

EL HADJ BOUBACAR GAMBY SAKHO ASSOCIATION

REFLECTION ON THE INTEREST OF DEVELOPING A SPACE POLICY IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

BACKGROUND

African countries have launched more than 40 satellites to date and are expected to send about 80 more by 2024. The 12 countries with space programmes have allocated more than US\$4 billion to the sector, mostly for satellites - in 2019 alone, about US\$800 million was spent on satellite projects. Finally, the continent's total space budgets have increased by almost 50% in the last three years, to US\$503 million.

All of these projects have economically viable development objectives, such as improving agriculture, forecasting and managing natural disasters, remote sensing, climate prediction and defence and security.

"For every euro spent on space, there are 100 euros redistributed in the country's economy. The continent's development depends on space," said Sékou Ouédraogo, head of aeronautical projects at Safran Aircraft Engines and author of L'Agence spatiale africaine, vecteur de développement (L'Harmattan, 2015).

Space programmes are therefore important levers for job creation, poverty reduction, rural development and sustainable resource management.

In 2017, the Ministers of Science and Education representing the 55 nations of the African Union (AU) adopted the first continental space policy, considering it *"decisive for the economic development of the continent", and enabling "the promotion of science, technology and innovation"*.

In January 2019, the AU endorsed the creation of an African Space Agency, choosing Egypt as its headquarters. The creation of launch bases on the continent is already envisaged for the coming years.

All of this is the result of international scientific cooperation, in the framework of technology and knowledge transfer. For example:

- Rwanda worked with the United States on its 'Icyerekezo' nanosatellite, which was launched from French Guiana;
- Kenya launched its CubSat from Japan.

Other countries are working with Russia, China and France - such as Ethiopia, which has signed space partnership agreements with the French CNES (Centre National des Études Spatiales).

(See the appendix for an overview of the continent's current space programmes).

Fighting illegal gold washing, poaching, terrorism; defining the cadastres of a geographical area; giving internet access to the inhabitants of remote areas; using telemedicine for isolated dwellings, etc.: many are the very concrete advantages of space. There are many very tangible benefits to be gained from launching a nanosatellite today.

LAUNCH OF A FIRST CONFERENCE

This is why, Building on the success of the conference organised in 2019 by the El Hadj Boubacar Gamby SAKHO Association on China's One Belt One Road Initiative and its impact on Africa - which led to the

establishment of a partnership with the University of Tianjin and resulted in a twinning with the Institut National Polytechnique Houphouët- Boigny (INPHB) of Yamoussoukro - the El Hadj Boubacar Gamby SAKHO Association proposes to continue to promote the city of Yamoussoukro as the **scientific capital of West Africa** through three axes :

- Formation of an astrophysics department at the INPHB;
- Regular intervention of personalities from the scientific world;
- **Setting up a specific programme for the creation of the first Ivorian nanosatellite.**

In order to achieve these objectives and to present the intentions of such a project, a first public conference is scheduled for 11 June in Yamoussoukro, at the Félix Houphouët-Boigny Foundation for Peace Research, in front of the students of the INPHB. The conference will feature speakers working on similar projects in other African countries or internationally.

In a second phase, the El Hadj Boubacar Gamby SAKHO Association intends to produce a "roadmap" for the Ivorian authorities, in order to submit to them the paths for the implementation of initial feasibility studies.

The aim of the conference on 11 June will be to stimulate a movement to mobilise Ivorian youth around the development of scientific and technological knowledge. Scholarships could then be granted to students wishing to study for a year in another country, as is already the case in Burkina Faso for example.

The theme of the conference will be: "Space Africa, the case of Côte d'Ivoire. "

The main objective is to lay the foundations for the construction of the first Ivorian nanosatellite.

To do this, an inventory and evaluation of needs will be established, whether material, financial or human (skills and human resources). Before that, it will be necessary to draw up an assessment of the country's existing scientific, technological and, more specifically, space policy.

Content of the conference

The meeting will be organised around presentations on a national policy on space exploration, in the light of that of other African countries already engaged in such initiatives. It will show how, on an international scale - and whatever the specific objectives of each country - space exploration is becoming a major scientific, economic and strategic issue.

Process

The discussions will be based on notes that have been prepared. A powerpoint presentation by the Association will set the scene for the discussions.

The meeting will take place in Yamoussoukro, in the main hall of the Félix Houphouët-Boigny Foundation for Peace Research, from 9 am to 1 pm.

Boubacar Fofana

President of the El Hadj Boubacar Gamby SAKHO Association