

Report of the Inaugural Meeting of the Steering committee of the Civic Commission for Africa (C-CfA) in Accra Republic of Ghana 23-25 June 2007

Background

WSF/Kenya:

Between June and December of 2006 there was a global invitation to the World Social Forum (WSF) and in January 2007, the entire world descended on Nairobi the capital city of the African Republic of Kenya. This was indeed a watershed for both Africa and the world, providing a platform for discussions on everything imaginable from agriculture; environment; education; HIV/AIDS; human and people's rights; politics; water and sanitation; Women, children and vulnerable rights; corporate responsibility; unfair labour, animal rights; north-south and south-south relationships; IFIs; Breton Woods institutions to zoology. The WSF provided academic opportunity, the meeting and sharing of cultures, the birth of new ideas, concretization of old ones and above all it provided a lovers' nest for many: a window for new, transient but also lasting friendships. It was at the WSF that the Japanese delegation held a session on the Tokyo (Japan) International Conference on African Development (TICAD) Civil Society Forum (TCSF).

C-CfA

In the month of April 2007, simultaneously, a group E-mails emanating from the TCSF in Japan were sent to apparently all countries in Africa for the formation and ownership of a new idea the "'CVIVIC COMMISSION for AFRICA' (C-CfA)". As the idea unfolded in a generic pan-African organization, it became clear that the need for and the idea to have an organization in Africa to engage with the G8, African Diaspora and the world in general coincided and became a comparative advantage both for Africa, Africans, Diaspora and the world in general. Twenty-two countries responded to the clarion call of the TCSF for candidates to the C-CfA out of which an online election was conducted for five (5) of the 22 **Country Based Organizations (CBOs)** were chosen from among themselves together with four (4) **Actor-Based Organizations (ABOs)** - nine (9) in all - to become the decision making executive body of the C-CfA to be known as the "**Steering Committee (SC)**".

CBOs

The twenty (20) countries which responded and therefore became Country Based Organizations are:-**Angola, Benin, Cameroun, Cote d'Ivoire, Botswana, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Madagascar, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe** and the 4 (four) Actor-based Organizations representing: **Women, People living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA), South-east African Farmers, North-west African Farmers.**

Steering Committee

The second stage of the process was the conduction of elections for the equivalent of an Executive in an orthodox organization for proactive, responsible decision making known as **Steering Committee** to which after fierce contest, five (5) organizations were elected. The countries of these organizations were:-Benin, Kenya, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe in addition to the four (4) Actor Based organizations as follows (Women -inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices (IAC), PLWA -Treatment Action Campaign, Farmers -South-East Africa -PELUM Association, Farmers - North West Africa - ROPPA.

Ghana Meetings

C-CfA Inaugural SC Meeting

Between April and June this year, every effort had been made for the opportunity of the inaugural meeting of the SC and it came during the 9th session of the African Union where apart from the meeting of African politicians there was space for the meeting of major African CSOs, Coalitions, platforms etc., from across Africa. The space was for African civil society to meet and strategize on the African union process, decolonization of Africa and give a second look at the development paradigm of Africa in relation to its position in the international geopolitics.

And so, major part of the steering committee (SC) members, a C-CfA member and some observers first met at the Niagara Hotel on Sunday 24 June 2007 with the following in attendance:- **Charles Abbey (Ghana) host/Chairman, Mwangi Waituru (Kenya), Gustave Assah (Benin), Falla Ensa-N'Dayma (Sierra Leone), Mandla HADEBE (Zimbabwe), Seth Ablosso (Ghana) -observer-, Rose Wanjiru (Kenya) -observer-, Miki Yoshida (TCSF-Japan) -observer-**.

The meeting was brief but a major breakthrough was achieved in that elections were held for the Task Force (TF) of the Steering Committee with the following as members of the TF: **Gustav Assah, Chairman; Mwangi Waituru, Executive Secretary and one representative from the Actor-Based Organizations to serve as Treasurer with two organizations to serve as Ex-officio (one Anglophone and one Lusophone)**

Chairman Assah thanked the members for the confidence reposed in him and promised not let them down. The meeting agreed to open up the C-CfA to the whole of Africa for collective ownership after which the name, abbreviation and logo of the C-CfA were scrutinized and agreed on by consensus. It was also agreed that for the C-CfA to succeed, it must effectively engage with the Political; Social; Economic; Women, Children and Youth; Disabled and Physically Challenged and the Diaspora and that this

engagement must be through a process with a Vision, Mission, Raison d'etre, Methodology, Strategies etc. In addition to this, it was also agreed that the C-CfA must work with the existing structures like African Union (AU) especially the Economic Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) of the AU; Organization of African Workers Trade Unions, G-CAP Africa, Millennium Campaign and other Pan-African workers' organizations; West African Peace Building Network (WAPNET); Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), South African Development Community (SADC); East African Economic Community (EAC) COMESA etc.

Who are we?

This question came up in the quest to find our right place within the C-CfA and to be able to place the C-CfA in an advantage position within the African and diasporan socio-political environment in a way that can make ownership of the C-CfA by the ordinary people of Africa easily absorptive. In essence, it was easy to say "we are Africans inside Africa and the diaspora using the C-CfA as a vehicle to forge linkages between and among ourselves within a timeframe, a registered secretariat with a proffered, well defined strategy.

What do we want?

The Steering Committee (SC) and the country based organizations (CbOs) want to effectually engage 4th TICAD (Tokyo International Conference on African Development) and G-8 Summit (both to be held in Japan in 2008) and beyond. "We are in the search for the best for Africa and Africans in Africa and the diaspora through effectective communication and engagement with other global players".

What is the Vision

We want to see a well organized C-CfA that is advantageously positioned to effectively engage the 4th TICAD and G-8 in 2008 and beyond.

Objectives

To influence G8's policy on developmental support

To promote people-centered governance

* C-CfA's Main target is TICAD. Through the activities toward TICAD, C-CfA influences G8 (including Japan)'s policy and African policy.

Duration of C-CfA

C-CfA exists as long as TICAD continue.

Activities

1. To create a paper on voices of Africa before the October 2007 meeting in Japan to which C-CfA may be invited and present the voices (The paper and its annex will be edited as a magazine and distributed to donors if possible).

This paper will be created to present the rural African voices to the 4th TICAD and G 8 in 2008 and represent Africa

The content of this paper is based on the country/actor based white paper about the true impact of international (including Japanese) commitment in Africa and the effective utilization of their support

Schedule:

Until at least 1 month before the meeting in Benin (22-27 Aug 2007): each member organization finds a consultant familiar to the subject and resource to realize the country/actor based white paper.

Until at least 2 weeks before the meeting in Benin: Each member organization (or a consultant) realizes a report on "the impact of international (including Japanese) commitment on (country)/(actor) and the effective utilization of their support". The report will be based on existing reports, experience and knowledge. (Although the report present the real voice of rural people, research in sites will not be necessary if the resource and time do not allow it.)

At least 1 week before the meeting in Benin: Validation meeting will be organized by member organizations with other CSOs in each country to finalize the country/actor based white paper.

After the validation, if possible, public meeting will be also organized.

22-27 August: C-CfA meeting in Benin. (C-CfA members will be invited by Social Watch Benin if they apply.) Every member organization will bring their country/actor based white paper and discuss about the form of the Paper, which will be created based on the reports.

Until the next meeting in Kenya: Every member organization will discuss about the contents of the Paper with other CSOs in each country/ among same actor and create a proposition of the paper.

15-18 (plan) September: C-CfA meeting in Kenya. (It's possible that around 10 organizations will be invited to Kenya by JICA.) Every member organization will bring their proposition papers and create one common Paper, titled "Voice of African Civil Society". Country/actor based white papers will be attached to the paper as annex.

Until the next symposium in Tokyo: The Paper and its annex will be edited as a magazine of resource allows. These magazines will be distributed to the donor agencies and others.

27 October: Symposium in Tokyo. The Paper will be presented officially.

Until TICAD IV (May 2008): Several activities will be implemented using the Paper as advocacy tool.

At the same time of TICAD: TICAD on civil society level will be organized in Japan. (We are not sure if it's C-CfA members who will be invited to Japan.)

2. To follow up international commitment after TICAD/G8.

Schedule:

After G8 in Japan: Period of follow up

December 2008: Review and determination of the strategy of next TICAD

What can TICAD/TCSF do?

To influence positive G-8 policy towards Africa

To influence positive Japanese people/government policy towards Africa

To introduce/connect C-CfA with the government of Japan

C-CfA Strategy

To work with the existing Pan-African and regional and diasporan institutions and their country networks and local CSOs/NGOs through the C-CfA CbOs

Measurable Goals/Outcomes

The G-8 working with Africa and African countries in meeting the MDGs in especially health, HIV/AIDS and other diseases and the cancellation of debt

The Japanese government supporting quality and quantity aid to Africa for pro-poor activities/projects

TICAD's clear pro African people centered input into the fulfillment of international commitment to eradicate poverty in Africa and to promote good governance in Africa

Mandate

To run the C-CfA process and platform in Africa using sustained best practice

To have the secretariat registered in Africa with a liaison office in Japan

Register an Office for one year (July 1 2007-June 30 2008) in the Republic of Kenya, East Africa.

To have the Kenyan SC member organization serve as Executive Secretary (G-CAP Kenya was elected to serve as Executive Secretary for one year and to register C-CfA).

That the officers responsible at law for all C-CfA actions are: Chairman, Executive Secretary and Treasurer

SC meeting 25th June 2007 (Morning)

Present

Mandla Hadebe (representing Charles Mutasa, AFRODAD) - Zimbabwe

Charles Mwangi Waituru, G-CAP - Kenya (C-CfA Executive Secretary)

Charles Abbey, ADP - Ghana

Falla Ensa-N'Dayma, CSAP-S L- Sierra Leone

Gustave Assah, Social Watch - Benin (C-CfA Chairman)

Miki Yoshida, TCSF - Japan (Observer)

On the 25th June, in anticipation of a scheduled meeting with the Global Call for Action Against Poverty (G-CAP) Africa Facilitation Team (AFT) in order to continue with the previous unfinished business of the 24th June. The SC held another meeting at the Golden Tulip Hotel with the following decisions:-

Citation: "Be it resolved at this second meeting of the SC held at the Golden Tulip Hotel, that the following decisions were taken by us here assembled for and on behalf of the Civic Commission for Africa in the hope that they will be implemented by all concerned with our full cooperation and putting the full weight of our organizations in their fulfillment/implementation thereof....."

That the logo of the C-CfA should be, "the map of Africa with a shining star in the middle with cowries at the centre of the star"

That a letterhead must be produced with the above logo on it with the list of the Task Force members on the left hand side

That the C-CfA should be opened up for the rest of the African countries who wish to join to come on board with the responsibility for that resting on the Chairman and the Executive Secretary

That a letter introducing the C-CfA to the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs including JICA, Japanese Embassies, G-8 countries and African governments and institutions be written and signed by the Chairman and, sent out (through TICAD) as urgently as possible

That a Liaison Office be established/opened in Japan run and manned by the TCSF on behalf of the C-CfA for easy access to the G-8, Europe, Asia and the diaspora

That all letters and policy documents should be signed by the Chairman while the Executive Secretary signs all administrative documents

All letters and/or other documents emanating from the CbOs should be signed by the designated country representatives on the approval of the use of the letterhead by the Chairman

That any information sent out requesting action on which action is not taken for up to 72 hours it is taken that those who have not acted on it have agreed with it and there will be no revision of the decision if any one comes out with a contrary view after five (5) days or 100 hours whichever is earlier

That these resolutions will form part of the constitution and other laws that exist or may be made for the good of the C-CfA and are therefore binding on all unless any body or person(s) raise an issue against the resolutions within 5 days on receipt.

That for the meeting in Kenya in September, if only 10 organization will be invited 5 country-based members of steering committee, 2 actor-based members, 3 other country-based members including Lusophone will attend the meeting.

That the chairman has an authority to decide in the name of Steering Committee and take decision after consultation or without consultation among the SC in the interest of the smooth running of the C-CfA..

Afternoon)

C-CfA (SC) Meeting with G-CAP Africa Facilitation Team (AFT)

Present

Christophe Zougrana, G-CAP/AFT

Ange-Marie Kalenga, G-CAP/AFT

Mandla Mudebe, C-CfA

Charles Abbey C-CfA

Gustave Assah, C-CfA

Seth Ablosso, GTUC - Observer

Falla Ensa-N'Dayma, C-CfA

Miki Yoshida, TCSF

The Global Call to Action Against Poverty (G-CAP) Africa Facilitation Team (AFT) scheduled a meeting with the C-CfA which took place at the Golden Tulip Hotel. The meeting was called to order by Gustave Assah, Chairman of C-CfA and requested all present to do self introduction:- Gustave Assah, Seth Ablosso, Charles Abbey, Mandla Mudebe and Falla Ensa-N'Dayma C-CfA; Miki Yoshida, TCSF, Japan - Observer; Marie-Ange kalenga and Christophe Zougrana, G-CAP/AFT.

Chairman Assah thanked the G-CAP team for the invitation and interest in the new Pan African C-CfA and asked the G-CAP to make a presentation. Christophe, the Chairman of the AFT thanked all and reiterated interest in the C-CfA on behalf of the G-CAP Africa and requested that G-CAP and C-CfA work together for the good of Africa since G-CAP was a coalition of more than 30 (thirty) country chapters in Africa with a special mandate to fight for the eradication of poverty.

Charles Abbey explained that the main reason for the C-CfA was basically to gather voices from Africa toward TICAD and G8 and take back responses from the G-8. In addition, the C-CfA was an African owned organization for permanent engagement with the G-8 on various issues including poverty.

Charles gave the structure of the C-CfA as been composed of 17 (seventeen) Country-Based Organization (CBOs) and 4 (four) Actor Based Organizations (ABOs) with a Steering Committee (SC) made up of 5 (five) CBOs and four ABO.

The Chairman of the C-CfA Gustave Assah said that the C-CfA was ready for strategic alliance, partnership and collaboration with G-CAP for information sharing and co-hosting events since G-CAP is Pan African and thematic focused. Chairman Assah, informed the meeting about the meeting his organization, Social Watch - Benin was organizing in Cotonou, Republic of Benin 22-27 August 2007 to which he extended invitation to the Steering Committee of the C-CfA and the chairman of the G-CAP-AFT. The C-CfA chairman further talked about the C-CfA meeting in Nairobi, Kenya in September 2007 where the TCSF has shown possibility of sponsoring 10 (ten) of the 21 (twenty-one) of the C-CfA members. The C-CfA meeting in Nairobi will take place between September 15th to 18th, 2007 in order to finalise "Voices". The outcome of this meeting, thus finalized "Voices" will be taken to Tokyo where the C-CfA is expected to be shared with Japanese civil society, and released world widely by some representatives of C-CfA in the end of October 2007. Gustave said that at this initial stage C-CfA's challenge will be: Women & Children; Disabled/Physically Challenged & Marginalized; Governance & Poverty and Voices of African People. Gustave enquired from the G-CAP chairman whether it was possible for the G-CAP to help funding the participation of the remaining 11 (eleven) members of the C-CfA in the Kenya meeting?

Replying the G-CAP chairman Christophe, could not give a definite answer to either the invitation or the request for sponsorship even though he believed that the C-CfA was a good initiative. He said that G-CAP Africa will support anything that promotes African development especially the eradication of poverty adding that AFT will ask country G-CAPs to liaise with C-CfA CBOs with the possibility of co-organizing events provided that a **formal letter** requesting collaboration originates from C-CfA to the G-CAP-AFT.

Christophe informed the meeting about important mobilization days in 2007: the first mobilization date being July 7 which is the mid-term between 2000 and 2015 for the achievement of the MDGs, October 17 the day of Global mobilization to show disappointment against the developed world and to request more commitment to the eradication of poverty based on thematic issues.

The C-CfA chairman thanked all especially the G-CAP members present for making the meeting the meeting possible.

Faithfully Presented:

Falla Ensa-N'Dayma
Rapporteur

Done at Accra, Republic of Ghana
26th June 2007.

-THE END-