



STATE OF THE  
**AFRICAN  
DIASPORA**

# NEWSLETTER

STATE OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA

NEWSLETTER N° 14

**SMART CITIES: THE NEW AFRICAN REVOLUTION**



## **AFRICA'S SMART CITY**



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**EDITORIAL**



Africa is no longer a predominantly rural continent. According to UN-Habitat, it is during this decade that the urban population will exceed the rural population in number. According to some experts, the turning point will come in 2022, that is, this year. Fifty years ago, one in five Africans lived in cities; today, one in two does.

The fact is that African cities are growing enormously. Cairo now has 25 million people; Lagos, 23 million; Kinshasa, 13 million. Over the past decade, economic growth in these cities has averaged 5%, and they have contributed \$700 billion to the continent's economy, an amount that is expected to rise to \$1.7 trillion by 2030, according to Oxford Economics. In short, cities are the engine of growth and development in Africa.

However, across the continent, 60% of cities are actually slums. And often, as cities grow in size, the quality of life decreases. Monstrous traffic jams paralyze all human activity. Air pollution, water pollution, noise pollution, bad waste management, everything becomes unbearable. Poverty, which already existed in the countryside, is being compounded by exclusion, which did not exist in the past. Cultural references and age-old traditions of solidarity are being lost. Criminality takes dramatic proportions. In other words, this development often leads to anarchy.

This is why the State of the African Diaspora must participate in the construction of cities, certainly, but new cities, the smart cities. These smart cities will be based



on three pillars: firstly, new technologies, secondly, sustainable development, like all smart cities; but in addition, and this is the third pillar of the cities created by SOAD, and this is their true originality compared to other smart cities that are being built here or there in the world, they will all have a strong urban identity. These agglomerations will thus be model cities, flagship cities, capitals that will eventually change the image of Africa, places where Africans from the continent and the Diaspora will live together. Because we want to make our cities living works of art.

### **Smart Cities: Urban Identities of the West**



Africa is beautiful, Africans are beautiful. But we must admit that most of the time, African cities are not beautiful. They are mostly made up of slums, and moreover, even the most affluent neighborhoods clearly suffer from a lack of urban planning. The city's function is just to bring together housing, shops and offices, but it has never been planned in the true sense of the word. Cities have often sprung up like mushrooms over the decades, without order or method, and worse, without vision or identity.

In the West, the most prosperous and famous cities have a strong identity, known throughout the world. When you say Hollywood, everyone knows it is the city of cinema; when you say Las Vegas, you say casino; in Venice, you associate bridges and canals; the City of London is the capital of finance; Rome is the city of the Pope; Brussels is the capital of Europe, etc.

Another example: Paris is the capital of love. In a sense, this means nothing; there is no more love in Paris than in London, Lagos, or Kinshasa. But this cliché, supported by regular communication for decades, works wonders. All over the world, lovers feel compelled to come to Paris to show their partner their feelings. This contributes mightily

to tourism, which is France's largest economy, accounting for 15% of the country's GDP. Tourists come and spend their money on Air France, hotels, restaurants, cabs, souvenirs, perfumes and shopping, all of which create direct and, above all, indirect jobs that cannot be relocated. France is the most visited country in the world, because its capital has a strong identity: the Eiffel Tower and Love.

Other examples are even more striking. Bruges, in Belgium, is said to be the chocolate capital of the world; others, lean more towards Geneva, in Belgium. But has anyone ever seen a single cocoa tree growing in Belgium, Switzerland or elsewhere in Europe? The countries that dominate the world's cocoa production are Ghana and Ivory Coast, which together produce two-thirds of the beans sold on the international market. But they only collect 5% of the 102 billion dollars linked to the chocolate trade, and the chocolate cities are not in Africa. However, it is obviously through the transformation of cocoa into chocolate that all the added value is done, which is enormous. It would be necessary to create a new city in Africa, a smart city, specialized in the transformation of cocoa, which would be the new world capital of chocolate.

The same could be said for diamonds. 7 of the 10 largest diamond producers are in Africa: Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, South Africa, Namibia, Lesotho and Tanzania. And yet, the city of diamonds, and especially of diamond dealers, is Antwerp. Has anyone ever seen a single diamond coming out of Belgium's underground? No, of course not. So we need to build the diamond city in Africa, which should be the diamond capital of the world, a place where diamonds are cut, where jewelry is made, and where prices are decided.





## Smart Cities: New Pan-African Urban Identities



Any smart city requires the collaboration of 4 partners:

- the one who brings the land (it can be a municipality, a kingdom, a company, a government);
- the one who brings the financing, i.e. the investor ;
- the one who brings the houses, the streets, i.e. the builder;
- the one who brings the project itself, coordinates it and gives it its own identity, i.e. the promoter, and in this case, it is the State of the African Diaspora.

And precisely, from a branding perspective, the smart cities created by the State of the African Diaspora will all have a strong identity, which will make them fully-fledged pan-African capitals, capitals based on a marked and identified speciality. Depending on the case, the urban identity of SOAD's smart cities will be based on:

- 1) a concept,
- 2) nature,
- 3) history,
- 4) economy.

In this special issue, dedicated to smart cities, some projects will be presented; due to lack of space, not all of them can be mentioned here, as there are already more than 20 of them. But others will be mentioned in a future issue of our newsletter. In all these cases, the first agreements have been signed, and the administrative and financial work is underway, along with the feasibility and impact studies. Then the actual construction can begin.

## SMART CITY



Among the cities linked to a concept, one in particular will be mentioned, Edina, in Liberia, the city of the Repatriation. Among the cities whose identity is linked to nature, the example of the Lion City, in Sierra Leone, whose name is historically linked to the king of animals, will be presented. As for the cities whose identity is linked to history, we will evoke Palenque City, in Ecuador, whose name pays homage to the communities created by the resistant slaves and their descendants in the former Hispanic colonies, following the example of the Quilombos of Brazil, or the Maroon States of Jamaica. Finally, as for cities whose identity is associated with an economic activity, let's mention the City of Fabric and Fashion in Nigeria; Muanda, the City of Light in the DRC, near the Inga III dam, which provides electricity in large quantities; and Zollywood City in Zambia, a city devoted to the film industry, as the name suggests.

Of course, for all these smart cities, it's not just a name. Indeed, the identity conditions a whole part of the economic activity deployed in the agglomeration. This is why it is important to identify the concept carefully, because it must be linked as much as possible to the region in which the smart city is located, which thus becomes the locomotive and symbol of the regional identity on an

international level.

However, even if each of these cities has an identity, and therefore a specialty, they are still generalist places. In the City of Fashion, there will be more than just fashion stores, of course. In the Lion City, there will be hotels. In the City of Light, there will be offices. In each city, there will be a little bit of everything, housing, schools, hospitals, businesses, etc. But the fact remains that each city will have its own specialty, and each is destined to become the pan-African capital of its specialty.

### **Liberia : Edina, the City of Repatriation**



*The Mayor of Edina and the Prefect of the region showing Mr. Goprou, Ambassador of SOAD, the place where the bridge is to be built.*

In the 19th century, the first slaves to be freed decided to return to Africa. Some came from the United States, others from the West Indies: they arrived in Liberia, and more precisely in Edina, a small village on the coast. It is in Edina that the first smart city of the State of the African Diaspora will be built. Chief Zanzan Karwor, president of the Council of Traditional Leaders of Liberia, signed an agreement with the State of the Diaspora, a cooperation that was enabled and facilitated by His Excellency Roland Goprou, Roving Ambassador of SOAD, and who received the Ambassador of

the Year 2020 award for the effectiveness of his diplomatic action. In addition, the State of the African Diaspora has signed an agreement with a company, CETS, headed by Mr. White, an African American entrepreneur, who has begun working with local businesses on the ground.

This August, on the occasion of Marcus Garvey Day, Dr. Tin, Prime Minister of SOAD, and Julius Garvey, son of Marcus Garvey, plan to travel to Liberia to inaugurate the construction site together. In addition, they will install the bust of Marcus Garvey, the champion of the Back to Africa Movement. It was only logical that his bust be installed in this emblematic place. In addition, the city will be consecrated as the City of Repatriation. This will be its urban identity.

Furthermore, to further symbolize the link between Africa and the Diaspora, the mayor of Edina, Mrs. Alzetta G. Spiller, sent a letter to the Prime Minister about the Edina Bridge. Currently, the only bridge over the river that crosses the area is far upstream. It takes more than an hour to get there by car. And if you want to cross the river by canoe, the crossing is very risky. Every year, there are canoes that are washed away by the current, and many people are killed, mainly school children, pregnant women, elderly people and disabled people. This bridge is therefore crucial for the development of the city, but also to facilitate communications between eastern and western Liberia.

SOAD had already agreed to build the bridge as part of the smart city project, and the city's mayor and the region's prefect had even shown Mr. Goprou, SOAD's ambassador, the location where it is to be built. But to express her gratitude to the State, Ms. Spiller took the matter to the city council, which made a decision: as they said in the letter sent to the Prime Minister, "we will name the bridge after you, Dr. Louis-Georges Tin."





### Sierra Leone: The City of Lions



*The Mayor of Edina presenting the city's memorial sites*



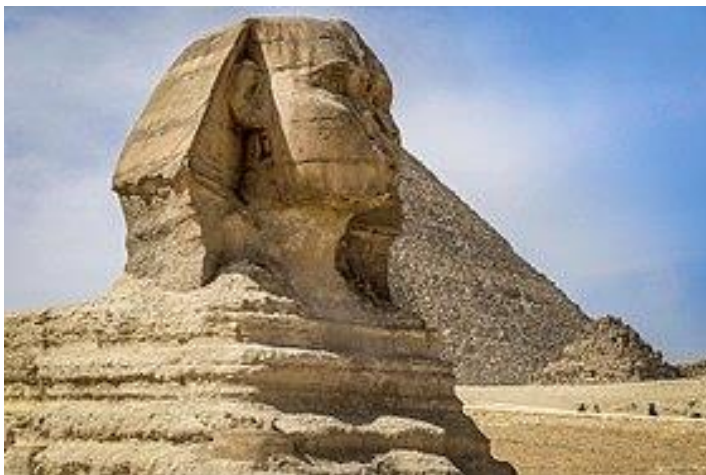
Another smart city will be built in Koya, Port Loko District, Sierra Leone. The idea of calling it Lion City was born out of a discussion between Dr. Tin, the Prime Minister of SOAD, Mr. Abdulai Bademba Barrie, the Managing Director of the Albademba Company, which is providing the land, and His Excellency David Suale, SOAD's Ambassador to Sierra Leone, who was the one who made the connection between the two partners. Dr. Louis-Georges Tin asked his interlocutors what made the identity of the region and the country. Quite quickly, the king of animals came to their mind.

The Prime Minister then said: "Since the name of the country, Sierra Leone, refers to the mountains of lions, in Spanish, it makes a lot of sense to revive the national identity of this beautiful country, and the smart city we are building will be named Lion City. Everything in Lion City will be around lions. The lion symbol will be everywhere. We will offer benefits to all companies with a lion logo. But also to anyone whose name is Leo, Leon, Lionel or Ariel, for example, because those names mean "lion. And why not, to all the people whose sign of the zodiac is the lion. We will have a festival of

tales and legends about the lion, because all over the world there are thousands of stories and fables about this animal that has made mankind dream for thousands of years."

We will make a large statue of a lion, in replica of the Sphinx of Egypt, which is a lion with a human head, but reversely, a human being, with a Lion face. People from all over the world will be amazed and will come to see it with their own eyes. We also need to bring back the lions to Sierra Leone, because there are none left. In any case, we would like to discuss this with the Government of Sierra Leone. It would be a great initiative for the environment, but also for tourism. And so, the city of Lions will become the emblem of the new power of Africa.

Of course, beyond the symbolic dimension of this city of Lions, and its identity, the basic infrastructure will be present in the city. For example, Abdulai Bademba Barrie recently presented plans for the hospital complex that will be built there. As David Suale said, "the Lions City will include a 1,000-bed multidisciplinary hospital, a medical school, a dental school, a pharmacy school, a convention hall and a housing project, among other facilities. With these facilities, Sierra Leoneans will no longer have to travel to Ghana and India for medical treatment. These facilities will benefit not only Sierra Leone but also other countries in the sub-region".



### **Ecuador: Palenque. From earthquake to reconstruction**



*Edison Marquez, MP and several other members of SOAD Ecuador*

On Saturday, March 26, 2022, SOAD Ecuador members held a local consultation to decide on the concept of their future smart city. At the end of the consultation, Edison Marquez, President of the National Delegation of Parliamentarians in Ecuador, called Dr. Tin, Prime Minister of SOAD, and told him: "The members of SOAD Ecuador have made a collective decision. Our smart city will be called Palenque."

In the Spanish colonies of the Americas, the word palenque refers to a community of refugee slaves and their descendants. There are many palenques in Ecuador, Colombia, Panama, Honduras, etc. It is the equivalent of the quilombos in Brazil, and the maroon communities in the English-speaking Caribbean islands.

The Prime Minister said: "I want to congratulate the members of SOAD Ecuador for their decision. Our government is very pleased to support this great initiative. This city will be the Palenque of Palenques. It will not only be a place where all the Palenques will be celebrated, but also all the Quilombos, all the maroon territories, etc. It will be a symbol of resistance to slavery and colonization."





In addition, Edison Marquez added: "the objective is to build a modern, ecological, administrative, economic and tourist city, with all the necessary infrastructure and other services. We plan to create a virtual reality entertainment center, cultural, artistic and modern centers, amusement parks, bike paths, gardens, gyms, supermarkets and shopping centers, among others. It will also have a pedestrian street, where we will find stores, luxury hotels, restaurants, jewelry stores, handicrafts and statues of our Afro-descendant heroes. This city of Palenque will remain a legacy for future generations."



*Luisa Ortiz, MP of SOAD Ecuador*

But two days after this consultation, an earthquake occurred in Ecuador, and it mainly affected Esmeraldas, the province where the majority of the black population of this country is located. Therefore, the State of the African Diaspora (SOAD) invited its partners, Future Energy Limited, a Nigerian company, and Axsumite Homes, a Jamaican company, who had already agreed

to build the new city, to participate in the reconstruction of the destroyed houses in the old city.

On April 7, 2022, the State of the African Diaspora and the two companies pledged to voluntarily rebuild 150 homes, as stipulated in the cooperation agreement signed with Lucia Sosa Robinzon, Mayor of Esmeraldas.

Anthony Atkinson, CEO of Axsumite Homes, visited Esmeraldas to assess the damage caused, analyze the situation and see how, in the coming months, his company will rebuild these houses, which will now comply with earthquake standards.

Edison Marquez, member of the Parliament of SOAD in Ecuador, welcomed him and guided him through the city, to show him the situation. And together they met with the mayor at the City Hall to sign the cooperation agreement.

At the signing of the agreement, the mayor of the city, Lucia Sosa Robinzon, said: "Despite this disaster, we are still able to recover. That's why I want to thank the State of the African Diaspora, represented here by Mr. Edison, and all its partners, like Mr. Atkinson who is with us today for the signing ceremony of this agreement."



*Signing ceremony of the cooperation agreement*





### Soon in Congo, the City of Light...



*Virgin Island, France. The highest lighthouse in the world. For the moment ...*

The City of Light is the name of the smart city that will soon be built in Muanda, DRC, on the Atlantic Ocean coast. The cooperation agreement was signed between the State of the African Diaspora (SOAD) and the NGO Action Communautaire pour le Développement Socio-Economique (ACDS), which works closely with the provincial authorities.

SOAD's Prime Minister had asked his Congolese counterparts what the city's urban identity would be. The association's representatives organized a consultation with local authorities and came back to Dr. Tin with an original proposal. They decided that the smart city would be called the City of Light. Indeed, the region is home to the large Inga Dam on the Congo River. This dam produces electricity, which is sold to South Africa. And when you say dam, you say electricity, and when you say electricity, you say light. This city will therefore be the City of Light. The City of Light will soon shine," said the president of the ACDS. It will be illustrious because of its history, its wealth, its science and its know-how," he commented.

Informed of this decision, the Prime Minister said: "This is an unexpected choice, but quite strategic and visionary. People think that Africa is an obscure continent? We are going to change this image. This city will be known worldwide because of the festival of light arts that it will host, and it will include an amusement park based on the play of lights, mirrors, lasers and optical illusions. In addition, a research center for light-related technologies will also be built, as well as an imposing lighthouse. Indeed, Muanda will be the lighthouse of Congo, Congo will be the lighthouse of Africa, and Africa will be, and will become again, the lighthouse of the world", concluded Dr. Tin.

## **Imeko, the City of Fabric and Fashion, in Nigeria**



Imeko, the Fabric and Fashion City, will be established in Yewa, Ogun State, Nigeria. Indeed, introduced by Mr. Otunba Dele Ajayi-Smith, SOAD's Roving Ambassador, His Royal Majesty, Alaiyeluwa Oba Benjamin Oyeditan Olanite Akanku IV, and Dr. Louis-Georges Tin, Prime Minister State of the African Diaspora, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to develop this program in the coming years.

Ogun State has a solid reputation for its cotton business. Cotton means fabric, and fabric means fashion. That is why the city will be named the "Pan-African Fabric and Fashion Capital". This activity will create jobs in agriculture, agribusiness and in the beauty and elegance industry. The city of Imeko will be able to promote not only Nigerian fashion, but all styles and aesthetics of African countries and the diaspora, from Algeria to South Africa, from Louisiana in the United States to Bahia in Brazil.

At the signing of the agreement, the Prime Minister of SOAD made the following statement: "On behalf of my government, I would like to thank His Majesty, who has made available 10,000 hectares of land, for this great initiative. In addition to the Pan-African Fashion Show, which will be held every year, there will be prestigious fashion shows, where not only professional models, but also princes and princesses will parade (something unique at the international level), to showcase the royal garments of African traditions, while promoting artistic modernity."

His Majesty also commented on the event, "Cotton has been grown here since time immemorial, and is the greatest source of wealth for this people. The country around Imeko is conducive to cotton cultivation and efforts are being made to encourage it. However, in recent decades, trade has declined due to the exploitation of middlemen. The intervention of the African Diaspora will bring blessings to this community, the whole of Ogun State, Nigeria and indeed the African continent. We are grateful to the Prime Minister of the State of the African Diaspora, Dr. Louis-Georges Tin, for endorsing our community as a smart city, fabric and fashion capital. God bless the diaspora!"

Otunba Bamidele Ajayi-Smith, the SOAD Ambassador, who made the connection possible, expressed his satisfaction : "this project located in Ogun State is not a fluke. Bringing such an important city to Imeko is a great honor for Nigeria and also for our past and living heroes of Ogun State, such as Chief Jeremiah Obafemi Awolowo, Chief Moshood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola, Chief Ernest Adegunwa Shonekan and the living hero, former President Olusegun Aremu Okikiola Obasanjo. This project will provide thousands of direct and indirect jobs to all Africans. We recognize the unprecedented blessings of the arrival of the African Diaspora. The continent will soon return to its divine trajectory to become the world's new leading power".







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### **Zollywood, the Zambian Hollywood**



After Hollywood in the United States, Bollywood in Bombay, Nollywood in Nigeria, a new cinema city is going to be born, this time in Zambia, and it will be called Zollywood. The project was initiated by Dr. Ngoma, CEO of the National Sugar Corporation (NSC), and he invited the State of the African Diaspora (SOAD) to participate in the initiative.

The cooperation agreement states: "SOAD will help connect experts from Hollywood and Bollywood to join the NSC (...). A significant amount of land will be allocated by NSC to SOAD to create Zollywood City."

After signing the agreement, Dr. Ngoma expressed his satisfaction in working with SOAD on this matter: "I am happy to collaborate with the State of the African Diaspora, which is long overdue. Through SOAD, Africa will be transformed. This is the best thing that ever happened to Africa. And I thank the government leaders for agreeing to work with me on our Zollywood City."

Dr. Tin, Prime Minister of SOAD, said, "All of our smart cities will have a particular focus. Edina, in Liberia, will be the symbol of repatriation; Muanda, will be the city of light; we will have the Lions City in Sierra Leone. This new smart city will be the temple of the film industry. We have so many stories to tell, so many heroes and unsung heroes to celebrate! This Zollywood city will play an important role in the development of Pan-Africanism on the international stage."

The State of the African Diaspora started to discuss this initiative with Euzhan Palcy, the great filmmaker, who has won many international awards including the Unesco award, and is also one of the patrons of SOAD University. As a result, Nollywood in Nigeria and Zollywood in Zambia will be able

to create or recreate the pan-African narrative that needs to be told by pan-African peoples on the international stage.

### **Medical Cities**



*Plan of the Medical Complex to be built in Sierra Leone*

One of the most expensive infrastructures in a city is the hospital. Health is expensive; however, illness is even more expensive. Therefore, there can be no question of economizing on what is the condition for a fulfilling social life, especially since morbidity in Africa is very high.

First of all, among babies and children, who are the most vulnerable. According to UNICEF figures, "in 2017, 50% of the deaths of children under 5 years of age in the world occurred in sub-Saharan Africa. One in 13 children die before their fifth birthday in sub-Saharan Africa. In high-income countries, that number drops to one in 185 children."



In addition, the major epidemics affect Africa disproportionately. Since 1981, AIDS has killed about 40 million people, about three-quarters of them in Africa. It is as if the entire population of Ghana or Mozambique had been wiped off the face of the earth.

In addition, the African population is heavily affected by malaria. Africa records 92% of the cases of this parasitic disease transmitted by mosquito bites. It accounts for 92% of cases worldwide in 2017, or 200 million out of 219 million cases.

However, the situation is improving globally. Life expectancy has increased by 25 years since the 1950s to reach 63 years today, only 9 years below the world average of 72 years. Africa is therefore catching up, but this effort must be extended.

This is why SOAD has signed agreements with several companies that will build SOAD's hospitals, medical complexes and medical cities. Indeed, in all the smart cities of the African Diaspora State, there will be a hospital, but in some cities the choice has been made to go further, and to have not just a hospital, but a real hospital complex, that is to say also a faculty of medicine, a school of nursing, a school of dentistry, a school of pharmacy, laboratories to make medicines, including medicines in accordance with traditional medicine, etc. So these are medical cities, just as there are university cities, built around a large university, or port cities, built around a large port.



*Surgical platform, as it will be built by Medicus international, in several smart cities built by SOAD.*

As it stands, SOAD has already signed agreements with several companies in charge of these health infrastructures:

- Medicus International,
- African Health Construction,
- Albademba Company.

Each of these companies has been mandated to build several hospitals, medical complexes or medical cities.

### Cooperation between Smart Cities



Without waiting for the cities to be completed, the State of the African Diaspora will build a coalition of SOAD's Smart Cities. These cities, conceived at the same time, by the same government, with the same vision, will be able to work together in a very fluid way.

This cooperation will be possible in several areas:

-on historical issues, for example. Indeed, the State of the Diaspora is working on the implementation of the Digital Slave Route, which aims to give digital visibility to the main sites related to the slave trade. It so happens that several of the cities on which SOAD is working are located in regions historically linked to slavery: Ouidah in Benin, Porto Seguro in Togo, Mwanda in the DRC, Badagry in Nigeria, Port Loko in Sierra Leone, and Edina in Liberia. Consequently, all these ancient cities, which are next to the new cities, will of course be included in the Digital Slave Route.

-on agricultural issues. Mr. Hugh Johnson, Vice Prime



Minister of the State is working on the establishment of a Pan-African agricultural exchange. Now in each city, there will of course be a large budget for agriculture, to finance farms and agricultural processing plants, which will be built in the vicinity. From then on, cooperation between cities will be possible: grouped purchases of equipment, pooling of human, economic and digital resources, joint construction of agricultural infrastructure and logistics, preferential rates between partners, assistance in case of shortage or natural disaster, etc.

-on commercial issues. These cities working together will in fact constitute a trade zone within Africa and the Diaspora. In other words, they will be a kind of shortcut to the free trade area provided for in the African Union treaty (AFCFTA). From then on, cooperation could be established.

