

**AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP**



---

**EMINENT SPEAKERS PROGRAM**

**Presentation by His Excellency Abdou DIOUF on: "Improving  
Africa's Perspectives in a Globalized World: the Role of  
Regional Integration"**

**Opening Statement**

**by**

**Dr. Donald KABERUKA  
President of the African Development Bank Group**

**Tunis, Tunisia  
27 September 2007**

**Your Excellency Abdou DIOUF,  
Your Excellencies the Ambassadors,  
Executive Directors,  
Vice-Presidents,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is with great pleasure that I welcome His Excellency Abdou DIOUF Secretary General of the Francophonie to the Temporary Relocation Agency of the African Development Bank. As we all know, the Eminent Speakers Program is intended to broaden the vision of the Bank as a Knowledge Institution. The presence of His Excellency, an Elder Statesman and defender of the welfare of African people, among us this morning is a great opportunity to learn from his rich experiences regarding the major development challenge facing the continent. We are grateful to him for honoring our invitation. Considering his work schedule, which is certainly very tight, as well as his high office, I am tempted to see in his visit a sign of the special esteem he has for the Bank.

Although we know that His Excellency was a former President of the Republic of Senegal, I also wish to underscore that his successful career as senior civil servant, which started in 1960, justifies the topic he is about to address. He served in many positions of high responsibility in his home country, as Secretary General of the Presidency, Minister of Planning and Industries and as Prime Minister. His exemplary performance in these positions led to his election as the President of the Republic in January 1981, taking over from another African Statesmen, of whom we should all be proud, His Excellency Mr Leopold Sedar Senghor of blessed memory.

**Distinguished Invitees, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We note with delight that His Excellency, though no longer a Head of State, places his experiences at the service of Africa. Through his influence and dynamism, he continues to promote cooperation and regional integration of which he will talk about presently. While serving as a Head of State, he fought for African unity

particularly when he assumed the positions of OAU Chairman and ECOWAS Chairman. At present, beyond Senegal and Africa, he is the African spokesperson at the head of the Francophonie organization, where he promotes cooperation among French speaking countries all over the world.

I am therefore highly honoured to give the floor to our illustrious Speaker.

Thank you.