Fatimatou Zahra Diop: trailblazer in finance and vaccine access

By Anne Purgold

When she was pursuing her master's degree in economics, Fatimatou Zahra Diop looked through the pages of the World Bank’s 1991 annual report and saw her future. A few years later, she would join the Bank, where she would develop her career from preparing financial reports for the first Gavi vaccine bonds to becoming one of the leading women at the organization.

Diop was born in Senegal in 1974 and moved to Paris at the age of 16 to pursue higher education. Two years later, she entered the University of Paris I, where she worked her way through school by working after class at the SEC.

After graduating, Diop secured a job at the Central Bank of West African States, where she rose to Secretary General. Ms Diop then earned her law degree, enabling her to be the first female lawyer of Senegal. Miss Diop is proud of the enthusiastic response to our latest bond issue, which raised $750 million for the Gavi COVAX Advance Market Commitment.

Diop’s career path has inspired women in Senegal and beyond to pursue careers of purpose and consequence. Today, as the only African on the IFFIm board, she is working to strengthen access to life-saving vaccines for women and girls, particularly in the context of ongoing COVID-19 vaccination campaigns.

Under Diop’s leadership at the World Bank, Gavi has played a leading role in the global immunisation effort. Diop’s efforts to support the COVAX Facility, available everywhere, would be essential to stem the pathogen's spread. There was a consensus that Gavi had to be part of the mammoth effort to make vaccines available to those with few resources, have access to COVID-19 vaccines.

In the spring of 2020, as the novel coronavirus began to envelop the world, it was clear that a multilateral, global solution to a pandemic was possible. Vaccination campaigns began the same month that the World Economic Forum convened on the Global Health Security Agenda. As financing in the bond markets becomes more important in the global immunisation effort, we are proud of the enthusiastic response to our latest bond issue, which raised $750 million for the Gavi COVAX Advance Market Commitment.

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In the News

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance is making an unprecedented commitment to support vaccination campaigns in lower-income countries. But what is Gavi, what can the organization do, and how does it work to prepare for future pandemics?

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