

HIGHLIGHT

« L'Etat de Droit et le Rôle de la Justice dans une Démocratie »

(The Rule of Law and the Role of the Judiciary in Democracy)

By: Professor Stephen Rosenbaum, (University of California - Berkeley) -
Moderator: Professor Serigne Diop, (Médiateur de la République du Sénégal - National Ombudsman)

Wednesday, October 13, WARC was the venue of a well-attended public lecture offered by Professor Stephen Rosenbaum of the University of California, Berkeley on the topic "l'Etat de Droit et le Role de la Justice dans une démocratie" ("The Rule of Law and the Role of the Judiciary in Democracy"). The lecture, which was organized by the the Association of



the US State Department Senegalese Alumni in collaboration with the West African Research center(WARC) and the US embassy in Dakar, was moderated by another prominent law specialist, senegalese former senior minister and currently national ombudsman("Médiateur de la république"), Professor Serigne Diop.



The Warc Director welcoming in his office Prof Diop and the US Embassy CAO, Mrs Stewart

Following the welcome address by the Director of WARC, who is also the president of the senegalese alumni association, Professor Diop made a brilliant opening statement emphasizing the fact that the rule of law dates back to Magna Carta in Europe (1215) while in West Africa, it traces back its origins in the Mande Charter of 1236 with the celebrated Mande emperor Sunjata Keita.

According to Professor Diop, the process of the rule of law in Europe gained momentum in the 18th century culminating in the 19th century with the readiness of the political powers-that-be to allow the rule of law to regulate their institutional prerogatives.

For Professor Rosebaum, who was warmly commended by his colleague Professor Diop, after his outstanding presentation, peace and stability in any society are guaranteed by citizens' free access to the various judicial institutions including arbitrations in legal courts. He explained that, in the US Constitution, there are provisions specifically addressing issues relating to the judiciary while drawing the audience's attention to the fact that it took the United States administration 170 years before legal provisions were made to make the free A



services of a lawyer available to poor citizens. He also added that, even in the US, new arrangements are being made everyday to improve the rule of law as witnessed by measures recently taken to improve the rights and entitlements of handicappers.

A partial view of the audience

He concluded by emphasizing that universal access to the judiciary is essential for the rule of law to prevail, while insisting on the need for legal decisions to be enforced for the people's trust and confidence in the system to be preserved and maintained.

The event was attended by over 120 participants and widely covered by the local print and electronic media.

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WARC Director