

Urban Thinkers TALKS

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CHALLENGES & FUTURE OF AFRICAN CITIES

Interview by Maggie Cazal Global Urban Think Tank

This interview was conducted in April 2018 during the setting up of the working groups of the "Africa Sustainable Cities" programme of USF. Alioune Badiane died on July 31, 2020.

Collection created by Maggie Cazal, PhD in urban and regional planning. International speaker. Founder of Global Urban Think Tank. Edition supported by the NGO Urbanistes Sans Frontières (USF) and the International Multidisciplinary Sustainable Development Organization (ODDIM)

Of Senegalese nationality, Alioune Badiane worked at UN-Habitat from 1991 to 2016. After a mission in Haiti in 1991, he was appointed Regional Coordinator of the Urban Management Programme for sub-Saharan Africa, a position he held from 1992 to 1998 (based in Lomé, Accra then Abidjan). In 1999, he was transferred to Nairobi to head the UN-Habitat Regional Office for Africa and Arab Countries. In 2012, he became Director of the Programme Division, a position he held until the end of September 2016. Graduated from ENEA in Dakar, Laval University in Quebec and Hunter College of the City University of New York, Alioune has accumulated vast experience at the international level for thirty years.

Why is the issue of urbanization so fundamental?

The issue of urbanization in Africa is very relevant insofar as urbanization represents a very followed trajectory, a trajectory that has been constant over the past thirty years.

This question is fundamental because urbanization translates into a positive transformation of our countries, our economies and our lives in society.

Nevertheless, it also represents a very problematic trajectory from the point of view of its challenges and the capacity of States and Cities to master this very complex process which requires leadership, a vision and the means to implement it. This process must be supported by a strong political will to be able to realize the advantage of urban development. Kofi Annan said that African cities have great development potential as long as they are well managed. If these cities are not well managed, they become risks for economic, social and environmental development.

Today, the record of the evolution of urbanization in Africa must be seen from several angles. Demographically, the period between 1980 and 2018 witnessed a gradual shift in African demography.

Today that demographic stands at around 470-475 million people in African cities. By 2040, this population is expected to grow to reach 1 billion people.

This danger leads to a whole series of risks that we must assess. Indeed, this demographic growth in urban areas has been accompanied by two phenomena which represent difficult peaks for the African authorities.

The lack of anticipation of this phenomenon was affected by several factors including the drought in the early 1970s, especially in Senegal.

These waves of drought led to a massive rural exodus to towns and suburbs, leading inexorably to the explosion of slums. This phenomenon has been the dark stain of the progression of urbanization over the past thirty years. Despite the efforts of States, African cities still house more than 60% of their population in informal areas.

That being said, African urbanization has also enabled Cities and States to accumulate economic growth.

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Business District «Plateau», Abidjan, Ivory Coast (source USF, photo MC)

Another consequence of this urban trajectory is the rise in power of local authorities which have asserted themselves as important partners in the framework of the city management system. Local communities and civil society actors have a key role.

Organizations were put in place after the Vancouver Conference (Habitat I) in 1976 came out and have been a leader in creating civil and civic movements in defense of citizens and to bring another discourse to these citizens.

Civil society makes it possible to complement the action of the State but is also an important monitoring element allowing

the defense of urban populations living in disadvantaged areas. A conjunction between local authorities and civil society has enabled the role of these actors to increase in importance within the framework of urban development.

The year 1996 was extremely important for the development of relations between States and local communities within the framework of urban management. For the first time, a mayor on the sidelines of the Istanbul Conference (Habitat II), spoke of the local authorities by reading the motion of the Declaration of cities and urban centers to define their role in the framework of urban development future.



lives of citizens in cities but also future conditions (with projections over twenty years). Much is being done in favor of the evolution of urbanization at the African level and at the global level.

What characteristics define African urbanization?

The evolution of urbanization has made African cities spaces characterized by four or five aspects with significant impacts on institutional, geographic and climatic elements.

Due to the institutional context and their major role in development, economic transition and greenhouse gas emissions, African cities are expensive cities in terms of existence. The populations suffer greatly there because the producti-

{ Cities, such as Kinshasa, Ouagadougou, Niame or Dar el Salam, are so spread out that their diameter can reach 100 km. Even in Dakar, which is a peninsula, the same problem arises. These cities are neither dense nor served, and therefore cannot be optimized or productive geographically. }

city and the economic contribution there have not yet reached a level sufficient for the incomes to allow the citizens to live decently.

The majority of African urban populations live in extremely difficult

conditions, whether in terms of transport, housing or food. Compared to cities of the same structure and size, African cities are ten times more expensive.

These cities need to be more productive and cheaper, but they also need to be more connected. Today, they are very loose and extensive, they are dominated by structures of action and governance that have failed to take into account short, medium and long term planning.

They are not sufficiently connected because they are not well served from the point of view of water, sanitation, transport, energy, but also from a social point of view because the extent of the urban fabric complicates the creation of social ties. Fortunately, the telecommunication possibilities are quite developed because all the other social services are problematic.

African cities are not safe either. However, security is a fundamental issue for cities to be safe and attractive places for investors. Cities must be more alive in terms of connection, economy, health, etc. They must be more productive by putting in place arrangements and investments in the areas of infrastructure, urban management, transfers and the economy.

Of course, there are advances at the socioeconomic level, but also at the institutional level, thanks to institutions that have defended the weakest citizens so that they are not left on the sidelines of the development process.

The Rio conference and the Local Agenda 21 were important elements in the rise of cities from COP 21 in Paris to COP 22 in Marrakech. They have made it possible to show the primordial role of cities in environmental management, due to a change of paradigm characterized by the dominance of the urban world over the rural world for the past ten years. This increase in power has led to environmental degradation as 70% of CO2 emissions and greenhouse gases are produced by cities.

Nevertheless, thanks to the collaboration of States with cities, urbanization has also made it possible to fight poverty, especially in a country like China where it has lifted more than 500 million Chinese out of poverty. Productive cities are important elements in the fight against poverty by improving the living conditions of urban populations.

The various conferences, which were held in Istanbul, Rio or Quito in 2016, enabled the transformation of political agendas at the international level, making the New Urban Agenda (NUA) the most important reference point for improving the



Lagos, Nigeria (source USF, photo MC)

At the institutional level, the sharing of responsibilities between States and Cities must be clearer. Despite the discourse on decentralization and the importance of local authorities, States continue to want to capture power at the expense of Cities. The principle of subsidiarity must be an established principle that we cannot go back to. Although States build the body of legislation that allows cities to be managed, local authorities and their partners in civil society must be able to provide the most reliable management and guarantee elements so that the institutional plan is clear.

Decentralization must be accompanied by secure resources so that Cities no longer have to beg from financial institutions to earn real income. Other innovative instruments need to be produced from a resource management point of view.

Geographically, the characteristics are obvious. Cities, such as Kinshasa, Ouagadougou, Niamey or Dar el Salam, are so spread out that their diameter can reach 100 km. Even in Dakar, which is a peninsula, the same problem arises. These cities are neither dense nor served, and therefore cannot be optimized or productive geographically.

In terms of climate, we must work on the resilience of cities so that they do not produce greenhouse gases, especially in the consumption and vehicle sectors. Today, many cities are extremely fragile and vulnerable to climate change, notably Saint-Louis (Senegal) and all the cities on the West African coast. The correlations between our coast and everything related to the rise in sea level are definite climatic consequences that we must work on.

Unfortunately, these resilience programmes are not well integrated into State or City programmes.

These issues need to be addressed urgently and I invite USF and its partners to advocate on these environmental and climate issues, as well as on the issue of urban planning which is the driving force to counter the untimely expansion of cities.

What are the major issues and challenges facing African cities?

Regarding the major issues and challenges of African cities, the fundamental element is the issue of urban poverty.

This question brings together issues related to slums, urban risks and urban management, that is to say, urban services.

{ Access to drinking water and sanitation services is also a major issue. As UN-Habitat says, «Water is life, sanitation is dignity». }

These urban services, in relation to housing and shanty towns, raise the question of land issues.

Land is at the center of several battles in terms of legality and in terms of opportunities for poor populations to access decent housing and for individuals wishing to invest.

Access to drinking water and sanitation services is also a major issue.

As UN-Habitat says, «Water is life, sanitation is dignity».

Sanitation issues are extremely important for women living in slum areas, in areas where access to sanitation is not easy. Indeed, they are very vulnerable to it.

Women often have to go to public toilets early in the morning or in the evening when there are fewer people due to lack of time during the day. These are the times when the risk of assault is greatest for these women. Women who go to work very early in the morning (in the fields, in the markets, etc.) also face problems of insecurity.

There is a risk relating to water and sanitation, but also with regard to the density, overcrowding and nature of urban buildings. A poor urban area is occupied by garbage and cardboard, it is unplanned and presents risks, especially for women and young children. From the point of view of urban risks, a poor area is very dangerous. From an economic point of view, cities must be more productive to enable urban development.

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From an opportunity perspective, we should not throw everything away and be absolutely negative about urbanization in Africa.

Cities are carriers of growth, prosperity, opportunities, socio-economic partnerships, benefits, and above all, freedoms and democracy.

Cities and local authorities are one of the foundations of an enlarged and strengthened democracy.

When cities are well managed, they are places of formation of shared prosperity as there is work, industry, opportunities to invest and transform our economies.



Intermediate city - Ivory Coast (source USF, photo MC)

The negative aspects of the city should not preclude emphasizing the positive aspects that cities can bring as part of a transformation.

As urbanization evolves, the urban population, which today represents 41% of the population, should be one of the motivating elements for the transformation of the coming years.



Slum - Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (source USF, photo MC)

What are the means to be implemented to achieve the objectives of the New Urban Agenda?

After more than two years of close collaboration and effective participation of local authorities in the negotiation process, the New Urban Agenda was approved in Quito in October 2016 (Habitat III).

In September 2015, in New York, the United Nations Assembly adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which replaced the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

SDG 11 is a particularly unifying element of this New Urban Agenda which adopted 175 articles for the resolutions taken in this field.

Under SDG 11, the sustainable development agenda calls for the construction of resilient, inclusive and sustainable cities by 2030. For this, cities must work hard and smart. In addition, the issue of smart cities was particularly chosen. We must ensure that these two agendas are federated. Much work has already been done at the level of UN-Habitat, the World Bank and various United Nations development bodies. Likewise, at the country level, work will be done as part of the implementation of this urban agenda in collaboration with the government of Senegal to set up a gradual process to choose the elements that intersect.

In the SDGs, as in the New Urban Agenda, recommendations overlap and must be put into a context of implementation. To this end, many countries, including Nigeria, Kenya, Morocco, South Africa and Ghana, have put in place mechanisms to implement the New Urban Agenda by drawing inspiration from the SDGs, in particular the 'SDG 11, which are contributing elements of this agenda.

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As part of this connection to be established, the most important and urgent thing is that each country can create and implement national urbanization policies. It is in this context that the possibility of federating around this agenda will be the most significant. A national urbanization policy is a process which makes it possible to define a short, medium and long term urbanization programme, to identify the strong points and weak axes of urbanization over a medium term of 20 to 25 years, and put in place funding mechanisms by States and partners.

This agenda must be approved at the highest level, through political will on the part of States and parliaments, and implemented effectively with development partners.

Monitoring mechanisms must be put in place and States must be supported. For this process to be firm and evaluated, it is necessary to put in place monitoring and evaluation mechanisms with clear indicators. Senegal is working with UN-Habitat to build a database using urban observatories and urban data produced in collaboration with national statistics institutes. These measures will make it possible to define a set of basic indicators in order to monitor and evaluate what is put in place. Such a database serves as a benchmark against which performance can be assessed.

Africa is on the right track thanks to its joint programme, set up in Abuja in preparation for Quito, which has made it possible to set up a mechanism for planning and monitoring the implementation of this agenda and the SDGs in Africa. . This promising action allows each African country, alongside their partners, to define and implement this positive programme contributing to our development. This objective has no other ambition than to contribute to the urban development of our cities.



Yaounde, Cameroon (source USF, photo MC)

How important is the issue of financing urban development?

This question is both relevant and very complex because if you do not perceive the driving role of urban development within the framework of economic development, the financing mechanisms will be very weak in terms of reach and commitment, both on the part of government as well as development partners.

For the financing of urban development at the macroeconomic level, all basic investments are necessary. Today, it would take about \$ 100 billion in investment per year in Africa to catch up in infrastructure, energy, roads, sanitation, networks and planning.

If we do not manage to put in place these bases for development, we will not be able to have the investments necessary for economic development.

How should we finance this urban development in terms of mechanisms? The role of States is very important because investments for development cannot be made by cities individually. The States must guarantee these investments from their budgets and their partners.

However, this funding role must also be decentralized to the cities so that they can play a role without being just collectors of daily taxes to finance their development. Innovative financing mechanisms must be developed.

Today, many have been tested and should allow cities to finance their development.

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In 2016, in Dakar, a bond tax process was put in place to allow the city to import \$ 40 billion into the bond market.

Following the performance reviews of the city, this bond market was so interesting that it was approved by UEMOA (West African Economic and Monetary Union) and the UN rating bodies.



Intermediate city - Ivory Coast (source USF, photo MC)

Naturally, this process was invented for other reasons, but it is important to stress that cities are defining new methods of financing which should enable them to have good political, financial and governance health based on a system of transparency.

This is essential to enable their partners and especially the population to trust local authorities. Thus, these bonds would be more easily bought and would allow this development to be financed in the long term, rather than being based only on small sales or on transfers which are rarely constant or which are blocked by political games that do not take place to be.

Cities are for everyone and must be open to everyone to enable economic development and partnership.

In terms of financing, it is important to put in place medium and long-term development efforts, to ensure innovative financing mechanisms and to act both at the level of Cities and States to guarantee financing on the long term.



Slum, Lagos, Nigeria (source USF, photo MC)



Flood sequence, Lagos, Nigeria (source USF, photo MC)

How to deal with the crucial issue of insecurity in African cities?

The issue of security is difficult and nagging. It is both an internal and an external problem.

More and more, our security can no longer only be placed in the hands of the police and the judiciary, as criminal justice does not always allow all of the local security issues facing our citizens to be resolved.

In its safer cities programme, UN-Habitat wanted to put in place mechanisms and a programme allowing cities to create municipal safety councils which make it possible to define a municipal safety plan. In these plans, all partners are involved and the mayors are the leaders.

All the forces in charge of defense and security in cities as well as citizens are involved in a relevant collaboration allowing

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the flow of information and the formation of trust between all actors.

From this process stems the concept of «co-construction» of security which must be co-produced between the populations and the security elements.

It is essential that this programme be funded, and I take this opportunity to thank the development partners, in particular the CMPI, the World Bank and UN-Habitat, who have had an awareness that there can be no urban development, therefore of sustainable development, without security.

This is why we stress the importance of security which is a founding element of urban development, and of the implementation of this agenda and the SDGs.

Cities and populations must work together to co-produce security.

Intermediate city, Benin (source USF, photo MC)



Makoko Informal Settlement, Lagos, Nigeria (source USF, photo MC)



What can you tell us about the partnership with Urbanistes Sans Frontières (USF), particularly within the framework of its “Africa Sustainable Cities” programme?

I am very happy to participate and support the “Africa Sustainable Cities” programme, and to prepare the conferences and discussions with the working groups.

The actions carried out by USF will provide elements of co-production, strategy and collaboration to implement the New Urban Agenda in Africa.

There are a lot of real possibilities for cooperation, funding and advocacy, the role of which we would share, with European and African States.

Through its experience and its will, Urbanistes Sans Frontières (USF) can rebuild bridges allowing the development of long-term partnerships for the development of cities in Africa.

Lagos, Nigéria (source USF, photo MC)



Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (source USF, photo MC)

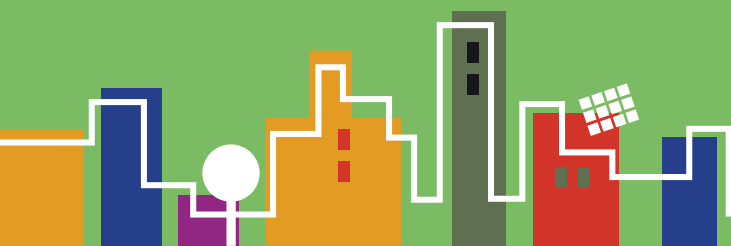
It is our future, the quality of life of our populations and the construction of transparent leadership and a firm, determined and inclusive political vision to be a driving force behind the mobilization of African societies.

{ Africa is the continent of now and of the future, Africa is the frontier of development in the world ... Being two continents linked by destiny and having to work together, we must look at all the parameters that should allow this partnership to succeed. }

Africa is the continent of now and of the future, Africa is the frontier of development in the world. Any partnership that takes place in this area must be part of a perspective of sustainability,

sincerity, equitable collaboration, which will allow institutions and cities to be built on sound foundations. Being two continents linked by destiny and having to work together, we must look at all the parameters which should allow this partnership to succeed.

It is therefore with great pleasure that I hope that USF's «Africa Sustainable Cities» programme will be successfully implemented to build a sustainable urban Africa, for our continent, for our cities and for our populations ■



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Interview of Alioune Badiane

GlobalUrban THINK TANK

Alioune Badiane was a man of networks and at the head of the UN-Habitat Programme Division.

Non-exhaustive list of his contributions:

From 2007 he was a member of the ICPC Editorial Board for the International Report on Crime Prevention and Community Safety. He has also been a Follow of the Alexandro De Gusmao Foundation of Brazil which works to connect Brazil to Africa.

As Regional Director for Africa and the Arab States of UN Habitat, he was for ten years the Senior Policy Advisor on Africa to the Executive Director of UN Habitat.

In October 2015, he was elected co-chair of ICCASU, the International Conference in China, Canada and Africa for Sustainable Urban Development based in Ottawa, Canada.

Similarly, in 2014 he co-initiated the RESAUD Network - Strategic Exchange Network for a Sustainable Urban Africa based at the University of Montreal.

He was a 2016 jury member for the Guangzhou International Innovation Prize for Urban Innovation and chairman of the AFUS Technical Advisory Board based in Durban, South Africa.

Alioune left UN-Habitat at the end of September 2016. He focused on supporting the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the New Urban Agenda in Africa.

Alioune Badiane created the Urban Think Tank Africa -TUTTA.



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To pay tribute to Alioune, a collective work entitled "Alioune Badiane, man of the future" will be published in 2021. Coordinated by Daniel Biau, former Deputy Executive Director of UN-Habitat, and Jean-Pierre Elong Mbassi, Secretary General of UCLG Africa, it mobilizes 50 contributors from 25 nationalities. Illustrated with numerous photos, this book will be available in French and English.



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