



# INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM 2022

SIMONE EHIVET  
GBAGBO

FROM THE  
CITIZEN-ACTIVIST TO  
THE STATESWOMAN

**DATE**

22, 23 & 24  
September 2022

**VENUE**

Abidjan,  
Côte d'Ivoire

**TIME**

8:30AM - 5PM

# INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

## « SIMONE EHIVET GBAGBO, FROM THE CITIZEN-ACTIVIST TO THE STATESWOMAN »

### Argument

First Lady of Côte d'Ivoire from 2000 to 2011, Dr Simone Ehivet Gbagbo is an intellectual and political woman with an exceptional career. Emeritus teacher-researcher of the University Félix Houphouët-Boigny, she is one of the initiators of the Research Group on Oral Tradition (G.R.T.O.), created in 1972. Dr Simone Ehivet Gbagbo headed the National Union of Research and Higher Education (SYNARES), at a critical moment in its history, from 1981 to 1984. A founding member of the Ivorian Popular Front (FPI), she was elected Member of Parliament and Vice-President of the National Assembly from 1995 to 2000. From 2000 to 2010, she chaired the parliamentary group of her party in the hemicycle. Dr Simone Ehivet was arrested along with her husband and members of their families (both biological and political) following the electoral coup, climax of which was the bombing of the official residence of President Laurent Gbagbo by the French army in April 2011. She then experienced a long desert crossing that began with her deportation to Odienné, a town located in north-western Côte d'Ivoire, and ended at the School of Gendarmerie in Abidjan, her last place of detention. She was finally released in August 2018, under an amnesty law, after seven years of imprisonment.

Upon her release, the First Lady, Dr Simone Ehivet Gbagbo exhibits remarkable spiritual serenity and militant tenacity. The dreams that she has always nourished for Mankind in general and for Africans in particular, remained intact. Her integration in the Ivorian society that she rediscovered after seven years of incarceration was done quickly. She resumed her political, intellectual, socio-economic and cultural activities.

The population rediscover the multidimensional emblematic personality that she has never ceased to be. Her charisma has increased after the post-election crisis in Côte d'Ivoire in April 2010. And she has become a true symbol of resistance to national and international predatory powers.

As a high-level political strategist, the First Lady, Dr Simone Ehivet Gbagbo, has brought her vision for her country up to date, which she describes as follows :

- ◆ A strong and sovereign Côte d'Ivoire, reconciled, modern, prosperous and open to Africa and the world;
- ◆ A Côte d'Ivoire that has become a Nation of justice and equity, built within an Africa that is integrated at all levels, equipped and crossed by large energy, port, airport and railroad facilities, and efficient road networks".
- ◆ A Côte d'Ivoire that has become a Nation populated by ingenious and creative men and women, young people and children, generous, open and hospitable, respectful of life and nature".
- ◆ "A Côte d'Ivoire that has become a country where men and women transform and exploit themselves the resources that nature puts at their disposal as well as the primary products that they get from the exploitation of their soils and their waters";

- ◆ "A Côte d'Ivoire that has become a State that knows how to ensure the security of its people within its borders, that provides health, education and training to its daughters and sons while respecting and making the most of all modern science and global ecological constraints";
- ◆ "A Côte d'Ivoire which participates in the construction of an integrated African market in all the fields and within which the sales and the purchases of the productions of all the continent are organized and where the problems related to the exchanges as well as the rules and the means of these exchanges are managed"<sup>1</sup>.

The advent of this new Côte d'Ivoire requires the regaining of seven (07) related and complementary cardinal values that interact with each other. They constitute the basis of the political and socio-economic commitment of the First Lady, Dr Simone Ehivet Gbagbo:

- ◆ Competence, pushed to excellence",
- ◆ Fear of God",
- ◆ Love of self and neighbour,
- ◆ Integrity which implies fidelity, loyalty, probity and honesty",
- ◆ Incorruptibility",
- ◆ The triptych "union-discipline-work",
- ◆ "The rectitude which includes the rightness and the justice"<sup>2</sup>.

It follows that the First Lady, Dr Simone Ehivet Gbagbo is determined to act for a change of mentality and behaviour essential to the restoration of Côte d'Ivoire. A Côte d'Ivoire turned towards harmonious development, whose motivated populations, in capacity to learn, to assimilate and to practice modern methods, will know how to qualitatively transform its primary, secondary, tertiary and quaternary sectors; A Côte d'Ivoire capable of developing efficient industries and infrastructures.<sup>3</sup>

This first symposium organized in honour of the First Lady, Dr Simone Ehivet Gbagbo has three main objectives:

- ◆ The first objective is to pay a deserved tribute to her exceptional career and the political fight she leads in favour of the Human.
- ◆ The second objective aims at promoting and further disseminating her ideals as well as the reference model that she embodies in Côte d'Ivoire, in Africa and everywhere else in the world.
- ◆ The third and final objective is to highlight the multiple facets of the Woman of State that is the First Lady, Dr Simone Ehivet Gbagbo.

*"Simone Ehivet Gbagbo, From Citizen-Activist to Stateswoman"* calls for a multidisciplinary reflection around five (05) axes.

### **1) Simone Ehivet Gbagbo: a spiritual foundation and a family base**

The spiritual foundation of the First Lady, Dr Simone Ehivet Gbagbo is not surprising. A former leader

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<sup>1</sup> See the speech of the First Lady, Dr. Simone Ehivet Gbagbo, delivered at the closing ceremony of the Constitutive General Assembly of the Movement of Capable Generations (M.G.C.) on Saturday, August 25, 2021, at the Palais des Sports in Treichville, Abidjan.

<sup>2,3</sup> *Idem*

of the Catholic Student Youth Girls (JECF), she has remained faithful to her Christian faith, which has been strengthened within the evangelical community she joined in 1998. In her book *“Ma Sortie de Prison, Premise d'une Côte d'Ivoire Réconciliée”* (My Release from Prison, a Premise for a Reconciled Côte d'Ivoire), the First Lady, Dr Simone Ehivet Gbagbo, lifts the veil on the relationship between the political and spiritual spheres from the beginning. For her, the spiritual sphere that can be inhabited by reading and immersing oneself in the Holy Scriptures holds everything together, including the political field. This position earned her severe criticism at first and sometimes mockery. But today, by dint of her determination, she is gradually establishing herself as a leading Ivorian political figure who unabashedly and openly combines her faith, her ideas and her political actions. She seems to be a role model in this area and never stops inviting politicians to invest in God in order to carry higher and further their projects of positive transformation of the society and the people they want to govern. However, this assumed approach to spirituality displayed by the First Lady, Dr Simone Ehivet Gbagbo, continues to be debated.

Also, Madam First Lady, Dr Simone Ehivet Gbagbo is undoubtedly a pillar for her family considered *stricto* and *lato sensu*. She is the mother of five (05) daughters that she had to raise sometimes alone despite her academic, scientific, trade union and political occupations. Besides her own children, she has contributed to the education of other [children within her couple](#) and remains an important support for her brothers and sisters. How did she manage to combine the demands of a multifaceted leadership with her duties as a mother, wife and family pillar?

## 2) Simone Ehivet Gbagbo: the pedagogue, the teacher-researcher, the intellectual and the writer

According to Dr Simone Ehivet Gbagbo, her first talent is that of [pedagogue](#). This talent feeds all the others. She excels in the art of teaching and transmitting knowledge, know-how and interpersonal skills.

What are the pedagogical approaches and models developed by Mrs Simone Ehivet Gbagbo during her rich career as a teacher, teacher-researcher and unionist? How do these approaches and models qualitatively impact the writer, political genius and "entrepreneur" that she is? Moreover, Dr Simone Ehivet Gbagbo embodies a model of a complete intellectual. She is not content with the comfort of solitude that is conducive to reflection and the personal satisfaction that one legitimately derives from the sometimes luminous ideas that may arise. She also gives herself the means to wear the hat of the pragmatist who works to put her vision and dreams into practice on the ground, for the benefit of the community.

This double quality of theorist and practitioner that Dr Simone Ehivet Gbagbo presents leads to question in a fertile way the concept of intellectual. Moreover, Dr Simone Ehivet Gbagbo is the author of three important books which are a corpus worthy of interest, from the point of view of their spiritual, philosophical, psychological, scientific, literary, political stakes, etc.

## 3) Simone Ehivet Gbagbo: the [union activist](#) and politician of genius.

Dr Simone Ehivet Gbagbo is a leading figure in trade unionism and politics in Côte d'Ivoire. In these two fields, she is a model recognized by all. What roles did she play within the National Union of

Research and Higher Education (SYNARES) and the Ivorian Popular Front (F.P.I.), the political party of which she was an influential founding member? What are the major actions of Dr. Simone Ehivet Gbagbo as a Member of Parliament and Vice-President of the National Assembly (1995-2000) on the one hand, President of the parliamentary group of her party in the hemicycle and First Lady (2000-2010) on the other hand?

#### 4) Simone Ehivet Gbagbo: the entrepreneurial spirit

The entrepreneurial aspect, one of the facets of the First Lady, Dr. Simone Ehivet Gbagbo, is little known to the public. Indeed, agribusiness is one of her passions. She experiments with the processing and packaging of local agricultural products such as cashew nuts, small kola nuts, baobab, pineapple, passion fruit, Guinea sorrel also known as roselle or "hibiscus sabdariffa", known by the Wolof name "bissap". She creates recipes and produces various beverages and other marketable food products. In the same perspective, the First Lady, Dr Simone Ehivet Gbagbo, is interested in the textile industry in general and specifically in banana trunk and pineapple peel which are used to make fabric, especially linen. Where does this entrepreneurial spirit come from and how does it fit into her vision for Côte d'Ivoire?

#### 5) Simone Ehivet Gbagbo: a national destiny

This fifth and final axis is the crowning achievement of the exceptional journey of Madame First Lady, Dr Simone Ehivet Gbagbo. Since August 2018, she capitalizes 56 years of activism in the service of Côte d'Ivoire and Africa. The death on August 09, 2021 of the FPI, a left-wing party that she created with President Laurent Gbagbo and other comrades in struggle, seems paradoxically to open the doors to a greater national destiny. This historic moment is another step in the political life of the First Lady, Dr Simone Ehivet Gbagbo. She is clothed in the mantle of the Stateswoman who fully assumes the leadership of the restoration of the Ivory Nation. Her closeness to the people is recognized by all. The large number of compatriots who came to commune with her, at her release from prison on August 8, 2018, constitutes a significant political act that legitimizes her audience. Madam First Lady, Dr Simone Ehivet Gbagbo has equipped herself with a new instrument of struggle that brings together many comrades of the former F.P.I. as well as several Ivoirians from professional, confessional, various social strata. With her new political party, the Movement of Capable Generations (M.G.C.), the First Lady, Dr Simone Ehivet Gbagbo, is weaving her web both on the national and international scene. The creation of a platform (Synergy for Dialogue and Reconciliation), composed of several movements, political parties, civil society and human rights organizations, is a crucial initiative of the action undertaken by the First Lady, Dr Simone Ehivet Gbagbo, in favour of national reconciliation in Côte d'Ivoire and in the West African sub-region. Its members aim to identify the basic problems that cause the crises in Côte d'Ivoire, to analyse them and to find lasting solutions.

All these actions contribute to amplify the national and international audience of the First Lady, Dr Simone Ehivet Gbagbo. She is undoubtedly one of the most serious contenders for the supreme magistracy of Côte d'Ivoire.

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They must be followed by a biobibliographical note and sent before July 31, 2022 to the following address: [segcabinet@gmail.com](mailto:segcabinet@gmail.com)