



The Challenge for Africa: A Conversation With Wangari Maathai

Monday, April 13, 2009

Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

Edited Transcript—Wangari Maathai

Geoff Dabelko:

Dr. Maathai, this is a real honor. It's one that comes from such rich contributions you're making with this book, *The Challenge for Africa*, a book that's clearly a very personal book, and one that speaks truth to power in every quarter and at every level, and offers many topics for conversation. And so that's what we'll jump into today. You start your book with the idea that many people in many communities in Africa have gotten on the wrong bus, and are driving away from where they need to go. And so, can you tell us what you mean by this notion of a wrong bus syndrome, and what must be done to get the bus back on track?

Wangari Maathai:

Thank you very much. And I'm very, very honored and privileged to be here in this beautiful building, and thank all of you for coming tonight.

I used the metaphor of the bus because in Africa and particularly in Kenya we travel a lot by bus, so I knew everybody would understand when I said that we are on the wrong bus. And in the metaphor, in the training, it was part of our training, what we call civic and environmental education, and we were trying to say that -- I was trying to deliver the message to rural populations, many of whom are peasant farmers, that there is a way -- that we govern ourselves in a certain way, and there is a reason why we govern ourselves that way. And there is a reason why we manage our involvement the way we manage our involvement. And because of that, we have precipitated problems. And many of those problems, they see. So I would usually start the seminar by asking them, "Which problems do you have in your communities, either personal, or community, or even the national problems?" And I guess, thinking I had the solution to the problem, they would give me a lot of problems.



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And we would list all of them. And I would use those problems to tell them that, "If you travel in the wrong direction -- if you take that journey, and you go to the right destination, you are likely to be happy, you are likely to be received well, you are likely to experience satisfaction, because you arrived at the destination that you wanted to arrive at. But if you arrive at the destination and you find yourselves with a lot of problems, then you must have made some wrong decision. Maybe this is not the place you should have been."

And so, I said, "If you --" I would use that path and say, "If you come to Nairobi --" usually you have these seminars in Nairobi, because we were also holding them when we were not allowed to be holding them, so we were hiding and holding them. So I would say, "When you come to Nairobi, there are two ways you could go. You could go north and go towards Uganda, or you could go south and go towards Mombasa. Now, what would be the reason why, when you go to the bus stop, you could take the wrong bus; that if you want to go to Mombasa, you could end up taking the road -- the bus that goes to Kampala. Because if you go to Kampala, and you wanted to go to Mombasa, you will have a lot of problems in Kampala; you don't know anybody there, maybe because you may be accused of loitering," and in Kenya if you're caught loitering you could end up in jail. "But if you didn't want to go to Mombasa and you take the right bus, then when you get to Mombasa, you will be okay, because that's where you wanted to go."

And I would then draw their attention to the many problems they will have given me at the start. And I said, "The reason why you have all these problems, is it because you are traveling in the right direction or in the wrong direction?" And in unison they would say, "We are definitely traveling in the wrong direction." And then you begin analyzing why those problems are there and how they got there. And that was the concept, then we would say, "We are traveling in the wrong bus." And you could apply it to many, many issues. In fact, I have talked to many other people, not only to these peasant farmers, and I have discovered that a lot of us travel in the wrong bus.

Geoff Dabelko:

You have many very effective metaphors in this book. Another one is, I think, intentionally picked to be familiar to African audiences, which is the three-legged stool, and we see, of course, they're everywhere. And you've talked about the three-legged stool needed to achieve good governance, and really addressing governance issues. You've talked about Democratic spaces. You talked about sustainability in natural resources, and then culture -- a



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culture of peace, and equity, and civility. Could you talk about how you see the three of those coming together to address some of these larger-frame challenges for Africa?

Wangari Maathai:

As you say, I picked up on the traditional stool because I think that's something that everybody can identify with. It's a very typical stool. You find it in many parts of Africa. And although it looks like a very fragile stool, once you sit on it you feel supported, even though it doesn't have a back. But you feel quite supported, and the reason is because, one, the stool is made from the same log, and the stool -- those legs are chiseled by a craftsman who doesn't first chisel one leg and then go to the next leg, he chisels all the three legs at the same time in order to create a balance. And eventually he creates a dip where you sit.

And so, when I would talk about that, everybody can understand that stool, and I would say that in every society, whether it is us or even at developed places, you have three main pillars that are very important for us to be a stable country. And I would say the first one is we all have our resources -- we have water, we have land, we have forests. If we manage these -- we have human, we have livestock, we have a lot of resources -- if we manage these resources now in a good way, that will be one leg of the stool. Then, of course, we have the way we manage ourselves, and quite often we will have discussed the management in the previous -- in the wrong bus syndrome. So now they will have known why we are managing ourselves badly, and why we are having so many problems in our societies. And we say, "If we do not manage ourselves properly, that's the third leg." And this leg means that we have to have -- for lack of a better word, we have to have a Democratic system of governance, a system that is inclusive, and that does not divide us along ethnic lines. A system that respects our basic rights, such as the right to assemble -- and at that particular time, I mentioned, we would be hiding because we did not have the freedom to assemble.

So I would say, "We need to have the freedom of assembly, the freedom of expression, the freedom of information, the freedom of movement, so that we can feel stable, that's the other leg." And the third leg is that there are many reasons why we can cultivate a culture of peace. We have to deliberately and consciously realize that we were put together in a superficial state by powers that were stronger than us. And they created a superficial state, so that we found ourselves with neighbors we didn't even know, and we didn't want to mix with them, but we were mixed. And almost 100 years later we can't afford to go back and fight, to go back and decide who belonged here and who belonged there. But it is very important for



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us to have a deliberate and a conscious decision that we will live together peaceably, we will coexist together. And that way we will be able to take care of ourselves. That's the third leg.

And I would say, if you have those three legs, then the dip on the stool is the involvement, the milieu -- yeah, the involvement in which development will take place. Now people can come. They can give us aid. They can give us loans. We will develop. We can go to school. We can build universities. We can develop. And we can get rid of all these problems that we shall have listed, and which would be hung on the wall. But if we don't have these three legs, no matter who comes and with whatever, we shall never develop. And that was, for us, the way we tried to make the link between good governance, environmental sustainability, and peace.

Geoff Dabelko:

Let me ask you about that environment, and good governance, and peace, or many times conflict linkages. I'm often asked, "Well, how -- what does environment have to do with conflict or security?" And starting in 2004, I had a very good answer, which was to point to your experience and the Nobel Peace Prize that you won, in a sense, for fighting the fight on the resources, and the livelihoods that that brought, against poor governance, and it was a very violent reaction. So can you talk about how you've seen and, in fact, lived these environment, poverty, or livelihoods, and conflict linkages.

Wangari Maathai:

Once you understand that linkage, you begin to see those examples everywhere. You can begin to see them even within your own community. You begin to see them within your country and within the region. And the first time I experienced them was between my community, the Kikuyus, and the Maasai community, in a place called Mai Mahiyu, those of you who know Kenya. The Maasais, as you know, are herdsmen. And the Maasais, from time immemorial, used to move from one place to the other in an expansive land with their animals, until we became a colony of the British. And the country was subdivided. Sometimes communities founded themselves on both sides of the border, like the Maasais do. And we introduced new concept of land ownership. We introduced title deeds. We introduced fencing. We introduced commercial agriculture. And a lot of this open commercial agriculture were established in the lands where Maasais used to graze.





But as far as the colonial devastation was concerned, if the Maasais were grazing at that corner, and several years -- several months later they are at that corner, then as far as the colonial administration was concerned, that was no man's land. That is no good. But it's the Maasai country for grazing.

Now, when we became a colony and we introduced the concept of land ownership that could be identified. First of all, the man is the head of the family and therefore the land has to be registered in his name. Secondly, you get a piece of paper, which we didn't have before, that says that, that land is yours and you can do whatever you want with it. That introduced a potential area of conflict, because that means that the Maasai can no longer freely move from one corner of the land to the other, because there are people who own land in between. Secondly, they need water for the animals. Water comes from the mountains. If the people who live in the highlands are cutting down forest or encroaching on the forest, and rivers stop flowing, or rainforest stop flowing, the people downstream are going to suffer from lack of water.

So in this particular area, when it would be dry, the Maasais would approach the ridge of the Rift Valley, where there was grass, there was forest, and there was water. But in the last few years -- maybe the last 15, 20 years -- human settlement has come and has taken over those lands. Because it was a big farm, and it was sold to local people, and they subdivided, and they got their title deeds, and they fenced it. And now the Maasais come because it's dry, and their animals need the grass, and they need water, and they are driving their animals towards the ridge, and they confront human settlements, farmers. And the farmers say, "You can't pass. This is my land. I bought it. I have a title deed. And as for the water that is coming from the mountains, we are using it for irrigation. We need it for irrigation." And a conflict ensued.

And on several occasions, people would be killed, and there would be a lot of political turmoil. And people would come and they would talk to the Maasais and the Kikuyus to try to create peace. And we kept saying, "You can never create peace until you educate these people that they're fighting over resources, and that these resources need to be managed in a different way. The way we are managing them, they are propagating conflict. We need to manage them in a way that will not propagate conflict. We must find a solution that will preempt these conflicts that come every so often, and especially when the land dries up."





So that was my first beginning of understanding the linkage between resources and conflicts, and mismanagement of these resources, because if the government was actually -- would take that matter, and study it, and negotiate with the communities, they could find a way of making sure that the Maasais' animals can reach the ridge, they can reach the water, and the Kikuyu farms would also be protected. But if you leave it to the communities themselves, they fight, they kill each other.

The other example I had was during the elections. Every time during the elections we would have tribal clashes. And the reason why we were having tribal clashes is because politicians would want to gerrymander elections. And the best way for them to gerrymander elections was to go to their communities -- that's their tribesmen -- who have bought land in this Rift Valley, and tell them, "These people who have bought land here don't belong here, they belong somewhere else." That's a governance issue, because we have a constitution that says you can buy land anywhere in this country. So the constitution is neglected, and instead the politicians take up these issues and they convince their people that nobody should -- everybody should be where they used to be before the British came. Now, it's not possible anymore.

We have created a new nation. We have a new constitution. This is the 21st century. The only way we can survive is if we learn to govern ourselves in a way that will not discriminate, and will not undermine the welfare of all people, not just a few people, and not allow politicians to take these issues and spin them during the elections. They did so in 1991, 1992, 1997. In 2002, we escaped because there was a big wave that eventually removed the government that was there before. But in 2007, those same issues acted out, instigated by the politicians. That's an issue of governance.

And so, for me I started seeing in close quarters how if you have bad governance; that is, governance which does not respect human rights, that does not respect the constitution, that does not respect the diversity that is characteristic of every country in Africa; that is not inclusive, that uses the tribe to attain power; and if you don't, then, therefore, ensure that the resources within the country are equitably distributed, and you encourage these prejudgments that communities have against each other, you're going to have conflict. And it kept happening, and it kept happening, and I kept raising it. But nobody was paying me any attention, so I was very happy when the Norwegian Nobel Committee said, "This girl has something going."





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Geoff Dabelko:

That's terrific. And you write very eloquently about how as a goodwill ambassador for the Congo Basin, and the forest, and that whole ecosystem, you point out that these dynamics are not just limited to within countries, but can be, again when coupled with weak or poor governance, can be part of helping us understand how the conflict in DRC particularly, Democratic Republic of the Congo, where some of these same dynamics but with plenty of international actors, as well.

Wangari Maathai:

In fact, if you look now in Africa, almost every war that has been fought in Africa -- I'm glad to hear that the President of Liberia will be here next week, and I'm sure she'll be sharing with you some of her experiences in trying to rebuild a country that was devastated. Almost every country in Africa has suffered from these type of conflicts. It's about resources. It's about gold. It's about diamonds. It's about forests. It's about oil. Darfur -- it's about grazing land, it's about oil. Almost every conflict in Africa you can point at has something to do with competition over resources in an environment which has bad governance and therefore unable -- that environment is unable to preempt conflict. And so, to me this is why I wrote this book, because I really was challenging us as Africans to think outside the box, and to begin to see why when we seem to move forward, we make two steps forward, and you make one step backwards, and so we look like we are not moving. Some of these issues are complex, they are difficult, but they have a lot to do with the way we have decided to manage our resources, and to manage our politics and our economics.

Geoff Dabelko:

Well, let's talk about really what I think in many ways you received your award for, which was doing something about these problems, right? And the Green Belt Movement that you founded decades ago with, in some ways, a very simple idea of planting trees, but as opposed to so many of our development efforts that stay in their narrow lanes -- and the health people do health, the development people do development, the environment people do environment - - you've found ways to really make this an integrated, or a multidisciplinary, or have a really diversified portfolio from this very specific intervention. Can you talk about how you do that, and this kind of very modest act of planting a tree reaps benefits across many, many sectors and many areas.



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Wangari Maathai:

First of all, it is important to realize -- you have to realize, and those of you who have followed the Green Belt Movement know this -- but when I first started, I wasn't -- first of all, I wasn't starting a movement. I was starting a small project to coincide with the very first International Women's Conference in Mexico in 1975. And I was trying to come up with a project that we can share in Mexico and also carry on for the next few years. I was in the University of Nairobi teaching. I was not supposed to be fooling around with women in the rural areas. But the minute I started, somehow it is as if I opened a Pandora's Box. And it just kept going deeper and deeper. And every time I would pull, I would pull -- I would pull a problem, and I thought, "Oh, this problem is also here." And I would continue looking for, "How do we get out of this? And how do we relate to what is happening at the national level?"

And eventually, although I started by saying to the women of the National Council of Women, "Let us plant trees to meet the needs that the women from the countryside are mentioning: the need for firewood, which is the main source of energy, the need for food, the need for clean drinking water, the need to stop soil erosion," even though that's how we started, it very quickly became clear to me, these are symptoms, and therefore we needed to get to the causes. And it is in search of the causes that eventually led me into understanding how interconnected these issues were, and therefore to understand that it's because I'm dealing with a cause, if I'm trying to get to the -- I'm dealing with a symptom to get to the cause, I can't deal with one at a time. I can't say, "Let us deal with governance this time, and don't worry about the resources," or, "Don't worry about peace today, let us worry about conflicts that are going on; let us worry about management of resources." I saw that it was very, very important to use the tree planting as an entry point, because until the government saw that we were doing more than just planting a tree, we were perceived as a bunch of women just going around digging holes, planting trees, watering them. Who cares?

But the minute we started the education program that I talked about, where we ask them for the problems, and we say, for example, "We don't have water, women need water," and we say, "How come rivers don't have water?" Because we want to help us understand the causes, that's what eventually led us to governance; that if you don't have good governance, you cannot protect the environment, you cannot protect the forest. As a matter of fact, we found out eventually that it was the very people who were supposed to protect the forest that



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were destroying them, that it was the very people who were supposed to protect the forest that were privatizing them, and so the protector had become the predator. And to deal with just the symptoms was really to waste your time. You are wasting your time, because those symptoms will continue coming. You have to go to the root cause. And it is going into the root cause that eventually showed us that it is not one root, that these are many roots, and some of these roots [unintelligible].

And therefore you need to have a big picture and not have one picture. And that's also the reason why we said, "When we go into the community, even though it is the women who provide the drive for planting trees partly because it is they who suffer when the environment is destroyed, it is also they who work in the field, once we are in the community we will have to deal with the women, deal with the men, deal with the children, deal with the livestock, deal with everything, because the community is dynamic. Community's not just men or women.

So if you are UNICEF, and you are only concerned about the children -- "The children are not being taken care of," is a symptom. What is the cause? Unless you're dealing with the cause, you are wasting your time. You can use all the money you want for all the years you want, you will not solve the problem, because you are dealing with a symptom. So we need to go outside that box and deal with development in a holistic way and address all these issues at the same time. What I mean is, it is not as if everything has to go -- and, yes, sometimes it has to go.

And even President Obama, I remember when he was complaining and he was told, "You have to go to Washington, D.C.," he said, "Well, I thought the President has to be able to deal with many issues at the same time." I said, "That's right."

You have to be holistic and multifaceted, so that you can promote this machine called development and touch the dynamic community rather than parts of that community.

Geoff Dabelko:

I hope some of the folks that you're speaking with in town here receive that message. One thing that struck me as -- goes throughout your book, as well, is the issue of kind of moving from this very -- a very grassroots focused, natural resource focus up to climate change and what that means. And it's obviously an above-the-fold -- newspaper-fold -- headline issue in



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the year of Copenhagen and the attempt to negotiate a follow-on to the Kyoto Treaty. We're starting to see some discussion of forests in that context. And that's new, and certainly starts to connect with the discourse that you talk about, again, the importance of Congo. But I think you're in perhaps an excellent position to remind us that climate change is not just the 30,000-foot view about emissions and cap-and-trade, that it really -- there's an awful lot on the adaptation side, and there's an -- it means an awful lot for those, in fact, least responsible for the problems themselves. And that was the theme that came through the book, and perhaps you can talk to us about how, you know, again sitting in Washington, we should understand the multiple faces of climate change.

Wangari Maathai:

Well, as I said down here, when I was starting, I was not starting a movement. And I had no idea that eventually this issue is so huge that 30 years down the road it will be a global issue. I had no idea then, but that's what has come to be, that more and more we have come to understand that we are part of the environment. You know, human beings sometimes act as if they are not part of the environment, as if we are separated, and we think we can go on and do whatever we want to do.

Recently I was reading an article about James Lovelock, many of you know James Lovelock, this British man who has been talking about the Gaia theory for some time. And what he was saying was very discouraging to me, because he was essentially telling me that those of us who are concerned about the planet are wasting our time, that the planet does not need our sympathy, because he said, "The planet has been changing, and is changing, and will continue to change. At the moment, we happen to be here, because it's changed and it created -- an environment was created that made it possible for us to survive. But we are helping to change that environment. And so, if we change it to the extent that we and the forms of life we know of cannot survive, the planet will just keep on going. It's we who have a problem." So he said, "You shouldn't be crying over the planet. You cry about yourselves -- because it's you who might not be able to adapt fast enough to survive in the environment that is evolving." And I thought, "Gee-whew, in a way I have been working hard to save the planet!"

But it is a thought -- even though some people don't believe James Lovelock, quite often we catch up with him, and we realize he was right. But the thought that we might be too late is a good thought that can make us stir up our mind and our understanding of the need for us to





ensure that the environment we live in is livable, can sustain us, that we can continue to live on this planet for -- and that we do not literally work ourselves out of the planet.

Now, one of the ways that we are -- we all know how we are harming the environment, we know about the emissions. But for me, one of the things that made me become goodwill ambassador of the Congo forest is when I realized that never mind what James Lovelock is doing or is saying, I say, "Whatever is happening is happening." But as for me, I'm going to be caught doing something about it. I'm not going to be caught lying down and saying, "I'm helpless, I can't do anything about it." I'm going to be found doing something about it, and that is planting trees, or protecting the trees that are standing, because at least this thing we know, that scientists are telling us that 20 percent of all the greenhouse gasses being pumped into the atmosphere are coming from deforestation and forest degradation. And that this is happening mostly from the developing world.

They also tell us that that is more than all the greenhouse gasses that are being emitted by the transport industry put together. Now, I think that is amazing. For me, when I read that statistic, I said, "Oh, that's real amazing to me, because I thought the transport industry was the culprit." Now, if 20 percent is coming from forests, imagine what would happen, therefore, if we went on a mission of destroying all the forests, as we are, to expand agriculture. And imagine what would happen if especially the three major forests we have, the Congo Forest, the Amazon -- let me start with the Amazon because that's the largest -- the Amazon, the Congo, and the block in Southeast Asia -- those three, we have been referring to them as the three lungs of the planet. Imagine what would happen if they were cut. Imagine how much carbon would be released into the atmosphere. So it is in our interest to have these forests remain intact. And it is for that reason that a group of us, and I know some of them may be here, have created a forum that is being called, "Avoided Deforestation Partners," led by Jeff Horowitz, and others. And we are trying to say that avoiding deforestation and protecting the standing trees should be considered part of the Kyoto Protocol Negotiations, or the Post-Kyoto Protocol, what we should now call the Copenhagen Protocol. So that it is not just about capping] emissions, producing green cars, going solar, going wind, going hydro -- some people even say going nuclear; it is all that, but it is also ensuring that the green life on the planet is protected and especially those three blocks of forests.

Now, when I started, I wasn't thinking like that. But I'm really grateful that I have lived long enough to realize that something we started a very, very long time ago and in a very simple



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way has become so important that it is so essential for our survival. Africans in particular are very vulnerable. Every scientist in that climate change arena is warning Africa that because of where we are, because of the Sahara and the Kalahari Deserts, because of our very destructive agricultural practices, especially slash-and-burn, and because our communities are still very dependent on primary natural resources, which they do not add value to -- and therefore are more vulnerable to exploitation by developed regions, which as you know, are coming in droves -- but because of all this, Africa is going to find it very difficult to adapt fast enough.

Now, it is in the interest of the world to help Africa, because if the rest of the world does not help Africa and they destroy their forests, believe me, they are not going to sit there and die, they will come. And I usually think of Europe. If you think of Europe, Europeans are already creating a wall across the Mediterranean. They are so busy trying to stop North Africans and some of the Africans south of the Sahara from coming to Europe; they are still coming. They drown? They're still coming. Many of them are following their fish because these countries that are highly developed, they have been fishing everything they can find in the oceans in the tropics to the extent that the fishermen in Africa don't have anything to fish. All the fish has gone, so that they've gone off where the fish went, and they follow the fish. And some of them drown. And so, we will see huge migrations of people who will be environmental refugees especially from these regions that are very vulnerable. So it is in our interest to support them, to support the governments that are waiting to wake them up, because sometimes I think they are still asleep, they still don't see what's coming. But we are doing our best to tell governments that climate change, as far as we know -- I don't really believe that over 2,000 scientists could be wrong, and therefore, we are all very happy that the United States of America, for a change, is onboard, because it is very, very important for us to learn to adapt, to learn to adopt.

And I'm not too worried about people in the North. I know people in the North are really moving very fast. They're moving with technologies. We can already see what President Obama is doing about and saying about green technology and green energy. We can see what is happening in Europe. The people who are really worrying me are the people in the developing world who are very vulnerable, but are also unable to adapt fast enough because they don't have the technology, they don't have the capital, and they don't have the skills to be able to shift their life. They are still going on with their good old ways. But I guess you -- sometimes it's very, very amazing for me to go back to the rural areas, to the people who are basically worried about today -- they are not worried about tomorrow, they don't know if





they will be alive tomorrow -- and I'm telling them, "Plant trees because climate change is coming." And they want to say, "What is that?" Well, right now in Kenya they're beginning to understand it, because we have had a very prolonged drought and a very devastating crop failure. A lot of rivers have dried up. Rainfall is not coming. And for those who can see Mount Kenya and Kilimanjaro, the white material there, which to us just looks white because we don't know what the air is up there -- but it is the thing that feeds our rivers, we tell them, and it is disappearing. Is it because of climate change? Maybe. But whatever it is, the land is drying up and the land is finding it very difficult to sustain life. So this is an issue, although it starts very local, when it gets to the global it becomes a truly global issue and a concern to all of us, because this is the one issue which really comes to tell us that indeed the planet is a small village, and all of us are in this little village together.

Geoff Dabelko:

Well, mentioned a couple times, we're sitting in Washington, the capital of the United States. The World Bank is down the road. In fact, I think you'll be paying them a visit tomorrow. We're sitting in the same building that houses the U.S. Agency for International Development, so I would be remiss if I didn't ask you what you would like to see, we'll say the donor community in this case, because you speak very clearly about what -- African governments, African communities -- but also you have some strong messages for what needs to be redressed, starting with issues of debt, starting with issues of trade, but some larger perspectives for how -- what kind of expectations you have for these communities and actors to meet the challenge for Africa.

Wangari Maathai:

Well, our hope, of course, is that -- you know, we talk about -- there are several words that we talk about all the time, to demonstrate good governance. We say good governance should be accountable, should be responsible. And you want to know if we really want governments to be accountable, why is it that sometimes our governments, when they are not being accountable, they're being supported by governments in the developing world? Those of us who were involved in the campaign to cancel the debts, especially with Jubilee 200 campaign, you remember we were arguing that a lot of those debts had to be repaid several times over. And you have now experienced in this part of the world, that banks can be very dangerous if they are not properly regulated.





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Well, we could have told you a long time ago, because we saw that all the things you are talking about, we suffered a long time ago. Because there has been almost a conspiracy of silence of people exploiting -- our own people exploiting us and being assisted by governments on the side of donor. And at that time, we were reporting the fact that for every dollar that is invested in form of aid, in form of loan, it comes back as \$4. And we were arguing, "That's not aid, that's trade." And what would be better for Africa? Instead of exploiting her that way it is to allow her to do better, just, and fair trade. But the governments in developed countries are very protectionist. They protect -- they don't allow you to sell your products unless you sell raw materials. If you try to add value to the materials in Africa, you have no market. But if you sell raw materials, you have plenty of market. These are some of the areas where we know that we talk from both sides of the mouth when we say, "Accountable, just, fair," what are we talking about? Are we really honest? So I think that even as we put pressure in our governments to shape up, to begin governing the people with respect, with dignity, and to govern them as if they matter, it's also very important on this side of the divide to put pressure on the governments to be fair, to be honest, to be just, and not to have a conspiracy with our leaders, and continue to exploit our people and our resources, and then tell us we are poor when we live in one of the richest continents on the planet.



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