



# SEAN CLEARY

Founder and Executive Vice Chairman of the FutureWorld Foundation, Chairman of Strategic Concepts (Pty) Ltd

## Robert DOSSOU

We won't waste any more time and I will give the floor to Sean Cleary, the founder and vice-president of FutureWorld Foundation. He is from the United Kingdom.

## Sean CLEARY

The best way perhaps of framing the issue is to try and put it in the context of the challenges that we face in a fragmenting world. One may have heard the discussion that was taking place about the future of the European Union a few hours ago in the plenary hall. 28 states today, perhaps 27 after Brexit, face the challenge of defining a common purpose based on a collective set of values. This is to order themselves in accordance with one set of norms to achieve a particular outcome in respect of the world at large.

Africa faces that challenge. As we all know, Africa has 54 countries. It is a continent that is three times the size of the United States of America. The distance from the Southernmost point to the Northernmost point is 8,000km. It is characterised by linguistic diversity, cultural diversity, ethnic diversity, and of course as I have said, 54 national states. In that parameter, one has to decide what is possible to achieve at national level, at the level of regional economic communities and at the level of the African Union. The moderator very correctly set this out.

There was the reconstitution of the Charter of the African Union and the adoption of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in the late 1990s. There was also the decision to encourage better governance in African states, through the African peer review mechanism. These are self-evidently all highly commendable approaches in addressing this challenge. However, if we are to take it forward, it is important to get a sense of what makes for success.

On a national level, on the level of a country, success can broadly be defined by (1) a reasonable degree of safety and security for one's citizens; (2) appropriate physical infrastructures (water, power, transport and ICT) to enable economic activity to take place; (3) appropriate investments in the creation of human capital through health services and education; and (4) policies that encourage persons to put capital at risk in search of reward. All these require (5) reliable, sound and trusted institutions.

Achieving this in 54 states is the core challenge that we face. We must also consider how to use the African regional organizations and, the African Union, the continental institution to enable growth and sustainable development. We have to find ways of squaring that circle. If we are honest, we know that Africa has not been well-served either by its colonial past or by aspects of the period after independence which began in Africa in 1957. Education has not been fit for purposes. As we heard in the plenary before lunch, health services often lagging in many parts of the continent, although splendid efforts are being made. The quality of African institutions themselves is not always up to standard.

We have a population today on the continent of 1.316 billion people. Roughly 44% are in urban areas, and the median age is 19.4 years. We are by far the youngest population in the world. By 2050, if things proceed roughly according to projections, we will have 2.5 billion people, of whom 60% will be in urban areas. This means an increase of not only 1.5 billion Africans but also nearly 1 billion urbanites, and the median age will only have risen to 24.8 years.

The challenge in respect of education, training and employment or other economic opportunities through entrepreneurship, is gigantic. That it seems to me is where our attention ought to be directed as we address the



challenge. All of the indicators suggest that *good governance*, according to the measures that are used to assess that, is very closely correlated with better performance on the Human Development Index.

There is very little doubt that getting these five things right will lead to higher standards of opportunity and welfare for African citizens. However, we must take it seriously and collectively; it cannot be achieved only by governments. Governments are to the fore, as the democratically elected representatives of the people in countries where we have elections. However, all other parts of society - business, civil society at large, faith groups and others - have a collective responsibility to realize this. We must provide good education, decent health services, appropriate accommodation and opportunities for employment and advancement. Otherwise, we will squander Africa's demographic dividend, and be held to account by those who follow us.

**Robert DOSSOU**

Thank you, Mr. Cleary.