



## JULIETTE TUAKLI

Founder and Medical Director of Family CHILD & Associates, Ghana; United Way Worldwide's Chair of Governance Committee

### Robert DOSSOU

I am going to give the floor to Juliette Tuakli from Ghana. She is the director and founder of Family CHILD and Associates and chairs the governance committee of United Way Worldwide.

### Juliette TUAKLI

Thank you very much Mr. Chairman for inviting me to say a few words. A great deal has been said already that I would have been happy to discuss, so I will speak more from the perspective of my work in civic society, with United Way Worldwide. This is the world's largest private NGO, as was described this morning, with annual revenues of 5 billion dollars. The reason why I would like to focus on that is because United Way's model is to create community impact using business models and community partnerships. I have been hearing the words partnerships, partnerships, partnerships over and over again. These are new types of partners and new types of alliances which are all critical.

Certainly, as a physician, the fellow that spoke about his programme at OCP was music to my ears. This is certainly because I consider food security as a public health issue as a physician and I do not think it is often addressed that way. However, within civic societies such as United Way, we can introduce that concept of food security being a public health concept and work with communities. I look forward to having some conversation later with our colleague, to see what kind of relationships we can develop with them.

I have worked for many years on the continent. I come from Nigeria and I work in Ghana. Having worked on the South and West of the continent particularly, as well as the East, I find there has been an erosion of trust in our populace, especially our young populace. There has been a hounding of civic society, the space within which civic societies can do what they need to do, and it is at a time when we need them more than ever.

I do not want to rehash the comments made by my fellow on my left here about the terrorism situation, but there is an absolute relationship between what is going on in the Sahel and with Boko Haram, and the fact that the military governments of our day destroyed our educational systems, which once were amongst the best in the world, and I speak from personal experience. We have to support civic society groups to re-introduce health and education. We can quibble about whether it is education rather than health or health rather than education. It makes no difference.

At the end of the day, our children are sick. Our adults are sick. That is why they die in their 50s. That is when most people are most productive, and we are losing our professionals and nobody says anything. We need to revisit how important civic society is in our countries. We must start developing mechanisms that indicate trust between the governments of our day and the civic organizations, instead of having this high degree of distrust and the high level of hostility that permeates into the younger folks. Our youth do not trust us at all. They have no reason to. What have we done for them? What have our governments done for them? They do not even recognize them half the time.

I do like the point you made. It is not migration. It is an exodus. It is disgraceful, what is going on, absolutely disgraceful, and we sit there talking about it as though it is an excellent coffee table or dinner chat. We have got to start getting serious at all levels, but I do think the most cost-efficient way would be to expand the role of civic society groups and allow them to operate. I am not putting in a plug for United Way Worldwide, but in the five years that I have worked with them, I have been thoroughly impressed with the way that they do not reinvent wheels. They take examples from Southern communities such as in India, Korea, Asia and Latin America. This is to apply within the African continent and they work, because we all face very similar issues at all the different levels. This is rather than



looking to Europe and America all the time to bring models that are not fit for purpose half the time. In theory, yes, but in practice, no, because there are so many other issues that we have to deal with, not the least of which is low literacy.

Yes, education must be fit for purpose, but to achieve that, we need to take some more circuitous routes. We also need to look at agriculture. I mentioned that earlier. We need to rebuild trust in our young people in our structures at each level in society, and this is where civil society is particularly important. The diaspora may play a very critical role here. I was a diasporan myself. I knew about United Way when I was at Harvard. I was at Harvard for nearly 30 years and I heard a lot about United Way, but never once thought that I would ever be directly involved with it.

Once I returned home, I recognized that the models that were being used were very effective and we could adapt them accordingly. The diaspora needs to be encouraged, not just to come back and do, but to come back and give back in ways that they are comfortable with. Again, we must support some of the initiatives of organizations such as United Way. It is not the only organization, but that is the one I know best.

We need to take the climate change situation very seriously. I am also a Rotarian, and I will never forget the day about five years ago when I met a group of Rotarians from France, I believe. They had taken it upon themselves 10 years ago to fly around the coast of Africa and decided 10 years later to fly around the coast of Africa again and draw what they saw. It was shocking. We are losing our countries, we are losing our coasts and we are losing our coastlines, and again, nothing gets said about it. We watch poor people building their cities on ground that we know is going to be submerged in a few years and nothing is said at any level. We have got to start taking green economies seriously, and I am going to sound like a broken record, but this might be another space for civic society to play a role.

As a private practitioner, when I hear people talk about public-private initiatives as being the way to go, I agree in theory. However, I do not think our governments always understand how important they are, and are often fearful of engaging with successful private groups. I think this is out of a sense of being found out, perhaps, not doing things properly or correctly. I do not know what it is, but there is always a little bit of pushback, and in my mind, it never seems to be as effective as it could or should be. This is mostly from the government side, not from the private-sector side.

For all of us here who are in this room who are involved in governments in various ways, please look at this again more seriously because I do think, as a private practitioner, and as most private practitioners are, that we focus on cost effectiveness. We have to watch the bottom line and make sure we are getting enough out for what we are putting in, in a timely way, which is not always the way governments run. I do think when you have a genuine relationship and a genuine partnership, it can be extremely valuable. We are acutely aware of how critical we are in terms of our health and education areas, and this is where we particularly need to start looking at funding from some of the larger banks in these areas.

**Robert DOSSOU**

Thank you, Ms. Tuakli. Thank you on behalf of all of us for your presentation.