

# CHEIKH TIDIANE GADIO

President of the Institute for Pan-African Strategies (IPS); Former Foreign Minister of Senegal

**Sean CLEARY**

I am going to save time by allowing all of the speakers to offer their perspectives, and now pass to our second speaker, Cheikh Tidiane Gadio, who is a former Prime Minister of Senegal, and currently the president of the Institute of Pan-African Studies. As I said earlier, he has a great amount of experience in conflict mediation and resolution.

**Cheikh Tidiane GADIO**

Thank you very much. I would like to pay tribute to our friend Thierry and wish the forum a happy 10th anniversary. I also want to tell him that good people are not allowed to retire: we still want to see him continuing work for several decades. As I see it, Africa is a relatively mistreated continent, because people approach Africa from a Manichaean point of view. In some people's eyes, everything is going badly, for others, everything is fine or everything is starting to be fine. I think we need to try to set the cursor in the middle: there are things that are doing well, doing much better, but there are things that are going badly, and in some cases even very badly.

This morning, I was listening to Radio France International and heard three extremely interesting pieces of news. The first is that the soldiers of Barkhane in North Mali, very generous youngsters, have pooled their money and raised 15 million CFA francs, or approximately \$30,000, to dig a well for villagers, villagers who walk 20 or 25 kilometres to find water, with children who cannot receive education, who cannot go to school because they have to walk at least 5 to 6 kilometres to have access to water.

Keep in mind that one-third of the population of North Mali does not have access to drinking water. I thought to myself: "Here is a concrete question in African development." We have to ask ourselves some serious questions: after sixty years of independence, should we still be at this stage, in a situation where one-third of the population of North Mali, which itself accounts for two-thirds of Mali, does not have access to drinking water? I see that as very concrete.

The second piece of news is that, in Kinshasa, 9 000 tonnes of waste are collected per day. The European Union provides \$9 million a year to keep Kinshasa clean. It troubles me that, in a country like the DRC, potentially the best-endowed country, perhaps the richest in the world, it is the European Union that is dealing with the purification and collection of waste in Kinshasa. It was added that privatisation is now being considered. After 60 years of independence, we are still at that point on this issue.

The good news came with a piece on the Ivory Coast and a project called "Finance is committed", where African financiers help SMEs, which account for about 80% of the private sector. What is interesting is that Africa helping Africa, Africa coming to the rescue of Africa on the continent, changes from the kind of talk we usually hear. To love and respect the African continent is to tell it the truth. Telling the truth if you are not African and telling the truth if you are African. In my view, there are many things that are not going well. Yesterday, the head of the AFD said something interesting: he is pleased that Africa has reached \$2.500 billion in GDP. I was sitting in the room, and was a little surprised.

I understand that he has observed consistent progress and is pleased about it. At the same time, I compared Africa with South Korea, which in 1960 posted approximately USD 3 billion of GDP. Today, it is at approximately USD 1 500 billion in GDP. That is, the sum of 25 African countries, some of which had higher GDP than South Korea in 1960; Nigeria was at 4.2 billion in GDP. I find it unacceptable that a country like South Korea, which came from almost the same starting point, perhaps even with less resources than African countries, should achieve USD 1 500 billion in GDP, while Africa is at USD 2 500 billion in GDP 60 years later.

It is a good thing that Morocco is joining ECOWAS and contributing 100 billion of its GDP all at once, but I hope that Morocco's arrival will also shake up the overall working principles of ECOWAS. We need to see what Morocco is contributing in terms of experience, etc., and what ECOWAS can offer. It also needs to engage in internal reflection. ECOWAS is a politically united regional community, and that is where the problem lies. We do everything in our power to prevent political unity and yet are rushing into economic integration arrangements. For the last 40 or 45 years, we have been doing economic integration, and the result is 12 to 14% inter-ECOWAS trade, where Asia is approaching practically 60%. Not to mention Europe, which has exceeded 76%. That is not acceptable; we need to change the paradigm.



To change paradigm, I would question those who believe it is essential to continue with what I call the African States' lone-rider outings. Béchir Ben Yahmed from Jeune Afrique, who attended the OAU Summit in 1963 and cannot be suspected of being an extremist, who is grown and very moderate, said, two weeks ago, something absolutely extraordinary. He confirmed those who defend the unity and integration of Africa as being absolutely right. I quote Béchir in one of his editorials: *"If you are African or if, as a non-African, you are interested in the place of Africa in the world, you may think that this continent should not be trimmed and cut into 54 states that believe themselves independent, when many of them are not viable. Africa could have become, much like India, a federal state. They are comparable in population, GDP, number of languages and ethnic groups. The country, which would have been called the United States of Africa, would have grouped into a federation of autonomous States, the fifty so-called "independent" States of today. It would then have been the world's third-largest State in terms of population, behind China and India, which it would overtake sometime in the next two decades. Its economy would have been the fourth, behind those of China, the United States and India. This dream state would have produced 75% of the platinum, 55% of the diamonds and 20% of the gold mined across the world. No other country would have equalled the United States of Africa with the riches of its subsoil."* He concludes: *"But let's stop dreaming and let's see whether..."*, etc. I do not want to stop dreaming, though; I still think we need to continue -- this is not a dream, it is a goal, because the issues which Africa faces are issues of survival, with the security challenge. Terrorism is moving to Africa to make this continent its epicentre, with Al-Chabab, Boko Haram and Al-Qaeda.

In 2014 and 2015, Boko Haram left more victims behind among the civilian populations than Daesh, but since the West is interested in Daesh and in some countries for various reasons, having to do with oil etc., Boko Haram did not attract much interest. Even though it has massacred many more people. Africa is under threat, the entire Sahel area is like a time bomb. Our States do not have the means to respond to this. You saw the G5 Sahel debates on how to set up African special forces to defend the continent. We are looking for ways to do so, more or less all over, and some partners are treating us very badly on this issue.

That is why we suggested moving to a G5+5 format, because it is not right that a country like Senegal, which can contribute enormously to the G5, has not been invited. Let us move beyond this debate and form a new entity today: the current G5, plus Senegal, plus Morocco, which has extraordinary experience when it comes to intelligence, information-gathering, etc., plus Algeria, the only country in the world, for the time being, to have defeated domestic terrorism in the 90s, and has a great deal of experience. We also need to add Nigeria, the entire Sahelian northeast of, with the Boko Haram problem, and lastly Cameroon, which is a regional power. This G5+5 would have financed the Sahel G5, without our having to go around and ask everywhere.

Africa has to manage some quite extraordinary conflicts. We need innovative solutions, we need to find innovative solutions. Eritrea is a problem, we have tons of questions about what is going on there; Somalia is a problem; the DRC, which has not had any respite since 1960, and there is also Burundi and the CAR. Looking at all these countries, you realise that Africa has to take up major security challenges, whether terrorism, criminal economies, human trafficking or drug trafficking.

This translates into a migratory movement that is the greatest tragedy that Africans have experienced. When we hear the word migration, Europe comes immediately to mind; however, the greatest tragedy experienced by Africans is the massive brain drain of our young people, who were our primary asset and whom we are going to lose in the seas and deserts. They go out and drown, they go out and die in the deserts, and they were Africa's main asset. For Africans and their friends, it is time for a change in paradigm; it is time to reflect again on how to save this continent. Thank you.

**Sean CLEARY**

Merci beaucoup. This is the advantage of combining passion with experience when addressing challenges.