



Hamed Diane Semega is High Commissioner for the Development of the Senegal River (OMVS) and a member of IFGR. After having affected China, Europe and the United States, the coronavirus epidemic is gradually spreading in emerging countries.

The experience of developed countries has enabled African countries to put in place preventive measures. Regional solidarity is being established and the international community is observing the health evolution of the continent.

As Senegal has not been spared by this health crisis and its consequences on the economic level, IAGF gives the floor to Hamed Diane Semega in order to explain the different actions carried out at the national and regional levels to fight against Covid-19.

❖ Senegal

291 confirmed cases
178 people healed
2 deaths

❖ African continent

14,525 confirmed cases
2,570 people healed
788 deaths

First of all Mr. High Commissioner, how are you?

In the context of this pandemic, I am obviously concerned, as any leader of a national or international organization would be. We are going through a difficult and tragic moment in the history of the world. However, I remain optimistic.

How are you? How are your loved ones?

We are fine thank you.

What organisation has OMVS put in place to deal with the epidemic: continuity or cessation of work on building sites, temporary suspension of projects?

OMVS, like all international organizations, is adapting to the current situation. Following the measures taken by the senegalese government in the fight against the coronavirus, I decided to act very quickly by

setting up a teleworking arrangement to avoid any risk of contamination between colleagues. It has been working perfectly well for a month now.

Of course, there is a slowdown in our activities. However, I am trying to supervise the day-to-day business. The directors of the departments are also mobilized with the same goal in mind: to follow up on the most important files.

OMVS is an organization that brings together 4 countries. Is there a difference in approach between them?

To limit the economic impact of this health crisis, **a solidarity fund managed by the Ministry of Health of each country has been set up, asking private sector companies to contribute financially.** The 4 OMVS countries will also provide aid to the tune of 100 millions FCFA per country, i.e. 400 millions FCFA in total. Consequently, the OMVS member countries have a concerted approach and a common strategy to combat this virus. We are guided by the concern to protect the most vulnerable populations in our countries.

At OMVS, we welcome the very rapid reaction of our member states, which have **taken very strong measures ranging from the introduction of a state of emergency with curfews to the banning of gatherings and inter-city public transport.**



In Senegal and Ivory Coast, cleaners disinfect the streets because of the coronavirus pandemic

What are your main fears about the global challenge that this health crisis imposes?

« My fears are many, but the main one is probably a recession in the world economy, especially for developing countries. »

This scenario unfortunately seems to be on the horizon. No State is spared.

The OMVS will necessarily be affected by this global crisis since, as you know, we have ongoing projects that will be suspended indefinitely. So yes, the consequences will be heavy for the States but also for an organization like ours. The world will no longer be the same after this pandemic.

Is there solidarity between African states on this issue, as can be seen (too timidly) in Europe ?

We are seeing a continental dynamic through an African Union initiative called the **Africa Covid Task Force**. This initiative will allow for coordinated and concerted regional action in the face of a global threat.

In addition, we have the Pasteur Institute in Dakar – one of the most renowned on the continent – has put its skills and know-how in the field of screening at the service of African countries in order to rapidly contain this virus.



Scientific teams from the Pasteur Institute in Dakar, Senegal

Finally, you will host the 9th World Water Forum in 2021 in Dakar. Do the consequences of COVID-19 invite you to rethink the content, the agenda, the programme?

For the moment, preparations are going well although travel restrictions are impacting the holding of some preparatory meetings. It is clear that the upheavals caused by this pandemic will necessarily have consequences on the organization of such an event. However, the organizing committee supported by the Government of Senegal and the World Water Council is continuing its work.