



REPUBLIC of BENIN

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Mundialist Studies Seminar Bohicon, Octobre 6 to 8, 2006

Final Report

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Introduction:

For many people in the world, wars and poverty are part of the daily life and they continually strive in total destitution.

Currently, the international community shows a total lack of interest for them. It is because of this situation that thirteen (13) world citizens have on March 13, 1966 launched an appeal in favour of world citizenship that would lead to a world government in which world wealth would be shared with equity and conflicts overcome.

It is seen from this point of view that the world citizens with the Benin Centre for Development of Basic Initiatives (CBDIBA) organised in Bohicon the first "mundialist" seminar in Africa which took place from October 6 to 8, 2006.

World Citizens from Ghana, Togo, France and Benin took part in this international meeting

This is the seminar report.

I.Opening Ceremony:

At the seminar opening, four (4) short speeches were made;

At the beginning, the honour was given to the CBDIBA General Director to welcome shortly the participants. He described the world citizen and world democracy background before reminding us of the seminar objectives.

He wished that this seminar contribute to the strengthening of the "mundialist" spirit through a massive membership .

The representative to the People's Congress Consultative Assembly was invited to make his speech

He congratulated the participants and the CBDIBA representatives in particular his general Director, the first because they came from so far away from BOHICON and the second because they organised the seminar with success, the first of this kind in Africa.

Then he listed the reasons that pushed on March 03, 1966, 13 people of world reputation to launch an appeal in favour of world citizenship that would lead to a world government

He summarised the difficult mutations taking place in the world before urging the participants to act in favour of a humanised world, main objective of the present seminar.

Then came the turn of the representative of the Prefect of the Zou and Hills department to be delighted about the organisation of this international seminar in a context where people hope for democracy in this world of conflicts, wars and waste of valuable resources. And he wished that the current seminar will put back international solidarity in the heart of the debates in order to define strategies to make citizen initiatives known and promoted.

Finally, the representative of the Minister of Justice, in charge of relations with institutions, spokesman for the government was asked to give his talk.

For him the organisers of this first seminar have made the right choice when they decided to think together about how to elaborate a plan of action in order to find solutions to the multiples imbalances that create disruptions and upheaval inflicted permanently to the whole humanity

Most of the decisions taken at the highest level of international institutions seem completely inefficient in front of wars, terrorism, persistent poverty and natural disasters that threaten humanity

Before he declared open the workshop-seminar, he underlined the support of the Government of Benin to this initiative

After all this talks, the participants and the authorities planted a tree called: **The world unity tree.**

A picture was taken around the tree before the cocktail party

II. Starting Activities :

In order to get the participant's attention, they were asked about their expectations and a list of objectives was presented to them.

II-I: Participants expectations:

- 1- Clarification about the world citizenship and world democracy concepts
- 2- Strategies proposals to promote the World Citizen movement and world peace
- 3- Clarifications about each world citizen's role
- 4- World citizenship contribution to poverty reduction
- 5- Training of trainers
- 6- Distribution of the seminar report

In order to match the expectation to the described objectives they were communicated to the participants.

II-2: Seminar objectives:

° Global objective:

To encourage exchanges of real life experiences regarding world citizenship and world democracy and plan a strategy of dissemination of this ideas in our countries and regions

° Specific objectives:

- 1- Identify socio-psychological factors in West African States able to influence the democratisation process taking place currently in the world
- 2- Appreciate the lessons from the democratic renewal of Benin and West Africa, leading to world democracy
- 3- Suggest what the United Nations and its Institutions should do to contribute to the progress of the states and people towards world democracy
- 4- Make citizen initiatives towards solidarity and world democracy known and prepare strategies to promote them
- 5- Propose a world citizenship vision dissemination strategy and the creation of the appropriate structures

Then several presentations were made to upgrade the participant's knowledge

III Presentations

First presentation:

Brief socio-psychological history of the West African States in the current democratisation process in the world

Presented by Professor Roger Gbegnonvi

The presenter after reminding the participants about the evolution of the West African States that went through three phases:

Pre-colonial, colonial and the independences, centred his presentation on four major points:

- A patrimonial traditional state
- A patrimonial colonial state
- A neo patrimonial state
- A state of hypocrisy and confusion

For the traditional patrimonial state or ethnical state the speaker illustrated his presentation with the organisation of the traditional power where the majority of people are under the king's will

Considering the colonial state the lecturer talked about the white invaders. In this state the colonised subject is under the order of the coloniser and no nation can be mentioned but only a mixture of civilisations and traditions

This long 66 years old reign led the colonisers to the division of Africa at the Berlin conference (1884-1885)

Considering the neo-patrimonial state, he recognized that the foreign invader pretended to give up and in the sixties started the process of decolonisation of the colonised African countries.

So the neo-patrimonial state, the one of the pretended independences became the culture fluid for military dictatorships, life long presidencies and bloody wars without forgetting an empire that was described as ridiculous, killing children and eating human flesh

These states want to day to monitor the democratic process, organising national conferences that lead to a state of confusion and hypocrisy

Concerning this state of confusion and hypocrisy, the speaker insisted on the access to writing that the invader facilitated imposing it only in the language of the coloniser. This did not favour emancipation and development of the colonised because writing is the tool to reach openness and liberation.

He then insisted on the necessity for African people particularly in the west to search for their identity and wanting to establish lasting development they must help develop their native languages and introduce them in their schools to be able to communicate with other people in the world.

At the end the speaker like Jean Jacques Rousseau in a negative thought asked himself if we will be able to reach democracy and world citizenship

According to him like Montesquieu, an optimist will can lead to the realisation of this 2 concepts

That is why he recommends acting very carefully not to create by reaction some radical individuals and he proposed two ways to help their development: Inter-religious dialogue and African culture of solidarity and humility

This brilliant presentation was followed by very interesting questions about finding strategies to make African hospitality help the creation of world democracy, especially that we know now that we live in a world of confusion and hypocrisy

Many answers were given, satisfying everybody

Second presentation:

African contributions to democracy

presented by Professor Azilinon Kokou Mike

After introduction, the speaker defined the concept of democracy as an ideology, way of governing and way of life before starting to talk about what Africa has brought to world democracy

As an example of ideology he quoted the famous definition of Abraham Lincoln "It is the government of the people by the people and for the people"

This means that a country is democratic when the people have the sovereignty and that the governed are their own leaders and that power is given to the citizens

Concerning democracy as a way of governing, the speaker has stressed that the system is based on the separation of the five basic powers (legislative, executive, judiciary, the media and the civil society) and that it is characterised by the permanence and the reality of free dialogue between the rulers, between governed and between governed and rulers, between opposition and all the different parties in a positive competitive environment

Talking then about democracy like a way of living, the speaker defines it as a set of values that any society with democratic ambitions should get. Values promoted by the different social components through permanent civic and political education

With more accuracy, as a way of living, he describes democracy as a system based on individual freedom, protection of human rights and the determination of obligations of each of its components underlined by the predominance of the right, in token of individual liberty, reason to exist of the national democratic community

Concerning the African contribution to democracy, the speaker reminded us of the beginning of modern democracy, the African contributions to the emergence of this democracy, Africa and the consecration of multi-culture intrinsic to democracy

He insisted on the rejection of dictatorship, necessary to the success of democracy. The acceptance of this democracy by the traditional powers, the important role played by the church in the emergence and reinforcement of this democracy and especially the one played by the civil society

In order to better surround the problem, questions for more clarification were asked and clear answers were given by the guest speaker

Third Communication:

Presentation of RECIM and ASCOP by Mr Daniel Durand, ASCOP representative

In a brief explanation, the speaker removed all the participants confusion and clarified the World Citizen concept

According to him is called "world citizen" the one who belongs to a community and who realises it in acting positively towards world democracy

One is not a member of the world citizen but rather a world citizen by birth because world citizenship is not kind of an NGO and not a movement that you subscribe to.

After he respectively defined the ASCOP as Consultative Assembly to the People's Congress and RECIM as the World Citizen Registry where all world citizens are registered

ASCOP includes many registered world organisations and the (PC) People's Congress includes 40 delegates elected by the registered world citizens

The speaker also underlined the differences between World citizenship and "mundialisation"

The word "Mundialisation" has been created by the world citizens especially Robert Sarazak in 1949. He was the first to design the institution organisation chart.

Then the speaker named any old how cities, universities and roads that have been "mundialised "and also some famous people who have declared themselves world citizens

An interesting debate has followed the presentation and at the end the participants understood the concepts better

Fourth Communication:

Citizen initiatives towards world solidarity and democracy. What are they and how to optimize their actions Presented by Mr Daniel Durand, ASCOP representative

Continuing his talk, the speaker explained that the world citizens have worked a lot towards solidarity and democracy in the world.

He named as an example several "mundialists " organisations and citizen's initiatives like the movement ATTAC that is a world syndicate that criticizes economical globalisation and that is currently overwhelming us

The bitter acknowledgement is that no proposal has been presented by politicians to promote world democracy.

Then the speaker invited Mr François Housounou, representing the Universal Association for Esperanto in Benin to describe the subject

From his intervention we can remember that Esperanto is an international language created in 1887 by the Russian-polish Lazare Ludovic Zamenhof whose aim was to facilitate communication between the people because he thought that humanity deep division were due to language problems.

Then a Togolese member of World Solidarity against hunger (SMF) described all the actions undertaken by this institution that fights hunger and advocates food self sufficiency reaching a vital necessary minimum for all humans

Member groups receive financial support in order to initiate food self sufficiency projects

At the end of the presentation, the participants asked questions like :

How long does it take to learn Esperanto? , requirements to get financial support from SMF and to be registered as a world citizen

All the questions were answered satisfactorily

Fifth Communication:

Role of the United Nations and its institutions in leading states and people towards world democracy

Presented by Dr Liliane Metz Krencker, ASCOP representative

According to the speaker, the presentation theme is itself a question asked to the world citizens. According to her the answer is negative because the United Nations and its institutions do not contribute to lead the states and the people towards world democracy.

She then described the creation of the " Nations Society" (SDN) that was replaced after its dissolution on April 18, 1946 by the United Nations.

The United Nations Charter was signed on June 26, 1945 including at the beginning 51 members whose objectives were

- Peace and international security
- Development of friendly relations between the states and respect of equality of rights
- International, economical, social, intellectual and humanitarian cooperation
- Harmonisation centre of nations efforts towards the same goals

At the end the speaker explained the role that the United Nations should play to lead to world democracy. She proposed in order to achieve these goals to:

- Ask the people to participate or..

-Abandon the UN and create other structures (federal or supranational) to achieve world democratic governance

The main questions during the following debates were about the strengthening of world democracy

2 suggestions were made:

- create besides the UN secretariat a parliamentary chamber to legislate
- give power to world civil society

At the end of this presentation the participants were divided in two groups /workshops

IV Strategy proposals

Following strategies proposals from the workshops (See in appendix)

- Institutionalise world citizenship
- Make an appeal to the authorities for their support to the idea
- Promote world citizenship to the people in order to trigger more registrations in the World Citizen Registry
- Appeal to the governments to promote equitable distribution of wealth to the benefit of world citizenship
- Put in place national, regional and international structures to help boost the movement
- Find a financing mechanism to organise this structures
- Organise lobbying to national and international governments to promote world citizenship
- Cultivate democracy as a way of life at local, national, regional and international levels
- Create organisations
- Read the UN charter to inform and multiply initiatives
- Broadcast the Bohicon declaration

- Participate to the different colloquium and international conferences
- Registration of at least 100 new world citizen by every already registered world citizen
- Translation of documentation into local languages
- Registration of literate and illiterate people to be trained through appropriate structures
- Make use of the world association for schools as peace instruments in order to train world citizens
- Bohicon 2 proposals
- Establishment of a secretariat in Benin
- Establishment of a permanent secretariat in every country
- Creation of a follow up network of the seminar resolutions and recommendations
- Broadcast widely the seminar results
- Decree that the World Unity Tree become a meeting place for all World Citizens

FOLLOW-UP COMMITTEE

Presidency-Benin: Lovesse Patrice

Secretariat-Togo: Tete François

Reporter- Ghana: Kpodo Karl

Consultative membres: ASCOP (Daniel Durand et Liliane Metz Krencker)

At the end of the seminar, the participants took resolutions and made recommendations

V. Resolutions and recommendations

Recommendations:

- Considering the World citizen objectives to carry out a common struggle for the organisation of peace and security based on world institutions
- Considering the main concern of every man to day which is to create and promote ideas and institutions able to resist effectively to the threats that accumulate in this beginning of the 21st century
- Considering the scourge that put to day pressure on mankind like: malnutrition ,pollution of the environment, monopolizing and wasting of raw materials and resources and the population explosion

The participants of the "mundialist " studies seminar recommend:

1° To the ASCOP and the People's Congress:

- The ASCOP and the people's Congress should institutionalize World Citizenship
- The ASCOP and the People' Congress should organise and support training and information activities for the World Citizens
- The ASCOP and the People's Congress should be involved in:
 - ° The appeal to the authorities for the support to the idea of world citizenship
 - ° Training for world citizenship at the people level
 - ° The appeal to governments for an equitable distribution of wealth to the benefit of world citizenship
 - ° The search for financing mechanism of local structures of world citizenship
 - ° The lobbying to the international organisations including the UN in order to achieve the promotion of world citizenship

2° To the national, regional and international organisations

- The national, regional and international organisations must support the ideas of world citizenship
- The organisations mentioned before should actively promote world citizenship

- This same organisations should provide their support (organisational, material and financial) to the world citizen structures

3° To the authorities :

- The political and administrative authorities of Benin, the countries of the region, Africa and the World should support the ideas of world citizenship
- The mentioned governments should give their support (administrative, material and financial to organise structures for world citizenship
- The previously mentioned governments should work at an equitable distribution of wealth to the benefit of world citizenship to achieve reduction of poverty
- The above mentioned governments should engage themselves more in the democratisation culture as a way of life

Resolutions:

- Considering that the main world citizens objective is to achieve together peace and security based on world institutions
 - Considering that the main concern of each human being today is to create and promote ideas and structures able to effectively stand against the threats that accumulate in the beginning of this 21st century
 - Considering the scourge that put pressure on human kind malnutrition, pollution of the environment, monopolizing of raw material and resources, population explosion, monetary disorders and increasing poverty, the world citizens reunited on October 6, 7 and 8, 2006 in Benin in a seminar organised in Bohicon on "mundialists studies"
- ° Confirmed their belonging to the world citizen community
 - ° Committed themselves to make the ideas of world citizenship known and shining forth in Benin, the region, Africa and the world: they will register individuals, organisations and institutions in the WC Registry and the ASCOP
 - ° Committed themselves to develop a permanent dialog, individual freedom, balance between individual freedom and solidarity as well as the protection of human rights in Benin, in the region, in Africa and in the world
 - ° Asked the participants and the organisers of the present seminar to follow up this resolutions and recommendations

Acknowledgements

The world citizens reunited in a seminar on "mundialists" studies in Bohicon, the 6, 7 and 8 October, 2006 address their sincere thanks and gratitude to:

- The CBDIBA and ASCOP for organising this seminar
- The Benin authorities for their presence and support for the seminar
- The representatives of World Community against Hunger (WCH), the World Citizen Registry, the French World Citizen Registration Centre for their financial participation to the seminar

VI CONCLUSION

In a general way this seminar that facilitate exchanges of experiences between participants allowed them to understand that they belong to the world community, the socio-psychological conditions in which African society live ,their influence on world democracy but also to identify and demonstrates the contribution of Africa to world democracy

Beyond the African borders, the seminar has allowed them to better know the United Nations its functioning, its influence on world democracy and other initiatives towards world citizenship

All this acquired knowledge has allowed the participants to design strategies to promote the movement at the national, regional and international level and to create a follow-up committee for the recommendations and resolutions

An evaluation was conducted at the end of the seminar

In conclusion we can confirm that the seminar reached its objectives to the satisfaction of all the participants