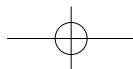
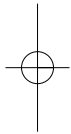
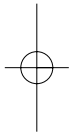


Yes I Dare

Twelve proposals for an emerging Senegal

CONVERSATIONS WITH HONORÉ DE SUMO



PIERRE GOUDIABY ATEPA

Yes I Dare

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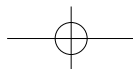
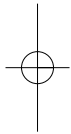
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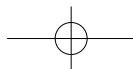
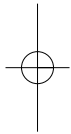
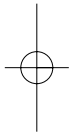
Presentation of Honoré de Sumo

Honoré de Sumo is a freelance journalist. It is not surprising that on this score, he holds a distinctive place in the cultural and political world. He has indeed met the greatest of writers and political figures. History will no doubt have it that he had the honour to talk with Nelson Mandela and drew some lessons that we are still sharing. Whether with Felix Houphouet Boigny, the wise Amadou Ba Hampaté, or other great African figures, his interviews are still being referred to. There were equally often editing successes as in the texts we read from his meetings with Winnie Mandela, Laurent Gbagbo, Hinda Deby, Germaine Ahidjo or the banker Babacar N'Diaye. For, it is not the least merit of Honoré de Sumo to translate for thousands of readers the lessons of some great men, simply and freely, and to which is added today the architect Pierre Goudiaby Atepa, equally president of a large multinational and multisectoral group.



Dedication

To the Senegalese youth,
To the African youth,
To the youth of the world,
DARE for hope to spring up.



Preface

To Move Forward

It is a formidable task to present Pierre Goudiaby Atepa, and more so to introduce his book with the evocative, challenging and very engaging title: DARE.

From the outset, Pierre comes out in the dual role of an architect and “development entrepreneur”, gifted and talented. But this presentation, in a reduced format shows, especially the professional side of the man; that is the “street” side, to use a common expression. I would on the parallel, lift the veil a little on the “yard” side of the man: this side is just splendid, beautiful to see. I would say that the attachment of Pierre to his origins, his love for his wife, Yvette, and his daughters, and his dedication to the cause of the weak, are undoubtedly the bedrock of his actions, the source of his inspiration, that of his initiatives and the key to his blooming.

Pierre is a man who is faithful in friendship, a man who can be relied upon anywhere and in all circumstances. He is a respectful man, a nice man to each and everyone, in spite of the person’s rank in society. Yes! I can bear this testimony, just as I will testify also that Pierre Goudiaby is a great Senegalese patriot, who loves his country “with a love that draws tears”, as Mr. Lamine Gueye said speaking of his attachment to the land of his ancestors.

Pierre is also a great lover of his continent, on which

he travels, feeling at home everywhere as in the Medina district of Dakar or in the streets of Ziguinchor. He is a tireless fighter for the dignity of Africa that he proudly and honourably represents in China, Russia, France and everywhere by installing in these countries an antenna of the group he leads, the Atepa Group. He thus intends by these branches, to contribute to the promotion of Africa in the world and forge a new image of our continent: that of a renewed Africa.

As readers may discover, Pierre does not say things as we would have liked to hear them or as we usually hear them. He chooses not to comfort us in our antiquated convictions. With courage and a good dose of temerity, he moves fast where many people hesitate to venture. He is an explorer of creative thinking, innovative thinking, which brings us with him to hoist the mast of audacity. He gives us ambition and leads us to DARE.

Yes, DARE! This is the magic word, the keyword, the rudder to move forward, to change our experience. Pierre is not trying to confuse us, but to reorient the convictions gained by using everyday words to help us better understand that in reality, nothing complicated should be undertaken.

Pierre Goudiaby dreams of Senegal like of a promised land where, however, milk and honey do not flow down from heaven like the Promised Land of the Creator. However, this milk and this honey do exist and even in abundance in other forms in our country. We need to go and look for them while activating the turbine of our

harnessed intelligences at full capacity, and while scorning a past that inhibits action, that makes us believe that nothing will ever change and that we will forever remain the burden of others, perpetual beggars relying on international help.

We therefore need to take our destiny in hand and readapt it otherwise we will be confined forever in the cargo wagon of the train of history, while other humans will be comfortably installed in air-conditioned cars to do the same journey.

We therefore need to act here and now to change the course of our future, to justify our part of humanity and live life fully.

We must DARE! This key word, in the author's meaning, aims at alerting consciences like a tocsin at the early hours of a decisive battle, that which will make Africa enter, a new Africa, into the "main stream", rid of all rags from the periphery, by connecting it to the international currents that contribute to the edification of the Global Village, our common heritage.

Goudiaby hates talking of the fight against poverty. He prefers the beautiful and no less elegant consonance of the "struggle for wealth". He is not wrong, because he wants the best, that is, excellence for his Senegalese compatriots. But undoubtedly, the shock wave of his twelve propositions for the emergence of Senegal will reverberate across all Africa, his real native land. In the final analysis, it is to his "African compatriots" that he

is talking. The recipe is therefore not exclusively Senegalese as one were enjoying a good Tiéboudiène (rice with fish, in Wolof), while dreaming of a Saint-Louisienne spin. It confirms the extent, if not the size of the Pan-African reflections of a man, great traveller before God, who, everywhere in Africa, has the same deep sleep as in his native Casamance.

The choice of the man with whom he decided to walk in the mazes of this interview is discriminating. His profession is to titillate, not to snoop around, but to rummage in the most intimate fibres of his interlocutor. He is at ease in this role that he has played with some major figures of African history. The exchange is tasty in language, vigorous in subject, stripping in relevance. The debate is open.

*Babacar Ndiaye
Honorary President and Former President
of the African Development Bank (ADB)*

Introduction

As the year drew near of the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of African independence, I was very concerned about the balance sheet of the last fifty years. One thing was already certain: there would be no major hunting trophies to show off. Nevertheless, that day there would be traditional feasts and major events, sounds and lights, military parades, radio-televised speeches. But what would we present when the lanterns would have been extinct?

In the absence of good reports, we would still have our memories to think, to think about the future, to see things differently, think differently, because we learn more from failure than success.

Those who have experienced major setbacks and had the audacity to think about the extent of these failures have become or joined great nations. Then I thought of Japan in particular, coming out of the last World War defeated, but today among the first three largest world economies. I thought of Germany, which in one century, led (and lost) two great wars, each defeat accompanied by the collapse of its economy, the destruction of its infrastructure and its submission to the dictates of the winners. Today, Germany is Europe's largest economy, its main engine.

What then is the secret of those who lose but know how to surreptitiously recover and rebuild on the ruins

of defeat? I was able to identify four fundamental characteristics: firstly, there are those who do not believe in bad luck; secondly, there are those who remain convinced that they are still the strongest; thirdly, there are those who stick together and move forwards in tight ranks; and fourthly, there are those who are convinced that the future belongs to them. With this frame of mind, they can henceforth dare, and first of all dare to believe, and then be able to dare to undertake. That is why I titled this book DARE.

Africa very well got into history – contrary to some allegations – and was even the first to do so; its course has nevertheless been chaotic. Ups and downs, there have been much. That is also one of the characteristics of great peoples. In the aftermath of World War II, she realised that she had to regain her place. Bandung* symbolised unity, determination and awareness of a people aspiring to completely quit the darkness of bondage. But this wish did not weigh much on the international arena where the great powers had their say, of course in their best interests.

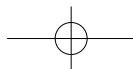
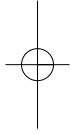
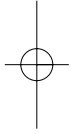
But never mind that! To see the bright side of things, I would say that history is a long river that never stops flowing. Nobody will say that it is too late to do well, that we can no longer take the helm of our history and redress the balance. To do that, we have to dare. My twelve proposals fall within this framework.

I want an emerging Senegal in a little over a decade. I want a Senegal that dares. I want a Senegal that leads

by example. She is already doing it in several areas. She has the capacity to pave the way for emergence. Other African nations will follow, I'm sure of that, because there are many which are projecting to attain this in 20 or 25 years. We should first believe in it; we should then put to use the means available to us – they are many; they are essentially human and that's what people need most; and we should finally, having been chastened, dare.

Pierre Goudiaby Atépa
Dakar, November 16, 2012

* In April 1955, 29 African and Asian countries met in Bandung (or Bandoeng) in Indonesia to assert their demarcation between the two blocs that emerged after the Second World War and thus constitute a third block that should have its voice in international relations.



Daring the Future Differently

Why this exchange? And why now?

I have always wanted to make my modest contribution to the notion of happiness in our society, how to promote a social environment where life is good for the greatest number. Improving the living conditions of the people is increasing their satisfaction. We all want what can be called happiness; the joy of living in a friendly, airy environment, where we all sit as a family around a good meal; the joy of enjoying a good health or almost. I will not philosophise on the concept or the nature of happiness, but we all agree that there is a minimum required to feel relatively good in the world where we live. The key seems to be, first to find work to develop oneself, and have the means to organise one's development.

I wanted to write a book a long time ago, but on the World Bank. The provocative title I chose was: "Should we burn down the World Bank?" I wanted to demonstrate why it was necessary to reorganise this institution to which all African countries refer. Over half a century now that our countries have been using its formulae, we are still not developed. I concluded that the World Bank is part of our problems and not the solutions we have been seeking.

Why now then? In life, there is a time during which we accumulate experiences because we work, we travel,

Yes I Dare

we exchange with people from diverse backgrounds; we draw up projects, some of which are successes and others failures. Then there is a time for reflection, which does not mean that action is left out. There are questions on everything being done in terms of development policy; we wonder why so many formulae have not worked, with so much money and so many experts handy. It's therefore reflection time. It's all this concoction of ideas that I would like to share by highlighting some mainline subjects: school, new information technologies, social discipline, the contribution of the Diaspora, tourism, exporter vocation of Senegal, etc. My experience is modest certainly, but it is a contribution, no matter how small, onto which I hold.

Let's not keep thinking that we have to do what was done fifty years ago. If we have not been able to develop our country since then, maybe it is because we had it all wrong from the onset.

It is therefore necessary to dare to challenge preconceived ideas, we should dare to shift the lines, we should dare to think differently, dare development, dare changes, dare to challenge, dare to face difficulties, dare dialogue, dare reflection, dare to propose, dare the truth, dare say no, dare say yes, dare to overcome challenges, dare peace, dare, dare ...

If we don't, we will have no solution to our problems. It is in this spirit of daring that I deliver these reflections. Reflecting on the future of a country should never

Daring the Future Differently

stop. It is in this spirit that I wish to launch the club "Intellectuals for the Development and Excellence of Senegal", or Club IDES.

In truth, I had wished to write a book with a circle of friends like a book of common reflection. We had a dozen meetings and exchanged on various topics that worry me. But my numerous trips did not allow us to progress effectively. I would like to tell them now how much happiness I had in sharing with them. They include Pierre Sané (Former Secretary General of Amnesty International and former Deputy Director General of UNESCO), Cheikh Sy (former UNESCO senior official), Mbaye Mbaye Sidy (Journalist), Abdoulaye Faty Mbow (Super-scale Computer Engineer), Moustapha Ka (Former Minister), Cherif Salif Sy (Economist), Ms. Touré Sukéna (Director of Twins), Amadou Gaye (Professor) and Pape Thiam Sadio (Journalist).

Your thoughts on a Senegal of tomorrow, or indeed, an emerging Senegal in ten or twelve years, certainly have a starting point. What is it?

I would start with generalities. We all seek to take responsibility, to address the problems that show up daily. To do so, we have to work. We cannot be happy without working. Yes, it takes work, but how is society organising itself such that everyone should have a job? Economists do provide us with figures. They say for

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example that below a certain growth rate, a country cannot develop. An index was set up called the human development index, which goes into more detail: access to basic health care, access to safe drinking water, access to education, even access to leisure, etc.

In the case of Senegal, for example, we need a sustained double-digit growth rate for a whole decade for us to attain the status of an emerging country. It is good to affirm it, but how do we achieve such a goal?

Simply put, I'm an architect. In my trade, when you are requested for a job, first and foremost, you ought to know that it must have to do with constructing a building, a school, a university or a hospital.

In an architectural project, I first analyse the environment and the fundamentals. I mean the physical, cultural and social environment; they are opportunities, etc. Analysing all of that to see what kind of building, hospital, mall, etc., should be constructed.

What would you say then in the case of Senegal?

First, we see that we are in West Africa, that we are at a position in Africa that is nearest to the Americas. When there was this heinous crime of slavery, the ideal place to export slaves, was Senegal. It is a few hundred miles away from Europe and America. Geographically, we are well situated to be a commercial hub. We equally have an ideal and exceptional climate. It is friendly all year round. We have over 600 kilometres of beaches.

Daring the Future Differently

There are some mineral resources in the East of the country. On our great coast, we have “heavy sand” (zircon, etc.).

On the other hand, Senegal has a very open-minded population. They are a very friendly people. They say it is the land of the “Teranga” because of this openness. There are advantages to this, there are disadvantages, but let’s take the advantages.

The first deposit of Senegal is human. Next, it is geographical and climatic. When you have these fundamentals, we then think: what can we do? We can already serve as a hub. Industrial hub for the export of manufactured goods to the Americas, for example. Americans told us some ten years ago: “Trade but not aid. We should trade instead of giving aid.” That was intended not to give us fish, but to help us fish; better still, when we fish, they will buy our fish at an exceptional price. As part of this programme called African Growth Opportunity Act (AGOA), set up in 2002, Americans agreed to facilitate access of our products to their markets, which, I must recall, is highly regulated. We cannot remain indifferent to such an offer: “You want to flood our markets with products from your country? Go ahead!” They say. So, if I set up a jeans manufacturing unit in Senegal, I can export it to the United States. No fees, no quotas, and this for about 6000 different products. Do you realise that? I must also say as an anecdote that I was one of three African businessmen

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selected in 1992 by the U.S. Congress to explain to members of this august assembly the merits of this legislation. I remember that Congressman Jefferson was very surprised to learn that the city of Dakar was almost closer to New York than the city of Los Angeles!

Senegal is 6, 7 days by boat, less than 8 hours flight from U.S. shores. What have we done? Apart from selling a few statuettes, nothing important! When we look at this exceptional facility offered by the United States, we realise that, ten years later, less than 70 products have been exported. On the contrary, U.S. exports to Senegal increases steadily, while we keep the same pattern of export products to Europe, and especially to France.

Senegal is not an industrial country. What else did you want export?

I think we need to arouse, promote and encourage relocation by some countries such as China, India or the Arab countries to target the American market. That is why I opened an office in Beijing. The idea is to identify Chinese industries that can move to Senegal. They will produce here for the American market. What do we stand to gain from this type of setting up? Employments, training, infrastructure, etc. I keep talking about the Americas because what we can do with the United States, we can do tomorrow with Brazil for example.

We have very good relations with the Chinese. For an anecdote, some ten years ago, it is us who caused Presi-

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dent Abdoulaye Wade to abandon Taiwan for mighty China. History now proves us right.

There is also South Africa. It is practically a developed country. Their planes transit through Dakar on their way to the United States. Cooperation should not be limited to “stop over”. Industries should equally be involved. If a South African produces dried meat in South Africa for sale in the United States, he does not have the same benefits had he produced it in Senegal for the U.S. market. First, it is three times further, and then there are quotas. Here, there is no quota. There is livestock here. So, these industries can be implanted here in Senegal, the dried meat produced here, and it is exported to the Americas. I know it's more complicated than that. I am trying to simplify it to promote some concepts.

I spoke with our elder brother and friend, the former president of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo. I told him this: “Nigeria is a giant in ECOWAS. You have oil, why couldn't we make an oil hub in a country that does not produce it? Let's picture a large petrochemical complex in Senegal, once again for the American market, for example. There are numerous derivatives that can be made from petroleum. Plastics, detergents, synthetic fibres, fertilizers just to take these examples; we could make synthetic bumpers here. How many bumpers could we thus sell to the United States?” He replied: “This is a great idea, let's work to develop it!” Nigeria could sup-

Yes I Dare

ply us oil. This oil would be refined in Senegal and then sold in ECOWAS countries at preferential prices. As for the other by-products, they would be channelled to the U.S. market. This is South-South cooperation.

All this put together, imagine the number of jobs that would be created. All these young graduates trained in sophisticated sectors of the various branches of technology, would have no need to emigrate. Now, I can make a transition to the brains of the Senegalese people. Senegalese learn very easily and quickly. We ought to be a platform for diverse skills. We need to set up training schools. So, you see that we have left from AGOA and landed on training. The effects of the industrialisation of Senegal under the U.S. facility are limitless from north to south, from east to west.

Today in Senegal, there is an explosion of training centres. Instead of going to Europe Africans could come to Senegal. You know that Europe is gradually closing up. Getting visas to go and study there is becoming more and more difficult for African students. So much the better, they will be coming to Senegal. We will have here a real “melting pot”. They will have conditions nearly similar to those of Europe or even the United States. From where will come the concept of Brain City, the City of Knowledge, on which we will dwell later within the framework of our new city. The quality of teaching will not be defective. The new information technologies are already offering the possibility of

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staying at home or lying down at the seaside and taking courses in “MIT” without needing to go to Boston, or at Sorbonne without putting foot in Paris, while sipping your glass of pineapple juice or “bissap”, or while drinking your coconut water on the beach. That is why I would also like that English become the second official language in Senegal. Anybody who doesn't speak English in this globalised world of today is handicapped. And if we want to be this big hub, industrial hub, knowledge hub, teaching English is an imperious necessity. We will equally talk about this later.

And then, I am not forgetting the Diaspora. I call this pool the “gray gold of the Diaspora”. We will say that last year, the Diaspora sent x billion, etc. They do what they can. All that is not structured, we don't have acting policies, dialogue, development policies by the Diaspora. Besides the civil servants who are in embassies, most people surely went on adventure; others have tried to better structure themselves to see how to help their parents or friends back home. This money serves to buy or construct houses, schools, hospitals, and represents in the lowest term, maybe 20% of the GDP. This is enormous. The Diaspora should be a major equation in the structuring of any development policy in Senegal.

Let's come back to the industrial hub. There are pre-conditions to any relocation. Senegal has, for example, very serious energy problems. Do you think that industry owners

Yes I Dare

of the countries you are talking about will scramble to knock at the doors of Senegal just like that?

You are right to cite energy handicap as an example. Once the relocation option is accepted, it will be for us to fulfil the feasibility conditions. We need to indeed master the problems of energy because it is fundamental to the functioning of industries. But there too, we have to dare. With the sunshine we have, we could, with 1 billion dollars for example, construct a 500 megawatts solar power station. You might retort that 1 billion dollars is a lot of money. But it is only in appearance, if you think. Such a power station has a life span of at least 50 years. To make it simple and fast, considered annually, the cost is equivalent to 10,000,000 dollars per year. At the present cost of KWh, at equal consumption, bills to be paid would yield far beyond 50,000,000 dollars. You can verify it! Better still, with the CSTJS, or the triple junction solar cells, we can get even more interesting outputs.

Do you think that AGOA will still be there for you in ten or fifteen years?

After about ten AGOA years spent in an optimal manner, we will have created conditions that will permit us to be competitive, even while paying taxes. That is a form of takeoff help, different from what we have received up to now, that is, aids to maintain poverty, but especially laziness. AGOA should make us rack our brains,

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roll up our sleeves, show proof of entrepreneurial spirit. That is even the idea that Americans had in mind while creating this programme. I am not sure we understood anything much about it.

You mentioned the geographical position of Senegal, which should make wise profit from the AGOA, as you have just revealed to us. The other asset, you mentioned is the hundreds of kilometres of beach that stretch along the Atlantic. How do we transform that into something striking and attractive?

We have the most beautiful beaches in the world. I say it without excess chauvinism; I know what I am talking about. I have already visited beaches around the world ranked as unfolding tourist earthly paradise, with however some exaggeration. It is therefore in this knowledge that I affirm that nature has offered us the most beautiful beach in the world; more than 600 kilometres of sunny sand all year round. A young Senegalese tourist guide told his visitors that they would be entirely reimbursed if they were deprived of only one day of sunshine during their stay. Like it or not, we need to have a lucid and well defined tourist vocation. It is not normal that Morocco has 9 million tourists near us, the Canary Islands 10 million, and that we don't have even a million in our records. Listen, we are less than two hours' flight from the Canary Islands. We don't have a single tourism office in Las Palmas. If we strengthen co-

Yes I Dare

operation with these islands, while adding to it Morocco, and why not Tunisia, just to take these examples, we could pull millions of additional tourists.

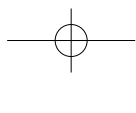
Many European tourists cross the African continent to go for safari in Kenya. If they know that on their way to Morocco or the Canaries they can come for a mini safari of 3 or 4 days in Senegal, I am convinced that they will reconsider their vacation projects. Of course, that requires organisation and dialogue with these countries, while including tower operators, travel agencies and air companies. I asked some experts to work on the possibility of bringing in 5 million additional tourists to Senegal in 5 years. It is nearly a dream, but it is a challenge. If we only make half, and that 5 years later, we obtain this number, that would be substantial.

Beyond the figures that we want to improve, it is necessary to ensure that those who come for the first time will come back a second time, and that they will adopt the destination of Senegal as their privileged place for vacations. For that, the reception setting should be pleasant, in an environment that breathes cleanliness, confidence and liberty to come and go without being harassed by beggars. I personally believe that there is need to create a solidarity fund that could, for example, be sustained by a special overtax called "solidarity tax" on the purchase of cigarettes or alcoholic drinks. There is also need to ban, for example, the use of plastic bags, if we want to regain the beautiful look of our environ-

Daring the Future Differently

ment. Towns like Ndjamena and Kigali have done it with great success. At the Kigali airport, for example, it is strictly forbidden to pass the customs counter without having gotten rid of all packaging or sachet in plastic. And besides, it is quite simple; it just requires a decree. I hope that our friend Haïdar El Ali, Minister of the Environment and Nature Protection, will read this passage, and that he will sign a decree forbidding the use of plastic sachet as has already been done with success in the countries I just mentioned.

Another axis of cooperation is Brazil. It is an emerging country. Brazilians come to Africa and achieve juicy business deals. Here is a country where the standard of living of the population has increased appreciably since a decade. When standard of living increases, the quest for leisure will also increase and the need for discovery as well. But I have never seen a single Brazilian tourist in the streets of Dakar. I am exaggerating a little, but it is to tell you that I have the impression that we refuse to think. Now, reflection is action. It is therefore necessary “to dare to think”. Also, in the domain of agriculture, we should be able to develop a lot of things. I visited some Brazilian ranches about ten years ago with my daughter Diane and we are currently putting in place a cooperation axis that will aim particularly at importing bovine embryos.



Daring to Commence with Audacity

Daring to begin seems to be the message carried in the wisdom with which you wove the network of your group today present on three continents.

To succeed an entrepreneur must dare, be courageous, aspire to be the best in his domain, believe in his worth and in his potentials. Thinking and action should be without interruption, especially when it has to do with our future, the future of our States, that of our children, and as it is generally said, that of future generations.

We therefore hardly dare, or not sufficiently. Doesn't the mitigating balance sheet of the last fifty years have an inhibiting effect on willpower?

You actually talk of a “mitigating balance sheet”. It means there were failures, but equally successes. From our failures, we need to learn lessons for the future. Our successes should spur us to attempt further. That is why it is necessary to preach by example. Those who have succeeded should testify, spread the enthusiasm, communicate and show that the famous Anglo-Saxon adage that “the sky's the limit”, or Barack Obama’s “yes we can”, is possible. Enthusiasm is the driving force of the leader of any successful industry. We must persuade ourselves that we are capable of displacing mountains. Moreover, the author of this marvellous formula said it

Yes I Dare

needs just a small amount of faith to make it.

Before tackling your considerations for an emerging Senegal in 2022-24, could you give us some examples of “mountains” that you moved with the measure of your faith?

The faith I am talking about is certainly not that one which consists in you sitting down on your prayer mat and waiting for angels to descend from heaven bringing with them paradise. It is about an acting faith, the courage to dare; that is the capacity to show proof of courage and ingenuity, to have self-confidence.

I tried the other day to translate the title of this book in English. The translation, which to me seems to be the best is, “YES, I DARE!”

I will take three examples at random to illustrate my point.

In July 2007, the President of the Republic, Abdoulaye Wade, summoned me for a working session. As soon as I arrived, the President began talking to me about some heavy sand that should earn Senegal 80 million dollars, a mining company and a city to be displaced. Since a head of state doesn't speak in parables, I began putting bits and pieces in my mind starting with what I know best, that is, how to build mansions, towns or cities. It is very easy to conceive a new city germinating from the ground near Lompoul.

But, the President was neither talking to you of mansions,

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nor towns or cities to build.

The President spoke to me of heavy sand. He informed me that there is a product called Zircon that is extracted in the country and that some Australian business men are proposing to pay 80 million dollars to carry out the extraction. I was at the moment lost as to what Zircon was, but I had the feeling that 80 million dollars was a very small sum of money. I told the President, "I want to renegotiate the contract for 1 billion dollars."

The president looked at me with uncertainty and said to me, "Pierre, you are not mad?" He had explained to me that Zircon serves, among other things, to manufacture what is commonly called false diamond used in jewellery stores.

I then decided to take off for Australia. I made some useful contacts beforehand with the leaders of the company concerned, called MDL Company, based in Brisbane. Before taking off, like any good student, I made sure I knew a little more about Zircon and the heavy sands.

Just a little anecdote; MDL company currently exploits gold at Sabadola. It is represented in Senegal by a Senegalese mining engineer who demonstrates real economic patriotism. He stood by me during the entire process of the negotiations to defend Senegal's interests. So, you took off for Brisbane!

Yes, and we were highly welcomed by MDL. They put

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things in their right order. A helicopter was put at our disposal. They made a big show. I told myself that this huge display of energy and resources means I am not dealing with the representatives of a small company. My conclusion was lucid: Zircon is profitable; one billion is worth proposing and probably winnable. My mission had several objectives. First to ensure that after exploiting the Zircon, the environment would be safe and that the area would remain inhabitable.

The other goal of my mission, besides the environmental problem, was to see to the technico-physiological aspect of the area: having been destabilised, will it be possible to construct on these sands later on, in two hundred years for example? There still, I had a big surprise, because the biggest tower in the world in terms of apartments was in Brisbane: it is the Q building. It was a beautiful tower of 100 floors, highest at the time. I went right up to the 98th floor to conclude from there that if the heckled sand can take a tower, then no qualms to get the deal.

But you had not yet grabbed the billion dollars that had been promised the President!

I still had to get his go ahead on the technical and even architectural perspectives. I then called the President and gave him a report by phone. After obtaining his consent, I told him, now, I am going to look for the billion. He responded with a laugh saying, "I was told

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that you were mad, but now, I am convinced that you are indeed mad". My reaction to the President's scepticism was simple: "It is worth trying, there is nothing to lose in negotiating".

Now you had a blank cheque.

I further realised that Zircon is also used in the aeronautic industry. My plan was now settled. During my last meeting with the Australian partners, I told them that I had two things to tell them: one good and the other bad. The good one was that they could go ahead with the exploitation, because the President had been reassured of the technical and environmental safety of the project. The bad news was that the 80 million dollars was not a reasonable offer. They gave me the impression that they were surprised and exclaimed: "Oh really?"

Then I hooked up with: "I want one billion dollars". "Mr. Special Adviser, you know that that is not possible". "Then, if that is not possible, work stops. I am a special adviser for which the President has not yet paid me even a symbolic one franc. Besides, I am a business man and I came to negotiate for my country. You give us a billion dollars or we'll ask you to leave. But as a country that keeps her promises, Senegal will respect the terms of the conventions in case the contract is terminated. I will double the indemnities. What does it mean? It means that if you must leave and that you are being owed 10

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million dollars, I'll make sure you are given 20 million dollars and then you leave.”

You seemed very confident of yourself.

I had to go to the end of my logic. I realised that things were beginning to change: “Well, Mr. Goudiaby, if you had told us 200 million dollars, we could have understood, but we cannot give a billion dollars”. I then gave them my business card and took off for the United States to spend a few days with my children.

On arrival, as soon as I opened my electronic mail, there was a new offer by the Australian partners. We thus began dancing with figures. 400 million? Far from acceptable. 650 million? Not yet. 850 million then? It seemed to be getting interesting.

I picked up my phone and called Jeff, a personality in the company. I told him that I appreciated the effort, but “a little more needed to be done to reach the final result.”

The following day, MDL proposed 1 billion 165,000 dollars, for the same agreement, the same duration and the same place. I called the President who was on vacation in Germany and gave him the good news. He was very astonished and did not believe his ears, and asked for a confirmation by mail, which I did through his aide de camp, Colonel Cissokho. Immediately he received the message, the President called me and said, “Pierre, do we meet in Dakar, then?”

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I had to finish my three day holiday with my children before returning to Senegal. Going alone, without any expert, and without knowing what Zircon really was, it is thanks to audacity that my country could get 1 billion 273 million dollars instead of 80 million dollars. When one has the audacity and wants to negotiate seriously, there is no limit as to how far one can go. In reality, I usually give this example to serve as a lesson for everybody to understand that if our resources are sold off, it is simply our fault.

Can this spirit of audacity be the explanation for the fast spread of your group on three continents: Africa, Europe, Asia and soon North and South America?

For me, Brazil is the next new borderland. Dakar is just less than 3000 kilometres from the Brazilian city of Natal. It is, therefore, necessary to anticipate on the future. One cannot remain indifferent to the expansion of China throughout the world. Her economy is dynamic thanks to a model turned towards the outside. That is why some six years ago, I decided to open a branch there. That is my second example of audacity.

When I met Liu Jan Ping, a Chinese business man, I made my intentions clear to him: "I want to open an office here in Beijing. You will manage it." That is how Atepa China Africa Links saw the light of day. That was in 2005. And two years later, we had so much business, that we had to increase our space. Today, Atepa China

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Africa Links operates on 300 square meters in the heart of the Chinese capital. The company is supervised by one of my girls. And not only Senegal benefits from it. I recently led a delegation of over ten giant Chinese enterprises with the Ambassador of Ivory Coast to Abidjan comprising China Railways that deals in railroads, Great World that sends satellites into space, etc. So, that is what audacity let me do. Because I was daring six years ago, the Atepa Group can be said to count on Beijing soil today.

So, all of Africa will thus have to benefit from Atepa China Links?

Certainly, just as its name indicates. And there are already new sites in progress. I could speak to you of the Team 9 for example.

What is it about?

One of my Indian friends called Ratina-Velu one day came and told me: "So, Pierre, we have to see how to build a lasting relationship between India and your continent, especially given that you are helping us with your address book. In short, it is necessary that we do something exceptional." I listened to him and we decided to constitute the Team 9. I proposed to him that we should select eight African countries, including Senegal, of course. Objective: organise them so that they can have an exemplary cooperation with India.

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The deal was thus sealed, and President Wade undertook his first official visit to India. The visit was crowned, among other things, by an agreement by which India accepted to put 200 million dollars at the disposal of Team 9. When the President informed me of this, I was not quite satisfied. Certainly, we don't minimise 200 million dollars, but we could get more than that. I went and saw my friend the Indian minister in charge of the file. I thanked him for his country's effort, but at the same time made him know that 8 African countries deserve more and that half a billion dollars will sound better than 200 million.

We spoke honestly just between friends. Then, he answered me: "Pierre, don't you know that we are a developing country?" I replied that it was he who thought so. With that, he called the Prime Minister to inform him of my request, and the Prime Minister responded positively. Better still, he requested that the 500 million dollars be "revolving", meaning that when the countries finish consuming the 500 million, everything comes back to zero with the same amount put back to the same use.

It is thanks to this credit that we had the Tata buses in Senegal. We equally created Senbus. As a little anecdote, we practically took Mr. Diop to India by the hand, but afterwards, he was ungrateful. That is also what life is! In the same way, we brought in Kyrloskar, the world's number one in irrigation. It was during a journey in

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India that I discovered that they had made Laos to pass from 200 thousand to 200 million tons in rice production in 5 years. I therefore spoke to the President about it and there was thus this positive complicity with him.

The Indians came to kick-start the self-sufficiency programme in rice. In the next five years, we were to reach self-sufficiency. Unfortunately, the then Minister of Agriculture did not understand anything. When the pumps arrived, he kept them in a warehouse for a month for distribution with neither plan nor project. I heartily wish that the new minister of agriculture should re-launch this important file for our country.

And your third illustration?

The Dakar-Ziguinchor railroad. I told President Wade this: “Mr. President, I cannot have as friends, Indian bosses of a railroad and not push through the idea of a railway that would link Ziguinchor, my home city and Dakar, the capital.”

When he gave me the green light for it, the Indians offered us about 10 million dollars of credit for the studies, which as at now, are complete. I have even sketched the future Ziguinchor train station!

Now we will need to choose between two tracks: either the one that would pass through Gambia with the famous future Faragéné Bridge on the River Gambia, or the great lap that would pass through Kolda. The ball is now in the court of President Macky Sall. Since the Casamance is part of his priorities, I am sure that this pro-

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ject will not remain in the drawers. In any case, during a recent working visit to New Delhi, I talked it over with my Indian friends and I know that they are this time ready to consider accomplishing this dream, which is far from being mad!

The fourth illustration?

The fourth illustration is a proposal I am currently studying with experts, which would consist in making the Carabane Island a franc zone.

We had been talking all along of the production of tangible goods. It was time we nibbled some space in the world of finance. I was discussing the other day with a passerby friend, and I told him of a Senegalese island, that is, of course, the delight of tourists. It is the Karabane Island, found in the estuary of the Casamance River. I told him: Karabane is the paradise of tourists. The walk on the blond sand, the relaxation, the marine air mingled with bucolic scents; I have nothing against it. But Senegal could make profit of this heavenly cocoon by transforming it into a financial profit base without making it a financial haven. Karabane could thus become an important economic hub for the entire sub region. Financiers around the world could make use of this paradise-like environment.

Looking at Karabane, I thought about a small country, the Principality of Liechtenstein: 160 km² without access to the sea, and an estimated population of 36,000

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inhabitants. Some decades ago, the Principality had to sell the paintings of some grand masters to survive. Today, it is thriving thanks to the production of industrial equipment, a low tax rate on enterprises and some multinationals, who generally own not more than post boxes. Unemployment rate is only 2%, the country has no debt, and the standard of living of its population is the second in rank in the world after Monaco.

It is worth pondering about. That is why I am at the moment testing the grounds with some banker friends and leaders of some multinational companies. We could also make of it a cyber-island and set up new information and communication technology companies there.

And your fifth illustration?

It is ongoing. I am currently negotiating with FIFA so that Jamal Habibi, the Arabian Mickey Mouse be the mascot of the 2014 Soccer World Cup in Qatar.

How was this idea originally born?

I was in Qatar, at the invitation of Ahmad Bin Suhain al Thani, the father of the future Queen. One evening, we were with his bankers. During a discussion, I tried to convince him to come and invest in Africa. He said it was too far, and that he preferred that I should consider doing something with him in Qatar. Then, I told him: "Listen, you should make a theme park here, if you are interested."

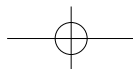
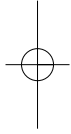
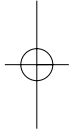
So, the night and the desert offered you counsel.

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If that is how you want to put it. Anyway, immediately the following day, I got inspired to write the story of what I called the “Mickey Mouse of the Arab world”: Jamal Habibi, my dear little Camel.

To refine the history, I engaged experts, and I went to the Institute of the Arab World in Paris, where I was able to talk extensively with its then president, Dominique Baudis, on the perspectives of the evolution of the adventures of Jamal Habibi. The following website was equally dedicated to it: www.jamalhabibi.com.

(The story, as was written for the first time, is found at the end of the work.)



Daring a Positive Economic Discrimination

You were special adviser to President Abdoulaye Wade. After the victory of Macky Sall against the latter you declared that were at the disposal of the new government: Patriotism or opportunism?

That cannot in any way be opportunism. Remember that the next day after the proclamation of the results, I said that the winner was the Senegalese. It is to him the benefit of the end of this exemplary electoral process; a process, it must be said, that was marked by serious incidents.

I am not a politician. I am an architect and a business man. I have in this capacity pursued numerous projects for several years that are useful to Senegal. Building a nation has nothing to do with a political colour. An architect doesn't get into the opposition because the government with which he was working lost elections. That would be senseless. It would mean stopping ongoing projects. Imagine the look a city would have if its architects had to halt every project and wait for power to change hands again, and the projects to be taken all over from zero by the new government. You know very well that a project, from conception to completion, can pass through several governments. The people who succeed each other work for the nation; they ensure the continuity of the state without which the government

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would have no credibility, not only in the eyes of the people, but also in relation to international agreements, concerning particularly, my relations with this or that head of state. I also try to take honest intellectual steps.

Let me tell you an anecdote. The next day after his victory over President Abdou Diouf, President Abdoulaye Wade called my home. He fell on Léontine, our house-help, who speaks no word in French, and asked after me. He told her, "It's the president of the Republic who wishes to speak to Mr. Goudiaby." With the phone in her hand, she called out to me in Ouoloff, saying, "It is a gentleman who says he's President of I don't know what, that he wishes to speak to you..."

For her, she understood President, but Republic? What's that even? as my Ivorian parents would say. In short, it was President Wade. He made me come to his home at Point E and told me that he would like me to be his special adviser!

I responded that, "Mr. President of the Republic, it is not possible because, you probably don't know it, given that the vote was secret, I didn't vote for you, I voted for Abdou Diouf who is my friend and who will always remain as such." He answered me, "You vote for who you want; as for me, I want to build this country and I will like that you join hands with me."

The continuation of the story is even more interesting. I called President Abdou Diouf, who, out of "elegance" had already left Senegal (he was in Morocco). He

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told me this, “Pierre, this man means good for our country, do all to join hands with him in his projects.” Is that not beautiful?

All this is to tell you that I have no moods when it comes to the development of Senegal. Everybody knows that I don't do political politics. I don't need to come back on the problems I had with President Wade throughout our time together for always telling him the truth at difficult or even perilous moments. Everybody knows for example that I was the only one in his entourage to tell him two years before elections that he should not stand for re-election and that he was not supposed to make us live an election campaign for two years! That said, I will continue to pay him visit to “talk” with him as I have already done several times ever since he is no longer in power.

All of this is to tell you that no one would interpret my “being at the disposal” of the new President as opportunism. That doesn't look like me. Just that the Republic is the Republic. If to be useful in my domain of expertise I have to do with a President, whoever he is, I will always be available.

And then, and then, President Macky Sall has always considered me as “an elder brother” as I told some friends the other day, who were expressing worries about my “situation” after the second alternation: “Wade it is my elder brother, Macky is my younger brother!”

You know, at 65 years, I thank God who has allowed

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me, by dint of audacity and perseverance, to work everywhere in the world! Therefore, those who think that I took advantage of my proximity with the President of Senegal to gain a place in the sun are mistaken.

As you know, 35 years ago, another colleague and I won the international contest for the realisation of the B.C.E.A.O. Tower. It is true that most of those novices who get excited on the internet with usually some out of place subjects grew up during the alternation and don't know that as regards "material needs" I am "free" since tens and tens of years ago! Machalah!

Talking, therefore, of patriotism, I would like to add the adjective "economic". It is being talked about in Senegal for some years now. You are more so one of its heralds.

Indeed, a nation aspiring for emergence cannot gamble with economic patriotism. It is absolutely vital.

What is your definition of this concept?

Not just a concept; it is a philosophy that consists in ensuring the legitimate defense of the interests of one's country. This is not a task that is incumbent only upon the government or business people. Every citizen is concerned. That goes from the purchase of an air ticket from Senegal Airlines International to the placing of strategic companies in the hands of private nationals. To break it down, it means to produce Senegalese, to consume Senegalese, without, that goes without saying,

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closing our borders to foreign products. No country in the world can live in isolation. No country in the world can close its borders. Even in the heat of the Cold war, American goods were still officially crossing the borders of countries of the Warsaw pact.

It is about a set of dynamics whose end goal is to stimulate growth and thus create jobs. When you buy an imported product, you help in the creation of jobs in the country exporting that product. When you buy a product manufactured in Senegal, you strengthen the production capacity of the company concerned, and by the same token, you help in the development of the country. As you know it, the development of a company usually goes hand in gloves with its modernisation and the multiplication of employment opportunities.

We could, therefore, put in place a “Positive National Economic Discrimination Initiative”, or PNEDI.

Is that not total protectionism?

The paradox of globalisation is that everyone protects themselves, except those who do not understand anything. These are mainly Africans. It is therefore not surprising to note that Africa is finding it difficult to takeoff. In the main stream of globalisation are mainly Europeans, Americans and Asians. You are not unaware of the war they are waging on the markets. Go to the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and you will be surprised at the number of disputes between these cham-

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pions of free exchange. The policy of quotas for example, imposed by some countries, is proof that economic patriotism is part and parcel of the world of free exchange.

There, nevertheless, exist free exchange zones. The European Union, for example, or the agreements between the American States and those existing between South Asian countries!

Of course, agreements do exist. Don't you think that when a French man wants to buy an air ticket to travel to another European Union country, he thinks first of Air France? That is at individual level. At the level of the States, if you check, for example, in official newspapers in France, you will find laws that aim at protecting national strategic sectors. Some pictures and paintings and even pieces of furniture are not allowed to leave the West, even if the purchaser is a foreigner. In the United States there is a ministerial and intersectoral committee to appraise foreign investments, and especially, decide whether or not this or that American enterprise can be purchased by a foreign company. When you see the composition of this committee, you immediately understand that the supreme interest of the country is on a scale balance. At its head, we find the Ministries of Defense, Internal Security, the American Treasury, etc.

You know that relocations, which to a capitalist are neces-

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sary to increase the added value of the enterprise, are considered by public authorities as antipatriotic acts.

Concretely, at the level of Senegal, what should be done?

We need a privatisation policy that takes into account national interests. We can find out, for example, the percentage of Senegalese interests in terms of capitalisation in the first 10 enterprises of the country. At what level are we present in banks, insurance, public works, telecommunications, energy?

I recommend the setting up of a commission that would every year evaluate the weight of national private shareholding in the companies in strategic sectors like electricity, mines, water, military equipment, public works, banks, insurance, etc. At the level of the national assembly, a law should be voted on the percentage of the capital of these enterprises, and that deadlines for correction be imposed where there is imbalance. Better still, I read in a newspaper recently that my friend Baïdy Agne, Chairman of the Senegalese Employers' Body, expressed the wish that the fourth mobile telephony license be allocated to a Senegalese. He is perfectly right.

Today, the new information and communication technologies are part and parcel of our universe. That is why I think, and we'll come back to it, that we ought to try the NICT. In order to integrate them into the dynamics of economic patriotism, it will be necessary to systematise the use for example – and the international promotion – of the Senegalese domain name (.sn). At the same

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time, thanks to the quality of the internet connection that would be needed for this, to be able to lodge the servers here in Senegal. That is an important aspect of the new technologies, whose outline we don't master, whereas that is a market of several billion dollars. The reference here in our country is ".com". That was the case in France some few years ago. Thanks to the policy of economic patriotism, no public firm, no private company, would not afford to use the extension ".fr" for its website. The English, Belgians, Canadians and Japanese, just to mention these ones, are doing same. It is the same in Africa, South Africa and most Anglo-Saxon countries are doing same. We took the ".com" for reference, while ignoring all financial and strategic implications.

Lodging internet websites in servers based in Senegal would enable us to have better control over information traffic. It would also enable us to have the tools to fight cyber-criminality, which is giving African countries serious worries. It is not something else that Westerners are doing. I am therefore, not inventing anything new. For that, we certainly need very good quality and cheap infrastructure at the level of speed and energy.

Can the private Senegalese national afford the means for some sectors of activities where the required capitals are quite heavy and need expertise that might not be available on the spot?

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At the level of Senegal, the means will never lack for nationals to be present where necessary. Today, an airline company like Senegal Airlines International is controlled by a private national. This example is, however, only partially good, because air transport is a difficult sector. Maybe this holding was allowed because foreign capital found the investment too risky. The Senegalese people who took this risk did so because civil aviation is strategic in a country with tourist vocation. All, therefore, needs to be done to guarantee the success of the company.

If we consider just the portfolio of state employees who travel every day, carriers of the Senegal Airlines International will never fly empty. But it would be necessary that the state pays cash for its air tickets in order not to make things difficult for the company. And that would be an act of economic patriotism. We still remember the sad example of Air Africa.

On the other hand, I cannot understand – and that is unacceptable – the total absence of Senegalese in the mobile telephone sector. For more than 10 years, this sector is one of those that yield the most money for investors. According to projections, in the next fifteen years at least, companies operating in this sector will earn even more money.

And there, I agree with the Chairman of the Senegalese Employers' Body, my friend Beydi Agne, who wants the 4th license to be allocated to a Senegalese. Senegal

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does not lack references, and practically in every sector. Take the agro industry, for example; I have my friend Hamet Amar, who, like me, started with very limited resources. Today, he is “an emperor in mill” and soon he will be one in dough not only in Senegal, but in the sub-region. In BTP you have big brother Alioune Sow of CSE and Léopold Ngom of SERTEM just to name a few. In the banking sector, you have our new Prime Minister who has brilliantly demonstrated that there is no taboo profession, and there are many others. But what I mean is that there should be a new policy to push these people upwards. Again, Senegalese leaders should benefit from a positive discrimination to better prosper their businesses. It is the entire country that stands to benefit from there.

At the level of expertise, I’m not teaching anyone anything. Senegalese executives abound both in international organisations as well as in multinational companies. Those living in Senegal, or who have returned to contribute to the development of the country are uncountable. If you want even experts in nuclear physics, you will find them there. I know the patriotism of my compatriots who work in big institutions in Europe or the United States. They are ready to respond to any national request for expertise. I know some who have done it already.

Are there sectors where the presence of Senegalese entre-

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preneurship satisfies you?

Yes. There are services, for example, where Senegalese companies show great ingenuity. But this is insufficient. Sectors of great added value are in the hands of foreign investors. Senegalese must be able to earn money at home.

A strong middle class tends to reduce inequalities. In my vision, Senegal should be able to attain the rank of an emerging country by 2025. For this to happen, the structure of the economy must undergo serious changes: changes in diversification of activities, changes in the architecture of national shareholding in relation to foreign shareholding, changes in a set of indicators at the social level.

In this business, the sinews of war, it is the banks, and to this effect, the example of Mauritania is worth mentioning. This is a country where the banking sector is nearly entirely controlled by nationals. Now, you cannot create SMEs for nationals without possibility of banking loans. Here, people have the impression that in Senegal, if you are not in a certain “sphere”, it will be practically impossible for you to have access to credit. And without the confidence of banks, you can do nothing.

But it is very much necessary that in Senegal, people accept the fact that there are people who earn money honestly, as someone said, at their own sweat or their brainpower. There is no shame in that! On the contrary,

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it is all to their honour. They are rather to be commended and encouraged. I am for the fact that there should be many rich Senegalese like Crésus to pull a maximum number of other Senegalese up. But again, the wealth I am talking about should be the fruit of hard labour and not one got from illegal activities.

Daring an Education Forum and a Digital Revolution

Africa was not present in the industrial revolution; it did not reap much benefit from the advantages of printing in the accumulation of knowledge. According to you, is history today throwing a hopeless line at it with the advent of the digital society?

There is no doubt that the invention of printing allowed writing to enrich all the wealth it contains. The infinite reproduction of knowledge and invention has enabled mankind to take a qualitative unprecedented leap into history. It is true that this revolution took place almost without Africa and Africans. Such an absence partly explains the gap that separates Africa from the rest of the world.

The means and ways of the progress were defined elsewhere, and it was only after having spent their time there that they landed here. But information and communication technologies could be the short course that Africa will take to bridge this gap. The virtual web has no boundaries and knowledge is available on the net almost free of charge. This web that is translated into a connection of cultures, knowledge, peoples and the economy, has produced a completely globalised world, a new world.

There should therefore be no rift today between the different parts of the world: everything is connected,

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everybody is interdependent. We therefore see why in Senegal most especially, we ought to dream and dare to fully enter into the digital revolution. Besides, it seems, by some magic that I can't understand, that the Senegalese "brain" is especially gifted in the manipulation and creativeness of the new information technologies.

Thus the idea of cyberspace, which is the expression of the large scale popularisation of the Internet.

The Cyberspace project is, in that light, a revolutionary vision that I had the honour and privilege to share with President Abdoulaye Wade. He asked me to ensure the architectural component, so that together, we should deepen the concept. The cyberspace project is a policy of endowment of digital and electronic infrastructures to grassroots communities to enable them not to be cut off from the world and the exchanges that structure modernity. The computer and the internet must, according to the philosophy of this project, be popularised and allowed not only to open up to the world, but also to achieve integration between local communities and between individuals.

The telephone, mailing and other related services should carry a cyber culture at the level of the village to produce a clearer visibility in the country and the world. This approach will ultimately make the rural world a forum for exchange where one gives and receives – to talk like Senghor – in real time without much effort.

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The notion of being rural should in itself change because the psychic distance is reducing at the same speed as the physical distance.

This approach allows, if we understand the concept well, to move the city and township to the hinterlands because information, values and skills, are available in the countryside as well as in the big cities?

Certainly! Never in the history of mankind has the notion of global village been this close to reality: proximity and the face-to-face that the peasant and the grazier lacked has become reality today. Better still, the mastery of ICT should, in the long run, fundamentally modify the nature and flow of exchanges in the rural world. Indeed, when possible, the grazier or the peasant, on connecting to the Internet, can follow the course of products he has for sale on the market and carry out transactions normally; there is a real revolution in trade.

Have you identified or listed other benefits of this meeting between knowledge and possession in the rural milieu?

After e-learning and e-medicine, which everyone knows, have proven their worth already, we will now settle on e-agriculture. Nobody can predict with accuracy all the benefits that will ensue. I personally believe that we will find the future instruments of our development from there. At community level, the involvement

Yes I Dare

of women is becoming more and more efficient with their access to these instruments, which eradicates all forms of discrimination and ostracism. Women who have been marginalised up to now in the management of the business of their city have easy access to information and are thus freeing themselves from the old bondage. Even in the field of religion, the introduction and development of new information technologies have positive effects: everybody can be self-taught and can acquire the latest knowledge in all areas.

In that respect, the promotion of the Senegalese woman, notably the rural one, should hinge on these technologies. And with regards to what is called decentralised cooperation, they can be the fastest and most accessible means thereof. There is also the youth. Instead of being a burden on society, young people are becoming a real locomotive of development. Also, contrary to a popular idea, development could start from the countryside and move to the direction of cities.

We talk of the digital divide between the West and Africa. It also exists between African cities and the countryside. This trench, thanks to the outline you are presenting, shouldn't it be bridged?

Reducing the digital divide is in this sense an historic necessity for the African continent at several levels. The one existing, as you rightly highlighted, between the

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West and Africa. The one existing between the city and the countryside. By integrating the different regions of a country in uninterrupted trade flow and communications, we give an equal opportunity to all citizens in spite of their locality; we encourage local self-governance and the association of rural residents to the problems of the nation. At the level of Africa, there are development gaps between countries. The complex equation of regional integration that has never started should be able to find a satisfactory solution.

Viewed in this light, the digital revolution is an opportunity for Africa, a fortune for Senegal. But let's be realistic: this revolution cannot take place without easy access to, or easiness on the computer. That is why, to match action with words, we went to Korea to develop, with the prestigious Samsung Company, what we called the 100,000 francs computer, the Campus computer, which we put on the market. The first one was Campus 150. After developments and improvements, we then came up with Campus 200.

But we are trying to do better. We have negotiated for loans with banks at a very low interest rate (about 7%) so that parents of students can have computers and pay in monthly instalments of not more than 10,000 CFA francs. Universities now need to negotiate with the government so that connections can be free on their campuses. It is not a dream. I am persuaded, for example, that the Sonatel Foundation could help realise this wish.

Yes I Dare

We need to celebrate the fact that an African Head of State, President Idriss Déby Itno of Chad, didn't hesitate a second to request us to join hands with him on his programme "One Chadian student, one computer". The first consignment of 6000 Campus 200 computers, has been distributed free of charge to students and other consignments are under preparation. Here, we are equally going to put in place the e-learning programme we already talked about, and before the publication of this book, Chadian students will be able to follow lectures dispensed from universities across the world free of charge, for example, lectures from the prestigious MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) in the United States.

ICTs are achieving a synergy that has always posed a problem to education: can one learn while having fun?

That is quite conceivable as far as Senegal is concerned. Certainly, homes of young people have always been criticised by parents because they are considered as places exclusively of entertainment and perdition. E-books, sites specialised in History, Maths, French, Philosophy, Literature, Physics, Chemistry, etc. convey free knowledge with exceptional speed.

Instead of the student or the pupil going in search of knowledge, it is knowledge that is offering itself to the student at a simple click: we are in the era of absolute transparency. The esoteric, the mysterious and obscu-

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rantism should no longer be quoted today, because every information is available.

In such a universe, ignorance has no justification other than laziness and the refusal to learn: it can henceforth be considered a crime. Our century is, in that sense, more humane than any other era. It has been said that one of the reasons for cultural and scientific regression is the fact that knowledge has always been jealously kept by a few individuals.

We can now rejoice to note that this domestication of knowledge in favour of a minority is no longer possible. Knowledge is now democratised and insofar as it is the vehicle of progress, economic disparities between zones should disappear progressively. To answer your question more precisely, yes, one can learn today while having fun. Besides, we ought to develop the concept to let the youth consider education as a form of “entertainment”. I often say of my job that when I am doing architecture, in my mind, “I am enjoying myself”. It is fundamental for creation and creativity, yes getting educational systems through entertainment. What a beautiful challenge!

Games on the Internet, for example, are they not a permanent danger?

The miracle performed by ICTs is to have succeeded in turning knowledge acquisition into a kind of game. It is there in computers, on the Internet, but one needs

Yes I Dare

at least some skill in data processing to access it. Simply open social networks to understand how much knowledge is available on networks like Facebook and Twitter: quotes of authors of all times, philosophical wisdoms, online libraries, courses and online methodologies, etc. Blogs, discussion forums, have today become means of dispensing lectures in specific domains. In some social networks, it is not uncommon to find someone coming to expose their educational difficulties and be helped for free by a user they don't even know.

You are not wrong in expressing fears, for example about seeing children diverted from the main thing by entertainment. Let's admit, nevertheless, that broadly speaking, ICT has more advantages than inconveniences.

The effort that a learner-blogger puts in to ensure the design of his/her blog through quotes, texts, poems or aesthetic forms, is already a positive achievement. That, to say that cyber culture is at the service of curiosity and continuous research. Adults don't always realise it, but besides the drifts they attribute to the use of ICT, there is an extraordinarily spirit of emulation running in social networks and in blogs. Youths vie in literary, philosophical and even scientific culture, by always searching for information to share on the net. In short, there is the birth of an "e-citizenship" where openness and sharing decompartmentalise everything and valorise everything.

It is, however, necessary to increase vigilance and

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educate young people, so to speak, on the positive use of the new information technologies. I am sometimes shocked to see the use some people make of the usefulness of the net or social networks. This negative use must give room to a positive use for education and culture.

The setting up of digital infrastructures will not only create jobs and wealth, but it will prepare the ground for rapid and multifaceted development of services that generally spring up spontaneously.

Do you mean new jobs that are created because of the Internet?

That's right. The digital and Internet domains have no limits. New jobs are constantly created, and it suffices to give its creativity a free course to fit itself into this somehow virtual economic fabric.

How many perishable products are lost in certain localities of the country due to lack of purchasers? Who can measure the increment that cyberspace will have, for example, when this problem will be solved by the popularisation of the computer and the internet? We always talk of political empowerment of rural stakeholders. We think that e-agriculture is the best way to attain it. Presence on the net always opens a universe whose potentials are unfathomable, because there is always something somewhere to take, to sell or to learn.

Once cyber culture will be installed in rural areas, we

Yes I Dare

will see producers establish contracts with partners from other horizons. We will see producers getting involved in a domain or in an agricultural sector just because they have been informed of the existence of a high demand in the country or abroad. In short, Senghor's dream of a humanity constructing a civilisation under the "give and take" model of appointment has never been that close to historical reality.

Did you think about the costs and other uses that are more ludicrous?

ICTs should normally help to reinforce the educational system by a continuous dissemination of knowledge and at minimal cost. Cumbersome and expensive didactic materials, logistics for conveyance and maintenance, staffing that is always insufficient, are some of the many burdens that ICTs will progressively remove from the system.

Talking of ludicrous usage, leisure is not left out in the concept of cyberspace: the people of Popenguine will realise this soon enough, they who saw the first cyberspace set up in their locality. In addition to a stage on which the youth will be able to perform (theatre, music, etc.), a giant screen will allow them to watch cup matches and local and foreign championships as if they were there.

But the revolutionary contribution of cyberspace will be in education, as I said recently during the WISE sum-

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mit in Doha, Qatar. Cyberspace will enable us put education at the service of all. Indeed, a first partnership with the Indian NIIT company has enabled us, through a special programme, to accomplish the education of over 500 pupils and students through cyberspace and per semester, that is, 1000 per year. The experience acquired with the Popenguin cyberspace during these last months of its test phase has helped us to confirm these hypotheses.

Besides educational programmes, health will have a major part in this project. A healthy environment for a healthy body in a healthy soul. The cost borne by the state in education will, in certain aspects, drop: a more massive introduction of the new educational tool offered by ICT will render some expenditure more and more decidable.

The educational exchanges that teachers in the rural area will henceforth have with their colleagues in the cities or other countries through the Internet will considerably boost their educational capacities.

On a political dimension, connecting the entire territory with cyberspaces brings central authority closer to the local populations. The day any citizen, no matter the locality in which he is, will be able to, by a simple click, accede governmental information, or even obtain an administrative document without leaving his/her environment, universal citizenship and citizen involvement will become realities. The more citizens'

Yes I Dare

knowledge of public business grows, the more democracy will stop being that of the literate to become popular. The rural populations have for a long time been political appendices or even instruments for the elite, who reside for the most part in big cities. By political obscurantism, by mystification and by manipulative practices, they have always used the rural masses to accomplish their personal ambitions or maintain themselves in power.

You mention here the “liberation of the populations” dimension thanks to the Internet!

Absolutely! One of the most effective instruments for the liberation of the rural populations from this political tradition is definitely the Internet. By offering the rural population writing, picture and the telephone in a combined manner, cyberspaces will considerably reduce the long distance they would have made.

In view of all these considerations, we can legitimately think that the cyberspace project is at the same time an economic, political and moral obligation.

This project is an economic obligation because it is the only alternative available to the country to accelerate its total integration: the rhythm of construction of road and railway infrastructures won't be sufficient to bridge the gap that separates us from other countries. The cyberspace project is equally a political obligation because democratisation of knowledge and information

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is an essential condition for the total democratisation of the society. We cannot talk of democracy in a society where knowledge and information are confiscated by elite who want only the perpetuation of their own privilege at the expense of the populations.

Finally, cyberspace is a moral obligation because the principle of equal opportunities among citizens cannot be met as long as one part of the country enjoys privileges and means of citizenship from which is excluded the other part.

Senegal is therefore gearing up to launching a revolution that will in the next decades be able to surprise many so much by its size as by its depth. We are all concerned; it's now incumbent on us to make it our business.

Is there no way to control and channel this revolution by preparing it methodically? Couldn't we think of "an Education Forum"?

The urgency of such a forum is no longer to be overemphasised. The first General Forum held in 1981. That's 31 years ago. Even if they had been implemented, the resolutions of that meeting would not be of much use to us today. At the time, a systemic transition came in. The educational system inherited from colonisation had outlived its usefulness. We needed a system of education that takes into account our specificities, but especially, which should be democratic and popular. Some

Yes I Dare

resolutions were, unfortunately, not implemented, and as often in such cases, it was blamed on the lack of political will and financial resources.

Nevertheless, Senegal is among the few countries, it must be underlined, that spend a lot of money in the education of its youth.

It is true, the figures speak for themselves. We are told that 40% of the state budget goes to education every year. It is also true that in percentage of GDP, we have reached a level that should allow what should be called “universal education”. We are on average at a rate of 6%, as against half and even less in most African countries. But you can see it for yourself, nothing seems to be moving. Teachers are all the time on strike. They are always asking for better living conditions, even though some salaries have been multiplied by three in less than a decade.

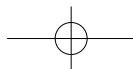
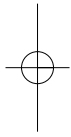
It is therefore necessary to teach otherwise, by organising a national education forum so that their work should be more productive. We will therefore have the opportunity to dare to conceive education in another way, by putting the new information technologies in particular, at the centre of the debate.

I often give the example of my girl Cynthia. After having obtained her Bachelor degree at the American University of Washington, she decided to do her Masters at home in Dakar. Two years later, she got her diploma and

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went to the “beginning” with her friends who remained in the United States. And it is by a competitive exam that she got a job at Desalt Aviation!

Her case is far from being isolated. In India, a lot of institutions do just that. And us, what are we waiting for?



Daring English as Second Official Language

You are interested in the determinant role of language as the most important political act in the destiny of the peoples.

In the galaxy of cultures that complement, or compete among themselves on the world stage, language plays a determinant role. As much as it can open up a country and a culture, it can spread them in ghettos where neither a dynamic culture, nor a competitive economy, nor universal knowledge can thrive. Yes, the choice of language in the education of citizens, in the management of staff and in the search for an honourable place in the world, is henceforth a major political act.

It's equally urgent to measure the gains, be they cultural, intellectual, political and economic, that a revaluation of the English language could bring to us.

Today, French is the official language in Senegal; it is that of the administration, it is also that which enables the acquisition of academic knowledge.

This is quite true. It is a cultural heritage that we cannot deny, but the world is changing. It is therefore important that we pay attention to its beats not to be left behind. The decolonisation of Africa, the decolonisation of Senegal, is also dependent on our ability to fit ourselves into the globalised environment of our world.

Yes I Dare

Only some extraterrestrial beings would tell you not to look at English.

Would “decolonisation” at language level not include serious risks of unforeseeable consequences in a country already traumatised by a complicated history?

The fathers of independence and the first heads of state and government were not wrong to keep the language, which facilitated communication and exchanges between our countries, which is integration.

It was not only consistent, but also and above all, it was reasonable. Our countries did not at the time in any of our national languages, have cultural and intellectual infrastructures sufficiently developed to support current emergencies: an educational system controlled for long by the colonial administration, educational contents exclusively designed and defined in the French language and an administration fully fashioned according to the French model.

You say therefore that we had no choice!

You see, the French language was necessary to build a de facto state, to found a school with manifest humane orientations and to shape citizens capable of participating in the affairs of the modern world. However, over fifty years after independence, what has been done as balance sheet on the use of the French language? Even though returning to national languages is up to now

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hardly conceivable, isn't it time now to open up more to other linguistic, cultural and scientific horizons?

The choice of language is never accidental; it is at the same time an intellectual and an ideological act with usually complex implications. A culture is always conveyed through a language, and any truly dynamic culture is expressed through a language with which members of a community identify themselves and use it both as a means of exchange and communication. The structure of a language is always indicative of the genius of the people who speak that language; languages are, in this light, general conceptions of the world. They reflect the real at the same time as they structure and mean it.

Do you nevertheless, acknowledge that the French language has been of significant contribution to the development of our societies?

It would be bad faith not to recognise the literary, scientific, political and cultural asset that our country has been able to build through the French language in the last 300 years - that is, since the beginning of French presence in Senegal. But the current structure of the world no longer allows for systematic confinement in unilateral and one-dimensional patterns. Internationalisation and globalisation require from every people an opening and a willingness to enter into the cycle of a relational history that nothing can stop.

Yes I Dare

However, the English language has ended up not only imposing itself in the domain of scientific research and technological innovation, but also in global political and economic governance. Senegalese scientists involved in various meetings around the world are forced to improve their “speak English”, or simply relearn the language if they do not want to miss the train of history and knowledge. After the knowledge and diplomas earned in their field, they are still forced to retrain to be able to gain access to latest inventions and progress.

It is therefore, necessary to recognise that all indicators militate in favour of a revaluation of English in the Senegalese educational system; not only is it the most widely spoken language in the world of business, but it concentrates the basis of scientific and technological heritage of humanity.

Does the Internet not allow for the resolution of this handicap in part, given that all the great languages of international communication are there, among which is French, and that instantaneous translation systems have experienced considerable advances in these last decades?

Cyber culture is, in this respect, the best illustration of the fundamental place occupied by English in the production and distribution of knowledge and culture. Translation software will never replace direct knowledge of a language. During major international meetings, we have often seen Senegalese officials being prisoners of

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the hazards and vagaries of translators, who are often so exhausted by their work day that their performance is sometimes of poor quality. The primacy of the French language is a fact, but the Senegalese should not distance themselves from some advantages that the English language offers them, and that, in all areas.

We are in the age of information, communication and consumption, but in all these three sectors, English is the language that serves as the locomotive at the rhythm of society. Even the culture of individual citizens of a globalised world like ours today requires the mastery of English. Mastery of language is one of the constituent elements of the culture of the individual: individual culture refers to a body of knowledge that the individual possesses on the world - this is what is referred to in generic term as general knowledge. However, it is through language and languages that this knowledge expands. You'll notice further, that young Senegalese who graduate from schools in English-speaking countries find jobs more easily than others.

Do you think the time earmarked by the Senegalese political authorities to achieve emergence, that is in 2025, is enough to bring a whole country to speak a foreign language?

Language experts will tell you that this is largely sufficient for the generation of children who would be born today. For adults, the learning methods are sufficiently advanced to enable them, over the same period,

Yes I Dare

to have sufficient command of the English language. I would like to remind you that a student, who wants to pursue studies in a country other than French-speaking, has only one year to study the language, even those languages with non-Latin roots, or whose alphabet is different from what obtains in common in French and English. Once again, English is the fertile soil of the present civilisation. The more we strive to master it, the more we expand our universe.

Conversely, closing up to the English language and, by extension, the culture it conveys, is shrinking one's world. In short, to use the language of modern astrophysics, the more you broaden your linguistic choices, the more you extract yourself from the too narrow confines of a single universe to enter into an open generous space of a multi-universe. Our country would therefore benefit by giving more time and credit to the English language in its educational system.

At what level of study should this teaching be in the school curriculum?

Introducing primary school pupils to the English language is neither absurd nor impossible. If they are already learning Arabic at this level, they must be able to absorb some basics of English. That doesn't suggest that English is easier than Arabic. This simply means that English Latin characters adapt more easily to French than Arabic characters that are less familiar at this stage

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of learning. The substantial increase in the coefficient of English in secondary schools should also help to strengthen its influence on the educational system and, in turn, to teach young Senegalese citizens an open mind more focused on modernity. And everyone knows it; Senegalese have unusual capacity for language.

Would you see it as a good thing that this proposal should be extended to all non-English speaking African countries?

I personally see English as the future cement of the United States of Africa. Communication is the basis of our humanity. It allows the sharing of ideas and values. It is in this sense that Aristotle defined man as “a talking animal”, that is to say an “animal” capable of articulating, a vector of ideas and values that may be passed on to others. Man is a talking animal because he is “by nature a political animal”; that is to say, his sociability is natural, because it is only in society that he is accomplished as a man.

Communication reduces distances and differences. It also allows for better conflict resolution. Words are not always just words: they are sometimes performances and acts. The use of English as a second language will, most especially, enable us achieve better integration with the Gambia and ease our dream of a federation with the Gambia, and of course tomorrow, with Guinea Bissau.

Yes I Dare

It is always said that one of the immeasurable advantages of French in the African context characterised by an atomisation of the society in several ethnic groups and local languages, was its capacity to federate.

If that is true, we should ask ourselves what it would be today if we had instituted English as second official language of the country early enough. Great African countries are English-speaking. Within the ECOWAS, among the heavy weights, are Nigeria and Ghana, two English-speaking countries.

In view of this multi-dimensional character of language, our country, which has always been at the forefront of Pan-Africanism and the United States of Africa, should take actions to further root the English language in school, administrative and even political morals so that borders that separate the French-speaking and English-speaking African countries should further narrow.

Prejudices and stereotypes often arise from a lack of communication, and they are the main pitfalls which stall all the efforts of a true integration of the continent. Since each language conveys a worldview, a political culture and diverse knowledge, multilingualism is now essential for any form of integration.

Often at sub-regional and regional institutions, political differences arise sometimes from a misunderstanding that could have been avoided if all Anglophones understood French and if Francophones spoke English. Moreover, languages paradoxically teach us how far

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miscegenation is vital in the destiny of mankind. Indeed, the most widespread languages are those that are more open, that is to say those crossbred through linguistic borrowing.

Through linguistic miscegenation, languages mutually enrich themselves. Conversely, those that want themselves pure and purists are deciduous. Latin and Greek are no longer alive on the one hand because they are too orthodox, elitist, and on the other because the cultures to which they were consubstantially bound died.

The lesson to be drawn here is that a language that refuses interbreeding is less competitive, and that any culture that is not expressed in a spoken and/or written language is doomed to disappear. Talking is also a way of thinking and being.

On this point, we should remember that English is one of the least elitist languages and therefore the most popular in the world. Syntactic and grammatical constraints are less severe in English than in other languages. Just a little anecdote; when I opened up the issue to our friend, former President Obasanjo, we made a bet that if I succeeded in selling the idea to the Senegalese people, he would do the same with French to his fellow Nigerians. I told him that I was sure that my task will be ten times easier than his!

This feature you just mentioned so well, is it a source, or

Yes I Dare

no, of efficiency of the language in terms of ideas generation?

English is considered a pragmatic and effective language. We know that today the “noosphere” or the sphere of ideas, and the “technosphere” or the sphere of techniques, are after the biosphere, the forces acting most on man. However, the configuration of the world is such that it is English that is shaping these areas: television, the Internet, the computer, mobile phone, etc., are built on the strength of the English language. A young person developing in such a universe is handicapped if he has no mastery of the essential basics of the language which, no matter what is said, makes science and leads the world.

Yet most African intellectuals argue for the fact that one or some African languages should be promoted at the continental level. What is your opinion on this?

Insofar as our national languages do not yet have the required international mark and presence, it is imperative on us to invest without complex on the path of a revaluation of English both as a second official language of Senegal and as an engine of the economic and political integration of the African continent.

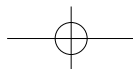
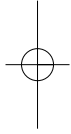
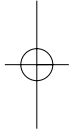
People occupy the international scene based on their ability to navigate in the various cultural and intellectual universes. However, it has been observed that such an aptitude is easy to adopt when we master the interna-

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tional language of exchange, which also happens to be the language of science and the new information and communication technologies.

Political realism and Pan-Africanism are today tilting towards giving a more prominent place to English as much in education as in audiovisual production in our country. Encouraging the media to create programmes that promote the English language and the culture it carries would certainly be a determined option to give our youth more opportunities in this world more than ever dominated by competitiveness. I am also pleased with the fact that the Senegalese Radio and Television (RTS) should have a very good programme in English with the evocative title: “English lovers.”

And then, and then, I have a friend who once asked me this question: Do you know one African Francophone billionaire in dollars? No, but Anglophone, many! Think about it.



Daring Compulsory Military and Civic Service

Order, discipline, patriotism, good citizenship are values you are attached to, and which, according to you, are part of the conditions for emergence.

It was indeed during an exchange in Korea with Senegalese students that I understood the importance of discipline in the development of a country. During this exchange – I often organise them during my trips abroad – I asked my young compatriots the question: “South Korea was behind Senegal 50 years ago in terms of development. According to you, what happened along the way? In other words, how can you explain the performance of our Korean friends?” They were all unanimous: “discipline, hard work, patriotism.” The verdict is final. It is from there that I got the inspiration, three years ago, that there should be in Senegal, compulsory military service, especially oriented towards training in agriculture for example, or public works (masons, carpenters, etc.), but first, to instil in minds and hearts a Patriotic Spirit.

In many industrialised countries, military service is compulsory and it has no negative impact on the education of the youth. On the contrary! The duration of compulsory service is considered as being generally more conducive for the emergence of hidden talents. Many young people drop from school without certifi-

Yes I Dare

cate, and are rightly or wrongly considered as not having the necessary aptitude to further their studies.

An inhibited man loses much of his intellectual capacity, and it sometimes happens that he has skills and talents unknown to him, or which he cannot exploit because of the unsuitability of the environment.

A detour through military life, therefore, seems to you capable of releasing the creative energy in young people, and making them more apt to undertake, and be better actors of development?

Certainly! Military life is certainly not an antidote against inhibition, but observation shows that the military are usually shaped such that there is no place for timidity. What would it then be like if all Senegalese young people aged 18 were forced to a year of service in the army? In addition to instilling discipline and good citizenship, military service helps to eliminate or reduce elements of blockage and inhibition in the individual.

How do you explain the moral and civic laxity among a significant proportion of the youth in the past few decades?

I can explore a track like that among others. The suppression of dormitories in schools and colleges constituted some kind of interference in the educational system of the Senegalese youth. There were, in fact, constraints of education, virtues of sociability and respect for public property. The problems of structural adjustment (again

Daring Compulsory Military and Civic Service

by the World Bank) and the too restrictive injunctions of donors, took their toll on the policy of boarding schools in our educational system, but its mindset enables us to understand the meaning and scope of compulsory military service in a country.

Order, discipline, punctuality, thoroughness, proper attire required of boarding students, were powerful levers of training and education for citizenship and public spirit. Now that the Senegalese school has lost this asset, the country is suddenly deprived of a discreet but effective Republican instrument. That's why our country would make maximum benefit from the institutionalisation of compulsory military service. Also, it is clear that we will have a superb "thing" to educate and place all these peddlers.

The money that donors wanted to make Senegal save, can it be available today?

The issue of resources needed for such a policy does not arise, because the solutions already available elsewhere are transposable in Senegal. The stake is too important for our country to hang on issues of money that are no major constraints here. We should scale down military schools like the St. Louis Academy, and create big military schools in great numbers in our country.

A country is also respected for the quality and number of institutes and academies it has. It is not normal that our country does not have military schools in the

Yes I Dare

image of its democracy and diplomacy. Great military schools are paradoxically part of the elements that contribute to the deepening of democracy. This is so because, not only do they inculcate into citizens democratic values, but they are places for the training of true auxiliaries of democracy: the police, the gendarmerie and other security forces. A police or gendarmerie officer who was trained in a great school is blessed with qualities and values that facilitate his relationships with a democratic society, which are sometimes complicated. There are sometimes some behaviours by the men of law towards politicians and civilians, which emanate from poor training and instruction.

That has to do with a new philosophy of values. But upstream, it would be necessary to carry out studies, find sites, and find money, even though you say it won't be the most difficult.

The most difficult is always the political decision. For all these reasons, the Senegalese government has to work to lay this path with serious feasibility studies and a political courage. Educating and training sons of the country are a duty for any government, but it can do it better by rationalising its means and investments more. As a little anecdote, the only picture in my office is the work of the artist Muamba, which shows an "itinerant" idle youngster. The reason I am keeping this sculpture is that, it reminds me that until I would have participated in finding a solution to the worries that can be read in

Daring Compulsory Military and Civic Service

the look of this teenager, I would not have accomplished one of the fundamental reasons of my passage in this world of Men.

It is true, there is a lot of money to be put into the implementation of such a project, but there is equally much of it to save by finding a point between school and the army. We need the culture of standardisation in all domains to go fast and well, because the gap separating us from the countries of the North would not to be bridged by progressing ordinarily.

We complain about the desertion of scientific subjects, which have become wide desolate boulevards of general education in our country. Meanwhile, in industrialised countries, they persevere in the construction of militaro-industrial complexes, military schools of health and even militarised polytechnic schools.

There are definitely lots of students, and even pupils who fail due to lack of didactic means, or due to the poor conditions in which they carry out their studies. All these pupils and students abandoned on the way by the toughness of life cannot certainly be absorbed by the institutionalisation of the obligatory military service, but it would undoubtedly contribute to reducing their number.

Do you already have an idea of the sites that would host these military academies?

A lot of military camps already have sites that can

Yes I Dare

provide premises for these young people without them being cut off from their schooling. Proximity schools and colleges have considerably decreased the school dwindling rate; and then, and then, let's discuss with schools and other existing institutions that could offer part time lessons.

Exactly, how do we solve the problem of the lack of means by poor families?

In a military camp, meal is free, rent doesn't pose a problem, uniform is provided by the army, and the young recruits can have a stipend that enables them to meet a few small needs.

The paths that lead to school failure are sometimes unsuspecting when they are not monitored: the small reefs that we have the habit of ignoring are sometimes of decisive impact on the child's school output. To this adds the fact that the consumption society has encroached considerably on the psychological and moral exemptions of the school and the university: excellence is threatened by asset.

Would the compulsory military service, in the light of the civic service you are advocating, therefore bring to the traditional school the sense of values that it has lost, and at the same time, solve the problems of excellence "threatened by asset"?

Compulsory military service should, indeed, comple-

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ment government's efforts in the domains of education, research and training. A youth is always a reservoir of strengths or potentials: everything depends on the environment and the education received. Thousands of pupils would not hesitate to enter into an army that offers them general or scientific education.

Are you giving the army a dimension that seems to have been overlooked until now?

Yes, it has to do with deepening the concept of “army nation” by making it participate in development tasks. It is in that, that it will be perceived by the youth as a heritage. There is truly nation-army only when the army is deeply involved in various structures of society. The army is already a school, a training ground in social life and citizenship. It is also an instance of training of the personality of the individual.

An army of development and citizenship needs resources and readily available staff, and let us not forget that we have one of the best armies in the world. I was saying the other day to my younger brother and friend, General FALL, Chief of Staff, that the whole of Senegal, and in fact, Africa, not to say the whole world, was pleased with the republican spirit of our army. They remained steadfast during difficult times and saved us a few “sincere captains”! Follow my eyes! Mr. General and all our brave and patriotic army, “Kudos!”

Yes I Dare

Tell us about the recent experience of “agricultural volunteers”, which saw the involvement of the army.

I'm glad you asked that question. It is under the leadership of Colonel Moumar Gueye that this experiment has been implemented. Its success shows us that the involvement of agricultural volunteers can be salutary to our rural economy.

With limited resources, the circle of volunteers was able to enlist and train more than three thousand youth. According to calculations we made, a budget of 20 billion CFA francs would have sufficed for the training of 20,000 youth. By bringing in our concept of agricultural interest groups, youth employment would see a new lease and contribute to the revitalisation of our agriculture. By extrapolating, we could imagine that this concept would be of considerable support to the food self-sufficiency programme. That's why it seems to me that compulsory military or civic service has become a pressing need for our country. At best, this investment is more than a bet on the future. It is also, and above all, a worthwhile investment because, if for example, you send this “green army” into the perimeter already irrigated by Anambé to plant oil mangroves, we should have a “return on investment” in less than 5 years! This is also a good business!

The concept of “Volunteers of agriculture”, can it be equated with that of "Agricultural Interest Groups" or AIG, which

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is the subject of your thoughts?

On its broad scale, AIG, on which I worked with my daughter Diane, who masters its concept well, will have as objective, to fight against unemployment and lack of skilled training for young people, to stem rural exodus and poverty, to make defence service a key lever in economic and social development, to mobilize young people in the pursuit of food self-sufficiency, and to promote self-employment through entrepreneurship. The concept is thus far more extensive than the programme for agricultural development.

Agricultural production will be complemented by transformation activities, springboard of the agricultural entrepreneurship, with a diversity of fruitful platforms to form an agro-industrial web, pillar of a modern agricultural sector with high added value, which is the domain of agribusiness (agricultural entrepreneur).

Thanks to the setting up of the agricultural domain – framework of the application of polyculture – which promotes the cultivation of several varieties in the same field, or in a natural area, a sign of intensive agriculture.

Young volunteers trained in agricultural methods and techniques will benefit from an incubation period of two years learning agricultural campaigns during which several vegetable crops, crops and fruit trees will be planted.

In the end, the volunteer will be able to conduct a

Yes I Dare

crop cycle, master the indicators of the operating account of a variety, and if necessary, proceed to the transformation of products. The agricultural domain will train agriculturists who had broken off with agricultural tasks and promote the empowerment of young people – sign of a successful socio-economic advancement.

Thanks to national service, young recruits have been able to embrace military service with the expected success and substantial resources, but the defence service has not had the same success as the youth are poorly mobilised in development projects.

This is the relevance of the establishment of a “contingent for the development of agriculture”, composed of young volunteers in the domain of agriculture.

Through this strategy, the defence service fulfils its usefulness in developing the potential of the youth.

We would thus be able to:

- Fight against unemployment and lack of skilled training for young people;
- Curb rural exodus and poverty;
- make of the defence service a strong lever of support to economic and social development;
- Mobilise the youth in pursuit of food self-sufficiency;
- Promote self-employment through entrepreneurship.

And the results will flow:

- Improve on the living condition of the youth by

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useful employment;

- Conduct a complete crop cycle;
- Associate agriculture to the products transformation industry.

For the training, we could retain the following modifications:

- Civic and moral training;
- Courses on agricultural techniques and agrarian planning;
- Learning military parade (tight order).

Indeed, conscription mobilises youth destined for a military career. However, the number of places is limited, resulting in a high number of youth not recruited, but who are able to contribute to development through defence service. Our conviction is based on the fact that military service, understood as national civic service, is certainly one of the levers to manipulate such that our country reconnects with growth and aligns permanently on the path of development.

If all high schools and colleges in Senegal were functioning under the model and disciplinary rigour of the Saint-Louis military academy, the Senegalese youth would certainly be better honed in the workings of citizenship and the struggle for development.

Do you think it is possible to put all the schools and colleges

Yes I Dare

under the regime of military discipline?

I admit that there is a dose of social utopia in this project, but it has the advantage of making people understand the urgency and relevance of national civic service. In other words, since we cannot build schools everywhere like the military academy, or enlist all young people into the ranks of the national army, we can at least learn from their model and their philosophy to build a youth capable of meeting the challenges of development and national unity.

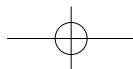
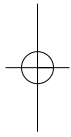
It seems clear to us that it is precisely such a vision that underlies the institution of the National Civic Service. The 1998 law establishing the National Civil Service, in fact, concluded that it is only by increasing citizenship and speeding up the effective presence of the youth in the field, that we could create the conditions for a psychological leap essential for development and national sovereignty. It must be understood that the defence of the nation is not only military and it is not the sole responsibility of the army. We then have to integrate the concept of national defence in all development strategies, so that young people and adults should have a clear understanding of their obligations.

National development should now be thought of as a duty to be fulfilled by all Senegalese. That is why the AIG we are proposing places moral and civic education at the heart of its preoccupations.

The government of Senegal, therefore, has an interest

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in strengthening legally, institutionally, morally and above all financially, the national civic service to make it both a lever of development and a structure for the civic and patriotic capacity building of youth. The example of a country like Jordan deserves to be known.



Daring a New Urbanisation and a New Decentralisation

An important part of your proposals concerns habitat. Are you worried about the dwelling place of the Senegalese, his environment and the comfort of his life?

I do not want to be nostalgic, but we must admit that those who are my age and older, maybe a little less, still remember this beautiful capital of French West Africa that was Dakar, known at the time as “Little Paris”. I still remember walking on Avenue William Ponty. What a joy to stroll to the shops and the sparkling neat street where we walked our children in the seventies!

Let's therefore, take concretely the case of Dakar that you are evoking. What should be done?

The city of Dakar has a symptomatic morphology of lawlessness that characterises the Senegalese economy and the regional development that is supposed to go with it. Dakar is, indeed, one of these capitals that rather give the impression of being small cities surrounded by thick villages. Uncontrolled urbanisation has various origins and reasons, but its consequences remain the same: galloping poverty, chronic insecurity, social inequalities getting more and more entrenched, homelessness of certain fringes of the population, placing containers along streets, etc.

There is an incontestable disharmony at the same

Yes I Dare

time demographic, infrastructural, social and economic in our country, and more obviously so in Dakar. Instead of the space being domesticated and controlled, it is the inverse that occurred: by occupying this space in a spontaneous and anarchical manner, it became a burden, a load that weights all efforts of harmonised development.

To denounce the anarchy that reigns today in the city of Dakar, I organised an exhibition in 2008. We were thus able to x-ray this urban cacophony, worthy of what I called “cacopoulos” in my thesis on the ideal African city in 1973.

It suffices to observe the standard of life and infrastructures in the suburbs of Dakar to realise the extent of the aporia towards which this disorderly urbanisation is leading us. Promiscuity is, henceforth, the daily lifestyle of these idle youth frustrated by the huge economic difference between their zone and downtown.

No courageous planning policy based on a rationalised option of the standard of living of the citizen has up to now been put in place. It is the sector that has suffered most from what we call piloting view and the absence of courage in our politicians.

How do you explain this state of the facts?

For decades we have let people moving in from rural areas to settle on all plots of land available without the least planning. The State never wanted to influence a

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phenomenon, which was nevertheless, known to be capable of becoming a scourge in the future. The gaping wounds that this landscape and urban anarchy have caused are almost incurable today and threaten not only the development of our economy, but also the stability of our society. Because we neglected the rural world in the grip of a deadly cycle of drought and a chronic idleness of its population, we could not be rigorous against the anarchical occupation of space in Dakar. In other words, because we did not want to antagonise these poverty-stricken rural people, fleeing from an infernal rural world without any form of outlet, we let people from the exodus to shove their way into Dakar and install kiosks everywhere.

Overcrowding has generated this anarchy that offers us this sorry sight today. It is not controlled, and it is a severe handicap for the capital. Everyone knows, however, that as a peninsula, Dakar is not infinitely expandable. It was necessary, from the beginning, to implement stringent legislation that would prevent people from establishing on undeveloped areas by setting up spontaneous dwellings and institutionalising an outright self-help and informal economy in all directions. Because we did not legislate enough, or rigorously implement existing legislation, the rural people gradually implanted themselves in urban areas with their habits, reflexes and lifestyle, sometimes completely out of step with the demands of the economy and urban life.

Yes I Dare

Thus, the rural world settled in the city without integrating into the city.

The mode of rural production that is inappropriate to town life curiously exists in the suburbs of Dakar, which gives the impression of a superposition of two societies with different, even opposing realities. We are witnessing a reversal of the movement of goods and people, or worse, a pitiable economic stagnation.

Thus, the suburbs are being stifled not only by an inexorably rampant overpopulation, but also by the inability to have it bring forth sustainable economic activities. We have tried many things; we have experimented everything, but the desired results cannot and will never be achieved: nothing that is viable and efficient can be built on a geographical and social structure that fragile and inconsistent. The economic and infrastructural structure is in itself faulty or invalid. How then do we want to implement economic and social projects that are viable and active?

In the same way that a beautiful building would very quickly collapse if there was no foundation, or if it was based on quicksand, any city whose growth does not respect a streamlined plan is expected to find itself in the dead-end of a failed urbanisation from the very start. If the analogy of the human heart could be permitted here, one could compare the current situation of Dakar to a cardiac arrhythmia. Worse! Because of lack of rigour or coherent planning, or both for that matter,

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we are witnessing a kind of systematisation of what I call “urban leprosy.”

But there is worse. You have noticed that over the past decade – with the return of a normal rainy season – the suburbs of Dakar are constantly flooded. The government spends huge sums to “remove water” and rescue people trapped by real spontaneous lakes.

In truth, these are not spontaneous lakes. The people have settled in the lowlands formerly occupied by water. Whenever we have a normal rainy season, which seems to be the desire of almost everyone, the same problem returns. By doing a quick calculation, we will have spent hundreds of millions never to fix the problem.

My proposal is to benefit from the implementation of the new town of Lac Rose and thus move these people. I thought at the time that selling 1000 ha of land at Lac Rose, the State could generate about 150 billion CFA francs, which could thereby assist the people concerned to resettle. This is not theory. What I am asserting is scientific, that is to say verifiable.

We would, this way, solve the problem of floods once and for all, and then we will simply carve these water areas to create lakes.

We cannot, however, say public action is absent. How do you explain the failure of the various policies implemented to “relieve” Dakar's population?

A kind of impressive obesity has seized the anatomy

Yes I Dare

of our capital, such that the arteries that should lead into the different parts of the city and the interior of the country are clogged. This is what gives the impression that despite significant efforts to solve the crisis in the suburbs, public policy has had no great effect.

A city is like a tree; when it is trimmed and cared for, it is not only consistent, but it will never enter the register of disproportion. Poverty, which is criticised by some and dissimulated or mitigated by others, remains thus a kind of insidious cancer, which sooner or later, will affect the rest of the city and the entire country.

Speaking of dysfunction, I cannot fail to mention the cornice currently soiled by anarchical constructions by those I call the “beach thieves.” It is President Senghor, I must admit, who first made me aware of the respect of public maritime domain (PMD) that should belong to all. Unlike some people, it is not a question of not touching the PMD, it is rather a question of jointly planning with local highways (mayors) to include landscaping spaces where people will want to walk, with refreshment here, restaurants there, and all this in accordance with a simple but fundamental principle: view of the sea from the road.

For this principle to be respected we will, as an example, write a petition calling for outright demolition, I mean the demolition of the hotel said to be the turn, whose sponsors simply played foul to obtain building permits. In the same petition, we will seek restitution of

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the Fann Beach that was “privatised” by Terroubi Hotel. A scandal!

A warning, therefore to the people and institutions concerned! One can therefore understand why you are leading your crusade for the creation of a new city, a new capital.

Dakar harbours almost all the industrial fabric of the country, all political institutions and major shopping centres. Goods and services barely exist within the country, and even cultural life seems to have chosen its residence exclusively in Dakar. The consequence of such a disproportion in the allocation of national resources and the production of wealth is that we are witnessing the emergence of a new type of citizen.

Which one?

It is a new type of citizen who feels excluded from the system and is extremely frustrated. He is hostile to any form of commitment to various initiatives in the direction of solving problems. Sites to create schools, training institutes and universities are generally not available due to the inaccessibility of some areas. And even when available, the means do not follow. The government cannot continue to ignore the needs of rural areas. That explains the sort of weakness on the part of the government in terms of solving the problem of flooding and the issue of youth unemployment.

Our capital is thus inevitably obliged to offer the

Yes I Dare

sorry spectacle of a city of poverty and begging industry. The summit of this anarchy has been reached with the creation of neighbourhoods where there is a “no man's land” law. Ensuring the security or sanitising these areas has become a headache for government authorities.

Give us some concrete examples to illustrate your point.

A district as Khourou-Bouki is a stumbling block to public order. The lawlessness, insanity, insecurity and dwindling school attendance inherent there are some overwhelming proofs. You should study the history of cities like London, New York, Washington, Pretoria, Marrakech, etc., to understand that, with regards to the excessive urbanisation of Dakar, the cart was put before the horse. Upstream, the installation of any big city has always had an agricultural and industrial revolution, and/or an administrative relocation.

For the case of Senegalese cities, and particularly Dakar, people got crammed in slum houses. The absence of hygiene, the lack of school infrastructure and banditry are hence the main consequences of the spontaneous urbanisation. Not being able to keep the youth and families back in the villages through the creation of employment and wealth on the spot, we let them manage in the city as they were able to do it. The spectacle thus offered the world is the impression of a people that have no other preoccupation than their prompt daily survival

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and that is unable to plan in time and in space.

What were therefore the responses of the different governments to this irreversible diagnosis that you raise?

Listen, the reality is that we are rather trying to clear the symptoms without taking serious measures to tackle the problem from its roots. The hybrid situation of Dakar is characterised by the fact that it is neither an industrial city, nor an agricultural zone. The crucial problem is to allow these agriculturists and small tradesmen to adjust to the realities of the city.

Petty professions are visible everywhere, in all nooks and crannies of the city. While awaiting long lasting solutions, is it not their right to get their own means of survival?

Petty professions have effectively invaded the city because the city offers very little to all these people who come and crowd the least nooks and outskirts of the capital of our country in thousands. That is the case, for example, with market-gardening and horticulture.

The rural people who come to the city are not absorbed by the modern sectors. Definitely, they are furious social misfits, never feeling at home anywhere. They today constitute the famous problem of hawkers who transform the streets of the city into open air stores and creating a real "canteening" of the city.

I was telling a friend the other day that the first banality that should be got rid of in our cities, is what I

Yes I Dare

call the external signs of poverty. When are we going to firmly ban these famous stands displayed on pedestrian pavements to sell just everything and anything, and which are packed just anyhow at the end of the day to wait for the next day? Besides, it is these displays that serve as “ammunition” during riots.

The creation of a new city, in view of all these considerations, is it thus the only pathway?

It is the only essential conclusion for the Senegalese authorities. That is why I am militating for the immediate creation of a new modern city as the political capital of Senegal. There is need for a national pact around the necessity and the urgency of a decongestion of Dakar through the creation of this new city.

Finally, your choice is on the site at Lac Rose.

Yes. It is infinitely more malleable than the geophysical situation of Dakar. Its opening to the rest of the country, let's say the four cardinal points, gives the assurance that it cannot meet the same fate like the city of Dakar. In fact, if you look at the latter well, that is as everyone knows, a peninsular, you will immediately realise that the only extension axis is towards the side that we call the Great Coast, or North Coast. That is where we find the Lac Rose, celebrated throughout the world because of the previous arrival of the famous Paris-Dakar rally.

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We thus have the choice to let the city of Dakar spread from Pikine and cleaned-up areas with the same cacophony, or we agree to structure the extension through what is right to call “The new cities of Lac Rose”, that would go from Malika to Kayar.

We have there a historic opportunity not to miss: the works that these new cities will require, the related activities that will spring up there, the improvement of the land in all the surrounding zone, etc., will be real levers for national growth.

It is easy to see that tourism development in the zone and the freeing up of Dakar that such an undertaking will produce, are a development whose life span and extent are nearly without limit.

And as the state considers the construction of new universities to further free up the UCAD, it goes without saying that the Lac Rose area could well do the deal. The thousands of students coming from the interior of the country, who are scrambling hard in amphitheatres in the UCAD, could thus be received closer to their home in a university at the Lac Rose site. In the same way, the construction of high schools and colleges would facilitate the decongestion of schools in Dakar thanks to what I call the “the City of Knowledge”, that would be built on the construction site of the new city. For some years now, as you know it, Dakar harbours teeming training schools, since Europe and America considerably reduced enrolment of foreign students.

Yes I Dare

Then, a Heath City would be anticipated, with specialised hospital structures that would be likely to promote medical tourism like in Tunisia.

In the cultural domain, a stage would be built on the site to host a film city like in Las Vegas or Hollywood, a permanent African exhibition park, in other words, a trade-fare of products from Africa. All employees of the administration who will move into the new capital will go with their families.

Our “national Akon” that I went to meet in Atlanta was moreover ready to join us for the realisation of the Entertainment City.

The telecommunications sector and that of services would definitely be the biggest beneficiaries of the implantation of this new capital.

In view of all these considerations, the question is no longer to know if there is need for a new city or not, but to ask ourselves what we lose per day from now until the time we will understand its necessity.

Filigreed to the concept of a new city and freeing up, is there not equally, by ricochet, the other concept to which you hold so much, the one of decentralisation? It is selling well, not only in Africa, but everywhere in the world. How do you explain this phenomenon?

The explanation is simple enough: the more we move towards a more democratic and more open world, the more we tend to loosen the vice of the centralisation of

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power. If, by oversimplification, we consider federalism as a higher form of decentralisation, you will notice that great democracies have all opted for decentralisation. The United States for example, are a federation of states. In Africa, that is equally the case with South Africa or Nigeria. I could even take the liberty to say that one of the outside signs of poverty it is the tendency towards centralisation.

In this matter, we cannot yet say that Senegal is part of the poor children of decentralisation.

No. Not at all! It can, moreover, appear presumptuous that I ask Senegalese “to dare” decentralisation. Effectively, we don't have much lesson to receive in this matter. Our experience is more than one century and a half old. But the balance sheet doesn't satisfy me. It is moreover for that reason that I ask to “better” dare this decentralisation. Decentralising should not mean recreating the central power at the local level. The justification we are making for decentralisation should not move us away from the objectives it is targeting, that is development.

According to you, decentralisation is therefore more an economic question than administrative.

Administrative organisation is not an end in itself. We organise ourselves administratively to serve better, think better and organise development, and not to do-

Yes I Dare

mineer the people better. There is no doubt that the central administration has never seen with a good eye the fact of giving up a part of its sovereignty, powers, or watch right.

Is money not here the major stake?

That depends on the perspective from which you view it. If it is for “people's empowerment”, as would say our English-speaking cousins, then that goes in the direction of our vision. It has to do with us putting into value the assets, which our regions have, and to make maximum profit from them. Therefore, first step: an inventory. The exercise is not difficult, since we know what is there in all the regions of Senegal. It is to say, therefore: yes, the Casamance for example, is our agricultural bastion. Then we will invest massively in agricultural projects and create an agro-centre in Ziguinchor that would serve the entire sub-region. An implementation centre could be the Anambé valley, with its thousands of already irrigated hectares and tens of thousands of irrigable hectares.

There is a lot to do. The young people, who took up arms since 30 years ago, whereas they were in search of jobs, will find something to do. I spoke elsewhere of the “positive discrimination.” This will be the place to let these youth, who are only asking to be useful to their country and to themselves benefit from it.

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Audits carried out during every alternation of power reveal numerous incidents of financial mismanagements not only at the level of the central administration, but also at the level of the management of decentralised local councils. Do the mechanisms of budgetary spending have that much defect?

Machines are not the ones in control. It is men. You could have the best programmes and the best procedures for an appropriate public expenditure, if the people in charge do not have a high sense of public property, money will still disappear. Of course, we need a good organisational structure, but we especially need a good seed in relation to human resources. That hooks up to my point of view concerning good governance and the training.

Bad management can be because of a shady civil servant, or resulting from incompetence, insufficient training, or even more, incomprehension of the role and objectives of the decentralised administration. When people spend a lot of money to get elected as mayor or councillor, they can believe that it is normal to use their new functions to manipulate their privileges, and that it is not criminal to appropriate for themselves a good part of the budget. But we need to admit that the negative impact of ignorance of administrative procedures, notably budgetary, is causing much havoc.

Do admit, nevertheless, that there is a real problem in the

Yes I Dare

transfer of financial resources to decentralised local councils.

It is a very old debate. There is some truth in this reproach on the central government. When we evaluate the aggregate part of the budget for the regions, we realise that it turns around 5% of the money spent by the central administration. This is not normal. When we talk of a better decentralisation, it is not merely about transferring expertise, it is about accompanying expertise with the means. But that is not all. We should lay down the specialisation of the regions in order to create what I want to call the “dynamics of decentralisation”.

You already talked of the Casamance. What are the main centres of this “decentralisation dynamics”?

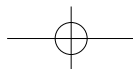
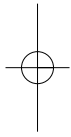
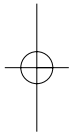
All the regions of Senegal are concerned. There are fourteen of them. But we can, for the purpose of regional specificity and decentralisation dynamics, group them in four or five big natural entities, each having its specificity, each one having its wealth.

The coastal region has the small coast to the south of Dakar – and we can go right down to the Gambia – and the great coast that extends right to Saint Louis, to the north of the Cape Verde peninsular. In the Saint-Louis region, there is the valley of the Stream that comes from Fouta Djalon and flows into the sea through an 800 kilometre corridor. It can, by itself, make of Senegal a net exporter of rice, even if already, as you know it, rice

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with fish, or Tiéboudiène in the Wolof language, is a universally recognised Senegalese export product. Giant agro-pastoral projects could see the light of day all along the river, supported by this agricultural excellence zone that would enable the bringing out of the added values, powerful multipliers of wealth. Infrastructures are not lacking. We need to reinforce them. The millions of m³ of rainwater that usually got lost through evaporation into the air, without counting the damages caused by flooding, are now regulated thanks to the Diama dam.

Then, we have Western Senegal and Upper Casamance. The mining vocation of this centre of excellence makes it naturally fit to harbour a mining school. We already talked about the Casamance, this natural breadbasket of Senegal thanks to its important hydraulic network and the dynamism of its population. There is finally the Sahelian strip, auspicious to pastoral activities. I spoke of dried meat that could be produced in Senegal and exported to the United States thanks to the AGOA. Americans would no longer need to import dried meat from South Africa. They would benefit in transportation cost, and there is no doubt that the cost of production would equally be more attractive.



Daring Good Governance

You are for the crusade against acquisition of illicit wealth. That is a global phenomenon, although it is taking the speed of a real scourge in Africa. The state of affairs in Senegal, is it preoccupying?

Our country has up to now, succeeded in establishing the foundations of a major democracy, and has equally made some significant advances towards economic emergence with the construction of quality infrastructures. However, pockets of resistance to development are still noticeable in public business management. Despite the goodwill of the different governments that have come and gone, the question of illicit enrichment remains the Achilles Heel of our democracy.

Democracy is not only in political and media pluralism, or in the organisation of free and transparent elections; it is also, and especially, in the economic. Economic democracy is at the same time equality of opportunities that disentangle individuals of all impediments that weight their economic development, and ethics of transparency in management.

This ethic of transparency not only requires the respect of public property and abnegation in management, but also the readiness to publicly give account whenever need arises. Giving account is both communicating on one's management and letting justice be operational in

Yes I Dare

its procedure and in its verdicts.

Senegal had double interest in reactivating the Court of Repression of Illicit Enrichment, first because it has become an ethical and political obligation, then because, rightly or wrongly, the state was suspected of closing its eyes. I salute the decision of President Macky Sall for having, therefore, since last May 10, reactivated this law that, be reminded, had been initiated by President Abdou Diouf in 1981. But we should not rejoice very early, even though I have no doubts on the determination of the new president. "That was a failure!" President Diouf had exclaimed on an international radio when he was being interviewed on this issue.

The consequences of corruption by the elite are not economic in nature, but equally psychological in nature: they destroy all respect for public property. Is it necessary to recall that those who govern, or who have the vocation to do so, should be exemplary in this light?

Do you think that citizens can be made to believe again in a government's capacity to fight this scourge?

We have to persuade the citizens that not only does the country have sufficient legal and institutional instruments to track corruption, but it is also resolutely turned towards a future made of tolerance zero in sanctioning corruption.

To do that, we have to engage in tracking corruption in advance and not only be content with hunting it after

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its commission. We should “promote virtue to pre-empt vice.” Such a bet cannot be held if the Judiciary doesn't function at full capacity like an independent power from the Executive and the Legislative.

Why is it that in our country, the judiciary must wait for people to deposit complaints on cases of corruption and concussion to trigger pursuits? And why do we hesitate to apply exemplary sanctions when infringements and economic crimes have been formally established? The answer to these two questions is still the same: the absence of judiciary independence and deficiency in preventive legal instruments. Concerning the absence of independence of the judiciary, various proposals are being made, but the problem is often a lot more cultural than economic.

Independence is like liberty. It is never a gift. It is a permanent conquest that only survives through and in the act of exercising it, and preserving it from the different types of predations. We can set up the best legal institutions and the best laws to fight corruption, if magistrates do not take their responsibility to act in all independence, justice will never be independent. To have an independent justice, we should have independent judges, for such judges, first need to be independent psychologically. It is in the consciousness of being independent that one is independent and not only in the nature and quality of institutions.

The concept of development is inseparable from the

Yes I Dare

fight against corruption. The exigencies of an equitable economic growth must hinge on a tangible policy of rationalisation and redistribution of resources.

A healthy competition among economic actors, which is the main engine of growth, must be guaranteed through an efficient and effective legal, judicial and institutional framework.

The framework and the mechanisms are nevertheless not deficient. Measures are taken, laws are voted, yet the evil clings on.

It is true a certain number of mechanisms well exists in Senegal to fight corruption. Donors and the civil society have moreover, largely contributed to it. It is clear that these structures are still not producing the expected effects. Financial scandals are still making headlines in the papers.

Senegalese note with regrets that this situation got worse with the advent of the alternation, which nevertheless, had raised a lot of hopes. Several responsible people, notably ministers, xxx since their appointment, have accumulated with time, and in the eyes of all, with an unspeakable arrogance, villas and mansions worth several hundreds of millions of CFA francs. The illicit enrichment of these persons is fragrant and known to all.

What is thus deficient in the system of the fight against cor-

Daring Good Governance

ruption?

All observers have noted with satisfaction that the legislative texts in force allows for efficiently fighting against corruption and money laundry. However, putting in place these legal dispositions are clashing with the weakening of the judicial institutions responsible for repressing irresponsible behaviours.

That is why in the current context of corruption in Senegal, two measures seem necessary to me to go up the slope and lay the foundation for a more just society enamoured with ethical values in the management of public goods. This is to strengthen the independence of the judiciary and reactivate the law on illicit enrichment. It is a thing done for the latter, while the writing of this book is in progress, and I mentioned that since the beginning of the interviews.

Let's begin with the independence of the judiciary if you wish.

This is indeed the cornerstone of good governance. The debate on its independence is recurrent during a problem or a case involving some senior public authorities. Many a Senegalese is deeply shocked to find that reports of independent monitoring institutions incriminating senior officials hardly have any outcome. The general feeling is that a flagrant impunity reigns, especially when it concerns big white collar offenders.

To allow justice to fully play its role, everyone agrees

Yes I Dare

that the organic link between the court and the Ministry of Justice must be rethought. Incriminating facts resulting from reports of the supervisory bodies should be used by the Prosecutor of the Republic as a step for proceedings, without any hindrance or pressure from the executive branch.

Instead of obtaining the abolition of the Ministry of Justice at the risk of falling into a government of judges or even tyranny, it is possible to explore reforms that allow supervisory bodies to constitute a civil bench for all offenses related to corruption, money laundering or embezzlement. These bodies should by themselves be able to deposit a complaint with the judge with civil action.

The other concern to strengthen the independence of the judiciary is the reform of the Higher Judicial Council, which is the body responsible for the career and integrity of the judiciary. Moreover, a strong signal in this direction has been given by Senegalese judges in their professional organisation, the UMS. The ideal is to ensure that all members of this high body are elected by their peers. The fight against judicial corruption, unacceptable in a state of law, must be fought without complacency.

Tell us now about the reactivation of the law on illicit enrichment.

It was imperative. It is not surprising that in the at-

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mosphere of social protest, which began on 23 June 2011, which equally bears a very suggestive name - Y en a marre – people, and especially the younger generations, openly attacked the property of political figures of this regime.

Illicit enrichment by officials or allies of the regime had reached an unacceptable level, which offended the sense of justice of all citizens. The recent attempt to revise Article 29 of the law criminalising money laundering, which is testimony of the height and arrogance of the ill-gotten wealth of the nouveaux riches, are some of the causes of social tension.

The looters of our economy, who have personally enriched themselves because of their placement in the state machinery, should prove the source of their wealth to the nation. How do we explain the fact that some people who moved in “fast cars”, who became Ministers, have after a short time, found themselves at the head of immense fortunes?

The activation of the aforementioned law will certainly end, or at least be a sharp response to the great social injustice, wherein Senegalese tired and exhausted by the contingencies, coexist with others who, without scruples, surround themselves in the most ostentatious manner, with ill-gotten wealth. But worse, we now see that corruption in the judiciary has reached such a degree that, a prominent lawyer in town, told me the other day that now, in addition to their fees, some lawyers

Yes I Dare

openly ask their clients for “tips” to make justice favour them.

I have personally lived this aberration. In a case where I could be charged to pay \$ 250 million, I was asked to pay \$ 35 million. Of course, I refused and I was charged while everyone knew that I was right. So I had to pay \$ 250 million. On the other hand, where it is somehow reassuring is that, in another case some judges have sentenced one of their peers who had filed a complaint against me for defamation and had even summoned their association. It was simply dismissed!

Do you believe that the independence of the Judiciary from the Executive is sufficient to enable good justice?

In this debate, many analysts thought that the appointment of judges by the Higher Judiciary Council could be a guarantee of independence. I do not share this opinion. The Executive is not the only power that threatens the independence of the Judiciary. Economic and financial powers, spiritual or religious powers, counter-powers such as the media and the Internet, are all sources of pressure that can influence and guide the judge in his work.

It is not because a judge is appointed by the President of the Republic that he is condemned not be free and independent in his profession. It is equally not because a judge is appointed by his colleagues that he is de facto independent.

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Then, it should be pointed out about this solution that creating a Higher Judiciary Council and dissolving the Ministry of Justice, can precipitate democracy into the abyss of a government of judges where judges will take politicians hostage on the contingencies of their political leanings, or even their interests.

What guarantees a priori that judges from such a reform are automatically forearmed against the various forms of corruption they themselves are responsible for tracking? Judges have repeatedly said publicly that the legal and institutional tools to enable independent exercise of justice exist in our country. We should stop following the wrong path and making citizens believe that justice is under the influence of the executive.

The mere fact that there is a union of judges in this country is proof that justice can be free when the people representing it so desire. When a man is not aware that his most precious welfare is freedom, he will always lose it to changing circumstances. When a judge is not immune to certain temptations, his freedom will be nothing more than an empty word in the mouths of those seeking to escape from their responsibilities.

In the United States, the President of the Supreme Court is appointed by the President, although this appointment must be confirmed by the Senate to be effective. Yet, we have never heard an American contesting this appointment to say that the judiciary of his country is not independent. The recipe is not in this more than

Yes I Dare

doubtful alchemy, bearer of political instability.

So, where then can we find the right recipe?

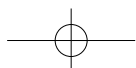
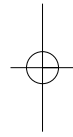
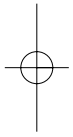
I see two directions: first, an all-out education, which will aim at teaching citizens the culture of transparency and good governance. Every politician as well as private officials should set a good example. Then, the fight against corruption should be amplified and refined always by a tougher law in terms of penalties imposed on perpetrators of corruption.

Political offices cannot and should not be a source of wealth, unless it opens the door to corruption-prone processes such as commissions and bribes. We believe that the best way to permanently wash those responsible of all suspicion is to establish a commission to fight corruption in the spirit of the law on illicit enrichment. The sudden prosperity and conspicuous display of wealth in prestigious ceremonies have become absolutely shameless in this country, and sooner or later, people will have to be held accountable. This insolent wealth should be justified by their owners, not only to set a good example, but also to reconnect citizens with the government. Senegal can neither afford to build its economy on a nebulous foundation, nor accommodate it in the vicissitudes of corruption because no economy is viable if it is not free of certain harmful forms of illicit enrichment. A country wherein it is tolerated for people to enrich themselves illegally destroys itself because work and

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rightness suddenly become useless. We cannot claim that nothing we possess has an illegal origin if we cannot provide plausible justifications.

If we want a country in which work and honesty will be the growth drivers, we cannot do without a determined and incisive fight against corruption. In the face of such a scourge, there is no half-measure or compromise; solutions must be radical and hard. The judges may well be insightful and honest, if there are objective barriers, they cannot overcome; their investigations will be futile.



Daring Agriculture Otherwise

For some years now, some Asian countries are buying large areas of farmland in Africa. You who champion partnership, is this a good thing?

I tell you right now that I am against the sale of land. If a people no longer have land, what remains for them? Partnership does not mean selling off one's land. I believe that countries that contented themselves with a few million dollars to surrender millions of acres of their land were not only wrong to do so, but have thus deprived future generations of their legitimate heritage. Another technique is to make concessions, which generally go up to 99 years!

Again, I do not agree. 99 years is too much. I agree that we have no capital. I agree that we do not have the means for significant investments in industrial agriculture. That is precisely why partnership with large foreign groups seems justified to me: a partnership in the sense of mutual contributions. We can say this to our partners: "You have the money, as for us, we have the land. Come, fund, you will earn money, and so will we." In this scheme, there is no surrender of any land whatsoever. If at the end you have to give concessions, they should not go beyond 20 or 25 years, but again, in partnership with local communities. Land could, for example, be transferred to an AIG (Agricultural Interest

Yes I Dare

Group).

Almost everything has been tried out for half a century for Africa to have enough to eat, but most especially that it should produce what it consumes. Billions of dollars have been invested, but we are still the only region in the world where we import most of what we consume; it is not normal.

The picture is actually not very enviable. But today there is a new element that could toggle everything; it is the new information technologies, the famous ICTs. Of course, first, the peasant or Senegalese farmer should no longer be the robotic image that we know. He should no longer be the one whose whole strength lies in his arms. He should have the minimum intellectual capacity that enables him to understand the mechanisms that control the price of what he produces or sells. He should be able to decide what he should produce in relation to what he will gain, that is to say, in anticipation of market prices. To be honest, he must take advantage of ICTs for his training.

And how do you think he will succeed in having this mastery of the international market environment?

Thanks certainly to ICTs. See today how easily our parents in the village are using the mobile phone. Do not give them just anything. They know the functions, and can distinguish between a mobile phone that has limited features and another that allows you to listen to

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music or radio. So, we start from the principle that the peasant is equally as smart as any other citizen. What he needs is training. He should be trained. In the future, it will be necessary that in rural areas, there should be nobody without at least a primary education certificate, and cyberspaces should be used in this training.

If the farmer knows that with the same effort and the same perimeter cultivated he can earn ten times more with something other than peanuts, he will not wait for anybody's advice to switch to that other thing. If he knows that there was abundant rainfall around the world where the same crops are cultivated like in his area, he will understand that in that year, market prices will not be high. He is forewarned; he has information; he will be able to take informed decisions on issues of his best interests.

There is also the crucial question of varieties. All countries have institutes of agricultural research. Some make very interesting discoveries in varieties with several annual cycles, for example those that require little water or that offer more abundant crop production. Again, we are in the area of information. He can request that variety of that cereal produced in that country where yield is better. And perhaps, even the quality of the soil in his environment could give much better results.

Eating habits have changed over time. There used to be mainly millet and sorghum. There is rice now. So, we

Yes I Dare

also need to change production habits. We are not producing enough rice to meet the needs of the population. It is possible that, with some varieties, with the same surface area, we can obtain twice, thrice more rice. Once the information is mastered, everything becomes possible. We will gradually leave the ancestral way of thinking where ethnic groups got specialised in the cultivation of certain crops and believed that they could not have or do something else. The vision goes beyond the small farm for the simple food needs of the family, or smallholder scheme, which hardly exceeds 5 or 10 hectares, and which is hardly sufficient to send their children to school. And this is where partnership comes in. I, a peasant, I only cultivate 5 hectares. I however have 100 hectares. Alone, I cannot do it. Can someone help me?

We do not lack land. In Casamance, for example, independence fighters who are making headline news at this time would see nothing wrong in making the land where they are taking refuge, production areas that would enable them to live full lives. I am thinking of all those young people who are in the bush, and who constitute a strong labour force that would contribute to the strong growth we need to get to emergence in some ten years. What does it take? Putting in place win-win partnerships with foreign groups, or even Senegalese, who wish to invest in the sector and who have the technology and the capital.

Daring Agriculture Otherwise

In just a little single decade, Senegal could become a big agro-pastoral country. We are only known for the cultivation of peanut. Yet the Senegalese soil is sufficiently rich for the cultivation of many other crops. There is for example market gardening. Thanks to the techniques of irrigation, it can be carried out anywhere in Senegal. And it would be a good thing, if only for the health of our people, whose diet knows very little variation. Market garden products, fruits and vegetables contain numerous vitamins in general: carrot, green salad, watermelon, spinaches, and you name the rest, are already part of the landscape when you crisscross Senegal. I will also add orchards, which you will see while crisscrossing the hinterlands. Orange, cashew nut, tamarind, banana, pineapple, papaya, avocado, all these fruits, Senegalese people produce them. We are a blessed land. But we are just given to quivering. Let's go even farther, we should carry the ambition to summits, within the framework of a big development vision where, daring, once more, remains the key word; and that is where we ought to nurse even more ambition.

When I spoke to our new minister of agriculture, my younger brother and friend, Benoît Sambou of the idea to make of the small agricultural centre at Djibélor a big Agro pole, he was immediately charmed by the idea and said to me that in actual fact, we could think of a centre of about 7 billion francs CFA. I immediately told him no, no, we need a 100 billion agro pole (10 billion each

Yes I Dare

year for 10 years) and make it the “agricultural brain of the entire sub region” (for Senegal, of course, but also for the Gambia, Guinea Bissau and even Guinea Conakry and Mali). And in passing, invite the greatest specialists and researchers in the world to Ziguinchor. That is DARING!

At the level of animal rearing, we ought to overcome certain mentalities. People will tell you, for example that it is Peulhs who rear cattle. In fact, the latter sell some of their livestock only to meet their immediate needs. Yet we need a pastoral industry. South-Africans produce dried meat and export to the United States as I already mentioned while speaking of the AGOA. It would be more economical to develop the livestock here in Senegal, and have industries that produce dried meat, for example, for the American market.

Besides agriculture and animal rearing, there is fishing. As you know it, Senegalese are very great fishermen. The maritime waters of Senegal are full of fish. That is not why we should be content with the small royalties that the issuance of fishing licences to foreign companies procures us. Senegalese should fish and sell the fishes that abound in their waters. That is why I am for the setting up of programmes to finance for example trawlers, the training of marine fishermen, and factories for the transformation of piscatorial products. You know that we have a unit for the transformation of tuna in Senegal. This factory needs the means to extend and,

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and why not triple its production.

The Wade presidency was marked in 2008 by a very original initiative: the giant agricultural offensive for food and abundance, or the Goana. In your capacity as special adviser to the President, you participated in the development of this strategy that aimed at making Senegal food self-sufficient. No one talks of it anymore. What was the problem? What went wrong? Money? People? Partners?

We have the imperious task to come out of the weakened pathways. We have to invent solutions to our problems, but especially, once again, to dare. Projections made in the Goana framework had to effectively enable Senegal to satisfy its food needs by a daring investment policy in this sector. And even to make it a net exporter of food products. In this regard, we need to pay sincere homage to President Wade, who dared to lay the true problems where they were found and attempted the original solutions as we had never thought of them.

To return to one aspect of your question, I did not participate in it, but also and again, they lied to the President. From what I know, he was told that we could, through Goana, which again was a good idea, produce 500,000 tonnes of maize. That was absolutely false. According to experts in that domain, we could barely produce 50,000 tonnes. Yet, it was actually possible to produce 500,000 tonnes. What did not work? As would say our Ivorian cousins .

Yes I Dare

I said somewhere in this interview that we need patriots. This is a large breed of men and women all dedicated to the nation. I also said training was needed, that is to say, having in the field people trained in their specialties, and especially competent. It is when you have created a synergy between patriotism and competence that you achieve conclusive results. One or the other of these two ferments failed somewhere along the line. Today, what seems important to me is that there is a pattern that is not utopia; it is that we cannot say it is not possible. Senegalese have a firm conviction that we can achieve self-sufficiency and even have surplus that we can export. I happen to think that we can do better than those who, 50 years ago, were behind us and who, for decades, are enjoying the benefits of emergence.

I am convinced that we should maybe try to better understand e-agriculture. With my office in Beijing, I am currently working with China Great Wall Company, the Chinese giant aerospace programme, on e-agriculture for all ECOWAS countries.

This may be the reason to rejoice that the new Minister of Agriculture is a real son of a farmer and in addition, a good citizen of Casamance. I know, for example – for we have discussed it – what he wants to do with the Anambé Valley, partly based on the concept of e-agriculture.

I am currently reading a book my friend Shinde gave me, which talks about the ideas of his father Amasahed

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Shinde, father of the Indian Agricultural Revolution, former Minister of Agriculture. The book summarises this: in the sixties, India was a country in which people were starving to death. Food was massively imported from countries placed under the PL80 programme. Experts saw India as a hopeless case that might be wiped off the world map. Today, after its population has increased by 250% since 1960, India has not only achieved food self-sufficiency, but it is helping to feed millions of human beings far beyond its borders.

To give another example, we are entering the holy month of Ramadan. During this fasting period, consumption of dates increases substantially. Did you know that Senegal, instead of importing it, could be a net exporter?

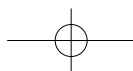
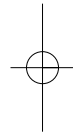
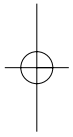
In an entirely new chapter, I asked my daughter Eva, who is beginning to specialise in agro-business, to see where and how we could produce feed for chickens in Senegal. Easy! I listened to a very interesting programme on RFI. It was on the poultry industry. I thus learnt that nearly 60% of chicken consumed in Africa was imported.

What does it take to produce chicken? Have chicken feed. So I am giving her as an equation to solve, to see how Senegal could tomorrow export chicken feed, of course after completing the feat of selling Brazilian chickens that are flooding our markets today.

To those interested, I wish that in 10 years, we should

Yes I Dare

be exporting our “chicken Gorgy” to the entire world.



Daring Together with the Diaspora

South Africa hosted the first World Summit of the Diaspora on 25 May 2012. You like saying “the white gold of the Diaspora.” So, satisfaction?

First, I must tell you, perhaps we often forget that it is to President Abdoulaye Wade that we owe the recognition by the African Union of the status of the Diaspora as a “sixth region of Africa”. Even though having studied in the United States of America, I did not have the time to belong to the Diaspora because my architecture degree in my hand was burning me with the desire to return home. I did just that by loading my luggage and my Mustang in the first ship bound for Senegal. In saying this, I do not mean to suggest that every African student should immediately return home. It is always good to gain some experience in the country where you received your training. We return better armed, and especially with the entrepreneurial spirit that has made these countries to be where they are today in terms of the development and innovations that establish their progress.

The migratory phenomenon, which creates the Diaspora, is global. Some people have the reputation of being champions in it. But you will notice that the history of great nations has a great deal of emigration. At first, it was to go and explore other countries, or whose

Yes I Dare

existence we imagined. That is what has led to some great discoveries. The major beneficiaries of these discoveries were the countries of origin of the explorers, who raided the wealth of the lands discovered in the four corners of the world. Exploration missions were even financed either by states or by large corporations who knew they would gain substantial profits from it.

In its modern form, the equation can be put another way: we are going to acquire knowledge, including the techniques of using this knowledge – work and experience step in here, and we bring all of that home. Senegal's development will therefore be with its Diaspora.

A few years ago, the Senegalese Government, in collaboration with UNDP, established a programme to mobilise experts from the Diaspora, called TOKTEN under its English acronym.

The merit of this programme is, may be, to demonstrate the relevance of my remarks, but nothing more. Like any project that requires funding from abroad, you will find that this programme did not go far in its implementation. As soon as the funding source dried up, it took lead in the wing. TOKTEN set up a database in which were registered some one hundred Senegalese, of whom slightly more than half only have returned to do short-term missions, mostly in Dakar and Saint-Louis.

When I say we should dare together with the Diaspora, it goes further than that. Already, it requires that the economy enters a dynamic growth in all directions,

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which does not need that we once more go asking for money from international organisations to do what we ourselves have to do. This economic and financial dynamic will create needs that will be satisfied by themselves.

If I set up a hubcap manufacturing company for automakers in the United States under AGOA, which we talked about, I will not need the UNDP to search in the Senegalese market of the Diaspora for executives whom I need to run my factory. And less of all, its money. If I have to create a bank and tap money from the Senegalese Diaspora, those who want to invest in it will come and directly put money into it. People gather every day, create think tank committees, and write thousands of pages of reports and recommendations. It is all that, but I need actions, I am a man of action.

Concretely, what is your ambition for the Senegalese Diaspora?

10% of Senegalese live abroad and contribute up to 20% to the build up of the national wealth of their country. With these consoling figures, we cannot spend time writing reports as it has been done for over 10 years now. First, we need to know who does what and where. Establishing a truly international and inclusive database would be a first step. Information has to circulate in every area where there are Senegalese. Then all Senegalese who earn their living abroad should be in this data-

Yes I Dare

base, which will be accessible to companies, research centres, banks, etc. As soon as they begin earning their living from there, as soon as they begin working, as soon as they have a business, they help in strengthening the wealth of their host country. This hard work and enterprising spirit, this spirit of ingenuity, this knowhow of Senegalese geniuses, will naturally add to the internal dynamics to create a winning synergy and push Senegal to emergence. The contribution of the Diaspora to the development of Senegal does not, however, require a physical presence.

The world has changed. Thanks to the new information and communication technologies, everyone can contribute to building the nation wherever he is found. That is the great revolution brought about by the digital world.

We should take full advantage of it. It is in this spirit that I launched the website: www.333senegalais.com.

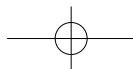
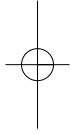
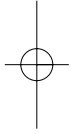
What is it about?

We have already talked about the white gold of the Diaspora. However, what I mean by “white gold”, in brief, is the sum of all these Senegalese minds who, by dint of reflection, innovation, expertise, work well done, skills, selflessness, dedication or even patriotism, are moving Senegal, Africa and the rest of the world. They are beyond our borders, but they are also and especially here in Senegal. They are of all ages, virtually in all ac-

Daring Together with the Diaspora

tivities; they are medical doctors, engineers, businessmen, artists, intellectuals in everything, writers, philosophers, journalists, pilots, teachers and local or international civil servants. They are in the hundreds if not thousands. Generally, they all have the same problem: they do not communicate among themselves because they don't know each other.

www.333senegalais.com thus aims at identifying them and helping them share their experiences, see how they can put together some of their expertise for the development of what they all have in common: SENEGAL.



Daring Solar Energy

You have created “Solar City”, to mark your faith in solar energy. Do you sincerely believe that Senegal can update to all solar?

I did my thesis some forty years ago on what I called “Solar City.” I was then imagining a new town where the only energy was solar. I designed for example a completely solar bus. What could pass for a dream is today reality.

We have this manna, which is sun in Senegal. We have more than 4000 hours of sunshine in a year. It’s a world record. Studies have shown that solar energy was more profitable than nuclear energy, for example, with the added advantage that it does not produce waste. My company “Solar City” is now installing two 5 MW plants of solar energy in Chad. The future of energy is in the sun.

Those who wanted to try their hands in solar energy say the cost is relatively high and the technology in this field is still at its beginning.

That is a short term look. Solar energy may seem more expensive than conventional energy for the simple reason that depreciation takes place in the medium term. In the long-run the costs tend to zero. Fifty years ago, a barrel of oil was \$ 5. We were all at the beginning

Yes I Dare

of the “thirty glorious years”, this long period of continuous growth experienced by Europe before the first oil crises. Energy was cheap. Industrial development had not reached its cruising speed to be so energy intensive. Today we are in a new era. The price of a barrel of oil is around \$ 100. We have even come close to \$ 150.

The exploitation of oil deposits scattered here and there around the world have become financially profitable, meanwhile, some decades ago, nobody would have thought of drilling. Good, however, for many African countries, which have become oil exporters.

To cope with this upsurge, some European countries have diversified themselves by investing in nuclear energy and even in the wind. As an architect, I do not lean on the wind because of its aggressive nature on the landscape. Nuclear power has advantages. It does not produce carbon dioxide, but it is equally not clean energy.

ECOWAS member countries each year spend more than 1500 billion CFA francs on their oil imports. It suffices for us to think like normal people to understand that we need to switch without delay to solar civilisation.

Daring solar energy is to take a comparatively good step towards what we did not inherit from colonisation. It is at last daring to think by ourselves and reflecting on solutions suitable for our environment and our means. In black Africa, no country has up to now solved

Daring Solar Energy

the equation of energy supply, including even mighty Nigeria. We cannot get into the industrial era being submitted to epileptic and endless rationing of electricity supply. It is probably not new to say it. You will hear it in great speeches. But effectively, to dare is to stop discoursing.

Hermann Scheer explains in his excellent work, “Le solaire et l'économie mondiale” (Editions Actes Sud), that “every year, the sun provides fifteen thousand times more energy than the commercial consumption of the world's population. It is so generous that it could satisfy our most luxurious energy needs, even though human, animal and plant reigns are still increasing considerably.”

Traditional energy use subjects us to the consequences of greenhouse gas emissions, which are dangerous for the survival of our planet. Even the use of nuclear energy is not without danger in the sense that it involves the production of uranium whose different applications allow for the production of atomic bomb. This without considering the nuclear waste produced by power stations whose reactors, after working for some years, present high risks at the level of maintenance and security. The dangers are therefore real. We still remember the accidents that occurred in some nuclear power stations and whose consequences for the future of the environment as well as the health of people, animals and plants, have not yet been completely evaluated.

Yes I Dare

Fossil energies therefore have limits, as much from the point of view of their availability, their cost, as the danger that they represent to our environment. It is therefore high time we passed to renewable energies, the solar being the one that carries our choice, and which, from the opinion of all the experts, is the cleanest among all the rest.

An important element equally plays in favour of solar energy. When the material gets used up after some years, they are not replaced as it is the case with all other worn out material. It simply becomes free of charge for the rest of the time.

To get solar energy, it is not enough to stretch your hands towards heaven. There are equipment, and Senegal doesn't produce any of them. We will come back to the vicious cycle of importing solar panels, energy accumulators, etc.

Not at all! You probably don't know it, but SPEC Company with which I work in partnership with Solar City, produces solar panels in Senegal: it is the first of its kind in Africa. An all solar policy doesn't mean importing solar panels. All along this interview, I keep insisting a lot on industry: creating on the spot, transforming on the spot, manufacturing on the spot. That will reduce importation cost. For, a material manufactured in India and imported into Senegal faces over charging, at least on transportation, even if no tax was charged. But once more, buying from outside is

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creating employment outside of one's borders and maintaining unemployment within one's own borders. Employment constitutes one of our major worries.

When we will be rooted in the industrial world with the functioning of our economy, we will be able to produce machine tools and semi finished products for the manufacture of other goods. In our case, it will mean continuing production of machines for the manufacture of solar panels, batteries, etc.

One of the constraints of installing these huge factories is the narrowness of the market.

Your remark brings us back to the colonial conception of exchanges between Africa and the rest of the world. When we manufacture for Senegal, we also manufacture for Africa, we also manufacture for the rest of the world. We simply need to conform to the norms required by the different markets, as our Asian friends are however very well doing. No economy of scale will therefore set in since we will work on the scale of the world economy. But better still, it is proper to talk here of South-South cooperation, for example, because, in this case, the solar power stations that we are going to install in Chad will use solar panels made in Senegal by SPEC company, as I mentioned a little while ago.

Some solar facilities very quickly broke down, notably in some non-electrified villages. That helped to give solar

Yes I Dare

energy a poor image.

When a new technology arrives, everybody rushes into it. People tell themselves that there is money to make. Thus, you will have people who will dress themselves with titles without having the qualification. It is therefore possible that in the cases you just mentioned some unscrupulous individuals are responsible for these installations. All studies show that solar energy is reliable, clean, long lasting. Besides, that is why it is called “long lasting energy”.

To speak a little technically, although it is not the goal of this book to enter into technical considerations, it is necessary to distinguish two branches in solar energy: the thermal solar energy and the photovoltaic solar energy. The thermal solar energy concerns essentially, heating. It perfectly replaces, for example, the electric water heater. Investment in this branch is relatively less compared to the photovoltaic solar energy branch, which is the one we know more and which is generally used for lighting. It equally wears out faster.

We should nevertheless admit that in the present market condition, electricity supply by the subsidised national companies seems more economic than the present costs of investment in photovoltaic solar energy. That is actually the theory. In practice, load-shedding, inopportune cuts that push some companies and even some households to equip themselves with generators make it such that in spite of the certainly heavy stakes at the

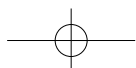
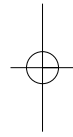
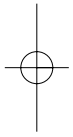
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start, adopting photovoltaic solar energy remains the most suitable solution. It is, moreover, in this sense that my company, “Solar City”, is working, within the framework of its research-development activities.

In another framework, we are trying to develop products of regular consumption.

We have developed, for example, solar tricycles, motorcycles and bicycles. Yes, solar bicycles, which run very well. Go to our website, vélo-solaires.com, you will be edified! You will equally discover in it recharging solar stations for solar bicycles. Our ambition is to install some of them tomorrow right in the most remote villages of Africa. We are moreover, equally working on our future solar car. You will see the Atepa-Tone that I am currently developing with my Chinese Atépa China Africa Links team.

With regards to street lighting, we have already created what we call $1+1+1+1 = 1!$ It is a very special solar lamp that combines panels, batteries, bulbs and surge protectors in a single element. The last in the series is called Slepht Lamp since it brings to mind the American fleeing plane with its triangulations. You see, solar energy is a fact for me, a real passion.



Daring a New Social Pact

Let's philosophise a little. What relationship do you make between culture and development? Can culture contribute in establishing development, and to what extent can it be a hindrance? What do you say specifically in the case of Senegal?

I'm glad you are dragging me into philosophy. Contrary to what people might think philosophy is not cut off from the realities we live. It is moreover important to clearly state the relationship that necessarily exists between culture and development to know what is obstructing what, to ensure that nothing hinders our long-distance race on the path to development. In fact, every reflection has a philosophical responsibility, and most of the time we philosophise like Mr. Jourdain who excelled in prose without knowing it.

Beyond assessments often made by politicians, trade unions and the civil society, our culture harbours many values for economic development because it contains work virtue and the spirit of sacrifice that has made the success of developed countries.

But the use we make of democracy and particularly its fundamental principles of freedom and equality, instead of being part of this perspective, has virtually destroyed the pillars our culture had built to shape men and women imbued with the values of merit, dedication and

Yes I Dare

dignity.

If we should, without any kind of ambiguity, salute the democratic culture of the Senegalese, it goes without saying that the need for lucidity demands that we take a critical look at the way democracy works in our country today.

Since independence, it is certainly presented as a model in Africa. Despite a few hiccups, the last presidential race still confirmed it.

That is true, but we need a lot of grooming on our democratic system. It would be dangerous for us Senegalese that they caress our navel, and that we follow the movement without any critical mind. Everything is improvable, even when a system appears to be the most accomplished.

Me, even when I talk about democracy, I am interested in its economic implications because this is, in the end, what makes the wealth of nations. The Japanese model of economic emergence – a country completely devoid of natural resources and ruined by the Second World War – and some Asian countries we often cite to explain our economic backwardness, poses a problem in its understanding and interpretation.

The economic emergence of Asian countries did not occur ex nihilo. It has historical roots, which hold among other reasons, first to their culture. Indeed, Asia is a land of several thousand years, to which is added a

Daring a New Social Pact

philosophy of life that has shaped the Asian soul with religions such as Confucianism, Buddhism and Hinduism.

Could you, therefore, precise the philosophical content of this Asian conception of the world, which is the basis of its “miracle”?

To better understand it, it is necessary to have an explicit reading of its meaning, aims and purposes.

First of all, note that most Asians profess the idea that no culture is superior to theirs, and on the contrary, if any superiority exists, it is their culture that is superior. This worldview is expressed in Chinese: China is the “Middle Kingdom”.

That is, therefore, militant ethnocentrism, even though questionable. It is an explanatory element of the Asian position in the world. They are impervious to external cultural influences, and if they get interested in it, they take care to sort and retain what they consider useful to them and put aside what seems unnecessary, redundant or accessory.

That is why the philosophy of claimed life gave them a mind of steel, but also a moral stance, determined as they are to resist outside influences and carve out for themselves a choice place in the concert of nations. Unlike the African culture that is based on alliance between man and nature, the Asian professes indifference to the world and to self.

Yes I Dare

You have just highlighted a fundamental difference between the Asian conception of the world and that of other peoples.

Indeed, the Asian doesn't think the individual is central, unlike the West, for example, which has made the promotion of the individual a philosophy of life. This indifference to the world and "I" is for the benefit of the group. It is in this that all energy is concentrated on the accomplishment of the "All" in which constituent entities are accomplished according to the virtues of order, hierarchy, social discipline and forced savings.

In Asia, belonging to community is often stronger than attachment to rather abstract values. In the Asian world, what is paramount is respect for authority, loyalty, diligence in the sphere of economic relations, the sense of family responsibility and respect for given word. We can say that the work ethic that arises from these philosophies places the group and national entity above the individual. This means that they do not decree the culture of love for work and economic patriotism.

If I understand you, the problem lies on a line between democracy and culture. There is thus a kind of interconnection essential for optimal management of the city.

In Senegal, it is this connection or interconnection, to use your word, between democracy and local culture that is lacking. The pursuit and conservation of power are, in all countries of the world, accompanied by mo-

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rally reprehensible behaviours. But the turn they have taken in our country today is very disturbing. Instead of a real participatory democracy, or even a democracy of opinion, which should result in a permanent deliberation, we have invented for ourselves a democracy of daily and permanent agitation.

Constantly, daily, we agitate and stir up all sectors of national life to install a psychotic crisis. The first symptom of political anomaly is large number of political parties not justified by any ideology or any electoral mass.

By listening to the various political party leaders, you certainly get surprised by the multiplicity of political parties: they make the same speech, adopt the same positions, develop the same strategies and are curiously unable to find a meeting point for unity.

Multiparty politics advances democracy only if it expresses at the same time a genuine political pluralism, if the parties involved have clear projects for the society, consistent and sufficiently different one from the other, to offer the nation real alternatives, real choices.

According to you, what therefore moves the Senegalese politician, or more generally, the Senegalese towards the politician?

People who adhere to the different political parties do so more on emotional, ethnic, sociological, religious, etc. bases, than on the basis of a rational decision driven

Yes I Dare

by strong political convictions. One thing explains this great paradox: Senegalese political parties are not formed around specific ideals and clear political or economic principles. They first of all create a political party, and then venture to find for it doctrinal ideologies and a doubtful political family.

I like this politician, I don't like that other one; this or that politician is more eloquent, younger, more beautiful (handsome): these are generally the premises of the argument to justify the choice and political commitments of many of our fellow citizens. The logical consequence of such a democratic anomaly is the downgrading of debates to an abnormally weak level in strength, regular clashes.

Everybody is lamenting the stagnation or lack of political dialogue between the various protagonists as if it was ironic, when it is the logical consequence of a bizarre political morality. The comparison criteria between politicians have as foundation passion, and even personal interests and not ideas.

Also, much energy and time are wasted just to settle political scores instead of a national crusade against economic backwardness and poverty of the masses. Serenity, confidence and calm, so necessary for economic takeoff, or at least, for investment, are constantly threatened in Senegal by libertarian political behaviours.

There are indeed great political groupings in Senegal whose

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ideology and trends we can clearly situate. Is it not exaggerating to say that Senegalese are not rational in their political choices?

Obviously, these ideologies exist. I was talking in general terms. I think, for example, that it is time to put clearly the problem of unbridled multiplicity of political parties in Senegal. As of today, there should be about 180!

Let me take a little leap backward. Contrary to what is commonly believed multiparty system was not born in Senegal in 1981, with the advent of President Abdou Diouf, who amended the constitution, specifically Article 3 relating to political parties. The first constitution of independent Senegal was in 1963, with limitation of mandate.

At a time when nationalism was sincere, where Senegalese looked in the same direction to ensure for the nation a future that was definitely turning its back on the dark colonial period, it never dawned on anyone's mind that politics was a matter of mafia calculations, this kind of business politics, a perfect forum for making their way to the sun and cheaply, behind the back of voters. Alliances were built naturally, and Senegal, for over a decade, had lived but de facto not at the point of de jure an almost consensual one-party system.

The creation by Barrister Abdoulaye Wade of the Democratic Party of Senegal (PDS) in 1974 inaugurated the era of genuine and credible opposition. President

Yes I Dare

Senghor, in one of his many constitutional amendments, leaned on the question of multiplicity of political parties. Was he worried that the coming on stage of the largest opposition party would open the Pandora's Box? Still, two years later, in 1976, he proceeded to a constitutional amendment which limited to three, then to four by another revision in 1978, the number of political parties.

So, Senegal moved from a complete multiparty system to a limited multiparty system and this under the presidency of Senghor!

Exactly! Taking office in 1981, President Abdou Diouf returned to the ex ante situation of non limitation in the number of political parties, but the context had changed. That is how the crisis came in, and so this seemed to be an opening for many political actors whose opportunism was undoubtedly, a source of enrichment if not compromise.

The argument of those who believe that we should continue to let the current disorder thrive is that no one should even dare to touch the sacred freedom of expression and association enshrined in the constitution.

So, are you suggesting that Senegal should return to limiting the number of political parties?

Any institution is based on both legal and moral justification. It should be measured against the benefits it

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is expected to inject into the running of the society. Today, business politics has literally taken over all other considerations, thus polluting the political environment.

Clearly, are you proposing to your compatriots to “dare” a limitation in the number of political parties?

Daring here will consist in “clearing off” the obstruction in our values in order to preserve the health of the social body. Daring here will consist in defying what some delight in laying down as the golden rule, even though the water pool is full of detritus of immorality if not amorality, even a form of political banditry hidden under the stamp receipt of approval. To dare here is to look at each other in the eye and say with courage: “Enough! It’s not good! It must be stopped! We have gone too far!”

So, you are proposing a revision of the constitution and a backward move of over 30 years!

I am fundamentally against constitutional revisions. The constitution is a fundamental law. It is a foundation, cement, a social contract that crosses generations and ensures the stability of the nation. It should not be tailored to satisfy partisan interests. That is why our lawyer friends refer to it as the highest legal standard. But for once, I want our constitution to take into account the need for a revision that would put a bit of order in

Yes I Dare

the house. It is not a step backwards. President Senghor had set it to three, then four parties, following the ideological tendencies, which undoubtedly corresponded to the configurations generally accepted at the time. I am proposing a limitation to five political parties. A centre party, a party of the right and another a little further to the right, a left party and another a little more to the left. All present political convictions should be found in this new configuration. The heads of the queue of these currents will naturally distinguish themselves by their various performances at national and local elections. There will therefore be no favouritism. The small formations swarming here and there, and have made politics a lieu par excellence for collusion of all kinds, should cling to where they can and to anyone for their survival. I do not doubt for a moment that the issue here is the future of our democracy.

You talked about political parties. What is the role of trade unions in Senegal and what are their links with the world of politics?

Trade union action in the world is the alternative against the horrors of globalisation and social drift brought about by global liberalism, which the accumulation of profit is the only morale.

On the social level, therefore, trade unions should logically be the locomotive of the train of development. But here, they have managed to establish themselves as

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insurmountable barriers to development.

Workers in sectors that constitute the real driving force of the economy (labourers, peasants, fishermen, pastoralists, etc.) are generally more concerned with the country's political stability, serenity of mind and economic development. In a word, the most hardworking and the most productive masses of our country are the most disciplined and silent.

It is therefore not surprising to see the social front infesting the political context, if it doesn't accompany it or render it more "complex".

Assiduity, punctuality, discipline in work and the need for a job well done and on time, are values to be promoted. The culture of easy and immediate benefits is, so to speak, the virus that has corrupted the entire moral fabric of much of the Senegalese youth in particular and the worker in general.

If order and discipline are precisely the virtues we still lack, some countries in "Taylorian" regime, where strike is an exception, have succeeded in stamping it on their people (Korea, Singapore, Japan, etc.); employers and workers should be able to combine their efforts, achieving a kind of symbiosis of their interests to participate in the effort of nation-building. That is the new requirement for economic patriotism or patriotism, simply.

The other factor of degeneracy of the love for work is the excessive number of holidays in Senegal. On this

Yes I Dare

point, an agreement between the state and religious authorities is absolutely necessary to stop the economic bleeding caused by these endless and expensive parties.

If everyone is comfortable with them, should we complain about them?

It is not about complaining or not. We should weigh its impact on the national economy. Religious holidays cost us doubly expensive: overspending and enormous loss of working time and, consequently, slowing down of productivity. In general therefore, the morals that democratic culture has instilled in us are helping to make of our country a less competitive economic area in the context of a globalised world economy.

Plato, the Greek philosopher, said that “Knowledge is a snatching, a climb.” So, wanting to emerge, wanting to do like Asia, wanting to accomplish economic performance, supposes a priori a violent snatching from the world, from nature. We have to dump some of our habits and some of our inhibitive behaviours and dare a new behaviour.

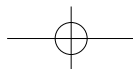
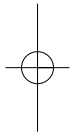
It is time that the struggle for the restoration of the authentic values, which were conveyed by our culture, be a problem of the civil society, and especially the national press, which must stop making politics the only subject matter in journalism; when it is not sterile personal attacks, it is often the soiling of honest citizens for nothing!

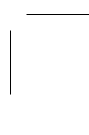
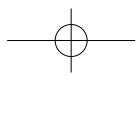
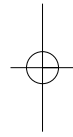
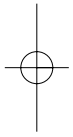
Daring a New Social Pact

All roads seem to lead to politics and this form of accumulation of wealth through business politics, to use your own term. So, how do we get politics “out” of overlapping interests, where religion, after all, occupies a place of choice?

Let me answer you without hesitation: we should depoliticise national life to promote the birth of a citizen convinced that political landscape and means are not the only ways to succeed in life. We must “talk frankly” with our various trade unions and reach a “social pact”, which should enable our economy to take a consequent leap towards emergence. By thus making Senegal a haven of peace, we can attract investors who will accompany us in making our country an emerging nation.

The five-year pact could be the result of an extensive consultation with social partners, including religious authorities. I think it would be interesting to gain inspiration from the example of Asian trade unions with a visit to these countries. Their experience and methods of positive claim cultivated over decades, could serve as an example or at least a reference. We will add to it the appropriate dose of what is peculiar to us. In any case, we need to dare a new social pact.





In the Beginning

The little princess was taking a walk all alone in his father's large field in this beautiful Gulf region. In his status as Emir, the latter had always dreamt of a beautiful forest in the desert. This is how he ended up creating a lush oasis in the middle of an arid land in the heart of the beautiful region bearing the name Wadiram.

It was an ordinary day, an afternoon like the others. It was neither hot nor cold. Leïla – that's the name of our beautiful princess – was far from imagining that what was going to happen that afternoon was going to give another light to her life.

She was humming one of the songs her father had taught her. According to the legend, pilgrims going to Mecca on camel backs precisely sang that song so as not to feel the length of the journey: "laïla hillalaye - layila hillalaye - mamadourou roussouloulaye".

She was singing and dancing while walking.

Leïla was a kind, soft, obedient girl. She was doing well at school and liked animals. Her father had moreover promised her that at 12 years, he would take her on a journey to Africa where she will be able to have a good time with them, touch them, feel them and speak to them. Yes, speak to them because animals in Africa had their language. One could therefore exchange with them thanks to language!

We are on the 07-07-07, a day like the others, or

Yes I Dare

nearly. The particularity however, being that it was the eve of her father's birthday. Suddenly, she was struck by the idea to pick flowers and offer them to him.

In the middle of his field, the Emir had carefully created a magnificent artificial lake around which he had planted flowers from the four corners of the world. Next to the flowers was a bush with trees and shrubs with no doubt that they came from Africa. Hey yes, Africa has always occupied a special place in the heart and life of Leïla's father. He used to go there for hunting, which he liked so much, but also and most especially to visit his African friends. To say it all, he had brought from Africa the niece of one of his friends so that she can take care of his beloved daughter. She was called Rita, who thus became the governess of the castle.

Rita spent whole hours narrating African tales and legends to the little princess: the adventures of Leuk the hare and Bouky the hyena. She also added in her narrations the mysteries of the deepest parts of Africa, the mystical powers of "witch doctors".

The Princess had hardly finished composing the bouquet of flowers she intended to offer her father for his birthday when, suddenly, a thunder clap broke the silence. All of a sudden, like an eclipse of the sun, the sky darkened. She then saw a camel in the darkness that, stricken with fear, had taken refuge in a bush.

The thunder rumbled again as lightening tore the sky: a tornado, yes a tornado in this area where it hardly ever

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rains, in any case, never at this period of the year.

Stricken with fear, the camel delivered a baby camel before the bewildered eyes of the little princess! Then suddenly, the rain stopped.

The small camel was all cute. A radiant sun paved its way in the beautiful blue sky.

Leila approached the small camel. It was like one magic moment. She put her right hand on its head. Suddenly, songs of birds echoed from everywhere and from nowhere. It literally filled the atmosphere as if nightingales had given themselves appointment to celebrate a special event!

“Habibi”, said the Princess. The songs of the birds intensified, the camel nodded its head and... miracle: the little camel sketched a smile!

The princess who had not parted with her bouquet of flowers retook her path to the castle, humming anew, the heart of angels.

There was evening, there was morning.

That was the second day of the birth of Jamal Habibi.

Leila knew she was henceforth in love with the little camel. The name it would bear would be magical: Habibi. JAMAL HABIBI, JAMAL HABIBI!

The princess hurried to tell her incredible story to Rita the housekeeper, but also her friend and confidant. The two decided to go and visit “Jamal Habibi” in its bush.

Yes I Dare

It was there in a resplendent freshness next to its mother camel. It was a pleasant day, but the two girls didn't want to let it stay without garment. They then quickly rushed back to the castle to make a dress for it.

There was evening, there was morning.

That was the third day.

Leila and Rita returned to the bush and dressed “Jamal Habibi”. It was even cuter, the small camel!

They then had the idea to make a shelter for it. Yes, a shelter for Jamal Habibi! It was nearly normal to think of it, but how will they do it?

Rita explained to the small princess that in Africa, with branches of palms, the problem is solved. With the help of the gardener she began collecting branches and putting up a shelter in the bush for “Jamal Habibi”. Didn't the little camel of the princess become the prince of little camels?

There was evening, there was morning.

That was the fourth day.

Leila then decided to talk to her parents of her new friend. But how do I explain to Dad and Mom that we became friends with... a little camel?

That day, there were festivities at home. Mom had decided to invite parents and friends to celebrate Dad's birthday three days earlier.

It was indeed complicated enough. The evening had

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thus begun and everyone the emirate was counting on as high dignitaries was there. Many foreign guests had converged on the castle. They were arriving from the four corners of the world. To do things well, the orchestra that enlivened the evening made a cocktail of melodies from around the world.

They were all there. They came from Arabia, UAE, China, India, North and South America, Australia, Africa, of course from Oceania, also from Japan, Russia, Iran, Afghanistan, North Africa, Iraq and the Solomon Islands. There was even a guest from Ushuaia – the southernmost tip of Argentina, considered to be the “end of the world.”

The party was beautiful, very beautiful, and of great solemnity.

The emir was visibly happy. His daughter Leila shone with joy. She was breathing happiness. She was proud that her father had many friends around the world. She rejoiced especially to know that all these people who had come from all over the world, had admiration for her father and appreciated him, while also showing him great affection.

Coming from that far to honour an invitation, that of her father! It was splendid, beautiful, sublime!

Leila had decided to talk to Dad at the end of the evening, but surprise!

Suddenly, in this milieu that looked like the Tower of Babel, where 36 different languages were being spoken,

Yes I Dare

the protocol called for a moment of silence.

The Emir and his wife moved to the podium as if to make a speech. As they got in front of the orchestra, they asked their daughter Leila to come to their side. Leila moved shyly in front of the many different personalities, so many dignitaries dressed in beautiful costumes according to their origins.

After thanking the guests for coming, it seemed like a miracle to Leila; his father ordered that who should be let in? ... “Jamal Habibi”, in its new clothes.

Rita had indeed told Leila’s parents the story of “Jamal Habibi”. They had then decided to make her this surprise by organising the “official” outing of “Jamal Habibi” before a global Areopagus.

The little princess wanted to be pricked to believe that she was living a reality. She who was still thinking of how to broach the subject with her parents! Now they had taken a great step ahead. They had gone beyond the expectations and hopes of Leila. It was like a coronation!

A round of applause preceded the standing ovation that greeted the arrival of “Jamal Habibi” accompanied by Rita. The band then hooked up by intoning Leila’s favourite song: “Laila it ... lala ... lahila hillala mouhamadou roussouroulaye ...” He added a chorus for the occasion dedicated to “Jamal Habibi”:

“There was once upon a time a beautiful little princess by the name of Leila

The Story of Jamal Habibi

Leila was pretty and smart
She was especially nice
She one day attended to the birth
Of a small camel
It was at Wadiram

The region that has not ceased to amaze the entire
world

Leila was pretty and smart
She was especially nice
She decided to name her small camel
She called it “Jamal Habibi”
Jamal Habibi

Habibi - Habibi - Habibi!

The guests took up the refrain:

“Leila was pretty and smart!
She was especially nice
She decided to give a name to her little camel
She called it “Jamal Habibi” -
Jamal Habibi - Habibi - Habibi!”

One of the guests, an African Prince, Prince Atepa, then walked towards the Emir, his wife and their daughter. He offered them a small box set in gold, saying: “This little box is for Leila. She should only open it on the eighth day of the birth of “Jamal Habibi” – and wear it on its neck. This medal will make “Jamal Habibi” an exceptional being whose adventures and exploits will reach everywhere in the world.” New round of applause from the audience.

Yes I Dare

Jamal Habibi grinned widely and ... miracle! Jamal Habibi said a word that the prince from Africa seemed to understand, Leila as well.

The guests applauded and the party went on until dawn.

There was evening, there was morning.

That was the fifth day!

Leila then decided to initiate Jamal Habibi to her favourite pastime. She bought it roller skates, yes, roller skates! Surprise, Jamal Habibi did not even wait for the first lessons. Hardly had it put them on that it began to make rounds and jumps, pirouettes and weathervanes! Incredible! It showed such an agility that it could be attributed the invention of this sport.

There was evening, there was morning.

That was the seventh day!

Before knowing how, the name of Jamal Habibi had already toured the world. For newspapers, radios, the Internet and televisions around the world, it was the event of the century.

A little camel had just been born, but already, roulettes no longer had any secrets for it; it was a bike. It was even able to ride and to use language. An unprecedented event in the history of the world!

Before such an affluence of universal interests, the Emir decided that the birthplace of Jamal Habibi be

The Story of Jamal Habibi

named “the Children’s Empire,” a place where, using the most modern technologies, they would create a paradise for children 3 to 93 years old.

The Prince announced the news to Leila. She was so excited about it that she had insomnia.

It is that night that the little box that the Black Prince had offered it began shining. It was as if surrounded by a diadem which emitted a blinding light. She heard a voice that seemed to come from the little box.

“Leila, as you know, tomorrow you’ll be wearing this miraculous medal to Jamal Habibi, which will make it an animal smarter than Men. This medal that should never leave it will give it eternal youthfulness! Yes, with this medal around its neck, Jamal Habibi will always be the same age. But, beware, if it were to lose it, 8 days later, it would regain its true age and die.”

There was evening, there was morning.

That was the eighth day.

Leila carefully avoided the media that were on the lookout, and went to Jamal Habibi to wear it its medal.

It was a simple ceremony. She took care to explain to Jamal Habibi that under no circumstance should it lose the medal she was putting around its neck. It was a kind of crystal globe filled with a red liquid like mercury.

Prince Atépa later explained that, in fact, this medal was discovered in the pyramids of Egypt and transited in the sacred woods of southern Senegal called Casa-

Yes I Dare

mance. This passage in woods with nothing unusual had given it magical powers.

Jamal Habibi was thus ready to go around the world and meet the children of the world on its skates, bicycle, motorcycle, car, windsurfing, ski bike, or on a flying carpet.

The extraordinary story of Jamal Habibi has then just begun. The miraculous little camel can even leave this earth, and one never knows, and one day go to the moon or Mars.

Thus Jamal Habibi will pass through the doors of history into legend.

Conclusion

Making simple can be as complicated as making it complicated in the absence of a “roadmap”, to use the word in fashion now. I said it should be simple, and that's what I have tried to demonstrate throughout this interview. We will not now throw these ideas into the sea, in the hope that the water will have the goodwill to let them arrive safely. Ideas have never been lacking. Those that resulted in concrete achievements are those that were adopted, even though so few, by those mandated to be the guides of the multitude and whose main concerns were to add a stone to the edifice.

I must say, without excessive chauvinism, that I am proud to be Senegalese. Senegal has given to Africa and the world great men, in politics as in science, in arts as in literature, and yet in many other disciplines. It has a reputation for committing pioneer acts, even though it has not suffered less from the ravages of the past than other peoples.

The neoliberal world in which we live today is characterised essentially by its competitive spirit. It is to outdo each other, or better still, every man for himself. We will exist just because we will have descended into the arena and that we will have deserved to get on the podium. Athletes know that very well. In a competition, we must surpass, overtake each other, the goal being to

Yes I Dare

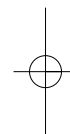
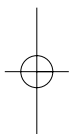
beat one's opponents, but also records, to rise to the forefront.

The spirit of competitiveness has a consubstantial link with value, and thus merit. We should be happy to live in such a world, on condition that we know how to, and are able to adapt to it. It is not a world marked by generosity. A wise man once said that the hand that gives is always above the one that receives. We must therefore distinguish ourselves from the culture of "receiving" if we cherish the ambition to occupy the podium.

In the context that has been ours, characterised by support and assistance from rich countries, it is a mental revolution that is needed to think differently and act differently. "Thinking" does not seem indicative enough of the scale I want to give the approach of this upward movement. That is why I developed the concept of "daring" behind my twelve proposals, and which constitutes my contribution to this emerging Senegal, which I am firmly convinced, is at arm's length.

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