



JEAN-MICHEL SEVERINO

Chairman of Investisseur & Partenaire

Christopher DICKEY, Paris Bureau Chief and Middle East Regional Editor for *Newsweek Magazine*

I want to open up the floor. Before I do so, one question I have to ask because this is always a big preoccupation in Europe is when we talk about migration. You have been talking about migration within Africa. Of course, one of the big questions for Europeans is what about migrations from Africa into Europe? With these kinds of demographic pressures, is the continent going to be growing fast enough and empty enough to accommodate this new population, or will this population come north across the eight nautical miles?

Jean-Michel SEVERINO, Chairman of Investisseur & Partenaire

By the way, I am very happy that I am seen as an optimist. I am happy to find someone today who is even more of an optimist than I am, so I can play the pessimist. As far as migration is concerned, the reality is that domestic migrations within the continent will be vastly more important than migrations from the continent to other continents, including Europe. It is hard, of course, to predict what may happen, but one possible scenario is that the percentage of the population willing to migrate towards other continents, including Europe, is going to remain about the same or may decrease. With the relationship between the relative numbers and absolute numbers, even with the decline in the proportion of Africans willing to migrate to Europe, it will lead to an absolute large increase in migration coming from sub-Saharan Africa.

There is nothing wrong about it. This is the way a world of 9 billion people is going to be built, with a stronger presence of people from other continents. It will definitely create challenges for Europe, which will also be opportunities because as an aging continent, we need a population flow from other continents. I think our government's policy in France is just completely wrong in terms of migration and it is taking all the wrong decisions on every front about the management of the migration challenge, including the way it is being explained to the French population. Demographics are playing an important role there, but I think it is a very important responsibility.

To conclude, I agree with Lionel that challenges for Africa in terms of managing population and population growth are not new. They have been handled more or less over the last few decades, but the pressure is going to increase further. The magnitude of the challenge is going to be even higher and if you are optimistic about mankind, those major challenges will be handled. It is going to be tough.

Let me highlight an example. Niger's population is now about 70 million people and as everybody knows, Niger is a very large country, where only a very small part of the country can be inhabited so far. According to the current demographics of Niger, which unfortunately experiences a 3.5 demographic growth rate right now, Niger's population will probably peak at between 40 million to 45 million within the forthcoming decades. It is just unthinkable that you will have 40 million or 50 million people in Niger. You will probably have half of them and this means that you will have about 30 million people on the road from Niger down to South Africa, to the coast of Benin, the Ivory Coast, Ghana and so on.

The shock between migrants and local people has been at the root of the Ivorian crisis, and migration is also at the root of the political difficulties Kenya has faced over the past few years. You may imagine that this will be a major cause of instability. You would have the same type of features coming from many countries down to the coast of the Gulf of Guinea. My perception is that if ever these problems have been more or less managed in past years, they will reach a



level of intensity that will spur new types of cooperation within countries in the regions, while there is some likelihood that instability will also lead to social challenges.

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Thank you both, Lionel and Jean-Michel, for a terrific presentation. We are hearing so much optimism about Africa.