

AMINATA TOURÉ

Former Prime Minister of Senegal

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Therefore, if you permit me, I would like to actually start off by asking *Madame* Aminata Touré, who is, of course, the former Prime Minister of Senegal, and was on the same panel on our discussion about some of the same issues at last year's World Policy Conference as well.

Madame Prime Minister, I want to turn to you first, Aminata, and ask you do you feel that the world economic order is stable; is changing? Do you have a vision of where it is going? How is it affecting the countries that you are most familiar with?

Aminata Touré, former Prime Minister of Senegal

Thank you very much. Let me just say how happy I am to be here. Thank you for keeping this going as a tradition.

When you age and you put on some weight, you look at this very nice suit – because there are only men here, so I am going to take the suit example – and you want to just fit into the one that you used to wear in your 30s. That is what the world looks like. You do have old powers that used to dominate, and they still want to keep things going because it is enjoyable to benefit from privileges.

However, in between you have one part of the world that caught up or wants to catch up; and then you move from what looks like a stable environment, but it was not for many people. Coming from Africa obviously, we want a new order, for sure.

You also have within countries some groups that want a new order that is more equal, that is more human rights-centered, that is more dignified for people.

Therefore, you do have this tension that is now being expressed through different ways – not the most peaceful or the most positive ways – but definitely, when you look into the 54 countries in Africa out of the 194, it is quite a number, and what they would like to see is something different. They want to industrialize. They want to be more present. They want a seat at the Security Council – they have been talking about it for so many years.

We do believe that disorder is not that bad if you want to be more present and you have your rights more respected. I think the disorder is called for by many people, including women. I mean, look at the room. Every year, it is the same story: black suits, all men, not very diversified, WASP as we say. I mean, we have just started the morning, but that is the reality I am seeing.

Therefore, we want a new world, definitely, that is more gender-equitable, for sure. How many women are leading countries? Very few; or Prime Ministers or Ministers – very few, regardless of the level of revenues or industrialization stage. It does not matter. This is a very old order – the Old Boys Club. That has been very challenging.



Even in Africa, look at the average age of the population. The median age is 19 – while it is 44 in Europe, by the way – and they are nowhere to be seen. The elite is sixty-year-old plus, meaning the Ministers or the Presidents, of course. They benefit from everything but they are only 3% of the population.

Therefore, these young people and these women want disorder and want a reshuffle of the cards. It is expressed, as I said, disorderly. They do not have the chance of sitting where I am sitting and saying it, but it is really something that we need to look into if we want to move to a new stage that is on.

Economically, obviously, in Africa – I can take Senegal as an example – we do have a very old relationship with France, but how is it now that France is being phased out in many countries? If you follow the economy – Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, being the case in point – what did not go right for that to happen after such a long relationship?

Well, what happened is the hope for development did not happen, so why would you entertain a relationship? It is like a wife in a couple, somehow. If you are unhappy, why would you keep that going? Are you going to replace it with something new that will be better? It remains to be seen, obviously, but when you have new partners and new players in the economic field – I am talking about Brazil, China, and whoever is there – you attempt to look the other way.

In a nutshell, definitely, do we have to go through disorder? It looks like it, and we are in the middle of it. By the way, when you talk about change, most of the time it is because it has already happened. What we need to see is more equality, more justice, more representation of women and young people, more race diversity, That is also an issue. We really need to look into the new world we want to build through what we are doing now – discussing, but discussing very honestly – and having the courage to put issues on the table.

We are unhappy with the state of international affairs. That is what it is, and how are we going to work together and make sure that we do have the dresses and the suits that fit everybody and everybody's happy with?

That is my first take on the issue.

Masood Ahmed

Thank you very much, Aminata, for raising not just what people are not happy about, but also some of the attributes of what people would like to see in a new international order. I think we will come back in a second round to ask you whether you see us moving in that direction. What are the forces that will get us there? If you were to look five years out or 10 years out, are we moving closer to that vision or are we basically staying in a set of relationships that lead to all this, not just resentment, but I think also increasing anger, in many parts?