



## ELISABETH GUIGOU

President of the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue Between Cultures, former Minister, former Member of the French Parliament and President of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Assembly

### Robert DOSSOU

Many of you here know Elisabeth Guigou, a former cabinet minister, former MEP, former MP and head of the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation. She is responsible for dialogue between cultures.

### Elisabeth GUIGOU

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I would like to say that the main thing we should talk about here is obviously all the progress that has been made in Africa, which you have highlighted. Mr. Cleary has just reminded us how important governance issues obviously are.

To begin with, I'd like to make one point. Africa and Europe face the same risk of leaving the stage history, of no longer being on the radar of power in today's world, of being dominated by China—we've spoken at length about that today—and of being the victim of the current trade war between the United States and China. We face the same challenges. We must, it seems to me, look together to see how we can continue to defend our interests and make our voices heard in the world, for example with regard to climate change, which is obviously much more threatening for our common Europe-Africa region than perhaps in other places.

If we do not want to be left out of history in the making, I'm convinced that we must work towards a new alliance between Africa and Europe. I say "new alliance" because that's the term President Juncker used. Having worked a great deal with the European Commission, I know that this idea is now being disseminated within the Commission, which is important. I have good reason to believe that the next Commission President will be on the same wavelength: a new alliance. As you've heard, President Macron talks about linking the two continents in order to defend our interests together.

Of course, it is essential first of all for each of us to put our own house in order, in other words for Europe to continue to consolidate itself and become more coherent—we talked about this a lot this afternoon—and for Africa—as you've stressed, Mr. Chairman—to carry out its own reforms. It's not too late, however, to start working together on the challenges we share: the climate, of course, security—we've talked a lot about the Sahel, but that's not all—youth employment—this is perhaps the major challenge, given the demographic situation—education, health and the joint control of migration. Uncontrolled migration is a tragedy for Africa because it is being drained of talent, and you've seen the effects of this in Europe: the rise of extremes and populism and the closing of borders. There is no solution unless we tackle these issues together.

It is not enough just to say that; we must see how to do it. First of all, there must be a principle, which is that Europe must not be the only one to set the agenda for discussions between Africa and Europe. We must turn our backs on all forms of neo-colonialism and on the idea that we Europeans know what needs to be done and you Africans need only listen. That is still very much the case. We have to change. We have to be inventive both in terms of method and in terms of the areas where we need to work together in a new partnership.

The priority, it seems to me, is to move from public aid—because if this worked, we would know about it—to funding that is undoubtedly public-private, but mainly private, for specific projects that create jobs and meet the real needs of the people. That is the main thing.



Furthermore, partners must be found. The African Diaspora in Europe is an asset. It's a human link between Europe and Africa that is not sufficiently taken into account and is obviously a source of wealth for both sides. There are businesses. I, and Jean-Louis Guigou even more than I, constantly meet small and medium-sized enterprises that say, "We would like to work in Africa rather than go to India or China". They prefer proximity. Proximity reduces transport times, costs and monetary risks. It allows for better quality control. "We would rather go to Africa, but we're afraid because we don't have enough guarantees."

The potential exists to truly industrialize Africa. Infrastructure is essential. It is the basis of everything. Then we have to go beyond that. How can we boost investment, not just European investment in Africa, but African investment in Europe?

As for the tools, I believe we need to think together about our common future. To do that, we must succeed in creating a foundation called "Africa, the Mediterranean and Europe". It's very beautiful, first of all because we're reversing the order by putting Africa first, and second because the initials spell out AME, the French word for soul. This would be a network of existing think tanks that are already working, many of which are represented here in this room. However, rather than meeting on an ad hoc basis as we have been doing for the last two days, which is already tremendously interesting, they would work on a permanent basis with academics, researchers, business and politicians. By comparing their views on a permanent basis in working groups that would be set up on specific issues, such as health, education, job creation, agriculture, the circular economy, energy and water, they would be able to draw up proposals, that is to say, to establish a consensus that would then be submitted to private and public decision-makers. I'm convinced that if we manage to have these places of ongoing discussion that produce consensus, we will succeed in getting initiatives from actors in the field, because that's what it is all about. We will be able to jointly assess them and select good practices. Many examples have been given to us during these two days. One person told us, for example, that in Ethiopia, there has been a great success story in the field of health. All this is pointless if it is just talk. These initiatives need to be assessed, disseminated and then acted upon so that the funding is there and the ways of doing things evolve as standards and are brought closer together.

Another tool seems very important to me. A bank is needed that hasn't once again been created out of nowhere. It would be enough to set up a holding company between the EIB (the European Investment Bank) and the African Development Bank so that the managers systematically ask themselves what is good for encouraging cross-investment: ensuring the movement of capital and guaranteeing that we can make things work. It wouldn't hurt if we had a new economic treaty instead of the Cotonou Agreement.

Furthermore, we need a different approach to the EU-Africa summits. These are juxtapositions of speeches. That's always useful, but let's look at what's happening on other continents. We should try to tell the Heads of State and Government to meet for 36 hours. That's a huge amount of time in their schedule. You come without a collaborator, you talk to each other and exchange ideas. Then, in other rooms, there are note-takers and we try to get things moving that way. These are a few proposals on a subject that's close to my heart. I will listen carefully, Mr. Chairman, to the other proposals and suggestions.

**Robert DOSSOU**

Thank you, Ms. Guigou.