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MAG 0119 Vol 2, January 2019

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AFRICA VOTES

**Key Races, Issues, Stakes, Candidates:
Focus on the 2019 Election Cycle in Africa**



Mozambique



South Africa



Malawi



Botswana



Senegal



Nigeria



Botswana



Namibia



**D.R. CONGO : FELIX TSHISEKEDI PROCLAIMED
WINNER IN HIGH STAKES ELECTION**

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GROWTH PROSPECTS REMAIN STEADY,
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**AFRICAN PASSPORT A PRIORITY FOR 32ND
AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT-COMMISSION CHAIR
MOUSSA FAKI**

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**MOHAMED SALAH WINS CAF PLAYER OF THE
YEAR AGAIN**

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Rethinking power dynamics in Africa and the many joys of Post Presidential Life

By Ajong Mbapndah L



Ajong Mbapndah L, Managing Editor

It was quite unique that a president who “lost” an election could receive so many congratulatory messages from home and abroad. The irony is that I received more applause in 2015 than I did after my election victory in 2011.”

The quote above is taken from the book *My Transition Hours* by Former Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan. Nobody saw him coming but he ended up as President of Nigeria. Nobody saw it coming, but the villain he had been caricatured into become a hero by doing the unthinkable in Nigerian politics: -conceding defeat in a high stakes election with the potential to destroy the polity. By conceding the 2015 elections to Buhari, Jonathan became a hero overnight, the congratulatory messages from that act surpassed any he had received in his previous electoral victories.

At the launch of “*My Transition Hours*” last November, the turnout spoke volumes about the larger

than life image his trade mark simplicity has earned for him. Several former Presidents from West Africa showed up, former leaders of Nigeria showed up, President Buhari was represented by a high-powered delegation, and even in the build up to another tense Presidential elections that Nigeria is known for, both the opposition PDP, and the ruling APC had the highest levels of their leaderships present at the book launch.

In 2019, there are a number of important elections that will take place in the continent. Nigeria, South Africa, Senegal, Mozambique, Botswana, Namibia, Malawi, and others, people will go to the polls to elect new leaders. Using the example of Jonathan and Nigeria, the point been made is that elections should not be a matter of life and death, personal ambitions as worthy as there are should not override national interest.

Prior to the 2015 Presidential elections, tensions in Nigeria were rife, the country seemed destined for large scale violence at the least, and prospects of a civil war were real. President Goodluck Jonathan indicated that, to him, no blood of any Nigerian was worth an election victory, and he conceded defeat even when he had multiple avenues at

his disposal to challenge some of the glaring irregularities that characterized the elections.

When one talks of challenges facing the African continent today, leadership and democracy are amongst the most prominent. Elections are therefore no joking matter. The conduct and outcome can make or mar a country. As the example of Goodluck Jonathan teaches us, there is life after Presidency. You do not have to be a positive example or contribute to nation building only when you are in office. At international public forums, we have seen former leaders receive adulation while sitting leaders are scorned.

For President Goodluck Jonathan, he now has his own foundation, he has led or participated in several missions to observe elections across Africa, and served as guest speaker in diverse forums across the globe. A few years back, we met former President Rupiah Banda of Zambia and he told us he was a tomato farmer, and his products are distributed across the SADC sub region. Former President Obasanjo has written many books, he is farmer of repute, and his products are distributed across the globe. In South Africa, former President Thabo Mbeki is one of the most respected elder statesman that Africa has today, even his predecessor Jacob Zuma, forced out of power as well is still waxing strong, and even in the midst of his corruption related trials, the man has the luxury of artists inviting him to

participate in a music album. In Botswana, President Ian Khama even resigned ahead of the expiration of his term.

Beyond the prospect of making a choice in who leads them, democratic elections are an opportunity for the people to grade their leaders in some form. In Nigeria, the 2019 elections will be an opportunity for Nigerians to grade Buhari and the ruling APC. In 2015, Buhari and the APC labeled Jonathan as weak on National security, of sitting idle while over 100 Chibok school girls were kidnapped by Boko Haram, Jonathan and his government was accused of rampant corruption, and so on, Nigerians will have the opportunity to pass judgement on the last four years of Nigeria under their watch. The same will hold for incumbent candidates and parties in other countries.

After suspense on whether President Kabila who had exceeded constitutional term limits will step down or if elections will take place at all, the D.R. Congo actually went to the polls in December. Kabila’s handpicked successor was beaten and so too was the leading opposition challenger. Proclaimed winner was Felix Tshisekedi, son of the late democracy and opposition icon Etienne Tshisekedi. For a country where millions have died from a senseless civil war and conflicts engineered by various self-interest, many are hopefully that Tshisekedi could build on the relative peace and calm that obtains in D.R. Congo now.

Elections in Africa are no

longer business as usual, people are asking questions, people are getting more informed, participating more, and questioning motives. It is progress when a Supreme Court Judge throws orders the cancellation of elections in Kenya because of irregularities. It is healthy when Africans can question why the French Foreign Minister would challenge election results in the D.R.Congo, yet elections whose conduct, and outcome were worse in countries like Cameroon, and Togo are given a pass, it is a healthy debate when people can question the role of the Catholic Bishops in the D.R.Congo. Are there rooting for change in the country or fronting particular interests, and agendas?

It is our hope that this election cycle will see continuous progress with regards to free, fair, and democratic elections which reflect the will of the majority in Africa. It is our hope that should Buhari be beaten in Nigeria, he will call the winner to concede and congratulate him just as Jonathan did in 2015. It is the hope should Macky Sall be beaten in Senegal, he will step aside just as his predecessor Abdoulaye Wade did. It is the hope that the opposition will accept defeat with grace, go back to the drawing board and wait for the next election cycle. And to the people, the ballot is a super potent tool, use it to vote, and express your hopes, use it to vent your anger, use it to separate the flowers from the weeds.

Happy Reading!

Senegal: Testing for Democracy in Nigeria and Senegal in 2019

By Melvin Foote

Without question Africa is a continent that is very much on the move towards democratic governance.

Africa has made incredible progress in the past two decades with many of Africa's 54 countries now able to be called democratic, holding peaceful and credible elections, enjoying a free press, and governments that are generally accountable to their people. A driving force behind the democratic reform on the continent is Africa's youthful population that is now coming of age. More than 50% of the population of Africa is under 30 years of age and increasingly educated and connected to the internet, and thus knowledgeable about what is going on elsewhere in Africa and elsewhere around the world. Things have changed dramatically over the past two decades! Sure many daunting problem countries remain, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Togo, Somalia and Sudan, but the tide has turned and without a doubt Africa is moving forward.

We have already seen the faulty election that took place in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and are anxiously awaiting the surely problematic results. Next month, two more important presidential elections are scheduled to take place that will also be closely watched in Africa and internationally -- Nigeria and in Senegal.

In Nigeria, after a very lackluster first term, President



Mel Foote is President of the Constituency For Africa.

Muhammadu Buhari (76 years old), is running for a second term as the candidate of the All Progressive Congress (APC), against politician and business tycoon Atiku Abubakar (72 years) under the People's Democratic Party (PDP), who served as the Vice-President of Nigeria under Olusegun Obasanjo. Largely because of his absence from the country on medical leave, very little was accomplished in President Buhari's first term on the primary issues, which he ran on, anti-corruption and economic development and prosperity. Nigeria, despite its great oil wealth, is now on track to becoming one of the poorest countries in the world in the next 25 years if some drastic measures are not taken right away to stem corruption and to establish good governance in the country.

Senegal's election, also taking place in February, has president Macky Sall (57

years old) seeking to extend his presidency for a second term. Senegal made history recently with the opening of the "awe-inspiring" Museum of Black Civilizations in Dakar, positioning the country as one of the intellectual and cultural capital of the black world.

With a population of 15 million people, in recent years Senegal has had a 6% annual economic growth in 2015, 6.2% in 2016 and a continued growth up to 7.2% in 2017. The 2021 anticipated oil and gas extraction is very likely to give the economy an additional upward boost.

Senegal is widely seen as a beacon of stability and democracy in the West Africa region, never experienced any coup d'état, an image reinforced by a peaceful and well organized 2012 presidential poll when the country faced its first test as previous president, Abdoulaye Wade, ran for a third term and was defeated

by Macky Sall. As a strong United State's partner, last month Michael R. Pompeo the Secretary of State, reiterated the United States' commitment to Senegal with the signing of Senegal's second \$600 million Millennium Challenge Corporation Compact and to maintaining Senegal's democratic traditions in the upcoming February 2019 election.

With a presidential election in less than two months, concerns are growing that democracy in Senegal, long an example for West Africa, is being subverted. Two important situations are creating political tensions.

First, a new election law approved by the Senegal Parliament in April, requiring 53,000 signatures to qualify to run for presidency caused protests with critics accusing the Macky Sall's government of a plot to block minor candidates for contesting.

Second, leaders from

the two historical political parties, Karim Wade (50 years old), the son of the former President Abdoulaye Wade (Senegalese Democratic Party) and popular former Dakar Mayor Khalifa Sall of Socialist Party (63 years old) met that requirements but see their candidacies at stake because of criminal charges against them. Some political players in Senegal believe those trials are politically motivated.

Despite his condemnation, the fiercest opponent, Khalifa Sall, is still contesting while going through the appeals process. He is actually running his campaign from his jail cell! The Senegal Supreme Court dismissed his appeal on Thursday, January 3. Khalifa Sall's supporters believe that the Macky Sall's government is targeting him because of his potential strong candidacy!

In a report last year, Amnesty International criticized the Senegalese government for cracking down on peaceful demonstrations and said the judiciary handling Khalifa's case "showed a lack of independence".

Senegalese inside the country and in the Diaspora are mobilized to bring the international community's attention to the situation they characterize as "democracy in danger" and are calling all stakeholders to help sustain Senegal's democracy by ensuring the independence of the justice system, allowing all political candidates to contest and by conducting a transparent, free and fair



Macky Sall of Senegal and Buhari of Nigeria are facing very competitive races.

elections.

Even though Senegal has made significant economic and political progress, President Macky Sall's eventual victory could leave a bitter taste in the mouths of many citizens, should the other two main historical political parties not be allowed to contest freely. All Senegalese-followers will be focused on January 21, the date the Constitutional Council will release the final list of approved presidential candidates.

Both elections in Nigeria and Senegal promise to be

noisy and hotly contested in many ways! That's why West Africa's regional bloc ECOWAS has also recently urged Nigeria and Senegal to ensure peaceful, free and transparent elections. It is our hope that personal ambitions will not supersede the will of the people, and may democracy win!

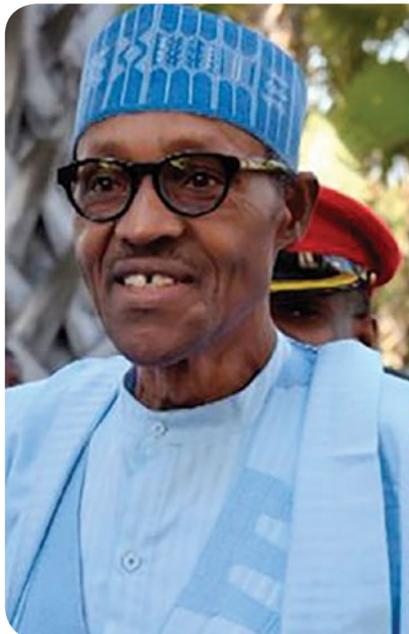
*Melvin Foote is President of the Washington DC based Constituency for Africa. The Article was originally published in all Africa and is published with his permission.

Nigeria 2019: Hoping for another reprieve?

By Edwin Madunagu

In a couple of weeks Nigeria will begin another round of general elections. This coming round of the four-yearly ritual, re-started by Nigeria's ruling class in 1999 to herald the Fourth Republic, will be different in at least two respects from earlier ones. In the first place, the number of officially participating political parties and candidates will be very much larger; and, in the second place, there are participating parties and candidates that are Leftist or socialist, and are officially named and listed as such.

However, only about five or six of the participating political parties can actually be described, even by Nigeria's historical standards, as political parties. But they are officially recognized and registered by the electoral agency as such. Other political formations that had unsuccessfully applied for recognition and registration are known—



again, officially—as “political associations”. Formations that had not applied at all simply do not exist in the eyes of the Nigerian state. In this last category fall several radical or protest groups—including Leftist ones—and all shades of anti-state and insurgent organisations. Whether or not, and in what way the Nigerian state draws

distinctions between them are not known. We may provisionally designate the five or six political parties mentioned in the first sentence of this paragraph as “strong”. Others in the same league of official political parties may be called “weak”. The participating political parties can be roughly separated into the following

groups: dominant capitalist ruling class parties; protesting capitalist ruling class parties; left-of-centre populist parties; reformist parties and Leftist parties. Of these groups only the first—and there are only two parties in this group—has a chance of producing the president—unless a major political accident occurs.

And, going by the current political alignments in the ruling class and the way money and state power are being deployed in the current period, particularly in the current campaigns, the two parties, combined, may take almost all the positions being contested in Elections 2019. Readers are invited to a light mental exercise. As



introduction, I propose that, for the working, toiling and poor masses of this country, quality of life in the last eight years has progressively deteriorated. Now, go back to Elections 2015 and construct an aggregate (that is, summation) of the former campaign manifestoes and promises—including lies and propaganda—of the two leading political parties in that contest: the ruling People’s Democratic Party (PDP) and opposition All Progressives Congress (APC). Then return to the present and do the same thing (summation of manifestoes, promises, lies, false claims, boasts, etc.) for the two current leading parties. You will discover, first, that the two leading parties for the 2015 elections are also the two leading parties in Elections 2019. The only difference is that their positions are now reversed: the 2015 ruling party is now the main opposition party, while the 2015 main opposition party is now the ruling party. You will also discover—and this is the high point in this exercise—that there is no substantive difference between the 2015 aggregate and the 2019

aggregate. I shall return to this point and conclude with it.

Although the number of strong political parties is small there are several serious presidential, governorship and legislative candidates—where by “serious” I mean possessing demonstrable knowledge, respectable postures and impressive antecedents. However, almost all the serious candidates carry the flags of weak political parties. Here we are: Serious candidates on weak or nebulous political party platforms—both sets approved by the Nigerian state. The emergence of this phenomenon must have been influenced by what took place—and some would say, still taking place—in America and Western Europe over the last couple of years. But the phenomenon cannot be regarded as a new stage or a new tendency or a new trend in global or “Western” history of liberal democracy.

I propose that what we have seen or are seeing in America and Western Europe are products of political conjunctures in the contemporary history of global capitalism and

imperialism. These political conjunctures produced Donald Trump (America) and Emmanuel Macron (France). Between the two World Wars similar political conjunctures produced Adolf Hitler. Political conjunctures can produce “angels” from the blues; they can also produce “devils” from hell. But none lasts for too long. They disappear without successors. As in the past, the lessons of the present conjuncture will be learnt both at the centre (America and Western Europe) and in the peripheries (Nigeria, etc.) of global capitalism. In Nigeria the lessons will be more critical for the Left. Why? Because it is the Nigerian Left that wants to change Nigeria for the benefit of victims of a decadent social order.

The central lesson for the Nigerian Left will not, as many would think, issue from the decision to take part in electoral politics and in elections under the present sociopolitical and constitutional order. The decision to participate was informed by history, and then, by the balance of forces: global and national.

Rather, the central lesson will issue from the nature and character of the revolutionary programme and strategic organizational framework within which the decision to participate was taken and put into effect – and, also, the tactical choices of forms of participation that were adopted.

Put differently, but simply and concretely: Is what we are seeing all that there is in the participating Leftist parties? Or, are they popular-democratic fronts of revolutionary formations? If what we are seeing is all that exists then the Leftist parties will disappear and vanish after the 2019 elections for which they were designed. But if they are backed by revolutionary formations, they will either not disappear at all or will disappear but re-appear as larger, stronger and more revolutionary formations.

An important conclusion from the preceding paragraphs is that Nigeria’s ruling class, as a ruling-class, has not been able to produce a winning party or a winning alliance of parties that can offer the people of Nigeria anything new. A genuine change—which, perhaps, is too late for Elections 2019—can therefore come either from the Nigerian Left or from an alliance of Leftist formations and genuinely reformist parties—an alliance in which the Left exercises ideological hegemony.

For the avoidance of doubt, by a genuine change I mean a radical and popular-democratic approach to the urgent problems of the nation—problems that are known by all and seen by all

except those lying members of the ruling class that can be taught not by the inevitability of genuine change, but by change itself. And, again, for the avoidance of doubts, these problems can be summarized and grouped into three: Massive class exploitation and state robbery resulting in grinding mass poverty and misery; elitist understanding and practice of “democracy”, moral degeneracy and bankrupt governance ideas on the part of Nigeria’s ruling class; and the national question whose enormity and complexity not only the ruling class but also many progressives and liberals—and even Leftists—do not appreciate.

The Left-alliance being advocated must be able to come forward with a clear and credible declaration or manifesto that frontally addresses these problems and offers the working, toiling, poor and suffering masses of Nigeria—in their current regional, ethnic and cultural divisions—something genuinely new, concrete, immediate, unifying and hope-inspiring in their various struggles that are just and genuinely liberating. A tall order? Yes, a tall order. It is either this challenge or you join the exploiting and oppressing social forces or continue to dance around them—hoping, like them, that there will be another reprieve from an irreversible national catastrophe that will surely come if the nation continues on its present course.

* M a d u n a g u , mathematician and journalist, writes from Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria.

Nigeria 2019: The Most Important Election Since Return Of Civilian Governance in 1999-Veteran Journalist Chido Onumah

By Ajong Mbapndah I

It is going to be a very tough contest between the ruling All Progressive Congress (APC) and the opposition People's Democratic Party (PDP); two, the main candidates have a few things in common: they are over seventy, both Fulani, Muslims, and from the northern part of the country; three, the elections are coming on the heels of

country returned to civilian governance in 1999. And there are many reasons why it is going to be a very tough contest between the two leading candidates. One, there is a balance of forces between the two main political parties in the country, the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP); two, the main candidates have a few things in common: they are over seventy, both Fulani, Muslims, and from the northern part of the country; three, the elections are coming on the heels of

"The country is more fractured today. Not since the civil war has the country witnessed this level of disunity, fear, suspicion and mutual loathing among the various groups that make up the country, says Onumah, a former Director of Africa programmes at the Panos Institute in Washington, DC. From the candidates, to the issues, stakes, role of international community, prospects of a third party break through and the critical role of the Independent Electoral watchdog INEC, Chido Onumah sheds light what will be the most keenly watched race in Africa in 2019.

How important are the upcoming Presidential elections for the future of Nigeria?

The elections are very important, perhaps the most important since the

great insecurity following a resurgence in the onslaught of the extremist Islamic group, Boko Haram, violence across the country, crisis in the education sector with lecturers on strike and universities closed, labour threatening to shut down the country over the minimum wage issue. The importance is that the outcome, will, to a great extent, determine what happens in 2023. The politics of 2023 has already started, and voters will have that at the back of their mind when they go to the polls next month. We must also not forget the different interests at play: the local political elite, the military elite, and the role of the international community so-called; finally, there is the critical question of unity and national integration. Whatever happens, we will witness renewed clamour for the



It may be the most important election since return to democratic civilian rule in 1999 says Chido Onumah.

restructuring of the country. If the incumbent president is re-elected, we will see a resurgence in the activities of separatist movements and call for restructuring, and if the candidate of the main opposition wins, he will be taken up on his promise to put in place the necessary mechanism for the restructuring of the country.

The build up to the last Presidential elections was very tense despite the happy ending, in what mood is the country and how are the parties and candidates carrying themselves?

In many ways there is a semblance between what happened four years ago and what we are witnessing today. Yes, the situation during the last election in 2015 was very tense. But the situation has gone even worse today. The country is

more fractured today. Not since the civil war has the country witnessed this level of disunity, fear, suspicion and mutual loathing among the various groups that make up the country. The mood in the country is that of apprehension. The activities of Boko Haram, banditry and politically-motivated violence across the country are a major concern. The parties are not helping matters with their divisive rhetoric. Among Nigerians generally, the feeling is that of cautious optimism. Nigeria being a very religious country, many people have resorted to divine intervention. There is a serious concern that the ruling party will use the instrument of the state, including the security forces and the electoral commission in its favour.

What are some of the major issues at stake in

the elections?

Unlike in 2015, political campaigns across the country it has to do with the general apathy which is a product of the disenchantment with the political class. It is hard to find any one issue that has defined the 2019 campaign. The ruling party, the APC, is campaigning on consolidating what it says is its achievement in the last four years while the main opposition, the PDP, is campaigning on the notion that the ruling party has not kept the promises it made before coming to party. Personally, I would have loved to see an issue like the question of unity and national integration dominate the campaign. More than anything else, I think it is one issue the country must confront for it to make progress. The existential crisis in the country is real, but it is not getting the kind

of attention it deserves.

Let's talk about the candidates, Buhari is the incumbent President and running under the platform of the APC, how can you sum up his first term legacy, did he and the APC honor the promises made to the Nigerian people in the last elections?

The issue of not honouring its promises is the major problem confronting the president and his party. The government rode to power on three planks: dealing with insecurity, fighting corruption, and boosting the economy. Then there is the other issue of addressing the concerns of those who say Nigeria is more of a unitary than a federal state and that there is the need to restructure the country and have a new constitution that will determine the basis for peaceful co-existence among the different ethnic nationalities. Insecurity seems to be getting worse. We are witnessing a resurgence of the violent Islamic group, Boko Haram. They are taking over towns in the north-east and the military appears helpless. Banditry is on the rise in Zamfara and Katsina States (the latter being the president's home state). Although the administration has made modest gains in the fight against corruption, the president has been accused of not addressing allegations of corruption involving his key men, including corruption in the military which many say is the reason for the country's inability to tackle the resurgence of Boko Haram.

The government has been credited with making some gains in the agricultural sector and expanding the



Opposition challenger Atiku Abubakar of the PDP was a leading supporter of President Buhari in 2015.

infrastructure base of the country. It has completed road and rail networks started or abandoned by the PDP administration. But even by the admission of partisans of the APC, Nigerians are groaning under the economic policy of the government, millions of jobs have been lost in the past three years, unemployment is rising, and the electricity problem has yet to be tackled. Nigeria remains the poverty capital of the world. One of the issues that endeared the APC to a section of the country was the promise by the party to look into the question of political, economic and social imbalance in the country. The president repudiated that promise immediately he was sworn in. About a year ago, the party revisited the issue and came up with a report which has remained in the closet.

Of course, we have the issue of the president's health challenge and the question of his ability to manage a country as diverse and challenging as Nigeria for another four years. The president has "outsourced" his campaign to the leader of his party, Mr. Bola Tinubu,

a former governor of Lagos State. This is a first in the history of political campaigns in the country and the view is the president is unable to withstand the rigours of intense nation-wide campaign. Remember that for most part of his first term the president battled with health challenge and was away for a long period in the UK for treatment. If he is re-elected and this problem continues, it will lead to serious infighting not just for who controls the presidency and the party but for who replaces the president in 2023. That would have serious repercussions on the direction the country will move.

His leading challenger Atiku Abubakar of the PDP supported him in the last elections, what are his strengths and weaknesses?

Part of Atiku's strength is perhaps the fact that he served as vice president for eight years between 1999 and 2007 and was head of the economic management team of

the government then. He has also been involved politically in the country for many years and can be described as an experienced politician. He is a successful businessman, a philanthropist and his tentacle spreads across the country. He has friends and political associates in every nook and cranny of the country. His weakness, if one can describe it as such, is his age just like that of the current president in a country where young people between 18-35 constitute 51.11 per cent of the total number of voters and there has been the clamour for a youthful president as is the emerging trend in many parts of the world. Then there is the question of corruption that

has dogged his public image. While he has tried to ward it off, it remains a big issue in his quest for the presidency.

Former Vice President Atiku's nemesis in past elections has been his former boss, President Olusegun Obasanjo. Finally, for this election, he has the endorsement of Obasanjo. How big a deal is this and what impact could it have on his chances?

I think it is a big deal and it brightens his chances. Obasanjo is a top member of the military-political class that has always determined who emerges the president of the country since 1999. I think that class, using former President Obasanjo as proxy, will not want to be humiliated. The impact is that Obasanjo's endorsement can improve, if not in Nigeria, at least in the eyes of the international community, the acceptability of Mr. Atiku. The endorsement also means that Mr. Obasanjo will be campaigning against the incumbent. Of course, it is not as smooth sailing as it appears because you can be sure that the public will keep reminding Mr. Obasanjo of his comments about his former deputy many years ago.



President Obasanjo is on my left during a symposium on January 15, 2016, to mark the 46th anniversary of the end of the civil war in Nigeria.



INEC chairman Prof Mahmoud Yakubu is saddled with the daunting task of making sure the polls are free and fair.

For the last two decades, power and politics have been dominated by the PDP and the APC, what are the chances that a third force could emerge to serve as a check between these two parties? Is there any candidate or party that can step up?

Nigeria is still a long way from the emergence of a formidable third force to supplant the two main political parties. My take is that many of the smaller political parties that see themselves as the “third force” have no organic existence. They are neither real parties or genuine grassroots political movements. What you have is that many of the young people who are interested in running for president do

not have the patience and discipline to work and build a political movement that will resonate with the masses. Many of them join the presidential race six months to the election and then they start shopping for a platform. I hope the 2019 election will be a learning process. If they have the staying power and don’t fizzle out immediately after the election but keep mobilizing, they can become a real force in 2023.

Former President Goodluck Jonathan set a very strong precedence by conceding the last elections and sending a congratulatory message to President Buhari, do you see him doing same if he is beaten by Atiku, or Atiku doing same

if he does emerge as the winner?

It is difficult to say. The president has made comments to the effect that he is not desperate, and that he will relinquish power if he loses. He has also said he is committed to free and

fair elections. His opponent, Atiku Abubakar, has also spoken about the need for free and fair elections. Nigerians are tired of election-related violence and are desirous of peaceful, free and fair elections. The leading candidates have signed a peace agreement promising to play by the rules. We hope they keep that promise.

In the last elections as well, we saw the strong implication of the international community notably from the Obama administration, what role is the international community playing this year?

The international community will play a role as it has always done in the

politics of the country. How that role will play out in the 2019, no one can say for certain. Four years ago, that support was quite visible. That hasn’t been the case this time around but that doesn’t mean the major players interested in the outcome of the 2019 elections in Nigeria, the UK and the US, are sleeping!

A word on the Independent National Elections Commission (INEC), charged with conducting the polls. Are they ready to organize a hitch-free and fair poll whose outcome will reflect the will of the Nigerian people?

INEC says it is ready for hitch-free elections. It has had enough time to prepare for the elections and has received all the support it needs to conduct free and fair elections. There are some red flags concerning the independence of INEC and its approach to the elections. In late October 2018, local newspapers reported that the chair of INEC, Professor Mahmood Yakubu, met with the Chief of Staff to President Buhari, Mr. Abba Kyari, at the Presidential Villa in Abuja. The outcome of the meeting was not made public.

In December 2018, INEC announced that Internally

Displaced Persons (IDPs) in neighbouring Niger and Chad will be allowed to vote. This is happening in a country where Nigerians in the Diaspora are by law prevented from voting. The issue here is that once an IDP leaves his or her country of residence, he or she becomes a refugee and no longer an IDP. To that extent, they are not covered by Nigerian laws concerning voting.

Recently, the president’s niece, a former Acting Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), was appointed head of the INEC collation centre for the general election. The main opposition party, the PDP, and a Coalition of United Political Parties (CUPP) have kicked against the appointment.

These are some of the concerns Nigerians have about INEC and its quest for credible polls. Nigerians are really looking forward to credible elections. I sincerely hope they are not disappointed. INEC can’t afford to fail Nigerians. It is standing on the cusp of history and every eye, both local and international, will be on the electoral umpire to see how creditably it performs.



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Big Year Ahead For South Africa As It Gears Up For the 2019 General Elections

By Prince Kurupati

2019 is set to be a big year for Africa's rainbow nation, South Africa. South Africa in May will hold its general elections. The general elections will see the electorate take to the ballot to choose their next provincial legislators, members of the National Assembly as well as the country's next president.

In past elections (after the attainment of independence in 1994), South Africa general elections when it comes to the presidential race were more of a foregone conclusion well before the voters cast their votes. One party i.e. the African National Congress (ANC) entered into the elections as a front runner and 'automatically', all knew that the ANC would win the most votes. The mere fact that the ANC was the party of most blacks meant it had the highest number of supporters hence the ability to win convincingly during the general elections.

While in the past the

presidential race was a foregone conclusion, the same cannot be said of the upcoming 2019 elections. There are two factors behind this i.e. the emergence of another pro black (and some would say pro poor political party) and also the reformation of the South African electorate from being proponents of personality politics to becoming proponents of substance politics. More on this later but now, let's take a brief look at South Africa's electoral history.

South African elections since attainment of independence

South Africa's journey to democracy started in 1993 when on April 27 the country adopted an interim constitution. The interim constitution was a compromise between the white South African population and the black South African population. In essence, the interim



President Ramaphosa and the ANC are still firmly incharge despite opposition inroads.

constitution officially marked the end of Apartheid system, a racial segregation policy which had been in existence for decades. For the black majority, the end of Apartheid was a momentous achievement as it meant that they could now freely move in their own country and also partake in almost anything they wanted. The colour

of the skin was no longer a limiting factor. For the white minority, the interim constitution was alright in that, though it abolished certain rights and privileges they once enjoyed, it let them keep the means of production from the manufacturing companies and industries to the farms.

Apart from the above, the other key thing which was bought about by the interim constitution was the provisions to administer the country's first democratic elections. A period of 12 months from the date of effect (April 27 1993) was the timeframe given to the government to organize and conduct the country's first democratic elections (one man one vote with universal suffrage). On 27 April the following year (1994), South Africans went to the

polls (the elderly voted a day before while areas plagued by some logistical problems were given another day for voting). It took less than a week for the Independent Electoral Commission to release the provisional results which saw the ANC score the highest with 54 percent of the votes followed by the National Party with 33 percent and lastly the Inkhatha Freedom Party with 4.5 percent. Official results were announced a couple of days later and on 10 May, Nelson Mandela was inaugurated as the first democratically elected president of South Africa.

After 1994, South held its second general election which saw the ANC win the presidential race for the second time with Thabo Mbeki as the presidential candidate. The third democratic elections were held in 2004 with the incumbent Thabo Mbeki running for a second



Julius Malema and the Economic Freedom Fighters have been a growing threat to the ANC.

term. Just like the first time, Mbeki won on the ANC ticket with more than 60 percent of the votes cast. Mbeki however could not finish his second term as he handed in his resignation letter on 21 September 2008 amid pressure from his party, ANC to step down. To finish Mbeki's term as president, Kgalema Motlanthe was elected interim president by the South African parliament. On 22 April 2009, the country holds the fourth democratic elections and the ANC running presidential candidate Jacob Zuma wins. On 7 May 2014, Jacob Zuma wins his second presidential term in the country's fifth democratic elections but just like his predecessor, he failed to finish his second term as he resigned on Valentine's Day 2018 amid pressure from his party to step down. To finish Zuma's term, Cyril Ramaphosa was elected interim president and he is the running candidate of the ANC in the upcoming 2019 general elections.

Changing political landscape

There is a prevailing feeling in South Africa that the upcoming elections are going to be a whole lot different from those conducted in the past. Most notably, the result of the presidential race is not going to be a foregone conclusion. While the ANC still dominates (at least according to polls done by several organizations), there are other factors which are likely going to influence the outcome of the election other than the 'supremacy' of the ANC name.

First, there is the issue of the emergence of a new political party which is pro black i.e. the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). The EFF is a splinter political party formed by Julius Malema, a former ANC stalwart who once served as the ANC Youth League leader. Malema is a charismatic and radical leader. Malema's radicalism trickles down to other organs as well as leaders and followers of the EFF. In the upcoming elections, the EFF is not necessarily being viewed as a party that will cause an upset and end the ANC's dominance. However, as a party whose main support base are blacks, the EFF does have the power to take away a large section of the ANC votes thereby leaving the ANC in a precarious position. The EFF's impact can be felt but only if the main opposition party i.e. the Democratic Alliance gets back into shape in the remaining few months. Failure to do so may however mean that the ANC will lose a certain proportion of its support but no single opposition political party would be able to capitalize hence it will still retain power.

Second, there is the issue of substance politics. In past general elections, the voting trend was along race and party lines. In general, the whites voted for the DA while the blacks voted for the ANC. This trend according to the current situation on



Democratic Alliance (DA) leader Mmusi Maimane will be a force to reckon with in the elections.

the ground is no longer applicable though. Voters are now much more concerned with politics of substance over politics of personality. To add to this, the emergence of new political parties on either side (i.e. the pro black EFF and the pro white GOOD Party) means voters have more options even if they still want to vote along 'racial lines'. In the buildup to the general election, there is one issue which is forcing the hand of all political parties to air their views i.e. the land expropriation without compensation issue. For the pro black political parties, they are in support of the policy though differing on how it should be executed and implemented. On the other hand, pro white political parties are preaching the importance of safeguarding property rights and as such, they are against the policy. Primarily, the issue of land expropriation without compensation is the most key issue which informs the stance

of different political parties when it comes to politics of substance. Ultimately, it is this very same thing which will determine which side of the political divide will win.

Last but not least, past achievements will also play a huge role in determining the outcome of the upcoming general elections. This last issue mostly applies to the ruling party. In the 2014 manifesto, the ANC promised to do a lot of things. Generally speaking, it has failed to fulfill most of its promises. The ANC promised to create six million work opportunities. Truth be told, Jacob Zuma failed to meet this expectation dismally. In fact, instead of creating work opportunities, one would not be completely wrong to suggest that work opportunities were actually cut. Just to put this into perspective, soon after assuming the presidency (in the interim), Cyril Ramaphosa had to make job creation one of his key objectives owing to the rising

unemployment rate in the country. The ANC also made a huge promise to "investigate the modalities of instituting a national minimum wage". True to what it said, it did raise and to some extent investigate the modalities but it did not go the extra mile to institute a national minimum wage. The ANC also promised to reform the education and healthcare sectors so as to cut costs but no such reform has as yet been initiated.

The failure by the ANC will no doubt make it prone to criticism from opposition political parties but what it does promise going into the general elections can compensate for past unfulfilled promises. At the time of writing, the incumbent Cyril Ramaphosa and the ANC are yet to release the 2019 general elections manifesto to let the electorate know what the ANC's vision for South Africa looks like. The manifesto is set to be unveiled on January 12 2019.

SWAPO: Namibia's Ruling Party Seeks to Maintain Its Dominance as It Gears Up for the 2019 General Elections

By Prince Kurupati

2019 is a huge year for Namibia as Namibians will once again go to the polls to choose and elect the country's next president as well as the next crop of legislators.

Namibia at best can be described as an archetypal southern African state when it comes to the elections. The reason we say this is that though Namibia classifies itself as a democratic multi-party state, it is in effect a one-party dominant state as the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) has maintained power since independence, often times winning elections with landslide margins. As the nation gears up for yet another general election, the overall feeling is that SWAPO is likely going to win convincingly, this time, thanks to the controversial land expropriation without compensation 'policy'.

Before we delve deeper into the chances of SWAPO (as well as other opposition political parties), let's first get to appreciate Namibia's electoral history.

Namibia's electoral history

On February 9, 1990, Namibia attained its independence from South Africa. The peace deal brokered by the United Nations secretary general at the time (Javier Perez de Cuellar) stipulated that the leader of the country for the next five years would come from the dominant party, the

party which had won the most seats in the 1989 Constituent Assembly Election (later changed to National Assembly after independence). With SWAPO having garnered 57.33 percent of the vote, it automatically meant that the leader of SWAPO at the time (Sam Nujoma) would become the first president of Namibia post-independence.

Indeed, soon after independence, Sam Nujoma was inaugurated as Namibia's president. To pave way for a clean slate for Namibia, the UN-brokered peace deal did usher in a new 'constitution' which outlined the laws of the land. Among the provisions found in this 'constitution', any elected was to be elected for a five-year term and she or he could only be re-elected once hence, in practice, this meant that the maximum presidential term limit was set at two terms. However, due to the fact that at independence Sam Nujoma had not been elected directly by the people, his 'first term' did not count towards the maximum of two presidential terms.

Nujoma's first term came to an end in 1994 and the country went to the polls to vote for the next president. Nujoma was one of the two competing candidates and he won the race with a huge 76.34 percent of the vote. This meant Nujoma was to serve his second term (but his first when counting towards the maximum presidential term limit). At the end of his second term in 1999, Nujoma ran once again for

the presidency and just like before, he won convincingly with 76.82 percent of the vote. This was Nujoma's last term and in 2004, he duly paved the way for SWAPO's newly elected leader, Hifikepunye Pohamba. Hifikepunye Pohamba competed in the 2004 presidential race and won with 76.44 percent of the vote.

At the end of his first term in 2009, Hifikepunye Pohamba decided to run for his second and final term. He won the race with 76.42 percent. Having done his two five year terms, Hifikepunye Pohamba vacated his position as SWAPO's leader and in his place came Hage Geingob. Hage Geingob (the incumbent) competed in the 2014 presidential election and won with a massive 86.73 percent of the vote.

Hage Geingob's first term ends in a few months; he has already stated his desire to run for a second term and he is the presidential candidate for SWAPO.

Land Question a Huge Plus for SWAPO

From the above, we saw how SWAPO has been dominating when it comes to presidential elections (the



President Hage Geingob and SWAPO will be hoping to maintain a firm grip on power in Namibia.

same can also be said of the National Assembly elections). In fact, in the last election, SWAPO saw a significant rise in its support as for the first time since independence, it managed to win the presidential election by over 85 percent of the vote. This on its own demonstrates the power and popularity of SWAPO. Looking ahead to the 2019 presidential election, evidence suggests that SWAPO is set to continue its impressive trend as opinion polls rank the ruling party as the likely winner.

While in past elections, SWAPO's revolutionary past has been the major factor that helped it pull supporters to its side, in recent times, a new factor emerged i.e. the land expropriation without compensation policy. This new factor looks likely to consolidate if not improve SWAPO'S power and popularity in Namibia.

Just like most African states, the main issue which

saw Namibians fight guerilla wars during colonialism was the issue of land. At the attainment of independence, it was stated that Namibia had won back its sovereignty and its land. However, landowners were not forced to vacate their land, rather, those who wanted to vacate were freely allowed to do so while those who felt that they wanted to remain and stay on 'their' land were allowed to do so. For the dispossessed blacks, those who wanted land were to acquire land from white farmers who voluntarily sold their land; a policy was put in place to help blacks financially when acquiring land. While this willing buyer willing seller policy was believed to be the best way forward by peacemakers and the government of the day, time later revealed that it was not exactly a 'masterstroke' of a plan as earlier believed. This was largely necessitated by the unwillingness of whites

to sell their land hence even after independence, the land which black Namibians had fought for remained in the hands of the minority few i.e. the whites.

Irrespective of the fact that many indigenous Namibians failed to access land after independence, at first, very few were concerned (or rather, very few openly showed their frustration at the slow pace of land redistribution). However, developments from neighbouring southern African states namely Zimbabwe (through the Land Reform Programme) and South Africa (through the and expropriation without compensation 'policy') instilled newly found confidence in Namibians to openly voice their frustrations at the snail's pace with which the willing buyer willing seller policy was moving.

Realizing that the public was now clamouring for a faster, efficient and more effective land redistribution policy, SWAPO acted fast and came up with the land

expropriation without compensation 'policy'. Not only did this new land policy promise a faster and effective land redistribution process, it also made land redistribution 'cheap' through repossessing and redistributing land freely. As such, it was double sweetness for thousands of Namibians.

Ever since Hage Geingob in early 2017 said that the government is considering radical land expropriation to spur the transfer of property to the country's black majority, support for him and SWAPO, in general, has increased sharply. At the time, Hage Geingob also said that "Namibia wants to transfer 43 percent, or 15 million hectares of its arable agricultural land, to previously disadvantaged blacks by 2020." Though the process has been moving slowly with the country yet to evoke part of the Constitution allowing for land expropriation with fair compensation, black Namibians have largely

remained optimistic and confident that the new process is going to be enacted soon.

With the support that Hage Geingob has received in the aftermath of his pronouncements to usher in a new land redistribution policy, at this point, it seems a foregone conclusion that a greater proportion of the electorate is going to vote in favour of him and SWAPO come Election Day. Moreover, the successes that he has achieved in the fields

of education and healthcare put him in a strong position. This also not forgetting that he is the incumbent thus he has the incumbency effect to his side.

Opposition political parties, on the other hand, have not done any favours to themselves. Instead of unifying, opposition political parties remain fragmented. To make matters even worse, while in the early days there was only the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance as the main opposition party, now,

there are a handful of other opposition parties. In the last election (2014), a total of eight opposition political parties competed in the presidential race and more are expected in the upcoming election. The end result of this is that all these emerging opposition political parties will just split the opposition vote hence inadvertently consolidating the foothold of SWAPO onto the power and influence it so dearly loves.



Land reforms remains an issue of great importance to many Namibians.



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Opposition Candidate Wins the Democratic Republic of the Congo's Presidential Election

By Prince Kurupati

In Africa, it's a rarity for the opposition candidate to win a presidential election but that is exactly what happened in the recently conducted Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) presidential election. Against all odds, opposition candidate Felix Tshisekedi was declared the winner of the 30 December 2018 presidential election beating two other candidates.

The 'Long' Election

The DRC presidential election is regarded as one of the longest election in the world. It's not really difficult to see why this is the case. According to the election schedule released by the election body, it takes 15 days from the time the people cast their votes to the time that preliminary election results are released. For the official election results, voters have to wait 9 more days before they know who the substantive president-elect is. While this is the schedule released before the election, developments on the ground actually differed. The presidential election which at first was slated for 23 December was pushed forward and ended up being conducted on the 30th of December.

Fortunately for the people of Congo as well as the whole world in general, the election was supposed to be a 'long' election ultimately failed to become one thanks to the work of the electoral commission which managed to tabulate and release preliminary in less than the

(maximum of 15 day period.

The announcement of the Results

In the early hours of January 10, the electoral commission of the DRC announced the much anticipated presidential results. According to the electoral commission, Félix Tshisekedi of the Union for Democracy and Social Progress won the election after garnering 38.57 percent of the vote (7,051,013 votes cast in favour of him). Martin Fayulu of the Dynamic

Congolese Political Opposition (backed by other opposition leaders) came close in the second position after garnering 34.83 percent of the vote (6,366,732 votes cast in favour of him). In the third position was Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary from former leader Joseph Kabila's party who garnered 23.84 percent of the vote.

Contestations

For a few hours after the election result was announced, it seemed as if DRC had managed to achieve its first peaceful transfer of power ever since the country got its independence. However, things turned quickly as losing opposition candidate Martin Fayulu stated that he did not accept the result and that the result had been massively manipulated. Soon after, some protest violence was reported in Kikwit, a Fayulu stronghold, where



A surprise victory for Felix Tshisekedi in the Congolese elections.

police said three people were killed. Police also confirmed "agitations" in Congo's third-largest city, Kisangani, but said they were quickly brought under control.

At the time of writing, it's still not clear if Fayulu will take the court route i.e. challenge the election result in the courts of law. According to the supreme law of the land in DRC, a losing candidate has two days to lodge a complaint with the constitutional court. As such, there is still time for Fayulu to challenge the results in the courts. Once a candidate has lodged a complaint, the Constitutional Court has up to seven days to rule on the matter. The Constitutional Court can nullify the complaint or the result depending on how it judges the matter.

Bone of Contention

For Fayulu, the bone of contention over the announced official results

by the electoral commission is the fact that the results he tabulated (from the data collected by his own team) released by the electoral commission. The difference in figures according to Fayulu is not small but rather very high, something which to him suggests possible manipulation of the results.

To back his claim, Fayulu states that Kabila's government made a deal with Tshisekedi as hopes faded for ruling party candidate Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary.

Therefore, Tshisekedi and his newly found 'friends' thanks to the 'friends' power and influence over the electoral commission decided to manipulate the result in favour of Tshisekedi. Many analysts are on the side of Fayulu with Pierre Englebert, a fellow at the Atlantic Council's Africa Center saying Tshisekedi would be more malleable

and might allow Kabila's network to continue. Patrick Smith of the newsletter Africa Confidential said "If Fayulu and his allies, with their own independent security and financial networks, had taken power they would have changed the power structure of Congo and definitively ousted Kabila and his clan... Tshisekedi, with his weaker network, looks like being the junior partner in his accommodation with the Kabila establishment."

Fayulu's Local and Foreign Support

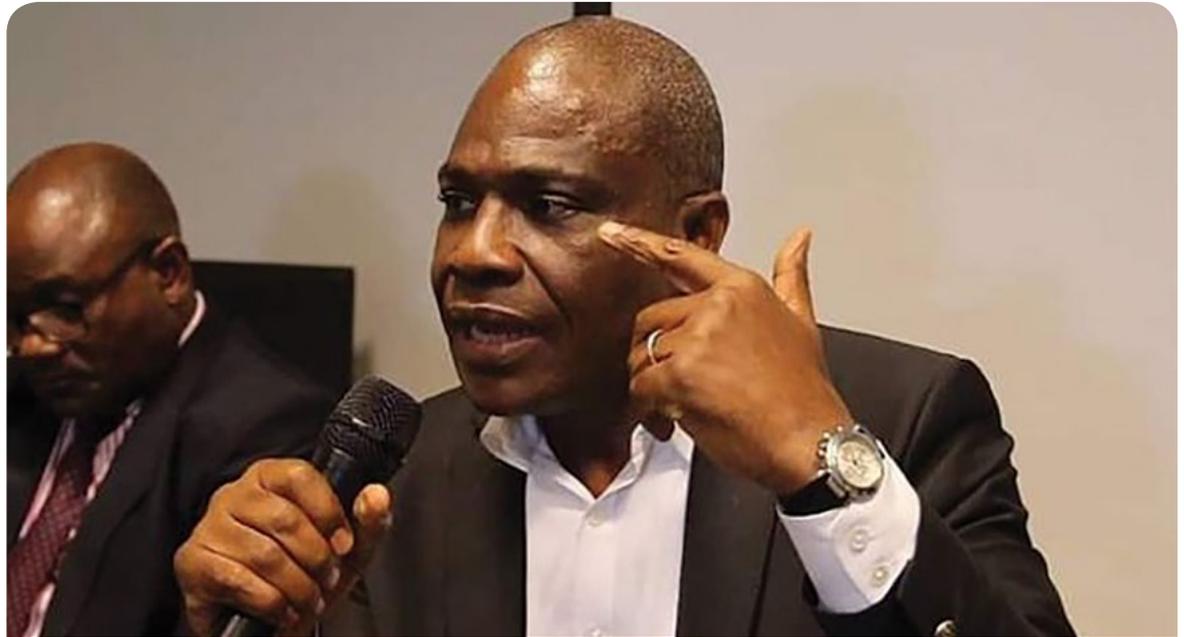
Support for Fayulu has not just been expressed by political analysts only. There are also other actors both local and foreign who have voiced their concern over the result of the election. Locally, the Catholic Church which fielded 40,000 observers said that its findings do not tally with the figures released by the electoral commission. As

such, they have reservations about the 'freeness' of the election. The Catholic Church is highly influential in DRC as over 40 percent of the country's population is Catholic.

Internationally, several countries including France and Belgium have expressed doubts about the result. France bluntly said that the results did not tally with early poll results while Belgium said it will take the DRC election results issue to the UN Security Council.

Uncertain Future

DRC faces an uncertain future after the announcement of the presidential result. While the situation in most parts of the country remains stable with few instances of violence recorded, many fear that if Fayulu decides to take his complaints to the Constitutional Court, violence might follow. With both Tshisekedi and Fayulu having



Runner up Martin Fayulu is strongly contesting the results of the elections.

split support, any decision that will be reached by the Constitutional Court will, on one hand, appease one group while on the other hand bring joy to another joy. Nullifying Fayulu's complaint will anger his millions of supporters hence inadvertently giving

them the excuse to go into the streets to protect what they call a 'stolen' election. On the other hand, nullifying the announced election result will anger Tshisekedi's supporters hence also giving Tshisekedi's supporters the excuse to go into the streets

to 'defend' their vote.

What Lies Ahead For Tshisekedi

Assuming that all things turn out good i.e. Tshisekedi manages to be inaugurated as the next President of the DRC and Fayulu admits defeat, Tshisekedi will have a lot of work on his hands. Firstly, he will have to unify a nation which is strongly divided along ethnic (and political) lines. Tshisekedi will also have to work on depoliticizing various arms of government which in recent times have operated more like departments, complete revamps will be needed. Tshisekedi will also have to address DRC's age-long challenge of rebels, most of whom

are causing untold suffering to communities living in the country's rural areas. He will also have to help resuscitate the country's economy which has been on a downward spiral in recent times while at the same time, ensuring that he reduces high poverty levels, high unemployment rates as well as raising the country's standard of living. Internationally, Tshisekedi will have to reassure the world that DRC is a safe haven for investment hence there will be a need for the formulation of new investor-friendly policies. In essence, Tshisekedi's presidency (if it does come to fruition) will not be an easy one. However, with neighbouring Ethiopia enjoying massive development ever since its new prime minister took office early in 2018, Tshisekedi will be hoping that he can learn and copy one or two things from his counterpart.



President elect Tshisekedi now says by stepping down Kabila is now a partner in the democratization process of the D.R.Congo.



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Macky Sall Seeks Re-election As Senegal Goes To the Polls in Late February

By Prince Kurupati



Senegal won its independence in 1960 and since then, it has been holding 'democratic' elections to choose the country's leader as well as members of Parliament. From afar, there is one thing which is clear when it comes to Senegal elections i.e. the country has never compromised the quantity of the elections but on several occasions, it has been found wanting when it comes to the quality of the elections. For the 2019 Presidential elections, the incumbent, the electoral body, as well as the whole nation, will be hoping that for the first time, the country is going to successfully tick both the 'quantity' and 'quality' election boxes.

Relieving the Good Side of Senegal's Electoral History

In brief, we have already stated that Senegal has never been found wanting when it comes to election 'quantity'. As and when (presidential or parliamentary) elections are due, they are held. The

first democratic elections in Senegal were conducted in March 1959; at the time, Senegal was part of the short-lived Senegal-Mali Federation. However, in 1960, Senegal decided to break away from the Mali Federation and Léopold Sédar Senghor from the Senegalese Progressive Union (UPS) was elected Senegal's first president. As Léopold Sédar Senghor was elected president following the untimely breakup of the Mali Federation, it was agreed that fresh elections with universal suffrage for all Senegal citizens were to be held sooner. The date earmarked for the elections was 1 December 1963. Indeed, thousands of voters went to cast their votes on the first of December 1963 and Léopold Sédar Senghor emerged once again victorious. This time, Léopold Sédar Senghor was given a five-year mandate to lead the country.

The five-year term ended in 1968 and as per the stipulations of the supreme law of the land, Senegal had to conduct an election in

1968. The country's electoral body set aside 25 February as the Election Day but no other candidates apart from the incumbent expressed a desire to run for the presidency. Therefore, the incumbent Léopold Sédar Senghor was re-elected unopposed. After serving his five-year term, the next elections were slated for 1973. The electoral body set aside 28 January as Election Day but just like the last time, there weren't any aspiring presidential candidates hence Léopold Sédar Senghor was re-elected once again unopposed.

From 1973, the next presidential elections were to be held in 1978. Things were different in 1978 as for the first time in three election cycles, an aspiring presidential candidate (other than the incumbent) emerged in Abdoulaye Wade. Wade, however, failed to break the dominance of Léopold Sédar Senghor as he was re-elected once again with 82.20 percent of the vote while Wade managed to garner only 17.80 percent of the vote.

Midway through his tenure,

Léopold Sédar Senghor lost his place as the leader of the UPS, this, therefore, meant that he would be unable to compete as the presidential candidate for the UPS in the next elections. At the end of his term in 1983, Léopold Sédar Senghor was replaced by Abdou Diouf as the leader of the UPS and subsequently, as the running candidate for the UPS. Continuing the trend started by Léopold Sédar Senghor since independence, Abdou Diouf won the presidency with 83.45 percent of the vote. In the 1983 election, there were five candidates including Abdoulaye Wade who came in the second position with 14.79 percent of the vote. Abdou Diouf was re-elected in 1988 as well as in the 1993 presidential elections.

The UPS now PS lost the presidential election for the first time in 2000 amid massive calls for the amendment of the country's constitution (which was eventually amended in 2001 through a national referendum). Opposition candidate Abdoulaye Wade won 58.49 percent of the vote against Abdou Diouf's 41.51 percent. Abdoulaye Wade was re-elected once again in the 2007 presidential election but lost in the 2012 presidential election to the current president Macky Sall.

From the above, one can see that no single Senegalese president has served only a single term hence the incumbent Macky Sall will be hoping that he doesn't break that cycle when he seeks re-election in February this year.

Senegal's Problematic Side

While Senegal has always managed to satisfy the 'quantity' side, she has found it difficult to do the same when it comes to the 'quality' side. Past Senegalese elections have been marred by political skirmishes and often times the results have been contentious. In the build-up to the upcoming elections, we decided to take a look at the steps that are being taken to rectify this and to ensure that this time, Senegal presidential elections will be of the highest quality.

First of all, we have to say that even before the day of the election, Senegal has failed to create a conducive environment for peaceful and credible elections. The banning of two leading opposition figures, son of former president Karim Wade and ex-Dakar mayor Khalifa Sall (no relation) from contesting over corruption issues has already given critics a 'weapon' to attack the credibility of the elections with once their favoured outcome does not come to fruition.

Moreover, the failure by the Senegalese government to establish an independent body solely tasked with managing the electoral register does not paint the country in a positive way in the build-up to the elections. Currently, the Ministry of the Interior and Public Security manages the electoral register. As the head of the ministry is a presidential appointee, there is a general belief that the ministry and

the minister are powerless if 'requested' by the executive to manipulate the register. The autonomous National Electoral Commission (CENA) is only responsible for organizing and supervising the operations of the electoral process but does not keep, handle nor manage any of the electoral tools outside of the election period.

Furthermore, the decision to withdraw the accreditation of the non-governmental organization called Enda Lead Africa Francophone NGO as an election observer team has angered many. The NGO was banned following investigations by the government which linked it to the citizen's movement called "Y'en a Marre", a movement which is considered a disruptive force in the country. By withdrawing the accreditation of the NGO, critics believe that the Sall government is trying to remove all objective voices of reason from observing the elections.

In addition, towards the end of last year, the Sall administration tightened its grip on the internet with President Macky Sall himself justifying the move saying it is all about stopping the spread of misinformation. For critics, however, they do not view this move as a way of stopping the spread of misinformation but as a way of silencing critics ahead of the elections.

Key Factors In the Presidential Race

In any election, there are key factors which play a pivotal role in determining who emerges victorious and who loses. Here, we are going to take a look at the key factors that are likely going to play a huge role in the upcoming

Senegalese elections.

First and foremost, there is the incumbency effect. Like it or not, African elections time and time again has proved that the odds are mostly in favour of the incumbent. As such, incumbency is likely going to be a decisive factor in this election.

Another factor which has characterized African politics particularly when it comes to elections is personality politics. For the majority, they are swayed not by substance (what the candidate is promising) but by personality (charisma, confidence and oratory skills). Looking at the candidates who have expressed their desire to challenge for the highest office in the land, the incumbent certainly does rank higher when it comes to personality politics. However, we have to say, things would have been different if two other aspiring presidential candidates in son of former president Karim Wade and ex-Dakar mayor Khalifa Sall (no relation) had been allowed to run. These two are highly popular but due to the criminal charges they are facing, they have been banned from contesting.

Apart from using one's power and influence as an Incumbent in channeling state resources to a political campaign, engaging in vote buying and the like, another benefit of being an incumbent when it comes to an election is that a candidate can focus on reminding the electorate the good work that he has done in the past and so in the process, promise to do even more in the future. For Macky Sall, he won the 2012 race on the back of his ambitious Plan for Emerging Senegal which aimed at transforming key sectors from agriculture to healthcare, public



President Macky Sall will have as main challenger a former party comrade and Prime Minister Idrissa Seck.

administration and education by 2035. Having realized some success on that front in his first term, Sall is promising even more in his second term thus he already has an advantage.

According to studies, it has been revealed that the percentage of African incumbents who win presidential elections stand at 70 percent. At the same time, when the opposition wins, more often than not, the opposition will have contested as a coalition or alliance. Rarely do a single opposition party challenge and win a presidential election

conducted once every seven years while parliamentary elections are held once every five years. What this means, in general, is that a couple of years before the presidential election is held, the parliamentary election will be conducted. The party which generally performs well in the parliamentary elections goes on to win the presidency. Following this trend, Macky Sall is the favourite as his ruling coalition (Benno Bokk Yakaar) convincingly won the 2017 parliamentary election. The Benno Bokk Yakaar won all but three of the country's 45 electoral departments.

Last but not least, another key factor which determines the outcome of the presidential race in Senegal pertains to the results of the parliamentary elections. Presidential elections are

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Botswana 2019: Will the BDP Keep Winning?

By Prince Kurupati



For 52 years, the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) has been winning every presidential election conducted in the country. In 2019, Botswana is going to conduct another presidential election but unlike previous years, the upcoming presidential election is not a foregone conclusion. In this article, we will highlight why this is the case but before that, let's briefly go down memory lane exploring Botswana's electoral history.

Botswana's 'Democratic' Electoral History

Botswana attained its independence in 1966. In 1966, the country conducted its first democratic elections and the Bechuanaland Democratic Party now Botswana Democratic Party won the National Assembly elections. The elected National Assembly members amongst themselves

elected the country's first democratically elected president, Sir Seretse Khama.

The constitution which enabled Botswana to hold its first democratic elections had no provisions for presidential terms. As such, it meant that a single person could be elected president for as many times as he wanted. The unavailability of the presidential term limits meant that the first democratically elected president retained power from 1966 up to 1980 effectively serving three full terms before his untimely death on 13 July 1980 when he was starting his fourth term.

After the death of Sir Seretse Khama, Quett Ketumile Joni Masire was elected President. Masire served as president from 1980 up to 1998 thereby effectively serving four terms. Before he left office, Masire did usher in a new constitution, a constitution which would

put Botswana on the world map in terms of championing democracy. Most notably, the new constitution introduced presidential term limits. From the 1998 National Assembly, any candidate elected president was to serve two 5-year terms only.

The first president to be elected after the adoption of the new constitution was Festus Mogae. Mogae effectively served his two terms and left office in 2008. He was succeeded by Letanant General Ian Khama who served one full term and three years of his second term before he stepped down earlier this year to pave way for Mokgweetsi Masisi, the current Botswana president.

A Tough Challenge for the Ruling Party

In past elections (apart from the 2014 election), Botswana elections were a foregone conclusion long

before the voters cast their votes. It was public knowledge that the BDP would win the majority of the National Assembly seats and in turn, the BDP National Assembly members would have the final say over who was going to be elected president. However, things changed in the last election, the BDP failed for the first time to win an outright majority. The party only managed to win 46.5 percent of the vote while the opposition shared 53.5 percent of the votes. Regardless, BDP had enough numbers to elect a president from their own party.

The failure to win an outright majority did surprise a lot of people inside the BDP. In order to prevent the same from happening, BDP decided to adopt a new strategy, the one similar to the strategy used by the ruling party in South Africa i.e. the African National Congress (ANC).

Adopting the ANC Model

BDP's solution to its failure to win an outright majority was to adopt a model used by South Africa's ruling party, ANC. The model entails delinking the electoral cycle from the presidential term. In practice, under this model, a party (often times and in this instance the ruling party) does push back its electoral cycle by one year (plus a few months) against the presidential term. This, therefore, means that the elected president will step down (or at least in theory his or her party will have enough power to make him or her step down before the end of his term) if it's clear that he or she has lost the support of the people. By stepping down prior to the election season, the party will be able to (in the interim) elect a new president who is likeable and loved by the people. In essence, this means the party sells an untainted candidate rather



Victory for incumbent Dr. Mokgweetsi E.K Masisi will maintain the invincibility of the BDP in Botswanan politics.

than selling an unpopular incumbent. The beauty of this model is that in the short period that the interim president is elected, he is tasked with implementing populist policies which are not too costly over the long run just so as to entice the voters before Election Day.

In theory, the ANC model adopted by the BDP looks to be a good strategy. Juxtaposition it with the current political environment in Botswana, one can certainly see the positive benefits of the strategy. In the short period that he has been in power, current Botswana president Mokgweetsi Masisi has reshuffled the Cabinet introducing new cabinet most of whom are female. At the same time, he also appointed Africa's youngest minister in 30-year-old

Bogolo Joy Kenewendo who was appointed the minister of Investment, Trade and Industry. All these moves certainly paint Masisi (and inversely the BDP) in a positive way hence it can be termed a masterstroke by the BDP to adopt the ANC model at the time when its prestige, power and influence was beginning to wane.

In addition to giving the interim president ample time to entice voters with populist policies, the ANC models also afford the interim president enough time to get accustomed to and at the same time effectively make use of the incumbency effect. The incumbency effect entails presidents being able to "bend state institutions in their favour, frequently securing positive coverage in the public media, they

use patronage and positions to buy loyalty, and they are able to introduce popular (or populist) policies to consolidate the ruling party's voter base. In many cases, the president is also able to use state resources to campaign in the elections, severely skewing the playing field in their favour."

Opposition Response

While the ruling BDP have gone out to seek the perfect strategy to help the party retain power in the upcoming National Assembly elections later on in 2019. The opposition, on the other hand, has also been busy devising own strategies to wrestle power away from the BDP. The strategy adopted by Botswana opposition political parties is to enter the upcoming elections as a

unified body.

The 'unified body' strategy was conceived as long back as early 2017 when the four main opposition political parties in Botswana formed an alliance to contest the 2019 elections as 'one party'. The four parties are the Botswana National Front, the Botswana Movement for Democracy, the Botswana Congress Party, and the Botswana People's Party. In the 2014 election, between themselves, these four parties split 53.55 per cent of the vote. If they were unified at that time, then they would have easily toppled the BDP by electing their preferred candidate as president. While this was not the case last time out, the four opposition parties are hoping that such an occurrence is not going to happen once again as the next time that they garner more votes than the BDP, they will become the 'ruling parties'.

The alliance formed by the four opposition parties is dubbed the Umbrella for Democratic Change and in the words of the BNF president (also the leader of the alliance), the alliance is "a response to a plea by the people for the opposition to stop splitting votes and work together." Many people are convinced that the alliance is going to spring a surprise come Election Day; political analyst, Anthony Morima said, "With only one opposition party in place now, I believe that the BDP will have to work very hard in the coming years to preserve or better its supremacy at the 2019 elections."

Structure and Format of

Botswana Elections

Botswana is a multiparty, constitutional and republican democracy. In Botswana, the members of the National Assembly are elected via the popular vote while the president is indirectly elected via the National Assembly. In essence, this simply means that the members of the National Assembly are the ones who elect the president of the country. The Botswana parliament is bicameral. There is the House of Chiefs (Upper House) represented by the eight chiefs from the eight principal tribes of the Tswana nation, select (4) members from the minority tribes, and 3 members chosen by the eight chiefs. The eight chiefs from the eight principal tribes of the Tswana nation are permanent members of the Upper House while the others are non-permanent members serving 5-years terms. There is also the lower house who members (57) are elected via a popular vote, there are also four members who are appointed by the party with the majority members in addition to two ex-officio members i.e. the President and the Attorney General.

Botswana's elections are scheduled for October 2019.

For the first time in the 2019 elections, Botswana will use electronic voting after a landmark (but also surprise) decision by the government on 05 September 2018 to withdraw amendments to the Electoral Act, which introduced electronic voting.

Corruption, intolerance and terrorism: the cancers that could topple Nyusi and Frelimo in the October elections

By Alexandre Nhampossa



President Nyusi will be seeking a second term in the 2019 elections.

Mozambique is preparing to hold legislative and presidential election next October, that will be marked by the entry of the new leader of the country's largest opposition party, Renamo, in place of Afonso Dhlakama, who died of illness in May 2018. It is unclear who exactly will be the new president, but the election was scheduled to take place between January 15 and 17 during the party congress.

These are the elections that will determine the continuation for the second term or not of the current Mozambican president, Filipe Nyusi, who in the elections of October 2014 had 57%, ahead of Afonso Dhlakama, with 36.6%, and Daviz Simango, MDM (Movimento Democrático de Moçambique), with 6.04%.

This January Nyusi completes exactly 4 years as Mozambican president. So far his only legacy has been to have achieved a ceasefire in the military political conflict involving the Mozambican

Defense Forces and the rebels of the Renamo party.

The armed conflict was having negative effects throughout the country and affecting various sectors of Mozambican life, because people could not move freely and safely to carry out their productive activities; tourism was affected by insecurity and, consequently, the economy became weak. With its simplicity and openness than former president Armando Guebuza, Nyusi was able to sit down with Dhlakama and determine the cease-fire as negotiations for effective peace unfold in the country.

In his self-assessment, during the presentation of the annual report of the General State of the Nation, Nyusi acknowledged the weakness of his governance in solving various problems that affect the people, saying in the end that although in 2015 he stated that he was not satisfied, he concluded that the commitment of his government in 2016 and the firmness of 2017 allowed in

record time to put the country back on the path of growth and prosperity.

«And because these achievements represent the solid pillars for the construction of a prosperous Mozambican nation, with the realism that has characterized us throughout these four years, we can safely say that the nation state is stable and inspires us confidence» Nyusi said.

Renamo's current interim leader, Ossufo Momade, who is believed to be the next leader to be elected at the party congress, said during a press conference witnessed by PanAfricans Visions that looking at the difficult road traveled by Mozambicans in 2018, was incredulous with the Nyusi conclusion because, for the majority of the population, the year of 2018 like the previous ones stifled hard the Mozambican families.

One of the points that has been tainting the Nyusi government has to do with the extremist attacks that since October 2017 have been

reaping lives in northern Mozambique, specifically in the province of Cabo Delgado. The Mozambican Armed Forces of Defense, which are controlled by him, have been unable to stop the phenomenon. More than 300 people have already lost their lives, most of them by decapitation, and more than 1,000 homes have been burned. The group that promotes the attacks is hitherto unknown, revealing the weakness of the secret services that are also directly controlled by the President of the Republic.

«It should be noted that such attacks are spreading, which shows that the Frelimo Government is unable to stop the killings. This incapacity of the Defense and Security Forces is inexplicable, because when it is to persecute and assassinate members of RENAMO, cadres and defenseless ordinary citizens have physical and warlike capabilities, including assault tanks and weapons of mass destruction» Ossufo Momade commented.

The statement is covered as many Mozambican journalists and activists have been persecuted by the Nyusi government. Kidnappings and blasts to this class and strong members of the opposition party are common in Mozambique. For example, various media and journalists continue to be targets of threats and intimidation, especially in rural areas, according to Reporters Without Borders, which in its index of freedom of the press for 2018 placed Mozambique at 99th place among 180

countries. Recently, a study published by MISA Moçambique revealed a growing tendency of cases that undermine freedom of the press in the country. Contrary to 2016, with 11 cases reported in 2017, 21 cases were reported. In 2018 there was more. These situations have caused the British magazine The Economist to consider Mozambique as an «authoritarian country». It was a major downfall for the governance of Nyusi that in the year 2017 had been placed in the category of «hybrid regime».

These situations come as a shock to Nyusi's promise at the time of his inauguration that he would be an inclusive president and a friend to everyone. What has been verified is that he is a friend of all who are in favor of his regime. Those who question are penalized.

In the economic domain, throughout the year, the analyzes of the Center of Public Integrity, transmitted the continuous lack of commitment leading to the economic development of the country by the State. As in past years, official estimates present an unrealistic outlook, underestimating GDP. Thus, the State Budget Law of 2018 foresaw a growth rate of 5.3%, but in the end was registered only 3.2%. The IMF forecast was 3.0%.

Nyusi when he took power on 15 January 2015 brought a speech of hope and change. Four years later, the balance of the Mozambican president's mandate is marked by worsening

extremist attacks, by natural disasters, as well as by the economic crisis aggravated by the scandal of hidden public debts that caused a former Mozambican finance minister to be detained in South Africa, where he is being incarcerated since 29 December 2018.

At stake is a Mozambican government scandal that consisted of a diversion of US \$ 2.2 billion between 2013 and 2014. At the time Nyusi was a defense minister and the investigation of the United States of America suggests that he was involved in the diversion of money which debts securities have been bought by many foreign businessmen, including Americans who now complain

of being circumvented.

The Mozambican leaders, including Nyusi, invented a scheme. They created three public companies allegedly for the purpose of maritime security by making the companies profit. The total investment was more than 2 billion. The Mozambican state has secretly issued guarantees to international investors who have bought the debt securities of a Russian and a British banks, but to date such projects have not yet been implemented. The reason is that after all money was used individually and not applied in such projects.

The revelation was made by the United States that has already sent several

mandates of international capture and extradition against Mozambican leaders involved in the scheme. Nyusi's name has not been released, probably because he is head of state. Whatever, the revelation completely destroyed Nyusi's name as well as his party - Frelimo.

The opposition has taken advantage of the situation and has been registering several followers. Ossufo Momade of Renamo said that the arrest of the former minister and the request of others accused of financial illicit in the process of hidden debts is confirmation that there was a criminal practice by the leaders of Frelimo involved in the process that should be held accountable.

«The debts should not be paid by the Mozambican people and the entire process of debt restructuring should be immediately suspended by the Ministry of Economy and Finance,» he said.

In turn, the second largest opposition party, the MDM, organized a march that was very crowded. Demonstrators went to the US embassy in Maputo and delivered a letter of thanks for the investigation. Both Pilipe Nyusi and Frelimo have not yet spoken on the subject.

The situation is creating a malaise within the Frelimo party itself, with many members worn out with the results of the investigation. A party session is scheduled for March and reports indicate

that Nyusi may be replaced by a new presidential candidate. In any case, the elections will be tight.

Renamo will enter in the game with a new leader who reaps many sympathies, not only members of the party, while Frelimo, on the other hand, is in trouble with the disclosure of these cases of corruption. Several calls were made to the Mozambican prosecutor's office to conduct an investigation and sentence the offenders, but top Frelimo leaders, through their power of influence, manipulated the process so that it did not do anything. This was one of the reasons that got US starting with the investigation.

2019 Presidential Election: Time for Malawi to Reinvent Its Democracy

By Prince Kurupati

Generally speaking, Africa does not really rank high when it comes to fully functional democracies. However, in spite of this rather unfortunate phenomena, there are a few 'model' democracies on the African continent. One country which is definitely not part of this small clique of African 'model' democracies is Malawi.

Malawi attained her independence in 1964 and since that time, she literally has described herself as a democratic country. While the country has indeed implemented some systems which are generally associated with democratic countries, albeit to a lower extent, Malawi to a larger extent has largely neglected to implement some key tenets of democracy chief among them being holding of

uncontentious free, fair and credible elections. In 2019, Malawi, however, does have an opportunity to correct past wrongs and lay a foundation for the reinvention of its democracy. Before we take a deeper look at the upcoming Malawi presidential election, let's just take a few moments to explore the country's electoral history.

Malawi's Electoral History

As briefly alluded to above, Malawi since the earliest times (when it attained independence) was a democracy just in principle but not in practice. To put this into perspective, after she attained her independence, Malawi for two years from 1964 to 1966 did not have an executive president elected by the people (as a democratic government ought to do).

Rather, the Queen of Malawi who is also the Monarch of the United Kingdom as well as the greater Commonwealth acted as the country's leader. Besides the Queen, the next highest person was the Governor-General (Sir Glyn Jones), an appointee of the Cabinet of Malawi meaning he also was not directly elected by the people.

It was only after the adoption of a new constitution in 1966 that Malawi abolished the position of the Governor General and subsequently waning the power of the Queen that the post of an executive president was established. This new post (executive president) was to be first filled by a person directly elected by the National Assembly but afterwards, the post was to be filled by a candidate directly elected by the people



of Malawi (all people above the age of 18). The new constitution also stated that once the people started to vote and elect a president, a simple majority was all one needed in order to be confirmed as president-elect. To this day, this provision is still in place. The new constitution also stated that an executive president once inaugurated would be given a five-year mandate to lead

the nation of Malawi. The new constitution glaringly failed to talk about the issue of presidential term limits.

Malawi's first president to be elected by the National Assembly (as per the stipulations of the constitution) was Hastings Banda. Banda was inaugurated on the 6th of July 1966. Hastings Banda of the Malawi Congress Party spent 27 years and 319 days in

power thanks to the absence of the presidential term limit in the Malawi constitution.

After Hastings Banda left office in 1994, Malawi amended its constitution to include provisions for presidential term limits. At this point, Malawians had seen the folly of not including provisions for presidential term limits and as a way of avoiding the mistake they had done during the Banda reign, Malawi decided to give whoever wanted to become the next president a maximum of two five year terms in office after which a new president would be elected. The first president to be elected using the amended 1994 constitution was Bakili Muluzi. Bakili Muluzi of the United Democratic Front was first elected in 1994 and when his first term came to an end in 1999, he was re-elected for his second and final term in office. At the end of his second term, Bakili Muluzi was succeeded by Bingu wa Mutharika from the same party (i.e. United Democratic Front). Bingu wa Mutharika effectively served his first term from 2004 up to 2009. In 2009, he was re-elected but he could not finish his whole term as he died midway during his reign. Malawi's first female president Joyce Banda was elected to finish off the second term of Bingu wa Mutharika while awaiting the next presidential elections. Having assumed power on 7 April 2012, Joyce Banda only served 2 years and 54 days as Malawi's president.

In the ensuing elections (2014 elections), Peter Mutharika (the incumbent and younger brother to former president Bingu wa Mutharika) was elected Malawi's new president. Having served just one term

so far, Peter Mutharika is looking to win his second term in the upcoming presidential election.

A Tale of Two 'Warriors'

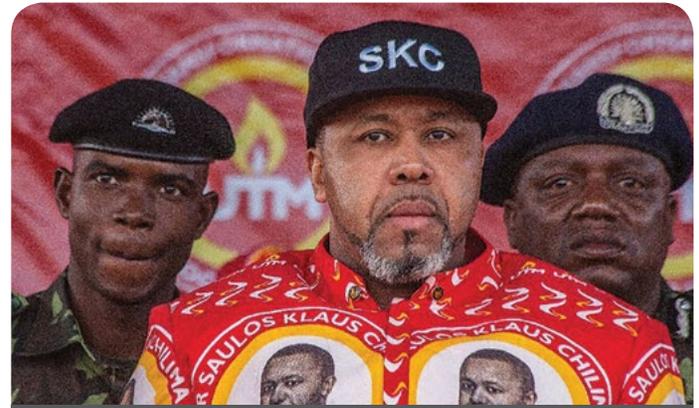
The upcoming Malawi presidential election has seen a high number of potential candidates expressing their desire to run for the presidency. However, in all honesty, in the build-up to the election (at least at this point), there are two frontrunners for the seat. The two are the incumbent Peter Mutharika of the United Democratic Front as well as former president Joyce Banda of the People's Party.

For the incumbent, there are a number of factors which make him a good proposition for a lot of voters. First of all, there is the issue of past successes. Though in recent times Peter Mutharika has been embroiled in graft scandals namely the police food scandal, what is evidently clear at this point (away from the 'allegations' he is facing) is that he managed to wash away the negativity towards the government and the country itself brought about by the previous regime i.e. the multimillion-dollar «Cashgate» scandal, the biggest financial misconduct by government officials uncovered in the country's history. The Cashgate scandal had totally wiped away public confidence in the government while putting Malawi in a precarious position as most of its donors were on the verge of pulling out and stopping giving aid to the country. For a country which largely survives on donor funds, such moves by donors to pull out would have paralyzed Malawi. For his role in 'correcting' the mess he inherited, Peter Mutharika has certainly won

the hearts of many and he in political campaigns will definitely use this to his advantage.

Past presidents of Malawi considered themselves demigods who holed themselves up in obscenely expensive palaces. However, Peter Mutharika in his first term demystified the presidency. Rather than living in the quiet rooms of his palace, he has been a president for the common man. During his reign, Malawi has seen a remarkable rise in freedoms of expression, something which was unthinkable in the past. Formerly banned radio stations were allowed to air again while the internet has been opened for all. The man himself has also granted interviews to a whole host of TV channels, radio stations as well as online news sites and magazines. Through this, Peter Mutharika has certainly made himself a man of the people hence his image is pretty strong.

Last but certainly not least, Peter Mutharika also has the advantage of the incumbency effect on his side. In as much as this ought not to be an advantage as it skews the playing field in favour of one candidate, past African elections including Malawi elections have proved that the incumbency effect plays a key role in determining the winner of an election hence if Peter Mutharika decides to



Former Vice President Saulos Chilima served under President Mutharika and is today one of fiercest rivals.



Former President Joyce Banda is seeking to make a come back.

use it to his advantage, then he can and will surely gain a major advantage over his rivals.

Despite all the factors which are in favour of Peter Mutharika, he finds himself facing another determined warrior in the former president, Joyce Banda. Joyce Banda lost the 2014 election to Peter Mutharika largely as a result of the Cashgate scandal which she was embroiled in as the chief figure. However, her time in exile gave her enough time to prove to Malawians that she was not at all involved in the Cashgate scandal. According to her, "she has done nothing wrong and that the allegations against her are politically motivated." Therefore, in order to repair her image and to prove to the people of Malawi that she is not what they were made to believe, Joyce Banda wants to lead the country for the

second time around and do so, in a 'good' way this time. Banda already showed during her party's primaries that she is a force to reckon with as she garnered 1 183 party votes against her little-known opponent Leonard Mphidza who polled a paltry 23 votes.

In order to win back the trust of the people, Joyce Banda recently unveiled her party manifesto which largely aims at tackling poverty in the country which according to Banda "become worse since the PP left office." Joyce Banda's manifesto also promises "to restore electricity, education standards, to build a mining industry, to restore the fledgling economy, provide affordable housing to the poorest and to provide health care for all."

Malawi is set to hold its presidential elections in May 2019.



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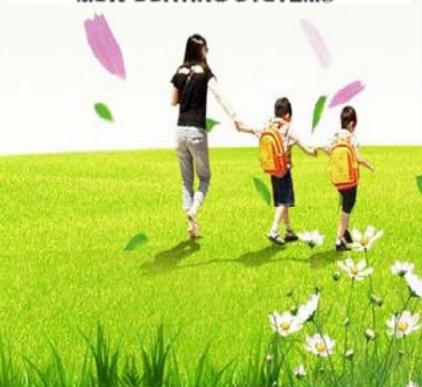
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1 Composition of the Waste

2 MSW Plant Solution

3 completed project



3 Completed Project

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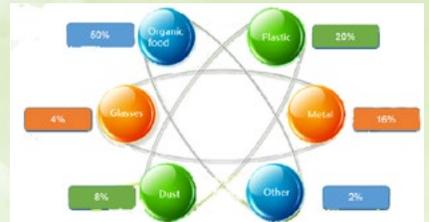
2 MSW Plant Solution



Principle of operation



1 Composition of the Waste



Metal Scrap / Bale de métal



Glass Scrap / Glass granule



Plastic Scrap /

Plastic bale



Cameroon Twin Elections: Can Opposition Parties gain more seats?

By Boris Esono (Buea-Cameroon)



Opposition SDF members protesting in Parliament. The ruling party currently holds a crushing majority.



serving as Speaker since 1992, Cavaye Yeguie has stifled all attempts by Parliament to address burning issues affecting Cameroon.

Cameroonians will this year head to the polls once again to elect new municipal councilors and parliamentarians. The date for the two elections have yet to be communicated by the Head of state leading some politicians to ponder if actually elections will take place this year or if it does which; municipal or parliamentary election.

According to Hon. Joseph Mbah Ndam of SDF Party, “elections this year might not hold. It will be difficult when we still have the Anglophone crisis still going on in the South West and North West Regions”.

The municipal and parliamentary elections are set to be contested this year after they were postponed in 2018 with the government indicating that it will be difficult to organize the presidential election alongside municipal and parliamentary elections. It is not the first time however that these two elections are postponed from their original date. Back in 2012, the elections were postponed three times until it finally held on the 30th of September 2013 after the head of state

increase councilor’s term by 12 months.

It will be an uphill task for opposition parties and candidate to dislodge the ruling party from their majority but the ruling party is reported to lost grounds this year with gains on the opposition.

Shortly after the results of the presidential election was made known, a group of opposition parties met in Douala to brainstorm on ways to approach the next legislative and municipal elections. The meeting hosted by Eboula Alain of MDP brought together PURS of Serge Espoir Matomba, UPC represented by Habiba Issa, MANIDEM and the FPD Party that backed Akere Muna. “During the meeting, we set up a mechanism to enable us create a platform for opposition parties to present a single candidate against the CPDM in every constituency”, Abel Elimbi Lobe, spokesperson for the group said.

Anglophone crisis

According to a survey carried out by the Nkafu policy institute, the Anglophone crisis was one of the vital

issues that the populations said need urgent attention. The fallout of the crisis in the two English speaking regions was massive as thousands of people did not take part in the presidential election, a situation which might repeat itself with the two elections.

The Anglophone crisis that has engulfed the two English speaking regions of the country has led to scores of people killed on the part of the civilians, security forces and separatist forces. This has led to mass exodus from the worst hit areas as the population seeks refuge in other areas.

Teachers and school administrators have suffered the most in this crisis. Several teachers have been murdered, maimed and kidnapped in the past weeks as education comes under increasing attack in the English speaking regions of Cameroon. Over 30 schools have been the targets of violence.

The rise of MRC Party

The Cameroon Renaissance Movement, CRM/MRC in last presidential election has gained the recognition as the main opposition party in the country dislodging

SDF Party which has hold that mantle since the advent of multiparty politics in Cameroon. The MRC’s strong showing was seen with them finishing second behind the incumbent president Biya in the presidential election-a result still disputed by him and his supporters.

According to Olivier Bibou Nissack, spokesman for Maurice Kamto, “elections are usual matters for serious parties like MRC who are on a daily basis on the field. But today, the main goal of the party is the NRP (National Resistance Plan) with the aim of restoring the truth of the last 7 October ppresidential election. That truth is that Maurice Kamto was not made president out of fraud”. “...As CRM is concerned, the page is still open on the fight against the electoral hold-up of the victory of H.E. Maurice Kamto. That is why our actions today are focus on it”.

Asked whether the MRC Party can gain more seats than the one they got in 2007, he said: “that time will come; the time of calculating potential seats related to the next parliamentary election. For now, we are resisting against the political gang

which has stolen our score of last October 2018 presidential election”.

“That is our priority alongside the real and sincere fixing of the terrible NOSO crisis as soon as possible through inclusive dialogue first, and until it is done make sure all IDP’s are receiving a citizenship assistance. That is why H.E. President Maurice Kamto called all compatriots to assist IDPs through the Ayah Foundation, a call which brought \$41000 (FCFA 23 million) just after a month” he added.

In the last elections that took place on the 30th of September 2013 after it was postponed trice, the ruling party gained 148 out of the 180 seats, a decrease of 5 seats they gained in the 2007 election. Meantime, the SDF Party gained 2 sates, from 16 to 18 seats while the MRC Party of Maurice Kamto obtained parliamentary representation for the first time with one seat. The onus is therefore on Maurice Kamto and the MRC Party after a fine showing in the presidential election to turn that into gains in both the House and municipal elections.

Rwanda registers over \$2 billion worth of investments in 2018

By Jean d'Amour Mugabo



President Kagame inaugurating a new Volkswagen assembly plant in Rwanda.

“This is evidence that Rwanda is being seen increasingly as a great place to do business, innovate and establish a hub from which to access the continent’s tremendous opportunities. The increased investments registered are a direct result of the initiatives that the Government of Rwanda, through RDB, has put in place to continuously make Rwanda an attractive destination for investment,” he said.

In terms of investor facilitation, RDB operates a One Stop Centre for investors. The Centre provides information and services to guide investors through the key steps of starting a business such as registration, licenses, immigration, land, utilities, environmental clearances as well as tax and mortgage registration services.

RDB also offers all investors Aftercare Services which provide assistance in ensuring that business projects are implemented free of avoidable impediments. RDB has also introduced investor engagement platforms such as the quarterly ‘CEO Forum’ where RDB senior management engages with business leaders.

Another important platform, ‘Investor Open Day’, aimed at resolving issues faced by investors, is offered every Friday and open to walk-ins. During 2018, 163 of 209 or 78% of investor issues recorded by Aftercare Services were expediently resolved.

Rwanda registered 173 investment projects worth \$2.006 billion in 2018, just \$6 million above the \$2 billion target for the year.

The figures released by the Rwanda Development Board (RDB) on Tuesday indicate that the 2018 investments increased by \$331 million or approximately 20% compared to the investments registered in 2017.

RDB indicates that an estimated 26% of the investments registered in 2018 represents export oriented projects. Manufacturing, mining, agriculture and agro-processing accounted for 57% of investments registered. Significant investments were also recorded in tourism, healthcare, business services and ICT.

Domestic investors represented 49% of the registered investments, Foreign Direct Investment registrations represented 47% while joint ventures represented the balance of approximately 4% of all investments registered during the year.

Domestic investment registrations almost doubled in 2018 compared to 2017 when they stood at 28% of the total while foreign investment represented 62% with joint ventures taking the remaining 10%.

RDB statement shows that some of the largest investors in 2018 with investments over \$70 million included Emerald Park Ltd, Millennial Construction Ltd, Rwanda Innovation Fund, Jali Transport, and Mara Phones.

Other notable investment

projects included Andela Software Development’s Rwanda based Pan African Hub, a first Tantalum refinery by PRG from Macedonia, new local production of a global beer brand – Heineken in Rwanda by Bralirwa, a large scale fertilizer blending plant in Rwanda by OCP from Morocco, a steel rolling mill by MasterSteel from Rwanda, a mosquito bed nets production plant by Vision Garments from Rwanda, a steel manufacturing plant by AARSAL STEEL from India, a mineral smelting company by Luna Smelter of Rwanda, hospitality development around Lake Kivu by GEMS of Rubavu, and mobility solutions development by Volkswagen.

RDB Chief Executive Officer Clare Akamanzi noted that the country has largely

benefited from her Diapora who have been investing in other countries.

She said the investment increase reflects confidence in the country’s business environment and the increased capacity of local investors which together are expected to spur the growth of the joint ventures in the future.

Officials also noted the impact of good reports about Rwanda, citing an example of World Bank Doing Business 2018 which ranked Rwanda 29th globally and second in Africa. The same report has kept Rwanda in the same positions in 2019.

RDB Chief Investment Officer Guy Baron said that registered investments in Rwanda jumped from \$398 million in 2010 to slightly over \$2 billion in 2018.

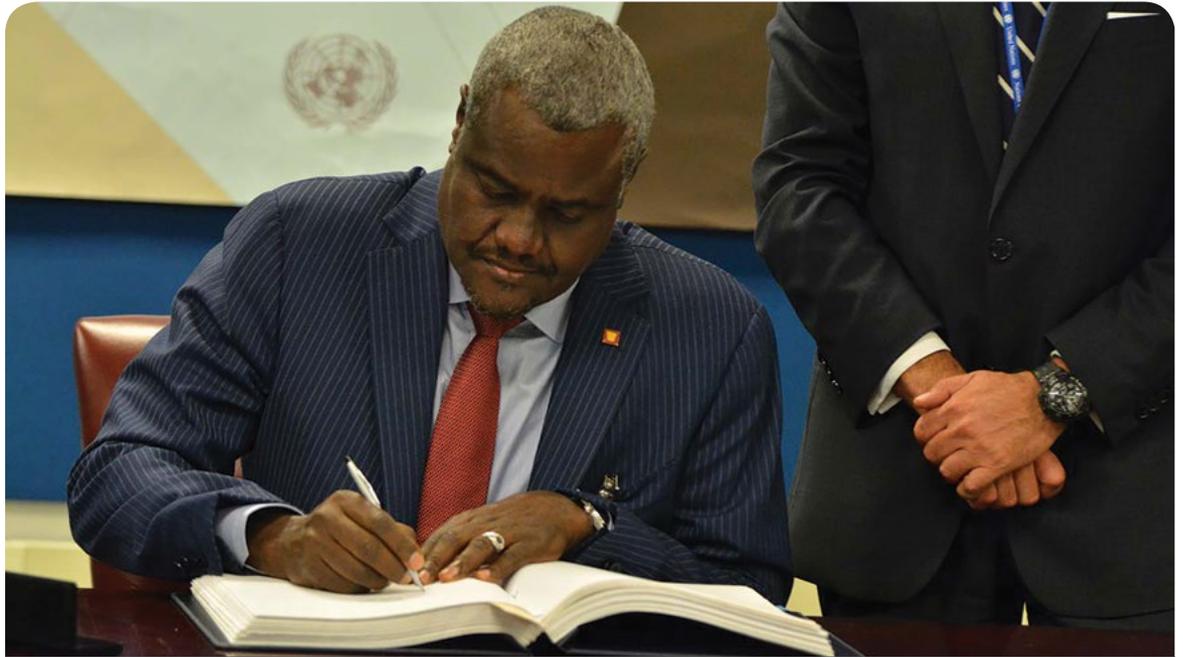
New Year's Message of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat

As 2018 draws to a close, I would like, on behalf of the African Union (AU) Commission, to wish a happy and prosperous 2019 to all the citizens and leaders of the continent, as well as to the African diaspora around the world.

The year 2018 was marked by further progress in the continental integration process. In January, in Addis Ababa, the Heads of State and Government launched the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM). The Extraordinary Summit held in March in Kigali saw the opening for signature of the Agreement on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment.

To date, 27 Member States have joined the SAATM. The Agreement on the AfCFTA has been signed by 49 Member States and has already been ratified by 14 of them, while the Free Movement Protocol, which garnered 32 signatures, has only one ratification. The Commission will intensify its efforts to ensure the early entry into force of these instruments and the accession of all Member States to the SAATM.

It cannot be stressed enough how crucial integration is for the development of the continent and the fulfillment of its people's aspiration to well-being. In this context, the Commission will continue to pay particular attention to the free movement of persons, as the persisting



Next African Union Summit will address issues surrounding the African Union Passport says Moussa Faki.

obstacles to our citizens' movement within their own continent are simply unacceptable. I congratulate those Member States that have taken measures to ease the procedures for the entry of African nationals into their territories, and urge those that have not yet done so to join this growing momentum. I am pleased to stress that, in February 2019, in Addis Ababa, at the 32nd Summit of our Union, the Commission will present, for adoption, guidelines on the design, production and issuance of the African passport, the materialization of which will take us one step closer to the long-held dream of complete free movement across the continent.

Investment in infrastructure is an important aspect of continental integration. It is worth

noting that 2018 saw the beginning of the development of the second phase of the Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA); the acceleration of the process towards the creation of the continental electricity market; and the operationalization of the African Renewable Energy Initiative. To mobilize the necessary political support for these initiatives and SAATM, I appointed a High Representative to follow up on them.

The AU has continued to work in many other key areas. Thus, several activities were carried out in sectors as diverse as those of education, science, technology and innovation, including through the Pan-African University, the academic mobility scheme and research grants; culture; space development,

with the ongoing work to operationalize the African Space Agency and the Earth Observation Program, which aims to help Member States better manage their natural resources; health and nutrition; livestock; environment and agriculture. In February 2019, the AU, together with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO), will organize the first ever international food safety conference in Addis Ababa, against the backdrop of significant progress in the implementation of the 2014 Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation in Africa.

These programs are having a tangible impact on the continent's development and

the livelihoods of its people. Their reinforcement and the need for better outreach to ensure they are more widely known will continue to engage the attention of the Commission.

The quest for peace and security has been a major priority for our Union in 2018. It is all the more so as our leaders have solemnly pledged to do everything possible to silence the guns by 2020, by ending the wars and other acts of violence that continue to afflict different parts of our continent and cause untold suffering. Clearly, achieving this goal requires renewed efforts on the part of all our Member States, civil society and other actors: peace is a global undertaking that requires the involvement of all.

In the meantime, I note with satisfaction the progress

made over the past months. Reconciliation between Eritrea and Ethiopia and other positive subsequent developments in the Horn of Africa have proved that peace is within reach when the required political will exists. I look forward to similar advances elsewhere on the continent, be it Burundi, as part of the region's action with the support of the AU and the larger international community; the Central African Republic, where we are endeavoring to relaunch the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation; Libya, with the intensification of efforts to convene, under the auspices of the AU and the United Nations, an all-inclusive national reconciliation conference; and Western Sahara, where the stalemate in the peace process has lasted for far too long. I urge the South Sudanese stakeholders to definitively close the sad chapter of the violence they inflicted on their own people and to resolutely move from the rhetoric of peace and reconciliation to its actual practice. I call for restraint and dialogue in Sudan, where the incidents that have occurred in recent days and the regrettable loss of life that has accompanied them are a source of concern. I renew the AU's willingness

to accompany the Comoros to preserve the hard-won gains in the stabilization of the archipelago, in parallel with the search for a definitive solution to the issue of the Comorian island of Mayotte on the basis of international legality and relevant AU decisions.

I salute the efforts of African civilian and uniformed personnel deployed in peace support and counter-terrorism operations in different theaters. From Somalia to the Sahel through the Lake Chad Basin, their actions and the sacrifices made are admirable.

More generally, the goal is to anchor peace and stability in the continent on a lasting basis. It is precisely in this perspective that efforts are being made to deepen the democratization processes, ensure respect for human rights and combat corruption, which was the theme of the Summit for the year 2018, and, more generally, promote good governance. The Commission has, in 2018, observed fourteen presidential and legislative elections, including the recent elections in Madagascar and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), to assess the extent of their compliance with the relevant continental instruments - some of these polls have benefited from

AU technical assistance. The Commission has also continued to monitor the effective implementation of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. In February 2019, it will submit to the Summit a draft Protocol on Specific Aspects of the Right to Nationality and the Elimination of Statelessness in Africa.

African solidarity, whether manifested among states or in favor of the most vulnerable, is one of the fundamental tenets of Pan-Africanism. Several AU initiatives undertaken in 2018 have been driven by this principle, including the fight against the Ebola epidemic in the DRC, as was the case in West Africa in 2014, and against other diseases in different parts of the continent; support to Member States affected by the fall army worm disaster, which threatens the food and financial security of millions of agricultural producers; the repatriation, in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration and the European Union (EU), of more than 30,000 African migrants stranded in Libya and the mobilization of the resources necessary for their reintegration into their countries of origin; and the support provided to countries emerging from

conflicts and crises under the African Solidarity Initiative. In 2019, the theme of the Summit will be devoted to the plight of refugees, returnees and displaced persons, with the aim of scaling up the continental response to this phenomenon.

Whether it is to ensure development and integration, promote peace and security, or strengthen the foundations of good governance, the role of women and youth is central. It is therefore with renewed determination that efforts to promote gender equality and African youth empowerment will be pursued. The formation of parity governments in Ethiopia and Rwanda and, more generally, the progress made in gender mainstreaming are encouraging steps that need to be expanded. The appointment of an envoy and the establishment of an AU Advisory Council for the Youth are also part of this commitment to involve all segments of our people in the drive towards continental renewal.

The year 2018 was marked by repeated attacks against multilateralism and the institutions that emanate from it. Africa has consistently expressed its concern over this situation, which is undermining the ability of the international community

to meet the complex and multidimensional challenges it faces. The struggle for a more just world and greater solidarity, based on the scrupulous respect for international law, will remain a key priority for the continent. I welcome the continued deepening of the partnership between the AU and the United Nations, as demonstrated by the signing, in January 2018, of a Memorandum of Understanding on the implementation of Agendas 2063 and 2030, which complements the agreement concluded in April 2017 in the area of peace and security, as well as by the joint actions undertaken in the field by the AU Commission and the United Nations Secretariat. Likewise, I welcome the progress made in the relationship with the EU as part of the follow-up to the November 2017 Abidjan Summit, and look forward to the successful holding of the Afro-Arab Summit in 2019 in Saudi Arabia.

At the same time, the AU will remain resolute in the fight against xenophobia and racism, which are manifest in migration policies in some parts of the world and whose rise is one of the facets of unilateralism. In this regard, the AU reaffirms its full support for the Global



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Compact on Migration agreed to in Marrakesh, Morocco, this month.

This is the overall context in which the institutional reform process of our Union is unfolding. The aim is to ensure that the Union is fit for purpose, can better meet the expectations of African countries and peoples, and ensure that Africa speak with one voice on the world stage. Major milestones have been set in this regard, particularly in terms of financial autonomy, working methods and coordination with the Regional Economic Communities, with the first coordination meeting planned for June 2019, in

Niamey. Measures have also been taken to strengthen the representation of women and young people, with the introduction of quotas for these categories for all posts at the AU level. Similarly, the the NEPAD Agency has evolved into an AU Development Agency.

This process will continue in 2019. Particular emphasis will be placed in this regard on the streamlining of the organs of the Union, the reform of the Commission, and the development of a new scale of assessment for the AU budget.

The year 2018 has certainly seen significant progress, for which the continent can

take legitimate pride, but many challenges persist. Conflicts and violence remain a reality that affects the lives of large segments of the African population. The democratization processes and the promotion of good governance are still fraught with difficulties. Poverty and misery are the daily lot of hundreds of millions of people even though the continent is endowed with wealth and talent. The voice of Africa on the international stage is still insufficiently taken into account, while the continent represents more than a quarter of the membership of the United Nations.

With Agenda 2063, Africa has developed a roadmap that clearly articulates the path forward for its emergence. The year 2019 offers the opportunity to move faster to break the multiple chains that hinder the actualisation of Africa's rich potential. From this point of view, nothing is more decisive than the deepening of continental unity. As I have pointed out many times, with unity we are everything; without it we are nothing.

The 19th of February 2019 will mark the centenary of the Pan-African Congress, which took place in Paris and laid the foundation stone for the creation of

the Organization of African Unity. May this centenary further raise awareness and strengthen the will for a stronger mobilization in a way commensurate with today's exigencies.

In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to President Paul Kagame for the dynamism with which he chairs our Union and for his constant support to the Commission. I look forward to working with President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, who will chair our Union from next February.

Addis Ababa, 31 December 2018

Kenya: Booming informal sector yet forgotten by the government

By Samuel Ouma | @journalist_27

According to Sir William Arthur Lewis, United Kingdom economist, Informal sector is a livelihood generation within the developing countries. He further referred to informal workers as those who do not have employment security, work security and social security.

The informal sector is a playing a significant role in Sub-Saharan Africa. It contributes to a country's income growth, creation of employment and poverty reduction. In Kenya it has a different name, "Jua Kali" meaning fierce sun. The name has been derived from Swahili language.

The informal workers carry out their activities by the roadsides or in the streets, sometimes with shelter, sometimes not. They comprise of small-scale



traders, entrepreneurs and craftspeople.

The dominion of the sector is well known in the East African country. In the Kenya National Bureau report, informal sector represents a whopping 82.7 per cent of employment. The sector has employed 13.3 million people

compared 2.6 million people in the formal sector.

The United Nation's Economic Commission for Africa in 2011 revealed that Kenya has the highest informal sector employment compared to Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, Egypt, Liberia, Madagascar,

Mauritius and South Africa.

"In Kenya and Rwanda, 3 out of 4 workers are employed in the informal sector, a proportion that increases to over 80 per cent among women," said the report.

The study linked formal sector's inability to absorb the huge number of jobs seekers

to the rise of informal sector.

"As the formal sector's inability-public and private cannot absorb the huge number of jobs seekers, informal sector employment usually drives job creation in most countries," added the report.

In 2014, the sector

employed 11.8 million unlike 2.4 million in the formal sector according to data from Kenya's Economic Survey 2015. Out of 799,700 jobs created, 693,400 were in the informal sector.

Grey economy is doing well in reduction of unemployment which has fluctuated over the past few years. Rate of unemployment in Kenya stands at 39.1per cent as one out of five youths are unemployed despite the influx of fresh graduates in the job market.

High rate of unemployment is attributed to the following factors; Inappropriate education system which prepares people to be job seekers instead of job creators. The emphasis on white collar jobs in schools and higher institutions of learning has imparted a belief in youth that without securing an excellent employment opportunity they cannot make it in life. The system is portraying informal jobs to be for those who have not gone to school.

Another factor is corruption. Kenyans led by leaders are among the most corrupt in the globe. You can hardly find a job without connections which

is caused by tribalism and nepotism. Leaders also pocket funds earmarked for inception of projects which when established can jobs to ordinary citizens.

High population growth is also to be blamed. Rapid population growth rate is incompatible to the new opportunities generated every year. Research shows that seven million Kenyans are unemployed and the number is expected to increase in future due to high rate of giving birth.

Federation of Kenya Employers, employers' lobby, has decried over the rise of informal sector compared to formal due to poor employment policies. The lobby's CEO Jacqueline, "The policies are not helping the informal businesses to transit into established formal businesses and also to small formal businesses to grow and become big business. Further, many companies have instead laid off staff while others while others have all together closed shop in Kenya".

Apart from employment, grey economy has contributed to country's foreign exchange as some products from the sector are exported outside

the country as well as purchased by the tourists. It facilitates decentralization since Jua Kali is widespread across the country.

Drop in crime activities has been witnessed as many young people get absorbed in sector. Some business opportunities have opened up. There are brokers and middlemen who have created a business of sourcing parts and goods to sell to small and mid-sized enterprises.

There is also provision of certain goods at a cheap price. The master craftsmen produce high quality goods for fewer funds. It is not necessary for one to purchase large and expensive machines to produce the same quality work as the large companies.

What prompts Kenyans to venture into informal sector?

There are several reasons why majority of Kenyans have opted to focus in the informal sector. First, it has no legal requirement and taxation. Majority of the businesses are not registered by the government making it easy to start and run. They are also exempted from paying tax unlike other businesses which operate under formal

sector. Many businesses require less money to start thereby creating more chances and attracting more people to venture into the sector as sources of employment which are not available in formal sector due to high capital needed.

"To start this business I only needed Ksh.5,000 (USD \$50). My first tools were hammer, tape measure; hand saw, two pieces of wood. In the first few months I encountered severe challenges but now things are well. I possess all the tools a carpenter should have and customer base has increased," Jack Wafula, a carpenter working in Nairobi revealed to the Pan African Visions.

"Change is inevitable. My husband's salary was not enough to sustain us. One day he left me Ksh.300 (USD\$30) for food and since I was left alone after children had gone to school I opted not to buy food. I rushed to market and bought three bars of soap and sold to my neighborhood and by evening I had a profit of Ksh.100 (USD\$100). The trend continued and that is how this business came about," Faith Nyambura,

a shopkeeper in Mombasa town, disclosed to us on phone.

Prevailing conditions also make most trading activities under informal sector flexible which acts a motivating factor to many people. For example, hawkers selling umbrellas when it is raining and hawk Christmas trees during festive season.

Individuals operating informal activities do not incur much in running their businesses which is a great encourage some to venture into such opportunities. Expenses such as bills of water, electricity, telephone and maintenance costs are history.

Challenges

Despite its significant role in economic growth to the country, the informal sector activities are hindered by inadequate capital since the operators do not get funding from government, rapid changes in technology, lack of social and economic cover and protection, inadequate security and adverse weather condition.



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The year of return: African Enslaved descents return for celebration

By Jessica Ahedor

The Ministry of Tourism, Arts Culture here in Ghana, is spearheading plans and the commemoration of “The Year of Return, Ghana 2019, in partnership with the Office of Diaspora Affairs (Office of the President), the Panafest Foundation and the Adinkra Group of USA. As part of the programme for the celebration, the maiden edition of the “This Is New Africa” (TINA) Kente Festival was held from 2nd - 4th January, 2019. The aim of the annual TINA festival is to promote the African continent and Ghana in particular; through music and creative arts which is becoming a catalyst for tourism and investment. The new African sound, Afrobeats is fast becoming a force to be reckoned with in the global music scene.

Global Afrobeats superstar Fuse ODG is the originator of the TINA festival. He uses his music and influence to promote Ghana and Africa in a way that has never been done before in Ghanaian History. He is also helping the rise of Afrobeats worldwide through commitment to re-educate how Africa is perceived in the world. According to Fuse ODG, TINA festival is a platform to unite the global African family (Diaspora), home and abroad to experience our culture and heritage so that we can tell our own story and change global perceptions about Africa and Ghana in particular.

The festival was held at Ghana’s iconic venue, the Trade Fair Centre-La, Accra,



unfolding other events such as Nation Builders Day on the 2nd January, 2019 at Akosombo School, one of Ghana’s premier schools that has churn out influential people in the country and abroad. Followed by Global Diaspora Conference and Exhibition on 3rd January, 2019 at the Accra International Conference Centre (AICC), Accra) and climax by TINA Music Festival on the 4th January, 2019 at the Fantasy Done, Trade Fair, Accra.

The event saw Speakers for the global diaspora conference and exhibition acts like Yaba Nkrumah (Political Activist), Fuse ODG, Reggie Yates (BBC TV Broadcaster), Ama K. Abebrese (Actress), Chaka Bars and many. The sector Minister Catherine Afeku

tells Jessica Ahedor Aside the sentimental reasons; the return of the African diaspora is economically pragmatic for Ghana. Tourism could add \$5 billion to Ghana’s economy by 2027, a prospect the government is looking to explore. The government is also not losing sight of the investment potential and human capital of the highly educated “returnees” like Kambon, who decide to move permanently to Ghana. Earlier, the President Nana Akufo-Addo in October, declared 2019 as “The Year of Return”, launching a series of programs that would seek to encourage people of African ancestry to make the “birthright journey home for the global African family.”

The idea of a homecoming of “our brothers and sisters” who were taken away is one

that Ghana has long fancied and championed. The country has hosted the biennale PANAFEST/Emancipation Day celebration since 1992 and in 2001, the Right of Abode law was passed, giving anybody of African ancestry in the Americas, the right to stay in Ghana indefinitely. On the occasion of Ghana’s 50th independence anniversary in 2007, the Joseph Project launched to also encourage the descendants of enslaved Africans to return.

In December 2016, 34 ‘returnees’ became Ghanaians in a neutralisation ceremony attended by the then president John Mahama. “I have only restored to you what rightfully belongs to you and was painfully taken away,” president Mahama said after handing out the naturalization

certificates. The international organisation for Migrations report for 2018 reveals over 700 Ghanaians return home voluntarily from both the Africa continent and Europe. However checks from Centre for Returnees in Ghana have it that, about 1000 applications are currently being process for African Diaspora of Enslaved Descent (ADED) and the Ghanaian emigrants who have lost their citizenship based on the acquisition of another nationality that does not accommodate dual citizenship. It added in 2016, 34 people were successfully integrated into the Ghanaian system and figures are likely to shoot up, saying the process so far has received positive feedback. History

August 2019 marks 400 years since the anchoring of an English ship in Jamestown, Virginia carrying a small group of enslaved Africans. While African slaves had been in other parts of the Americas region (including the United States) before 1619, that year is widely regarded as the commencement of the African slave trade to North America. In all, the Transatlantic slave trade from Africa to the New World lasted four centuries (1444-1888) and involved nearly all the European powers. When Brazil became the last country to abolish the slave trade in 1888, an estimated 17 million African women and men had been seized from the continent and transported to plantations across the Americas a conservative figure that UNESCO admits excludes the many who died



2019, The Year Of Return, Ghana To Accommodate African-Americans And Africans In The Diaspora says Pres. Akufo-Addo.

Prize in 1950) and Mordecai Johnson (the first African American president of Howard University) attended Ghana's Independence Day celebration on Mar. 6, 1957.

Nkrumah and Ghana made a huge impression on Martin Luther King, which later inspired one of his famous sermons "Birth of a Nation" upon his return to the US. Malcolm X and Muhammad Ali also made high profile visits to the country years later. The black star on the national flag is inspired by the Black Star Line shipping company founded by pan-Africanist orator Marcus Garvey, which had the grand ambition of facilitating the return of African Americans to the motherland. Accra has also been home to black American thinkers and exiles such as Maya Angelou (for three years along with her son Guy), Sylvia Boone (the first tenured black woman professor at Yale University), Julian Mayfield, W.E.B Du Bois and George Padmore, all of whom lived and worked in Ghana. Du Bois and Padmore are buried in the city and their homes are now public libraries. But even before this period, Accra had long been home to the Tabon people, a group of African slaves in Brazil who returned after a popular slave rebellion. The Tabons arrived in Accra in 1820s and 1830s and their descendants have fully assimilated into Ghanaian social and political life.

Black Mecca

Positioning Ghana as the home of global Africa and the place for a spiritual journey of self-discovery has been an idea promoted by governments since Nkrumah.

on the way and were thrown into the high seas. Many of the enslaved Africans came from West Africa and the present-day nation of Ghana was a significant place of origin.

Birth of a Nation

Right from the founding of the modern nation, early Ghanaian leaders led by the first president Kwame Nkrumah preached pan-Africanism, one that transcended the shores of continental Africa. As a student in 1930s and 1940s America, Nkrumah saw at first hand the racism black Americans endured and it radicalized his own consciousness about Africanness and blackness.

In some ways, it was a driving force for him to return home in 1947 and eventually become the lead architect of Ghana's independence the first sub-Saharan African country to break free from European colonialism. President Kwame Nkrumah speaking at the White House on Mar. 8, 1961 The civil rights movement in the United States was also at its height and many black American leaders at the time felt a connection to this new black African country that had gained self-determination in a largely peaceful manner. 5Leading civil rights leaders including Martin Luther and Coretta Scott King, Ralph Bunche (the first person of color to win the Nobel Peace

Small scale farmers in Zimbabwe to benefit from carbon balanced smart agriculture training

By Wallace Mawire



Small scale farmers from Mashonaland Central province of Zimbabwe are set to benefit from a supported training project in sustainable agriculture practices to equip them with knowledge they can use to adjust to changing climatic and agricultural conditions.

According to Tonderai Chikono, Funding and Partnerships Specialist for Development Aid from People to People (DAPP), the project organized community members into farmers' clubs, which are functioning as models and catalysts to organize rural small-scale farmers around production and cooperation and around climate change.

"They will showcase the power of rural farmers to live a positive and empowered life, one that serves as an example to others," Chikono said.

He said that DAPP is using its farmers' club model to train 2,000 small-scale farmers in sustainable agriculture practices and to equip them with knowledge they can use

to adjust to changing climatic and agricultural conditions.

It is reported that as an integrated part of the training, the farmers are organized around exploring and sharing water resources, securing inputs, and marketing their produce. General knowledge and skills within nutrition, health and community development are included as essential components.

According to Chikono, the farmers' clubs programme is a system of cooperation that empowers farmers to increase their production and improve their livelihoods. The farmers learn to execute conservation and organic farming methods, implement crop diversification on their own land and establish or increase vegetable production and garden farming.

Low-cost technology farming methods are introduced and farmers learn to better and more sustainably utilize local water resources. Animal husbandry is also introduced to increase sources of protein based on sustainable sound methods



of raising animals on crop waste. The farmers learn about budgeting, planning, measuring outcomes, and how to buy and sell cooperatively.

The UNEP funded Sustainable lifestyles among rural families in Zimbabwe: Small-scale conservation farming to change lifestyles in Africa and beyond project aims at developing and replicating sustainable lifestyles, including low carbon lifestyles in rural Zimbabwe as a way of starting from the grassroots up to policy levels, bottom-up approach in mitigating the impact of climate change through carbon balanced smart agriculture.

The overall objective is to accelerate the transition toward sustainable and low carbon lifestyles in Africa. Its specific objective is to promote and replicate sustainable farming, adaptation and mitigation to climate change and living

in rural areas in Zimbabwe. The philosophy is to have the local farmers appreciate the impact of their lifestyles to the climate change debacle and how important is their decisions and practices at low level in the fight against the same.

The project has been implemented by the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Water, Climate and Rural Resettlement and has trained the project staff together with AGRITEX officers using the trainer of trainers approach in the use of EX-ACT as a decision making tool. The trained officers will champion the training of the 2,000 farmers and the use of the tool in the everyday agriculture decision making.

The Ex-Ante Carbon-balance Tool (EX-ACT) is an appraisal system developed by Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) providing estimates of the impact of agriculture and forestry development

projects, programmes and policies on the carbon-balance. The carbon-balance is defined as the net balance from all greenhouse gases (GHGs) expressed in CO2 equivalent that were emitted or sequestered due to project implementation as compared to a business-as-usual scenario.

EX-ACT is a land-based accounting system, estimating C stock changes (i.e. emissions or sinks of CO2) as well as GHG emissions per unit of land, expressed in equivalent tonnes of CO2 per hectare and year. The tool helps project designers to estimate and prioritize project activities with high benefits in economic and climate change mitigation terms. The amount of GHG mitigation may also be used as part of economic analyses as well as for the application for additional project funds.

EX-ACT can be applied on a wide range of development projects from

all agricultural sub-sectors, including besides others projects on climate change mitigation, sustainable land management, watershed development, production intensification, food security, livestock, forest management or land use change. It is reported to be cost effective, requires a compared small amount of data, and has resources such as tables and maps which can help finding the required information. It is also added that while EX-ACT is mostly used at project level, it may easily be up-scaled to the programme/sector level and can also be used for policy analysis.

The project organized community members into Farmers' Clubs, which are functioning as models and catalysts to organize rural small-scale farmers around production and cooperation, and around climate change. They will showcase the power of rural farmers to live a positive and empowered life,

one that serves as an example to others.

According to Chikono, it is reported that by the end of the training, participants were able to use the EX-ACT tool and were also able to understand the nexus between climate change and agriculture, explain the concept of a carbon balance, apply the EX-ACT tool for a simple application and to analyze and utilize EX-ACT results.

The training was covered under a five day period per district which included Gutu and Mutasa. The training was divided into six modules which included land use change, crop production and management, grassland and livestock, land degradation and inputs and further investments.

Also the modules encompass the general description of the project such as geographic area, climate and soil characteristics and duration of the project, identification of changes in land use and technologies foreseen by project components using specific "modules" such as deforestation, forestation, forest degradation, annual/perennial crops, rice cultivation, grasslands, livestock, inputs, energy and the computation of C-balance.

Also the training opened with an extra module Agriculture and Climate Change which focused on the establishment of the accurate understanding of the concept of climate change.

Five African Women Who Should Have Been on 2018's Forbes Power Women List

By Liz Grossman

Every year, Forbes publishes its list titled: 'The World's 100 Most Powerful Women'. The women on this list are some of the most intelligent, resilient and influential leaders of today, making their mark in the world in all fields including politics, business, philanthropy, media, technology and finance. They are creating solutions for some of the world's biggest problems and leaving lasting legacies along the way.

Members of the 2018 Most Powerful Women list represent women in six categories: business (27 honorees), technology (18), finance (12), media & entertainment (16), politics & policy (22), and philanthropy (5). Combined, the 'Power Women' control or influence nearly \$2 trillion in revenue and oversee 5 million employees.

While I know this list is highly competitive and the women on the list all deserve the honor, there is a serious problem when it comes to diversity. Just look at the numbers: North America has 50 women represented, Asia and the Pacific has 22, Europe has 24, (with the United Kingdom boasting 7 from that number), the Middle East has 3, and only one in Africa at position 97, the newly minted President of Ethiopia Sahle-Work Zewde.

Of course, picking the Power Women is no easy feat. Forbes uses four metrics every year 1) money (net worth, company revenues, assets, or GDP); 2) traditional, digital and social media presence; 3) spheres of influence; and 4)



Liz Grossman.

impact, analyzed both within the context of each woman's field (media, technology, business, philanthropy/NGOs, politics, and finance) and outside of it.

Criteria number one, money, can place African women at a disadvantage. According to the IMF, in 2017 Nigeria had the largest nominal GDP of any African country at \$376 billion, but ranks 30th globally, with most African countries trailing far behind. The top ten African businesses range from \$58 billion (Sonatrach) in revenue to \$8 billion (Imperial Holdings), none of which have a female CEO. Fortune's top ten global companies range from over

\$500 billion (Walmart) to \$242 billion (Berkshire Hathaway). These simple numbers and economic imbalance alone may explain why so few African women make it on the Power 100 list, but it is reductionist to defining power in terms of money.

Power can be defined as the ability or right to control people and events, or to influence the way people act or think in important ways. African women have historically been influential leaders, dating back to the 17th century with Queen Nzinga from Angola, through to the struggles for independence by women like Yaa Asaantewa, Rose Chibambo, Graça

Machel, Winnie Mandela, Joice Mujuru, Lillian Ngoyi and Albertina Sisulu, to the modern historical figures such as former female Presidents Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Dr Joyce Banda, Ameenah Gurib Fakim and Catherine Samba Panza. Business women like Njeri Rionge from Kenya, Sibongile Sambo from South Africa are running multi million dollar enterprises. We must also praise countries like Rwanda, for having the most number of women represented in parliament. African women leaders are resilient, influential and changing their societies and the world. And they wield significant power. Forbes has recognized

African women on past lists, such as Folorunso Alakija, Dr Joyce Banda, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Ameena Gurib Fakim, Gail Kelley (the only African woman to ever be named in the top 10, #8 of 2010), and others. However this year, I would like to suggest six African women to consider for the Power Women List.

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka is the United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women, a position she has held since August 2013, expanding the agency to raise the most revenue in its history and provide financing for almost 50,000 beneficiaries globally. She boasts over 83,000 followers on Twitter, speaking engagements on some of the world's most influential stages, and sets the policy agenda for gender equality in the core of the United Nations. She uses her experiences as an active leader in the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa, as well as serving in some of the highest positions of government, including Deputy President, to influence the lives of all women across the world.

With a glowing career in civil society, government, policy making, and advocacy, Obiageli Ezekwesli spearheaded the #BringBackourGirls Campaign, creating a global movement to insist on returning the Chibok Girls. More than one million people, including the former First Lady of the United States, Michelle Obama have tweeted the hashtag. HBO has recently released a documentary on two of

the girls, which is a result of this campaign. She was a 2018 nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize for her work in transparency in the extractive sector. She is currently running for President of Nigeria, and using her global platform to disrupt Nigeria's politics of failure, as evidenced by her interview with CNN's Christine Amanpour, and through a strategic campaign targeting young Nigerians.

Tsitsi Masiyiwa is a Zimbabwean philanthropist and social entrepreneur who has devoted much of her life to empowering the lives of young people through education and technology. She and her husband, billionaire Strive Masiyiwa, founded the Higher Life Foundation in response to the AIDS crisis, and now provide education, access to technology, and healthcare in Zimbabwe, South Africa, Burundi and Lesotho. Every year, the Higherlife Foundation provides 20,000 scholarships for African students, and gives 600,000 students a month access to education through the Ruzivo online learning platform they developed. Tsitsi is a



UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka.

sought after philanthropist and speaker, serving on boards such as the Global Philanthropy Forum, PATH, the Giving Fund and the End Fund, where she uses her expertise to influence decisions about major philanthropic investments globally.

Amina J Mohammed serves as the Under Secretary General of the United Nations, the second in command of the entire UN system, with a budget of \$5.4 billion. After years in

the private sector, Amina served in government under three Nigerian Presidents, including as Minister of the Environment, before joining the United Nations as Ban Ki-Moon's advisor on the post-2015 Development agenda. Sharing stages with major world leaders, she is working to better share the humanitarian work of the United Nations, and encourage reforms within the system, including on climate change, the Every Woman Every Child

initiative, women's health, and developing future African political leaders through the African Women Leaders Network.

A top executive hailing from Ghana with a career spanning PepsiCo, Apple, Uber and now Endeavor, Bozoma "Boz" St John is disrupting music, pop culture and business as we know it. She was the mastermind behind Beyonce's Superbowl Halftime show in 2013, and created Apple Music's ad campaign with black

celebrities. Boz's work has been featured on superlative lists including Billboard Magazine's list of top women in music, Fast Company's 100 most creative people, and the Hollywood Reporter's 2018 Women in Entertainment Power 100. At the 2018 BET Awards, she encouraged entertainers and executives to use their platforms to advance various agendas, and use their power for good. She also sits on the board of Vital Voices, an powerful international organization identifying women leaders and supporting their visions.

I encourage everyone to keep an eye on these women, as well as the growing movement of African women leaders both on the continent and across the globe. As Africa continues to produce top talent, as nations grow, and policies are written and implemented invest heavily in women and girls, I am confident the Forbes Power Women list will become more geographically balanced and reflect this growth.



Tsitsi Masiyiwa.

LIONHEART: THE STORY OF CULTURE

By Ngozi Noblin



Ngozi Noblin.

Lionheart isn't just a movie, it is an evolutionary growth of Nollywood. Nollywood has come a very long way, and Lionheart is one of the very many proofs of how strong we have invested everything treasurable to us including time in growing one of the strongest economical revenue in Nigeria.

Amidst the incredible story of family legacy comes the intelligence in technical and acting skill of the cast and crew. The cast, which were paramount of old actors once again reminded us how far Nollywood has come in her growth; furthermore, the old actors displayed their exceptional skills thereby educating the new actors especially the young generation that being an actor is not about the fame rather it is ability to interpret one's role(s) in an extraordinary manner. The actors in the movie, especially the old actors interpreted their roles with ease that one

could easily think it is their real lives.

Having talked about the skillful act of the cast and crew let me discuss the aspects of the movie, which surrounds culture, the act of good deeds and the success of ONE NIGERIA. Lionheart is centered around the Igbo culture; Family is an important institute in the lives of every Igbo person. The Igbo culture and tradition believes that every relationship stems from family. Our perspective and view of family as a unit is very different from the western world; to the western world family means one father, one mother and child(ren); however, in Igbo culture family is structured by including the extended part of the family not just the immediate part of the family and your business is everyone's business. This part of the culture was seen in the movie when Chief Obiagu got his brother to replace him due to his health issues, which was also a critical time for

the Lionheart transportation company. Chief Obiagu (Pete Edochie) could have chosen a non-member of the family to replace him during his absence rather he chose his brother who knows little or nothing about the company; however, we could see in the movie that his brother Godswill (Nkem Owoh) even with little or no knowledge about the company and its entities worked so hard with her niece Aadaeze (Genevieve Nnaji) to revive the company, which is the spirit of Igbo people. No matter how hard it turns out to be, no matter how little knowledge we possess about any situation we are surrounded with Igbo people always find a way out. We are very determined and driven by the story of our ancestors, so we preserve through every situation no matter how bad it turns out to be.

In addition, the story shared in Lionheart brings us to the next aspect of Igbo culture, which probably not everyone will agree with me. This aspect of our culture is the role of women in the Igbo community. Women are believed not to be brave enough to take up challenges, we are given the back seat in every situation and we play behind the scenes. We saw this in the movie when Aadaeze Obiagu (Genevieve Nnaji), who wanted to replace her father, Ernest Obiagu (Pete Edochie), when he wasn't able to run his company due to health issues; instead her father asked his brother Godswill (Nkem Owoh) to replace him. Chief Obiagu (Pete Edochie) thought Aadaeze being that he's young and a woman

won't be able to handle the company, but that was the opposite. Aadaeze was very determined and preserved all through the dark times trying so hard without letting her age nor gender come in between her goal, which is saving the family legacy. I strongly believe that if women are given more opportunities in the Igbo community there will be more positive changes in the community.

The next aspect of the story roots in the importance of good deeds. In as much as Aadaeze and her uncle worked diligently in saving the company, the good deeds of Godswill (Nkem Owoh) contributed towards building the foundation of the relationship between two cultures (the Hausa and the Igbo). This movie shows that we should learn to be nice and honest to people regardless of one's language, culture, gender, status etc, which brings me towards discussing the next aspect of the movie, which is ONE NIGERIA. Regardless of the ethnic groups we come from, as long as we recognize the advantages of coming together as ONE NIGERIA we could build our very own DUBAI in Nigeria. As seen in the movie- the both families

representing the Hausa and Igbo identities came together to achieve ONE common goal. We have our differences in terms of culture, but most times we have to look unto the similarities, which is the fact we are NIGERIAN, we are same color and finally the fact we are humans and we are supposed to share love amongst ourselves and work towards achieving one common goal which is developing Nigeria. The both families, the family of Alhaji Danladi Maikano and Chief Ernest Obiagu focused more on their similarities instead of their differences, and we all saw how fruitful it turned out to be for both families.

Finally, I believe that language is the only key that provides access to our culture and traditions, and the usage of Igbo language in the movie is the crown that fits perfectly well unto the story; this helps and contributes greatly in promoting the Igbo language, which my organization (Igbo Amaka Cultural Institute) works diligently in promoting the language as well as the culture.

*Ngozi Noblin is a student of Medicine and President of the Igbo Amaka Cultural Institute



Nollywood veterans like Nkem Owoh joined established names like Genevieve Nnaji in the movie which got lucrative deal with Netflix.

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Sierra Leone: Unbending Leadership pushing Anti -Corruption Commission To Step Up Its Game

By Uzman Unis Bah

The Sierra Leone Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has taken robust steps to cripple corruption in the country; the stout and robust leader of the ACC, Francis Ben Kaifala, is very resolution; bolting with an unwavering mindset to prosecute all those who have a corrupt whiff.

The ACC under the astute leadership Francis has achieved great accomplishments within a short-term. For the first time the Afro Barometer Corruption Perception plunged from over 70% in 2015 to an all-time low of 43%. The ACC under the new boss presented a cheque of 7,578,449.077 (Seven Billion Five Hundred and Seventy-Eight Million Four Hundred and Forty-Nine Leones and Seventy-Seven Cent) to the president as part of the recovery of stolen public funds.

The president, in his new year's address, said "The New Year promises to be a year of hard work as we progress into the next trajectory. We look forward to the actualization of a special court that will try corruption cases that have stocked up in the court. We hope that we will be able to further improve on our mandate as we move towards the New Year. Already, we have recorded 100% convictions of our cases in court and we are going to have more convictions...."

President Bio at African Union Summit in Mauritania addressed the

summit on the theme "Winning the Fight against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa's Transformation"; revealed his determination to fighting corruption and how Africa should take this matter very seriously.

He stated that based on agreements already made with suspects, the Commission is expected to recover a further Le 5,000,000,000 (Five Billion Leones) and over \$ 700,000 (Seven Hundred Thousand Dollars) in the next six months. He noted that the impressive recovery is happening against the backdrop that this year the country was able to pass the control of corruption on the Millennium Challenge Cooperation with a score of 71% compared to 49% in the previous year.

"Apart from the hospital, we will use monies recovered to build a new office for the ACC that will be symbolic. Going into the New Year, I have reasons to smile because you are delivering on my promise to fight corruption. I am extremely happy for you. This is a new Sierra Leone and we are heading for a beautiful destination," President Bio affirmed.

On his part, President



Bio said he was extremely pleased with the efforts by the ACC to end corruption in the country, saying the relentless

work by the ACC provided hope that the country was moving in the right direction. He disclosed the monies

recovered by the ACC would be used to construct a medical diagnostic center for Sierra Leoneans.

Zimbabwe's Traditional Rulers Stepping Up Plans to Advise Mnangagwa on role of African Customs & National Rituals To Resolve Crisis

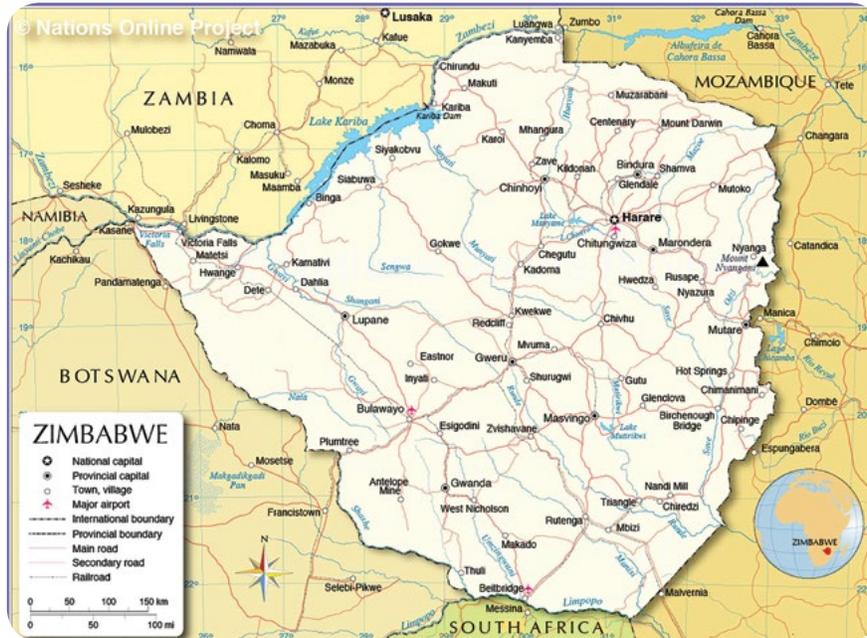
By Nevson Mpofo

A spiritual and ritual gang of African customs belief, Zimbabwean Traditional Healers have dedicated themselves to step up a campaign under the theme Restoring the Tradition and Culture of the African Land. The call was made recently by a group of traditional healers under ZINATHA, Zimbabwe Traditional Healers Association.

The Association is vividly vitiating a plan to meet the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe His Excellency Emmerson Dambudzo. They are cock assured he is ready to take off from the ground their ideas and advice. The ideas have been welcome by several community leaders, spirit mediums and some African values cherishing people.

The idea resonates on the centre of addressing tradition and culture of African perspectives focusing on Zimbabwe's cultural relics and vestiges which were ignored, vacated and abandoned since 1980. Traditional Healer Prince Sibanda, Secretary for Education in ZINATHA said the main reason why they want to meet Mnangagwa settles the dust hovering on the centre of the Economy which has had challenges since 2000.

In other words they are pushing for sundry spates of rituals with the goals, visions and mission to spread the voice of reviving the spirit of African cultural and traditional values. These have



long overdue unvisited since Revolutionary and Liberation struggles emancipated the whole of Africa. The whole of Africa is said to be still colonised spiritually. We are in a new dynamic World forefathers of Africa never lived in. They are angry because they died after having suffered hostility of erstwhile European colonisers who hoodwinked them holding the Bible, with Trade in mind and holding the gun.

This, in the long run, they want it to be a norm for the whole continent to liberate Africa spiritually. There is a feeling roaming in a triangle that of the bones of the Revolutionary dead are turning in their graves in Africa. Even those Africans who died which in other continents like America and Europe, their bones are turning in their graves that is if they died for Africa

.Also the hurl of anger of the flaring spirits of the dead in the whole of the submerging Motherland should be assuaged pain by performing rituals of Africa's ancient culture.

"The main objective of the Restore Tradition and culture of the African people is mainly meant to create a driving force to propel the economy at large.

"No one doubts that the Zimbabwean issue is spiritual. This is heavily manifested by a strong wave of disturbing events since the year 2000 at the height of the Land Reform Program.

"At the same time, let us not forget that there were problems in the spectrum of the social, economic and political spheres. The Government had already failed on many occasions.

Sibanda in terms of subsequent failure of the

economy to settle steady productive results in economic view he was referring to failure of the Economic Structural Adjustment Program which was launched in the late decade of the 80s by the then Minister of Finance and Economic Planning Dr Bernard Chidzero the late.

Apart from that, several political turmoil headed by the Military under the auspices of Robert Mugabe had pervaded the country in what was known as Gukurahundi. It left 20,000 people dead and some maimed in the Midlands and Matabeleland Provinces where the massacres took place between 1980 and 1987 before signing of Unity Accord

The Healer revealed also that the idea cooked out of the aftermath of the ZANU PF Congress held last year

in December in Filabusi. He pointed out that the discussions also cryptically hovered on the issue of the party to move a step towards taking heed to tradition and culture of Africa looking specifically at Zimbabwe.

"The idea we are taking off from the ground emanated from the talks which were done at the congress. There are some traditional leaders who were at the congress. They actually picked up the marvellous idea.

"We certainly pin our hope on Emmerson Mnangagwa whom we know obviously is aware of the story behind Zimbabwe's serious economic and political problems. This is not just economic and political, but social in the sense of humanitarian aspects.

"People are suffering. This kind of life faced by the nation as a whole affects the World as well because Zimbabweans are now everywhere around the World. They need to come back, work in their own country and develop their land. They must die peacefully in their own land rather than struggling being out as diasporas as it is said", he concluded.

In confirmation to the story of tradition and culture, Nelson Chamisa believed to be a faith possessed person by Prophet Blessing Chiza of Faith In God Ministries Eagle Life Assembly, the Opposition Leader at the centre of controversy in the hurl of anger after losing the

2018 Presidential election is also in support of the idea. He actually has not spoken in open strongly about it but a source who spoke to the Pan-African-Vision in call for anonymity said the Leader is having prayers day and night to appease evil spirits inflicting the country.

“Yes. I certainly know that Chamisa is aware of this. For sure he has something in mind pertaining the ongoing crisis. However, this is no longer a secret because he is having long day and night prayers to assuage pain of the people of Zimbabwe. This has been going on for long. Do we need to hide the truth in daylight yet the nation is in chaos?”

Prophet Chiza added that the only person who had the keys of the Kingdom of Zimbabwe is Nelson Chamisa of Opposition MDC T. He even prophesised that Nelson Chamisa will rule the country. Further to the escalating point he talked of the need for talks before it is too late.

“I will end by saying that there is need for talks between the two parties before it is too late. These talks will make the country move well. If these are not done, then we are as a nation down forever because the country will sink”.

The Writer took it for deep gleanings to step up clarity on the issues of tradition and culture and their link with the economy. A female traditional healer with the Tangwena family of origin Mbuya MaShumba known to be possessed by strong powers of the mermaid of the Indian Ocean who stays in Locknivar Harare confirmed the story surrounding culture

and tradition.

“There were supposed to be rituals which would have made all difficulties pass away. Maybe some problems would have been visited and blown by the wind. The whole story must have been solved by Robert Mugabe when he came to power in 1980.

“These Revolutionary people of ZANU PF led the country to Independence but it was through the powers of the spirits of the Land of AFRICA. I say so because they were helped by some other countries like Zambia, Ghana, Tanzania and Mozambique. They consulted spirit mediums whom they later dumped with shame and lack of honour”.

“What is it that has been done to appease the freedom fighters who liberated the country. The true heroes are dead. They never got what others got. They died for nothing. They left families struggling. That is the reason why we have these problems”,

The Old woman of spiritual powers in healing concludes Mnangagwa and Charumbira could be the only men to solve the problem. She reiterated that the only people who are responsible in resolving the crisis are those who died for this country.

“There are people who died for this Land. There are those alive. The only person I pin hope on is President Mnangagwa and Chief Charumbira the President of the Chiefs Council and the Vice Chairperson of the Pan-Africa Parliamentary Forum. However, God has his way into everything on earth” she said.

Chief Fortune Charumbira



Protestors gather on the streets during demonstrations over the hike in fuel prices in Harare.

shaded a little ray of light to this. He took a slight move to clear the air when he was contacted by the Pan-African-Visions. The Chief revealed that rituals had been done on several occasions.

“What I can only say in brief is rituals have been going on but they are not part of the media and the nation at large. This is just for the Government to look at secretly. If in the near future there is reason or reasons to announce then it can be made public. But, let it be as it is at the moment”. He said.

The Economy versus the long story of African Tradition and Culture..

Several Community Leaders, Traditional people, Economists and sociologists contacted by this Writer interestingly spoke openly that such thorny African matters could be a full text of the crescendo of challenges bedevilling the country. They however pointed clearly that if not proved this could just be African theories not

practical ones.

On the disturbing forces waylaying the economy down the truth in spiritual terms is that of an example of how even African families are hindered and shadowed by evil demons. This, they said is true and proved from a family perspective. The Zimbabwean issue has become interesting in that the ball of challenges continue rolling at the expense of millions of Zimbabweans touching all corners of the Globe.

Currently according to IOM and ZIMSTAT, there are approximately 4 and above millions of Zimbabweans leaving outside their country. These are Labour displaced migrants seeking jobs and some employed as Doctors, Engineers, Economists, Teachers Lawyers and sundry of academic experts.

Spontaneous forces to engulf the economy and cause effects could be a story told by failures running the economy. With regard to Zimbabwe there could be foreseeable evidence as it has been

gathered owing attention to the death of thousands of sons and daughters in the Revolutionary and Liberation struggle in Mozambique at Chimayo. Some bones of the dead were excavated in some parts of the country and repatriated to their original homes. A good example is of the Chibondo case in Mt-Darwin. Some rituals were performed at the place and around the area. Some were done at Chimoyo, Nyadzona and Tembere. The death of people through brutal massacres occurred several occasions since 1980 especially during elections. Everything has been attributed to the greed of political power. Since 1980 Zimbabwe has been conducting secret rituals at some shrines without success. Maybe this will spread to other countries in Africa. This can be, if it is an African linear pattern of new change.

Scapegoating In Zimbabwe's Dramatic Economic Tailspin

By Nevson Mpfu



Zimbabweans are looking up the government of President Mnangagwa to shake up the economy.

Zimbabwe as of 2018 close to end of December, Inflation figures rose sharply to 50% as released by the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange. Prices of all commodities up to now are spiralling on a daily basis. This has led to what may be termed "commercial anarchy". This is where-by anyone in Business has his own mind and does what he or she wants to peg as price of

a product on the market. Who to blame now stands to be the question by end of day. People are putting the blame more on the ruling party ZANU PF. MDC T and opposition parties are directing the blame to ZANU PF. These blaming comes amid the dramatic near to shut-down of the country's Government Corporations, Parastatals like National Railways of Zimbabwe, Air-

Zimbabwe, ZISCO STEEL and several mines and Private Industries.

Massive corruption was done in some of these like at ZIMRA , the country's Revenue Authority, NSSA National Social Security Authority, Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority and in Government Ministries. Main sectors Agriculture, Mining and Manufacturing Industry

have drastically gone down in terms of their contribution to the Growth Domestic Product.

In a plethora of Interviews by the Pan-African Visions with the Civil servants and the general public ,sentiments are that the economic situation is deteriorating in the hands of the Governments under the ruling Party . The large scale of the blame is put on the side of ZANU PF the ruling Party. They propose a Government of National Unity like the one which came into force after the 2008 heavy melt down which increased poverty by almost 90%.

At a time prices of basic commodities are shooting up, transport fares are rising every day, salaries are not increasing. This means that poverty is as well shooting. Workers have burden of the depending loads who are bread-winners .They are only having hand to mouth salaries. In schools teachers once resorted to work less hours on two days a week. Some civil servants had to go on go-slow. This is a blow to the Education sector. The Health sector has been heavily trodden since the time Doctors went on strike.

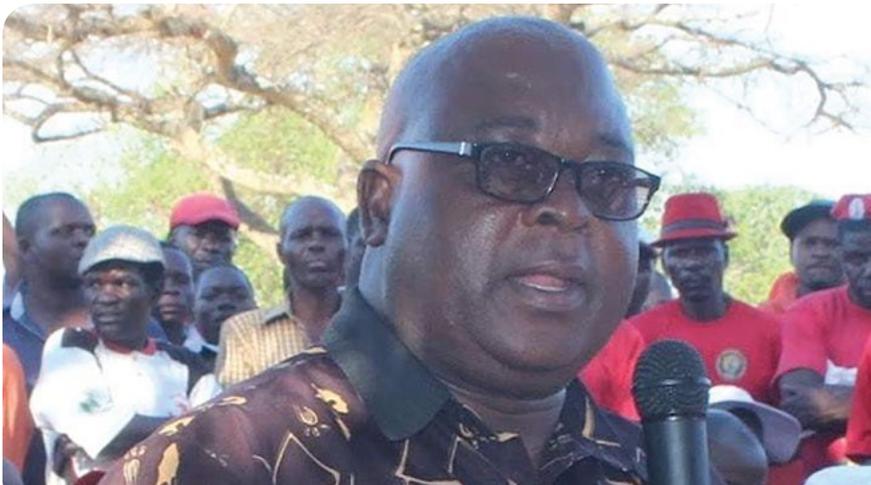
Deep political acrimony lies between two main parties ZANU PF and MDC-T. Opposition has declared that the ruling Party ZANU PF has failed to deliver. MDC-T Vice President Elias Mudzuri lamented that the ruling Party had no-more room of positive direction Leadership because they have failed to stabilise the ailing Economy since 2000. Elton Mangoma shares similar sentiments.

"Mnangagwa has the inability to solve Zimbabwe's problems because everything is turning sour for the people as a whole .Poverty levels have increased in cheer of the World. Everything he promised since late last year has not been substantiated. This has been going on for some time at the expense of Zimbabweans", commented Elton Mangoma recently.

However Simon Khaya Moyo ZANU-PF Spokesperson blames MDC-T as well. In an interview in Harare two weeks ago, he pointed out that the blame must not only be on the side of ZANU PF. He reiterated that even MDC-T and opposition parties are to blame because they have been pulling as well on their side mainly to worsen the situation in the country.

"The crisis that is looming is not only to be brushed on the side of ZANU-PF. We are all Zimbabweans in this suffering. Everyone is to blame. The problem is not created by the ruling party but it has come around because we are not united. Let us get in unity and solve it rather than point fingers to each other", said Khaya Moyo

Zimbabwe's deep economic crisis has led to extended divisions of all political parties. It is feared that this may cause as well the divided World between the east and the west. When there comes time when some countries come to the point of criticising those believed to belong to and support ZANU PF. A Political and Economic Analyst who is well known source for truth and positive



MDC-T Vice President Elias Mudzuri.

séance outcome said there is clear truth that the east and the west may be divided. The source further high lightened that this may be like a cold war but it could be as well create strong friction between USA and Russia.

“This could be true. USA is watching, Russia is watching. China is a bit in between, but Russia supports ZANU PF a Revolutionary Party which led Zimbabwe to Independence. China must be on that side, but they fear painted black by support of Dictatorship and abuse of Human-Rights.

“China has a relationship with Zimbabwe but it does not admire what is bad. Russia at the same time is quiet but it is on the side of what Revolutionaries do. USA is just for fair delivery of Justice in the country. It is looking at all eyes with fairness. They want Democracy, Social Justice and economic development of the country. In-fact. It is in between.



Simon Khaya Moyo ZANU-PF.

“USA will never be on the side of the opposition or ZANU PF for the sake of their choice and political affiliation. It is looking at the social, economic and political freedom and emancipation of the people, rule of Law and Liberty. In-fact these countries can advise the two parties to unite like they have done twice in 1987, the Unity Accord of ZANU PF and ZAPU PF and the

Government of National Unity of 2009 between ZANU PF and MDC-T.

“There is also the challenge of the Global Crisis. What is happening in the country is to lead to Global Crisis. This has occurred in 2008. Now it seems the problem is going on. It shall come again. But take note, the problem comes for countries in such friction and political disturbances like what is the case between

ZANU-PF and MDC-T”, said the Analyst.

The two political parties are getting serious blame from the majority of Zimbabwe inside and outside. There are 4 million Zimbabweans living in outside countries. The big number is in South Africa. Some countries with high numbers of labour migrants are Botswana, Namibia and UK. Some super power countries are watching as the

rot goes on like that but they shall talk at last to resolve the crisis.

ZANU PF has received much criticism arising from Robert Mugabe who stayed on to power for nearly four decades. The same situation was experienced during his tenure. Still the situation goes on like that up to this day with Mnangagwa of the same party who is in power. What people say has changed is the Human Rights issue shown in the new Government

MDC-T is also receiving criticism from ZANU PF and some sections of the population for causing unnecessary opposition which led to the on-going crisis the country has. All the problems started in 2000 as MDC called in to oppose ZANU-PF. At the same time that was the time the land was taken from the whites in what is called the Land Reform Program.



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African Economic Outlook 2019: Africa growth prospects remain steady, industry should lead growth

The state of the continent is good. Africa's general economic performance continues to improve, but it remains insufficient to address the structural challenges," A. Adesina

Five policy actions could raise Africa's total gains to 4.5 percent of its GDP, or \$134 billion a year

Africa's general economic performance continues to recover and GDP growth is projected to accelerate to 4.0 percent in 2019 and 4.1 percent in 2020. But improved macroeconomic and employment outcomes require industry to lead growth, according to the 2019 African Economic Outlook report, launched today by the African Development Bank.

Published annually since 2003, the African Development Bank's flagship report provides headline numbers on Africa's economic performance and outlook.

The focus of the 2019 report on regional integration for Africa's economic prosperity, highlights integration for trade and economic cooperation and the delivery

of regional public goods.

In opening remarks to diplomats, government officials, policy makers and students gathered at the Bank's Babacar Ndiaye auditorium in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, Senior Vice President Charles Boamah said even though the report presents daunting challenges, "Africa has the means to overcome them by joining hands together and removing barriers to integration and drivers of migration."

Guest speakers included Kanny Diallo, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation for the Republic of Guinea and Alma Oumarou, Minister and Special Advisor to the African Union Champion for Regional Integration.

The 2019 African Economic Outlook report analyses gains of regional public goods, including synchronizing financial governance frameworks, opening regional aviation to competition, and facilitating the free movements of people, goods, and services through open borders.



Highlights:

The 2019 report focuses on three key areas - Africa's macroeconomic performance and prospects; Jobs, growth, and firm dynamism and Integration for Africa's economic prosperity.

The Bank's Director of Macroeconomic Policy Forecasting and Research Department, Hanan Morsy, provided participants with the report's "storyline" and noted that in spite of a rising national debt across Africa, "there is no systemic risk of debt crisis."

At the current rate of labor force growth, Africa needs to create about 12 million new jobs every year to prevent unemployment from rising. The report states that a "concerted industrialization effort that builds on countries' comparative advantage," is

required.

"Manufacturing-driven growth has the highest impact on job creation," Morsy said.

At the core of African integration, the African Economic Outlook suggests that "a borderless Africa" is one of the key foundations of a competitive continental market that could serve as a global business center."

The Continental Free Trade Agreement (CFTA), signed in March 2018 by 44 African countries, offers substantial gains for all African countries the report says, citing new data and analytics.

"To develop cross-border supply chains, improving customs management and adopting simple and transparent rules of origin, are essential," the report notes.

Significantly, the report identifies five key trade policy actions that could potentially bring Africa's total gains to 4.5 percent of its GDP, or U\$134 billion a year:

- eliminating all applied bilateral tariffs in Africa;

- keeping rules of origin simple, flexible, and transparent;

- removing all nontariff barriers on goods and services;

- implementing the World Trade Organization's Trade Facilitation Agreement to reduce cross border time and transaction costs tied to nontariff measures and ;

- negotiating with other developing countries to reduce their tariffs and nontariff barriers, by 50%.

The African Economic Outlook bridges a significant knowledge gap with respect to African economies through regular, rigorous, and comparative analysis.

It also provides relevant and essential reference material on Africa's economic development, for researchers, investors, civil society organisations, and development partners.

A full set of updated growth projections will be released in May 2019, ahead of the Bank's Annual Meetings in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea.



THE TRANSMISSION ROADMAP

Interview with Andrew Herscowitz, Coordinator, Power Africa



THE TRANSMISSION ROADMAP

INTERVIEW WITH ANDREW HERSCOWITZ,
COORDINATOR, POWER AFRICA



Please can you provide a brief overview of Power Africa as an entity – the reasons behind its inception and the initial goals laid out back in 2013?

The U.S. government launched Power Africa in 2013 with the goal of doubling access to electricity in sub-Saharan Africa. The U.S. Agency for International Development coordinates the efforts of 12 U.S. government agencies. We realized early on that the energy deficit,

600 million people without access to electricity, would only be solved through significant coordination among ALL players in the sector, not just the U.S. government, so we began shaping our partnership model, signing private sector and development institutions to partnership agreements, whereby they commit to adding a certain number of megawatts or electrical connections in support of Power Africa’s efforts. Right now, we have 18 development partners (such

as the African Development Bank, the World Bank, and the governments of Korea, Norway, Israel, France, Sweden, Canada, Japan, and others) and over 150 private sector partners (about half of which are American firms). We compile the tools that each of these organizations offer into our Power Africa Toolbox, and we believe we have created a credible and reliable one-stop-shop for companies seeking to invest in the power sector.

What has been the

success of Power Africa over the first five years since inception: the major success stories, progress made, and challenges mitigated so far?

We estimate that Power Africa has helped more than 50 million people gain access to electricity for the first time since 2013. For many of those people, though, they only have access to basic lighting and mobile phone charging. Our goal is to help move those

people up the energy ladder so that they have access to more productive appliances that consume more electricity. And there still are 600 million people who do not have energy access.

Power Africa has helped 119 projects comprising over 9,635 megawatts (MW) reach financial close, 2,423 MW of which are commissioned and operational. In 2018 alone,

Power Africa supported the 36 financial transactions that will generate over 2670 MW of new, more reliable electricity.

Currently, Power Africa is tracking over 880 projects and more than 80,000 MW across the Continent.

What is the significance of the Powering Africa: Summit to Power Africa?

We have participated in the Powering Africa Summit for four years now – it has a proven track record of drawing key stakeholders and facilitating conversations that lead to real results. We have seen deals get unstuck, in real time, at the Summit. We also can meet with dozens of partners and government officials from all over the world over just a few days to help advance deals.

In terms of the segment you'll be overseeing, can you expand on the transmission roadmap?

Under our Power Africa 2.0 strategy, which we launched last year at the Powering Africa Summit, transmission and distribution will be prioritized – we took stock and realized that many of the generation deals we had been supporting would likely lead to excess capacity, and if countries are able to unlock cross-border trade, that excess capacity can be traded, and companies and countries won't lose money on those projects. The Transmission Roadmap that we launched in November is our analysis of which transmission lines should be prioritized to allow that trade to happen as quickly as possible, before the excess generation capacity comes online. We've identified 8 key areas in the Roadmap, all of which can

realistically be addressed by 2030.

Launched in November the Transmission Roadmap:

- Designed to advance regional transmission by unlocking cross-border electricity trade through priority projects, unsticking the bottlenecks they face, and supporting existing coordination mechanisms to implement them.

- The imperative to shift power across borders is in line with Power Africa's commitment to increase access to electricity in sub-Saharan Africa and to increasing generation capacity by 30,000 MW and create 60 million new connections by 2030.

- The Roadmap builds upon the significant transmission work already underway by Power Africa partners to accelerate efficient power markets in sub-Saharan Africa

- Sets out Transmission Targets for 2030:

- 7,500 MW transmission capacity installed

- \$3 BILLION in transmission-related investment mobilized

- 5,000 km of transmission lines installed

- 10 transmission projects brought to financial close

- Moving forward a priority will be to attract more private investment via alternative financing models and increase dialogue with the private sector.

What do you believe are the next steps that need to be taken to expand the continent's grid network, and what are the key themes, ideas and messages to get across; both at the event, and through Power Africa's published

roadmap?

African ministries have asked donors to try and work together, on the side, and then bring a consensus-built proposal to them, and that's exactly what we intend to do. We will work closely with the private sector to understand the needs of investors and project developers. We will work with our development partners to figure out who can fund these projects. And then we will work with governments and parastatals to get these lines built, and get that electricity moving from one country to another.

The event preview speaks about how the network might look 10-20 years from now... What are your expectations and hopes to this end?

We have a goal of 30,000 megawatts and 60 million connections by 2030. In a mere 12 years, to reach those goals, we will need to add 20,000 megawatts and 48 million connections, based on our tracked results to date.

You might be saying that we will never meet those goals, but given the fact that we're tracking over 800 project on the continent, prioritizing

a means by which to get electricity to the people of sub-Saharan Africa, and working with the private sector, we do believe we are on track to reach those goals. We believe that if we have done our jobs well, by 2030 there will be no need for Power Africa to exist as it now does. As USAID Administrator Mark Green often says, "We believe the goal of development is to end the need for its existence."

What key themes and factors do you feel need to be capitalised on to reach these goals?

We need everyone to work together. We need to be on the same page, as donors, when we speak to African officials. We need to understand the private sector's needs and work to create environments that will allow their sustainable enterprises to flourish. If we can do that, the details will take care of themselves.

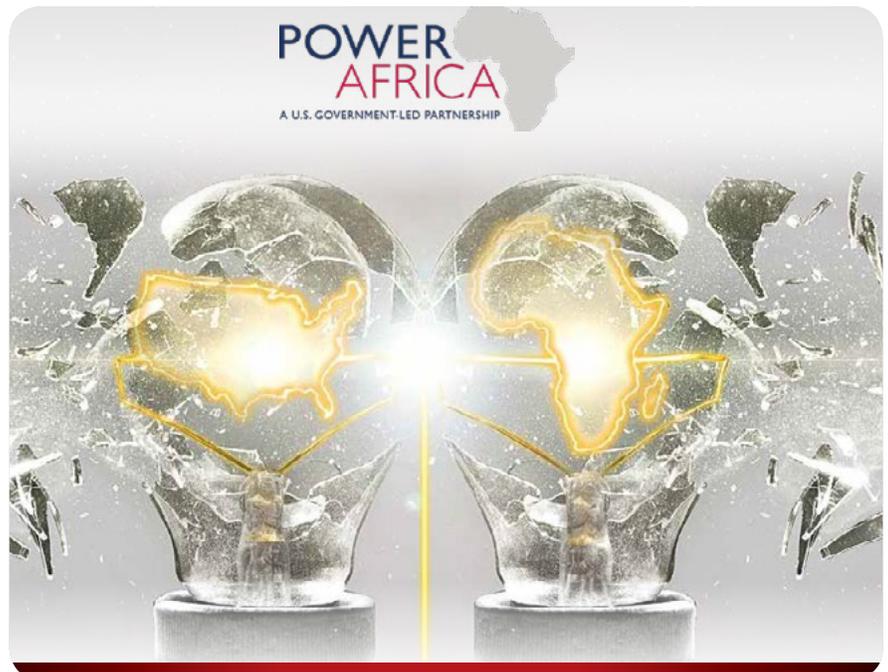
In the next 3-5 years' time, what measures would you hope to see already being taken in regard to extending

and supporting grid stability?

We hope that within 5 years, we are able to see significant cross-border trade throughout Africa. I would personally love to see the regional power pools connected – South Africa trading with Ethiopia is a real possibility. Countries in North Africa have the highest access rates on the continent, and could sell power to sub-Saharan Africa. In terms of grid stability, I think we will see our work with the distribution companies and regulators really start to pay off – solvency and profitability will have a ripple effect on access rates.

Andrew Herscovitz, Coordinator, Power Africa will be speaking at the upcoming Powering Africa: Summit 2019 from 25-27 February in Miami.

For more information on how your organisation can be involved at the summit, please contact PA-S@energynet.co.uk



Egypt Replaces Cameroon as 2019 AFCON Host

By Boris Esono

The Confederation of African Football, CAF has awarded Egypt the rights to host the 2019 edition of the Africa Cup of Nations, AFCON. Egypt will be hosting the tournament for the fifth time, having just six months to prepare for the expanded 24 team finals kicking off on June 15 to 13 July.

Egypt saw off the challenge from South Africa 16 votes to 1 in a vote held during the CAF executive Committee meeting in Dakar, Senegal. Cameroon who was given the mantle in 2014 as host was stripped of staging the competition in November because of slow preparations.

In a decision that has been seen by many as appeasement, CAF has offered Cameroon the chance to host the 2021 AFCON finals, a decision which has meant that the original hosts of the 2021 and 2025 finals have been asked to delay their tournaments.

This decision has however been met with opposition from Ivory Coast, host of 2021 AFCON which the country taking CAF to the Court of Arbitration for Sports, CAS to protest the decision. According to authorities in Ivory Coast, CAF had no rights to withdraw their hosting credentials and more over the issue that they country is not prepared is baseless.

Guinea's football federation has however complied with CAF as they announced that it had agreed to move its staging of the Africa Nations Cup from 2023 to 2025.

Speaking in Dakar, Ahmad said the two candidates had equally good infrastructure and the greater political enthusiasm of Egypt was the key factor. "Our audit firm said the infrastructure was equal so we assessed the political commitment in the two countries and Egypt came out on top. Members of the (CAF) executive committee did not feel any real support from the South

African government to carry the project forward".

It will be the fifth time Egypt, which won the tournament when it last hosted in 2006, has staged the tournament. The country will use eight stadiums during the tournament, hosting in five different cities: Alexandria, Ismailia, Port Said, Suez and the capital Cairo.

«I want to thank the (CAF) Executive Committee for the trust, and I thank the government for this support,» said Egypt FA (EFA) president Hany Abu Rida. «We organised the tournament in 2006 and that make us against a challenge to make better and better, we are ready for this honour».

«The guarantee from government helped us to win against South Africa and that will help us to make a good tournament,» added Ahmed Shobair, vice-president of Egypt's FA. «The fans will be back again in the stadiums, which will be full in the tournament I promise».

South African football officials have however said the 16-1 vote in favor of Egypt was "political" without offering insight. A CAF insider told AFP that South Africa have not been forgiven for backing the winning Canada/Mexico/United States 2026 World Cup bid instead of sole rivals Morocco.

This decision reportedly infuriated Ahmad, leading to South African media speculation that he encouraged CAF executives to support Egypt.

"South Africa voting for the USA, especially after president Donald Trump had publicly criticized the people of the continent, was seen as anti-African," the CAF insider said. "The feeling ahead of the vote in Senegal was that Egypt was the favorite but no one expected such a landslide victory".

Acting South African Football



CAF President Ahmad Ahmad.

Association chief executive Russell Paul said: "Technically, there is no country in Africa better suited to host the Cup of Nations than South Africa. "We do not have a fight with Egypt, we have a fight with the way the process unfolded," he added, referring to the vote being brought forward 24 hours without an explanation. "A delegation had been prepared for a Wednesday presentation only to find that the Egyptians

had been there for a while, with government representatives, ready to present their case".

Security concerns

According to New Zimbabwe, the Malagasy Ahmed acknowledged that there was security concerns regarding Egypt, with three Vietnamese tourists killed in a recent terror attack there.

"Before the 2018 World Cup, people were worried about the security situation

in Russia, but they worked hard and there were no incidents," he said.

Under an Ahmad plan still to be finalized, Cameroon will now host the 2021 Cup of Nations with Ivory Coast (2023) and Guinea (2025) staging the following two editions.

From this year, the tournament moves from January/February to June/July and the number of qualifiers has been expanded from 16 to 24.

Mohamed Salah wins CAF player of the year

By Boris Esono



Salah won the African Player of the Year award for the second straight year AFP Photo SEYLOU.

Egypt and Liverpool striker Mohamed Salah has been voted the 2018 Confederation of African Football player of the year—the second consecutive year he has won the award. He was voted during a ceremony in Dakar, Senegal on the 8 of January.

He thus becomes the fourth player to win this trophy twice in a row, after the Senegalese El Hadji Diouf (2001, 2002), Cameroonian Samuel Eto'o (2003, 2004) and Ivorian Yaya Touré (2011, 2012). He is also the second Egyptian to win the award after Mahmoud Al Khatib's 1983 success.

The forward, beat Liverpool team-mate Sadio Mane of Senegal and Arsenal and Gabon striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang to the title.

«I have dreamt of winning

this award since I was a child and now I have done so twice in a row,» Salah said. «My thanks go to my family, my team-mates and my fans and I dedicate this trophy to my homeland, Egypt».

Salah was voted the BBC African Footballer of the Year for the second time in December.

The Liverpool striker won the golden boot for the 2017-18 premier league season after scoring 32 goals in 36 appearances for the club to set a record for most goals scored by a player in the modern league era.

He scored 44 goals for Liverpool during the 2017-18 season, helping the Reds to the Champions League final hey lost to the eventual champions Real Madrid

before scoring twice for Egypt at the World Cup in Russia, though having a bad performance due to a shoulder injury sustain at the champions league final.

This season, Salah has scored 16 goals in 29 appearances across all competitions for Liverpool, 13 in the premier league.

Salah was born in a northern Egyptian town Nagrig and used to make eight-hour return trips on buses to train with Cairo-based El Mokawloon (Arab Contractors). Spotted by scouts from Swiss club Basel, he moved there in 2012 before joining Premier League giants Chelsea two years later. According to AFP, Salah found scoring difficult early in his professional

career and was nicknamed “chancetod” (chance killer) by the Swiss media.

After having a poor showing at Chelsea, Salah was send on loan to Italian outfits Fiorentina and Roma, and then sold him to the latter club. Salah blossomed in Rome, averaging close to a goal every two matches, which led to Liverpool paying almost 37 million pounds (about \$47 mn/41 mn euros) to sign him two years ago.

The Egyptian had his share of setbacks last year, too, with an injury in the Champions League final loss to Real Madrid also keeping him out of a World Cup defeat by Uruguay.

He returned to score against hosts Russia and Saudi Arabia, but the Pharaohs

exited their first appearance at the global showpiece in 28 years without securing even one point. Salah netted twice and missed two penalties three months later in a 6-0 Cup of Nations rout of Niger and snatched the late winner in a 3-2 victory over Tunisia in the same competition.

Having defended his Player of the Year title, his next goal will be to match the four straight wins in the competition by former Manchester City and Ivory Coast star Yaya Toure.

Houston Dash and South Africa forward Thembi Kgatlana was named Women's Player of the Year. Kgatlana was the breakout star of last year's Africa women's cup of Nations. She led South Africa to the final with five goals before losing to perennial champions Nigeria 1-0. Nigeria's duo, Asisat Oshoala, winner of the last two editions and Francisca Ordega completed the top three in the women's category.

Other awards given included among others:

Youth player of the Year: Achraf Hakimi (Morocco)

Coach of the Year: Herve Renard (Morocco)

Women's coach of the Year: Desiree Ellis (South Africa)

National team of the year: Mauritania

Women's national team of the year: Nigeria

Goal of the Year: Chrestinah Thembi Kgatlana (for South Africa v Nigeria in Group B game at Women's Africa Cup of Nations)

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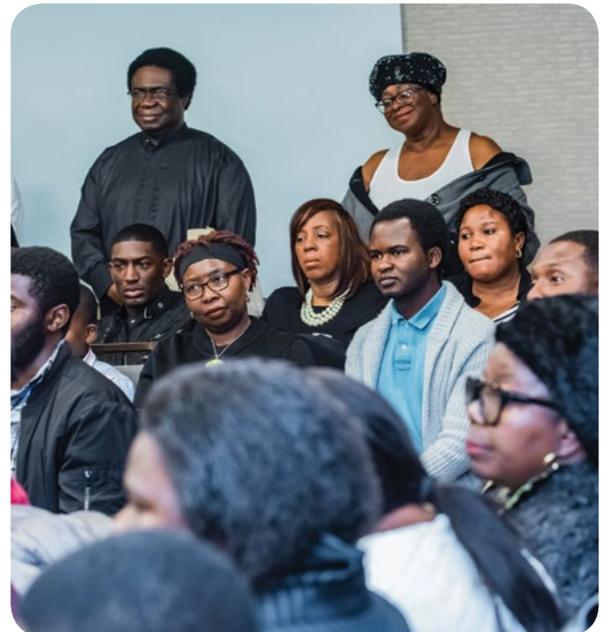


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Stock Taking and 2019 Projections at 1st Million Dollars Holiday Party

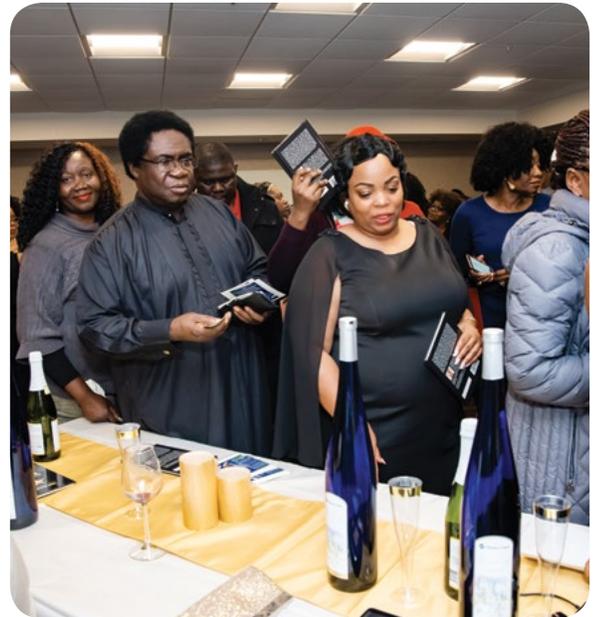
Management and customers of 1st Million Dollars, a Smart Partners LLC company, celebrate a successful year at the Courtyard Marriot in Largo, MD, USA. Excellent cuisine, nice ambiance, a hard look at the global impact of My 1st Million Dollars, interesting projections for 2019, and a book signing by Dennis Jali marked the event. The book titled “My 1st Million Dollars”, gives insights on how a young boy from South Africa raised by a single parent rose from dust to power in the private market and business, and also offers tested tips on how to successfully navigate the world of finance. PAV Magazine shares some pictures of the December 14th holiday party.













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