

YOUSSEF AMRANI

Chargé de mission, Royal Cabinet, Morocco

Marie-Roger Biloa, CEO, Africa International Media Group

Let us now speak about security, and I will turn to Youssef Amrani, who is Charges de Mission at the Royal Cabinet of Morocco and former Ambassador. I will make the question very short. Regarding Boko Haram, Al-Qaida, Al-Shabaab, these brand names of terror in Africa - what is your take on the situation, firstly, and what needs to be done?

Youssef Amrani, Chargé de mission, Royal Cabinet, Morocco

Thank you very much for inviting me here. Let me first say that I do not see a dialogue only in terms of security in Africa; there are other essential dimensions, and we cannot disassociate security from economic development. Let me say at the beginning that today everybody is interested in Africa. Sometimes we get confused because there is a lack of coherence: there is the China-Africa dialogue, there is Korea-Africa, India-Africa, the joint action between EU and Africa since the Brussels Summit, and finally the action in August between the US and Africa.

Marie-Roger Biloa, CEO, Africa International Media Group

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Youssef Amrani, Chargé de mission, Royal Cabinet, Morocco

France also had a dialogue, but it was within the Francophone countries. I referred to the EU as a whole in its dialogue with Africa. Therefore, sometimes we, as African partners, are lost; we need this dialogue, as it is important, and we need this kind of solidarity, but we need some coherence in the action towards Africa.

Sometimes we feel that our partners are only interested in the resources of Africa, but today we need a comprehensive and holistic approach to deal with Africa. Security is important, but it is not the only way of facing the challenges. I am not a specialist on security, but I know that security represents a real issue in Africa today, with Al-Qaida in the Maghreb, Boko Haram, Ansar Dine, Al Shabaab, and all these kinds of ideological movements that are harming the development of Africa. We still do not have the necessary tools to face these kinds of challenges.

Thanks to the French intervention in the Security Council upon the demand from the Malian Government, we were able to fight terror in Mali, but we were not able to chase out Al Qaida, and it is now in Libya and elsewhere. I want to make the point that we need a real policy towards terrorist movements in Africa, because if we do not act using the appropriate tools, through trust and through a real political will, we will have the same chaotic situation as in the Arab world, especially with the resurgence of the Deash movement. Boko Haram and Al-Qaida are a major security threat.

It is good to have security cooperation and cooperation in the field of intelligence, to send peacekeeping forces to solve the conflicts, but if we do not have a peace-building strategy, we cannot face this kind of risk. There are eight peacekeeping missions in Africa today, but there are a lot of difficulties and we have not solved the problem. Therefore, we need cooperation to face these challenges, and we need access to markets. I will briefly outline the major concerns.



Nevertheless, the continent is faced with many security, political, demographic, migration, environmental and health challenges to which it must successfully rise in order to achieve sustainable human development and ensure inclusive growth and progress for all. Africa must take its future in its own hands, overcome the barriers to its socio-economic development and create jobs for its youth, who are the continent's real driving force.

To achieve this objective, it is necessary to re-engineer African economies, develop fruitful, mutually beneficial cooperation partnerships and promote African independence.

In the past, cooperation was based on trust and historical ties; today, it is increasingly revolves around on efficiency, performance and credibility. A rapidly emerging continent, Africa needs partnerships that can play a catalytic part, rather than conditional assistance.

This means South-South cooperation will be at the heart of Africa's economic partnerships, as the continent naturally continues to develop mutually beneficial relations with countries with which it has the strongest historical ties and the most affinities.

We also need to do our own homework as Africans, in terms of regional integration, good governance, accountability, and implementing democracy in our countries. This is something we need to do, but we also need to do it while respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of countries, because the major issues and problems facing Africa today are through the borders. We need a concrete and holistic effort, and we also need tools. Nathalie was talking about tools, and I will just give an example of how we were able to face a major security threat with a different approach, when we were able to transform a migratory crisis in the region into a comprehensive partnership involving the countries of transit, Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, the countries of destination, such as Europe, and the countries of origin, because we said that we needed to devise something together and to give importance to development.

I also want to raise another issue in fighting the security and terrorist threat, and it is something that Morocco is doing today. This is South-South cooperation. We heard very successful stories of investment in Africa, but an essential dimension is the spiritual and cultural one, to be able to face all these extremists, because Islam is a tolerant religion in any case. Islam is present in Africa, and we are training imams in de-radicalisation and the promotion of the real value of Islam, which is tolerance, based on solidarity and shared values. This is one of the major tools at the end of the day.

What is important, and what is a priority for us, is how we can create jobs and promote growth in a continent, Africa, with a lot of expectations and with a lot of human and natural resources. Maybe we lack some things, but what is important is to create jobs and to promote growth, and today Africa has changed. Africa is no longer just an exporter of raw materials. It now has other assets today; it has a middle class, it has consumers, and we have the ambition to work in partnership and create growth. We need to face all these challenges, such as security, Ebola and so on, but what we need today is more cooperation, and we need to do our own homework as far as regional integration is concerned. It is working today in East Africa, but less well in West Africa and the Maghreb, for many reasons, but we need a clear vision.

I was impressed by the President of Korea this morning, who insisted on trust and the role of the private sector, and this is exactly the Moroccan vision. We need trust in our projects, but we also need to involve the private sector in investment in the region and in creating jobs in order to fulfil our ambitions.