

**COVID-19 AND AFRICA:
HERITAGE MEDICINES AND KNOWLEDGE
IN THE CLASH OF HISTORY ...**

**Manifesto for
structurally deconfining Africa**

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“And the old Europe progressively cadavers itself...”² And with it, before the bewildered eyes of the Community of the non-powerful ghettoised in the “third” and “quarter” worlds, the presumption of absolute control over the order of things, over matter and time, crumbles.

The world division of labour and its pyramidal architecture imposed upon the conscience of the beings that dwell on the planet Earth are inexorably fading away.

The power of the Mighty, the haughtiness of conquistadors, the arrogance of the descendants of the “great explorers” are crumbling, falling apart and collapsing like so many houses of cards.

Yes, “Things are falling apart”³ ... A world of certainties and stereotypes, a mystifying construction of instances of confinement or exclusion. A world where the Just, the Beautiful, the True, emptied of their diversity, confiscated by an oligarchy, have for centuries been subjected and are groaning under the yoke of a univocal, unique and inevitably iniquitous outlook: Globalisation.

2020! Six hundred years of history are thus toppled: away with “civilisations” ...!

Civilisation, a patient accumulation of the most spectacular technological advances, the most complex knowledge, the rarest riches, the most sophisticated and threatening weapons... 2020! And suddenly, the civilisations... display their laughable fragility, reminding themselves of their inescapable “mortality”.

² Aimé Césaire

³ Chinua Achebe



2020! The time to pass the baton from an ending year to another that is about to begin, and then boom! From the depths of the East surreptitiously arose..., a tiny, microscopic, invisible and unpredictable enemy: a crowned virus that invades the air, pollutes and kills. There is no cure!

And it is not the least affluent who, alone, are struck! The **corona virus** spares no one: it “spreads terror” indiscriminately among people. The powerful and the weak, the rich and the miserable, the old and the young, the believer and the unbeliever, the free and the condemned are sucked into its dictatorship. Ignoring races, it targets, strikes and decimates humanity.

As the art of living has become a luxury, all that matters is saving life. The end of life itself has ceased to be sacred: neither distinguished burial nor epitaph, summarily buried are those who fall, often without appropriate care.

Savants are silent or booed by yokels replete with ignorance but sure of their equality before disarmed and confused specialists.

No hope to be found. Lights become fireflies and darkness drives away the fireflies. The World gropes for Light. Consciousness is in search of Meaning.

As of the date of this Declaration, the death toll makes is dizzying: within seven months of the pandemic, more than one million two hundred DEATHS out of some 50,000,000 (fifty million) people affected.



As pathetic as worrisome, the Corona virus (COVID-19) pandemic sufficiently informs on the volatility of the henceforth “forfeited” world-system. Long deemed operational, sustainable and implacable, the post-modern world system has been consolidated over time with internal and contextual “anti-systemic movements” brought under control. But humanity was still a thousand leagues away from imagining that a purely sanitary asymmetric insurrection could impose itself on global thinking and defeat it against all odds.

Faced with such brutal decomposition, we are swayed between questioning the superstructures that have ruled the world single-handedly and exploring a new habitus after the Coronavirus pandemic. In the face of a known but neglected enemy, courage and repentance neutralise each other under the guise of a pretext that outlines the failure of an entire system of values and aspirations.

In recent months, the logic of development appears increasingly questionable, as the foundations and operators are laid bare in the face of an enemy that deconstructs everything and shatters the myth of the hegemony of the established powers. Indeed, there is a common enemy: the virus, and a danger that is being generalised: fear. Yes, the fear of being enlisted in a war whose outcome is uncertain. The fear of being embarked, once the evil has attenuated, on a new dynamic that will never benefit the weakest economies, which could establish the oblivion of their adventurous destiny as solitary riders. We are certainly not in doomsday, but, from mem-



ory, the Age of Enlightenment has indeed made Europe, the former colonist, a “Developed whole”. Yet, there has never been an aspiration without compromise. The West very early on execrated the “worker” and privileged the “consumer”. It promoted democracy as a horizontally sovereign force, denying the marginalised subordinates (immigrants, communities, etc.). Unfortunately, in all consumer societies, the urge to produce more establishes an order of precedence and monopolisation that puts you at centre stage and elevates you to the summit of the “free market”. In such a situation, the reconfiguration of the capitalist world-economy takes shape and all games and anti-games are allowed. The ‘war’ against the virus that is threatening us, therefore, postulates a counter-insurgency approach in which the systems in place are attacked (rights and duties) driven by an index of fear that exonerates from any responsibility and authorises the existing hegemonies to invoke great ideas and disproportionate, even odious projects, under the pretext of Covid-19.

By way of illustration, the term “world government” has recently reappeared to signify a centralisation of the crisis’ management at the global level. Would there be any difference, in such a case, with Globalisation that has taken the small economies of the Third World hostage? Such jurisprudential illegality marks a generalised lack of ethics. Africa is concerned: She, to whom “THE WORST” was promised at the pandemic’s very inception!

Concerned? Not only: Africa is hereby summoned before History to shake and break the chains of the centuries-old Despotism



of its subjugation through alienation and mimicry... To get out of Shame the beautiful resources of its multi-millennial heritage - in terms of health management from its own environment, that is the challenge. And also to build, on the ruins of vexing claims, the pride, insurance and victories of tomorrow...

For, it must be said, Africa's post-colonial condition saves its honour. Such a demarcation has to do with a collectively developed survival instinct. Today, Africa is much coveted and busy in terms of cooperation and development aid. And yet, it has nothing to lose, so far, except protecting its populations that for long have suffered from more deadly viruses than Covid-19. From the Western point of view, there is no development in Africa. Africa is emerging. So much the better, because far from mass consumption, Africa enjoys its prestige as a people of solidarity, a community of sharing. And what better does it have to share than its identity, history, humanity and the power of its heritage knowledge?

It is here that we observe that the healthcare of 80% or even 90% of the continent's men and women is still provided through heritage health systems that have, unfortunately, been sidelined in the national policies of states obsessed with the myth and illusions of imported modernism in this domain as in others ... The powerlessness of the powerful medicines imposed industrially, compared to the efficiency of the humble applications of local recipes and potions drawn from the soil of the people encourage elicited reflection.



For, is it not time to extricate ourselves from mimicry and congenital conformism to the colonial spirit that imposes unchallenged rule over the universe?

It is undoubtedly time to realise and proclaim, with supporting evidence, as it is already being done in other areas and in other places this terrible year: “AFRICAN KNOWLEDGE MATTERS” ...

Yes, it is urgent that African elites, decision-makers as well as strategy-makers for Africa remember positively that this heritage knowledge of Africans, that treated and fed them without publicity ..., remain registered in the archives of oral tradition and in the memory of African languages, the very languages which, in the name of civilization, have been relegated to the margins of “modern” usage...

More than ever before, under the shock of COVID-19, the founding urgency is to renew faith in the languages, cultures, habits, practices, in short, in African civilizations. But at the same time, we have to look beyond the passing pandemic, look higher, further, stronger, toil to ensure that COVID-19 is seized as an Opportunity in the service of Africa’s liberation.

All this entails rethinking the approaches, redefining the tools, mobilising the resources – human, immaterial and material, that is, those within the continent and contributions from the friends of Africans –, within the framework of a new grammar of combinatorial co-operations, integrating the setting up of better synergy of action between the scientific, cultural and operational institutions of the continent.



For its part, **CERDOTOLA** has been implementing in the last three years, a major project on the “Mutualisation of endogenous knowledge” - “MUSE”. It is a platform for exchange and sharing of experiences between researchers and practitioners. Among the major components of this project is traditional medicine which stands out, once again, as the royal road open to African States and Governments to... “Heal their development” and to think about culturally sustainable development. Within the framework of Africa’s industrialisation through its traditions, CERDOTOLA’s MUSE initiative falls more generally within the suggestion of a Social Development Contract advocated by the Institution in the form of an “African Development Pact for Emergence through Traditions”, PADETRA. The time is right to extend this project, as the carving out of Africa into 54 States certainly undermines its development as the continent remains pulled apart between four or five residual colonisations which some of her sons and daughters are ready to defend with their lives, along with the effects, impacts and sinister outcomes.

Against Covid-19, recent research on medicinal plants and biomedicine, as well as subsequent discoveries by seasoned Africans, stand out as veritable “barrier measures”, endogenous factors of resilience against the despotism of the dominant world’s industries. The WHO itself is now called upon to clarify its relationship with African engineering. Throughout the continent are flourishing unexpected therapeutic offers, demonstrating that, when Africa does not give up, it can be successful in autonomously safeguarding the lives of its populations.

This is the trajectory given to the “MUSE” project. It is a call for mobilisation to act, the sovereign commitment of a continent determined to project itself into prosperity. It is the ideal moment for Africa, more than ever before, to regain its permanent beauty, that of its traditions and culture, the only undisputed basis for potential positive, assumed and opposable power!

Ultimately, Covid-19 should, at the very least, sound the death knell for the international pharmaceutical despotism over Africa!

And, for all accounts, when everywhere in the vast world the new corona virus will have been defeated or brought under control, there will remain a final word for Africa: **eradicate the COLONIAL-VIRUS!**

Indeed, to African Elites, Scholars and Decision-makers, thus speaks the COVID-19:

- Daughters and sons of Africa! Think Africa! Eat Africa! Heal yourself Africa!
- Withdraw at long last your hand that so promptly reaches out for help from those that long sealed your fate! No one will help Africa solve her problems.
- The time has come for Africans to regain confidence in the neglected capabilities of the daughters and sons of Africa, who ask only to release their energies, strengths, intelligence, genius and creativity. With little but with ourselves... Africa can and can do all things.
- Free your peoples from the appalling image of their representatives, their chests covered in brand suits, systematically

declare from the podiums of the world: "... The international community should help Africa to...; international partners must assist Africa to ...; we ask our friends to support us in achieving the objectives set out in such and such a programme... ”

- No! No one has helped her in the past, and no one will help Africa to extricate herself from the obscene and cynical confinements of the World Colonial Order in which she has been chained since she met the powers that have dominated the earth for six centuries already.
- Away with confinement ! Decreed the official exit from Confinement, long live the Deconfinement of African genius !
- Yes, Daughters and Sons of Africa, all for the Deconfinement of your thinking, your knowledge, your spirituality!
- Behold the time to leave “the roads that lead nowhere..., the time to put an end to the fragmentation of forces, to give a chance to the coagulation of African energies.
- In all things, therefore, make room for the African Solution, for the world also - and more than ever - needs the African Solution, at the service of Africa and humanity without exception!
- This is the Time Africa! Not “the Africa’s Time” announced by predators with Africa as the object of their own coveting and appetites..., but the time of an independent, responsible and sovereign Africa, accountable for its failures and proud of its victories!

SANKOFA ! The Future builds on the Past.

SANKOFA ! The Solutions reside in renewed Faith in the resources of the Immemorial Self.

SANKOFA ! The Expansion will germinate in the self-confident Man of Africa, on African soil as well as in the Diaspora. -

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