republic and for implementation of the new European Partnership Agreement (€12M) are all projects outside the focal sectors. **D.P.** ■

ENTICING TOURISTS to an “incredible country”



Beach scene near Les Cayes.
© Marc Roger

A three-day tour in November 2007 by a score of Japanese tourists made headline news in Haiti's 'Le Nouvelliste' newspaper. What was special about this group is that they were not development workers, nor friends or family of UN personnel, nor conference-goers, all keeping Haiti's hotels in business lately. With another group of these "real" tourists from the Far East due early 2008, there's optimism that vacationers are now being enticed back to Haiti.

Tourism has been singled out as a priority for the government to generate employment, revenue and growth, but luring visitors back is still a huge public relations task. UN blue helmets are a common sight around the country, and will be so for the foreseeable future. Sporadic kidnappings in exchange for cash reported in the international press also, frighten tourists away. Rutted and pot-holed roads mean that country-wide sight-seeing appeals only to those with a sense of adventure.

On the other hand, it's easy to see why the government is upbeat about the sector's potential. There's a huge variety of places to visit immersing visitors in the country's rich history and culture, yet at the same time, you

can enjoy the Caribbean's big selling points: white sand and a laid back ambiance in most parts of the country. "Haiti is a cocktail of destinations," explains Giliane César Joubert, Executive Director of Haiti's Tourism Association.

Anne Rose Schoen Durocher, Director of the ARCA Advertising Company in Port-au-Prince, who has lived in Haiti for the past 28 years, first arriving as a guide for a leading European tour operator, says tourism was healthy in the 1970s. Then, one of the country's most famous landmarks, 'La Citadelle', dramatically perched on 'Pic-la-Ferrière' built by King Henri Christophe to prevent against reinvasion from the French, used to see 600 visitors weekly. At the foot of the Citadelle are the remains of the Milot Sans Souci palace of Henri-Christophe, destroyed by an earthquake in 1842.

The sight of refugees in boats fleeing Haiti towards the end of the Duvalier years and the HIV crisis - which was not handled well from a PR point of view - scared tourists away and the sector never recovered, says Durocher: "The country went backwards very, very fast and tourism at the same speed. By 1986-1987 tourism was at a standstill," she explains.

> "Must-sees"

Her "must-sees" include Jacmel, a pretty 19th Century town, lost in time in the south, built by coffee traders with Victorian cast iron pillars and now associated with hand-crafts. Cap Haitien in the north is Haiti's 2nd city and near La Citadelle.

Les Cayes, built in 1720, is a laid back town in the south-west. "The south is totally unspoilt with miles of incredible sandy beaches," says Durocher. Côte des Arcadins just to the North of Port-au-Prince also has stretches of sandy beach.

Tourists should not skip the heaving Port-au-Prince. Bang in the centre, the Champs de Mars built in 1953 and recently spruced up by President René Préval, is a sort of recreational space or meeting place, a stage for Haitians to see and be seen. In the same spot, the Musée d'Art Haitien houses a vast collection of naïve art. At the sight of the stark white Presidential Palace, imagine the comings and goings of Haiti's rulers.

Not far away, Hotel Oloffson's Thursday voodoo jazz evenings are not to be missed. Graham Greene's Hotel Trianon in 'The Comedians' is known to be based on Hotel Oloffson, where he wrote part of the novel.

"Haiti is a cocktail of destinations," explains Giliane César Joubert, Executive Director of Haiti's Tourism Association.
© Marc Roger



Streets scenes in Les Cayes.
© Marc Roger

Port-of-Prince's numerous gingerbread houses feature Victorian embellished balconies, turrets, gables and sloping roofs. Up the hill, galleries in the commercial district of 'Pétionville' are full of work by Haiti's much sought after artists. Even further up at 'Botilliers', take in a bird's eye view over Port-au-Prince.

Towards the north-west, Gonaives is where the independence of Haiti was declared on 1 January 1804 and on Haiti's south-west finger, the Macaya National Park is the country's remaining virgin cloud forest peak rising to 2347 m. Anne Rose Durocher is keen to share her passion: "We must show what an incredible country Haiti is."

> 600,000 day trippers

With such few travellers spending a night in Haiti, it's a surprise to learn from the Ministry of Tourism that as many as 600,000 visit the country annually. Nearly all are day trippers brought in on the *Royal Caribbean* cruise liner, 'Liberty Overseas'. The boat calls at the white sands of Labadie in the north 2-3 times per week, each sailing disembarking some 4,300 tourists. Visitors are levied US\$6, half of which goes to the Haitian government and the rest to the company that runs the beach facilities. With the Citadelle a mere hop away, there is the feeling that visitors could part with more cash on trips to this fortress in the sky, but poor infrastructure hampers tours, explains Paul Emile Simon, urban architect at the Ministry of Tourism.

There's a lot of hope too for bi-national projects with the Dominican Republic, including development of Etang Saumâtre and Lago Enriquillo in the Dominican Republic. The lakes are in the same "ecological band," explains Simon and share fauna, crocodiles, iguanas and flamingos. Simon sees opportunities for hotels and the golf facilities on the flat land that straddles the border area.

Some feel that Haiti should be offered as a 'parallel destination' on a circuit taking in Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Cuba. Although there are very good quality family run hotels in Haiti, the country would benefit from investment by an international chain, feels ATH's Giliane Joubert.

There's encouragement given too to Haiti's diaspora to invest more in the sector. The 'Haiti Tourism Development Summit' organised by the MWM Associates, Port-au-Prince, 20-22 June 2008, will look amongst other things at how private public-partnerships can work together to develop the sector.

D.P. ■

Capturing the soul of Haiti: SERGINE ANDRÉ

Among Haiti's huge pool of painters, writers, musicians and cinematic talent, Sergine André or 'Djinn' seems to evoke the soul of Haiti.

Sergine André is all that is captivating about the country: vibrant, creative, sensual, a free spirit. Her paintings reflect the country's extreme mix of hope and despair, optimism and pessimism.

Sergine André's early work features barely discernable figures lurking in the background of the canvas. Some are solid with visible, smiling features surrounded by an orange background. They are almost protectors. Other figures are hardly perceptible, their ghostly skeletal features which leave a mere trace on the canvas are more menacing. Are all these different shapes and forms perhaps the artist's representations of Voodoo's Iwa spirits?

'Vodou' or 'vòdu' in West African Fon and Ewe, meaning spirits or divine creation, was brought to Haiti when the Bkongo of Central Africa and the Igbo and Yoruba of West Africa arrived in the country as slaves. In voodoo, one god 'Bondyé' is worshipped, but spirits are served (Sèvis Lwa). There are literally hundreds of spirits or 'Lwa' which are broadly divided into Rado, hot spirits, which are more congenial and 'Petwo', cool but restless spirits. Neither group is purely good nor evil. Voodoo too incorporates some influences of the country's original settlers, the Taino Indians and also uses imagery of Roman Catholic saints to represent spirits. This is thought to originate from when slaves had to hide their religion from colonial masters. During voodoo ceremonies, food, drink and gifts are offered to the spirits when voodoo priests, 'Houngans', and Priestesses, 'mambos', try to make contact with them and the spirits of blood ancestors, with songs and prayers. The spirits may take possession of individuals who in a trance-like state then act like and speak through the spirit. Everyone is thought to have a special relationship with one spirit but can serve many.



"I'm influenced by voodoo, of course it's part of me" says Sergine André but explains that the figures she paints may just be the shadows or dreams of dark nights in Haiti's Artibonite rural region where she grew up.

After studies at the 'Ecoles des Arts' in Ottawa, Canada, she returned to Haiti. In December 1997, she was winner of the competition, 'Connaître les Jeunes' (which showed the work of young painters) of the French Institute. She was subsequently invited, in April-June 1998, as visiting artist at the 'Ecole Nationale des Beaux Arts' in Paris. In April-June 2006 she travelled to South Africa with the 'Bag Factory', to work with young artists where she was saddened by the rifts in South African society. Among her inspirations, she cites recently deceased Haitian abstract artist Jean Claude 'Tiga' Garoute, whose 'Solèy Brile', a method using ink and acid produces a burnished look to artwork, a method she has paid homage to in her own work.

Oranges, reds and other vibrant colours put over her energy and passion. She is currently working on a series of paintings in blue hues. Using broad bush strokes, symmetrical shapes appear in the background, almost like windows. Perhaps these are the cool Iwa spirits? "Perhaps, I just paint what I see" she says, moving over to an open window in her studio. Sergine André's eye is a window to the soul of Haiti.

D.P. ■

Sergine André in her studio in Petionville with one of her paintings. © Debra Percival

Sergine André, "Untitled", Oil on canvas, 30 x 40cm. Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Debra Percival

In background: Sergine André, "Untitled", Oil on canvas, 30 x 40cm. Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Debra Percival

Discovering Europe

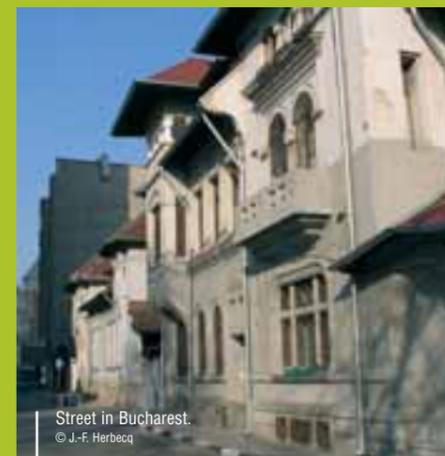
Jean-François Herbecq

ROMANIA, land of contrasts

Forming Europe's new eastern border, Romania seems to be developing quicker than any other European country. After just over a year as a member of the European Union it is experiencing rapid economic growth, even while its social and physical infrastructure awaits reform. Additionally, it is a country with marked regional contrasts, making it a largely unexplored but promising tourist destination. Transylvania in particular, with its many minority groups and mysterious traditions, is a fine example of multicultural diversity.

> A bumpy road

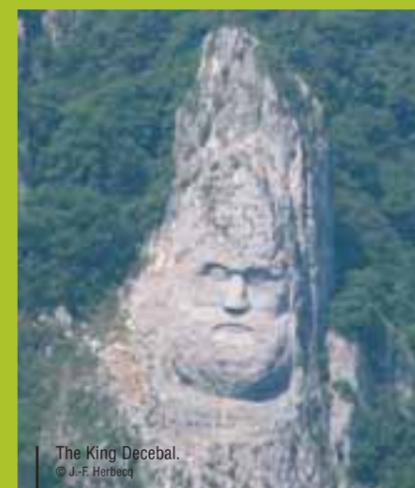
Lying at the crossroads of the Orient and the Occident, Romania is an 'island' of Latin civilization in the middle of a Slavic ocean. Its history alternates periods of accelerated modernisation with debilitating stagnation. Between its early origins in the mists of antiquity to final unification of the nation state in the 19th century, Romania witnessed barbaric invasions, the independent principalities of the Middle Ages as well as domination by the Ottomans and the Hapsburgs. The lands that would become Romania absorbed many influences, including those of Saxon settlers who



Street in Bucharest.
© J.-F. Herbecq



Popular scene in Bucharest.
© J.-F. Herbecq



The King Decebal.
© J.-F. Herbecq

were sent by the Hungarian sovereigns in the Middle Ages to secure an Eastern border frequently under attack from the Tatars and the Turks. Having become masters of Moldavia and Walachia, the Turks neither colonized nor Islamised this borderland, leaving the people to enjoy a large measure of autonomy under the administration of powerful Greek families from Constantinople known as the Phanariots. These Germanic and Greek influences were enduring. Finally, in the aftermath of World War I, the country was defined by the borders of what was known as 'Greater Romania'. During this turbulent history, the Romanians often saw battles on their soil but were never among the aggressors. Sadly, they had little choice but to face the appetites of the three

major powers that surrounded or included them: the Russian, Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires. Following World War II, Romania paid dearly for siding with Nazi Germany in the years 1941-45, not only in terms of human lives but also by being incorporated into the communist bloc. The 1989 revolution put an end to the excessive and destructive version of communism imposed by the dictator Nicolae Ceausescu. Finally, on 1 January 2007, Romania joined the European Union, bringing a guarantee of stability that will no doubt benefit its future development. Both Latin and Orthodox, Romania brings to the EU an original mix of East and West that can only enrich the Europe of the 21st century. ■

Romania from A to Z

Aslan: Developed by Dr Ana Aslan in the 1950s, Gerovital H3 with its extraordinary anti-ageing properties is a cure for almost everything, from arthritis to depression, including hair loss. It has become a symbol of Romanian research and is a popular gift.

Brancusi: The most famous Romanian sculptor and one of the first to experiment with abstract forms, spending much of his life working in France.

Ceausescu: A shoemaker turned despot, he rose to power suddenly in 1965. In the early years he adopted a very independent stance towards Moscow but then his dictatorship descended into a surrealist nightmare, earning him a telegram of congratulations from artist Salvador Dali. His great friend, Mobutu, was much affected by his death.

Dracula: 'The fact that Dracula did not exist does not mean that he does not exist,' wrote the historian Lucia Boia. Prince Vlad Tepes the Impaler, who lived in the 15th century, is at the origin of this mythical legend often associated with Ceausescu, the 'red vampire'.



T-Shirt with symbol of Dracula © J.-F. Herbecq

Ecology: An unknown word in Romania until recently.

Francophonie: An island of Latin civilization in a Slavic ocean, the use of French offers Romania a window on the world, and especially Africa.

Garda de Fier: The Iron Guard was an extremist movement of the 1930s that combined nationalist mysticism, anti-Semitism and Orthodox fervour. Its 'Legions of the Archangel St Michael' were finally destroyed, politically and physically, by Marshall Ion Antonescu.

Hungarians: Romania's principal minority, representing 1.7 million among a total population of 22 million. They make up one-fifth of the population in Transylvania where they continue to affirm their identity after years of repression under communism.

Film industry: Since the success of Cristi Puiu, Cristian Mungiu and **Corneliu Porumboiu**, not to forget the much missed Cristian Nemescu, Romania has been known for its film industry. Behind every Palme d'Or and other awards there are thousands working in the industry. Many foreign filmmakers come to Romania to film, attracted in part by the unique scenery, including Francis Ford Coppola (to name but one).

Jews: According to the Wiesel Commission, 'Romania is responsible for the deaths of more Jews than any other country except Germany itself.' Yet despite the massacres in Bessarabia, Bucovina and Transnistria and relentless persecution – an estimated 250,000 Jews and Romanies were murdered by the Antonescu regime during the war – the majority of Romania's Jews survived.

Kronstadt and Koloszar: These are the names, in German and Hungarian respectively, of two towns in Transylvania, Brasov and Cluj, which illustrate the region's cultural diversity.

Logan: With more than 700,000 sold in less than four years, Dacia has scored a big success in 55 countries with this Renault-based automobile costing 'less than €5,000'. Produced in seven countries including Romania, Morocco and soon South Africa, it exists in three versions – saloon, estate and van – and is specifically designed to meet the needs of emerging markets.

Manele: A fashionable musical style. It is a mixture of traditional Romanian music and gypsy chants, with an added touch of commercial pop 'peppered' with oriental undertones. It no doubt has as many fans among young people and Roms (Gypsies) as detractors among intellectuals. The often vulgar lyrics speak of money and women, the mafia and love. It is in a way a sort of local rap, n'dombolo or zouk.

New leu: One new leu is worth 10,000 old lei, and the new notes are in machine-washable plastic!

Orphans: Whether street children or placed in homes, they are still among the most disadvantaged in Europe, even if there has been recent improvement in the overall situation.

Petit Paris: Bucharest's nickname, originating from the desire to westernise the city and its lifestyle in the 19th century.

Quadrilatere: Two counties lying in the south of Dobrogea that were briefly incorporated into Romania between 1913 and 1940 before restitution to Bulgaria. The reason for defiance towards Bulgaria.



Timisoara Church © J.-F. Herbecq

Religion: The Romanian population is 86% Orthodox. The collapse of communism left the field open to an Orthodox church with conservative and nationalist values.

Sarmale: A national dish of rolled and stuffed cabbage leaves, served with mamaliga, a type of corn meal.

Tökés Laszlo: A Hungarian protestant pastor who ignited the popular uprising by publicly condemning Ceausescu in Timisoara in 1989. He has just been elected to the European Parliament.

University: It was on University Square in Bucharest that the 1989 revolution turned bloody, with over 1,000 demonstrators killed. It is the 'kilometre zero of democracy in Romania'.

Vegetarian: A meal without meat is not a meal, except in a period of fasting.

Wurmbrand, Richard: Born in Bucharest in 1909 he was, until his death in 2001, one of the most important Christian preachers. A German Jew born in Romania who converted to Protestantism, he spent 14 years in communist jails.

Xenophobia: The Romanians tend to blame the gypsies or Romanies for all their misfortunes. It is a group that makes up almost a 10th of the population, although the government claims it is much less than this.

Yuan: Cigarettes, furniture, bicycles, agri-foodstuffs: Chinese investments have been flooding into Romania since it joined the European Union. Today, a new Chinatown is being built in Bucharest... in a sector named Europa!

J.F.H. ■

A NEW DONOR COUNTRY



Romania's entry into the European Union at the beginning of 2007 marked a turning point in its foreign policy as the country embraced Europe's cooperation and development objectives, and joined the group of donor countries. However, with regard to the ACP countries, it is a policy that remains embryonic.

l The Berlaymont building, Brussels 2006. © ec

Accession to the EU in January 2007 represented an historic moment for Romania, although the benefits of membership had already made themselves felt before this date with a series of reforms and an average 6% growth rate over the previous seven years. Foreign investments had also seen a sharp increase but unemployment had remained low. However, becoming a full member of the 'club' brought the benefits of complete access to the internal market, economic policies and the social cohesion of the EU, coupled with an increased presence on the international stage. For Romania's Permanent Representation to the European Union, 2007 was a clear success for the country in economic, social and political terms. But Europe aside, what about its policies towards other countries and specifically those of the ACP? "The support of Ceausescu's communist regime for certain African countries damaged the image of cooperation," explains Daniel Daianu, recently elected as a Liberal member of the European Parliament.

"Political regimes come and go, but the people remain," stresses Foreign Minister Adrian Cioroianu, who does not rule out political dialogue with an economic dimension in order to win new markets for Romania and diversify energy supply sources. The reality is that Romania is losing markets in Africa as economic and trade relations turn increasingly towards Western and geographically closer countries. Today the country's principal trading partners in sub-Saharan markets are Angola, the Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria, Sudan and South Africa. Yet as they stress at the Permanent Representation to the EU, Romania has much to offer to African States. Indeed, Romania's universities train over 30,000 experts and these have contributed to a wide range of activities, with a significant number of them currently working in various African States: civil engineering and infrastructure projects in Nigeria and Ghana; mining and oil-drilling operations in Nigeria, Senegal and Burundi; farming projects in Mozambique and Madagascar; water drilling in Zambia, and

assembly plants for the automotive and rail industry in Nigeria.

Socialist MEP Corina Cretu believes now is the time to forge new relations between Romania and other countries, not forgetting that as a donor country Romania must now take account of its own responsibilities.

Former Finance Minister Daniel Daianu offers some words of reassurance: "Eastward EU enlargement does not mean a reduced cooperation budget. On the contrary, the global budget is experiencing growth. That said, development cooperation policy in Romania remains rather parochial and this must change!"

> **Good little soldier**

Even if, since it joined the EU, relations between Romania and the countries of sub-Saharan Africa have assumed an important dimension in its foreign policy, it is Euro-Atlantic integration that remains the number one objective, as they explain at the Permanent Representation in Brussels. Countries that are geographically close, especially in Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans, are the priority, together with those in the process of stabilisation where Romania is participating in peacekeeping operations, such as Iraq and Afghanistan. As a peacekeeper, Romania has been the 'good little soldier' on the interna-

tional stage. To date, Bucharest has never refused when called upon to participate in peacekeeping operations, with troops deployed in Haiti, the DRC, the Côte d'Ivoire (all French-speaking countries), Ethiopia and Eritrea, Sudan, Liberia, Afghanistan, Nepal, Timor Leste, Georgia and Kosovo.

As we said earlier, with EU membership Romania ceased to be a beneficiary country and became a donor, and will soon be contributing to the European Development Fund (EDF). It also plans to co-finance projects on the African continent alongside other EU countries. At the same time, the Romanian Government has expressed its desire to support the Millennium Development Goals, as well as UN activities in the fields of education and health, climate change, food security, humanitarian aid and peacekeeping.

> **Francophonie**

Five million out of the 22 million inhabitants of Romania speak French, which makes Romania a member of the 'Francophonie'. In 2007, the Romanian Government introduced a system of study grants, known as Eugène Ionesco Awards, which are intended for foreign nationals seeking to study at Romania's institutes of higher education. Under this scheme, Romania awards a total of €1M annually to PhD students and researchers from French-speaking southern countries. The aim is to allow students and researchers from these countries to spend at least 10 months at one of Romania's 15 institutions of higher education that are renowned for their academic excellence. The maximum number of grants awarded in 2007 was 70 and this will increase



to 120 in 2008. Currently in its first year, the Eugène Ionesco programme has brought to Romania researchers from Benin, Cameroon, the Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mauritania, Madagascar and Senegal.

The 11th Francophonie Summit, held in Bucharest in September 2006, presented a series of events covering several cultural aspects. The 'Francophonie in rhythm and images' event, for example, saw artists and groups from Morocco, Haiti, the DRC, Djibouti, Vietnam, Senegal and Guinea give open-air performances that were much appreciated by the Romanian public. An art exhibition.

J.F.H. ■

BEING AFRICAN IN ROMANIA

More than 2 million Romanians live outside the country but only around 60,000 foreigners live in Romania. However, all that is set to change as Romania becomes a destination country with a relaunched economy in need of labour. The newcomers are Moldavians, Turks and Asians as well as Africans. For the latter, integration is not always easy.



Former student Amadou Niang can testify to that: "As a Senegalese grant holder, I was immediately disappointed by the poor conditions for university students. The room on the university campus was in such a poor state that I had to rent a room at my own expense. The quality of the studies also leaves something to be desired and there is corruption when it comes to exams."

Nonetheless, after completing his studies, Amadou Niang wanted to stay in Romania. His reason for staying was love. But not even marriage to a Romanian offers protection against discrimination when dealing with the administration or finding employment. Then there is the problem of living as a mixed-race couple: "The anti-discrimination law is just a cosmetic device," he says. "It doesn't work in practice. It simply imposes a fine with no redress for the

victim," adding that the Romanians probably suffer more from racism than Africans. Despite all this he says he has many Romanian friends. Based on his own experiences, Amadou Niang decided to found an association to help immigrants settle in Romania. And he is not alone in taking action, as a programme called 'Democracy and courage' has been set up to educate young people on how to reject racism in schools. J.F.H. ■

WHITE BLACK

White Black: The duo AlbNegru, formed by Romanian Andrei and Franco-Guinean Kamara, is living proof that tolerance exists. A mix of Romanian pop with an oriental flavour and French hip-hop with suggestions of reggae, AlbNegru sing of love and acceptance. Their success and popularity are seen as remarkable in a country where foreigners are often regarded with suspicion.

"In 2004, when we started out, few people thought we had any chance of success," remembers Andrei, "but we have been going strong for three years now. Our image, one black and one white, has a very strong impact." "Our message comes across well," adds Kamara. "When they see us together, two friends and two races making the same music, people understand that an understanding between two men of different colour and culture is possible." "Guinean and French music have always fascinated me. I was influenced by my Franco-Guinean culture enriched over time by Romanian culture," explains the Guinean from Bucharest. "And that makes Kamara a special person on

the Romanian musical market," adds his white companion, Andrei. AlbNegru's hits entitled *Noi doi* (We two) or *Muza mea* (My muse) are sung in a mixture of Romanian and French. This is taking quite a risk in a country where, despite its traditional Francophone leanings, English is seen as the modern language. "That was something new, using the French language in Romanian music. But the years have passed and we can now say that the fusion of French rap and Romanian pop has been a success," enthuses Kamara. Three albums in three years, participation in Eurovision with a cosmopolitan group and a host of other projects, including a tour in Spain and possibly France emphasise that there is nothing mixed about AlbNegru's success. J.F.H. ■



TRANSYLVANIA: THE PROMISED LAND FOR TOURISM

Transylvania owes a great deal to the Irish author Bram Stoker who, by creating the character of Dracula in 1897, produced so many strong images of Transylvania in the popular imagination. But there is more to the region than castles shrouded in the mists of the Carpathians. The region's architectural patrimony also includes some unique fortified churches and practically intact Saxon towns and villages. Its mountains and valleys also offer the visitor magnificent landscapes. All in all it is a region rich in potential attractions for the tourist.

Transylvania has an undoubted power of attraction for the visitor. The skies are magnificent at sunset and here, along the roadside, there are sellers of onions, blackberries and raspberries. Lower down are the thermal waters and hot springs or saline lakes. Then there are the former volcanoes and mines with their curative salts, the wooded valleys and the verdant mountain pastures. The occasional campsite in a beautiful setting – plus many barbecues, which the Romanians adore!

This part of the country is a mosaic of cultures. In one place they speak Hungarian, in another Romanian. You ask a question in German and receive an answer in English. There are no real borders, but the language changes all the time.



Along the roads, with their many roadworks, one looks at the roaring traffic. At a level crossing, you slow down. Gypsies with their Motorola phones are photographing a procession of sports cars!

The big towns are already attracting tourists. In 2007, Sibiu, also known by its German name of Hermannstadt, made the headlines when it was named European capital of culture: this jewel of a town has been renovated to acquire the status of a quality tourist destination. Less frequented, Brasov also possesses a distinctive charm of its own, nestling at the foot of the mountains. In Sighisoara, another Saxon town, Japanese tourists have already arrived, clicking away at any reference to Dracula. The car parks of the castles and citadels are full. Anyone suffering from agoraphobia would do well to avoid visiting Dracula's supposed castle in Bran, surrounded by a perfectly kitsch market. Beautiful and well restored, the castle finds it hard to cope with the mass of tourists in the peak season!

Further east in Transylvania, beyond Tirgu Mures, and into Székely country, it is like being on a Hungarian island in the middle of Romania. Rather than in Romanian and Hungarian, the signs are often only in Magyar. The 'memorial' parks are adorned with statues decorated in the Hungarian colours. All kinds of souvenirs are on sale, cups and T-shirts boasting of a Greater Hungary. A sensitive matter... **J.F.H.** ■

A wall divides a street in two in Sfantu Gheorghe

We are in Szekelföld, in the country of the Székely, where the ethnic Hungarians live in eastern Transylvania. This is a small town where Hungarian is spoken more widely than Romanian. There is little of interest to the tourist here, apart from the museum. Outside the city centre, a residential street runs up the hill. At first it looks just like any other street. Once past the church, the houses become more modest. Fewer villas, more

suburban dwellings, then apartment blocks. Nothing special. Then suddenly the street is divided into two: lengthways. A wall, two and a half metres high, separates the left and right sides of the road. On one side it is asphalted and a few cars are parked alongside the apartment blocks. On the other, the road becomes no more than a dirt track alongside a row of modest houses. No cars. A few children are playing. A glance is enough to identify the divided populations. On one side the 'whites' and on the other the 'blacks' or 'tanned' meaning the gypsies or Romanians. Between them, a concrete wall. ■



P. 56
Castles and valleys are very potential attractions for tourism. © EC

P. 57
On the left:
In Sfântu Gheorghe, a wall divides the street Varady Jozsef.
© J.-F. Herbecq

Center foto:
In Transylvania, they promote hungarian identity. © J.-F. Herbecq

Bottom :
The 'memorial' parks are adorned with statues decorated in the Hungarian colours.
© J.-F. Herbecq



WHAT FUTURE for RURAL TOURISM IN ROMANIA?

The countryside and mountains have preserved their landscapes and their traditions. But although green tourism represents a very real opportunity for Romania, its growth threatens the authenticity of unique regions such as Maramures.

Meeting with Raluca Nagy, researcher in anthropology at the ULB (Université Libre de Bruxelles) and at the University of Cluj

The tiny mountainous region of Maramures, neighbouring the Ukraine in northern Transylvania, is sometimes presented as the Shangri-La of all that is quintessentially Romanian. But the mythical Romanian peasant is having a hard time in a country that remains predominantly agricultural as it joins the European Union. Far from the mass tourism of the Black Sea coast or the castles that are said to have been the home of Dracula, this green region with its deep-rooted traditions has seen the arrival of a quite separate race: the post-modern tourist, explains Raluca Nagy. "Ten years ago, these tourists discovered Prague; today they have their sights on Bucharest or Sofia." She adds, "The ethno tourist is not interested in getting a suntan, but in discovering something new, and is fascinated and attracted by all that is different."

She goes on, "The picture-book landscape of Maramures and the myth of the true Romania, somewhat erroneous given a history marked by the arrival of the Hungarians and Ukrainians, have made this region a success. In just a few years, 'friendly' tourism based on traditional

hospitality has given way to a more commercial relationship." Nagy adds, "The people of Maramures, often part-time farmers, have turned to rural tourism. Some of them, those who work abroad, have even put up new buildings to welcome the visitors in greater comfort than the traditional wooden houses. The development of these sanitized *pensiuni* is, however, a threat to the very thing that attracts the tourist to Maramures: its authenticity. It could even risk disappearing altogether."

Yet despite all this, green tourism remains an asset for Romania. As Nagy puts it, "No other country in Europe has more variety to offer the tourist, but it is a potential that must be used intelligently."

J.F.H. ■

Top
Typical house interior in Lunca Livei. © EC
Life in rural areas. © EC



Mirko Popovitch*

An all-too-rare OPPORTUNITY TO TURN THE SPOTLIGHT ON AFRICAN PHOTOGRAPHY

African Photography Encounters in Bamako

The 7th African Photography Encounters is one of those all-too-rare initiatives for promoting African creativity, an opportunity for all those in South and North with a keen interest in photography.

As with video, where digital technology is often used to manipulate professional photographs, fine art photography, expressive photography or, simply, art photography are sectors where it is difficult for Africans to reap any financial rewards. The reason for this is that they are too far away from the major publishing houses, exhibition halls and distribution networks. This also means that they have difficulties in meeting fellow professionals and this makes the African Photography Encounters all the more important. Today, professional photography-related projects are very thin on the ground across the continent with the exception of South Africa, where many artists and organisations operate. There's some activity in Mali, Botswana, Gabon, Zimbabwe and Tunisia, but that's about it. For the 7th Encounters in Mali's capital, the efforts involved in mounting, organising and supervising the event relied heavily on Paris-based experts working in cooperation with the *Maison Africaine de la Photographie* in Bamako. As one local visitor remarked, "we used to watch them taking photographs of us, now they help us to look at our own photographs".

As part of the event, CULTURES FRANCE has published a detailed 269-page catalogue, in French and English, a unique guide to the dis-

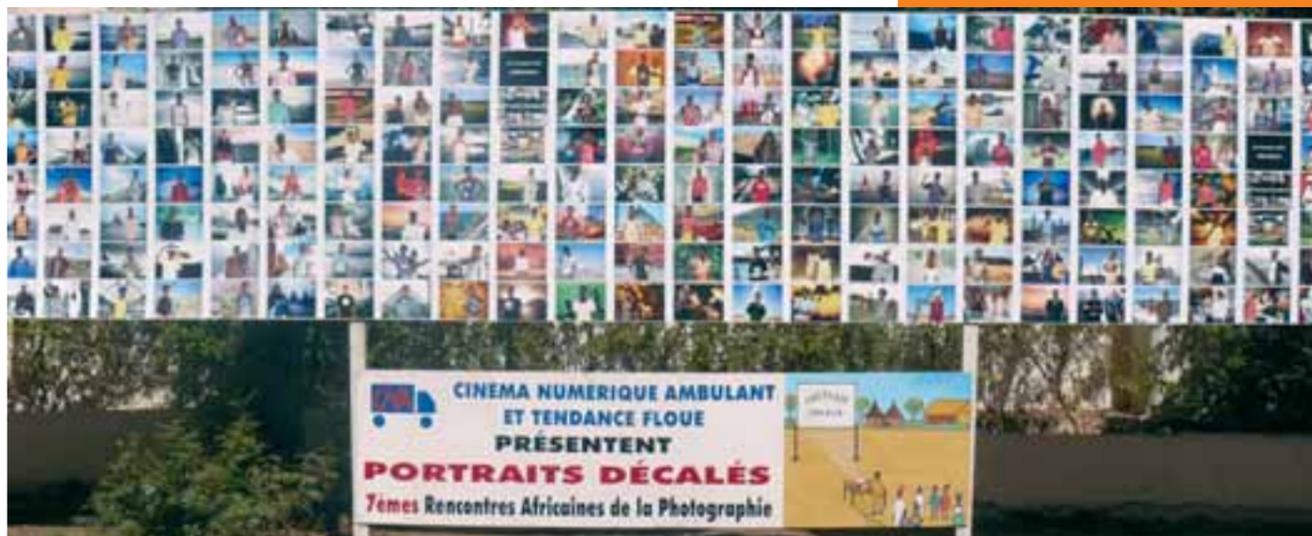


From Top to bottom:

Fanie Jason (Afrique du Sud), *Carters on the Way to the epping scrap yard*, Série Cape Carting, Biennial of Photography, Bamako, 2005. © Fanie Jason

Samy Baloji (RDC), *Gécamines 4*, Série Mémoire, Biennial of Photography, Bamako, 2006. © Samy Baloji

Port of Bamako, a place of hectic activity where life is at its full intensity. © Anne Sophie Costenoble



covery of what can only be termed a photographic record of cultural diversity. This is a guide that will be of great use in the future, as well as, a record of the event.

The objective of the theme for 2007, "Inside/Outside the city", was to provide a variety of perspectives and produce revealing images of love and peace. It is Africa, Europe, America, the world, photographed by Africans. *An African city is a confusing labyrinth for any visitor looking for familiar bearings. Its rules are invented as it goes along, depending on where the wind blows. And it is the wind that creates the city, which, in spite of everything, works. Why? For it is made of flesh and blood.* (Simon Njami, Curator General of the Photography Encounters in Bamako)

The advantage of this type of event is that it gives an opportunity for photographers to exhibit works of the highest standard side by side. Selected by Simon Njami Curator, General of the Photography Encounters and his associate, Samuel Sidibé, Director of Mali's National Museum, exhibits from 16 African nations were put on show. A specially prepared site in Bamako was used as the venue where artists brought together photographs and videos to create an amazing series of presentations.

However, questions crop up when trying to pin down the nationalities of exhibitors. Some of the photographers at the exhibition live in London, Paris and New York, only returning to their native countries from time to time. So what does the term African photography now mean? Is it really African? Is it more African than the photography of individuals of Western origin who have spent half their lives in Africa and are committed to watching and discovering African life? And what about African photographers who are less well-off, who have no choice but to remain in the land of their ancestors?

The Bamako Encounters exhibition was supported by the Jean-Paul Blachère Foundation, named after its creator, who, from his artist's residence in Apt, France, has spent many years turning the spotlight on the works of groundbreaking African artists. In photography, he is credited with the discovery of Saïdou Dicko. This award-winning photographer from Burkina Faso won another prize this year, this time from the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie* (OIF).

Not to be outdone, Bamako's EU-sponsored *Cadre de Promotion pour la Formation en Photographie* (CFP), backed by the Brussels-based *Contraste Association*, played host to a joint-training scheme involving 18 trainees from Mali and Belgium. This Africalia-sponsored initiative resulted in the creation of 200 photographs, all of which were exhibited and projected in various parts of the city. At the same time, the *Cinéma Numérique Ambulant* took a digital photographic studio around Bamako's markets to record the festive atmosphere. Hundreds of portraits of inhabitants were then connected via a computer to landscapes from around the world. This project was a huge success, especially when images of local people were projected onto a giant screen, with a background of the Eiffel Tower, the Pyramids or the Great Wall of China. The organisers also invited young photographers from Finland to show their work, creating an opportunity for photographers from different nations to exchange ideas and compare techniques.

* **Mirko Popovitch** - Director of Africalia (Belgium)

Above
Biennial of Photography, Bamako, 2007.
© Afrique in visu/Baptiste de Ville d'Avray

In the box
Biennial of Photography, Bamako 2007.
© Afrique in visu/Baptiste de Ville d'Avray



The winners:

- SEYDOU KEÏTA PRIZE:**
Calvin Dondo, Zimbabwe
- EUROPEAN UNION PRIZE:**
Aida Muluneh, Ethiopia
- ORGANISATION INTERGOUVERNEMENTALE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE (OIF) Prize:**
Saïdou Dicko, Burkina Faso
- Prix Elan of the Agence Française de Développement (AFD):**
Mohamed Camara, Mali
- Prix de l'Image:**
Amal Kenawy, Egypt
- Special Jury Prize:**
Nontsikelelo "Lolo" Veleko, South Africa
- Afrique en Créations Prize:**
Sammy Baloji, Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Fondation Blachère Prize:**
Adama Bamba (first prize)

The African Photography Encounters was co-produced by the *Maison Africaine de la Photographie*, Mali's Ministry of Culture and CULTURES FRANCE, with the support of the European Union and the backing of the *Agence Française de Développement* (AFD) and the *Organisation Intergouvernementale de la Francophonie* (OIF). ■

PRINCE CLAUS Award 2007

Sandra Federici



Faustin Linyekula with Papy Ebotani and Djodjo Kazadi in *The Dialogue Series III*, Dinozord, 2006. © Sammy Baloji, Courtesy Faustin Linyekula



Cartoon by Gado
Courtesy of Gado

The Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development was established, on 6 September 1996, to mark the 70th birthday of H.R.H. Prince Claus, husband of Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands. Since 1997 it awards artists, thinkers and cultural organisations in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. In 2007, the Prince Claus Fund has given the first award to Faustin Linyekula for his overall commitment to the Congo, outstanding choreography, his courageous return to his country and his innovative stimulation of cultural life, despite the instability and turbulence that prevail.

The choreographer from Kisangani uses movements, texts, images and sounds to

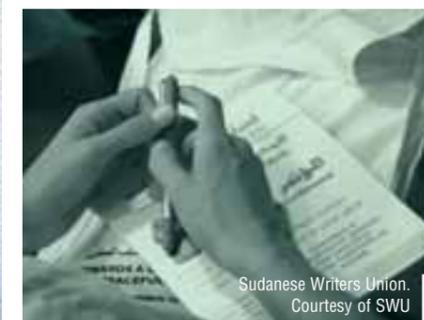
communicate and raise awareness of the experience of living in the midst of a conflict that has gripped his country for decades, noted the jury honouring Linyekula in December 2007. Linyekula describes himself as a storyteller. His performances are strong and feature avant-garde language.

For ten years now, the Prince Claus Fund has attributed a prize of €100,000 to outstanding individuals and organisations from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean in the field of culture and development. Many individuals worldwide are invited to put names forward and upon research, a restricted jury selects a few candidates, among which a winner is chosen and receives his or her award at a ceremony held in the presence of Dutch royalty in Amsterdam. In 2007, the Prince Claus Award set out to honour artists and organisations working to counteract the destructive power of conflict, promoting beauty, dialogue and respect, dignity and self-esteem in the face of devastation.

Ten lesser prizes of €25,000 were given to, inter alia, the theatre-producer and cultural revolutionary, Augusto Boal (Brazil), the actor and poet Patricia Ariza working in Colombia, the Tanzanian cartoonist Gado, the artistic group Ars Aevi (Bosnia and Herzegovina), the Sudanese Writers Union (Sudan), and the Radio Isanganiro founded in 2002 in Burundi by a group of journalists. ■



Publication *Facts* by Ars Aevi.
Courtesy of Ars Aevi



Sudanese Writers Union.
Courtesy of SWU

Ruth Colette Afane Bellinga*



Presentation of masks, Bandjoun Museum, Grassland, Cameroon.
© Projet de musées du Grassland

NATURAL HISTORY in Cameroon's Museums

Tangible or not, a country's heritage is a key component of its identity and so public authorities have a moral obligation and a duty to ensure that the echos of the past are well and truly safeguarded. Fully aware of this responsibility to be keeper of the "voices" that once were Cameroon, the country is now making significant strides to ensure the legacy of the past is preserved.

At a memorable General Assembly on Culture, Cameroon's Ministry of Information and Culture adopted a series of resolutions and commitments to promote the viability of the nation's heritage.¹

However, it was back in 1980, in association with the Office for Overseas Scientific and Technological Research, and the University Research Assistance Fund that the Ministry decided to launch a wide-ranging heritage inventory research programme. This initiative paved the way for the creation of structures which later became information, education, training and research centres.²

As a result, Yaoundé, Douala and certain parts of West Cameroon boast one or two museums, art galleries and monuments and these have assembled miscellaneous collections of natural resources (ethnography, local and regional history, geography, natural history and the visual arts). In addition, as part of its policy for acquiring contemporary works, the Ministry of Culture has launched competitions



National Museum of Cameroon: main entrance.
© Achille Komguem

in the field of creativity.

Despite activities already underway and the wealth resources made available, the museum-related network is still in an embryonic stage. Across the country, only 15 museums are actually operating (with over half in private hands) and some of these hardly deserve such a description.

► Complacency

Indeed a culture of complacency seems to have crept into the administration of public museums, despite all the resolutions that were so enthusiastically agreed upon in the initial stages and this has been exacerbated by on-the-ground difficulties. Cramped conditions, equipment shortages and tight budgets have all affected the smooth management of the museums. Other problems and setbacks include climate control systems, effective educational services, the collection and transport of exhibits and the creation of libraries with specialist scientific and other specialities. Due

to these shortcomings, exhibits are often exposed to wear and tear and are stored in less than ideal conditions. In addition, the museums have had to struggle to recruit qualified staff and consequently the system is seriously lagging behind in terms of conservation and restoration. As a whole, all these problems and challenges sowed seeds of doubt about whether there was any real point in creating these sorts of institutions in Africa.

Fortunately, these misgivings were quickly dispelled during a meeting of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) in Ghana in 1991 (What Museums for Africa? Heritage in the Future), which helped boost a museum culture in Africa. Today, international agencies are taking steps to help these countries make a genuine effort to meet the challenges they face. For Cameroon, it is up to the culture professionals involved to put into practice recommendations for paving the way towards an effective collection and conservation system; a system that not only guarantees the nation's cultural heritage but ensures that it is better promoted and marketed to reach its target audiences. ■

*Art Historian.
Teacher at Yaoundé I University,
Cameroon

¹ Proceedings of the General Assembly on Culture, Yaoundé, Congress Palace, Ministry of Information and Culture, 23-24 August 1991, pp 54-55

² Bulletin Zamani, 1993, No5/6, p.8

For younger readers

Will those faraway islands REALLY DISAPPEAR?



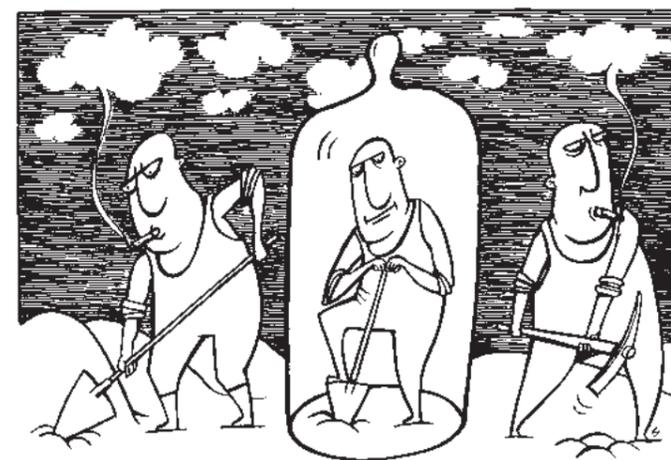
© Kirill Livshitskiy.
Image from BigStockPhoto.com

With climate change seemingly on everyone's agenda there's real concern that many of the small, beautiful, faraway islands in the Pacific and Caribbean are in danger of disappearing. And, as the earth warms up, regions with temperate climates like Europe will have less snow, reduced rainfall and months when it is hot when it used to be cold.

There's more. In countries where there is no winter, it is now extremely hot, almost too hot, all the time and in some places it

has simply just stopped raining. That, of course, makes it difficult to grow plants and find drinking water. It is rain that causes water to penetrate deep into the earth; the water that appears when you turn on the tap. Also there is now an increasing number of major disasters in which people are killed: hurricanes, earthquakes, floods and erupting volcanoes. In the North and South Poles, where there used to be enormous quantities of ice in winter and summer, the ice is melting more quickly. When it melts it means there is a lot more water in the seas.

This can be very serious in some places around the globe. Belgium and Holland in Europe and particularly the small islands in the Pacific - flat coral reefs that are only just above sea level. In one of these countries, Kiribati (pronounced Kiribass) two of the small islands have already disappeared under the sea. Although these islands were not inhabited, people used to go there and it is said that when he was very young Prince Charles, the Prince of Wales, had lunch on one of them. Not surprisingly,



Radek Steska, 2007, Manifesta!
© Africa e Mediterraneo

on some of the small Kiribati Islands the people are frightened. In fact, some of the people from this country as well as from another country, the Marshall Islands, have already had to go and live on another small island state in the region, called Niue. Niue is lucky because it has mountains.

But the country in the Pacific people speak about as most in danger is Tuvalu. People say it will perhaps be the first country to disappear completely beneath the waves if sea levels continue to rise. We visited Tuvalu. One grandmother told us: "I will allow

my children and grandchildren to leave but I will stay here. It is here that I want to die." That is sad.

Children learn at school what must be done to help the country, such as not wasting water, protecting the trees, and so on, but they also learn what to do in the case of danger - if the sea rises. But, of course, they do not want to leave their homes. Susana, aged 9, told us: "I don't know what we must do but I don't want to leave." Another girl, Tepula, said that she will climb up into a tree and wait for the water to go down. A boy, Teisi, wants to stay to watch over his country and Kanava, another boy, says he will fill the sea to make a mountain.

And Kanava is not wrong. He thinks the same as the leaders of his country who want to build an artificial island that is higher. But they will need a lot of money and materials. They think people and children everywhere do not want their very beautiful little country to disappear and that everybody will help them.

H.G. ■

Words from the Readers

We are interested in your point of view and your reactions to the articles. So do tell us what you think.

Just full of joy that this very educative Magazine is back and looking forward to reading about events in the ACP Countries again.

<peterskwi>

Thank you for issue number 1 of *The Courier*. After reading the publication, I welcome the new style.

Michel Baudouin,
professor of agronomy at the University of Gembloux (Belgium) and expert on rural development

I am writing from the European Youth Forum (YFJ). We are happy to know that 'The Courier ACP-EU' has been re-launched.

Angela Corbalan

Press & External Relations Coordinator of YFJ (Brussels - Belgium)

Let me congratulate you on this revived publication which has always proved extremely valuable to us in Uganda. With thanks,

Michel Lejeune

Deputy executive Director NCHE (Kampala - Uganda)

Congratulation for your magazine, Kind regards

Paméla d'Authier
Cirad

Direction des Relations Européennes et Internationales
Délégation pour l'Europe communautaire (Montpellier - France)

Well come back. The Courier ACP-EU magazine is very educative on ACP-EU countries. Accept my congratulations for your return to print this magazine. Yours

Asagaya Jasper

(Yaounde - Cameroon)

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Calendar

January - May 2008

January 2008

- > **22-23** Africa Private Sector Forum organised by the African Union's Department of Economic Affairs, Addis Ababa
- > **28-29** EU General Affairs and External Relations Council, Brussels
- > **31-2** Conference of African Union Heads of State and Government, Addis Ababa

February 2008

- > **18** EU General Affairs and External Relations Council, Brussels
- > **20-22** UNEP – Global Ministerial Environment Forum 10th Special Session, Monaco

March 2008

- > **10-11** EU General Affairs and External Relations Council, Brussels
- > **15-20** ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, Ljubljana

- > **17-20** UNCTAD – Conference on Trade and Development 24th Special Session, Geneva

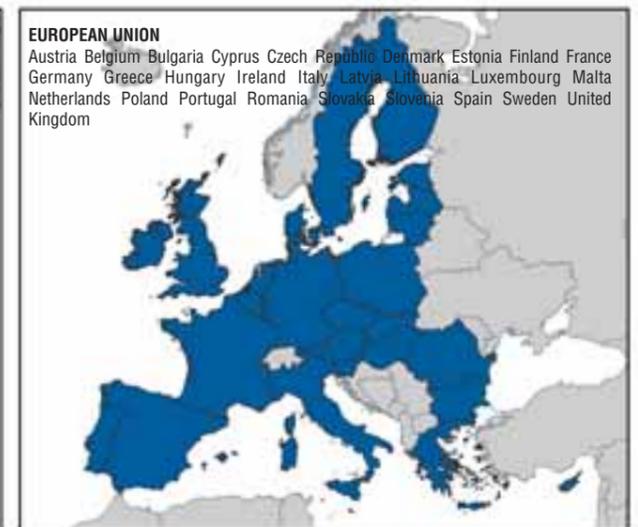
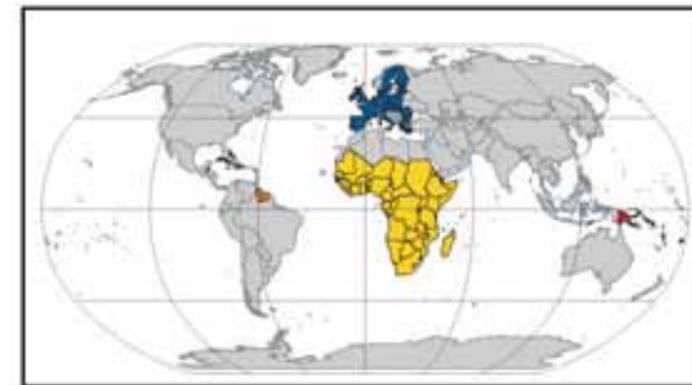
April 2008

- > **28-29** EU General Affairs and External Relations Council, Brussels

May 2008

- > **16-17** EU-Latin America-Caribbean Summit (EU-LAC), Lima
- > **26-27** EU General Affairs and External Relations Council, Brussels

Africa – Caribbean – Pacific and European Union countries



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