

Wholehearted support for the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow

by *Lamine Ba,*

new Secretary General of the SCSA



Shortly after his election as Secretary General of the Supreme Council for Sport in Africa, Lamine Ba (see Olympic Review No. 146) gave an exclusive interview to the Senegalese weekly "Zone 2". Under the heading "I am not the boss of African sport but its first servant", the new Secretary General of the SCSA referred to the tensions stirred up by this election. Above all he defined the broad outlines of his task and the resolutions adopted at Yaoundé concerning the fight against racial discrimination and the meeting's wholehearted support for the Olympic Games in Moscow. Below we give the most important extracts from this interview reported by "Zone 2's" special correspondent, Mr. Serigne Ali Cissé.

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Before being elected Secretary General of the SCSA, you had the privilege of leading the Senegalese delegation at the ninth General Assembly of this institution. How do you feel about the way in which the discussions were held and the conclusions that were reached ?

From the point of view of the organisation of the meetings, at the start there were a number of mix-ups, which were very quickly sorted out, however, thanks to the vigilance and readiness to help of the host country's relevant authorities, who created excellent working conditions for the participants. With regard to the general conclusions. I would say that they were positive insofar as all the points included on the

agenda of the General Assembly were able to be settled by recommendations and concrete resolutions.

One has only to remember the very rewarding budgetary debate, whose great merit consisted in making everyone aware first of all of the material difficulties facing the SCSA and, second, of the necessity for the contracting parties to honour their obligations towards the institution. One could also mention the revision of the statutes, the new version of which defines more clearly the prerogatives of the President in office as well as the relations between the Council and the African sports confederations.

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You are going to have to leave Contéjes and move to Yaoundé. When will you start and what will happen in the meantime?

The transfer of office will take place in Yaoundé on 30th January 1980 in the presence of President Ordia and three members of the Permanent Financial Commission. In the meantime, the retiring Secretary General will have to prepare the transfer file with all the documents relating to the inventory of the patrimony of the SCSA. the financial situation and the current state of the files.

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Ganga ran the SCSA in his own, in his own style. What will yours be ? In your opinion, just how far can the Secretary General of the SCSA go, what initiatives has he ?

Men come and men go and no two are alike. Ganga had his style. Lamina Ba will have his. Those who expect me to base my style on that of Jean-Claude will be disappointed, because I do not intend to do so.

In acceding to the post of Secretary General of the SCSA, my intention is not to be the boss of African Sport but its first servant. This is the political credo that will guide my action in the SCSA, that is to say I intend to make full use of the possibilities of member-states as well as of the African sports confederations, which have become specialised technical bodies. In addition, my action will be based on the zones of sports development which for my part I consider as being decentralised operational cells from which the programme of animation and training can be effectively operated. My main role therefore will be one of organiser and coordinator.

Just how far can the Secretary General go ? The old and the revised statutes answer this question fairly clearly. In the first paragraph of the old Article 30, it is stated "The Secretary General acts, within the framework of the directives received on behalf of the Supreme Council for Sport in Africa, which he represents, either by correspondence or through the contacts his mission imposes on him on the African and international levels. He keeps the members of the Executive Board regularly informed."

The revised statutes, as I mentioned above, lay down the prerogatives of the President who remains the legal entity representing the SCSA. The Secretary General and the President must co-exist in mutual understanding in the interests of the SCSA. Continuous-joint effort will therefore be required as will a harmonisation of points of view. The Secretary General, who is the main driving force in the SCSA, may undertake initiatives within the framework of the general directives defined by the regular bodies, subject to his keeping the President in office informed of his actions.

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From the financial point of view, the situation is quite worrying. You inherit a deficit of about 80 million CFA francs. How, in

your opinion, should this be made good ? Will you have to call on outside aid ?

As I said earlier concerning the conclusions of the General Assembly, the debate on the budget in which we took part was an excellent thing in that it brought matters home to member-states. For proof, three countries offered to make a voluntary contribution of US \$100,000 each and I am sure that this action will not stop there.

In addition, the General Assembly decided on the creation of a multilateral fund for aiding the development of sport in Africa. We shall therefore have to finalise all these generous ideas. And to do this, we shall undoubtedly have to call on internal as well as external help.

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Mauritius, Mozambique, Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau, which have just arrived on the continental sports scene, expect a certain amount of help from the SCSA in drawing up a sports charter in keeping with their specific realities and concerning the training of sports leaders. What steps are you planning to take with regard to this ?

You are quite right. Some member-states require assistance more than others. It was in this light that I devised the idea of drawing up an emergency plan for those countries in such circumstances, a plan to be carried out in close co-operation with them. Such a programme would involve activities intended to accelerate the development of national sport in the states in question.

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The fight against racial discrimination in sport continues apace. In this respect, what major developments occurred at the meeting of the General Assembly ? Can we assume for certain that African athletes will take part in the Games in Moscow ?

Concerning this matter, the General Assembly in Yaounde showed great maturity and vigilance. At Yaounde, two quite separate resolutions were voted : one concerning the fight against racial discrimination in sport, the other concerning the participation of African sportsmen in the Games of the XXIIInd Olympiad.

The first reasserts the firm determination of members of the SCSA to step up the fight against racial discrimination in sport by all possible means. It recommends :

- all governments of States belonging to the OAU to back this fight by all possible means with a view to the rapid and total eradication of apartheid and racial discrimination in all its forms ;
- all African member-countries to put an end to bilateral sports relations with any country maintaining sports relations with South Africa, including the athletes and sports officials of that country, whatever their capacity ;
- the systematic condemnation of all sports meetings organised in South Africa or with its participation and more particularly the coming tour of the British "Lions" rugby team.

In the second resolution, which follows the communication of the OCOG-80 delegation, the Council expressed its wholehearted support for the Olympic Games in Moscow, declaring that it is ready to do everything in its power to ensure the success of the Games of the XXIIInd Olympiad, inviting all countries belonging to the SCSA to ensure the widest and most representative participation of their athletes in these Games.

From these two resolutions it can therefore be deduced that African participation at the Olympic Games in Moscow is assured, unless the situation changes radically in the meantime.

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How do you envisage the future of the SCSA ? Is there still room for hope ? Where and when will the next summit meetings of the Executive Board and General Assembly take place ?

My faith in the future of the SCSA remains unshaken, in spite of the difficulties in the situation with which I am going to have to cope.

I wish to point out that, as far as I am concerned, the Council is not and never could be the affair of one man. The SCSA must be the affair of each and everyone. I am counting therefore on the support and the co-operation of all to bring the "ship" safely into port.

With regard to the meetings of the governing bodies of the Council, the Executive Board will meet in Sierra Leone in 1980 and the General Assembly in Lesotho in 1981.

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Once you were certain of your election, what was your first reaction ? What does this election represent for you ? Has it any particular significance ?

My first reaction was one of relief and also of satisfaction. Then I was overwhelmed by an acute feeling of responsibility, thinking of the importance and the delicacy of the mission that had just been entrusted to me.

For me, this election represents a mark of confidence that African sport has placed in me. I shall try to deserve this mark of confidence, which I appreciate fully, always giving of my best in the fulfilment of my mandate. I do not accord any particular significance to my election, except that which I have granted to all the missions I have been called on to assume during my administrative career, since for me, every mission comprises its share of nobility and its burden of responsibility. I shall tackle it therefore with the greatest determination and the firm intention of carrying it through to a successful conclusion.

