

Toni Fontana first of all good morning. I think that the movie we saw has already told you all there is to say, or at least the titles. I will try to be very brief, so that I might add some elements to our discussion. I think that today we should be able to focus on our foreign guests, particularly to those who come from Africa, I see that there are many people from Africa, I think that we should let them tell us what is happening.

Then we will listen to politicians, because I believe it is necessary that our country take the initiative that until now we haven't witnessed, on the contrary we are in the middle of the age of the massacre of international cooperation, the age of a renouncing politics in the field of International cooperation.

Briefly I would like to talk about a few things, a few days ago I interviewed Heveline Hefkins for my newspaper and she told me that there is a part of Africa that will come close to reaching the Millennium Development Goals; she talked about countries like Mozambique, Uganda, Kenya. This means a lot to me as my work has brought me to Africa many times, in some God forgotten parts of this continent. What I see in Africa is a great vitality of the continent, a great energy, but also the great tragedies that afflict it. The fact that some the situation in some countries is changing is of course positive. But I think that despite Heveline's words, there is an attempt by a certain part of the press to create a false image of Africa, trying to tell people that there is a 5% growth of the Gross Domestic Product of Africa and that the continent is doing fine. I think this image is false: this growth is mainly caused by the growth of the oil price. This makes some of the African elites richer, some countries that are oil producers, but in truth there is no real growth of the living condition of the whole continent. The problem still are of enormous proportions. We journalist, maybe wrong we divide ourselves into "Afro-optimist" and Afro-pessimist, a very schematic and insufficient distinction. Nevertheless, I think that days like today contribute to the understanding of the new elements, negative and positive that come from the south of the world, specifically that come from Africa. Please excuse me always talking about Africa but this continent holds a special place in my heart even though I know that poverty, hunger, diseases are not exclusive to the African continent. Our theme is "let's save the UN" and with some much needed realism I have to say that Africa is also the battle field of many of the UN's greatest defeats. The UN pulled out of Rwanda, leaving hundreds of thousands of people defenceless to be massacred. The UN's peacekeepers left of helicopters while the peoples that had sought shelter in churches were executed. Africa is a I said the continent of the greatest defeats of the UN, which was born as mean to change the world, to help and work in solidarity and then ended being a part of the massacres, the shootings on crowds, this is definitely something we should think about.

I finish my expressing my pessimism, of course I know that there will be a big meeting of the heads of state at the UN on the 14; I think that the failure of the summit is already written, we don't have to delude ourselves. I was two months ago in Gleanaeagles, in Scotland, to follow the G8 summit for my newspaper and I must say that there too I have heard many promises; but then a few weeks later, when faced with the crisis in Niger, with hundreds of thousands of people who were dying of hunger, a hunger also caused by the international institutions that had caused a sudden increase of prices, the UN and its great agencies were literally without money. So even the promises that were made in Scotland were false.

I must say a last thing and will conclude: in those day were people talked about Africa, about poverty; the masters of the world were talking about it. I was in Edinburgh, I saw thousands of young people that were demonstrating in the streets; then one morning the terrible news of the London bombings reached us and the people who were there, the young people, told me "we are the first victims of this terror". I have seen many trains fill up with people that had marched trough the streets of Edinburgh and were going home very disappointed, because terrorism had closed all

political spaces for demonstrating. These are the few things I wanted to say to give my contribution to the debate.

I hope that today we will hear many other contributions, from all over the world. Thank you.