

The Africa to Come

The view of the
younger generation



UN Photo

Perpetual Diary



Africa: Action on AIDS

The Africa to Come...

As part of its effort to support and promote actions initiated by local African communities in control and prevention of HIV/AIDS, African Action on AIDS decided to launch this major project.

The goal of the project is to fundraise and organize STOPAIDS activities in the majority of African schools. It is also to ensure that we are in position to create at least 1,000 school years for AIDS orphans by the end of the 20th century.

To realize these goals, AAA decided to produce a perpetual diary. Taking into account suggestions from young African members of AAA, we decided that the theme of the project will be: The Africa to Come: The view of the younger generation. This theme has been possible only because of the leadership shown by these young people, who agreed to lend their names and pictures to the cause and at the same time give their vision of the type of Africa they see for the future. We believe that these visions will certainly lead the actions of those who will have the responsibility to guide Africa to a better destiny.

A call for contributions was placed in our News Brief since June 1994. AAA also sent individual letters to all African Permanent Missions to the United Nations. Essayists were 15-25 years old when their contributions were selected.

Africa to Come is in the vision of the finest segment of our population: the youth.



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE 49TH SESSION OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY



UN

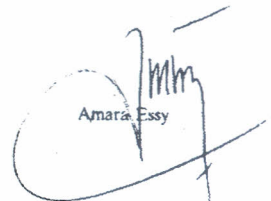
14 June 1995

Our children are our future. They are our unique and only hope to make our continent AFRICA a vital part of the world, to help our continent cope with and incorporate the emerging technologies that are going to predominate in the 21st century. With a clear vision of the future, our children are preparing to meet the complexities and challenges facing our various communities, central among them the appalling threat of AIDS..

Children of our continent are organizing in various fields. Noteworthy among them is the Youth Association for Human Development (YAHD), an organization that works hard to bring an awareness of the dangers of AIDS to a hundred secondary schools in the western region of Ghana. YAHD has already trained 60 part-time volunteer counselors, and in one year has reached 2,380 young people. The equally laudable National Students' Union for the Control of AIDS (NASUCA) has launched a sensitization campaign in the six universities of Cameroon, with the prime objective of preventing the spread of AIDS and other sexually transmissible diseases among students. In the next academic year, NASUCA intends to sponsor two AIDS orphans throughout their secondary education (7 years each). To raise funds, each student of NASUCA has agreed to give 25 cents a month.

Children of Africa, with the help and support of African Actions on AIDS (AAA), are going to establish Centers for Excellence in African schools, whose aim will be to keep young people off the streets and orient them instead towards creative activities. They intend to establish at least 1,000 such Centers by the year 2000.

Our children are also speaking out. Read in the pages of this journal what they say in their own words.


Amara Essy

HADJARA OUMAROU GARBA YOUSSOUFOU
NIGER

*From the "Anthills of the Savannah" to the eternal snows of
Kilimandjaro*

Africa cries out her pain, her sorrow.

She questions her children,

Do you remember my kingdoms, my queens?

Do you remember when you'd swim in my waters, my streams?

Now you are rivers and rivers away.

I cried endlessly the night you went away,

And now my own grandchildren don't even know me

And this worries and weakens me terribly.

So, my children, revive me, I pray -

You don't want me to fade, wither away.

Bring me my children, all in all.

I'll teach them my tongue, my talk,

So I can rest easy, and I'll be free

From the chains of despair that have held me for centuries.

Show me their bright smiles, their beaming faces—

I'll show them our roots and our ancestor's traces.

And I'll replenish, I'll relive, I'll shine

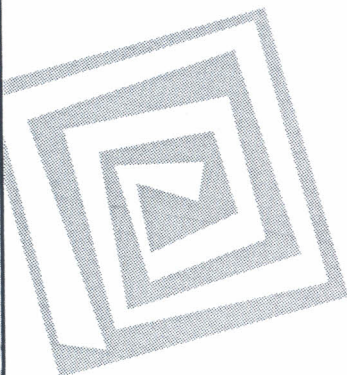
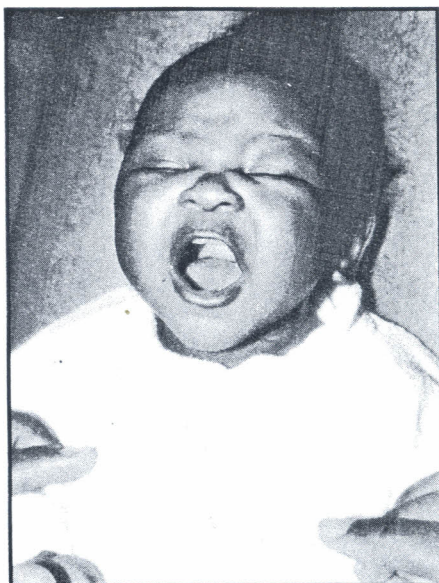
Because I'd have met this wonderful face which is mine

And with my family by my side

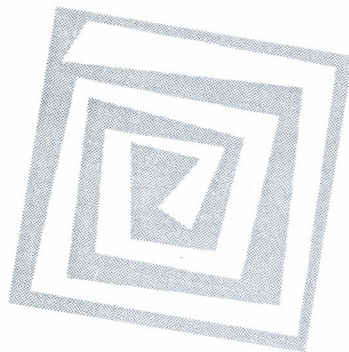
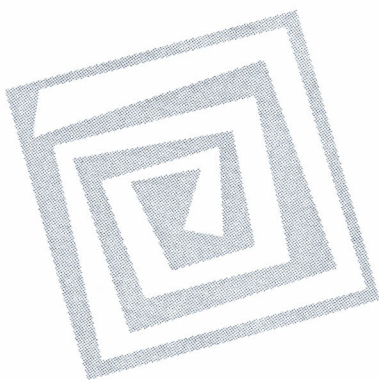
I'll be renewed with energy, vigor and pride

And especially, I'll be what I'm meant to be...

THE JEWEL OF THE EARTH, THE BIRTHPLACE OF HUMANITY.



AFRICA TO COME ... with healthy babies...



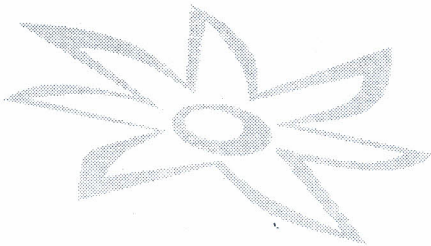
Oumou Kalthom Gueye
Ghana/Senegal

*You are a lot more fun and gay
Than the way you used to be.
Your world is filled with sunny days,
Your people live in harmony.*

*The freedom that we have obtained—
The freedom that will last—
Was given by our leaders
Who showed our youth the past.*

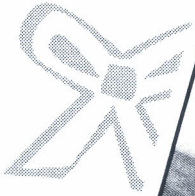
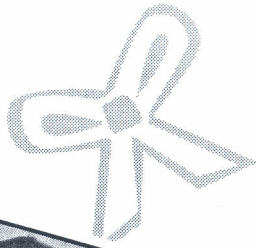
*Your land has grown, your people rich
In wealth as well as soul.
We've all become a mighty force
That protects us from the cold.*

*I will cherish you forever
I will never let you down,
Because today upon my head
I proudly place a crown.*

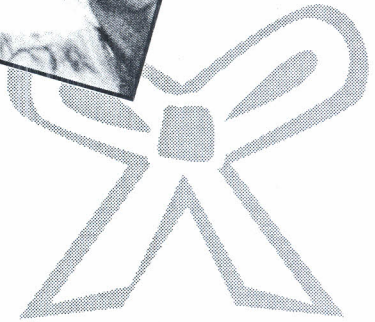




... cute little boys ...



... happy little girls ...



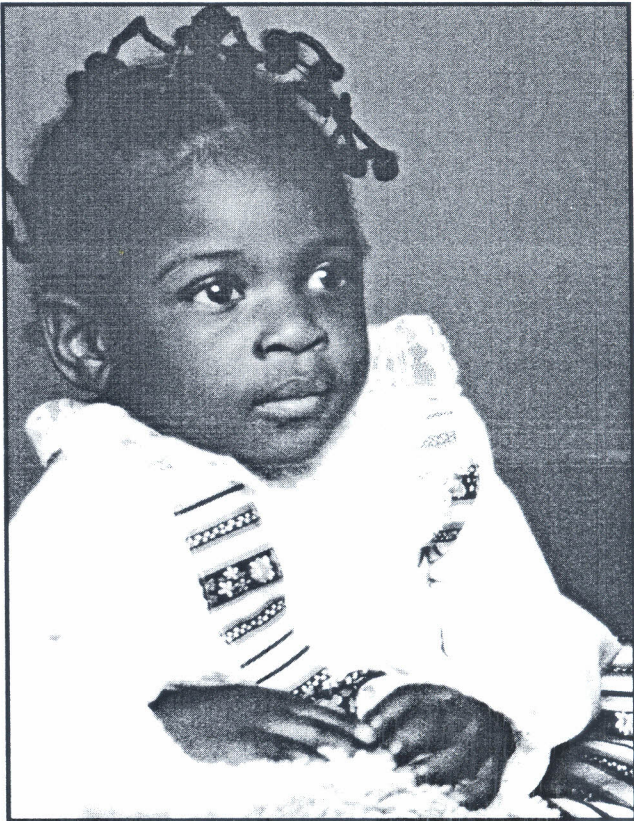
**OPATA PETER PAUL
UGANDA**

*Mama, give me your hand,
Daddy, I want your support,
I do not know how to live alone;
I have never learnt to walk by myself.
Mama, give me your hand.*

*Mama, I love my brother so much
I do not want him go out of sight.
I want to see him smile at me
And I want to see you smile at him.
Mama, give me your hand.*

*This world is so hard to live in;
So many people lack support
And yet they must live.
They live grumbling, murmuring, and feel
Helpless, but my Mama can never let
Me loose, she always gives me a hand.*

*When I lie down hungry, I stare at
The beautiful trees around.
I desire to have a taste of each.
When my brother finds me staring
He never spares to ask what the problem is
And Mama provides me with an answer.
She never lets me tremble without
Giving a helping hand.
Mama, give me a chance to live.*



... proud children ...



Susan E.M. Engo
Cameroon

We do not know our language,
The one our parents learned.
We do not know our language,
From our mouth it can't be heard.

We cannot move ahead
When we've left our roots behind,
Cause then we cannot look back -
There will be nothing left to find.

We have to learn our language
So we can raise our heads up high.

Then we'll show our language
To the world with honor, love, and pride.

How can we tell our children of
The lives our parents led?

When we do not know the language
That they heard when to be fed.

How can we lead the future
When we've left the past behind!

We cannot teach our children
Of a culture left behind.

We'll look back upon our countries and a hole is all we'll find.

We are the Africa to come -

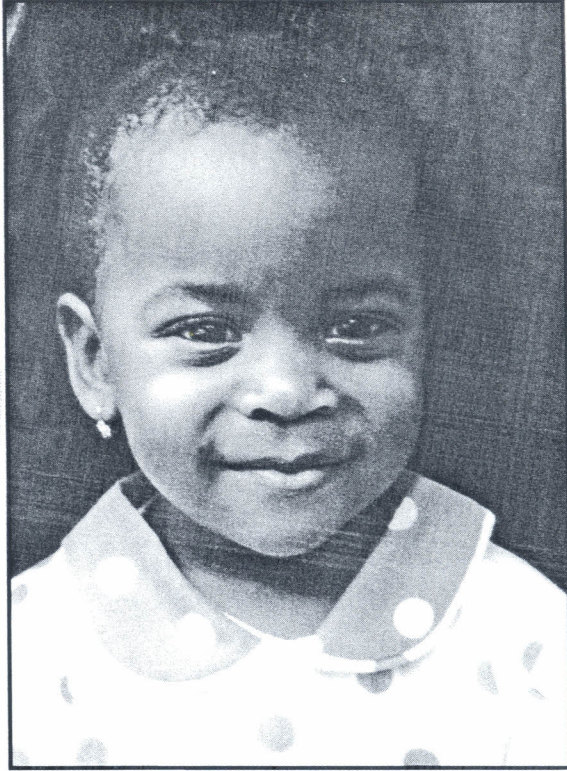
We must show Africa in the sun!

Do we want Africa to be ahead?

Do we want it to be free?

We cannot lead a continent

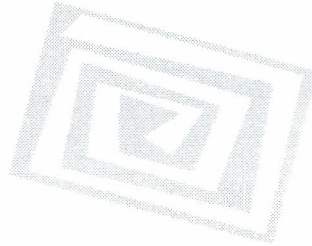
When there's nothing left to see.



... secured childhood ...

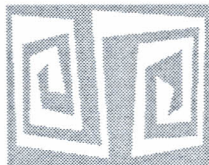
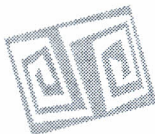
Sewit Techeste Ahderom
Eritrea/Ethiopia

A good friend once told me "All you need for happiness is the desire to possess it". But apparently the road to happiness, peace and prosperity offers some interesting, if trivial, obstacles. And it is a known fact that as human beings we are eager to be sidetracked by these hurdles. I have come to know that ignoring difficulties is not a wise decision. It just makes you to stumble, fall and inflict unnecessary wounds on your person and make your journey more difficult. Because the bottom-line is: There will always be obstacles and problems on the road to anything substantial. That is how I see that treacherous road to peace and prosperity that Africa is taking. But after all her people have been through, her destiny to overcome hardships is not only forthcoming but also inevitable. The best thing about roads is that they never stretch to infinity, like all good things bad things come to an end too.





... primary education for all ...



ABOMO Barbara Engo
Cameroon

My vision of Africa is very much colored by the failures of its present. When I think of Africa today, I think of a people who have become the joke of the world, a people who have been declared the beggars of the world taking what others have rejected. They are a people who have not learned from the past, a continent of people who have not invested in their future. Africa is a rich and fruitful land. It is true that this land has seen its fair share of natural disasters, but we no longer have the time to dwell on these issues. The time has come for us to rebuild Africa. My vision is not that of materialism and glitter as offered by the west. My vision is of the integrated simplicity of our culture, our foods, our dances, our music, our tales, everything that bring us pride and joy or that catches the simple flavor with which we approach life. My vision is of a people who have rediscovered their identity and self-worth. My vision is of a people who have backed their pride with their accomplishments.

I would like to see the countries of Africa follow the example of international community and unite to form an independent economic trading bloc. The establishment of financial markets in Africa such as the one set up last February (the Lusaka Stock Exchange of Zambia) can open Africa to all kinds of investment opportunities and finally give it the tools with which to bargain in the game of international finance.

There exists in Africa a great number of scholars, but all their degrees are meaningless if our streets are dirty and the infrastructures of our countries are falling apart. My vision is of a people who have learned to value all its workers: street sweepers, farmers, mathematicians, teachers.

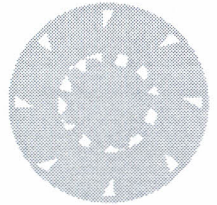
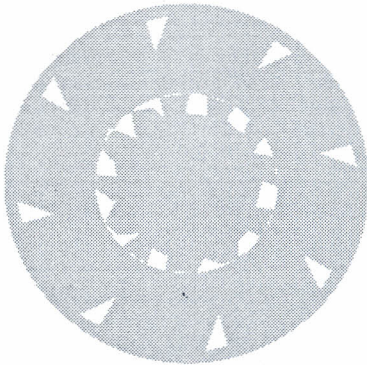
In the end, I do not want my children to lose the pleasures that I experienced as a child. I would like my children to have clean rivers to fish in, the joy of harvesting from their first farm.

My vision of the twenty-first century, if we are to survive, is that of less politics and more sweat.



UN Photo

... secured environment ...



DANIEL K. AMIOT-PRISO
Cameroon

We are called the third world
With poverty and misery -
Yet we are the first world
Full of richness and mystery.

Our future is like a star
Way up in the sky.
One day we'll reach it -
Hope it's not too far.

For our babies are dying
Each and everyday.
They represent the future,
The tomorrow of today.

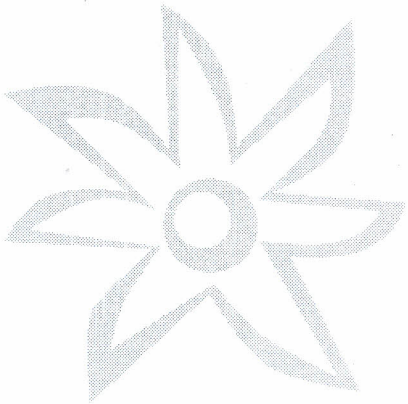
We need to fight the disease.
That is destroying our land
Before it increases
Throughout the motherland.

We need more unity,
So together in harmony
We'll reach our destiny
While learning from past history.

It will put us back in the climb
Instead of the decline
of the Africa to come.



... organized youth ...

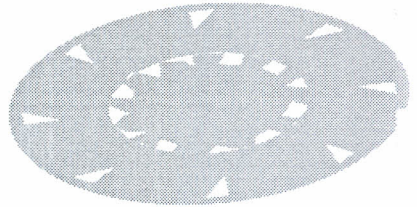
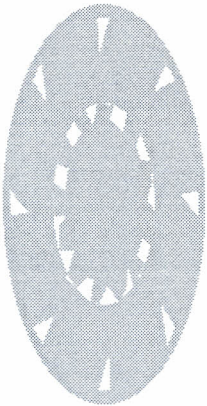
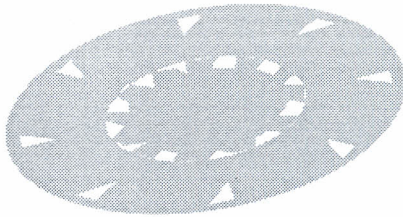




... beautiful young women ...

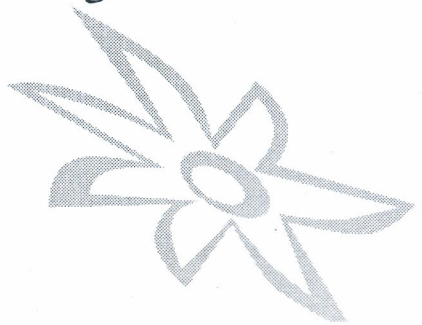
Terfa Tilley-Gyado
Nigeria

"The leaders of tomorrow" is a name tag put on those in the community who are just below twenty years of age. It is not a very enviable to be so tagged, to say the least, especially in regard to Africa. However as the old saying goes, for every bad there is a little good. So whenever you hear of starvation and war in one part of the continent, you hear of new development and technology in another. These kinds of things are what make me and virtually every other person feel good for there is a little burden taken off our shoulders with respect to what they are going to face in the future. Such a consideration gives me a view of Africa as a strong, well-developed, and probably united continent in the near future.





... active teenagers ...



TSINU TESFAYE
ETHIOPIA

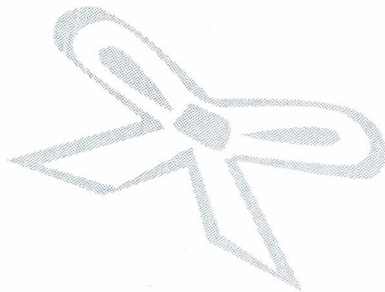
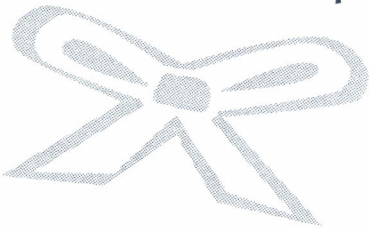
We all have common hopes for Africa in the future: peace within and among ethnic groups, abolition of hunger, corruption and dictatorial and unstable governments; adequate educational and medical facilities. But do we know how to achieve these aims? Ask yourself and then ask another African. You are bound to disagree. And if history is any indication, you will have to give up the idea of bettering Africa by working with that person whose aims and methods may be different from yours. But this is the vicious circle we need to stop.

If we agree on a goal of a Better Africa, why does it matter how my contribution to that goal differs from yours? I see myself years from now as a doctor serving an international organization which has stations in different small villages in Ethiopia. So what if you do not see yourself living in Africa when you become a professional, while others see themselves in Africa the day after graduation? Reality is not just where you are, it is where your heart is. No matter how much you try to ignore it, your flesh and blood are African. You cannot deny it! Whether you like it or not, the West is educating you not creating you. So accept yourself. Use your Western education to teach and benefit those African brothers and sisters who lack the opportunity for acquiring it.

Whether you go to Africa and use your talent as a doctor, lawyer, businessman, or whatever, or whether you work outside Africa and send money back home, make the most important contribution first: be proud of your African heritage and Western upbringing and walk and talk proud. Be the "carrier" for the much-needed epidemic of self-pride through education which will lead to all Africans making their own contributions to a Better Africa.

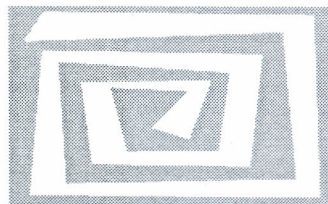
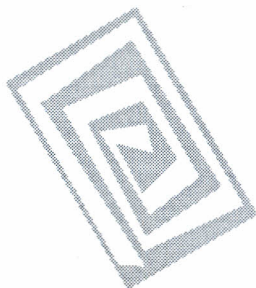


... participating youngsters ...



Paul Bamela Engo Jr
Cameroon

Africa in the future is a story yet to be told. The Africa of tomorrow is one that is self-sufficient as well as "independent" in every sense of the term. The typical stereotype of Africa is a third world continent living off of handouts from other countries. The Africa I see in the future will be composed of Africans helping each other to rebuild each other. For example many schools in Africa are of very poor conditions. Desks in the classroom are basically non-existent for they are broken. The buildings themselves are in poor shape, so bad that when it rains the students are covered in water due to the holes in the ceiling. This is just a small portion of what we Africans will have to change, to make sure that we write the story of our future and prove the stereotypes constructed by the rest of the world wrong.



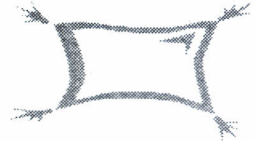


... peaceful exchange of ideas ...

Willemina Watterboer
Namibia

I would like Africa to be a decent place to live in. There will be laws of the land and the observance of human rights. People should strive for peace and would love one another.

In the Africa to come, unity will reign. Violence and wars will be something of the past. All Africans will be made aware of saving the earth and their natural resources. Keeping Africa clean will be the major concern. Everyone will have a right to good health, education and decent homes, with nobody having to squat on the land.





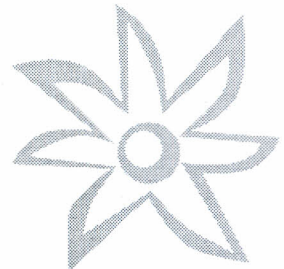
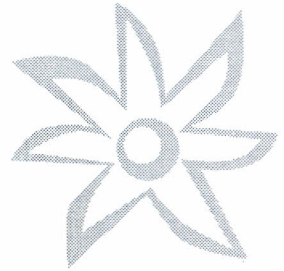
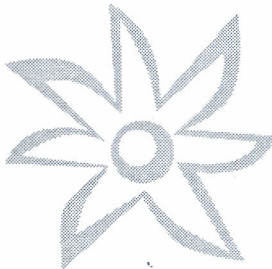
UN Photo

... cultural pride ...

Peter Panyin Forson
Ghana

"I am proud to be an African". Several years ago, I was unable to utter such a phrase. As an African youth living in America, I succumbed to the pressures of assimilation, which unfortunately included disguising my nationality just to "fit in". I was very reluctant to reveal my true nationality to my classmates.

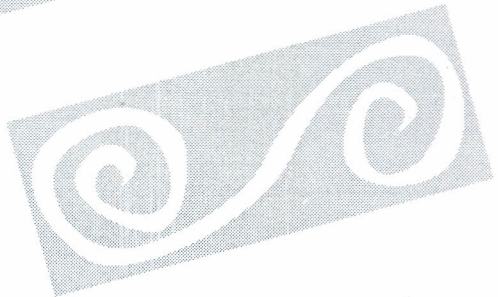
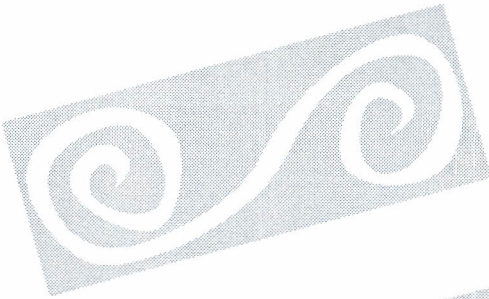
Children today aren't being taught enough about the history of Africa and its beauty. They need to know that Africa is flowing with abundant natural resources, that it has a rich history of scholarship and military potency. The future I envision for Africa is one of self-reliance, in which the structure of the schools and other buildings is adequate, and one in which citizens are more concerned with success than with factional fighting. These efforts will help African countries to become strong and able to participate fully in the world economy.





UN Photo

... equal education for boys and girls ...



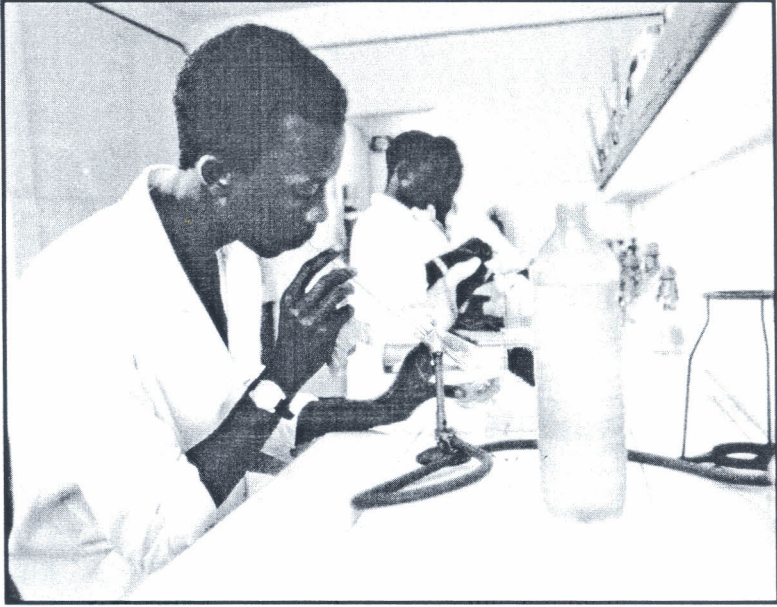
Nafisat Mohammed
Nigeria

Africa, my motherland. A great continent suffering from hunger, famine, poverty and disease. It has not always been like this nor will it continue to be so. As I sit dreaming of the future, the future of my land what do I see?

I see a land with abundant wealth and food, one with good medical facilities, a land with fair governments, a land of joy, peace and happiness. I see every African enjoying a good life—good food, good medical care, police protection, the right to vote and be voted for as well as other basic human rights. Day-to-day living is easier. The prices of goods are moderate, housing is less difficult to obtain, and the standard of education is high.

I also see a land of beautiful and diverse cultures that are known and appreciated all over the world. Our tourist attractions are developed and draw visitors from all over the globe. Our people are less tense, less angry and less inclined to cause trouble. Everywhere there is the sound of laughter, music, joy and celebration, which shows the true nature of us Africans.

I suddenly snap out of my dream. It has been an enchanting one and very possible if we, the youth, can work towards it. I am suddenly aware of the fact that the younger generation has a lot of work to do to ensure that the Africa of our dream is realized, because we are the ones for whom the future exists, not those who are destroying our land.



UN Photo

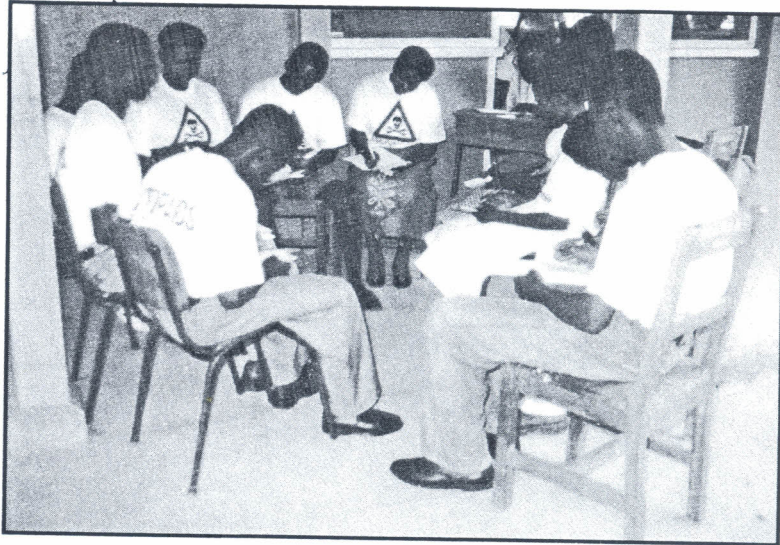
... research for development ...

**Moise B. Hoth
Cameroon**

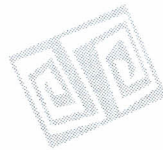
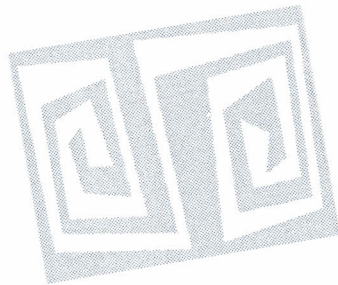
*When talking about Africa
The sound is heavy
The word is scary
The image is dark...
Why is that?*

*Certainly because of the bad propaganda and media displays
Or the hunger in Somalia
Perhaps even the war in Rwanda
But look, we possess Courage;
We have Determination; we can definitely stop
This nasty view of ourselves if we decide to!
We can prove our intelligence, our knowledge if we decide to,
We can unite and create the AFRICAN GLOBE.*

*Young Africans, this is the message
Lets look ahead without fear and worries,
With Courage, Enthusiasm, Will and Unity,
We will finally win the fight.
We can end the war in Rwanda, in Liberia... if we decide to,
We can solve our problems of hunger, of diseases... if we decide to
And we can unite to build stronger Africa.*

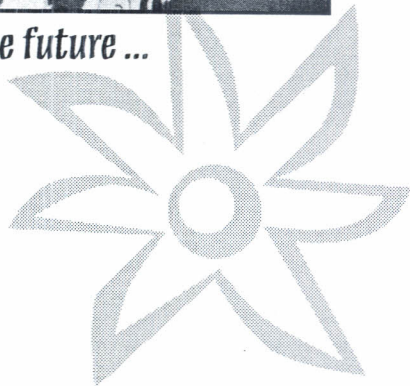
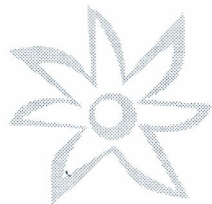


... youth associations ...





... trust in the future ...

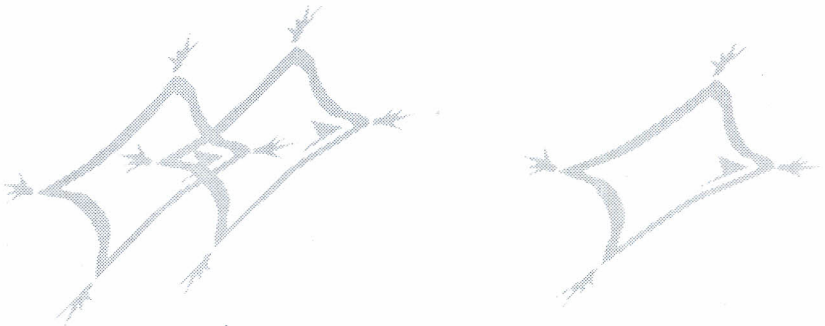


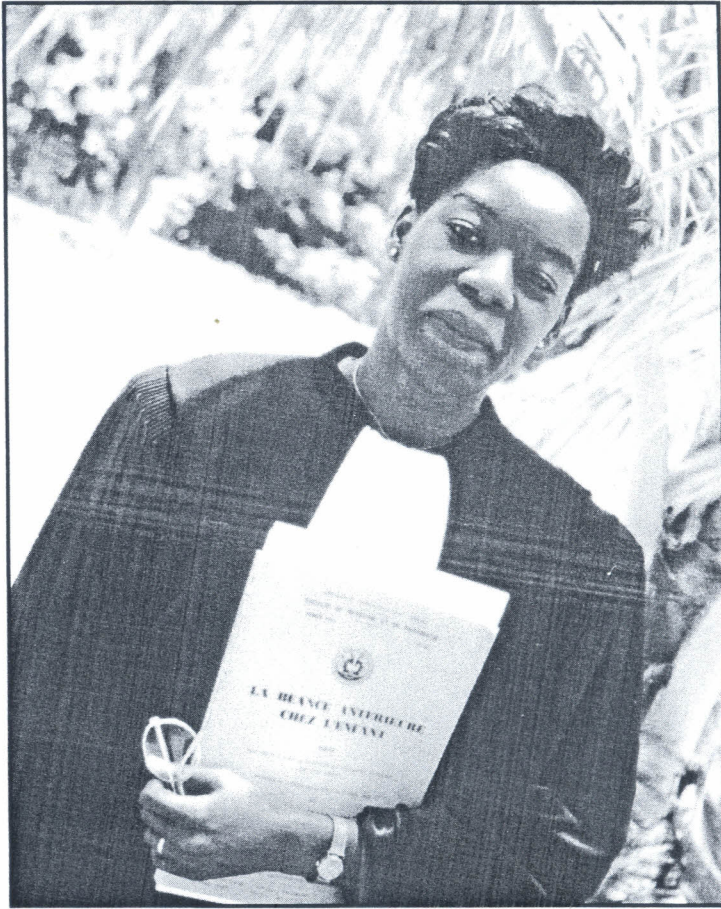
DORA DANKWAH

GHANA

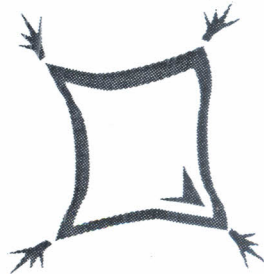
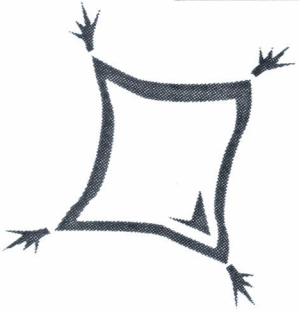
Africa is a legendary continent that is rich in relics and historical monuments. However, for centuries now Africa has been faced with numerous problems. They include what had been the slave trade, colonialism, disintegration of the African identity, racism, and present-day socio-economic hardships. Political instability has often compelled people to flee their homelands and become refugees in other countries.

We, the younger generation, look forward to an Africa free of insecurity, instability, hunger and starvation, exploitation, ignorance and disease. To achieve such conditions, Africa should foster closer cooperation among its states. We should exploit our natural resources for the benefit of our people. Such actions would generate employment and thereby increase the standard of living. With better education, we would be able to improve our technology and other production strategies. Our governments should channel funds available to them to improve the lot of their people. We should promote our cultural heritage and take pride in the way we are. When all of these undertakings have been accomplished, we can be assured of a better Africa to come.





... highly educated women ...



JANEEN M. HARRISON
United States

For me as a Black American, Africa represents the motherland to which I must journey back, and whose elusive visions I must embrace.

I have vague visions of being greeted and embraced by my African cousins living in my (our?) ancestor's homeland, Nigeria. I foresee a grand celebration welcoming my return to the motherland, and foresee as well the enjoyment of exploring my ancestor's culture one on one. I anticipate pleasure derived from the fruitful resources so bountiful from Africa's rich soil, and from the abundance and variety of animals nature has blessed us to share with the earth. But at present, Africa is not the haven I picture. Africa is reported to be a continent racked by political turmoil and mini civil wars at the same time that it is beset by famine, by the threat of animal extinction, and by disease.

I envision the younger generation taken up the role to search, learn, and enlighten each other about themselves in schools, at work, and at other numerous social gatherings. The misconceptions that black Americans and Africans have about each other's history and culture is inexcusable. To educate each other, we must educate ourselves and learn about our own history and culture.

The younger generation has the opportunity to take this self education a step further and collaborate with each other to learn about each other as well as about themselves. As complex and intricate the history of both Black Americans and African' history is, we possess rich knowledge about each. For example, we should not sport authentic traditional African attire and not appreciate the beauty of the artistic pattern or not know what the colors may represent. Similarly, we should not claim possession of traditional art in the form of portraits, sculptures or even hairstyles but care little about their original meaning or the way they came about.

Black Americans are descended from Africans, and Africans are cousins of Black Americans.

I envision stronger communication between Black Americans and Africans to bridge that gap of misunderstanding, and make the statement above a reality. Through such collaboration, my romantic vision will become a clear, realistic vision of what Africa is today and what it will be. Then, and only then, will my journey back to Africa be successful.



... free association ...

Cosmos High School / Namibia*

Africa, my home, my place-
Africa, are you just
Floating by, a cloud of dust,
A minor globe about to burst,
A piece of metal bound to rust?
Africa land of ivory and gold
Cold as a rock -

Alive with music, hunting my deepest soul
Life songs of ages, throbbing in my blood.
I have danced the rhythm of African songs.
You have thrilled my senses with beauty.
May peace and love fill your heart in
joy and in sorrow,
May you be alive with tender breezes.

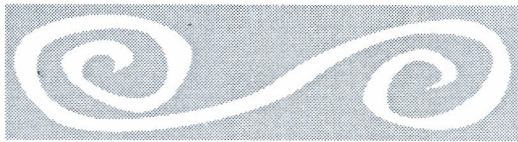
You are a lonely spaceship with a large asteroid
It might try to destroy you but
Beauty you will possess.
Oh, Africa, how I wish you will
Be free, flying high like an
Eagle in the clouds!
Africa-to-come will be what
I dreamed of every night.

In my dreams and in my nightmares,
Oh Africa motherland, I see your pain
I see your suffering.
In my worst nightmares I see victims of
A-so-evil thing named AIDS.
People on this beautiful continent, we
Should support and be there for them.
But someday, Africa, you will be released
From all evil and pain that
mankind caused you.
Africa with all my heart, I love you.

*unknown author from Cosmos High School



... acceptance of diversity ...



*She who would be king**
 Ama Ata Aidoo

Women Fir

An encounter that took place in the kitchen of a university guest house.

Half a century earlier, in 1976.

He-of-twenty-five-years-old: "So what did you say you will be when you grow up?"

She-of-ten-years-old: "The president."

"The what?"

"The president."

"The president?"

"Yes."

"Of what?"

"This country."

"W-H-A-T-?-!-!"

"Why not?"

"You are mad."

"I am not."

"Yes, you are."

"No."

"Well, you can't."

"Yes, I can."

"You are mad."

"I am not."

"Anyway, you can never be the president of this country."

"Why not?"

"Listen, I don't think the men of this country will ever let a woman be their president."

"No? We shall see."

And now, the year is 2026. The month, May. The day, the twenty-fifth. The old woman is eighty-six years old. Her daughter the lawyer, whose story this should have been, turned fifty-nine six months ago. Her granddaughter, whose story it turns out to be, will be thirty-six at year's end.

— continued

*We got this exceptional piece during the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing

The Old Queen, as the family calls her behind her back, is lying in the adjustable chair in the corner. The members of her family think that she is old beyond joy and sorrow. So they have arrived at an unspoken agreement. That the only way she can jubilate with them over this most welcome but still unbelievable piece of news is for others to fuss over her. So they keep fiddling around with the contraption, rearranging now her pillows, now the headrest.... Then before she can open her mouth to say she is fine, someone comes to raise - or did he lower?-the footrest.

But the plain truth is that she really is quite comfortable. In fact, if anybody had ever told her that a day would come when she would feel this much at peace with herself and the world, she would have laughed in her face. Her life has been very difficult, and full of surprises that were not always pleasant. She could never plan her life. So time had often taken her into some awkward places. But then this is not supposed to be her story.

Her daughter is Adjoa Moji, professor and dean of the law faculty. Her students call her Professor AdjMoj, affectionately, behind her back. She is in the house but not in the family room. The Old Queen cannot see her. But she can feel her.

They are at least, four generations of the family in the room, as well as representatives of several different branches of it. Actually, it is not a room as such. It is really the square open space linking the four sides of the house, roofed with glass, and a huge skylight created in the process. So that as you approach from the garage, you are pleasantly surprised to find yourself entering a classical clan courtyard, which is also a lounge in the European style.

The house itself, built with a loan from the University, is rather small. However, its design is so original that it has become a subject of intense discussions among the professor's friends and colleagues, as well as members of the general public. Suddenly, everybody is an expert on architecture. Of course, those who don't like the professor, or envy her and her family, say that the thing looks and feels like a hothouse.

The television set is in the center of the room facing west. Its screen is as wide as that for a small lecture theater. This is 2026, so of course, it's high definition. But since this is 2026, the Anane household's screen is neither the biggest nor the highest-defined around. In this neighborhood near the university campus, people are not the poorest in the country. But they are also not the richest in the country. In fact, in the

— continued

real "cash-dey" sections of this city, some homes have television sets with screen that are almost as wide as those that used to be in the old cinema houses in the city center. As soon as the sun goes down, the skies in such areas are lit by the glare from the television sets. Yet this is only a state capital. They say that in the capital city of the Confederation of African States, there are many more such neighborhoods. Those who have been there claim that, in fact, even if the city council were to stop providing streetlight at night, the total glow from television sets would be enough to light the streets.

Of course, the first name that everybody has originally thought of the union was the United States of Africa. But when everybody had also agreed that that would not do. People would want to abbreviate it. And when they did, it would be "U.S.A." And of course, everybody knew uncle Sam wouldn't like that. So the formal abbreviation in English is "C.A.S." But one trait that survived with the Africans who survived the unspeakable twentieth century is their cynicism and the capacity to laugh at themselves. So they have already decided to call the union "The CASE."

The capital city has taken all of the last twenty-five years to recover from the previous thirty years of civil war.

It isn't Africa's capital alone that went through a rough time. The entire continent went through hell in the last forty years of the twentieth century and the first ten years of this century. She had been in hell of one kind or another for exactly five hundred years. But those last fifty were something special. Manmade but accidental, manmade and deliberate, home-grown, imported, natural. Name it. If it was a calamity, Africa suffered it.

At the height of the AIDS epidemic, priests from different religions had had to set up camp in the cemeteries from eight o'clock in the morning and did not leave until late at night. To cheer themselves up, everybody joked that burials had become the hottest nine-to-five job in town with no pay for overtime.

Then there was The Drought. At its worst. Those who were paranoid had said that white folks were fiddling with the planet.

— continued

"They are fixing Africa to face the sun permanently."

"...to deprive us of rains."

"They are trying to fry us."

"...part of the Great Plot to wipe us off the surface of the earth. So they will be free to take our continent completely. Instead of just holding on to it by devious and vicious means, as they've been doing the last five centuries..."

The real tragedy was that in those days you could find plenty of support for such fears. And very little to discount them with. However, others had talked then of the thirty-year drought cycle. Most of them knew nothing for certain. They were only doing some wishful thinking. But a few had been geographers, weather people, and sundry other such experts. Anyway, to our general relief, those who belonged to the latter, more optimistic group seemed to have been proven right.

Almost on the dot of January 1, 2010, the rains started. From the Cape to Cairo, it rained, and rained and rained. The Nile, the Niger, the Congo, the Zambezi, and all our rivers swelled and overflowed their banks. And so did the great lakes: Chad, the Volta, Victoria, and Kariba had filled up again. Even the Sahara and the Kalahari began to green up. Of course, that wasn't going to last.

The deserts were not going to become rain forests. But the illusion that they might stay green, as they were at the beginning of time, was not bad for our spirits. Hope had been long in coming. Now it was here, and we held onto it, every way we could.

The Old Queen knows that, at this very minute, AdjMoj is in her bedroom, dancing before her dressing mirror. That is, if the high jumps, wide arm throws, and kicking she does when she is happy can be called that. How well she knows this child of hers!

Her mother is right. AdjMoj is dancing. What else can she do? On a day and in an hour like this? She can hear her grandmother, a long time ago in the village, muttering to herself whenever something nice happened, or she heard a piece of good news: "Tarkwa, or anywhere else for that matter. She has remembered the saying because she has lived long enough to see this day.

The main news has come on. And sure enough, Afi-Yaa has been elected the first president of the newly formed confederation of African States.

An encounter that took place in another part of town, the evening of this same day of May 25, 2026.

He-of-seventy-years-old: "Did you watch the news?"

— continued

His son, in his forties: "Who didn't?"

"Hmmm..."

"She is only thirty-six! And they say her grandmother is eighty-six. Tight like a wire, and lucid like the edge of razor blade."

"But is a razor blade really lucid?"

"Eh...hm...well, it's sharp."

"So her grandmother is eighty-six, and sharp like a razor."

"Anyway, that's it. We are going to have her for the next fifty years!"

"Why do you think that!"

"This is Africa, isn't it? No one resigns here. Certainly not heads of governments or any outfits for that matter. And they never allow themselves to get voted out of power. Not if they can help it. No, they are either thrown out in coups, or they sit on people's heads until they rot with old age. And those who wait in the wings as deputies or the opposition are no better. Sometimes they even manage to be worse.

"That was quite a speech. But wake up. These are the twenty twenties, not the nineteen-seventies. In any case, it was I who lived through all that. Not you. So, wake up... and she is a woman."

"What difference does that make?"

"Should be a lot. Those were power-hungry old men..."

"...and power-hungry young men."

"Okay. Well, she is a young woman, and she doesn't seem to be hungry for anything. Least of all power."

"No,? We shall see."

"Hm...that's what her mother said to me a long time ago."

"Her mother?"

"Yes. I know her."

"You know her mother? That professor?"

"Yes. Or rather, I knew her then."

"How?... Where?... When?... H-O-W-?"

"It's a long story... and why are you so surprised?"

"Well...well..."

"Well, what? You know something? Some things clearly do not change. She is a university professor who has built a cottage that is supposed to be the most interesting house in town. And I am only a manufacturer, a businessman-"

— continued

"With lots of money and the biggest house in town!"

"No, we didn't leave our prejudices and other pettiness in the twentieth century. What a pity!"

"Please, Father, I didn't mean it that way. Stop being so sensitive about being rich and tell me about you and this girl's mother."

"OK. You just said, 'No? We shall see.'" That's exactly what the mother said to me one day, when I told her that the men of this land would never let a woman be president."

"She wanted to be president of this country?"

"Yes. Or at least, that's what she told me when she was ten years old, and this was a country."

"Now her daughter is the president of Africa!"

"The first president of Africa."

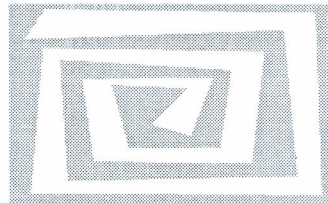
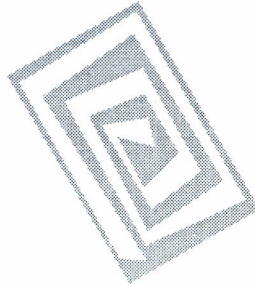
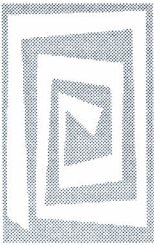
"Good Lord."

"Don't swear. The ancients have said that it's the same thing if a horse doesn't go to the battlefront, but its tail does."

"Good Lord."

"Didn't I ask you not to swear" Wanting to be corrected at your age like a little boy! and remember, 'that girl is your president... In fact, as my workers at the site would insist, 'Old country chief be president, all-Africa chief no be president: e be king. So as for this woman, e be she-king.' ... My son, you better look for a more decent way of referring to her, even in private."

"Good L-o-r-d.



WELCOME THE AFRICAN CHILD*

by

Ruth Bamela Engo-Tjega

Big eyes
White teeth
Strong—
Here comes the African child.

Donnez-nous la route
On la veut toute.
Here comes the African child
Marching on a National Day.

No uniform for school—
Too expensive for parents—
Here comes the African child
And off goes Emperor Bokassa.

No Africans in school
So weto
Amandla
Mandela—
Here comes the African child
And off goes Apartheid.

Campuses on fire
Heat turned up on streets.
Dakar
Yaounde
Bamako—
Here comes the African child
And off goes Mr. President.

Graduates on the street,
Empty work places,
Planes filled with doctors,
teachers, agronomists.
Unemployment
Hunger
Immigration
Death.
Here comes the African child—
Off goes the future.

Seeking Mother's protection
Though she just left for the land of no
return.

Rwanda
Burundi
Somalia
Angola
Mozambique
Liberia.

Here comes the African child—
Off goes security
Off goes love
Off goes nurturing.

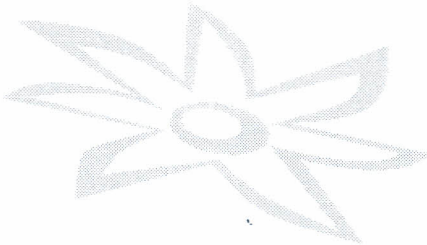
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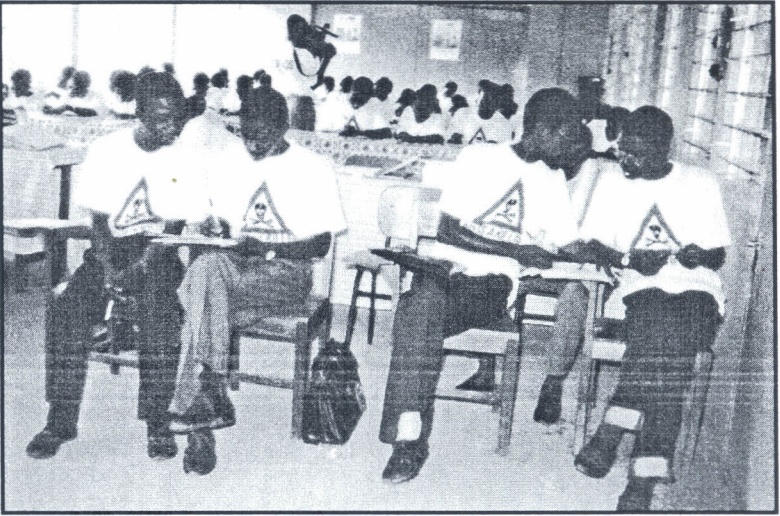
*Names of all writers and those who sent pictures are listed at the end of this poem

Asleep to the world
Like babies yet unborn,
Dreaming of the morrow,
Faithful
Trusting
Naive—
Here comes the African child
And off goes despair.

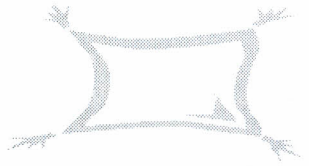
Abomo
Aisha
Asante wa a
Ama
Amiot
Bamela
Bella
Behle
Dankwah
Eyenga
Hadjara
Hot h
Janeen

Kimina
Loga
Nefisat
Nghinaunye
Olende
Opata
Oumou
Panyin
Sewit
Terfa
Tsinu
Viola
Willemina-
Walking straight
Proud
Confident
Determined
Beautiful
Strong—
Here comes our hope,
Here comes our future.
Welcome the African child.





... team work ...



FOLK TALE

Folk tales are traditional stories that are passed down from generation to generation. Listening to folk tales helps children learn about their culture and teaches them lessons for life. This story, from the Fipa people of Zambia, tells about the importance of helping others in need. This is what the children who wrote in this diary or send pictures are doing. They participate in helping AIDS orphans go to school.

THE RAT'S PROMISE

A hunter was walking through the bush one day with his dog, his bow and arrows, and his spear. Suddenly he heard a voice. "Help!" cried the voice. "Hunter, please help me across the road!" "Who's there?" Asked the hunter, looking around. "It is I, the rat," said the voice. "If I do not get across the road, I will die. Help me across, and I promise I will save your life some day."

"You save my life?" laughed the hunter. "How could a tiny creature like you save a strong hunter like me? You must be lying."

Yet once again the rat promised that she would save the hunter's life. The hunter did not believe the rat, but he took pity on the animal. "I would like to help you Rat," he said, "but you smell very bad, and if I pick you up, I will smell bad, too." "Then pick me up with your bow and lift me across the road," Begged the rat.

So the hunter stretched out his bow and the rat climbed on. The hunter carried the rat across the road and let her off on the other side. "I will not forget your help," said the rat as she continued on her way.

That night, when the hunter arrived home, he told his family about the rat's promise. His family too, laughed at the idea of the hunter's life being saved by the tiny, helpless rat.

The next day the hunter ate a big breakfast of millet porridge and set off to hunt far away from his home. He had killed three fowl, when suddenly it began to rain very hard.

Searching for shelter, the hunter came upon a cave and went inside to wait for the rain to stop. A few moments later an enormous lioness appeared at the entrance to the cave. She, too, was cold and wet - but when she saw the hunter, the lioness remembered that she was hungry as well. She began to roar, and the hunter trembled with fear.

— continued

"Oh Lioness!" cried the hunter. "I am only a poor hunter seeking shelter from the rain. Must you eat me?" The hungry lioness looked at the hunter holding the three fowl and said, "Hunter, you eat the fowl first, and then I'll eat you."

Just then they heard a voice come from deep inside the cave. "Yes, Hunter," said the voice. "That is a good idea. You eat the fowl, and then the lioness can eat you, and then I'll eat the lioness!"

The lioness peered into the cave, but she could see nothing in the darkness. "Hurry up, Hunter! Said the voice. "I'm getting hungry for a big meal of lioness!"

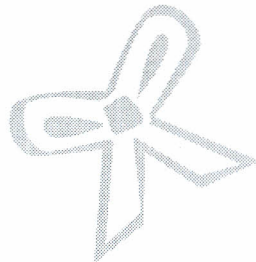
The lioness, terrified of the mysterious voice, turned from the cave and ran. When she was gone, the hunter picked up his game and hurried away as well.

A few days later, while he was walking in the bush, the hunter again came upon the rat he had helped across the road.

"Do you remember the voice in the cave?" asked the rat. "It was my voice! I was in the cave, too!"

The hunter looked at her, amazed and the rat said, "You see? I told you that if you saved me, I would save you one day. You should not have doubted my promise."

When the hunter returned home, he told his family what he had learned, and they were all very happy that he had helped the little rat.



GAME

SONGO is a game of strategy for two players.

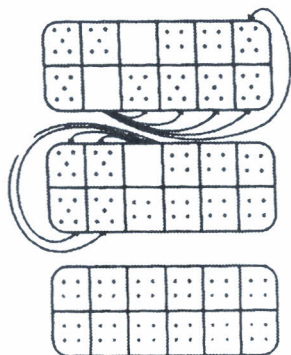
The object is to capture the beans from the other player's row.

SONGO is played in Cameroon and in many other African countries. In North Africa it is called Manakala; in Nigeria it is called Ayo; in Mali it is called Oware; in Liberia it is called Wari; and in Ethiopia it is called Gebeta. The holes of the game board are often carved out of a log or dug into the ground or stone. You can play it in an egg carton.

It's fun to play and easy, too!

You need:

an egg carton, paints or markers, and 48 beans (all one color)



1. To make the game board, cut the top off an egg carton and decorate the bottom with paints or markers. Label one row A and one row B. Put four beans in each of the holes

2. If you are player A, take all the beans out of any hole in your row (row A), and drop one bean into each of the holes to the right. You may drop beans into your partner's row.

3. If you are player B, do the same thing. Take all the beans out of any hole in your row (row B), and drop one into each of the holes to the right.

4. If the last bean dropped into any hole in your partner's row brings the total number of beans in that hole to two, three, or four, you have captured the beans in that hole. Remove them and save them. If the number of beans in the holes just before the captured hole also totals 2, 3, or 4, you have captured those beans as well.

5. Continue to move and capture beans in this way until six or fewer beans are left on the game board. Take the beans left on your side and add them to your capture file. The player with the most beans is the winner.

African Members States of the United Nations

Algeria	Libya
Angola	Madagascar
Benin	Malawi
Botswana	Mali
Burkina Faso	Mauritania
Burundi	Mauritius
Cameroon	Morocco
Cape Verde	Mozambique
Central African Republic	Namibia
Chad	Niger
Comoros	Nigeria
Congo	Rwanda
Cote d'Ivoire	Sao Tome and Principe
Djibouti	Senegal
Egypt	Seychelles
Equatorial Guinea	Somalia
Eritrea	South Africa
Ethiopia	Sudan
Gabon	Swaziland
Gambia	Togo
Ghana	Tunisia
Guinea	Uganda
Guinea Bissau	United Republic of Tanzania
Kenya	Zaire
Lesotho	Zambia
Liberia	Zimbabwe

African Action on AIDS
or
Linking AIDS education and prevention with
local problem solving

African Action on AIDS (AAA) was created in 1990 to galvanize support for local African community endeavors to respond to the threat of AIDS mostly among adolescents and to support AIDS orphans through secondary education.

AAA's aim is to generate at least 1,000 school years by the end of the century, and have STOPAIDS clubs or Centers of Excellence in the majority of schools in Africa. 20 orphans are now sponsored by AAA for 6 years each in Uganda, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, which makes a total of 120 school years.

Since 1992 AAA has supported a number of projects including *The AIDS Prevention and Health Awareness in African Teenage Girls* held on 25-26 April 1992 in New York City. It assembled young women from 11 countries, including Burkina-Faso, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Niger, Senegal, South Africa, Togo and the USA. The AIDS Challenge Youth Club of Kampala, founded by a group of young people whose parents or close relatives are living with or have died of AIDS. Youth Club members educate their peers on dangers of HIV/AIDS and its prevention by holding workshops and counseling programs like the one we sponsored on 16 April 1994. The Youth Association for Human Development (YAHD) works hard to bring awareness of the dangers of AIDS to a hundred secondary schools in the western region of Ghana. Last September, YAHD trained 60 part-time volunteer counselors and reached 2,380 young people. The National Student's Union for the Control of Aids (NASUCA) launched a sensitization campaign in the six Universities of Cameroon in February 1995, with the prime goal of preventing the spread of AIDS and other transmissible diseases among students.

AAA publishes 2 issues of its News Brief each year,
specially bringing information from the Home Front.

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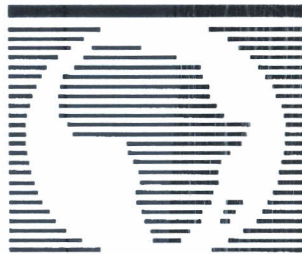
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African Action on AIDS

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