

Discussion evening with Samson Tsegaye on 13 Nov 2018

## **"Fighting the causes of flight"**

from Hep Monatzeder

The issue of causes of flight and its consequences is now leading to intense controversy within politics and society. This topic, which until only a few years ago was almost exclusively discussed only in small circles concerned with political developments and dismissed as a marginal topic, has now reached centre stage in politics, since the moment the refugees literally stood knocking on our front door.

Africa is currently the focus of German migration policy. According to Angela Merkel, the continent poses the greatest challenge for the European Union. In many places there is considerable population growth and at the same time there is a lack of sufficient economic development. This imbalance is certainly one major cause of the high number of African refugees.

Those, however, who want to talk about fighting against the causes of flight, must also discuss fair trade, social justice, human rights, sustainability, unjust distribution of resources, environmental destruction and arms exports and war.

Behind these issues lie the reasons that induce people to set off on this dangerous path, not only to Europe.

We live in one world, and for that reason the world's problems are ours too. Escape from extreme poverty, inequality, injustice, hunger or violence are the challenges of our globalized world, which are likely to become even greater, more daunting and ever more threatening in the future.

The central question remains: What contribution will political, private and civil society leaders make in the coming years to meet the associated municipal, national and global demands? The responsibility for solving the many pressing development issues must be shared by all players worldwide.

The fact is it requires nothing less than a new global partnership for equity and sustainability. However, I have to admit that I am very sceptical that this be achieved. At least on the supranational or international level, I have legitimate doubts.

And why? Because Africa's position has worsened rather than improved in the wake of globalization and international economic relationships.

Africa's share of world trade has been steadily declining since the 1950s. It was not until 2003 that the situation stabilized, but this was almost exclusively based on non-renewable raw materials such as fuel and mining products and their increased world market prices.

Africa is used by the industrialized nations, but now also by Asian emerging economies such as China, almost exclusively as a raw material repository. This is also reflected in the poor infrastructure or its focus on external trade. Africa therefore plays a minor role as a supplier of processed parts in the increasing international spreading of labour.

The growing importance of global value-adding chains, for more than half of the exports of emerging and developing countries', results today from their role as a supplier. This development has almost completely passed Africa by. The central weakness of Africa is the absence of some form of industrial production.

In terms of development policy, this is alarming because without a minimal amount of industrial infrastructure, a country cannot lock into the global value chains. Industrial processing is the decisive development factor, because this creates jobs and not just employment in the less productive household and agrarian subsistence sector. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that the overall productivity of African countries is stagnating or even declining.

However, examples like Ethiopia show that it can be different. In this sense, I am looking forward to the subsequent discussion.