



**Babacar Gaye**

**Saint-Louis City Councilor, Senegal**

*Interview*

English translation

**Babacar Gaye (BG):** Good morning, Maud.

**Maud (M):** Would you please tell us a bit about yourself?

**BG:** My name is Babacar Gaye. I come from Senegal, more precisely from the city of Saint Louis. I'm here for two main purposes: first, as a city councillor for the municipality of Saint Louis, which has a population of around 300,000; then, as an administrator of the funds for the development of ground transport in Senegal.

**M:** Very good, great. In any case, we're happy to have you here in Grenoble in the context of the city's year as a Green Capital. I'd like to ask you a question. In your opinion, why is it important to collaborate in a network, in a network of cities?

**BG:** As you know, there are new concepts such as inclusive management, co-building and co-projects. Synergy must be winning and productive, not only at the municipality level, but in all of our actions, in everything humans do on earth. As I see it, synergy is indispensable, and this is what we have in the project for cities. This project is the reason why we're here in Grenoble. In any case, in these two days, in just 48 hours, we have learned a great deal and we're very satisfied with being in Grenoble.

**M:** I see. Is there any specific area where you find Grenoble to be particularly inspiring?

**BG:** I'd say there are several areas, but I'll just mention one as an example: the use of bikes, even though this may perhaps seem banal. Grenoble is currently said to be one of the greenest cities, if I'm not mistaken. Correct me if I'm wrong.

**M:** In Europe, in 2022.

**BG:** As I noted on my first trip to Grenoble, I'm very, very happy with the pure, fresh air, as well as with the way the environment and space are managed. I don't have that in my municipality, I don't have that in my country, so it's very, very inspiring and makes me want to look for new ways to collaborate. In addition to mentioning bikes and clean transportation, I'd also add waste management because it's obvious that you have moved forward in this area. This is not the case for us, for my country, for my municipality. Although we've made efforts to achieve this, we still have lots to learn from Grenoble.

**M:** I'd like to discuss an example that I found to be very inspiring during these 48 hours and that you perhaps also have in Saint Louis; correct me if I'm wrong. What I'm referring to, Babacar, is the use of geo- and bio-sourced materials like earth and clay to build homes.

**BG:** Yes, absolutely. You know, I told the conference attendees yesterday that to the north of Saint Louis, at a distance of about twelve kilometres, we are already using this new concept of raw-earth construction. As you also know, in northern Senegal, particularly in my municipality, in my region, there are lots of typha plants. These reedy plants are used to add density to new constructions. We have earth, we have typha. Maybe we don't have bamboo, but we have other materials. These new materials help to make buildings that are clean, airy and pleasant to live in. And cost isn't the only advantage, because this doesn't cost much as compared to traditional constructions, so this is a dynamic that should be encouraged. I'm convinced that if you pay a visit to Senegal, you'll learn many things because there are already constructions going up that use these new tools, these new materials.

**M:** I totally agree. Thank you for telling us about all the sources of inspiration you find in Grenoble. We, too, find inspiration in the way you use certain materials in Saint Louis. You are also a source of inspiration.

**BG:** We extend an invitation. We are officially extending an invitation to the city of Grenoble because Saint Louis is a very interesting place with respect to climate, ecology and the ecological transition. It's a city that's surrounded by water. There's both the Atlantic Ocean and the Senegal River. So, it's a very inspiring place, and once you're there, you won't regret your trip.

**M:** Great! Thanks a lot, Babacar.