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INTERVIEW

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INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRACY
AND ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE
(INTERNATIONAL IDEA)**



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Editorial



Digitization has become key in accelerating the development process of Africa and the elimination of corruption, considered the bane of the continent's progress.

FALADE BIDOSSSESI

As reiterated by the Beninese Minister for Digitization, digital access is a booster for sustainable development and Corporates Panafrican Bilingual Magazine ascribes to the need for the continent to adopt measures to digitize services at the local and international levels.

In Ghana, for instance, the Vice President Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia is leading a drive to ensure payments to and by government institutions are down through electronic means, with a view to elimination human intervention, which promotes corruption.

Benin and other countries have also joined the fray towards a totally digital continent. However, some experts are of the view that the growth and speed rates are lower and slower than expected, considering what pertains in other parts of the world.

Corporates Panafrican Bilingual Magazine, is adding its voice to the call on African nations to take advantage of the current digital wind blowing across the

world, to explore the numerous opportunities for the youth.

The development of digital programme to facilitate the services sector can be assigned to the youth to help eliminate the rigorous and rudimentary process that slow the continent's development. Such a move would do away with the over-reliance on foreign aid and cost of doing business.

The African Union (AU) needs to support the spirit of panafricanism that would see to the resolution of African problems the African way.

Africa has diverse natural resources that are enough to answer its developmental needs but strangely foreign firms are in charge and continue to make the most of them. Many of the countries with these resources continue to have majority of their people living in abject poverty whilst others feed on the resources.

The Corporate Rendez-Vous events are geared towards bringing together those who

matter in the business world in Africa to network, share ideas and work together to explore the potentials of the continent. The events are being replicated in various cities across the Africa with cities like Accra, Ouagadougou, Lome; Cotonou, Abidjan, Kigali, Nigeria, etc, have already benefited from the events that has become a regular feature.

The aim is to reach the stage where African businesses would build on the strength of each other and become a beacon for young entrepreneurs to follow suit, without necessarily losing sight of other opportunities elsewhere..

We would like to say thanks to those who have so far been part of this dream and to encourage them to reach others with the Pan African message of hope for the richest continent on earth.

Let's find solutions to Africa's problems the Pan African way.



Anne-Rita Solano

Managing Director - CCI France Ghana

WHO ARE WE?

The France Ghana Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCIFG) is an association under private law, that brings together companies and professionals from various sectors of the Ghanaian economy, or wishing to develop their activity in Ghana. It supports the business development of French and Ghanaian companies by facilitating trade and financial exchanges between France and Ghana. It participates in the promotion of Ghana among French players and supports them in their entry into the Ghanaian market. The CCIFG also supports Ghanaian companies in developing their international potential.

Established in Accra in May 2014, the France Ghana Chamber of Commerce and Industry is a member of the CCI France International network of 120 French International Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CCI FI) in 90 countries.

In January 2020, the CCI France Ghana was referenced as a Team Franche Export Partner (TFE) for commercial seed services

WHAT DO WE OFFER?

The role of CCIFG revolves around 3 poles: to animate, inform and support.

We run a business community around two monthly events organized for our members. Also open to non-members, our conferences, networking cocktails and working breakfast provide businesses with a platform to expand their contacts and create new business relationships.

These events also provide access to up-to-date macroeconomic and sectorial information, reinforced by CCIFG communication tools such as the press review and periodic newsletter.

Through our business support

service, we are also able to provide tailor-made services to French companies wishing to establish business relationships in Ghana, and to companies present in Ghana wishing to develop their international potential.

CCI France Ghana, your development partner in Ghana

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A close-up portrait of Aurélie Adam Soule Zoumarou, Minister of Digital and Digitalization of Benin. She is wearing a bright yellow top, black-rimmed glasses, and gold hoop earrings. The background is a solid orange color.

The Digital:

**AN INSTRUMENT TO
FURTHER REVEAL BENIN**

INTERVIEW

**MS. AURÉLIE ADAM
SOULÉ ZOUMAROU,**

MINISTER OF DIGITAL AND DIGITALIZATION OF BENIN.

**Panafrican Bilingual
Corporates Magazine (**
PBCM):Hon Minister, Please
introduce yourself to our
readers.

I'm Aurélie ADAM SOULE
ZOUMAROU, Minister of Digital
and Digitalization.

PBCM : Madam Minister,
through the implementation of
the Government Action Program
(PAG) of President Patrice Talon
and the creation of the Ministry
of Digital and Digitalization, we
have observed a clear interest
in the digital. What are the key
achievements to date in this
sector?

**Aurélie ADAM SOULE
ZOUMAROU:**

Since the assumption of office
of President Patrice TALON in
2016 and the establishment
of his team, the digital sector
has experienced considerable
growth. The vision of the Head
of State for the development
of the sector is very ambitious.
Moreover, the digital economy
constitutes one of the priority
sectors of the five-year term as
well as agriculture and tourism.
These are, therefore, the three
flagship sectors of economic
recovery in our country. And
when you have placed a sector
on such a pedestal, it becomes
easy to understand that it
is being given the means to
achieve results. This has been
a reality since 2016 through a
holistic approach in terms of
projects, programmes to be
implemented. Projects such
as the deployment of high
and very high speed internet.
On this front, we have several
achievements, such as our
fiber optic backbone. Today,
we have nearly 2,000 km
of fiber that we have either
rehabilitated or deployed in
addition to this rehabilitation.
From north to south and with
loops in some major cities and
also suspenders in several
localities. Then, we relied on this
deployment to bring fiber within

the reach of populations through
the establishment of community
digital points, digital rooms in
schools, and ICT access points
in post offices . In concrete
terms, there are 40 community
digital points, to date. We will
continue to roll out at the other
localities.

Community digital points are
centers where we have brought
an internet service provider who
installs a Wi-Fi point (in youth
centers in most cases) and at
the same time sets up a digital
center so that populations
have access to training in the
digital sector to develop digital
skills but also to benefit from
digital resources: computer or
connection for their activities.
As a result, artisans, students,
pupils, the public sector, that is
to say civil servants, all of these
now have a place where they
can at least access internet.
Of course, the internet service
provider, from the moment he is
in the locality, can also connect
all of the services that are
around both public and private
companies, the town halls and
the homes of these localities.
This is particularly important
because we want to bring
technology closer to our people.

The digital code that we have
implemented since the President
of the Republic promulgated it
in 2018, is an illustration of this.
Today, we are one of the few
countries in Africa that have
a complete legal arsenal for
the digital sector. It's good for
investors because it gives them
the right framework. They now
know what to expect to come
and invest in Benin. This is a
good situation for companies
that are established in Benin,
because they are aware of the
obligations and the rights to
which they can be subjected.
It's the same for our startups.
Our young companies can
thus see the whole array of
opportunities available to them
and we are, more and more,
working to make the application

texts of this law on the digital
code available. The latest
texts were voted in July 2019.
They helped fix the landscape
and the elements that should
regulate the digital sector a
little more. I cannot cite all the
achievements. These are some
of the major ones that can show
for the sector.

PBCM: What are the indices
and / or figures that show that
Benin is on the right track?

**Aurélie ADAM SOULE
ZOUMAROU:**The first clue is the
one you can easily notice: the
internet penetration rate. When
we talk about broadband, right
away, we think of the internet.
We have gone in terms of
penetration from a rate around
28% before 2016, to almost
48% now, according to the
latest ARCEP estimates. These
figures show that we are on an
upward curve both in terms of
deployment and infrastructure.
The mobile connectivity index
of the GSMA has shown a
positive development in Benin
with regard to 3G and 4G
infrastructure. And we are
continuing this momentum.
Then, when we observe the
use of digital technology, the
first index that has experienced
growth is the financial
transactions sector, which
concerns mobile financial
resources: mobile money has
experienced truly exponential
growth, simply from year to
year. The growth is even more
noticeable when you consider a
number of years. For example,
according to ARCEP, between
2017 and 2018, we went from
1,700,000 active subscribers
to nearly 2,600,000. More than
50% year-on-year increase. And
it continued like this. These are
all figures that show that we are
doing the right thing; from the
point of view of the platforms
that we set up, especially the
e-visa platform which facilitates
the procedures for people
wishing to come to Benin
for various reasons, tourism

or business ... Before the implementation of the e-visa, we issued around 12,000 per year, or 1,000 visas on average per month. After the launch of the e-visa platform in April 2018, we went from 1,000 per month to more than 4,000 visas issued on average. These are all figures and you can well imagine that behind these figures, there are economic aspects, spin-offs in terms of revenues for the State. So today, the telecoms and digital sector shows its importance in the development of our country.

PBCM: Since 2018, you have been the president of the French-speaking network of ministers for the digital economy, and Benin is home to the permanent headquarters of this network. What is the French-speaking network of ministers for the digital economy and what does Benin gain from being a member?

Aurélie ADAM SOULE ZOUAROU: (Smile)

The French-speaking network of ministers of the digital economy is first and foremost an instrument for the Francophony and for the member countries of the Francophony. This network was desired by the Heads of State who, at regular intervals, meet at summits of the Francophony to take a certain number of decisions. And at the last summit in Yerevan, the former secretary general of the Francophony presented this network's project that she and the President of the Republic Patrice TALON thought of, when she was on an official visit to Benin.

The idea of this network was welcomed and it is quite natural that the Heads of State made this decision in Yerevan to create this network which has its permanent headquarters in Benin and to entrust the first presidency in Benin to my very

person. The objective of this network is to unite our national initiatives so as to develop synergies, to allow us, all the ministers of member countries of the Francophony, to find the right way to share our experiences, to have common initiatives and of course, to accelerate the implementation of our digital strategies in each country. It's really an instrument of implementation.

PBCM: As President, what is your roadmap? Under what sign do you place your mandate?

Aurélie ADAM SOULE ZOUAROU:

You know, when you set up this type of crucible, the first success is to make it dynamic, active and to continue to stimulate the interest of all the stakeholders around this work. This is what we are working on. If you attended the first meeting of the network here in Benin, in May 2019, in concert with the OIF and the other members, you would realize that my counterparts came, supported by all our partner French-speaking networks. We are therefore working to put in place its instruments, the statute, the rules of procedure, how the presidency will turn and the operating framework of this network. But besides that, we have also defined a certain number of projects. Projects that we proposed to members of the network who found them interesting. Projects that revolve for example around artificial intelligence, youth issues, fake news as they are called. At the same time, we are trying to advance this aspect. And this is how we move forward. It's on these two aspects that my presidency is working together with my team.

PBCM: What are the concrete benefits of your leadership for the people of Benin?

Aurélie ADAM SOULE

ZOUAROU: (Smile) This question is interesting because it was already asked in Parakou by students. And I will give you the same answer as I gave to them: first, why among all the member countries of the Francophony, we chose Benin? Second, the fact that the choice is focused on Benin, the fact that at this international meeting, the name of our country was mentioned as being a country able to host this network and to preside over it is something important for the people of Benin. When you are a citizen of a country, you want it to be a country that counts in the comity of nations, and this is proof that our country counts in the comity of nations. And all of us, Beninese, we can suddenly say: yes! Benin holds the presidency in the comity of nations. It's a fallout that isn't palpable. But that is important. Another spin-off is of course all the projects that we are going to develop within this network, the sharing of experiences.

Beninese youth are also affected. The Beninese youth will also benefit from the education that we are going to give through this project. The questions around artificial intelligence which is today inseparable from technological and digital development, the fact of having a project that will help the French-speaking world to be able to understand its challenges... Let us take for example the project on the artificial intelligence that matters in the lexicon. Today most of the terms related to artificial intelligence, unfortunately, are English terms. When you are French-speaking, you will first have to understand the concept, but in addition we explain it to you in English, and that constitutes a gap. So we thought it was important that the French language glossary relating to artificial intelligence be in place to allow French speakers to grasp these concepts and understand them in the



language we are used to, even if we know that English constitutes a compulsory passage. This is what I see as spinoffs and of course, as the network grows, there will be more. Recently, there was the Fab Lab network in French-speaking countries and the fact that Benin currently manages the French-speaking network meant that we still had some collaboration with young people who came from all countries. They were also present at the digital week.

PBCM: Your ministerial department has worked hard to organize the digital week from 12 to 16 November last. What are the benefits for the people of Benin? What is your assessment of this 2019 edition and what can we hope for 2020?

Aurélie ADAM SOULE ZOUAROU: Digital Week is the flagship event of the digital sector for our country. Every year we see this week getting away. We see it as the week of others. Not just that of the digital ministry and the agencies. And that's what we want. Each edition holds surprises for me in terms of commitment from the ecosystem and the population. This year, I noted with great satisfaction that digital week is not only organized in Cotonou. There have been events all over the country, whether

in Avrankou, Parakou and Natitingou, I am delighted. I hope that next year we will have even more places and I have no doubt about that.

The theme of this year was precisely around the citizen in the era of the digital economy. Quite often, we use a lot of technical terms. For example, we talk about optical fiber but nobody sees optical fiber because it is buried. We said to ourselves, let's go back to basics, which is central, the citizen. We went all out. We had panels, keynotes, workshops. The managing director of the Smart Africa Alliance was there and shared his vision of this digital Africa. He also talked to us about how policymakers and the private sector are getting started to deliver this, and again, he said that within the alliance, Benin has always been an active country. For example, we will lead the working group on digital identity at the regional level, at the African level, within the Smart Africa Alliance.

We also had competitions on several themes including: education, art, digital security. We had a lot of activities during this week. Activities that showed the richness of this sector, the fact that the populations are at the center of everything we do, many young students came.

There were also professionals from all fields of activity, because it was not only digital. We also talked about health, education, tourism... And the 2020 edition will be even more beautiful.

PBCM: What is the contribution of the Beninese Agency of the Universal Service of Electronic Communications and Post (ABSU-CEP) in the realization of your projects?

Aurélie ADAM SOULE

ZOUAROU: The Beninese Universal Service Agency for Electronic Communications and the Post (ABSU-CEP) is our agency responsible for ensuring that every Beninese, every Beninese, whoever he is, wherever he is, whatever either its sector of activity, whatever its social status, can benefit from digital services and not be left behind. Through these different activities, the agency implements this mission. The community digital points that I mentioned earlier serve to bring digital technology closer to all populations, multimedia rooms to train young generations for the future challenge, to the future world which will be highly digital. The agency has an essential mission which is the strengthening of digital skills. I recently visited one of the centers we use for the assessment of public administration personnel around digital skills. Quite simply because we believe that everything we are doing as a project in the sector must be supported by

strengthening the skills of public service agents. The agency also has this mission of building skills. It does so through a flagship activity, the Benin Digital Tour, which creates an avenue every year in several municipalities in the country to train artisans, students and teachers who are in these localities.

PBCM: Benin's ambition to achieve intelligent administration is underway. It is within this

framework that the government initiated, and implemented, the Smart Gouv project. What is this project about?

Aurélie ADAM SOULE

ZOUMAROU:The Smart Gouv project is one of the major areas today of our ambition in terms of the digitization of our country and of Beninese society in general. The Smart Gouv project aims to set up all the bases, all the repositories, all the platforms and all the applications that are necessary for our administration to deliver public services to populations regardless of where each individual is located. You are in Natitingou, you need a document which is in Cotonou, you do not need to come to Cotonou. You are in Malanville and you need to be able to correspond with the public administration, for a given transaction (a payment, your taxes, take stock of your business ...) you can decide to do it at 3 p.m. as at 11 p.m. To achieve this, we must set up the base that will manage our databases. Currently, with our partner, Estonia, we are in the process of setting up the government database. It is a platform which will integrate all the databases and which makes it possible not to ask citizens for documents that the administration already has. It sounds obvious like that but in practice today we know that the administration asks you to bring her documents that she is supposed to have. We will then be one of the countries in the sub-region to have a bus that has a decentralized approach.

Secondly, we have a major component, it is the national portal of public services that we are also implementing. Very recently, I reported to the Council of Ministers on the implementation of this project. We will start with seven (7) e-services. There are registers of major services such as the Commercial Register, the Certificate of Environmental

Compliance... It is a portal that will allow not only to have e-services to be able to make transactions with the administration from anywhere, but also to have information on each public service delivered by the State.

Still within Smart Gouv, there is an important aspect which is, digital identity. The digital identity will allow an individual to be able to authenticate and identify himself to consume digital services in the same way as you can authenticate yourself in the physical world.

We are going to dematerialize the file of state officials, to allow people to retrieve them without any difficulty, without having to go through complicated files. Lots of benchmarks to set up. You know, a company that has to interact with the administration is apprehensive of this moment. Because when you go into administration, you have to chat with people, you have to understand what they expect from you to benefit from the service even in terms of administrative documents without counting the waiting time and unfortunately not counting the high risk of being faced with an insensitive individual who expects a certain gesture from you before rendering you the service for which he is paid. Having these items online right away for a business allows them to overcome all of these constraints. For our companies too, this is important. And then, finally, within the Smart Gouv programme, you have an aspect that people do not often see, it is the interconnection of all administrative structures. Internal communication within state structures is essential for the delivery of smooth administrative services. A document that the ministry of the digital economy needs or the ministry of the public service needs and which is in the ministry of finance for example, if there is not a

fluid communication between the ministry of finance and the ministry of public service, it greatly slows down the transmission of information and forces you to transport the document from one department to another. These are all things that we do within the Smart Gouv programme.

PBCM: What horizon can we actually expect to set up intelligent administration in Benin?

Aurélie ADAM SOULE

ZOUMAROU:So the modern, transparent, intelligent administration that we have as ambition is already in place, we are improving on it. It's a continuous improvement. There will never be a time when

we will say, we have finished, because it will not end. We are condemned to evolve very slowly. So when you ask me this question, I have no date to give you. What I can tell you today is that we have interconnected departments; fiber optic interconnection. And this is already a major change. Second, our databases today communicate to each other. Every day between the Commercial Court and the APIEX which deal with the creation of companies and the promotion of investments in Benin, every day, between these two entities, there are documents circulating and we have today, companies can take them from one place to another because information circulates instantly. Every day between the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of the Civil Service, databases interact with each other. So the transparent, intelligent administration we want is already there. Only, we do not intend to stop there. As I said, we really want to dematerialize, digitize all of these transactions. And this is where our actions are directed. In a few months we will launch the public services portal. By the end of the five year term, in the digital sector, it will be a country that will be cited as an example, it already is. Recently when African digital story, a regional event taking place in several countries, looked at

the sub-region and wanted to choose countries to carry its events, quite naturally Benin came to mind. Better still, when they came, foreign delegations extended their stays to learn from our experience.

PBCM: We're going to talk a bit about start-ups. What is their contribution to the Beninese economy?

Aurélie ADAM SOULE

ZOUMAROU: Asked like this, the question may seem theoretical. I could give you a percentage and tell you that start-ups contribute x% to our economy. But I think the indication of the contribution of our start-ups to the economy is elsewhere. It is found in the dynamism of our ecosystem. When we look at the way our ecosystem works, we see more and more that the world of start-ups is hatching and stealing the show in the positive sense, from the other actors who were there at the start. We see less and less the public sector players that we are and start-ups are taking center stage. And this is what shows that we are on the right track in terms of the contribution of our start-ups. I was in Tunisia a few months ago for the African summit of start-ups (Afric'Up) and Benin was strong. We had a presence not only quantitative but really qualitative.

PBCM: If you were to encourage investors to take an interest in our start-ups, what would you tell them?

Aurélie ADAM SOULE

ZOUMAROU:I will simply tell them that there is potential here in Benin. Dear investors, if you are looking for a country in which you want to have potential, Benin is a country well suited for you. We need to have even more incubators, accelerators too, because there is, in fact enough to source to have start-ups that can be followed, to which we can bring elements to grow and bring returns and in return, investors will be able to gain benefits. What I also want to say to investors is that the education sector follows in this trend. The government has a frank desire to prioritize technical and professional training in our country. And you know that the biggest consumers of those who leave technical and professional fields are the private sector, especially the innovation sectors such as the digital sector. Investors should therefore know that all the forces involved are directed towards the production of talents, skills, capacities to support life, production, to support businesses. I therefore invite them to come to Benin. The regulatory framework is in place. The young "start upers" are there at different levels of maturity. The state sector also supports this.

PBCM: So as a final word, how do you see digital Benin in the next five (5) years?

Aurélie ADAM SOULE

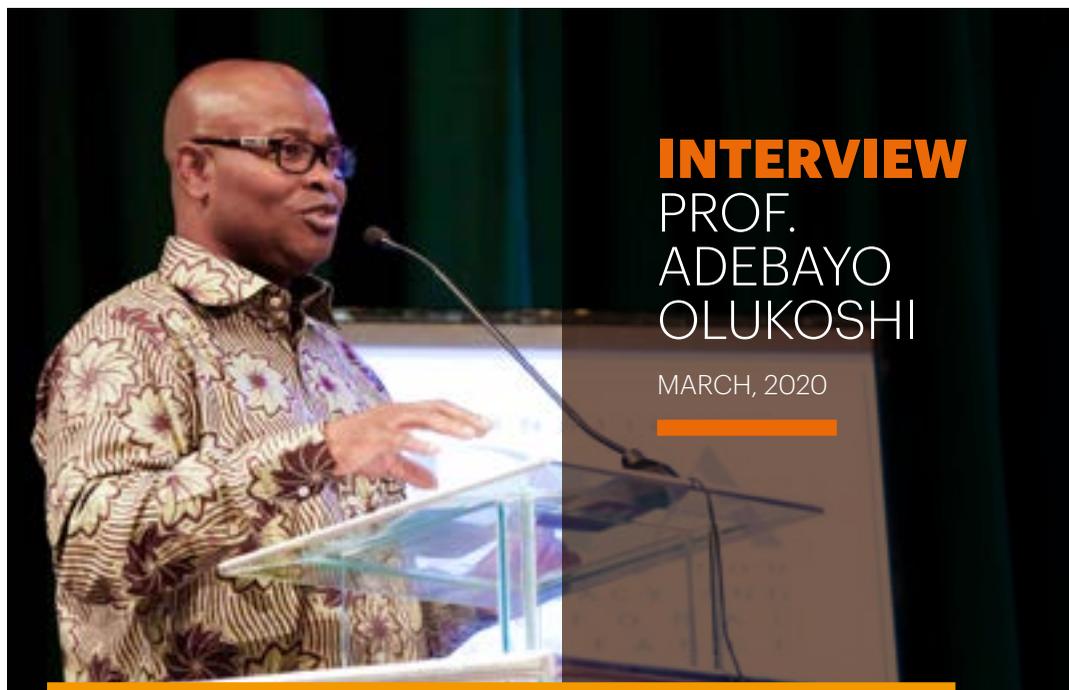
ZOUMAROU:By 2025, the digital sector will have fully

reached a level of maturity. We don't plan to stop at some point to say we're done. We will always be in continuous improvement; but we will have a completely dematerialized, digitalized administration. An administration whose procedures or processes will be dematerialized. Anyone who needs to transact with the administration can do it from anywhere, anytime. We will have in place an ecosystem that will innovate around new services, new technologies that will have appeared at that time. 5G has already made its way, as have artificial intelligence technologies. There is no doubt that the ecosystem will mature and will therefore always be innovating. In 5 years, in terms of the network of our territory, we will have reached a level much higher than what we have today. And the important thing for me, because I'm going to push for it, is that we will have different construction habits. Today when you put up a building you have to be aware of the fact that you have to pull the fiber out

automatically. It is no longer conceivable that we put up buildings, houses, offices without immediately putting fiber optics in them. This is an important prerequisite. Our country will be an advanced country in terms of digital technology. And I don't want to compare with other countries because we also have our digitization and digitization model. But we will not be among the countries that will be behind when it comes to digital. So I am very confident and we are in this dynamic.

Thank you





INTERVIEW PROF. ADEBAYO OLUKOSHI

MARCH, 2020

PANAFRICAN BILINGUAL CORPORATES MAGAZINE

(PBCM): Could you tell us a bit about yourself?

Prof ADEBAYO OLUKOSHI : My name is Adebayo Olukoshi. I am a Research Professor of International Economic Relations. Currently, I serve as the Director for Africa and West Asia at the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. Prior to this, I served as the Director of Research at the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs in Lagos, Senior Fellow/Research Programme Coordinator at the Nordic Africa Institute in Uppsala, a senior programme staff at the South Centre in Geneva, Executive Secretary of the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) in Dakar, Interim Director of the South Centre in Geneva, and Director

of the UN African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP). I am a Nigerian.

PBCM : What motivated you to go into International Relations, Governance, and Human Rights?

Prof ADEBAYO OLUKOSHI : It is a bit difficult to say with complete precision. I grew up in an environment in which social and economic issues commanded a lot of attention whether it be in terms of poverty and inequality, struggles for better wages by workers and their unions, student activism for justice, human rights, and democracy, etc. Moreover, from the time of my entry into secondary school at Federal Government College Sokoto to my undergraduate years at Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria, I drew considerable inspiration from the

contributions and life struggles of many role models such as Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, Martin Luther King Jr, Kwame Nkrumah, Sekou Toure, etc. Those were also years of vibrant student activism across Nigeria in support of the liberation anti-Apartheid struggles in Southern Africa and awareness about the multiplicity of rights and justice issues involved was very strong. At a more personal level, my oldest brother who was also a mentor and role model was extensively invested in the Humanities which he had studied at the university. I had the privilege of reading many of the books he had read and discuss them with him. By the time I went into university myself, I was pretty clear that I wanted to be in the social sciences and humanities and my journey into studies in advanced research and studies in the social sciences began in earnest.

PBCM: What is International IDEA about?

Prof ADEBAYO OLUKOSHI : International IDEA is an inter-governmental organization established in 1995 with the sole mandate of promoting democracy worldwide. It is the only inter-governmental body with such a mandate. It has members and offices in all of the five continents and prides itself with being a think and do tank that produces useable comparative knowledge and tools on democratic processes and systems and provides technical support for democratic reforms and advancement. Its work is carried out on a non-prescriptive basis.

PBCM: How far is International IDEA achieving its objectives?

Prof ADEBAYO OLUKOSHI: In good measure. The Institute is recognized globally as a leading and high regarded source of quality comparative knowledge and practical tools for democracy actors to use in their work. Practically, it contributes, in varying degrees of intensity, to democratic governance reform around the world, including in constitutional and electoral reforms. It is respected for its non-prescriptive, independent, and impartial ways of engaging.

PBCM: How is democracy doing in Africa considering the conflicts taking place in different parts of the continent?

Prof ADEBAYO OLUKOSHI: Compared to where it was at the end of the 1980s when

military rule and single party systems were still dominant on the continent, Africa has clearly taken giant steps in the march towards democratization. Most governments in place today are products of elections conducted on the basis of a multiparty competition. There have been several successful cases of alternation of power between ruling and opposition parties through the ballot box. Overall, election management bodies have improved considerably in capacity and performance since the 1990s. By and large, basic human rights are respected by most governments. Media pluralism and civil society activism are now mainstream feature of everyday life in most countries. The examples of progress made are many. However, there is still much unfinished business on the ground and this should not perhaps be surprising given that the democratic project is itself a permanent work in progress. More still needs to be done to improve the integrity of elections in many countries, curb corruption in governance and the corrosive influence of unregulated money in politics, level the playing field between ruling and opposition parties, achieve a much better system of internal checks and balances and separation of powers, promote internal democracy in political parties, improve electoral justice, etc. Also, elected governments in Africa must still organize themselves better to deliver dividends of democracy to the citizenry through development policies that create jobs for the teeming

population of young people, improve living standards, generate opportunities for advancement, etc.

PBCM: What would you prescribe as a suitable form of governance in Africa? Some experts suggest a mix of democracy and dictatorship.

Prof ADEBAYO OLUKOSHI: My take on this is very simple: After decades of authoritarian/dictatorial governmental systems, complete with personal rule, many life presidencies, massive human rights abuses, significant blood-letting, chronic instability, etc., Africa is, in my view, condemned to democracy despite its imperfections. It is true that the last 30 years of efforts at democratization have been a mixed bag but it is also clear that the answer to the shortcomings experienced and challenges encountered is not a resort to dictatorship but, as elsewhere in the world, an investment of efforts to do better. Across the continent, there is ample evidence, including survey results that show that the democratic ideal remains a key part of the broad consciousness of the people. Citizens are, in the face of myriad problems, demanding more and better democracy, and not less democracy. Now, we are faced with a certain perversion of the overarching will of the people in which many governments embrace a ritual of regular elections as a facade for the highly authoritarian systems they run. Africa has many of such hybrid regimes and International IDEA has documented them in its

Global State of Democracy Report which I commend to your readers to study for the key findings it reports. I think it is interesting to note here that hybrid regimes in Africa, as elsewhere, do not provide any better results for society than democratic ones. Quite on the contrary.

PBCM: Digitization is seen as a way forward for efficiency and effectiveness in solving Africa's problems. Is Africa catching up in the application of digitization to governance?

Prof ADEBAYO OLUKOSHI: Africa is clearly experiencing a massive and rapid penetration of digital technologies and solutions in virtually all spheres of life, including governance. In Cabo Verde, e-governance has been in place for several years now. In most other countries, to one degree or another, there are some elements of e-governance that have been introduced. The domain of electoral administration is also witnessing the application of various digital solutions, from the registration of voters, the voting process itself, and the tabulation and transmission of results. Africa is clearly a growth pole for digital applications. It is not a risk-free development and we hope governments and other actors will ensure to invest as much in managing the risks as they do on acquiring the technologies.

PBCM: What are the prospects for African youth on the continent in view of the constant exodus to the West through the perilous Mediterranean route?

Prof ADEBAYO OLUKOSHI: The mass migration of young Africans through the Sahara and the Mediterranean is one of the tragedies of our time. It speaks to the inability so far of most of our countries to take full advantage of the youthfulness of our populations to transform the continent. Massive and prolonged youth unemployment, diminishing hope, and pervasive corruption contribute to the feeling of abandonment by government and societies that some of the youth feel. Migration is one of the options being exercised by the youth. Gangsterism and radical extremism are the other options that we have also seen unfolding. The consequence is that we are in danger of losing what should have been a dividend for our socio-economic transformation. It is not too late to prevent a youth bomb from exploding.

PBCM: Why does Africa come across as being weak when it comes to international negotiations?

Prof ADEBAYO OLUKOSHI: Modern international trade negotiations are very complex and time-consuming. They require an array of specialists and involve a combination of disciplines. Too many African countries, given their sizes, are simply lacking in the capacity to enable them cope. That is why recent efforts to define a broad continental strategy for negotiations under the auspices of the AU (African Union) merits to be closely considered.

PBCM: Are there lessons Africa should learn from the Asian Tigers?

Prof ADEBAYO OLUKOSHI: Africa certainly has a lot to learn from the comparative experiences of others. From the Asian Tigers, I would suggest that honing of the developmental capacity of the state is one such area from which Africa can learn. Effective trade and industrial policies aimed at generating jobs, expanding domestic productive capacity, improving domestic value addition, increasing exports, etc. are examples of domains in which the experience of Asian Tigers can be very useful to us.

PBCM: What message would you like to leave for African leaders with regard to international relations in the world today?

Prof ADEBAYO OLUKOSHI : Very simple: Be clear what it is you want from the world, have a clear strategy for getting it, and go for it. There is clearly no altruism in world affairs and every country will have to decide how best to secure the dignity of its people.

'@' IS AN ANCIENT AFRICAN SYMBOL

1. Many of us have met '@' many times a day in our lives.

'@' is a symbol and not a letter as many may probably believe. It is a symbol of communication like the Adinkra symbols of Ghana '@' is arguably the most used symbol in the world now.

2. It is a very present symbol in our ICT world of today.

Who created this important symbol that we perhaps take for granted?

It is an ancient symbol created long before alphabets were created. It is believed that '@' was created over ten thousand years BC.

3. The '@' symbol was created by the Abahaya people.

The Abahayas are also known as the Haya people.

The language of the Abahayas or the Hayas is Kihaya.

The Abahayas or the Hayas are from the Bukoba region in Tanzania.

4. Politically, the Bukoba region is now known as the Kagera region.

Bukoba or Kagera lies on the western shores of the Lake Victoria.

Lake Victoria is the biggest natural lake in Africa. There is no doubt that the symbol '@' is African.

5. The original name for '@' is: "ELIISHO LYA MUGASHA".

Eliisho is 'The Eye', Lya is 'For' or 'Of' with 'Mugasha' as 'The Benefactor'.

It is therefore considered as "The Eye of the Benefactor".

The symbol '@' is associated with Haya traditional mathematics.

6. Africa must acclaim the '@' symbol, celebrate and celebrate it!

We've all watched the world take over the '@' symbol in a big way.

Africa is as usual very silent... perhaps completely aware.

Shouldn't we be proud to acclaim and celebrate this unique heritage?

7. The world today has come closer through the '@' symbol.

The '@' as a symbol is a very major creativity of Africa.

It is also an achievement of Ancient African minds

Manifesting in the here and now of our lives...

Adabasu Kuwornu, Munich, May 2016





**Tribute to
Gaëtan
MOTOO
of Amnesty
International,
seasoned
activist, human
rights advocate.**



Gaëtan MOTOO, craftsman of the early stages of the defense of persons at the beginning of the 90s, this researcher from West Africa at Amnesty international, created a shock wave within his professional fraternity and caused more reknown waves than the previous ones in other areas.

One of the leading figures in the struggle for the recognition of Human Rights on the African continent, Gaëtan MOTOO, a Mauritian, bowed out on May 25, 2018 at the age of 65, not without having shown the world in general, and Africa in particular its attachment to the values that found and cement living together. A staunch advocate of human rights in the early hours of the democratic wave on the continent in the 1990s, years of emergence in West Africa and the center of human rights organizations. Alioune TINE, independent UN expert on Human Rights in Mali, former regional director of Amnesty International, recognizes in Gaëtan MOTOO, qualities of a man endowed with an ardent and active faith in the fight and the respect for human rights.

Competent, humble and sympathetic, he was the African of Amnesty International because for almost 40 years, he experienced all political crises, armed conflicts, tensions followed by serious human rights abuses in Guinea Conakry at the time of Lassana CONTE and Dadis CAMARA, in Togo of Eyadéma GNASSINGBE or even in Ivory Coast etc. The cases of crisis management are a legion and Gaëtan MOTOO in the company of Salvatore SAGUES, both elite researchers, has walked mountains and valleys, crossed pitfalls to plant wherever necessary, the roots of deep respect for Human Rights. Alioune TINE rightly recalls this anecdote which suggests Gaëtan MOTOO's attachment to human values and the strong personality he embodied. It should also be recalled that Human Rights Watch, Raddho and Chadian organizations relied heavily on reports and research results from Amnesty International and Gaëtan MOTOO to document the Habré case in the late 1990s and beyond.

Gaëtan had established contacts with all segments of society: dissidents of all kinds, pol-

iticians, unions, activists, journalists, women's rights activists and victims, anonymous people to whom Gaëtan gave so much attention. "I still remember in 2015, a teenage girl who was looking for news of her father who had disappeared from Nouakchott prison, reports Alioune TINE. Gaëtan had told the Minister of Justice of this country. "This young girl needs to know whether she will see her father again or not. Minister, this young girl has the right to know." The Minister finally admitted that the father was alive and in detention in another prison in the interior of the country.

Africa in general and organizations campaigning for the respect of Human Rights have just lost one of the great activists, "a shield against arbitrariness and the anchoring of the culture of the State, Human Rights and fundamental freedoms..." He also worked in West and Central Africa for the realization of the political alternation of power of opponents like WADE, Alpha CONDE, GBAGBO and OUATTARA.

Gaëtan MOTOO of Amnesty International, this highly respected man in Africa, one of its most dedicated and passionate human rights experts. Amnesty International said that "for more than 30 years, Gaëtan has documented human rights violations in West Africa and worked tirelessly to bring justice to affected communities"

His great professional rigor, his remarkable human qualities, his finesse, his attention towards the victims of human rights violations made him a rare expert and a loved one.

Panafrican Corporates Magazine shares in these different testimonies and recognizes this emblematic figure, the commitment and work of Gaëtan which will continue to inspire us and inspire generations of human rights advocates.





CORPORATE GLOBAL MEDIA

PANAFRICAN BILINGUAL
corporates
magazine THE BUSINESS INFORMATION DIARY

Corporates Media is a bilingual media Company (English-French) founded in Ghana in 2009, that specializes in strategic communication and events management consultancy.

It is also a firm of experts in human capital development, development communication, public relations, marketing and sustainable development. The main vocation is to support businesses and African leaders from all walks of life to better impact the Community, boost them and above all improve their image. The core business of Corporate Global media consists in delivering tailor-made coaching services in professional visibility and image. Publisher of the Pan African Bilingual Corporates Magazine. It is a bilingual (French-English) media company founded in Ghana in 2009, Rwanda in 2015, Benin in 2015, Togo in 2016, with representations and branches in twenty countries around the world, specializing in consulting in strategic communication, commercial representation and event management, its quarterly Magazine has for editorial line the restitution of the actions of the heads of organizations in the Sub-region through summary articles on the essentials of the economy of African countries.

Corporates Media began with collaboration with

Ghanaian entrepreneurs in Information Communication Technology (ICT), banking and finance, insurance, energy, building and public works sectors, as well as multinational and international corporations based in the country.

All these enterprises that were involved in some significant work, needed a greater visibility and a solid networking to make their mark in the country, it was in that vein that we organized in 2009 the first business rendez-vous named Corporates CEOS Rendez-vous. The event recorded great success and networked some hundreds of CEOs.

After this success, other Corporates CEOS Rendez-vous and tailored events for companies were organized.

Moved by the desire to extend this experience, Corporates Rendez-vous were organized in other African countries such as la Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Togo, Rwanda, and more recently Benin, In the medium and long term, Nigeria, Guinea-Conakry, Niger, Mali and Senegal would follow suit.

In 2011, growing interest by partners to make their products and services more visible, forced us to establish the Corporates Magazine, It is a bilingual Business magazine that, every three months, puts the highlights on heads of organizations in the sub-region and gives a report on the essentials of the economy of African countries.

Seven years down the lane since the first edition of the sub-regional Corporates Magazine, we are looking forward to creating a Corporates Magazine with a national character that would highlight economic potentials at the national level and that would be circulated in countries of the sub-region.

Finally, the Corporates Media group, conscious of its pan African vision, decided to launch the Corporates Awards for African Integration. The objective is to acknowledge and promote on the African scale, personalities, heads of organizations, para-statal institutions and international organizations, who have excelled in their areas of management etc. The previous editions of this Gala of distinction, took

place in Accra and Lome and subsequent ones would eventually be extended to other African capitals.

Today, enterprises or companies that have confidence in us, can benefit from our rich experience at the international level and be part of a large network of businesses and multinationals spread across the African continent.

SERVICES OF CORPORATES MEDIA

- Concept development and production of personalized communication materials
- Editing and digital printing, business cards, building plan, PVC ,in 3D, catalogues, diaries, note books etc
- Website
- Branding
- Events management
- Marketing and Communication consultancy
- Digital Communication
- Audiovisual Production
- Intermediation Service
- Business Representation



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INTERVIEW WITH **MADAM SOPHIA KUDJORDJI LISSAH**

1. Can you tell us a bit about yourself?

I am Sophia Lissah (nee Kudjordji). I am a Development Communications Expert with expertise in Public Relations, Communications, Marketing and Sustainability. I have about 26 years of work experience in the field Journalism, Public Relations and Marketing. I started my career as a Journalist with the Ghana News Agency, during which time I also had a stint with community radio and at the same time consulting in the area of Public Relations for a donor-funded Water and Sanitation Agency. I had the opportunity to work with the British High Commission as a Website Editor and later doubled as a Media and Police Relations Liaison.

I started working with the Private sector in 2006, when I joined the UT Group. It was then just Unique Trust Financial Services, which later became UT Bank (now defunct) and others, a Group Company of six subsidiaries with operations in Nigeria and South Africa. I was part of the lead for the corporate identity change, initial public offer of UT shares and generally the lead who worked with a team on most media and marketing activities for the Group.

I joined the Jospong Group of Companies in June 2016 as the Group Head, Communications, for the Group which boast of over 45 companies operating in 14 sectors of the economy.

In November 2019, I was appointed the Acting Chief Communications Officer for the Group.

I trained as a Journalist at the Ghana Institute of Journalism and later obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and Psychology from the University of Ghana. I also hold an MBA in Leadership and Sustainability from the University of Cumbria, UK, and an MA in Development Communication and Postgraduate Diploma in Marketing from the Chartered Institute of Marketing, UK.

I am the recipient of Ghana's Most Promising Public Relations Professional (2012), Public Relations Personality (2019) and one of West Africa's top 20 Marketing and Communication Professionals (2019) awards.

I am a member of the Chartered Institute of Marketing Ghana, (a former Member of Council), an Accredited Member of the Institute of Public Relations Ghana and a member of the African Public Relations Association.

2. Can you tell us a bit about your family?

I am the fourth of my mother's six children (the third girl), and 7th of my father's nine children. Both parents were in the Police Service so had to travel a bit around Ghana for my primary and secondary school education but finally landed at Mawuli Secondary School for my O'level

and Okuapemman Secondary School for my A'level certificates respectively. My maiden name is Sophia Kudjordji.

3. Please tell us about the Jospong Group of Companies and their areas of operation?

JOSPONG GROUP OF COMPANIES is a wholly Ghanaian holding company with interest in over 40 different subsidiaries. Established in 1995 with a core business of printing and publishing, the company has in the last two decades grown into a conglomerate with operations in 14 sectors of the economy. Since then, the company has made significant breakthroughs over the past two decades, growing into a world-class business conglomerate with over 50 subsidiaries and affiliates in Ghana and other parts of Africa. Its operations have been divided into five, namely Environment and Sanitation - this forms over 60 percent of our operations, where we boast of being the leading Waste Management Company in Ghana, Zoomlion, a household brand, and an environment, sanitation and the circular economy-liquid waste treatment, recycling organic waste to compost, dredging of water ways, medical waste treatment facility etc. Jospong also has operations in ICT, Financial Services-two insurance companies, Pension's trust, a venture capital company and shares in

a Bank. It has Technical and Logistics space which boasts of Ports and Terminal Services, manufacturing, automobile, plants and equipment, Agriculture and Agro businesses and finally a Commercial and Allied Services under which we have a Printing Press, a Multimedia company, and a Hotel among others.

Jospongs mission is to "improve the lives of people" with a vision of "becoming the most successful African Holding company leading in every sector of our operations"

4. How is the Jospong Group of Companies navigating this crucial Covid 19 period?

The Jospong Group of Companies is founded by a very forward looking and intelligent visionary, Dr Joseph Siaw Agyepong, whose business acumen is second to none and penchant for identifying new opportunities in challenging times is just legendary. With the advent of the COVID 19, he quickly reinvented the companies and its operations to deliver present and relevant solutions taking advantage of our expertise in providing waste management in all districts in the country and operating in some of the remotest areas in Ghana. He immediately resourced the company to provide a service that the whole world has accepted as one of the ways of curbing the spread of the infection, which is disinfection of surfaces using the World Health Organisation's recommended chemicals. This project has seen our companies, Zoomlion Ghana Limited and

Vectorpes Companies with technical advice from Noguchi Medical Centre, undertaking Nationwide Disinfection of National Assets. So far, the exercise has been undertaken in Markets, all educational facilities for Basic to tertiary level, Parliament House, military and police installations as well as some corporate, government institutions and private homes. Our medical treatment facility is also working around the clock to ensure that COVID 19 waste is treated with utmost efficiency and professionalism. New companies have also been born as a result of the pandemic. Operations of some of the companies have also slowed due to the pandemic.

5. As Public Relations Practitioner, a Marketer and a Communication Professional, what are your views on how Africa is managing the Covid 19 crisis?

I must say that Africa has done quite well in dealing with this pandemic despite earlier pronouncements that Africa was going to be hard hit by it. I must commend our leaders and particularly frontline workers for the immense sacrifices they have made in containing the situation so far.

Right from the Centre for Disease Control of Africa Union to individual national heads, there has been a lot of information flow to constantly and consistently update the citizenry on the spread of the infection and calls for observing the protocols to curb the spread. So even though health facilities are inadequate, leadership

in African countries use Information, Communication and Education to fight the pandemic. I believe that with the continuous flow of information, the provision of the necessary resources and observance of the precautionary measures I believe Africa will continue to deal with the situation. Don't forget that Africa per our earlier experiences with Ebola, Dengue, Malaria, Cholera and other such outbreaks have built experiences somehow, so despite the overwhelming nature of this pandemic, a lot of the experiences of the past has been brought bare on the current situation which is really helping. With more resources in terms of well-resourced and world class laboratories in the similitude Noguchi Medical Research Centre in Ghana, and with great scientist on the continent, Africa has the potential of discovering solutions for the whole world.

6. How far has the sanitation situation in Ghana affected its accolade as the Gateway to Africa?

Ghana is very much aware of the crucial role it plays in holding the key to open up Africa to the world and is doing everything possible to maintain that enviable position. In the area of Sanitation, I have always commended the present government under the leadership of H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo for setting up a whole Ministry for Sanitation to give the challenge focus and the necessary resources to spearhead the drive to make Ghana Clean. The Ministry in collaboration with other ministries and Municipal, Metropolitan and District assemblies have even intensified efforts to deal with the sanitation situation in Ghana. There are a couple of projects currently ongoing including the provision of toilets for individual homes and communities to curb open defecation; Clean Accra and other cities campaigns to sustain the cleanliness of our communities as well as the decommissioning of some major landfill sites, are clear indication of the multi-pronged approach being adopted by government and its partners to tackle the





situation. What is needed now is sustained education and enforcement to consolidate the gains of these exercises.

7. With your experience of working with the British High Commission, what do you make of Africa's approach towards communication as an image-enhancing exercise?

I am of the firm belief that Africa has to be deliberate and intentional about enhancing its image to the world. You know, there is so much news out there but it is not everything you put in the public domain. This is one experience that I think Africa has to deliberately work on. As a people we are too quick to "wash our dirty linens in public", in the name of freedom of speech, free flow of information and the like.

I believe that, the African narrative must change and it will take communicators on the continent like the media, public relations professionals, marketers and the like, both in government and in private institutions to do this. Africa abounds with very great stories of achievements, innovations, bravery and of course beauty, but we take these positives for granted and are quick to put out negative stories. In this day and age of digitalization and social media, where information travels with the speed of light, communicators of Africa's story must pause and ask themselves a few questions before they press the send button because once the story leaves, no amount of retraction can repair the damage it might

cause. We should always remind ourselves with the following questions;

1. What do I want to achieve with this story?
2. What picture will it paint of me and my people?
3. Will I be proud of this story 5-10 years from now?

I am not saying people should be stifled to do only goodie goodie stories but we can report the same story without murdering our image. -it all boils down to the language and pictures that goes with it.

8. The media in Africa is perceived as having fallen short of projecting the potentials and the international image of the continent, in view of the negative stories told by the Western media about Africa. What recommendations would you make to change this trend?

As indicated in my earlier submission, there has to be a deliberate strategy to change the African narrative. Media personnel must be trained to see the crucial role they have to play in changing this narrative. For now, it's all about getting scoops and being the first to break the news no matter the consequences. I love the pace being set by Rwanda to the world, showcasing their nation as great and the destination to be in Africa. This did not happen by chance. When you go to Rwanda, even the taxi driver who drives you around is clear in his mind what the nation is

about. The driver will not cheat you; he knows what the nation's tax is being used for and is happy to show you the best tourist places and eatery to take you without taking advantage of you! It is such a beautiful story. I am not sure this was by chance! Definitely, a deliberate, calculated systematic strategy and plan was put in place... everyone is clear what their roles are and are delivering on that plan. Can we learn from the Rwandan story starting with the media?

Can we call for convergence of our people taking advantage of the current digital boom to exchange notes on best practices and share our experiences as Africans and as rightly put by the Ghanaian President, find African solutions for African problems?

The narrative for the African continent can change. Let us be deliberate about it. Let us come out with implementable strategies that is not so much about money but little steps that involves the entire Citizenry and before long we will get there. As the saying goes "Rome was not built in a day but started with one brick at a time" and the French will say "petit a petit, l'Oiseau fait son nid" meaning little by little the bird makes its nest. One step at a time, but we have to start taking the steps by having a destination in mind. We must know what we want to be known for.

9. Today, the focus of the world is on Covid 19. Africa is considered one of the least affected continents



so far. How can the continent capitalize on this consideration to rebuild a new image?

This offers a great opportunity for Africa to leverage on to build its image as a continent that has what it takes to manage its affairs. We are not an island but we are big enough to look within to get potentials to build our continent.

What did we do right? What are the lessons that we can quickly document and share out there? Who are the brains behind these success stories? Let us hail them, let us celebrate them and let the world know that the African has the capacity in terms of human resources to redeem itself. We should bombard the world with our success stories from across the continent. Who are the heroes and heroines in the communities? These are the stories we should focus on. We should take the focus off our dark skin to our bright brains and earn the respect that we deserve.

10. What are your views on Companies in Ghana giving back to society through Corporate Social Responsibilities? Have they lived up to expectations?

A lot of Companies are doing well by giving back to society through their Corporate Social Responsibility activities. For instance, diligently paying taxes and other statutory obligations is a great give back to society. However, Corporate Social Responsibility should be looked at from the three pronged approach of People, Profit and Planet. How do our operations impact on these three core areas of not just making profits but how we give back to society including the wellbeing of our employees and their families

as well as protecting and conserving the environment for posterity?

Most organisations are engaged in lot of philanthropic giving. That is great, but undertaking cause related initiatives will be more impactful and sustainable.

11. What are some of your greatest achievements in life?

Hmmm...have I achieved anything at all?

Casting my mind back, in addition to the various awards which for me kind of validates my performance and contribution, it is the joy of seeing my work impacting my organisation and society that I find fulfilling. So helping to steadily change my organisation's narrative is one that I am quite humbled about. Leading the UT Brand identity change and sustaining that brand to win some prestigious awards as a company and for the Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Prince Kofi Amoabeng felt good.

At the British High Commission, one of my sweetest achievements was being able to set up its first website and managed it for about four years, coupled with rekindling a very production relationship between the High Commission and the Police, for which I received a commendation letter from the 10 Downing Street.

I am also quite intrigued about the achievements of some sharp and intelligent young men and women who I have been privileged to work with who are now occupying responsible positions and making positive impacts. All these, plus the years of working as a journalist and producing some great developmental reports brings smiles to my face.

I have always believed within me that 'not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God'...2 Corinthians 3:5!

12. What is your philosophy in life?

I have a couple of philosophies in life-

1. Everything that has a beginning has an end - the joy, the pain, the celebrations, the sorrows etc, but it must end in praise!
2. It is a fact that no one is indispensable but I can make myself irreplaceable.
3. People matter!
4. I am nothing without God.

13. Your advice to PR and Communication Practitioners on the continent.

We hold the key to changing the African narrative by our story telling skills. We are the custodians of our brands and reputation which eventually rubs on our countries. We should therefore be on top of our games- recognised and appreciated by the company or not!

Public Relations and Communication is both an art and a science. Now a lot of organisations are looking for data driven information and solutions. But no matter how scientific the world becomes, relationships still matter. It is therefore, important as practitioners to take advantage of the current digitization of the world and train ourselves in that space to remain relevant and continuously engage with our stakeholders to build brands equity. In spite of the numerous challenges and inadequate resources let us exert ourselves to become and stay relevant, irreplaceable by our organisations.

In conclusion, Public Relations and Communication should be a way of life, but the onus lies on professionals to make that life meaningful and alive! Our companies, shareholders, stakeholders and the public are looking up to us, whether they show it or not, it is the reality!