

Senegal

President Diouf Gives National Day Address

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[Speech by President Abdou Diouf in Dakar on 3 April 1990 on the eve of National Day—live or recorded]

[Excerpts] Senegalese nationals and foreign nationals living among us: good evening. By celebrating Senegal's independence anniversary tomorrow, we shall be celebrating the anniversary of the founding act through which our country joined the great history of nations. I know that each one of you, like myself, will be happy and proud. Some of you can still remember that day of hope when we regained our destiny. Since then, that same hope has spread through the whole of Africa, thus sweeping the old order and freeing our people since [words indistinct] of development. That hope was for justice and dignity, for social progress and prosperity. Today, this hope is also for peace and democracy. It was this hope that you were able to read on the faces of our South African brothers when they cheered the long-awaited release of Nelson Mandela. It was also this hope that you read in the faces of Namibians when our continent's last colony became independent one month ago, 30 years after our own independence. [passage omitted]

Senegalese, our country is now entering its 31st year of existence as a state, at a time when the world seems to be on the verge of a new era, an era that has a lot of uncertainties and generates a lot of questions, and which will probably be an era characterized by a demand by all the people for greater freedom and effective participation in the adoption of the decisions that affect them. In a word, it will be the era of democracy.

As far as we are concerned, we are waiting for this era with joy, because the path that it will open up is the same one that we have chosen and on which several countries have now joined us or are preparing to do so. [Passage indistinct] because democracy is the primary condition for development,

which tomorrow will help to consolidate our political independence through a true economic independence—I mean self-centered and self-sustained development. [passage omitted including words indistinct].

For my part, I will do my very best to ensure this. Of course, I am referring to the political pluralism which, while guaranteeing freedom for everyone, liberates energies and favors creativity and a spirit of initiative. [passage omitted including words indistinct]

I am aware that in the situation of a country like ours, development cannot be conceived without a real regional solidarity. That is why, faithful to our constitution, I have decided to make Africa's economic integration one of the priorities of the new cabinet I have just named. Senegalese, you can see that the country is more than ever committed to the path of true development. We have set up the political framework to achieve this goal and favored the development of private initiative. What remains, namely the spirit of creativity and hard work, as well as self-confidence, will depend on each one of you. It will depend on what we shall do and shall not do.

I am referring, in particular, to the support which we must give to civil servants who choose to work henceforth in the private sector as entrepreneurs and salaried workers. The success which these people achieve will have beneficial and invaluable repercussions on the country's economic growth and well-being; but without our commitment and our support, it will be impossible for them to succeed.

The first step we must make in this direction is to stop entertaining some prejudices and consume more of what we produce locally. Such an attitude will, among other things, give a new impetus to our national production.

To the entrepreneurs, the cadres, the workers, and the employees in particular, let me tell you that it is your duty to ensure that the watchword for consuming locally produced goods must not stop at food products alone. Consuming locally produced goods will boost our agriculture, our industries, and our services. For this reason, you must ensure that you win the battle for productivity, quality, and reliability, all of which must be your utmost priority.

I want you to share my conviction that you can win this battle thanks to improved business management and in particular thanks to the use of new equipment, because this is for our future—for an increased modernization of our enterprises. Investing in Senegal must also be the constant concern of all our businessmen and all who have the means. Saving in Senegal in order to invest in Senegal must incontestably be a proud demonstration of our faith in our capability to ensure our own development. [passage omitted]

Senegalese, I cannot end this address without paying tribute to our Army and to express to it the gratitude of all our people. We know that it is competent and courageous. For almost one year now, we have all

appreciated its cool-headedness and its sense of discipline, two qualities which it inherited from our heroes of the past and which it has been able to maintain and to improve upon.

I also want to express my sympathy to our compatriots expelled from Mauritania and who have been able to remain serene and to work together with us in dignity, hard work, and hope in others, in order to build a

Senegal that is stronger, more prosperous, and more democratic. I encourage them to persevere this attitude, which has always been shared by our people. On behalf of all of you, I renew our solidarity with them.

Finally, it is my wish and that of all believers in this country that at the end of this week of penitence, of prayers, and thanksgiving, we become more united. Senegalese and foreigners living among us, good evening.