
[Africa: The World Cup and reality](#)

Every four years millions of people throughout the world suddenly become football fans. Many of us know that the organizer –FIFA- is a huge and corrupt money-making machine. We also know that football is big business for a large number of highly destructive transnational corporations. We even know that football players are in many cases no more than modern gladiators sold as human commodities in the FIFA market.

In spite of the above, the magic of football glues us to the TV sets. The beauty of the game and the art displayed by some of its players is coupled with a very rare quality in today's world: equality. Regardless of the political and economic power of the country they represent, 11 young men compete in equal terms with 11 other young men. Within the teams, collaboration between the players and with the coach are essential. The rules of the game are the same for both teams and referees are usually neutral in their application.

For the first time ever the World Cup is taking place in Africa, which is a good opportunity for comparing football with reality in this continent.

To talk about equality in the relations between Africa and the economic powers of the world is a bad joke. Rules are imposed by the referee (Mr. World Bank, Mr. IMF, Mr. WTO and other misters) to assist corporate players in winning the game. The African coaches –governments- have been bribed by the opponents, thus making collaboration within teams impossible. In the opposite side, corporate managers –Northern governments- impose changes in the rules whenever their teams require them to change. Fair play is non-existent. The result of the game is known well in advance: Transnational corporations easily win over Africa.

Contrary to football, where losers simply feel unhappy for some time, the Corporations-Africa scenario is full of real human suffering: hunger, death, violence, dispossession, homelessness, environmental destruction. The riches of the continent –forests, minerals, oil- enrich the already wealthy while pushing African people into absolute poverty. The “game” is not a game at all: it's a tragedy.

However, little or nothing of this is being informed by the thousands of journalists present in South Africa reporting on the World Cup. Both the host country and the rest of the continent appear to be full of joyful people dressed in colourful clothing and blowing a vuvuzela, only concerned about the success or failure of their teams in the beautiful game.

But the real suffering and exploited Africa is in fact very visible for anyone wishing to see it. And so are its many communities, organizations and movements struggling against all odds in the unfair game being played against the continent. They have been kept well away from World Cup reporting but, fortunately for Africa's future, they are still there and getting stronger. Our support to them!

