

Blacks encouraged to develop stronger links with Africa

By Hazel Trice Edney
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) — The head of a leading Africa advocacy organization has called for the Congressional Black Caucus to develop stronger ties with African diplomats.

"One of the things we're trying to do is get the Congressional Black Caucus and the African Diplomatic Corp to meet," said Melvin Foote, executive director of the Washington, D.C.-based Constituency for Africa. "They've never met in history. The two most powerful Black groups in this country have never met. They have never sat across the table from each other to talk about a common agenda. Marcus

Garvey is turning over in his grave."

Foote was speaking during a lunch forum that brought together African ambassadors and the National Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation, an arm of a trade group that represents 200 Black-owned newspapers. The forum, held at Africare, a Black-owned non-profit organization founded 34 years ago, was sponsored by CFA to discuss ways to develop stronger ties between Africans and African-Americans.

Foote, an NNPA Foundation board member, says involvement must go beyond the fair reporting of stories, and include the active participation of Black institu-

tions on all levels.

"We have 35 million of us over here, and when we think a lot of ourselves, that's insignificant when we're talking about the globe," Foote said. "It behooves African-Americans to link up with 800 million in Africa, to link up with the 600 million in Brazil and the Caribbean. These are our people."

U. S. Rep. Elijah Cummings (D-Md.), chairman of the CBC, says some members of the 39-member Caucus have met with some of the more than 40 members of the ADC during his 20-month tenure. "But we haven't gotten very much accomplished," he concedes.

Foote is hoping for a fall meeting. He says South Af-

rica Ambassador Barbara Masekela will help to make it happen. Masekela told NNPA publishers that Africa's relationship with Blacks in America and in other nations will be critical.

"We need the participation of Africans in the Diaspora, no matter at what small level, in the economic development of Africa — which means infrastructure building," Masekela said.

"We need Africans in the Diaspora involved at whatever level in those developments because that is the story of Africa. Not to mention that we don't have pollution. We have beautiful wild animals."

Often in daily newspapers — and even in many African-American newspapers — the only stories about Africa, the second largest continent in the world behind Asia, are ones about death and dying from AIDS, famine, or civil war, such as in the Sudan. Although there is much suf-

fering, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, this is not the whole story.

The CBC has established task forces on Africa and has drafted legislation for jobs, economic development and trade, including the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). Enacted by Congress in 2000, the bill brought together an unlikely pair the next year, President Bush and U. S. Rep. Charlie Rangel, for a Rose Garden announcement of a U.S. sub-Saharan African Trade and Economic Cooperation Forum, one of the mandates of the bill. Bush signed an extension of the Act into law this summer.

Both Africans and African-Americans have seen the impact that can be made through fair reporting in the press.

From the Civil Rights Movement in the U. S. to the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa, and now the movement to stop the war in

Sudan.

Much more can be accomplished on other issues, simply through greater communication, says Dorothy Leavell, publisher of the Chicago New Crusader.

"There is a very important need for us to get the right word out about the issues and we need to be brothers and sisters," she says.

"Starting this dialog is extremely important. And I think, more than that, we've got to really walk the walk and talk the talk and we've got to communicate so that we can help get your story out."

Masekela is pushing for exactly that.

"I think it is incumbent upon all of us to have this kind of sharing," she said. "I'm tired of going places where people have been talking all the time, but I think that maybe because you represent newspapers, we have had a meaningful dialog."

Violations

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violence in Sudan, to combat AIDS in Africa and "to promote hope and progress as the alternatives to hatred and violence."

"Our great purpose is to build a better world beyond the war on terror," Bush said.

Though Bush has often been at odds with the U.N. over Iraq, he paid tribute to the world body and its chief during a luncheon toast.

"Mr. Secretary-General," Bush said, raising his glass, "with admiration for your leadership and with confidence in this organization, I offer a toast to you and your service and to the United Nations."

At this year's General Assembly ministerial meeting, world leaders are confronting a depressing global agenda dominated by terrorist threats, a humanitarian disaster in Sudan, turmoil in Iraq, and a growing gap between the rich and poor.

President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan said his country still has many hurdles to overcome, including combating poverty, illiteracy and terrorism. But he called the country's first post-Taliban elections on Oct. 9 "the most significant milestone in our journey" toward democratic government.

But he warned that "as long as terrorism continues to exist in our region, neither Afghanistan, nor our neighbors, nor, indeed, the rest of the world, can be safe."

Several leaders praised Annan's call for the rule of law and Bush's focus on promoting democracy and combating terrorism.

Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who spoke just before Bush, warned again that there would be no peace in the world until a more just economic and democratic world order is established.

"Peace will never rise from poverty and hunger," he said.

German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, when asked his reaction to Bush's speech, said: "I think it's very important what Kofi Annan said about the rule of law in the 21st century so I don't want to go more into the details because this would be very unpolite."

Tanzania's President Benjamin Mkapa said dozens of leaders agreed at a meeting

Monday that "globalization has produced both striking achievements and harmful distortions in global growth and development."

"We all agreed that, left unchecked, globalization will exacerbate the wealth gap — within and between nations — thereby planting the seeds of social instability and crime on a national and global scale," he said.

In his speech, Annan told world leaders that "today the rule of law is at risk around the world."

"Again and again, we see laws shamelessly disregarded — those that ordain respect for innocent life, for civilians, for the vulnerable — especially children," he said.

Annan pointed to the violence in Sudan's western Darfur region, which the United Nations has called the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

He is appointing an international commission to determine whether acts of genocide have occurred there, but said Tuesday that regardless of its findings, "things are happening there which much shock the conscience of every human being."

In the southern Russian town of Beslan, where a school was seized, "we have seen children taken hostage and brutally massacred," he said.

Annan also condemned the massacre of civilians in Iraq "in cold blood, while relief workers, journalists and other non-combatants are taken hostage and put to death in the most barbarous fashion."

"In Israel we see civilians, including children, deliberately targeted by Palestinian suicide bombers. And in Palestine we see homes destroyed, lands seized, and needless civilian casualties caused by Israel's excessive use of force," he said.

In northern Uganda, where the rebel Lord's Resistance has fought an 18-year rebellion, "we have seen children mutilated and forced to take part in acts of unspeakable cruelty," he said.

"And all over the world we see people being prepared for further such acts through hate propaganda directed at Jews, against Muslims, against anyone who can be identified as different from one's own group," Annan said.

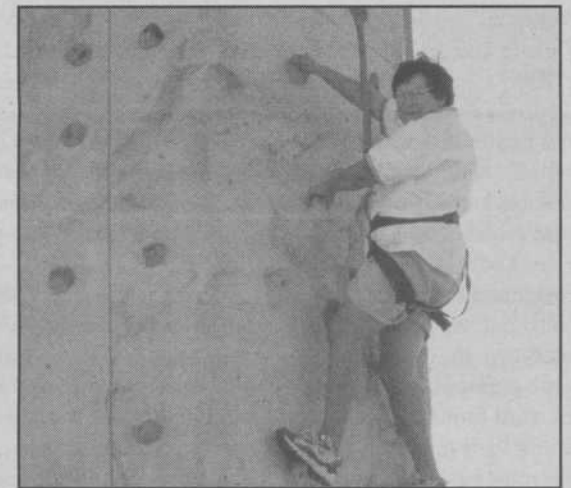
Health Fair

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taking part in various exercise activities. Each individual was asked to participate in at least five different activities to receive a gift bag filled with goodies to promote good health.

Fruit and water was available to all the participants along with blood pressure monitoring and blood sugar testing provided by the Southern Nevada Black Nurses Association.

Anyone interested in getting more information about improving health or learning more about REACH 2010, may contact Gamell at (702) 257-5558.



Sentinel-Voice photo by Les Pierres Streater

Celia Ferrier climbs a pseudo mountain during Saturday's Choose to Move Festival at Doolittle.

Gap

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established in 2002 by the International Labor Organization, a U.N. agency, urged policy-makers in the February report to set fairer rules for trade and immigration so that millions of people can benefit — not suffer — from globalization.

More than 1 billion people were living on less than \$1 per day in 2000, the report said.

Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa, who chairs the commission with Finland's President Tarja Halonen, said the disparities between the world's rich and poor countries was politically unsustainable.

"For me and for the people of Africa, the status quo is

not an option," he said. "It is verily unacceptable."

Finland's U.N. Ambassador Marjatta Rasi said a resolution was being drafted to put the issue on the General

Assembly's agenda.

Other proposals put forward in Monday's debates were reduction of trade barriers and elimination of agricultural subsidies.

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