

ATLAS OF THE SAHARA-SAHEL: GEOGRAPHY, ECONOMICS AND SECURITY

Speakers



Mr Mohamed Baye, Chief Co-ordinator, Executive Secretariat of the SDS Niger-Sahel Strategy

Mohamed Baye, a Nigerian national, is a primary education inspector, a graduate from the École normale supérieure de l'Université Abdoul Moumouni de Niamey and holds a Master's degree in communication for development from the Institut de formation de l'information et de la communication. He has held various positions at the Projet d'appui au développement de l'éducation non formelle being its regional representative from 2002 to 2005. Many times appointed as Deputy Regional Director of education and Regional Director of vocational training and literacy, Mr Baye was appointed by decree in August 2011 as Director of documentation and training materials and then Deputy Director General of the Institut de formation en alphabétisation et éducation non formelle de Niamey from 2013 to 2014. From June 2014 to date, Mr Baye has been serving as Chief Co-ordinator at the Executive Secretariat of the Strategy for Development and Security in the Sahel-Saharan Areas of Niger.



Mr Laurent Bossard, Director, Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat (SWAC/OECD)

Laurent Bossard has devoted his professional career to development issues in West Africa. He joined the European Commission's Directorate General for Development in 1982, where he was posted to Burkina Faso as Technical Advisor for Regional Co-operation in the Sahel countries. From 1989 to 1994, he worked for the FAO Investment Centre on World Bank programmes, mainly in Benin and Niger. He joined the Club du Sahel in 1995 to work on the West Africa Long-Term Perspectives Study. He then contributed to a reflection process on the future of the Sahel (Sahel 21) and international co-operation (Co-operation 21). In 2004, he was appointed Head of the Regional Integration Unit within the SWAC/OECD Secretariat, where he directed work to help ECOWAS define a common approach on migration. With his team, he founded the West Africa Borders and Integration Network (WABI). Nominated Director of the Secretariat in March 2011, Mr Bossard has produced numerous reports, studies and articles. He co-ordinated and co-authored the Regional Atlas on West Africa and co-ordinated the Atlas of the Sahara-Sahel: Geography, Economics and Security. He holds a Master's degree in tropical geography.



Mr François-Xavier De Donnea, President, Sahel and West Africa Club

François-Xavier de Donnea served as the Belgian Secretary of State for Development Co-operation from June 1983 to November 1985, as Minister of National Defence from November 1985 to May 1988. Member of Parliament since 1981, Mr de Donnea is currently the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Belgian House of Representatives. He is also Professor Emeritus at the Catholic University of Louvain where he was in charge of the Centre for Research in Public Management of the Institute of Administration and Management. Among his many commitments, he has been President of the Sahel and West Africa Club since 2009 and played a key role in the creation of the new Club. His work for the Club has focused notably on engaging new development actors, strengthening South-South co-operation and increasing the participation of Parliamentarians. He holds a PhD in economics from Erasmus University Rotterdam.



Mr Michel Reveyrand de Menthon, Special Representative for the Sahel, European Union

Michel Reveyrand de Menthon was appointed European Union Special Representative for the Sahel in March 2013 to in order to help guide the EU action in support of regional and international efforts to restore peace, security and sustainable development in the Sahel. He is also mandated to help co-ordinate the EU global approach to the crisis, using the EU Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel as a basis. A senior French diplomat with extensive experience in the region, he served as Ambassador to Mali from 2006-2011 and to Chad from 2011-2013. His professional career has focussed extensively on diplomacy and development co-operation with and in Africa. He is a graduate from the École Nationale d'Administration (1984/1987).



Mr Didier Reynders, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Affairs, Kingdom of Belgium

Didier Reynders obtained a degree in law at the University of Liège in 1981. In 1985, he was appointed Director General of the Local Authorities Department of the Ministry of the Walloon Region. From 1987-1988, he was the Chief of Staff of the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Justice and Institutional Reforms, Mr Jean Gol. Mr Reynders was Chairman of the Société Nationale des Chemins de fer belges (1986-1991), of the National Society of Airways (1991-1993), and of the Board of Directors of the SEFB Record Bank (1992-1999). Simultaneously, he pursued a political career in the PRL (Liberal Party): he was elected a member of the Liège Municipal Council in 1988, and has been the leader of the PRL group there since early 1995. King Albert II appointed him Minister of Finance in 1999, Deputy Prime Minister in 2004, and Deputy Prime Minister, in charge of the National Lottery, the Federal Holding and Investment Company and the insurance companies in 2007. He was Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and European Affairs from 2011-2014, and became Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Affairs, in charge of Beliris and Federal Cultural Institutions on 11 October 2014.



Ms Hiroute Guebre Sellassie, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel, United Nations

Hiroute Guebre Sellassie was appointed as Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General for the Sahel and Head of Office on 1 May 2014. She recently served as the Director of the Political Affairs Division and Head of the Goma Regional Office in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) from 2007 to 2014. Before joining the United Nations, Ms. Guebre Sellassie worked with Oxfam and the African Women Committee on Peace and Development. As a law graduate of the University of the Sorbonne in Paris and with many years as a practicing lawyer, she has also served in different capacities in the Ethiopian Government. As Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary General for the Sahel, Ms. Guebre Sellassie brings to the position extensive experience that combines strategic and managerial leadership, operational planning and policy formulation in the area of peace and security in Africa.



Mr Klaus Rudischhauser, Deputy Director General, Directorate-General for Development and Cooperation – EuropeAid, European Commission

Klaus Rudischhauser joined the European Commission in 1989 and took up duty in the Directorate-General Environment. Subsequently, he worked on assistance to the Newly Independent States and then was Head of Unit at the Directorate-General Personnel and Administration and the Directorate-General Energy and Transport where he was in charge of the Transeuropean Transport Networks. From March 2007 to May 2011, Mr Rudischhauser was Director at the Directorate-General Development and Relations with ACP Countries. His areas of responsibility covered amongst others: programming of the European Development Fund, Panafrican issues, peace and security in Africa, migration, governance, budget support and debt relief. From June 2011 to July 2012, Mr Rudischhauser was in charge of Directorate B “Quality and Impact of Aid” at DG Development and Co-operation – EuropeAid. His responsibilities included amongst others: quality of aid; evaluation; inter-institutional relations; information and communication. As of August 2012, Mr Rudischhauser is Deputy Director General at DG Development and Cooperation – EuropeAid and oversees directorates EU development policy, sustainable growth and development, human and society development and three units dealing with respectively communication and transparency, institutional relations, quality and results.



Mr Yaya Sow, Ambassador, ECOWAS Resident Representative in Brussels

Yaya Sow, of Guinean nationality, holds a Master’s degree in economics and mathematics from the University of Conakry, a certificate in economic analysis from the International Monetary Fund and a certificate in international business from Harvard University. He has held various senior positions at the Ministry of Commerce of the republic of Guinea including the position of Director of Economic Studies and Statistics before joining the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as an Economist. In the regional organisation, he rose through the ranks to become Director of Economic Research. Mr Sow was transferred to Brussels as ECOWAS Head of Office and Resident Representative. The mandate of the Office is mainly to strengthen co-operation between the European Union (EU) and ECOWAS countries. The EU is the main trading partner and the principle donor of West African countries.



Mr Olivier J. Walther, Associate Professor, University of Southern Denmark

Olivier J. Walther is an Associate Professor at the Department of Border Region Studies at the University of Southern Denmark. A geographer by training, he is specialised in the study of cross-border trade, border markets, and border conflicts and terrorism in West Africa. His research has been funded by the National Research Fund of Luxembourg, the European Spatial Planning Observatory, the European Commission, and the OECD. He is Africa Editor of the Journal of Borderlands Studies. In the Atlas of the Sahara-Sahel, he contributed to Chapter 7: “Borders, cross-border co-operation and freedom of movement in the Sahara-Sahel” and Chapter 8: “Security issues, movement and networks in the Sahara-Sahel”.