

ATTAC TOGO PRESS RELEASE ON THE LAST JOINT ASSEMBLY ACP-EU

Attac Togo paid particular attention to the debates held during the last joint meeting ACP-EU, notably about the external debt of the ACP countries. Attac Togo is thrilled at the importance given by the representatives of the ACP countries and the EU to the major theme and welcomes the parliamentarians' consideration for some of the suggestions of the civil society committed in this theme. Years after the beginning of the debt in the South, we have reached a new debt crisis which throws the world into even more serious worries.

The financial and political crisis the European Union is undergoing must be analyzed not as a cyclic economic crisis but as a failure of the economic system as a whole. Without a deep and serious analysis, no sustainable outcome of the crisis will exist. The failures of the various measures taken since the beginning of the 2008 crisis prove it. Regarding the recent history of the ACP countries, the austerity plans implemented in Europe are not the solutions to the crisis. More than 25 years after undergoing the same measures, no ACP country has seen its indebtedness solved. On the contrary, indebtedness has increased and remains a genuine problem. Hence, the importance the assembly has devoted to this burning issue.

Attac Togo is delighted to notice that the assembly granted a large moment of the debates to the abolition of the debt. After the crisis, the recent abolitions of the debts in the balance sheets of the western banks and their successive bailings out with the public funds convince us that all the present debts of the ACP countries can be abolished. Actually, the total debt of the developing countries, among which the ACP countries, reaches 1580 billion \$ whereas the European Union devoted 2000 billion Euros - in vain - to save its banks. It sounds more urgent to save one billion and a half inhabitants in the ACP countries who are victims of the basic social sectors because of the structural adjustment programs than to save the banks and their shareholders. As Thomas Sankara declared at the 1987 Conference of the Organization of the African Unity « if we do not pay, our creditors will not die ». Let us recall that the debts of the ACP countries are odious since they were contracted by the dictatorial regimes which were supported by the European Institutions to oppress their people. The recent cases of Tunisia and Egypt are still in our minds. The debts of those countries must simply be abolished as a mea-culpea to the silence and support of the European Union to their dictators.

Whatever the level of development of a country, the reimbursement of the debt lies on the people. It is important for the populations to know how the loaned sums were actually spent. Therefore, in the North as well as in the South audits are necessary so as to assess the situation and analyze the conditions, which surround the loans. Beyond the action of the state auditors asking in the assembly resolution, Attac Togo thinks the creation of independent commissions in each country of the ACP-EU is necessary, following the example of the commission created by the Ecuador Government in 2007 which managed to launch a complete audit of the debt of the country. Attac Togo asks the different parliamentarians, representatives of the peoples, to act in their own country to launch independent audits of the debt with the participation of the people. No partnership will be possible between the ACP and the EU as long as the stanglehold of the debt lasts. The debt carries on the domination of the South by the North. A partner relationship between Europe and the ACP cannot exist without a questioning of today's exchange and aid policies, which are the best tools to subjugate. Attac Togo calls the parliamentarians of all the ACP countries to demand the complete abolition and without condition of all the debts before the beginning of any kind of partnership as the EU wants to enforce through the Treaty of Lisbon.

In an era of crisis when the voice of the peoples in the South as in the North is not considered any more, when any public indignation against the crisis, the impacts and the governments is oppressed, we ask the ACP-EU parliamentarians to be more careful about the defense of the freedoms of expression and action of the citizens. More than ever, Attac Togo supports the introduction of a Tobin-type tax and the closure of the tax heavens to fight tax evasion and embezzlements of public funds in Africa.

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