

**RENCONTRES
DE
MARRAKECH 2024
1st Edition**

FINAL REPORT
January 4 – 6, 2024



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Recipients : The Founding Chairman, the members of the Brazzaville Foundation; friends and partners of the Brazzaville Foundation and all participants – contributors to the discussions



Convivial dinner (January 4, 2024)



After the board meeting (January 5, 2024)

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-  List of participants
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INTRODUCTION

The Brazzaville Foundation, its friends and partners have designed and launched a new initiative which they have entitled “Les Rencontres de Marrakech”. The first edition of this initiative took place from January 4 to 6, 2024, at the “Es Saadi Marrakech Resort Hotel” in Marrakech, Morocco. This first edition was remarkable for the number of its participants (around thirty) and their excellent quality (high-level experts), their contributions to the debates were of high quality.

In the concept of this initiative, it is a place of reflection and emulation which brings together several African, Western and other personalities. These high-level personalities have diverse and varied professional backgrounds (see Appendix 1: List of participants). The main objective is to bring a common and shared vision for the future of relations between Africa and the West, a vision based on the principles of equity, mutual respect and inclusive cooperation.

As recalled in the concept note (Appendix 2), the participants unanimously agreed that the current context in Africa is characterized by the presence of strong issues to manage, numerous opportunities to seize and significant challenges to relieve. At the same time, the observation is that Africa-West relations are deteriorating due to growing misunderstandings and growing populism within both parties. This situation challenges the management of the Brazzaville Foundation, its partners and its friends in many respects, particularly in view of the solid experience in this area which they demonstrate.

Consequently, with complete legitimacy and in line with the humanist values of the Brazzaville Foundation, bringing together these high-level personalities to conduct free reflections on this crucial subject was well welcomed by the experts themselves because it was a privileged opportunity for them to share their experiences and their vision. This approach of free reflection is considered an appropriate and responsible response to the pressing concerns of Africa but also of the West in the current context. In order to achieve the objective mentioned above, these free reflections contributed to answering the following question : "how to rethink the fundamentals of Africa-West relations, in the current world characterized by so much uncertainty, in order to respond to the current and future challenges of the world and the African continent in particular in global “living together” ? »

To this end, the work took place over three sessions of a total of half a day each. After the official opening of this first edition of “Les Rencontres de Marrakech”, the first session focused on an essential question which is : “How to rebuild friendship between peoples, a prerequisite for paths towards peace within the framework of a new multilateral approach as a basis for new Africa-West relations (mutual understanding between peoples) ? »

At the end of this first session, rich in high-level debates, the various contributions were synthesized and grouped into five themes which were debated during the second session. As for the last session, it was devoted to formulating recommendations.

I. OPENING ADDRESS AND WELCOME

1°) Speech by HRH Prince Michael of KENT, Royal Patron of the Brazzaville Foundation



On the arrival of HRH Prince Michael of Kent



At the address of HRH Prince Michael of Kent

The solemn part of the opening of this 2024 edition of “Les Rencontres de Marrakech” was enhanced by the effective presence of HRH Prince Michael of Kent, Royal Patron of the Brazzaville Foundation. In his opening speech, after having congratulated and warmly thanked Mr. Jean-Yves OLLIVIER, Founding Chairman, and the entire Brazzaville Foundation for this great initiative, HRH Prince Michael of Kent recalled, with accuracy and solemnity, the importance issues discussed here for Africa and the rest of the world. He indicated that this was in line with the missions carried out by the Foundation since its creation.

In addition, he welcomed the diversity and quality of the high-level experts gathered on this occasion. He concluded his remarks by indicating that he expected rich and fruitful debates which will contribute to strengthening the centuries-old relations between Africa and the West. It is with these words of hope that he declared open the first edition of the “Les Rencontres de Marrakech”.

2°) Introduction, Jean-Yves OLLIVIER, Founding Chairman

Mr. Jean-Yves OLLIVIER, Founding Chairman, for his part, expressed his gratitude to HRH Prince Michael of Kent for his presence and his constant and valuable support. Then, he reiterated his sincere thanks to all the participating experts who were willing to take part in this very important meeting despite their respective very busy schedules, especially since some came from very far away. In addition, he thanked Ms. Fiona HILL, founder of the “Future Resilience Forum” who had kindly invited him to the first edition and included him in it. He also expressed his thanks to the executive team who were fully invested in carrying out the Foundation’s missions.

He recalled the principle of the “Les Rencontres de Marrakech” in general and the objectives of this first edition. Without delay, he invited all the participants to move on to the rest of the program which begins with viewing the video of President Macky SALL's speech.

3°) Speech (video) by Mr. Macky SALL, President of the Republic of Senegal

President Macky SALL delivered this “advocacy” speech on the occasion of the first edition of the “Future Resilience Forum”. Indeed, his speech remarkably made a vibrant call for the need for a more just, inclusive, legitimate and effective multilateralism in the current context of the world tormented by conflicts and violence.

To do this, President Macky SALL, after welcoming the admission of the African Union as a member of the G20, reiterated the wish of the African leadership that global political, economic and financial governance be reformed to take into account current realities of the world. Among the urgently needed reforms, those of the United Nations Security Council and the Bretton Woods institutions are considered priorities in the redefinition of equitable and inclusive multilateral relations.

In other words, the calls made by President Macky SALL summarize all the expectations, needs and interests of the African continent in its diversity. This speech made it possible to place the work of this first edition of the “Les Rencontres de Marrakech” in the current context of a world in movement in which Africa displays its priorities.

4°) Presentation of the progress of the three sessions, Foulo BASSE, Moderator

The moderator presented the progress of the sessions of this edition punctuated by two excellent convivial dinners, one held the day before the start of the activities and the other held on January 5 at the property of the President-Founder. It should be noted that these two events were important moments of exchange between the participants in all simplicity and in a friendly and professional state of mind in accordance with the philosophy of the Brazzaville Foundation.

In practical terms, the moderator reminded that participants could express themselves in French or English as they wished; instant translation being ensured and the headsets provided for this purpose were available for all.

II. REBUILDING FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN PEOPLES (FREE EXCHANGES PROMOTING EMULATION)

As a preamble, the moderator recalls the following question posed to the participants : “How to rebuild friendship between peoples, a prerequisite for paths towards peace within the framework of a new multilateral approach as the basis of new Africa-West relations (mutual understanding between peoples) ? »

The agreed terms are that the participants have the freedom to speak freely and voluntarily to debate this question. At the end of the first session, the contributions are synthesized and grouped into five homogeneous themes. Based on these themes, participants were invited to formulate recommendations.

1°) Free exchanges to encourage emulation

During this session, the participants took turns to speak and unanimously welcomed this initiative, at the start of each speech. Then, everyone thanked and encouraged Jean-Yves OLLIVIER and the Brazzaville Foundation.

In substance and in a synthesized manner, participants explored the important expectations to take into account in the new dynamic from the point of view of Africa, namely :

- Development issues, particularly in relation to sustainable resource management and respect for the environment ;
- Agriculture or access to food (food sovereignty), health, well-being of populations ;
- Global warming (climate change) with all its dramatic consequences in some places ;
- Issues of migratory movements which relate to common interests as a priority ;
- Security issues from all angles with the destabilization caused in certain States in particular by the existence of numerous ongoing conflicts but also organized crime ;
- Issues of political stability, business, trade in particular the place of Africa in world trade, necessary legal security ;
- Issues of state sovereignty and respect for the principle of the inviolability of this sovereignty ;
- Reform issues to be implemented in political, economic and financial governance in the conduct of world affairs to take into account the expectations and needs of Africa. Africa's demands regarding the United Nations Security Council and the Bretton Woods institutions are among other priorities highlighted ;
- The place of critical minerals in Africa was highlighted as attracting all covetousness in terms of geopolitics and potentially altering multilateral relations ;
- Several actors are in a position of influence in Africa and the predominance of the five powers is considered to be over but the West does not seem to recognize this, at least it does not admit it ;
- The need for respect excluding condescending looks and considerations from the West ;
- The weakening of the United Nations, in particular through the blocking of its Security Council in the face of new wars (example of the war in Ukraine) has revealed the divide between Africa and the West in general ;
- Take into account the values of Africa in this redefinition of multilateral relations which must be fair, inclusive and adapted to the current context ;
- Non-African and non-Western point of view: placing African values at the center of Africa-West relations is essential to enhance the potential of Africa (Africa, cradle of humanity) ;
- Africa is a continent with a young majority and therefore the weight of African opinions must be taken into consideration and the domination of Western media for decades with a biased vision alters the perception of things ;
- To draw inspiration from the experience of India and China in this strategic thinking process ;
- The West should be careful not to impose its point of view and both parties should make the most of the skills of African diasporas in mutual understanding and the development of inclusive approaches...

Overall, this list summarizes the priorities identified by the participants to reinvent the new partnership, the basis of new Africa – West relations, which must have as its foundation a new relational ethic in order to build a fairer, more equitable and more inclusive future.

2°) Summary of thematic contributions taking into account Africa's expectations

The exchanges and debates of the first session made it possible to determine the central subject of the second session recalled below.

How should the major issues specific to Africa be integrated into the multilateral approach? their perception by the West? (the voice of Africa through Africa)?

To this end, the following was recalled: adopted by the African Union in 2015, Agenda 2063 draws up the blueprint and master plan for Africa which aims to transform Africa into the world power of the future. It is the strategic framework of the continent, which aims to achieve its inclusive and sustainable development. Its main objectives :

- ✓ Focus on mobilizing populations and their ownership of the continent's programs ;
- ✓ Highlight the principle of self-dependence and financing of Africa for its development ;
- ✓ Highlight the importance of having capable, inclusive and accountable countries and institutions.

Taking into account all these discussions on the expectations generally held by Africans, the different contributions collected were synthesized into five themes as follows :

A) Understanding (mutual for the coexistence of peoples) : Concept of Values

- 🌍 To listen, to listen to each other in order to understand better one another
- 🌍 To know each other better in order to work better together
- 🌍 To respect each other (no condescension = example of visa refused, including to representatives of the people)
- 🌍 To highlight common and shared interests

B) Sovereignty of African States :

- Stabilities/instabilities (political, economic, security, etc.)
- Respect for the inviolability of this sovereignty
- Food self-sufficiency / food sovereignty

C) Political, economic and financial reform of global governance : the United Nations (Security Council) and the Bretton Woods institutions :

- 🌍 Better inclusion of Africa
- 🌍 Better legitimacy
- 🌍 Better efficiency

D) Energy transition / Natural resource management (fair, equitable and sustainable approach)

- 🌍 To rely on optimized, fair and inclusive management of resources, in particular through quality training of African populations for technology and know-how transfer
- 🌍 Climate change
- 🌍 Water stress (water)
- 🌍 Access to electricity

E) Inclusion of populations (listening to them)

- 🌍 To organize meetings with civil society (Associations, NGOs, etc.)
- 🌍 To listen to opinions, particularly from young people, in the design of structuring projects

III. RECOMMENDATIONS MADE

Taking into account all the issues discussed previously, the last session was devoted to formulating the recommendations of the first edition of “Les Rencontres de Marrakech” which are listed below in chronological order.

1) Mutual respect, based on our common humanity

Mutual respect, in all its forms (sovereignty, values, consideration of actors, etc.), must serve as a basis for rebuilding relations between the two geographical spaces and their peoples, particularly on the subject of the sovereignty of African States.

2) Information/Training of key interlocutors

To take care to properly inform or train Western interlocutors so that they can understand the issues accurately and respect local values. Indeed, it often appears that incomprehension comes from the ignorance of the actors concerned..

3) Common values

In practice, we should promote the values that people share, particularly because of their common history; namely from the cultural, linguistic, artistic, scientific, economic, technological etc. point of view and strengthen exchanges in these areas.

4) Relations between human beings

The basis of successful human relations lies in the good quality of links between men and women in the geographical areas concerned. Therefore, we must bring about the emergence of civil society in Africa which interacts with civil society in the West, create links between people and create appropriate meeting spaces. In addition, this would have the other virtue of fighting against stereotypes which are the breeding grounds of populism promoting fears and withdrawal.

5) Fight against water stress

One of the best ways to combat mutual misunderstanding is to encourage projects with social impact on the ground. Given the water stress¹ in some areas, water projects are examples of “success stories” that deserve to be encouraged.

6) Exchange spaces (platforms)

The “Les Rencontres de Marrakech” initiative, like other forums initiated in this direction, is one of the appropriate responses which deserve to be encouraged and pursued. It should be used as a dynamic discussion platform to continue to bring people together.

7) Institutional cooperation

We must encourage respectful and inclusive cooperation at all levels : sharing of democratic, economic, fiscal experiences linked to globalization, legal (harmonization to fight against trafficking of all kinds), health, etc.

8) Sharing of experiences and technology transfers

In several areas, but particularly in the field of energy and global warming (climate change), we must encourage inclusive and technological cooperation to promote people's access to electricity, particularly green energy, especially since Africa is full of opportunities in this area (solar, water, wind, etc.).

9) Aid / Development financing

One of the ways to ease tensions and increase the feeling of consideration is to design the financing criteria with the beneficiary countries and not conditional on the criteria defined elsewhere. In other words, it is up to the beneficiaries to know what is best for them and, in return, the latter would be much more grateful.

¹ Water stress refers to a critical situation in which either available water resources are lower than demand, or the quality of accessible water requires limiting its use.

10) Promote public-private but also private-private partnerships

Beyond the contribution of civil society, public-private and private-private partnerships should be encouraged and promoted, particularly those with a social impact aim.

11) Reform of rating companies

The ratings of rating companies have an immediate impact on the debt service of African countries. Sometimes, this can compromise the ability of these countries to raise capital and therefore invest in structuring development projects. We must therefore encourage the reform of the rating criteria of these companies to make them fairer and adapted to the African context.

IV. CONCLUSION

This first edition of “Les Rencontres de Marrakech” was acclaimed by the participants who, through their enthusiasm, contributed to the success of this event. The participants expressed their wish to continue these constructive exchanges.

It is therefore recommended to design a collaborative work space on the Brazzaville Foundation website to maintain the dynamic started at a frequency which will be defined.



« Les Rencontres de Marrakech » : Closing of the 2024 edition