FONDAZIONE
BANCO DI SICILIA

Fondazione Banco di Sicilia promotes the third Forum Edition

Developing Africa: an opportunity for Europe, Italy and Sicily

The annual meeting that sees Sicily as an international debate centre about South Africa issues, will be back on October

Milan, July 15th, 2009 - For the third time Sicily **is going to be a platform for an international debate focused on financial, cultural and social development issues about Africa**. Summoned up by Fondazione Banco di Sicilia, intellectuals, entrepreneurs, scientists, economists, politicians as well as decision makers worlwide will meet up in Taormina on October 1st – 2nd to give life to the 2009 Forum Edition: ***Developing Africa: an opportunity for Europe, Italy and Sicily*** with the contribution of The European House – Ambrosetti.

Africa has been long put aside from the economical-financial system of the global business. In recent years though, something seems to be changing. The African Continent (despite the international crise impact) has been showing signs of recovery and draws the attention of the international Community: a growing GDP, a developing trend involving many of its countries, a young population capable to ensure manpower and enthusiasm for the future.

"*The subject is topical: almost everyday politicians and economists worldwide talk about the growing Africa. Fondazione Banco di Sicilia has been doing that for a long time. We were far-seeing two years ago, when we tried to single out the economical potentials of Africa"* - states **Giovanni Puglisi, President of Fondazione Banco di Sicilia**. "*This Forum is a plan characterized by important economical, social and cultural values. It"s an annual meeting which is well know and long awaited even out of border. The fact that it's held in Sicily, a natural bridge between Europe and Africa, justifies the efforts of the Foundation whose main objective is exploiting the sicilian territory and its resources* ".

The Forum is supposed to be a pluri-annual meeting. **It's aimed at being a recurring moment where to share developing proposals about Africa** and where the African and European leaderships can face eachother to seriously talk in order to find and increase concrete and **strategic solutions for the relationships between the two Continents.**

- First Stage: Palermo, May 2007. Fondazione Banco di Sicilia promoted the first Forum and presented the first results of a research aimed at mapping the economical potentials of Africa.
- Second Stage: Taormina, October 2008. In this Forum edition, real and ready developing projects were presented.
- **The third Forum edition**, next October, is going to be full of incentives. In Taormina with absolute concrete perspectives, Fondazione Banco di Sicilia is going to announce:
  - ***The start-up phase of a telemedicine and education project*** *related to the Sant'Egidio Community and most specifically to the DREAM programme which has been fighting against HIV and malnutrition in Africa for years. With a € 17 million investement over five years, the project aims at providing 20 DREAM centres in Africa infrastructures required for telemedicine ad educational activities, creating a crack telemedice centre in Sicily and starting a new formative programme on the premises, for medical, paramedic and IT experts staff (almost 4.000 people involved).*
  - ***The start-up of a promotion centre*** *aimed at motivating the* ***university education*** *of the next african execuitve class in Europe. With an initial investment of € 1 milion, it is extimated that 15.000 african students will come to Europe.*
  - ***The feasibility study*** *for the implementation of a* ***food farming Park*** *which can attract international players. Characterized by an agricoltural-zootechnical or fishing production destined to a domestic market, the park should be energy self sufficient, well connected with the local infrastractures and with an appropriate industrial food processing equipment.*

Among the speakers of this year, we would like to remark: James Heckman (Nobel Peace Prize 2000), Amre Moussa (General Secretary of the League of Arab States), Renato Brunetta (Italian Minister of the Public Administration and Innovation), Vincenzo Scotti (Under-secretary of the Minister of Foreign Affairs), Kerry Kennedy (RFK Center for Human Rights Founder), Caleb Foundanga (Governor Bank of Zambia), Adolfo Urso (Vice Minister for Productive Activities), Andrea Ricci (Sant'Egidio Comunity Founder), David Olusanya Ajakaiye (AERC Reasearch Director-African Reasearch Consortium).

A reasearch to better "understand" Africa

The next Forum will be the perfect stage to present the evolution of the study research developed by The European House – Ambrosetti aimed at providing, one year later, an updated picture of the the social and financial situation of Africa.

The Impact of the international crise on Africa

As regards Africa, when the crise begun, it was expected the the continent would only be partially hit, due to the modest dimensions of the internal financial sector (13 stock markets only) and to the poor connection with the global financial markets.The reasearch highlights that the prevision was partly wrong.The real development of Africa has been affected by the negative global trend:

The African GDP is expected to pass from over a 5% average annual rate through 2007, to less than 5% in 2008 and 1.5% in 2009 (per-capita GDP has been slowing since 1994 due to the population growth). **In 2010 it is extimated it will recover by 3.8%** which is however less than the average before the crise.

The crise impact is especially indirect as a consequence of the reduced global demand. It has been calculated (Source: Uneca) **a USD 251 billion loss** of **the exportations value in 2009** (it is a 7.1% point of percentage).

The FDI (Foreign direct investments) reaching USD 53 billion in 2007, will also decrease.

Africa and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

Another challenge of this research is trying to understand what Africa is doing to achieve the "**Millennium development Goals**" or the eight crucial "targets" that the 191 UN member States are on course to reach by 2015.
According to the first goal (reducing extreme poverty and hunger by half), the reasearch highlights a positive data: in Africa the percentage of people living with less than a **dollar a day, has fallen from 55.7% in 1990 to 51.4% in 2007**. However in 2009 this trend might reverse. Especially the Sub-Saharan Africa is having difficulties in achieving the eight Goals due to the current crise.
The best performers are: Camerun, Green Cape, Senegal, Kenya, Mauritania and Ghana.

The transnational corridor and the multi-regional dimension of development

"In Africa we're attending the launch of the so called transnational corridors, financed by the international Community in order to develop the infrastractures and undertake transport, power and trade facilitation projects" - as **Marina Mira d'Ercole, Senior Consultant di The European House Ambrosetti** says while commenting the research data.
The North-South pilot corridor represents an example of the multi-sector approach aimed at investing in infrastructures and adopting solutions to facilitate trade and exchanges. This has been made possibile with the contribution of three African regional organizations (COMESA, EAC e SADC)* that, together with the eight countries involved (South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Malawi, Botswana e Mozambico) and other partners (which includesThe African Development Bank: USD 380billion – the World Bank:USD 500 billion – the European Union: USD 150 billion), have recently pledged **1.2 USD billion** to better the rail and road connections along the North-South Corridor. Other partners of this corridor project are France, UK and Japan.

*Common Market for East and Southern Africa, Eastern Africa Community, Southern Africa Development Community

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