

AFJN's Post-Conference Challenge

By Rocco Puopolo, s.x.

AFJN Conference	1
Zimbabwe Crisis	3
Congo Global Action	4
Militarization	5
Notre Dame Conference	6
Prayer for South Africa	7

At our recent 25th Anniversary Conference, Dr. Jeffrey Sachs posed several challenges to AFJN members and conference participants. The goal of his presentation was to provide an assessment of the outgoing Bush Administration and suggestions for the incoming administration, particularly in relation to the Millennium Development Goals. After explaining that the government's attention to these goals got side-tracked due to the Global War on Terror, Dr. Sachs offered seven suggestions for the new administration that will put the focus back on the United States' full participation in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. As in any conference, not all participants agreed that these suggestions are the best advice for the new administration, but we share them here to start of a conversation with you, the reader, and we welcome your feedback. Our goal is to collate a structured and well thought-out contribution to the next administration, starting in this very engaging season of political platform making. It is our hope that by the end of the summer, we will have a number of suggestions and concerns that we, together with other Africa advocates, can present to the candidates who are vying for the presidency.



Board Chair Robert Dowd, CSC and Dr. Jeffrey Sachs (live teleconference) at AFJN's 25th Anniversary Conference.

First, Dr. Sachs hopes that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) can be the centerpiece of US outreach to Africa and the rest of the world. These need to be firm and clear. He wants to hear the MDGs in the inaugural address in January! President Bush has mentioned the MDGs publicly only once in his entire presidency to date.

Second, he would like to see a cabinet-level department on sustainable development, on par with all other cabinet positions in the executive branch.

(Continued on page 2)



(Continued from page 1)

Third, he wants to see us fulfill our commitment to Official Development Assistance (ODA) by committing 0.5% by 2010 and 0.7% by 2025 of the Gross National Income (GNI).

Fourth, he would like to see the end of malaria by provid-

we would like to invite other suggestions that we at AFJN can present to the new administration. For starters, we would like to offer the following: We suggest that the next President rebalance funding between the State Department and the Department of Defense; for example, the \$300-500 million requested for funding the Pentagon's Africa Command (AFRICOM) should be put into USAID

or, as suggested by Dr. Sachs's, a new development cabinet position. We would like to see a new approach to the security issue in Africa, relying more on civilian policing in whatever form would be appropriate, rather than military options. On the level of civil society, we encourage the administration to promote awareness about what good governance means and to provide civil society with ways to generate good governance in their own countries. On an economic level, the new President should promote microcredit schemes to engage the people of Africa in the

development of their communities. The World Bank has recently increased its contributions to microcredit initiatives, but global contributions to such programs are miniscule considering the proven impact of direct micro-lending. Now to you. What proposals would you add? Which of the above suggestions do you agree or disagree with?

At this important time, ideas have the possibility of getting into the policy platforms of those who wish to govern our nation. We have an opportunity to get Africa on the road map for the new administration. If proposals or other concerns come to your mind (or if you wish to see what other AFJN members suggest), please go to our website and click on the new blog entitled "2008 Africa Platform."

Also, on a related note, our colleagues at Network and the Catholic Alliance for the Common Good are hosting the **Convention for the Common Good** in Philadelphia July 11-13. It is an attempt to gather concerned citizens together to contribute to platform proposals that can be forwarded to the candidates for president that will reflect the Common Good. Go to www.commongoodconvention.org for more information and registration.



Conference Participants at the Banquet Celebration on April 19th, 2008.

ing treated bed nets as well as making anti-malarial drugs available in every village.

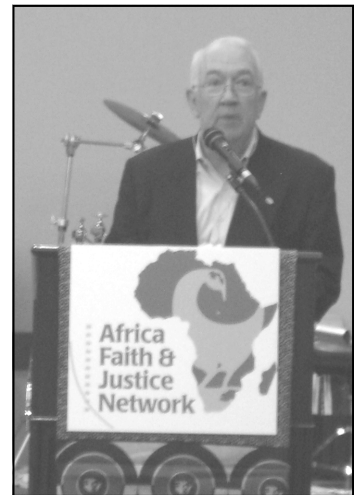
Fifth, he suggests a Green Revolution for Africa. In other words, creating a Global Fund that will increase food production on the continent.

Sixth, Dr. Sachs would like to see an end to ethanol subsidies so that the U.S. can put money into food production rather than into gas tanks. Ethanol is an incredibly inefficient form of energy that not only diverts resources from responsible farm policy but is also unlikely to yield results in the movement to curb global warming.

Lastly, he encouraged the incoming administration to join the Millennium Village Projects in a more holistic way through outreach in agriculture, education and health care. Why are there not adequate tools for farmers, schools and supplies for children, health clinics in villages and trained community health workers, potable water, electricity, etc.?

There was a short give and take with Dr. Sachs on these proposals at the conference. Among other things, AFJN takes issue with Dr. Sachs fifth point on the Green Revolution and its structure. The idea that Africa needs genetically modified seeds and chemical fertilizers to feed its people is an American view of agriculture that undermines the traditional and successful farming methods of the people of Africa. We will be following this issue in the months ahead, with an eye toward respecting the sacredness and fertility of African soil.

Now, for those of you who could not attend the conference or for those who were unable to ask Dr. Sachs a question,



CRS President Ken Hackett receiving the Faith and Justice Award.

Zimbabwe: A Massive Challenge

By Marie Dennis, Director of the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, and AFJN member. Marie recently returned from Zimbabwe where she served as an election monitor.

The day by day situation for almost everyone in Zimbabwe – except for a small elite – is dreadful. Life expectancy for women has plummeted to 34 years and for men to 37 years. The economy has completely collapsed, with inflation reaching astronomical levels (1 million percent at the end of May). A vibrant black market exists in both currency and goods. (The government prints money as needed then sends runners out on the street to sell it for foreign exchange on the black market.) The shelves of most food stores are practically empty and prices are rising on an almost hourly basis. Electricity is sporadic; many neighborhoods have no water service; fuel is expensive and difficult to obtain; roads and infrastructure are deteriorating. Unemployment has reached 80% and infant mortality 81 of 1000. People are amazingly creative and resilient, but many are hungry – even starving.

When I arrived in Harare on Wednesday, March 26, the atmosphere was calm and focused on the presidential, parliamentary and local elections to be held just a few days later. The campaign had been peaceful so far, although most people assumed that manipulation was already underway and rumors were circulating about what had been done to rig the elections. Some said that officials had printed duplicates of every numbered ballot; that 600,000 postal votes had been printed for about 50,000 eligible people; that 9 million regular ballots had been printed for only 5.9 registered voters; that many dead people's names were still on the voter rolls.

Both Morgan Tsvangirai (candidate of the Movement for Democratic Change) and Simba Makoni (independent candidate formerly from the ZANU-PF party) were campaigning vigorously, although fear was clearly present that those who publicly supported either one would be punished later if Mugabe were to be re-elected, which was considered highly unlikely if the elections were free and fair.

The election process was managed by the Zimbabwe Election Commission (ZEC). Observer missions from SADC (the Southern Africa Development Community), the Pan African Parliament, every candidate, Zimbabwe's civil society and the ecumenical community were present

across the country.

The voting process itself went very well and quickly. Votes were counted at the polling stations and results posted outside the same stations immediately. Problems were expected in the rural areas where the lack of electricity would make late counting difficult but observers followed the process to the end in most locations. By the end of the day word was circulating about a major victory for the opposition.

All day on Sunday March 30, the day after the elections, there was a great deal of anxiety because there was no official word from the ZEC about results, despite the fact the MDC had begun to report a huge victory. Rumors continued to circulate, and there were some confirmed reports of rigging.

The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN), an independent, non-governmental organization, had 8000 observers in the field. Despite the lack of tolerance, lack of equal access to state media etc. prior to the election, they

“The voting process itself went very well and quickly... By the end of the day, word was circulating about a major victory for the opposition.”

affirmed that the voting process and vote counting had taken place without major problems. The Christian Alliance and SADC delegations concurred. All urged the Zimbabwe Election Commission (ZEC) to proceed with the announcement of results in a timely, transparent and accountable manner.

On Monday the ZEC began to very slowly announce and broadcast the vote count in specific contests, but over a month later the results of the presidential election were still not announced; yet the ruling party was calling for a run-off and politically-motivated violence was escalating. As this story went to press, there were reports of severe violence against the opposition leaders and supporters, which may discourage people from voting for the MDC in the June 27th run-off election.

Obviously, the power struggle behind the scenes has been intense. Despite the evident MDC victory that seemed substantial enough to avoid a run-off, Mugabe and/or others

(Continued on page 5)

From a Class Assignment to a Campaign

By Bahati Ntama Jacques

An English writing assignment became an advocacy and outreach movement to help the victims of sexual violence at Panzi hospital in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

After reading “Women left for dead—and the man who’s saving them,” by Eve Ensler in the *Glamour Magazine*, Ms. Roseanne Riolo, an English teacher at St. Catharine Academy in Bronx, NY, used this article for her 9th and 10th grade students to familiarize them with global issues. Students were shocked by the atrocities of rape against Congolese women and girls described in the article.

Among these stories is that of Nadine: “She tells me how one of the soldiers forced her to drink his urine and eat his feces, how the soldiers killed 10 of her friends and then murdered her children: her four-year-old and two-year-old boys and her one-year-old girl... ‘One after another they raped me...’” (*Glamour Magazine*) Saddened and angered by what is happening to women in the Congo, they wanted to help. “The 10th grade class took the idea to the religion teachers and then we had bake sales, sponsorships, etc,” said Ms. Riolo. “Then, all the grade levels 9-12 joined in. We had an international show in February and donated the proceeds to Panzi. So far, we now have a check to give to Dr. Mukwege of \$5,000! And that is how it all started. From one lesson to a life changing experience.”

A delegation of twenty students, four teachers, and the school president attended the Congo Global Action Conference in Washington, DC held at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum March 30-31st, 2008 where Dr. Mukwege

spoke. On April 1st they visited Senator Hillary Clinton’s office on Capitol Hill where they lobbied for peace in the Congo as an ultimate way to end sexual violence against women in DRC. They asked her to: 1) co-sponsor the international Violence Against women act (S.2279) introduced by Senators Joseph R. Biden and Richard Lugar, a bill which would increase and keep the United States committed to fight any kind of gender-based violence against women around the world; 2) support the implementation of the Goma Peace Accord signed on January 23rd, 2008; 3) support humanitarian aid and development for Congo by requesting \$25 million for the congressional 2008 emergency supplemental; 4) call or write to the ranking

members of the House of Representatives to encourage them to hold a hearing on US policy in the Congo; 5) support legislation on transparency in natural resource management; 6) require an increase of funding for Congo in the administration’s 2009 budget request for state and foreign operations.

At the conference, St. Catharine Academy’s delegation was also able to meet

and give their donation in person to Dr. Mukwege, the man who has been tirelessly saving many victims of rape in South Kivu province at Panzi hospital, where he serves as its chief of obstetrics and gynecology.

Upon their return, as part of their campaign for peace in the Congo, students at St. Catharine Academy wrote letters to the US Ambassador to the Congo urging him to take these issues to heart. One of these students, a freshman, was honored by her church community for her work and commitment to the campaign for peace and for the health of rape victims in DRC. Now, this Church is expected to join the campaign for peace in Congo.



St. Catharine’s Academy students at Senator Hillary Clinton’s office on Capitol Hill.

Most of **Dr. Mukwege’s patients** claim to have been raped by foreign fighters speaking Kinyarwanda. These armed groups have horrific ways of terrorizing their victims. Some make their victims sit on fire, others shoot or insert objects into the victims’ reproductive organs, and others keep their victims tied to trees and repeatedly rape them for hours or even days. The trauma not only affects the victims themselves, but often their husbands and relatives who are forced to watch as their loved ones, be they mother, sister, wife, neighbor, endure the pain of rape. As a result, some husbands leave their villages to unknown places to never to return, shamed because of their inadequacy to protect their families. Many people driven by fear leave their homes and are now internally displaced, leaving the land to their enemies. This method of shaming and disabling women, men, and communities, this destruction of dignity and family by these insurgents is cruel and inhuman. We encourage you to support AFJN’s campaign to end the violence in DR Congo.

The Pentagon's Improper Priorities

By Beth Tuckey

In the summer of 2007, we at AFJN watched in horror as gunfire and bombings infiltrated Somalia from its neighboring country of Ethiopia. Only after the initial fighting did we learn that the United States had given weapons and intelligence to Ethiopia to pursue the attacks against the governing Union of Islamic Courts (UIC) in Somalia.

The Bush Administration's reasoning for participating directly in the invasion has much to do with the terrorism-tinted lens through which it views the world. U.S. intelligence alleges that the UIC has links to al Qaeda, that it rules by Sharia Law, and that it is taking hold in one of the world's true failed states. According to the perspective of the Bush Administration in the post-9/11 world, Somalia is a perfect breeding ground for anti-American extremism.

"Considering the Somalia example, it seems impossible to trust AFRICOM as a credible pathway to stability in Africa."

Unfortunately, Somali civilians have been caught in the middle ever since that first blast on July 20th, 2007. At the end of last year, experts estimated that there were 1.5 million internally displaced persons in Mogadishu alone, contributing to a humanitarian crisis of unbelievable proportions. The brutality of the attacks has only increased this year to what witnesses call "slaughtering" by Ethiopian troops and continued fighting on both sides. Early in the morning on May 1, the United States fired four missiles at a compound in Dusamareb, targeted at a known al-Qaeda

leader. Ten civilians also died in the attack, prompting an anti-American protest by 1,000 Somalis in Dusamareb.

Over the past several years, fear of terrorism and thirst for oil have dominated U.S. foreign policy, leading the United States to abandon its moral compass. While it is legitimate that the U.S. be concerned about protecting its citizens and preventing terrorism, it is difficult to justify the deaths of 10 civilians and the outrage of 1,000 Somalis for the death of a man who had, by himself, done no wrong to U.S. citizens. Many Somalis viewed life under the UIC as one of the most peaceful and prosperous periods in recent memory. No, the human rights record wasn't perfect, but, as an 80-year-old taxi driver put it in a New York Times article, "we want the Islamists back... at least we had food." (Gettleman, NYTimes, 11/20/07)

Thus, when situations like Somalia happen, or when the Bush Administration decides to give money to Chad's abusive government to train and equip its military to fight terrorism, we must question the motives and for whom the U.S. is acting. Many analysts will claim that American citizens are no safer today than they were before 9/11, and yet the people of Africa have been made to suffer.

Over the past several years, the Department of Defense (DOD) has aggressively pursued "train and equip" programs in Africa and is now erecting a military command, AFRICOM, to serve as the umbrella for Pentagon involvement on the continent. The State Department and the U.S. Congress have largely complied, providing the DOD with

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 3)

in power have been unwilling to leave without a fight. Rumors and questions continue to circulate: Would Mugabe ever willingly leave office? Would he leave the country? What guarantees would he need in terms of avoiding prosecution or keeping his massive ill-gotten wealth? Would the army generals accept Tsangerai as president? Would they stage a coup? Would the many others whose corruption has bankrupted Zimbabwe be allowed to keep their bounty? What role is SADC playing behind the scenes? South Africa? How can the non-African international community play a helpful role in this painful and dangerous process? All these questions are yet to be answered.

But beyond the elections, the challenge for Zimbabwe is even more massive. How will this beautiful country, which is so rich in human talent and natural resources, recover from the devastation it has experienced in the past decade? What steps will be taken to bring inflation under control and to resurrect the economy? How will the basic national systems and infrastructure (health care, education, transportation, water, electricity, communications) be rebuilt? Who will guide the process and to whose benefit? Will the Zimbabwean diaspora return to help? What role will the international community play, especially South Africa, SADC, the African Union, the U.N. and international financial institutions, but China, India, Brazil, Europe and the U.S. as well?

Notre Dame's Future of Catholic Peacebuilding Conference

Reflections from Edouard Koutsava

Three things impressed me: the sharing about the peace building process from every continent (Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe and USA); the prominence given to Africa; and the quality of the participants and the speakers from the church, American universities, and organizations from around the world.

From the discussions and views of the speakers, it became clear that natural resources are primary sources of conflict in Africa, especially in DRC. One of the main questions that emerged was: why do conflicts persist despite the flow of money from developed nations for refugees and peace-keeping? On both of those issues, the role of the Church is great in generating conflict resolution and social dialogue among communities. We have seen this in the DRC, Burundi, Nigeria, Colombia and Philippines bishop's conferences – all of which are involved in reconciliation processes in their country. In the Philippines, the bishop's conference is promoting development through a culture of peace with six dimensions and operational values for the well-being of citizens.

A new expression I learned was the "theology and the spirituality of peace building." At the root of this is: "how are we dealing with peace building spoilers or with violence?" Personally, I like the phrase "spirituality of peace building" because it signifies a lifestyle change for everyone.

At this conference, my hope for peace in Africa increased. It was great to see how many organizations – Catholic Reliefs Services (CRS), Pax Christi International, Caritas Internationalis and others such as Africa Faith and Justice Network – are working on Africa's wellbeing by strengthening the social teachings of the Church.

What else did I hope to gain from this Conference? While this conference was a success and allowed me to

meet and to exchange with some great and various personalities (priests, Bishops, professors, etc.), I was not fully satisfied, for two reasons:

1. I was waiting for a clear resolution which could allow every participant and organization to act on the ground. I didn't find some thing like this after the global conference.
2. This second reason made me a little sad: the lack of discussion about the place and the role of young people in the peace building process. In talking about the future of Catholic peace building, I think those who are representing the future must be at the first range. The views and perspectives of young people should have come out at some main points of the conference. Why? Simply because:

I believe that we can change the world, end conflicts, and build peace on our Earth for ever, but I don't believe that we can succeed without the vitality and creativity of young people.

As the leaders of the future, young people must not act as consumers but as contributors in resolving today's problems. They must not be the followers but the decision-makers, so they can take part in leading the future of the whole world in peace and in justice.

May God bless all of you.

Edouard Koutsava is from Togo and is the new Secretary General of the International Young Christian Student Movement, headquartered in Paris, France. AFJN sent Edouard to Notre Dame's Conference (April 13-15, 2008) to have the voice of youth represented.

25th Anniversary Conference Program Booklet CORRECTION:

Unfortunately, the Society of the Holy Child Jesus' advertisement did not appear in the program booklet at the 25th Anniversary Conference. AFJN regrets this mistake and wishes to extend our sincere apologies. The ad has been published on the AFJN website and the text and logo appear here.

"The Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus Congratulate AFJN on its 25th Anniversary. Your 25 years of advocating for change and responsible policy development through education and action has created a more just and peaceful world for many. We are honored to be a sponsoring congregation of the Africa Faith and Justice Network and continue to offer our prayerful best wishes and support."



(Continued from page 5)

increased funds and latitude to pursue the narrow goals of U.S. foreign policy under the Bush Administration. Considering the Somalia example, it seems impossible to trust AFRICOM as a credible pathway to stability in Africa.

In the 2006 version of the National Defense Authorization Act, Congress granted the Department of Defense the authority (called “1206 Authority”) to train and equip foreign militaries utilizing its own appropriations, not to exceed \$200 million. This authority was once under the jurisdiction of the State Department and was limited by the governance restrictions outlined in the Foreign Assistance Act. In 2007, 1206 money was increased to \$300 million. This year, the U.S. Senate requested \$400 million for fiscal year 2009 while the U.S. House of Representatives kept the maximum allotment at \$300 million. The Senate went so far as to appeal for a permanent extension of the program until 2011. In 2006, the U.S. gave Chad, a country with an extremely poor human rights record, \$10 million in 1206 funding to build a counterterrorism force. According to a Human Rights Watch 2008 report, some of the Chadian soldiers trained by US Marines and Army have now defected to rebel groups in the country.

The United States is repeating its Cold War pattern of arming groups and militaries who can act in America’s narrow interest but who are ultimately unable to comply with or enhance U.S. long-term security goals. In late April and throughout the month of May, AFJN signed on to letters addressed to the Senate and House of Representatives expressing our concerns about these train and equip programs. In one of these letters, a clear link was made between the 1206 funding and the potential funding for AFRICOM, both of which are part of the broader militarization of the African continent. It seems that the House at least heard our appeal and noted in the summary of the bill that “the Committee is concerned about the appearance of militarizing U.S. foreign policy on the continent of Africa.”

In each of the letters sent to Congress, we questioned why countries would need to qualify – under strict guidelines of democracy and good governance – for Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) funding and yet countries such as Chad and invasions such as that of Somalia receive military money without firm oversight. These countries are in desperate need of bread and instead receive guns. The disparity between diplomacy and defense is truly shocking; according to a Washington Post story, the Department of Defense’s 2008 budget totals approximately \$623 billion while the State Department’s budget for 2008 falls at a comparatively paltry \$12 billion.

Although both the House and the Senate have continued the 1206 program in their versions of the 2009 Defense budget, it has not yet been passed by all members of Congress. The bill will go to conference soon and it will be our opportunity to reach every member of Congress with the facts – to tell them about the suffering of the Somali people at the mercy of American weaponry, to tell them about the use of peacekeeping funding for counter-insurgency purposes, and to tell them about the tendency for donated guns to end up in the hands of rebels engaged in a civil war. A foreign policy built upon the military is sure to get us nowhere as Americans and is certain to harm innocent civilians who never asked to be embroiled in a war over oil and Islamic extremism.

This is your opportunity to act for the common good. Let’s stop this deadly money before it becomes too difficult for the next President and the next Congress to undo.

South Africa: Prayer in Xenophobic Crisis *sent by Biddy Rose Tiernan, SND*

God our Creator, it is with great sadness that we the people living in South Africa today look at what is happening in our country.

We ask you to send your compassionate Spirit to be with us, to comfort those whose lives have been shattered by violence.

Jesus, you came to live among us and be one with us.

We ask for the grace to recognize you in all people whom we meet, in those whom we know and in the stranger who seeks refuge in our land.

You and your family lived as refugees in Egypt, help us to desire to live in love with those who seek refuge in this country from turmoil and trauma in their own.

Gracious God, we know that many of us in South Africa are living in extreme poverty and despair. We have unhealed wounds from our own violent history. Grant us the graces of patience and insight to recognize that the pain we live with cannot be eased by scapegoating others who are even more vulnerable than ourselves.

We pray for all those working to bring about peace and a cessation of violence, that they may be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Give them the graces of courage, of perseverance and of deep compassion for all involved in this crisis.

Help us all to be agents of your love and reconciliation to all we meet.

Spirit of God, come fill our hearts with your peace. Amen.

The **Africa Faith and Justice Network**, inspired by the Gospel and informed by Catholic Social Teaching, educates and advocates for just relations with Africa.

Staff:
Rocco Puopolo, s.x.
Bahati Ntama Jacques
Beth Tuckey

© Africa Faith and Justice Network, Inc. ISSN 1093-4820. Materials in Around Africa are copyrighted and may be used provided AFJN is given credit. For full citations, visit the AFJN website.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Individual Member \$50 _____ Organizational member \$1,000 _____

Return to AFJN, 125 Michigan Ave NE, Washington, DC 20017
Ph. (202) 884-9780 Fax: 202-884-9774 email: afjn@afjn.org
www.afjn.org

Advocacy for justice and peace in Africa doesn't just happen. AFJN needs your help and participation! Thank you for your financial support.

