



STATE OF THE  
**AFRICAN  
DIASPORA**

# NEWSLETTER

STATE OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA

NEWSLETTER N° 13

**THE REAL DEBATE : CLIMATE REPARATIONS !**



*Salem Ayenan, Ambassador of SOAD*



**UN**   
**environment  
assembly**

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## EDITORIAL



The real debate is about climate reparation.

At present, Africa contributes 5% to global warming. However, 2/3 of the damages linked to climate change will be, and is already in Africa. We must therefore repair this damage. But who will pay for it ?

For the moment, the debate is carefully avoided. The media talks about climate change, climate transition, climate adaptation. But again, who is going to finance all of this?

The "polluter pays" logic should apply. Obviously, this is not the case. For centuries, the countries of the South have been exploited by the countries of the North; and for decades, the countries of the North have been polluting the planet, which primarily affects the countries of the South. In other words, it is a double penalty: in addition to the question of colonial reparation, there is now the question of climate reparation.

Are these non-paying polluters climate skeptics, climate egoists, or climate racists ? In any case, for Africa, and for the Diaspora, it is a question of survival. It is necessary to impose this debate, to use the right words, the angry words if necessary, and to fight - as usual.



## Salem Ayenan and USOAD chosen by the UN



A few days ago, the Global Constituency of Youth for Environment, which works under the aegis of the United Nations, honored Salem Ayenan, Dean of the Faculty of Diplomacy of the University of the State of the African Diaspora and Chief of Staff of the Minister of Education.

This UN institution had launched a call for applications for the organization of Local Youth Assemblies for the Environment. It should be recalled that these assemblies are held each year before the UN General Assembly for the Environment, and their mission is to contribute to the work of the UN in this area by making proposals that are presented at the UN General Assembly for the Environment.

Salem Ayenan had applied on behalf of the State of the African Diaspora. On February 10, 2022, he received the following message:

"Dear Mr. Salem Ayenan of the University of the State of the African Diaspora, we congratulate you on your selection to implement the Regional Youth Assembly for the Environment on behalf of the Africa region. Out of more than 200 applications from all countries in Africa, your application was of particular interest to us because of your vision, ideals and experiences. »

Reading the letter, Salem Ayenan was filled with joy:

"I am happy and proud that our efforts have been recognized at the highest level. The UN itself is showing that it

recognizes our work, and that is why they are giving us such an important mission. This is a great opportunity for me and my team, because the Regional Youth Assembly for the Environment will bring together young people from all African countries, personalities, experts, journalists, environmental and climate change activists, political authorities, civil society actors, in short, all those who are involved in this field. »

Dr. Tin, Prime Minister of the State of the African Diaspora, also expressed his satisfaction:

" More than 200 proposals were sent, and only Salem Ayenan's proposal was selected. The UN thus recognizes his work, but also the University of the State of the African Diaspora where he is very involved. Our Government is very proud of Salem Ayenan, and is working with him to strengthen the UN's environmental agenda. It is important to remember on this occasion that the consequences of climate change are connected to capitalism and colonialism. We must therefore put in place strong structures in favor of climate justice and climate repair."



## UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA

Indeed, from Monday 21 to Thursday 24 February 2022, the Youth for the Environment Local Assemblies was organized under the aegis of the University of the State of the African Diaspora, and it is on this occasion that the proposals carried by Salem Ayenan and the State of the African Diaspora were revealed.





### **Interview with Salem Ayenan**



#### **-Salem Ayenan, could you introduce yourself ?**

I am Salem Ayenan, I am from Benin. I am the Founding President of the Virtual University of International Relations and Ambassador of the State of the African Diaspora.

#### **-What have you done so far in the framework of the State of the African Diaspora (SOAD) ?**

I joined the State of the African Diaspora as an Ambassador. I have worked to promote the ideals of SOAD in my community. After my appointment as the Head of the Faculty of Diplomacy and International Relations of the University of SOAD (USOAD), we organized several virtual conferences on the topics of peace and conflict resolution. Then, I was appointed to the position of Chief of Staff for the Minister of Education, Mrs. Vimbai Chiwuswa. I have worked on many assignments, especially in the framework of USOAD. And recently, I organized the African Youth Assembly on the Environment, an initiative of the UN for the Global Constituency of Youth for Environment. We brought together hundreds of young people from all over Africa to discuss issues related to climate change and environmental protection. This activity was a regional consultation that allowed us to collect proposals for solutions to effectively fight against global warming.

#### **-Why did you apply for this UN initiative regarding youth and environment?**

The climate crisis is threatening us and we are heading towards chaos. We have no other planet to survive on, if this one ends up collapsing. I have always been concerned about the environment and have always acted in favor of nature. Given my many years of activism for the protection of the environment and the fight against global warming, I decided to apply for the call launched by the Global Constituency of Youth for Environment of the UN in order to organize the Assembly of African Youth on the environment. I wanted to exchange with all African youth activists, journalists, civil society organizations and all parties involved in the fight for the safeguard of the environment to contribute to the resolution of the problem. Out of more than 200 applications from all regions of the world, we were selected to organize the Youth Environment Assembly consultation for Africa. The UN was looking for a young dynamic person with expertise in organizing large events and with previous experience in UN activities. That is why I thought maybe I could apply.

#### **-How did you organise the Youth Environment Assembly for Africa ?**

The African Youth Environment Assembly was organized with the help of some colleagues and USOAD. To make a long story short, we set up a coordination team that steered

**Global Youth for  
Environment**



**CHILDREN AND YOUTH  
MAJOR GROUP OF UNEP**



the activities. We issued a call for applications to all African countries. We then launched a second call for applications open to all civil society organizations, movements and youth associations. We brought all these people together on various platforms. We also consulted experts and young people involved in the fight against global warming. With them, we set the agenda for the papers, panels and groups. We also set up the team of moderators and rapporteurs. It is a real team effort. We should not forget that the Prime Minister and several other Ministers of SOAD have not failed to make their contribution.

**-What is the objective of this conference ?**

The objective of this Assembly was to consult youth at the regional level, so that they can make proposals for solutions regarding the climate crisis. This meeting allowed the voice of youth to be heard, and their proposals were brought to the highest level during the United Nations Environment Assembly, which took place for this 5th edition in Kenya from February 28 to March 2, 2022.

**-Why do you speak of « climate repair », and what does it mean ?**

The question of climate repair came up several times during the consultation sessions with the young people consulted. We believe that, in addition to prevention, we need repression. When the environment is degraded, it must be repaired. We do not dismiss the efforts made by the UN, the States, the Civil Society Organizations, as well as all other parties. But we will continue to suffer, if adequate measures are not taken to remedy the crisis. And as I say, our planet is dying, and this is not the time to turn a blind eye to the need for climate justice. It is clear that African countries are the most affected by global warming, even though they contribute very little to it ; but for the moment, the question of compensation is not really being addressed. This is what leads us to talk about climate reparations. We now need mechanisms to make the "polluter pays" rule a reality.

**-With the Prime Minister of SOAD, you would like to create two new bodies in the UN. Could you tell us more about this initiative, and how would you do to make this happen ?**



Once again, I would like to congratulate the UN and the States for the interest they show in safeguarding the environment. Still, we do not see much progress, while time is sorely lacking. Many voices were raised at our Assembly on the Environment to demand the implementation of climate reparation. The creation of these two institutions, the Council for the Rights of Nature and the Tribunal for the Defense of the Rights of Nature, will reinforce the actions of the United Nations Environment Program. These two institutions will work in synergy to bring the different States to respect the Agreements they have signed for the environmental cause. For this to happen, political will is needed on the part of leaders. They must agree to make a certain number of concessions so that the majority of the population can live in good conditions.

**-How can the contribution of the young generation, and the people like you especially, make a difference?**

The young people of my generation have understood that the stakes are high and that we must do something to preserve our planet from the worst. That is why we are calling on the diligence of the leaders on the need to involve us and to take our grievances into account during the COP and the various summits organized to discuss environmental issues. As for our contribution, we have recently launched the "All Stand for Climate Revival" campaign. It is time for every young person, wherever they are, to make a difference. At our Regional Assembly, we emphasized tree planting. We also emphasized the fact that we must follow closely these plants that we plant and keep watch. If each young person does this in his or her community, it will produce effective results. We believe



that every young person can take action for the climate and not expect everything from the leaders. I am living proof of that. I did not wait for the UN to take action for the environment.

### **Portrait of Salem Ayenan**



Born on October 25, 1998, Salem Ayenan is a young Beninese man with a degree in English language teaching. He is a United Nations Volunteer and Regional Coordinator for the International Commission on Human Rights in Benin. He is one of the actors committed to the effective achievement of the Development Goals by 2030.

He has participated in numerous organizations, such as the Cercle des Jeunes Aspirants aux Institutions du Bénin, Africa Science Diplomacy and Policy Network, Global Pan Africanism Network, and Afro Science Foundation. He joined the African Youth Parliament in 2020 as the Beninese Youth Representative. Then, in the same year, the World Peace Committee appointed him as the Representative of Benin, and he became the Director of International Youth Affairs of this international organisations. Towards the end of 2020, he joined the International Youth Parliament based in Ethiopia.

Also in 2020, Salem Ayenan created the Virtual University for International Relations. For the first promotion, from September to November 2020, more than 500 students followed the online trainings on topics related to diplomacy, human rights, conflict resolution etc.





In 2021, he joined the State of the African Diaspora as an Ambassador. A few months later, he was appointed to head the Faculty of Diplomacy and International Relations at USOAD. He is now the Chief of Staff of the Minister of Education of SOAD with whom he is working to support USOAD and the SOAD Network of Pan-African Schools.

Salem Ayenan has received numerous distinctions, notably in the field of peace promotion, human rights and innovation. His ambition is to make Benin and Africa shine internationally.

## Babies, Children, Youth and Climate Change



Babies, children and youth, who are naturally more vulnerable than the adults, will be, and already are the first victims of climate change. Dehydration has severe and rapid effects on babies. The drought causes undernourishment which irrevocably affects the physical development of children, and also their brain. The rise of the sea level and the multiplication of storms and floods accelerate the diffusion of viruses and diseases such as malaria, cholera, tuberculosis, poisoning, diarrhoea, etc.

According to UNICEF, 1 billion children are highly exposed to high levels of air pollution, and also approximately 1 billion children (nearly half of the world's minors) live in one of the 33 nations classified as « extremely high risk », most of them being in the Global South.

Very often, these evils add up and reinforce each other, sometimes creating vicious circles, and even real traps: thus, children who are in the countryside that has become deserted go to the cities, or rather to the slums. They live and eat in garbage dumps. Fleeing from starvation, they fall ill. To pay for food or medicine, many young girls become prostitutes and fall into the hands of international networks, which capture, drug or sell them.

In total, one in three children (850 million) live in areas exposed to four or more climate stressors and 330 million (1 in 7) live in areas with five or more major stressors. "This figure only include children affected to date, but it is likely to increase as the effects of climate change become more severe", warns UNICEF.



However, even if children and youth are the first victims of global change, they may also be instruments of positive change. People already know Greta Thunberg ; they also need to know our great young leaders from the South. Salem Ayanan is certainly one of them.



### Climate skeptics, or climate racists?



For decades, we have been hearing about climate skeptics. Some people doubt the reality of climate change, or they are not sure that this phenomenon is linked to human activity. That in the 1970s, 80s, or even 90s, some people might have been doubtful can be understood. But, we are now in 2022, and the IPCC reports have brought together thousands of scientists from all over the world who, unanimously, make the same observation, which is getting worse every year: yes, the planet is getting warmer; yes, this is due to human activity; yes, humanity is in danger; and yes, especially in Africa and in the countries of the South.

Under these conditions, one can less and less seriously believe that those who refuse any progress in the fight against global warming would be people of good faith, simply expressing personal doubts about theories of which they would be badly informed. There are undoubtedly still some true skeptics, but in reality, the more time passes, the more it becomes obvious that the climate skeptics are at least climate-egoists, and probably in fact climate-racists.

Indeed, many people, political and economic leaders of the Northern countries know perfectly well that global warming is a reality that mainly affects the Southern countries in general, and Africa in particular. And in the countries of the North, the people most affected are the poorest citizens, the minorities, the precarious people.

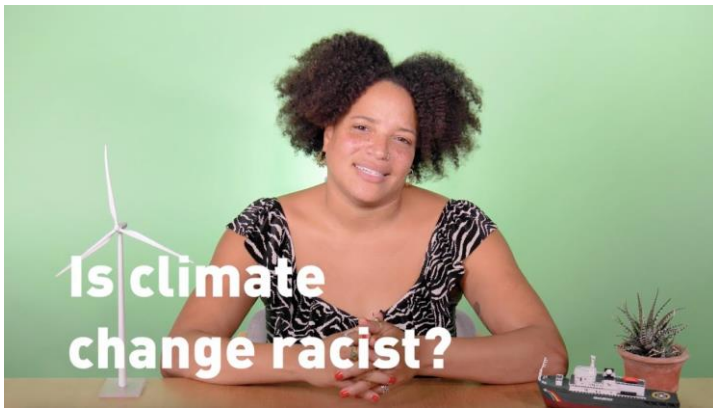


The richest believe that there will always be "solutions" for them: more air conditioners (which cool the room while warming the planet), villas in the countryside if the cities are too polluted, and why not survival bunkers for the family if the situation really becomes very tense.

In other words, their indifference to the problem, or even their opposition to any progress, is a privilege of class and race, which betrays their contempt for the poor citizens of the South, but also of the North. This is why we should no longer be naïve: the adversary is not, or at least is no longer, the climate-skeptic, but the climate-egoist and the climate-racist.

there are pipes, but there is no more river.

This is why, if Africa in particular, and the countries of the South in general, really want to progress, they must impose these words, and mobilize against "climate racism", and for "climate reparations".



These last two concepts may be surprising, especially the term "climate-racism" that we have designed to describe this reality, but they reflect a situation whose links with colonial history cannot be overlooked. The countries of the South have long been exploited by the countries of the North, and they are now being polluted by the countries of the North, which still refuse to pay a fair price, whether for the raw materials they buy or for the pollution they cause. And even the carbon credits that were conceived a few years ago look more and more like a "permit to pollute" rather than a sanction against polluters.

Africans must appropriate this concept of "climate-racism", because it allows us to make the link between colonial or neo-colonial issues on the one hand, and climate issues on the other. All the progress made in the field of development over the last few decades may soon be erased. Fifty years ago, in some African cities, people did not have water, because there were rivers, but there were no pipes to carry the water. Today, in these cities, people still do not have water, because now,

## **The Council of the Rights of Nature**



At the United Nations, there is the Human Rights Council, but there is no Nature Rights Council.

At the United Nations, UNESCO is in charge of the protection of cultural heritage, but it is much less concerned with natural heritage.

In these conditions, it is obvious that the defence of the rights of nature is the poor part of the UN bodies. This does not mean that nothing is done on national and international level, on the contrary. Many actions have been undertaken, many rules have been enacted, but this is not enough to stop the dynamics of global warming, or even to reduce it.

Some countries have already made progress in this area. The rights of nature are recognized at the constitutional level by two countries: Ecuador and Bolivia. In these South American jurisdictions, nature has become a subject of law, which complicates the action of those who are de facto enemies of the environment, and therefore of humanity. In 2019, 25 trials were conducted in Ecuador based on these legal texts, and 21 were won. In the same year, Lake Erie in the United States was given the legal right to "exist and thrive naturally" following the adoption of a local referendum. Similarly, several rivers around the world have been granted legal personhood, such as the Whanganui in New Zealand.

These interesting initiatives remain totally isolated for the moment. It is therefore advisable to generalize them, which can be done at the local, national or international level by creating Nature Councils, which would be likely to rule on the rights of nature in general, or at least on the rights of such and

such a forest, such and such a lagoon.

The mission of these Councils would be to establish the list of natural sites to be protected, and to grant them the legal protection that seems necessary. This is something SOAD is pushing for, and Salem Ayenan will put this proposal forward during the Youth Assembly for Environment.





## **The International Tribunal for the Defence of Nature**



Africa is responsible for 5% only of the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions that contribute to global warming. But 2/3 of the climate damage will be and are already in Africa. On a continent where temperatures are already naturally high, global warming will reinforce the advance of deserts, the repetition of heat waves, the multiplication of droughts, famines, water wars, climatic migrations, international tensions etc.

The countries of the South in general, and the countries of Africa in particular, are even suffering a "double penalty" in this respect : for centuries, their raw materials have been exploited by others, and paid for at a low price, in the best of cases ; and in addition, the resulting global warming affects them disproportionately. The natural logic of the "polluter pays" principle clearly does not apply; at least for the moment.

This injustice is massive. While some speak of "climate change", "climate transition", or even "climate justice", these expressions only euphemize the reality: there are climate crimes, which require the implementation of a logic of "climate reparation". Under these conditions, it is important to create an International Tribunal for the Defence of Nature, and of course of the peoples who try to live in it, with increasing difficulties.

When it comes to fighting a scourge, there are always two aspects to be implemented: prevention and repression. For

decades, the IPCC reports, the NGOs, the media and the whistleblowers have been constantly working on prevention. This is very useful, and it is appropriate that they continue their work. But the more time passes, the less we can be satisfied with prevention only. The repressive aspect must be reinforced: we no longer have a choice.

Repressive measures do exist, but they are not very dissuasive. Even the carbon credit market is often denounced as a "permit to pollute", rather than a ban. Moreover, the defence of the environment does not only concern global warming. The respect of biodiversity, oil spills, ecocide crimes, and so many other attacks on nature must be further repressed. It is therefore necessary to create a specific Tribunal.

In the history of the world, in circumstances that require it, we have been able to create exceptional tribunals: the Nuremberg Tribunal after the Second World War, for example, was intended to judge the crimes against humanity committed by the Nazis. The Arusha Criminal Court was created to judge crimes against humanity committed in Rwanda. Today, in the face of a global threat, it is incomprehensible that there is no international jurisdiction in charge of enforcing the rules related to the rights of Nature.

This is the interest of this International Tribunal, whose various sections could be deployed and relayed at the international, regional, national or provincial level...





**Voices from the Global South**




**INSTITUTING  
SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT**

PM Dr. Louis Georges Tin    President Melvin Brown    Zetha Nobles Moderator

Mr. Mark Purai    Dr. Linwood Tauheed

**SUN FEB 27, 22 10 AM PANAMA**

**zoom**  
Meeting ID: 850 8018 3583  
Passcode: melvin

**SOAD PARLIAMENT PRESENTS THE FIRST 2022 CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:**

CONFERENCE PROGRAM:

1. Opening Statement - Melvin Brown, President of Parliament
2. Lecture on Environmental Justice System (panelist) - PM Dr. Louis Georges Tin
3. Co-operative Management and ownership of FMCG businesses (panelist) - Mark Purai
4. Lecture on Community Planning (panelist) - Dr. Linwood Tauheed
5. Close the conference - Melvin Brown, President of Parliament

Panama. Melvin Brown, President of the Parliament of the State of the African Diaspora, who recently organised a session on sustainable development.« Every development process begins with ideas. The idea behind SOAD Parliament organizing a Sustainable Development

Conference on February 27, 2022, is to begin a conversation that will lead to concrete steps, tasks and processes that will reverse the negative impact of 600 years of colonialism and neocolonialism to people of Africa and the Diaspora. Our institutional position in this post-colonial era, is to have a Sustainable Development Department that can assist Leaders and Members of Parliament in the social construct of plans, programs of action and projects that will increase the quality of life of the African family on the Continent and in the Diaspora, designed and organized with proven environmental protection and administration policies. »



*Joe Kamamy Razafindravelo, Ambassador of the SOAD, planting trees in Madagascar*

Madagascar. On Saturday, February 26, 2022, Joe Kamamy Razafindravelo, Ambassador of the SOAD, gathered the SOAD Madagascar team to work on the reforestation of the country. In a joyful and active atmosphere, those present, who numbered about 700, planted more than 5,000 seedlings in the Analamanga region, near the capital.

The SOAD Ambassador explained the objective of the mission in these terms:

“The SOAD team wanted to participate in the reforestation of our region, to save the future of the country. It is important to know that the state of the forests in Madagascar is very degraded due to agriculture: 70% of the Malagasy forests have already disappeared. If nothing is done, in a short time, everything will be gone. There will be no more forest, no more water, no more agriculture possible, and therefore no more sustainable



life. We cannot stand idly by. That is why we are taking this step.”

## FAQ



Burkina Faso. Zion Daouda: « If there is a war to be fought, it is the war for climate protection. Together for climate repair. »

Kenya. Steve Austino Otieno : « Let us all take individual responsibility, it begins with you and me. The future of our mother or environment lies in our actions. Stand up all. Let's act, we can reduce climate change to the minimal level. »

Bénin, Bara O Gilbert Célestin, A. Marcel Kpadoou : « Nous soutenons activement l'idée de la création du Conseil des Droits de la Nature et du Tribunal de la Défense des Droits de la Nature. »

The Gambia, Biran B. Sallah : « I support the creation of the Council for the Right of Nature. Such Council with its tribunal will be able to defend the Nature, since the United Nations is responsible to mitigate global issues. »

Burkina Faso, Mahamadi Traoré: « Africa is the continent most vulnerable to climate change. In some regions, since the beginning of the 20th century, the temperature has already increased by 3 degrees Celsius, especially in

-240 million children are at high risk of coastal flooding.

-820 million children are at high risk from heat waves.

-920 million children are at high risk of water scarcity.

-1 billion children are highly exposed to high levels of air pollution.

-Women and children are 14 times more likely than men to die from a natural disaster.

-99% of deaths already attributed to climate change occur in developing countries.

-Children account for 80% of these deaths.

-Africa contributes 5% to global warming. But 2/3 of the damages linked to climate change will be, and is already in Africa.