

Dealing with THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CHALLENGE



Crisis can be a time of opportunity. How can this crisis spur us to create economies and policies which enable the developing countries to thrive and the developed to become sustainable?

Angelina Teny Sudan, Minister of State for Energy and Mining

Dialogue between the North and the South has been going on a long time. A crisis comes up, we talk and the opportunity passes. I hope that this opportunity will at least yield fruit. I no longer talk about equity, but bringing the gap a little closer, and improving the lives of Africans. All that a person in Africa is looking for is security. Right now their security is having more children because we have no hope of having a pension. This population explosion has a great impact on the global environment and the world resources – which are also not equally divided.

I want to talk about level playing fields. Barack Obama says that Africa needs strong institutions not strong men. How do you support those institutions in Africa that are failing to improve lives? How do you make them stronger? Let me speak about my own situation. I am engaged in a sector that is very important to the economy of Sudan in terms of trying to bring back the fabric of a society that has been destroyed by war, and trying to end some of the conflicts in the oil sector of Sudan. The American sanctions mean that Sudan is extracting fossil fuels and yet has difficulty accessing the best technology so as to ensure best practice and a safe environment for those who are impacted. Because of the sanctions we only deal with certain countries and that limits the choices for ensuring best practices. The recovery factor for oil in Sudan is 26%. In Norway, where new technologies are used, in some cases it is 65%.

Some people have issues with the kind of partners that the Sudan has dealt with or Africa in general. I remember in one forum in Europe a prominent European leader put it very clearly and said, 'We have problems with some of the partners that you choose.' But I think it is

important to study what it is that China is bringing to Africa today that the Western world may benefit from. The West could also try to improve relations so as to have an impact on Africa's economy and institutions, and on our attempts to meet the challenges we face, such as the environmental challenge. Because when we are impacted environmentally in Africa, it doesn't spare you in Europe or America.

Sudan has for long been working to join the World Trade Organisation. We have spent a lot of money, but are not making headway. Europe is spending a lot of money to support its farmers. How do you expect the African farmer to compete? The focus ought to be on supporting all farmers so that there is healthy competition. A farmer in Europe needs protection, but that farmer would not go hungry if you lift that protection to support the African farmer that is struggling. The recent G8 meeting offered us no food aid but agricultural aid. How are you going to move from food aid to agricultural aid? What will the World Bank or the IMF do differently? How is the approach going to be different as you move from food aid to agricultural aid? In Sudan the donor funds for our post conflict recovery programme are being managed by multi-donor trust funds. From our experience of the last four years, we need to be engaged more in discussing how to make this programme work.

Angelina Teny Machar

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