

AMADOU GON COULIBALY

Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I take part in the 12th World Policy Conference in Marrakech.

To begin, I would like to convey the cordial greetings of the President of Côte d'Ivoire, H. E. Mr. Alassane Ouattara, to His Majesty Mohamed VI, King of Morocco, may God help him. On his behalf, I would like to express my pleasure at the outstanding friendship and cooperation between our two countries.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Thierry de Montbrial, President of the French Institute of International Relations, for having once again invited me to this important event, which offers decision-makers, researchers and opinion leaders an opportunity every year to discuss the challenges of today's and tomorrow's world.

It is an honor for me to share this time with you.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I have just arrived from Lyon, where I represented H. E. President Ouattara at the sixth replenishment conference of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

It was a great moment of international solidarity and successful multilateralism, since the \$14 billion goal was almost reached.

The event bringing us together today also offers us an opportunity to reflect in depth on the challenges facing Africa and the world.

As you know, Africa is on a solid foundation to become a major pillar of global growth and prosperity. Exceeding the global average, its growth rate was 3.5% in 2017 and 2018. It is forecasted to reach 4% in 2019 and 4.1% in 2020.

However, this is still not enough to meet today's main two challenges in Africa, namely the massive creation of jobs, especially for young people, who account for nearly 70% of the population, and poverty reduction.

We must face these challenges together, as they have an increasingly important impact on the issue of migration as well as on the issue of terrorist threats in Africa.

With regard to the massive creation of jobs for our youth, which represents our continent's present and future, we must structurally transform African economies.

Today this structural transformation is a key component of the policies pursued by various governments. It requires quickening the pace of the development of African industry, which remains very uncompetitive due to excessively high input costs and relatively small markets.

In that regard, most African countries are implementing major transport and energy infrastructure rehabilitation and development projects to create economies of scale and cut factor costs. Thus, from 2011 to 2019, electricity output capacity in Côte d'Ivoire, which has had an average economic growth of 8% a year since 2012, has risen by nearly 60%. The number of electrified localities doubled over the same period and the country has massively invested in building industrial zones and transport infrastructure.



From Marrakech, I will travel to Washington for the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, where I intend to raise the issue of infrastructure financing in Africa, beyond Côte d'Ivoire. We must imagine the possibility that World Bank resources could be used as leverage to raise the funds necessary to meet infrastructure financing needs in Africa.

Moreover, African States have all been endeavoring in recent years to improve the business climate with the aim of effectively attracting foreign direct investment and further fostering the growth of the private sector, which remains the source of employment. The number of African countries in the top 100 of the World Bank's Doing Business ranking has almost doubled in 10 years, from five to nine between 2010 and 2019. Côte d'Ivoire has also ranked three times in the top 10 reforming countries in the Doing Business ranking, in 2014, 2015 and 2019.

With regard to poverty reduction, the policies pursued by various governments seem to be paying off. The extreme poverty rate in Africa fell from 57% in 1990 to 43% in 2012 and 35% in 2015, according to the African Development Bank.

In this respect, I would like to reiterate my satisfaction with the results of the sixth replenishment conference of the Global Fund to Fight HIV, tuberculosis and malaria. I hope all the international initiatives to raise funds for health and education will be equally successful.

Of course, African countries must support this international solidarity, in line with our vision of multilateralism, with national counterparts in their budgets, which must grow from year to year for the social sectors.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Despite the quality of the economic policies implemented across the continent to consolidate its economic and social development, Africa faces a new threat that risks slowing its economic growth. Rising protectionism fueled by various trade wars could cause major problems for the continent, namely:

- The decline in African exports due to tighter quality and safety standards for many products
- The slowdown in Africa's industrialization because of stiff competition from manufactured products
- The fall in foreign investment in Africa on account of new difficulties encountered by the main investors.

To meet this new threat, Africa must step up trade within the regional economic communities as well as effectively set up the African Continental Free Trade Area representing a market of 1.2 billion consumers and the emergence of a middle class of about 800 million people. This will foster intra-African trade, which currently stands at 16%, thereby mitigating the impact of external shocks.

In addition, Africa will need to further strengthen the establishment of trade agreements with its favored partners.

In this regard, I would like to welcome the Economic Partnership Agreement between Côte d'Ivoire and the European Union, its main trading partner. The accord entered into force this year, bolstering the historic relationship between Côte d'Ivoire and Europe. We are confident that it will be extended to all the ECOWAS countries.

That is why we affirm our preference for multilateralism, which fosters consensus-based decision-making allowing the weakest to economically participate in writing up the rules that regulate international trade.

In this respect, the United Nations system, the expression of multilateralism, has for decades contributed to the promotion of international trade, the definition of sustainable development objectives, crisis prevention and sustainable conflict resolution.



Various UN resolutions and its peacekeeping mission have enabled Côte d'Ivoire, a country weakened by a decade of economic, political and military crises, to relaunch its economic and social development.

The country's exemplary exit from the crisis and the progress made have enabled Côte d'Ivoire to share its experience on the United Nations Security Council as a non-permanent member for the 2018-2019 term.

In conclusion, I would like to return to the issue of terrorism on our continent, particularly in West Africa.

West Africa faces an alarming deterioration in security with an increase in terrorist acts.

Terrorism is spreading in West Africa: 11,500 people have been killed, over 2,200 attacks recorded and millions of people displaced in the past five years. Terrorism threatens to have a major impact on the area's economic prospects.

In this connection, I welcome the initiative of the ECOWAS Heads of State who approved the establishment of a \$1 billion fund, including \$500 million financed entirely by WAEMU countries, with a view to strengthening the regional fight against terrorism.

This approach strengthens ongoing international initiatives in the Sahel, including Operation Barkhane, the United Nations Mission in Mali and the G5 Sahel.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As I pointed out at the beginning of my remarks, Africa is on track to become a pillar of global growth and prosperity and meet the challenges mentioned above. This responsibility belongs to all of us, but first and foremost to African leaders.

With this conviction in mind, I would like to end my remarks by repeating my sincere thanks to Thierry de Montbrial.

I wish you every success in your work and thank you for your kind attention.