AID OR JUSTICE? A QUESTIONING ABOUT WORLD SOLIDARITY FROM AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: The paper deals with the idea of solidarity from an African perspective. It is divided into three sections. The first section focused on the current African context calling for solidarity: poverty and misery that have increased more than ever in the recent decades. The second section explores the idea and practice of development aid as a way to express the world solidarity towards Africa. The balance sheet of fifty years of development aid is clear: "the aid has been a two-edged sword. While needed to promote development, aid has often been a tool to promote industrial nations' economic and foreign policy objectives, including shoring up corrupt but compliant authoritarian regimes" (Gordon 2007:397-398). The last section focused on some main ideas in order to improve the current practice of solidarity, particularly on the contribution of the African world vision. The paper takes the idea of justice as a general background.

Introduction

The concept of solidarity is currently in vogue all over the world. People speak of workers solidarity; ethnic solidarity; gender solidarity; numerical solidarity; intergenerational solidarity; ecological solidarity; global solidarity; etc. They claim the same word, but nobody refers to the same thing. They develop a wide variety of interpretations; attitudes; traditions and practices of solidarity.

With regard to this variety of meanings and practices, the paper deals with the idea of global solidarity from an African perspective. The paper explores the main paradigms used in this respect, paying particular attention to the notion of development aid, as it represents for many people an adequate way of solidarity towards these in need around the world; it is also supposed to mobilize important human and financial resources.

The paper is divided into three sections. The first section analyzes the current context calling for solidarity towards and within Africa. In a globalized and changing world, Africa is walking backwards: poverty and misery have increased more than ever in this part of the world during the last fifty years. It is both a moral and political imperative to support the African continent. This is to be done in defense of human life and in virtue of world interdependence.

The second section focuses on different shapes of solidarity in use in Africa. After a short presentation of the main three forms (concepts) of solidarity most used in Africa –*warm solidarity*; *tepid solidarity*; and *cold solidarity*– the paper explores the myth of development aid, thought to be an adequate way to help Africa overcome poverty and misery. In spite of its multiple metamorphoses and the zeal of its

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defenders, development aid led Africa to an impasse: meaning more poverty and dependence upon funding countries. The balance sheet of fifty years of development aid speaks by itself: "the aid has been a two-edged sword. While needed to promote development, aid has often been a tool to promote industrial nations' economic and foreign policy objectives, including shoring up corrupt but compliant authoritarian regimes" (Gordon, 2007:397-398).

The third section reconsiders the notion of global solidarity on account of African values and their potential contribution to the humankind richness and diversity. On this occasion, the paper highlights four points: the idea of global solidarity through the African world vision; global solidarity's final purpose; the dialectic between human solidarity and community membership based solidarity; the role of justice in the heart of global solidarity.

Informing this paper, we are aware that Africa includes a wide range of human diversity; a large cultural variety as well as different economic and political trajectories. The history of the peoples of Africa cannot be considered as a metaphysical substance; one; inodorous; colorless; and insipid (Bidima, 1995: 3). It cannot be viewed as a unique story without any particular identity; any distinction between countries, ethnic groups, histories (Mbiti, 1970: 131-135). Therefore, we would like to propose that a large part of illustrations mentioned in this paper do not concern all African countries; thus we make use of the concept of Africa by convenience and in a broad way, being aware of all risk of reductionism or of hasty generalization.

I. Africa in a Globalized and Changing World

It is commonly admitted that we live in the age of global transformation and increasing interactions between people around the world. Walls have fallen and communism has collapsed. People like Vaclav Havel or Nelson Mandela have moved from jail to presidential mandate. The world consciousness concerning issues like democracy, human rights, gender, sustainable development, and global warming have increased more than ever. Thanks to advances in science and technology, the quality of human life has improved. Communication and contacts between cultures and human communities have become so easy that, after McLuhan, many people speak of the world as a 'global village'.

At the same time, the neoliberal economic system has become a world ruling paradigm. This paradigm insists on the emergence of a global single market which is viewed as the corner stone of both the world's integration and economic growth. According to the protagonists of this paradigm, to fight against the global single market's project is an act of blindness or an attitude of unconsciousness; it is like a suicide or an act of self-exclusion from the world's history; a want of the common sense (Petrella, 1997: 9-10).

In our time, the world has achieved the highest level of production of wealth ever attained in the humankind's history. The 2010 United Nations Development Program (UNDP)'s report on human development attests to this trend through its analysis of the world evolution during the last forty years. Drawing on a new dataset of human

development trends since 1970, and covering 135 countries which account for 92 percent of the world's population, this report sheds light on the fact that the Human Development Indexes (HDI)[1] progress around the world has been impressive during the last forty years. "The world average HDI rose to 0.68 in 2010 from 0.57 in 1990, continuing the upward trend from 1970, when it stood at 0.48. This increase reflects aggregate expansions of about a fourth in the health and education indicators and a doubling of income per capita."[2]

According to the UNDP's report, if advances in the HDI have occurred across all regions, Africa is globally the least performing region. The three countries whose the HDI did not improve during the last forty years are African. More than thirty African countries count amongst the world's poorest performers. Indubitably, the African continent is walking backwards. Contrary to the rest of the world, Africa concentrates "the highest incidence of a multidimensional poverty. The level ranges from a low of 3 percent in South Africa to a massive 93 percent in Niger; the average share of deprivations ranges from about 45 percent (in Gabon, Lesotho and Swaziland) to 69 percent (in Niger). Yet half the world's multi-dimensionally poor live in South Asia (844 million people), and more than a quarter live in Africa."[3]

Testimonies from many African countries confirm the failures mentioned in the UNDP's report; particularly concerning areas like the health, the education system, the purchasing power and the social life of Africans. In a country like the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), for example, people live with less than one dollar a day; the health care infrastructure is totally disintegrated. The national budget for health is no more than 3.5 percent. Such an amount represents something like 13 US dollars a year per capita. This is clearly inadequate compared to the objective of 15 percent of the national budget recommended by African leaders for 2015, in Abuja, in 2001.[4] As a consequence of this decay of the national health care system, calamities like HIV/AIDS; poliomyelitis; malaria and malnutrition; etc. have increased. In addition to that, the resurgence of diseases like tuberculosis and sleeping sickness, formerly considered eradicated by the World Health Organization, has also.[5]

It is the same story concerning many others African countries for example Zimbabwe. Formerly considered as a stable country and a kind of public granary for his neighbors in the area, Zimbabwe has been pauperized in a incredible way during the last two decades. Today it even imports foodstuffs; the infrastructures of the health and the education formerly among the best of Africa have been considerably

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[1]The Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite index that measures a country's average achievements in three basic aspects of human development: health; knowledge; and income. This index was developed by the Pakistani economist Mahbub ul Haq in collaboration with the economic laureate Amartya Sen. The HDI represents an alternative to conventional measures of national development, such as the level of income and the rate of economic growth. For further details, please see: http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/hdi/
[2]http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR_2010_EN_Complete_reprint.pdf
[3]http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR_2010_EN_Complete_reprint.pdf
[4]www.afriquejet.com/afrique-centrale/rd-congo/rd-congo-sante
[5]http://www.medecinsdumonde.be/CONGO-la-sante-publique-reste.html

degraded. People are impoverished so that many Zimbabwean women have no means to go and give birth at a hospital; tens of thousands of children are unable to attend school, because their parents cannot afford their scholarship (Traoré, 1999: 49).

The Malian people suffer similarly in these area. The Malian activist and former Minister of Culture, Mrs. A. Traoré, expresses great concern about her country's inability to provide adequate health, social and economic stability. According to Mrs. Traoré, the Malians are disenchanted because the promise of a better life made since the eve of the Malian Independence has never been realized. On the contrary, people are sinking in an endless ocean of poverty and misery. On a daily basis most people face unemployment; want of health care; disintegration of the educational system and lack of access to clean water and sanitation. There is a total resignation of the Malian State concerning its social responsibilities (Traoré, 1999: 18). Like many African countries, Mali is walking backwards. Both Africa and Mali are paralyzed and strangled by an inhuman and deadly inadequate societal system (Traoré, 1999: 11-18).

For many people, this state of things[6] confirms René Dumont's prophetic work published at the eve of African independence: *"L'Afrique noire est mal partie"*.[7] This book largely anticipated many of the causes of the current African collapse. For example, it highlighted the extroversion of the African economy to the detriment of the real needs of the African populations. It also criticized the paternalism of Western countries towards Africa and the fatal character of their help as well as the internal corruption of the African leaders and their want of a sense of responsibility. For many people, this book constitutes a premonitory hymn for the afro-pessimistic discourse (Smith, 2004: 26-27).

Indeed, the debate on the causes of the collapse of Africa created its emulators. On one side, the afro-pessimist discourse that denounces both the African cultures and traditions to be the cause of the current failures on the continent. We recall amongst African protagonists of this discourse thinkers like A. Kabou (Kabou, 1991) and D. Etounga-Manguelle (2001). According to A. Kabou, the search for the African identity is "a cathartic initiative of decolonization consisting in planting the flag of the ancestor there where floated that of the white man. This return to African identity, that would have been able to be an exalting and creative adventure; a liberator of energy; is slowly killing the Africans by being only a brainwashing operation" (quoted in Smith, 2004: 28). For D. Etounga Manguelle, the real causes of the African bankruptcy are not to be searched in both the slavery and colonization; they mostly relied on African culture and traditions which are particularly anachronistic as well as opposed to modernity. In sum, they are counterproductive in the current global context of this changing world. The best option for Africa should be a cultural adjustment, which means the absorption of African traditions and cultures by the power of modernity (Etounga- Manguelle, 2001).

On the other hand, there are afro-centrists thinkers who, contrary to the afro-pessimists, attribute to the international system the main responsibility of the wreck of Africa. Such is the case of a large range of African intellectuals amongst which we

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[6]www.fnh.org/français/fnh/uicn/pdf/afrique
[7]René Dumont, *L'Afrique noire est mal partie*, Paris, Seuil, 1962 (The False Start in Africa).

should mention Mrs. Traoré (1999); D. Moyo (2009); B. Boris Diop (2005); S. Amin (1970).

For this class of thinkers, the current bankruptcy of Africa is an opportunity to question the ruling economic system; both the rules and the way how the wealth is distributed in the world (Traoré, 1999). They would like to transform radically the world ruling system, from the relationship of dominion and marginalization of the non-Western peoples towards a world more worried about justice and inclusion. For the afro-centrist protagonists, the current situation of Africa is a real challenge to search for new forms of solidarity and new strategies to overcome chains of poverty and stagnation (Moyo, 2009).

II.   Global Solidarity towards and Within Africa

Poverty remains a severe and growing problem in Africa, and the dire situation facing the majority of Africans is apocalyptic, as already described. This state of things requires a surge of moral indignation and the awakening of the world solidarity. Such an assertion raises various questions concerning, for example, the very meaning of global solidarity towards and within Africa; its parameters and real articulations. We must examine the main actors involved in this process and the values which are promoted through the idea of global solidarity; etc. Let us examine some of these issues.

II-1. *One Idea, Various Shapes*
Many people speak of solidarity, but until now there is no universally agreed definition of this term. To prevent misunderstanding in this respect, let us first sketch an operating concept of solidarity which will be used as a theoretical background in the present analysis. Let us assume the idea that solidarity is the "awareness of a common humanity and global citizenship, as well as the voluntary acceptance of the responsibilities that go with it. It is the conscious commitment to redress inequalities both within and between countries. It is based on the recognition that in an interdependent world, poverty or oppression anywhere is a threat to prosperity and stability everywhere." [8] We think of global solidarity as relying more on the consciousness of the humankind interdependence and common responsibility to rectify injustices than on the capacity to cover the whole universe. In other words, we insist more on the common commitment to tackle the causes of injustice and suffering of humanity than on the geographical extension of such a dynamic.

> The reputation of Africa as a land of solidarity is not to be made anymore (Orsenna, 1992). The legendary solidarity of Africans is based on the consciousness of their interdependence, mostly shaped by their world vision. J. Mbiti stated in this respect as following: "in traditional life, the individual does not and cannot exist alone except corporately. He owes his existence to other people, including these of past generations and his contemporaries. He is simply part of the whole. The

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[8] www.ingentaconnect.com/content/routledg/crea/2004/.../art00008

> community must therefore make, create or produce the individual; for the
> individual depends on the corporate group" (Mbiti, 1970: 141).

The awareness from belonging to a corporate group makes one transfer from his own life how important group solidarity is, because "when he suffers, he does not suffer alone but with the corporate group; when he rejoices, he rejoices not alone but with his kinsmen, his neighbors and his relatives whether dead or living. (…) Whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual" (Mbiti, 1970: 141).

African people express their solidarity in various manners, but three forms of solidarity can be recognized: 'warm solidarity'; 'tepid solidarity' and 'cold solidarity'.

II-2. *"Warm Solidarity"*

Warm solidarity refers to a spontaneous and direct support between individuals or communities. The adjective warm is used as a metaphor to refer to the spontaneity and warmness of such an act. It is like a touch of humanity which is present in every one of us. That is why *warm solidarity* is mostly related to the individual's initiative to bring help to needy people. This kind of support is supposed to come spontaneously from ones heart.

In the traditional African context, the concept of *warm solidarity* is enhanced by the already mentioned corporate group consciousness: the family; the relatives; the clan; the neighborhood; etc. are at a time prior beneficiaries and actors of *warm solidarity*. People speak of it as "family to family solidarity". [9] Underlining the constraint of this kind of solidarity, the Baluba from Kasayi, in the DRC, call for the interdependence and collective responsibility, through a range of proverbs and wisdoms like: "*Nkunda ya bangi isombela iboba ne mata"*; which roughly means: "Unity is strength". *Tshia dima umue, tshia dia bangi*": "the one's work is profitable to the whole community". *"Lukanu lumue kalutu ludila ku diboko":* "Just one bracelet does not ring on the wrist".

This *warm solidarity* has taken on new dimensions in the last two decades in Africa, due to the above mentioned crisis of the African continent, the globalization and the current migratory flows. It overflowed the local and regional framework to become an international issue; playing an important role in local development and economic growth by providing foreign currencies; stimulating informal economic systems, supporting community works (building of Health center, schools, etc.), and preserving the lives of tens of thousands of families who rely on the financial support from a relative living abroad.

Considering *warm solidarity* from the perspective of African migrations, many experts have shed light on light the economic process of remittance performed by majority of African migrants; they speak of the 'migrant remittances'. According to the World Bank, "the help sent to Africa by the African migrants in support of their families and relatives represents the central and most tangible link between migration and development. Its inflows to Africa quadrupled between 1990 and 2010, reaching

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[9] www.youpil.com/fr/category/authors/edgar-c-mbanza-0?ypcli=ano

nearly $40 billion in 2010, equivalent to 2.6 percent of Africa's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2009. After foreign direct investment (FDI), remittances are the continent's largest source of foreign inflows. Migrant remittances contribute to international reserves, help finance imports, and improve the current account position of recipient countries. They are associated with reductions in poverty, improved health and education outcomes, and increased business investments."[10]

Beyond its current and positive effects, *warm solidarity* is globally as hazardous as limited, because it essentially relies on the destiny and the financial capacity of the individual donor. Its scope is mostly limited to an individual's relatives and family circle, being given with the exception emergencies or national disasters (like floods; drought; epidemics; etc.) when everyone's generosity is required.

II-3. *"Tepid Solidarity"*
The concept of *tepid solidarity* is based on ad hoc structures, created by organizations within the civil society. This form of solidarity includes both an individual's disposal to help and community commitments to bring support to people in need. In this prospect, Africa counts an important battalion of Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) committed to tackle different problems affecting the continent. Such is the case of NGOs in charge of health care; childhood care; gender empowerment; human rights; poverty; etc. These NGOs constitute a complex network where national and international actors meet each other. Values like justice, transparency (or the lack of transparency), lobbying and pressures of all kind are often at stake (Brunel, 2004).

> The actors of the tepid solidarity are from both the local and the international reservoirs. It often happens that the collaboration between NGOs from the North and these from the South is not free from conflicts and misunderstanding. Problems arise around the means and methods used by each one of them; the respect of the local cultures and traditions; the relationship with the civil or local authority (Robert, 2004: 74).

By the early 1990s, donor countries changed their development aid policy: they decided to pay more attention to civil society organizations rather than to the official state or country representatives. The famous speech by French President F. Mitterrand, at La Baule on 20/06/1990, can be considered as the starting point of this policy turn. Mitterrand linked the French development aid with the democracy's advances in Africa. He was followed on this by the majority of Western donor countries (Traoré, 1999: 66). This change of policy propelled the visibility of NGOs; it also increased their role and influence in Africa. Many of these organizations became the surveyors substituting for the ruling regimes, particularly concerning issues like health care; education, culture; etc. all areas left aside by the official African state.

In spite of their good will and services to African populations, most of these NGOs are often seen as the agents of neo-colonialism and are viewed as the secular arm of the Western hegemony (Alternatives Sud, 1997). These criticisms are mainly

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[10]www.worldbank.org

formulated by the African states and local NGOs who blame the international NGOs for violating national sovereignty. They are accused of behaving as if they were in a conquered territory, without respect for both the national laws and local traditions; obeying only orders from their donor institutions or government of their countries of origin. For their part, local NGOs complain also about the competition which they perceive from international NGOs, concerning means and devices committed to resolving various problems. They complain of the lack of dialogue and coordination with regard to a common commitment: the solidarity towards the African and needy populations. Some of the local NGOs feel as held in contempt on behalf of their Western colleagues (Robert, 2004: 72-77).

Regardless of these criticisms, *tepid solidarity* is still useful to Africa, because it provides in many areas, for example the social and even economic life, which the African state which has either neglected or ignored its social responsibilities. In this regard, the work of organizations such as Amnesty International, Doctors Without Borders, Oxfam, CAFOD, Human Rights Watch, Transparency International, and Action Aid, are still of major benefactors for African populations. They alleviate their needs as well as express to them the solidarity and the human face of Western states.

II-4. *"Cold Solidarity"*
The last form of solidarity is known as *cold solidarity*. It refers to support which is managed through structural modalities and created by public institutions, at both the national and international levels. It concerns the support between countries or within a country towards its own populations. In the latter case, we must immediately recognize that a large number of African countries are not organized to provide real assistance to their own populations. As a matter of fact, things like social services, health care insurance, unemployment allocations, are far from being reality for the majority of African countries. The already mentioned cases of the DRC, Mali and Zimbabwe are eloquent in this respect.

Cold solidarity is most active and noticeable concerning relations between states, particularly in the area of international cooperation (Jacquet; Comolet, 2009). It concerns mainly grants and loans from foreign countries in support of a wide range of development projects. For many years, African governments considered this support as a permanent right on which they depended and based an important part of their national budget incomes (Moyo, 2009). Now the question is to know whether the link between solidarity and development aid is justifiable, and at what extent such a link is coherent and useful to African people.

II-5. *Solidarity and Development Aid*
Many people think of *development aid* to be the way to reduce poverty as well as to achieve solidarity towards poor countries, including Africa (Jacquet; Comolet, 2009: 5-6).[11] For others, this form of help is again evidence of Western hegemony. It is a

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[11]See also: http://www.encyclopedie-dd.org/encyclopedie/developpement-durable/1-2-acteurs-du-developpement/le-developpement-durable-fait.html

strategic lever to dominate and despoil the Third world, specifically the African people (Moyo, 2009). As already mentioned, both these attitudes reveal the question of the very nature of both the ideas of solidarity and development aid, as well as issues concerning the efficiency of the link established between them.

Let us first assume that both the evoked concepts of solidarity and development are not synonyms. Both of them are plural concepts. They respectively refer to a wide range of contexts and ideologies. Neither of them is an end in itself; both of them are theoretically subordinated to the service of a common target: the human life. In this prospect, the improvement of the human life can be considered as their common ground or their overlapping zone.

Leaving aside the etymology and the fortune of the word solidarity[12], we can recall the already mentioned definition of solidarity as the "awareness of a common humanity and global citizenship; the conscious commitment to redress inequalities both within and between countries; the recognition that in an interdependent world, poverty or oppression anywhere is a threat to prosperity and stability everywhere."[13]

In the same prospect, we can also consider development as the improvement of "the quality of people's lives, expanding their ability to shape their own futures. This generally calls for higher per capita income, but involve much more. It involves more equitable education and job opportunities. Greater gender equality. Better health and nutrition. A cleaner, more sustainable natural environment. A more impartial judicial and legal system. Broader civil and political freedoms. A richer cultural life" (Gordon, 2007: 398).

The preoccupation to improve human life conditions in the Third world is already noticeable in H. Truman's Inaugural Address on January 20th, 1949: "More than half the people of the world are living in conditions approaching misery. Their food is inadequate. They are victims of disease. Their economic life is primitive and stagnant. Their poverty is a handicap and a threat both to them and to more prosperous areas."[14] The US President's speech emphasizes our initial question of how far can development aid express world solidarity? What does imply the idea of development and its connection with the concept of solidarity? What should be the right structures to improve together the life conditions of African peoples to overcome poverty and stagnation?

II-6. *Development Aid: Complexities and Traps*
The idea of development aid was launched by the United State in 1948 within the context of Post-World War II and the Cold War politics. Originally, this idea referred to a large-scale aid program aiming to stimulate the European Recovery Program (ERP), also known as The Marshall Plan, as well as strengthen the ties between West European countries in order to contain the influence of the USSR. This project was also extended to the former Western colonies, qualified as the Third World in

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[12]Pierre Ansay, *La ville des solidarités.* Bruxelles-Charleroi: EVO, 2000.
[13]www.ingentaconnect.com/content/routledg/crea/2004/.../art00008
[14]http://www.bartleby.com/124/pres53.html

opposition to the two world powerful blocs: the Western bloc under the US leadership; and the Eastern bloc leaded by the USSR (Gélinas, 1994: 40-41).

> Abounding in the same direction as the US Marshall Plan, the United Nations' (UN) resolution number 200, published on 04/12/1948, draws the attention of developed countries on the technological backwardness of underdeveloped countries; consequently, it calls up to a general mobilization of the international experts to help and advise the Third World leaders to catch up the technological backwardness in order to resolve their problems concerning misery and poverty (Gélinas, 1994: 20).

President Truman is considered as the one who formally launched the development aid crusade, initially evoked in his Inaugural Address. According to the American President, both the poverty and economic stagnation of the Third World are a flagrant insult against morals; they also are a threat to the world security. Therefore, they must be tackled rigorously through the development aid project which has to be innovative and ambitious. In this respect, the American President's strategy stipulated two major points: first, it presented the standard of living in the US as the universal paradigm to which every country in the world should follow and reach, regardless of its particular culture; history; and political trajectory. The aid can be considered here as Universalist and an ideological project. Secondly, Truman proposed the transfer of capital and technologies as the right method by which Third World countries could improve their own technological backwardness; and in so doing, to develop themselves (Gélinas, 1994: 24-25).

Truman's development aid paradigm prevailed up into the decade of the '60s, mobilizing important human and financial resources. The American economist W. Rostow is known as one of the prominent intellectual architects of this model, particularly through his theory of a linear economic growth, structured in five stages including the traditional society; the prerequisites for the takeoff; the takeoff; the walking towards the maturity and the era of the mass consumption (Rostow, 1960).

Regardless of various interpretations of the concept of development, we can notice that this concept remains an infinitely complex idea (Jacquet; Comolet, 2009) and full of traps (Latouche, 2004:31-72). Some of its original sins that determined its evolution from the early beginnings up to now can be identified as the policy to contain the communists' expansion, as well as both the American agricultural and financial lobbies.

In order to counter the success of the communists in China and the rise of revolutionary parties in the Third World, the donor countries gave more support to military investments than to addressing the real needs of the people in underdeveloped countries. As an illustration, J. Gélinas shows that in 1954 US development aid reached 6 billion dollars for which 86 percent was in military investments (Gélinas, 1994: 25). On the other hand, under the pressure of the American farmers who were in search of how to liquidate their stocks of unsold farm produces, the American Congress passed Public Law 480 (1954), known as "Food for Peace." This law authorized the US government to use development aid as a means

for such a purpose. In the name "Food for Peace" the US poured their vast food surpluses into the Third World including Africa. Many other developed countries and western economies largely followed the example of the US in this respect (Gélinas, 1994: 25-27; 183-189).

From then on, it can be noted that beyond the declared intentions, the notion of development aid is a truncated process; disguised as a cheap business for the benefit of the 'landlords of funds' (Jacquet; Comolet, 2009). As a matter of fact, conceived as a path of solidarity with the poor countries, - including African countries-, in order to reduce poverty, development aid has become a paradoxical process: instead of helping the so called poor countries, it serves the financial as well as the political and geostrategic interests of the donor countries. As a consequence, the dream of Africans to be free from poverty becomes more and more a 'distant' dream (Traoré, 1999: 25-37).

Indeed, African leaders failed in their mission because they did not address the real needs of their own populations. They ran dramatically into debt and they invested the money in the acquisition of military equipments, - that means in the defense of an ideology ('capitalism versus socialism', vice versa) and also in the protection of their own regimes. One of the best realizations of dictatorships throughout Africa has been the forces of repression yet alternatively the communal entertainment of the people by the dance, the games and the drink. African leaders like Mobutu; Bokassa; Idi Amin; etc. constitute eloquent illustrations in this respect.

The abundant presence in Africa of American farm commodities (and European as well), which are sold cheaper than local produce, ruin the local agriculture. This economic dumping contributed to the resurgence of hunger and poverty. It also strengthened the dependence of African countries on foreign support, not only concerning new technologies, but also in regard to the demand for foodstuffs (Gordon, 2007:407-409).

Consequently, far from being an emancipative strategy, the concept of development aid can be viewed as a path to servitude: "the logic of the help immortalizes the logic of dependence that generates the pessimism. It is known that the import of foodstuffs - in the form of help or in the trade frame- can prevent the development of the local savings because these imported foodstuffs are cheaper than the local products. There are many African countries where the rice of import replaced, for example, the traditional vegetables. This gap with the deep needs of societies also explains the phenomenon of the "white elephants ", these projects of "development" financed at great expense and which have never worked because they were badly thought or conceived by partners ignoring real needs of people and concrete conditions of realization of these projects" (Robert, 2004: 72-73).

The idea of development aid as a support to catch up the technology backwardness progressively failed. By the 1960s and 1970s due to the combination of various factors including the oil crisis in 1973 - the geopolitical awareness of the Third World countries and their claim for a new international economic order; the emergence of critical theories of the development denouncing the responsibility of the world economic system in the production and the preservation of underdevelopment became an apparent reality (Gélinas, 1994: 30-32). Further illustrations of this

breakdown and failure were expressed in ideas like the theory of dependence and unequal exchange developed by Raúl Prebish; the analysis of both the extroversion and the dislocation of the Third World economy carried out by Celso Furtado; the theory of the accumulation of the capital at the world scale sustained by Samir Amin.[15]

Due to these criticisms development aid is not viewed anymore as an act of assistance, but rather as a moral duty of compensation towards southern countries (Jacquet; Comolet, 2009). In this respect, a significant effort was expected from rich countries, specifically on the basis of the percentage of their gross domestic product (GDP). According to the United Nations recommendation, this help was to be equal at least to 0.7 % of the GDP of the rich countries. It is still true that not all developed countries contributed the expected amount of money. On the other hand, it is paradoxical that in spite of the 'received support,' Africa never improved or progressed, as poverty and its corollaries destroyed any hopes of advancement. Following the Zambian economist D. Moyo, we find that "between 1970 and 1998, when aid flows to Africa were at their peak, poverty in Africa rose from 11 percent to a staggering 66 percent" and that "roughly 600 million of Africa's people are now trapped in poverty" (Moyo, 2009). Once again, this lack of performance, indeed this failure of progress exposes questions related to the efficiency of development aid as a way of solidarity towards and within Africa.

Forced by the collapse of the price of raw materials and brought down by debt servicing, African countries were obliged to accept binding measures on behalf of the institutions of Bretton Woods, specifically the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB). These measures are globally known as Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP). Their purpose is clear: to configure both the economic and commercial structures of African countries, - and thus their social structures -, in compliance with the requirements of the global free-market economy, regardless of their effects concerning social, humanitarian, and cultural issues (Traoré, 1999: 39-51).

As the cold war ended and the iron curtain fell, the help defined by development aid lost its military or war's justification. There is no longer a communist danger to contain. So, the economic and financial prospects are the remaining justifications. With regard to this new context, development aid became a straight intervention mechanism for Bretton Woods' institutions and Western nations into African countries' affairs. It becomes a kind of life-buoy allowing African states (furthermore frayed by the SAP) to insure so-so their kingly functions. At the same time, the international community forged and imposed the concept of humanitarian intervention, mainly in order to facilitate the imposition of the SAP measures. Of course, the unsaid of the humanitarian intervention principle is to get around the principle of national sovereignty; in order words, this principle can be considered as

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[15]Raúl Prebish, *The Economic Development of Latin America and its Principal Problems,* New York, United Nations, 1950. Celso Furtado, *Desenvolvimento e subdesenvolvimento,* Rio de Janeiro, Fundo de Cultura, 1961. Samir Amin, *L'accumulation à l'échelle mondiale,* Paris, Anthropos, 1970.

only a pretext to defuse all social revolt going against the neoliberal measures; to weaken any (African) state which would like to resist the dictates of current world ruling systems and countries. Saddam Hussein's Iraq, the recent events in the Ivory Coast, and the fall of Gaddafi in Libya, are all eloquent illustrations in this respect.

The existence of this kind of world ruling strategies on behalf of rich countries mirrors the former colonial order, which was organized around three control levers: the military force, business/financial aims and religious or missionary efforts (Hugon, 1999: 104).

In such a prospect, development aid can be rightly considered as having a two-edged sword. While it is presented as a system of solidarity, the aid is also used as a tool in support of the economic and financial interests for the donor countries. It also contributes to strengthen their domination all over the world. Like a drug, the international aid increased both the dependence and the exploitation of African countries (Moyo, 2009).

As already mentioned, the effects of the SAP fell far below expectations. These measures degenerated the situation of the African countries. The already mentioned 2010 UNDP report attests to the degraded performance of the majority of African countries. Many amongst the protagonists of the SAP "admit that most countries have experienced little or no growth after undergoing structural adjustment (Gordon, 2007: 407). For the Malian former Minister of Culture, Mrs. A. Traoré, the issue at stake is the quintessence of the SAP: "To fit or to die is the quintessence of this message. But we now know in sub-Saharan Africa that it is a question of fitting and of dying nevertheless. Most of the countries under structural adjustment programs collapsed from stagnation to decline: the food deficits reached alarming proportions; the unemployment aggravated; the sub-use of the industrial capacity became widespread and the deterioration of the environment threatens the survival of the Africans" (Traoré, 1999: 42).

As it is to be expected, the already mentioned 2010 UNDP report is not a data collection nor a set of figures and statistics to give a good impression of an international organization. The matter at stake is that of human life: this report concerns tens of thousands of children, men and women whose lives are shattered because of endless, grinding poverty. It is a question of life and death. This situation is aggravated by the dismemberment of the African social order; the atrophy of the functions of the African state; and the development of an economic system aiming essentially at profit rather than the well-being of humankind.[16]

Once again, let us agree that development aid failed as a path of solidarity. For numbers of observers, development aid is a pretense of which African leaders have to be aware; they must largely distrust in it. Development aid is an unmitigated political, economic and humanitarian disaster for African people (Moyo, 2009). It is a source of a hardly reimbursable debt (Traoré, 1999: 25-37) and a vicious circle of dependence and impoverishment (Gélinas, 1994). Therefore, it seems urgent to rethink both the idea and current practice of global solidarity.

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[16]Please see: *Les effets sociaux des Programmes d'ajustement structurels dans les pays du Sud,* in Alternatives Sud, Vol. 1 (1994)2. See also :

III. Rethinking Global Solidarity from an African Perspective

To rethink world solidarity implies an immense critical task to unmask errors of the past and to put on milestones for another possible future. In this prospect, we would like to limit our considerations to the African context. Therefore we explore here both the finality and articulations of the idea of global solidarity taking into consideration African values and potential African contributions to the enrichment of global solidarity vision, as an expression of the human interdependence and the search for global justice.

III-1. *Global Solidarity in the African Context*
We defined solidarity as the commitment to tackle injustice and situations striking a blow at both human life and human dignity, on account of the world interdependence consciousness. The idea of interdependence does not include as a background the system of mass production and consumption characterizing developed economies; known under names like Taylorism; Fordism; Toyotism; etc. On the contrary, we put emphasis on both the convergence of volunteer and effort to build together another possible world; aiming for justice and rich in human diversity. With regard to such a consideration, global solidarity cannot be viewed as a one-way process; that means a relationship in which some are confined to be receivers while others have to play the role of donors endlessly.

The analyzed paradigm of solidarity reflected a world vision which can be considered mono-cultural (Semprini, 1997: 62-63), meaning a Eurocentric perception of solidarity according to which peripheral countries are definitely considered as poor and having nothing to bring for the edification of a common humanity. Such a theoretical background of global solidarity has to be changed in favor of a pluralistic and multicultural perspective.

Indeed, the current model of solidarity is asymmetric, as it confines Africans to the passive and eternal role of beneficiaries of 'foreign generosity.' In so doing, this paradigm ignores the African resources useful for a new perception of solidarity; the capacity of African cultures to contribute to the enrichment of solidarity as a humanitarian practice. Humankind embodies a wide ranging means of manifestation. By focusing only on money and power relationships, the ruling solidarity paradigm ignores humankind's diversity; it denies the possibility for other cultures (mainly non Western cultures) to elaborate a coherent and significant thought on human relationship and destiny.

According to the African world view and values, money and power relationships are not in the very centre of solidarity practice. This traditional wisdom denounces the domination of the donor as well as the submission of the beneficiary of solidarity. It excludes from the practice of solidarity all kind of abuse of some towards the others. In this respect, an African proverb point out: "the giver hand is always over the receiver one." For their part, the Baluba of Kasayi (DRC), sustain as essential to solidarity and brotherhood the recognition of the other as a subject and human values bearer - whatever his age and whatever his social condition. So, they announce

proverbs like: "*Kua mukulu kantu; kua muakunyi kantu, nenku bulongu bua disanga*"; which means: "the brotherhood is really nice when everyone is valued and can bring its own contribution to the common living".

From the African perspective, solidarity is not enclosed within the sphere of money and power relationships. It goes beyond and values respectful human contact and exchange of services and support. According to this approach, nobody is thought so poor that he can bring nothing in support of another. J. Mbiti holds this prevalence of the human relationship on others' considerations in writing: "Only in terms of other people does the individual become conscious of his own being, his own duties, his privileges and responsibilities towards other people. When he suffers, he does not suffer alone but with the corporate group; when he rejoices, he rejoices not alone but with his kinsmen, his neighbours and his relatives whether dead or living" (Mbiti, 1970: 141).

In her book, *Viol de l'imaginaire*, the Malian former Minister of culture, A. Traoré, denounces the focalization of the ruling system on profit. This attitude contributed to pass over and silence African values as well as it annihilated African creativity by making of African cultures a kind of rubbishes of humanity. Having interiorized and likened a negative image of themselves promoted by the ruling system, the Africans are violated in their imagination and emasculated in their creativity (Traoré, 2003).

This thesis joins an idea already developed many decades ago by A. Memmi in his book *Le portrait du colonisé* (1985). Drawing on the criticism of colonization, Memmi denounces one of the strategies of the colonial system consisting of creating and promoting a negative image of the colonized people.

All allowance being made, it can be said that the same logic operated concerning the analyzed model of solidarity, because this paradigm viewed Africa and Africans in only one role of poor beneficiaries of foreign generosity. We think of such an attitude to be an error of optics which is advisable to rectify advisedly; giving a chance to the so called poor countries to express by themselves their own world vision and axiology with regard to solidarity.

In this regard, as observed C. Robert, the African continent is an unexplored mine. According to this scholar, "the search for the solutions to the troubles which strike Africa would open new ways of reflections on the "globalized" planet. By drawing from its own cultural resources, Africa would diversify the sources of the debate on the necessary social transformation and would feed the researches (...) on the alternative model to the globalized capitalism. (Robert, 2004: 142).

III-2. *The Purpose of Global Solidarity*

Is global solidarity an end in itself? As is to be expected, the answer is negative: just as for development aid, global solidarity cannot be an end in itself. The image of Africa as a land of solidarity is not to be made anymore. The African solidarity is far from being an end in itself; or a kind of accommodation that encourages parasitism and drift, as denounced by analysts like S. Smith (Smith, 2004: 141-156). Following many African thinkers including J. Mbiti, we maintain that African solidarity is

essentially at the service of the human life in a human community (Mbiti, 1970). But what does this mean concretely?

The concept of life does not refer to any vitalist mind or animistic perception of the world on behalf of African people (Bidima, 1995:55-58). The issue at stake concerns the human life in its material or basic dimension (bios). Borrowing the phenomenological category of H. Arendt, we can evoke the category of the "*animal laborans"* which insists on the satisfaction of the human basic needs, just required to be in life or to be a living being (Arendt, 1958). Concretely, it concerns the capacity of African (as a human being) to maintain the life (food; health care; etc.); to take part in the reproduction of the life and to pass it onto future generations.

Indeed, the idea of life is prior to everything, according to the African world vision. Life is a gift from God, through the mediation of the Ancients. It must be well kept and passed onto future generations. The African thinks of himself to be a link in the long chain of the management and the transmission of the life. Consequently, the individual lives with a permanent consciousness of interdependence towards both the ancients and forthcoming generations. For African people, 'to be' is essentially 'to be connected'; to be linked to the community (Bidima, 1995: 56).

The Rev. P. Tempels is the first to address the paramount worry of the African about life. He does it in his famous philosophical book named: *Le Philosophie Bantoue* (Tempels, 1947). For Tempels: "in the mouth of Black people, they are words which are repeated ceaselessly. They are like a variation on a leitmotiv which is present in their language; their thought; and in their actions. This supreme value is the life; the strength: to live strong or vital force" (Tempels, 1947: 30).

For the Baluba of the Kasayi (DRC), the consciousness related to the value of life is ubiquitous in their daily language. In Tshiluba language, the word "moyo" stands for "life". To greet each other, the Baluba use the expression: "*Ndi nkuela moyo*" either " *Moyo weba* ". That means: "I wish the life to you "; either: "Life to you". The answer goes to the same way around: "*Eeh! Moyo*"; either: "*Weeba peeba*". That means: "Yes, I accept the life or your wish of life to me"; either: "Life to you as well". Abounding in the sense of the Rev. Tempels' observation, we can assert that the category of "life" is central in the Baluba perception of the world as it is used in every major life circumstance; first and principally to refer to the material dimension and the quality of human relationship. It is in the very centre of their conception of global solidarity.

In addition to that, we also see that human life is considered as an ethical criterion of universal validity. Its defense is both a moral and a political imperative (Dussel, 2002: 127-129). The defense of the threatened and denied human life is a moral principle that resists further alternatives and metaphysical speculations. Such a principle is more binding with regard to the already evoked situation of African peoples who are exterminated by the poverty and annihilated by the exploitation on behalf of ruling system. A global solidarity worthy of the name should make people consider human life as the main and prior target. In such a prospect, the African struggle for life can be part of tens of thousands of voices that are already claiming for an adjustment of the current global economic system which privileges the profit for itself instead of the well-being of humankind (Houtart; Polet, 1999: 131-135).

Focusing on the improvement of human life, global solidarity is different facing the global single market. In this regard, the African world vision should contribute to the emergence of an alternative world, making visible the richness and diversity of humankind; how far every culture of the humanity can contribute to the emergence of another possible world. Nobody is so poor that he cannot bring any support, in return, to his fellow men.

III-3. *Global Solidarity and Community Membership*
As already underlined, the African world vision emphasizes the role of the community as the space from which life emerges and grows up. It is through the community and within the cooperation of all members of the community that human life develops. Now the question is: can solidarity be developed beyond community borders? If yes, then why? Consequently, if such a prospect is feasible, how far can we explain both the genocide and the ethnic conflicts occurring in Africa?

Indeed, the human life constitutes the corner stone of the negro-African vision of the world. As we already mentioned the value of human life amongst African communities, we should consider that the defense of life through global solidarity has to go beyond frontiers and clan spirit. The respect for the destiny of victims of the ruling system as well as of the African dictatorships and all people in need of help, recommends both modesty and an open mind to those who, in virtue of ethnic comfort, political interests, or a regionalist expectations, deny the relevance of a cross-border solidarity.

The protagonists of ethnic solidarity consider the idea of global solidarity as meaningless as well as idealistic. Some of them even think the world organization should be developed in compliance with segregationist logic or apartheid. According to them, solidarity must be developed in the context of separated communities on the basis of ethnic or regional ties. Their reasoning relies on the bonds of mutual care characterizing the concept of solidarity as more strong and effective in particular communities, where members share a common identity; rather than in a universal community where people do not have such a strong attachment between them.

This attitude is based on a double consideration: on one side, the protagonists of ethnic solidarity use the convergence of the resemblance or the argument of homogeneity; on the other side, they underline the exclusion of the different or the rejection of diversity. In sum, the ethnic solidarity defenders deny both the people diversity and a capacity of integration on account of their community membership. The dichotomy of their reasoning can be disentangled as follows: the community is built on the basis of an antagonistic logic; that means it is built on the basis of the opposition between the "We" (the community members supposed to be homogenous, unanimous and united) and the "other" (the foreigner; the non identical; the different). According to this way of thinking, the denial and the exclusion of the difference ("other") are both essential to the assertion of the existence of the community ("We"). I am (or we are) because you are not. You have to disappear for us (the "We") to be. In order, the eviction of the different (the other) is the basic requirement for us (the "We") to be. To be, the "*demos*" excludes the "others" on account of their identity

background (Maalouf, 1998). Therefore solidarity is possible only within the community's fellow members.

In virtue of such an approach, people can justify the indefensible. This was the case concerning the Rwandan genocide, in 1994, for example. On account of their respective ethnic membership, both the Tutsi and Hutu opposed and killed each other in incredible proportions (Boubacar Diop, 2000). This was also the case of the inhuman eviction of the Baluba from the Katanga province, in 1991-1993, in the DRC: on the basis of ethnic membership, tens of thousands of people from Kasai were deprived of their properties and chased away as rats of the Katanga (Kangomba, 2000). The recent political dead-end in Ivory Coast can also be considered as an illustration of ethnic or community based solidarity. In his essay "*Négrologie. Pourquoi l'Afrique meurt*", S. Smith denounces the persistence of such an attitude in Africa which he sees as characteristic of African dictatorships (Smith, 2003: 141-156).

The idea of limiting solidarity to a shared common identity; values or an ethnic membership seems to be attractive, because it flatters the ego of all kinds of nationalists. However, it sins on both sides: first the confinement in the homogeneity; and secondly, the refusal of all difference. This reasoning is pure sophism, because no identity, culture or community is ever in the pure state. It is on account of loans, mixture and solidarity that our identities and communities are built (Maalouf, 1998).

To confine the practice of solidarity to a common identity is to deny human life as a shared value by all human beings the world over. In virtue of human life viewed as a universal ethical reference, we dispute the validity of the ethnic solidarity thesis, because it promotes a kind of essentialist approach favorable to some kind of political and social eugenics; aiming to the development of homogenous entities, and consequently, to the negation of diversity and human integration. The protagonists of this thesis pass over in silence a fundamental element without which any solidarity worthy of the name is possible: the human life. This is a Universal value whose defense is morally mandatory to everyone. Such a defense can justify a world solidarity towards those in need (Dussel, 2002: 17-39).

With regard to the previous assertion, what is then the role of kinship solidarity? Is the "family to family solidarity" to be evicted from the Africans' relationship panorama? First of all, we must recognize that the kinship is still important in Africa. It plays a major role in the development of individual and the implementation of social harmony (Mbiti, 2004: 135-138). By having common descendants, people share also a common fate. This situation has the effect of strengthening the link between them. Such an attachment should be considered as a plus in the context of global solidarity as it can be used as an important step in mobilization the people for global solidarity. But the question is still: how far can be kinship based solidarity reach out to foreign people?

The concept of kinship based solidarity must be considered within its original context of traditional Africa where people lived in a homogenous social space; and communities were dependent upon themselves for self-defense and the survival. In such a context, every community member is obliged to protect his community and

insure its future generations. Currently the world has changed and is still changing. Kinship based solidarity is more and more questioned by African themselves.[17] The emergence of big cities promotes the slackening of community ties and constraints. This state of things calls for a reconsideration of the kinship based solidarity concept. To be precise, the question concerns more the context solidarity is practiced than the principle itself as, even in big cities, people develop new types and ties of solidarity based on new categories like the neighborhood, labor, classmates, gender, political or social activism, churches; etc.

Anyway, drawing on the pertinence of human life as a Universal and moral criteria, we sustain the development of a cross-border solidarity, regardless of all kinds of barriers. The point is the implication of everyone in the development and the defense of the human life wherever needed.

III-4. *Solidarity and Justice*

It is common place to note that solidarity is not a self generational behavior. It is rather a fruit of strong moral convictions, a balance of power relationship, a result of various conflicts of interests and social struggles. It is essential to underline a practice without which any act of solidarity is meaningless or, in some cases, it can be considered as a theft, a rape, or a violation. Speaking of theft, we refer to the extortion and the pillage of both material and intellectual resources of African countries.[18] By the notion of rape, we make reference to the alienation of the imaginary of African people and the destruction of their cultures; and finally, by violation, we indicate any shape of violation of the fundamental human rights, especially the right to life and to develop a decent living (Traoré, 2002).

With regard to the mentioned treats, we think of the requirement of justice to be the basic criterion and perspective of solidarity. We speak of justice towards and within the African continent. J. Rawls considers such a requirement as "the first virtue of the social institutions" (Rawls, 1971); whereas, several centuries before him, Saint Augustin already underlined the importance of justice by claiming that "kingdoms without justice are only companies of robbery."[19]

What does the idea of justice refer to? What should be its implications in the debate on global solidarity, particularly from an African perspective? We think of the idea of justice to be related to the search of global harmony. The search for harmony is constitutive of the African world view. Unfortunately, this concept has been interpreted by many scholars either in a platonic way, far from the people daily realities or reduced to the submission of Africans to the law of the nature (Robert, 2004: 114-115). Many left aside the basic needs of African people or fundamental human aspirations and focused on a metaphysical perspective and the world beyond. Consequently, they put forth evidence of animism and vitalism in African traditions,

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[17]www.slateafrique.com/833/face-cachée-solidaité-africaine
[18]In this respect, there are many reports of the United Nations concerning the spoliation of countries of the Great Lakes Region, for example.
[19]http://la-philosophie.com/citations-de-saint-augustin

passing over silent conflicts and daily fights for biological survival, or social and environmental balance (Bidima, 1995: 49-58).

We think of this interpretation to be contrary to African people aspirations and daily realities. The harmony to which the African people aspire is first and fundamentally rooted in their real life. The harmony refers to the search for equilibrium in social and political life as well as in regard to the environment. Harmony does not have to do with any artless faith and unfounded fears in front of the nature. Harmony focuses on the balance in the redistribution of the social dividend; on taking care of orphans, widows, both the handicapped and aging people. Harmony stands for balance and justice.

On the other hand, the idea of justice does not imply any mathematical equality. It rejects all kind of sterile and metaphysical speculation. It is linked to the concept of life because it aims at both the protection and development of the human life. The life is perceived as a collective adventure. Justice has to aim at the equilibrium within the community, in particular towards the most discriminated. J. Rawls spoke of justice as a search for equity (Rawls, 1971).

Beyond the current changes, it is the duty of African leaders to restore such a value as well as to promote it as the African contribution to global solidarity. Concretely, they have to take part rigorously in the struggle against corruption, for example, improve their own practices towards the most deprived among which are the children, the elderly and the widows.

This task is also a duty of the whole international community which, in order to strengthen the credibility of proclaimed fundamental human rights, should encourage the achievement of fair and international structures concerned with the issue of good life for all. Why is profit for, if it is not human life oriented? It should be time to promote through a renewed idea of global solidarity more social and economical justice than aid.

Conclusion

The African continent is walking backwards in the current globalized and changing world. As a result, tens of thousands of Africans are starving from hunger, poverty and misery. To put an end to these sufferings is a moral and political imperative. In this regard, many people thought of development aid to be an adequate way to achieve solidarity with African people. Unfortunately, a balance sheet of more than 50 years of development aid's projects confirms the fact that, in reality, in its current shape, this aid help generates more dependency and poverty than it contributes to the real emancipation of Africa. Therefore, it is time to change the paradigm of world solidarity, to focus on social and economic justice, but also promote alternative values and traditions of solidarity by revealing the contributions from Africa and Africans on the issue.

Global solidarity is not a question of money and power relationships. It is the consciousness of a common struggle against injustice, poverty and misery all over the world. Based on human interdependence, such a solidarity is called to be a multidirectional dynamic; a space in which everybody is considered as a subject and

able to bring his own contribution to the well-being of humankind. This is an important challenge for African people, as well as for all those who believe in real solidarity between people and its strength to make things change.

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