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From Egypt With Reminders On The African Genius

By Ajong Mbapndah L

The curtains of the African Nations Cup were recently drawn with Algeria winning the trophy for the second time. With their scintillating style of football, the Algerians were considered as hot favorites after the first few games, and there was near unanimity at the end, that there were worthy champions.

The tournament took place in Egypt after original hosts Cameroon was judged to be ill prepared by the Confederation of African Football. The fervor generated by previous tournaments was missing, as more often than not, it was only the games of host country Egypt that drew the big crowds. Unfortunately, the Egyptians were booted off early into the second round, and with that, went the little enthusiasm that was there for the tournament.

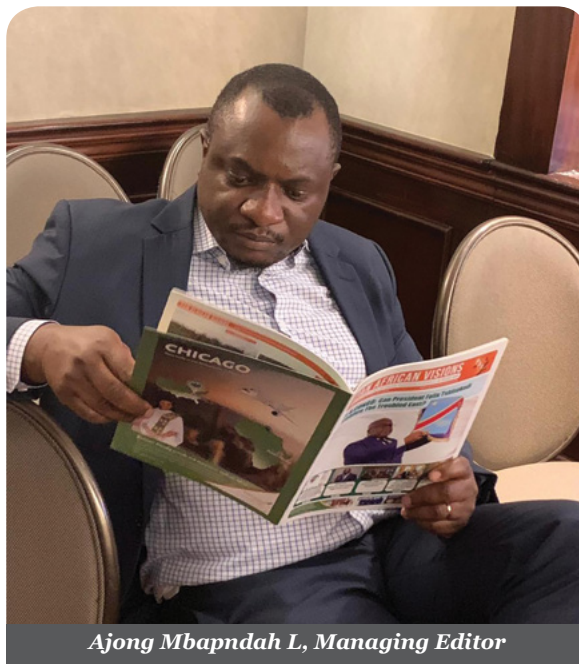
For the first time, the tournament was played with 24 teams, and this meant that some of the countries who are not often chanced to play at the AFCON were able to do so. Hence, unfamiliar names like Kenya, Tanzania, Burundi, Madagascar, Uganda, etc. were able to make it to the tournament. Some of them notably Uganda, and Madagascar, were amongst the revelations of the tournament.

Of the 24 countries which participated at the tournament, less than ten of them had African coaches. Looking at the income or remuneration of the coaches, the foreign coaches in most

cases earned at least five to ten times more than their counterparts from Africa. Coincidentally, for all the expensive expertise that most countries preferred and went for, it is two sides coached by Africans that qualified for the finals-Djamel Belmadi of Algeria, and Aliou Cisse of Senegal. While Belmadi was in the list of the 10 highest paid coaches, alongside others like Florent Ibenga of the D.R. Congo, and Kwesi Appiah of Ghana, Cisse did not make the cut. That Belmadi and Cisse took their countries to the finals is testament to the genius of African coaches.

The broader point been made is that Africa does not always have to look outside or to seek help or rely on foreign expertise to solve its problems... Why would a country like Cameroon with global football icons like Omam Biyik, Bell Joseph Antoine, Patrick Mboma, and others who have better qualifications not be given the opportunity to coach the indomitable lions? Why can Nigeria not give one of its esteemed football stars Okocha, Amunike, Siasia etc the opportunity to serve as coach of their national team? Aliou Cisse and Djamel Belmadi have proven beyond reasonable doubt that, African coaches are the way forward.

Today hailed as a hero in Senegal, Aliou Cisse received severe knocks when things did not go right. To the credit of the Senegalese Football authorities, Aliou has enjoyed



Ajong Mbapndah L, Managing Editor

their trust, confidence, and the results are there to show. He qualified Senegal for the 2016 World Cup and almost took them to the second round. He qualified the team for the nations cup, and emerged as runners up. With the talented crop of players that he has, there is every reason to believe that he will take Senegal to higher heights.

While there is nothing wrong in countries picking foreign coaches, qualification, and merit must be respected. Why should a country opt for a less qualified foreign coach when its nationals are more qualified? Why should the less qualified foreign coach earn more than the local or African coaches? Why should the working conditions for foreign coaches be better than those of local coaches? Why should local coaches be vilified at the slightest bump

whereas foreign coaches get a free pass?

In terms of leadership, it has been a bag of mixed blessings since Ahmad Ahmad took over leadership from Issa Hayatou. The new President seems indecisive, lacking in vision, has questionable integrity, and the result has been a strong decimation in the international respect enjoyed by the Confederation of African Football. From tales of corruption, to his detention, and release in France, and the decision of the world football governing body FIFA to get more involved in the management of CAF, Ahmad seems to be taking African football backwards. Considering that he is relatively new on the job, hopefully he regains his bearings, with a better understanding of the multifaceted importance of football to Africa.

Irrespective of the reasons

that may be advanced, the stark truth remains that when Africa doubts or does not believe in its own potential, the results are not good. When you doubt your own researchers, when you doubt your own scientists, when you doubt your own teachers, your own products, why would the rest of the world value or believe in you? Why would politicians refuse to engage in dialogue until a foreign power tells them to do so? Why would Africa think about free and fair elections only when someone else tells them to do so?

Recently, there has been talk about the Swiss government offering to facilitate talks between the Government of Cameroon, and Ambazonia separatist fighters. As laudable as the offer from the Swiss is, many have expressed skepticism and rightly so on the ability of that country to act as a neutral arbiter or umpire. Switzerland has been a second home to President Biya. The Cameroon President spends lengthy stays there at a crazy cost. A bigger question remains, why did President Biya have to wait for things to go so far South before thinking of dialogue? Imagine the toll on human life, thousands that have been killed, thousands in jail, the thousands of externally and internally displaced people, the great distrust that exists today, and so on, what was the President waiting for? Why could he not address the issues? Is dialogue now not like selling

after the market? Did it have to take the Swiss and others who have made offers to mediate or put pressure on the government for President Biya to know that he had to listen to the grievances of people and act accordingly?

Even when it comes to dialogue, why would the President not use the good offices of credible Cameroonians like Cardinal Tumi, Christopher

Fomunyoh, and others? If we want to take it further, how comes the rest of Africa has remained so indifferent? Where has the African Union been? Where have elder statesmen like Olusegun Obasanjo, Thabo Mbeki, Joachim Chissano and others been?

We are using the Cameroon example now, but the examples across the continent are legion. When

we talk of African solutions to African problems, we must be able to match this with concrete actions, and so far, the continent is not doing enough. Salva Kiir and Rick Machar should not travel to Rome, and have the Pope kiss their feet to know that the civil war in South Sudan is not serving the interest of its people. We should not have African leaders acting with nonchalance in the face of

natural disasters in Malawi, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe while foreign countries and organizations take the lead in trying to offer support and proffer solutions.

Just as we salute the exploits of Belmadi and Aliou Cisse, there is a reason to remain hopeful that the dark clouds still hovering over the continent will sooner than later give way to the silver lining. Be it with efforts in

West Africa for a common currency, to agricultural initiatives, the work of the African Energy Chamber, the Foretia Foundation, and others, there is much to salute with respect, in the hope that slowly but surely, Africans will learn to celebrate and make use of their own prophets.

Ghana's difficult relationship with the IMF: Is it time to say goodbye?

By Amos Fofung

In recent times, pressure has been mounting for Ghana to cut her relationship with the International Monetary Fund, IMF. From individual citizens to statesmen, dozens of Ghanaians think their country should disintegrate itself from the international body.

what fuels this attitude towards the Bretton Woods Institution whose mission seeks to; help ensure stability in the international system, keeping track of the global economy and the economies of member countries; lending to countries with balance of payments difficulties; and giving practical help to members.

A look at sentiments expressed in statements by former presidents and finance ministers under whose tenure the country exited IMF sponsored programs illustrate this well. They ranged from:

The decision to be independent of IMF budgetary support is a watershed in the history of the country's economic development. To "We won't



go to IMF again"; Ghana will no longer be troubled by conditionalities of IMF.

These quotes detail how Ghanaians feel about the relationship. But is the relationship that bad? An informed assessment requires some context: how Ghana relates to all Bretton Woods institutions. A historical assessment of this will better contextualize the nature of Ghana's relationship with the IMF.

As Quartz Africa details it, Ghana was the first sub-

Saharan African country to gain independence in 1957. It was undoubtedly a beacon of hope for the region. The country had significant natural resources as well as a highly educated population. Ghana's relationship with the IMF is a cycle of meeting targets under its programs before falling back on bad habits.

The relationship between Ghana and the IMF and World Bank dates back to the late 1960s. Following the overthrow of Kwame

Nkrumah's government in 1966, the country suffered nearly two decades of political instability and economic decline. A prolonged drought worsened the situation, as did widespread bush fires. This resulted in an unparalleled famine.

Adding to the burden on government was the need to resettle one million citizens from Nigeria. The next decade saw the global oil crisis as well as a persistent downward trend in the terms of trade. By the 1980s inflation was at a

triple digit level.

Undoubtedly, by 1983, Ghana's economy was in tatters. It desperately needed support to reverse the downward spiral. As a result, Ghana embarked on a major programme of economic reform. It did this through an IMF and World Bank sponsored structural adjustment programme and economic recovery programme.

Over the years these have become a major reference points in terms of the relationship between Ghana and the Bretton Woods institutions.

The scale of reforms under these arrangements were enormous.

The structural adjustment facilities were used to steer Ghana toward becoming a market friendly nation where incentives were created by the free market. In the process, the country embarked on a large-scale overhaul of institutions, encouraged competition by privatizing state own enterprises, built institutional capacity and attained macroeconomic stability.

Undeniably Ghana chalked up some initial successes under the programme. It was in fact referred to as the programme's ideal student due to significant improvements in its macroeconomic indicators.

But after nearly two decades of adjustment, in 2001, the country fell on hard times. It was classified as a highly indebted poor country – a World Bank and IMF

initiative aimed at reducing the external debt burden of very poor countries.

At the time, all Ghana's earlier successes had been eroded. The economy was suffering from rapid exchange rate depreciation, high inflation and very low external reserves. The severe crisis was partly due to high debt service requirements that affected the budget and affected the balance of

payments reports hold.

In 2001, the newly elected government opted for debt relief under the highly indebted countries initiative. This decision was met with a lot of public backlash. People's view was that Ghana had fallen from being the beacon of hope for Africa to being heavily indebted and poor country, HIPC.

With no foreseeable benefits from its engagements with



President Akufo-Addo thinks its time for Ghana to take greater control of its own destiny.



Story 2 Pic 3. Senior Minister and Vice Chairman of Ghana Economic Management Team, Yaw Osafo Maafo.jpg

the IMF whose predictions hardly last for the night, Ghanaians started mapping out strategies to strive outside IMF's structural program which sustains almost every economy in Africa.

In its 2019 World Economic Outlook the IMF is however forecasting that Ghana will be the fastest growing economy in the world this year with a projected growth rate of 8.8%. But Ghanaians are not having it with their forecasting, they are determined to make it

preferably without the IMF.

As with previous IMF/World Bank sponsored programmes, Ghana is once again out-performing itself.

As usual, the government is very optimistic about the prospects of the country following its exit from the programme. The obvious question being asked is: what is different this time? And for how long can Ghana strive if she decides to part ways with the IMF?

One Year Later: A Look at the Eritrea-Ethiopia Peace Deal

By Prince Kurupati

For many, the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea was akin to the one between Israel and Pakistan. Essentially, this simply means that many people did not expect an end to a conflict that seemed to take new twists every now and then. However, the unthinkable did happen when in early July last year, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed crossed the Ethiopia-Eritrea border on his way to meet his Eritrean counterpart President Isaias Afwerki in the capital Asmara.

The over joyous crowds that greeted Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed on his way to the official residence of



President Isaias Afwerki of Eritrea and Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed of Ethiopia were hailed for the historic moves that led to restoration of ties.

President Isaias Afwerki clearly illustrated how many though skeptical were eager to see the conflict between the two countries come

to an end. Reports from media houses that were on the ground to cover Abiy Ahmed's visit in Eritrea do expose the jubilation,

emotions, pomp and fanfare that the crowd had. This understandable because though the two countries had been at loggerheads

for over two decades, they are intricately connected in terms of ethnicity and tribes (hence strong family relations between those residing in Ethiopia and those residing in Eritrea). The peace deal, therefore, meant that family members could once again meet, wine and dine with their long lost relatives.

When Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed met President Isaias Afwerki, the two signed a memorandum that officially brought to an end the tensions that existed between these two countries. A few weeks later, the two leaders signed a peace deal in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia which was witnessed by the Saudi



Eritrean women all smiles after crossing border for reopening ceremony. Photo Stringer AFP Getty images.

King and the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

Resumption of normal ties between Ethiopia and Eritrea meant that just like any other countries that do have cordial relations, their citizens would be able to visit the other country without any hassles, this of course enabled by connecting flights, trains and buses.

Perhaps the major benefit ushered in by the peace deal is the ability to afford all citizens the opportunity to cross borders from Ethiopia to Eritrea and from Eritrea to Ethiopia. Those crossing the border doing so for two main reasons, the first of which is to meet long lost family members and secondly for trading purposes. Interviewing some Ethiopians who used the peace deal to establish cross border trading businesses, the BBC interviewed one Ms Mebrhit

Gebrehanes who said "What we fear is war. We love peace. When Eritreans come to this market, I welcome them with a smiling face." This therefore clearly illustrates the friendly relations that have been brought about by the peace deal.

Just to illustrate how cross border trading has boomed ever since the peace deal was signed, one simply has to look at the remarks made by one Ethiopian shop owner Haile Bisrat who said "We get to make a little more profit than before as the market is in a better state...When the border first reopened, as many as 2,000 Eritreans were coming every week. The numbers have gone down a little, but that's perhaps because they've bought everything they wanted."

The benefit of free movement, however, has largely been appreciated by Ethiopians rather than

Eritreans more so in recent months. This is because the government of Eritrea as a measure of trying to curb the influx of opposition figures decided to issue a decree restricting many Eritrean citizens from travelling outside and inside the country. This, therefore, has made it difficult for the general populace to conduct their cross border trading business in recent times. The only exceptions, that is, people who are allowed to travel in and outside of the country are well-off Eritreans who are above the age of 50.

While the free movement has made it possible for cross border trading business to boom and for family members to reconnect, the peace deal signed last year also saw the phone lines between the two countries restored after being cut off for two decades. To this day, phone links remain open meaning that Ethiopians and Eritreans whether looking to connect on a family level or business level can conveniently get hold of their loved ones or business partners via the phone rather than physically travelling.

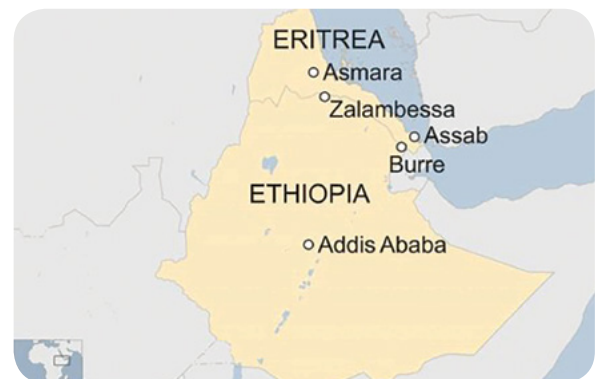
The peace deal has also enabled Eritrea to develop infrastructure wise. This as an indirect benefit of the free movement of people and goods. The BBC reports that

most Eritreans who cross the border into the Ethiopian market buy building materials like cement and construction cables. The construction materials are used in building permanent structures back in their home country. Most of the buildings were destroyed during the war with Ethiopia many years ago and the owners were unable to rebuild the structures owing to shortage of construction materials and when available, the high costs of purchasing them in their country. The structures being rebuilt are both houses as well as demolished small malls and factories. Eritrea outlawed the construction of large buildings in May 2006 and the ban has not been lifted as yet.

Political wise, the peace deal has been a blessing for the Ethiopian government as the warming relations between Ethiopian and Eritrean troops along the border means there is no

longer a readily available base for rebel forces to use. Before the peace deal, rebels in Ethiopia used the Badme area as their base knowing fully well that neither Ethiopian nor Eritrean troops would freely patrol the whole area.

While the peace deal has indeed ushered in some great benefits for citizens of both Ethiopia and Eritrea, it has, however, has had its own shortcomings. This not per se due to the peace treaty itself but rather due to witty manipulation by political leaders. Looking specifically at the case of Eritrea, the Eritrean government has used the peace deal to entrench its hold on power as the Afwerki administration which had been in a state of isolation suddenly now enjoys attention from global powers. The Afwerki administration, in turn, is using the attention of global powers to legitimize its extended rule on the country.



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President Kagame snubs western judgement on universal human rights violations

By Mohammed M. Mupenda



When we respect the things, we respect in our country it is not for you or anybody else, it is for ourselves, said Kagame.

Rwanda's President Paul Kagame spoke, last month, on behalf of African leaders, unexpectedly as it happened. This made some people happy but it still left many others in suspense over Rwanda's human rights violation question which went almost unanswered.

This came after interview from an independent journalist to Rwanda's President Kagame on France 24 interviews with European Union development commissioner, where a series of questions were asked on his country's efforts to eradicate poverty.

During the interview with a journalist, Mr. Kagame decided to point out what many Africans termed as finest truth and others said he had no answer for the tough question asked about Rwanda's fundamental

human rights violations; mixed reactions went on social media such as Facebook, Tweeter and professional network LinkedIn, where most professional and Africans said that he made it by speaking for all African leaders.

I love Kagame and I am happy African President have come up to call out European Union's involvement on violating human rights, forgetting that the greatest genocide ever happened in Europe, world war two and colonialism started in Europe. In fact, they are the most human rights offenders, said Dr. Murumbi Seraki on her YouTube Channel show with Slogan «Wake Up Africa». She also urged Africans to control the narratives and Kagame showed it to them.

Mr. Jordan Sharpe said that we cannot live on this planet with these abuses, they

do it in the United States of America and they act like they are nice while doing evil to blacks, here not employing them printing money and not giving the masses of blacks jobs, no resources.

However, listening to the full interview gives you a different impression where Mr Kagame answered all interview questions well but soon, the conversation which took place on the margins of the European commission's European Development days Forum became heated. Faced with tough questions from an independent journalist, Kagame's discomfort was obvious.

Mr. Kagame has given a clear answer to the Europeans and America but these allegations were supposed to be answered. Because, in Rwanda many government critics and oppositions in the country have never been free,

critic who is not jailed, fled the country, or he/she living in fear adding that whatever good he is doing for country and Africa they don't give him right to keep violating government critics' rights, One of the viewer commented on Facebook.

When pressed on the European union's 2018 report of «serious civil and political violations» in Rwanda, his tone turned outright hostile.

«It's rubbish, absolutely rubbish because Rwanda is completely different from what it was 25 years ago. In fact, maybe you need to be looking around in Europe because you are violating people's rights when we have this problem of people being bundled and sent back to sink in the Mediterranean Sea and so on and many people being mistreated in your own countries; why don't you

talk about your own human rights record and stop just offloading everything on African leaders," President Kagame fired.

At one point, he accused those raising concerns about human rights violations of suffering from a «superiority complex.» «You really need to stop this superiority complex nuisance about Human Rights. You think you are the only ones who respect human rights and all other people are violating human rights. We've fought for human rights and freedoms of our people much better than and more than anyone including you people who keep on talking about this nuisance; where we have taken our country from and where it is now speaks for itself, the rest of the stories just come from this complex,"

«I think this kind of discussion which has gone on for a very long time sounds a bit cynical in the sense. In fact, it is like the tragic situation of 1994 isn't considered even as a violation of human rights, it has now gone to the background. I think it's just ridiculous because there is nothing like human rights minus what you are talking about in terms of development. Education, health, food security and development these too are human rights," President Kagame pointed out during the interview.

Rwanda is often praised as a model for the continent based on its bold development policies, cleanest and green city. The government, formed by a former rebel group, has practically rebuilt the country

since it ended the 1994 Genocide.

Kagame loudly wondered who had appointed the western world as the judge, jury, and executioner of what passes as human rights and not.

“Yes human rights is universal but if it is universal and you believe it then you don’t become the judge yourself, you don’t start telling the other what to do, what they should do or not or what they are doing it is not to your satisfaction who are you?” he posed to Nicholson.

“When we respect the things, we respect in our country it is not for you or anybody else, it is for ourselves,” said Kagame.

“I believe you shouldn’t be there belittling Africans or leaders of Africa who are trying to do their best. Human rights abuse occurs even in Europe, not only in Africa,” he stated.

Looking in the eyes of the journalist, it was very clear that she could not go further, she had to respect the interviewee and ended the interview.

Last year, Rwanda refused to renew cooperation agreements with Human

Rights Watch (HRW) citing that HRW continues ignoring the government’s stance on the country’s human rights situation.

The HRW has repeatedly accused Rwanda of human rights violations. The HRW report released last October said there were unlawful detentions in military camps and widespread and systematic tortures by the military in Rwanda.

In October, the Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture, which oversees enforcement of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT), ratified by Rwanda in 2015, conducted a state visit to Rwanda. It had to suspend their visit and leave sooner than planned, citing obstruction by Rwanda’s government. Rwanda has yet to set up a national preventive mechanism for the prevention of torture at the domestic level, required by the OPCAT, despite a deadline to do so one year after ratification.

In November, Rwanda appeared before the Committee against Torture (CAT), a UN body that monitors implementation



An aerial view of a traffic intersection in the capital city of Kigali. Rwanda is often cited as a model of development in Africa. Photo Timothy Kisambira New Times.

of the Convention against Torture by state parties. On December 6, CAT in its concluding observations, called for involuntary detention in transit centers to be abolished; an end to intimidation of political opponents, journalists, and human rights defenders; and prompt, impartial, and effective investigations into allegations of torture.

According to HRW report, civil society in Rwanda is very weak, due to many years of state intimidation and interference, leaving Rwanda human rights organizations largely unable to publicly document violations by state agents, unlawful arrest and detention, forced disappearances, torture remain all too common in Rwanda. While some private radio stations occasionally

broadcast programs on politically sensitive issues, such as proposed changes to the penal code in relation to defamation, official government views dominated the domestic media and almost all election coverage. Government actors also intimidated international journalists. The BBC Kinyarwanda service remains suspended since 2014.

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The significance of the "year of return" and how it impacts on diasporans with African descent.

By Papisdaff Abdulla

In September 2018, Ghana's President, Nana Addo Danquah Akufo-Addo declared the "Year of Return, Ghana 2019" for Africans in the Diaspora. The initiative which seemingly appears to provide another subtle justification for the struggle to attain a united Africa through those resident on the continent and their brothers or sisters in the diaspora., the Ghanaian leader noted "We know of the extraordinary achievements and contributions they [Africans in the diaspora] made to the lives of the Americans, and it is important that this symbolic year; 400 years later, we commemorate their existence and their sacrifices."

The 'Year of Return, Ghana 2019' is a major landmark marketing campaign targeting the African-American and other Diaspora market to mark 400 years of the first enslaved African arriving in Jamestown Virginia during the trans-Atlantic slave trade. The West African Country which prides itself with being the gateway to Africa is expected to attract nearly half a million diasporans from across the world this year to celebrate the "Year of Return 2019."

President Nana Akufo-Addo at one of the commemorative events to pave way for the flagship initiative recalled Ghana's early pan-African leadership role and pledged that: "Under my leadership, Ghana will continue to ensure that our hard-won pan-African

reputation is not lost. Making Ghana the focus of activities to commemorate the landing of the first enslaved Africans in the English colonies in North America is, therefore, a huge opportunity to entrench Ghana's leadership."

Nearly a year after the famous Washington declaration, thousands of diasporans including famous athletes, actors, and the like have visited the country between January 2019 and now as scheduled commemorative events continue to take places in various part of Ghana. Again, very notable diasporans of Ghanaian descent such as WWE Champion Kofi Kingston, Idris Elba and Boris Codjoe also visited so far.

The year-long event is

expected to bring about 350,000 people from North America and 150,000 from the Caribbean and Latin America to join African Culture and Wellness Festival, Black History Month, Back2Africa festival, Pan African Student Summit, Ghana Jamaican Homecoming festival, Waxprint film documentary festival, Black Prophet Homecoming celebration, Emancipation Day, Marcus Garvey Award Ball and banquet, Natural Hair Expo, Jamestown-to Jamestown and African American Business Investment and Development Summit among other activities lined up for the event.

Director of Diaspora Affairs at the Office of the President, Akwasi Awua Ababio, said Ghana's

leadership in Africa's quest to be free, united, politically and economically independent was well recognized and had been noted as a 'gate of return' to people in the diaspora. He said over the years, the governments had sought through various initiatives to connect and re-connect with people in the diaspora through programmes such as the Joseph Project, PANAFEST, Emancipation Day and Homecoming Summit. Mr Ababio said all these activities were geared towards drawing awareness and making Ghana the seat of African Emancipation. His outfit is expected to come out with a policy document that centers on diaspora development. This according to the Government of Ghana is expected to primarily

target more Ghanaians living abroad to bring their acquired technical skills, money and investment opportunities to facilitate development in the country.

According to the Diaspora Affairs Director, the "Year of Return," took inspiration from the Joseph Project and leaders such as Dr Kwame Nkrumah, Mr George Padmore and Dr W.E.B. Du Bois who led and gave foundation to Pan Africanism with series of activities, actions and interactions spearheaded by Ghana. "As Ghana continue to be the headquarters for the fight for African liberation and the symbol of hope for African emancipation, our nation continues to seek deeper socio-cultural, economic and political inclusion for our kith



and kin from the Diaspora,” he said.

Mr Ababio said the government was committed to improve on the economy and discourage irregular migration by making sure that the young men and women could achieve their dreams in the country. He said his outfit was working with other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and academia to pursue diaspora policies and engagements strategies and embrace the diaspora community to make the event a success.

Ghana has attracted the attention of well-known international businesses, investing in all sectors of its economy. All these investors have come to Ghana because of the conducive social, political and economic environment in which they can invest, grow and be successful. The country has over the couple of years built on significant natural resources, through its evident commitment in improving physical infrastructure. The West African country recently embarked on an ambitious reform programme to improve the investment climate for both local and international investors. These efforts according to government have paid off tremendously with Ghana being ranked the best place for doing business in West Africa, ahead of Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire with reference to the Ease of Doing Business Report. Ghana ranked 108, an improvement from the 111 rank in the previous report.

Significance of the year

of return

In the mid fifteenth centuries, Africans were exported as slaves to America and other European countries to serve their white masters. Most of these slaves were from countries in the west coast of Africa (Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Senegal the Gambia and so on). In 1619, the first ship of African slaves arrived at Jamestown, Virginia. The year reminds Africans of the sad periods of deprivation, torture and slavery. However, in 1807, the British government passed an act to abolish the slave trade throughout the British Empire. It became internationally illegal to trade slaves across the world.

As August 2019 marks 400 years of the trade of Africans as slaves, the declaration of 2019 as the year of return to welcome Africans in the diaspora back to the continent has become a very important event to Africans on the continent and in the diaspora since it is a great opportunity for Africans in the diaspora to trace their roots to where they originated from. Also, Africans who have migrated abroad to seek greener pastures and opportunities can also use this occasion to come back home. Floyd Banks, an African-American who had returned to the country told panafricanvisions.com “growing up, I heard a lot about Africa and I knew that is where I’m from but only saw it on maps. I didn’t feel belonged. I see a lot of potential here if we put our minds to working on developing the motherland.”

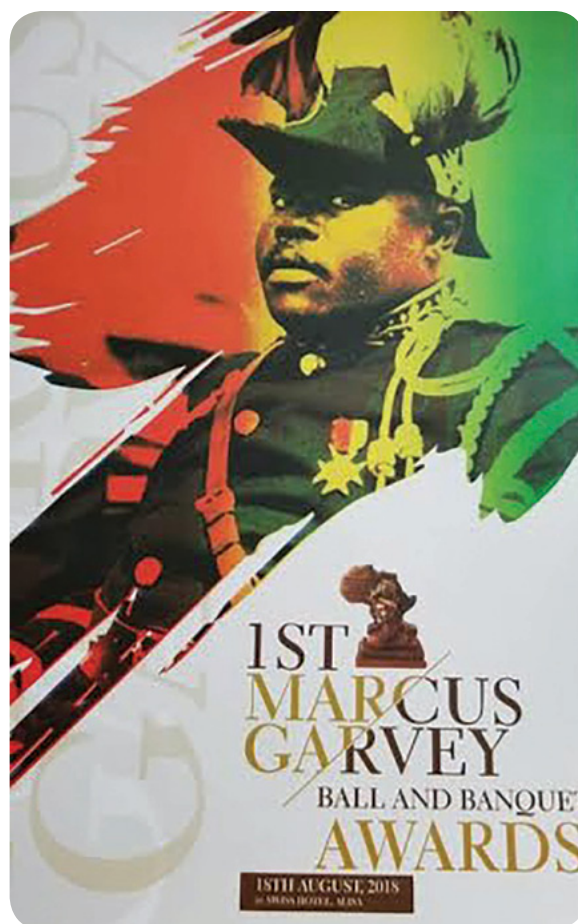
Africans believe in coming together as one people. It is

witnessed that traditionally, African ceremonies and occasions is characterized by coming from different families to share their sense of communal love and unity. Likewise, the year of return is aimed at bringing Africans together, akin to the age old traditional way. It is a landmark initiative aimed at inviting the global African to come back home. As a result, the year of return is one way of rediscovering and attaining true identities. More so for those who have found themselves as citizen of other nations like the African Americans, black Caribbeans and Africans in some part of Asia as a result of the slave trade or displacement.

Why it is necessary

This event is expected to bring socio-economic success to Ghana and the African continent as whole because the “year of return” provides a grounds for expanding human resource and expertise on the continent. This is an avenue of exploiting the skills these people have and means to provide opportunities for Africans in to interact with themselves on how enhance and impact their skills on others who have not got that opportunity.

The tourism and economic sector in Africa is becoming one of the leading industries driving foreign investors and tourist onto the continent. This has made Africa the new zone for exploration in the various sectors of the economy and it has become the breeding grounds for new and multinational investors to explore with their resources. Therefore, Africans across the world



need to come together to actively involved in this new industry in order which in the long run will bring unity.

This homecoming is also another ground for investments. The solution for the Africa is encouraging Africans to invest in their own continent and wean it from handouts of former colonial masters. Over the years the African continent has seen different investors coming to the aid of African countries. Europe and America dominated this space until recently when the Chinese joined, making huge strides in terms of investments compared to their predecessors and or competitors. Economists say it is time for African to invest in their own continent thus incumbent on policy makers

to create opportunities and the right environment that will allow global Africans to invest in ventures around the continent to expand the socio-economic activities around the continent with the use of their skills and knowledge.

There is the need for Africans to unite globally in order to protect their identity and stand for what they believe. Africans need to come to work towards unity to change the negative perception behind their race and to acquire equal recognition. Worldwide, many Africans have suffered stereotyping and racism due to their colour and origin. The perception that Africa is a poor continent due to the images shared worldwide which depicts

Africa negatively must end. Therefore, this homecoming as expected should bring Africans together and discuss how they can be equally recognized worldwide. When this happens, those in the diaspora can look back to seek assistance from their countries of origin and they can seek for equal opportunities irrespective of their race.

Initiatives

As part of the year-long 'Year of Return' programme which aims to attract diasporan Ghanaians and Africans as well as people of African descent in the diaspora back home to Ghana, the Akufo Addo led government of Ghana has slashed the cost of visa acquisition on arrival in Ghana from \$150 to \$75 dollars. Hitherto, the issue of expensive Ghanaian

Visas was a major challenge that had the potential of frustrating the initiative welcomed by many as laudable. Also Ghanaians and Jamaicans can now travel to and from each other's country without a visa. This was agreed to after presidents of the two countries held bilateral discussions in Kingston, Jamaica during President Akufo-Addo's two-day official visit to the Caribbean country. President AKufo Addo said "We cannot have visas standing in the way of those relations, so the decision has been taken by my government that, as Ghanaians benefit from visa-free arrangements here in Jamaica, we are also going to provide visa-free arrangements for Jamaicans in Ghana," he said.

With the two leaders pledging to reactivate the Ghana-Jamaica Permanent

Joint Commission for Co-operation, which has been dormant for some time, President Akufo-Addo explained that, when properly structured, the Commission will serve as a legal framework for the doing of business between the two countries. During his visit to the Caribbean, the President said, has been to "strengthen the relations across the water, and build the bridge that we have to build over the Atlantic

so that we could find a way of strengthening each other in growing and empowering our economies, to play a more and more critical role in the new global architecture that is being drawn up now. We are going to have relations that are intimate."

Furthermore, Ghana's parliament has also passed a Citizenship Act in 2000 to make provision for dual citizenship, meaning that people of Ghanaian origin who

have acquired citizenships abroad can take up Ghanaian citizenship if they so desire. That same year the country enacted the Immigration Act, which provides for a "Right of Abode" for any "Person of African descent in the Diaspora" to travel to and from the country "without hindrance."



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South Sudan: Progress under ruin due to existence years of war and graft

By Deng Machol



Women collect sacks of maize and sorghum dropped from the air by a World Food Program plane in northern South Sudan. Photo Patrick Meinhardt AFP/Getty Images.

Juba – South Sudan's progress is under ruining due to the years of political violence that returned the world youngest country to stone age era.

July 9th, South Sudan attains 8th years of anniversary independence since it seceded from Sudan in 2011 after decades of scorch-earth of civil war.

The country two years after independence plunged into civil war that has killed nearly 400,000 people and uprooted four million people from their homes and it was until late 2018 that great level of peace was achieved following a ceasefire and peace deal signed in September 2018.

The country, which gets

almost all of its revenue from oil and has been boosting production as it tussles to rebuild its devastated economy from the wreckage of a five-year civil war, that broke out in late 2013. Oil output, which accounts for 98 per cent of state income, has fallen by more than half since independence in 2011, when it reached 350,000 barrels per day.

President Kiir and key opposition groups, including Dr. Machar reached a fragile ceasefire and peace deal in September, 2018, promising to end the political violence, but plans to form a power-sharing in May, this year were delayed after there was no funding to disarm, establish

cantonments, rehabilitate and integrate militias and rebels across the country.

Despite the peace deal, South Sudanese warring parties' fighters are still occupied the civilian, school and health centres across the country, make it very hard for the people to return home.

Despite the peace accord, the thousands of people are still living in the internal displaced place (IDPs) and the United Nations protection sites in the country due to the fear of their lives outside.

At now, South Sudanese leaders are eagerly searching for the peace and stability to return the hopes and happiness which the citizens have at the time of

independence.

President Salva Kiir, while speaking in a televised address to the nation that marked the 8th Independence Day celebration, blamed the ongoing civil war for being a contributing factor to the deteriorating development progress, economic and financial system that has been forcing the government to delay civil servant salaries and those of the country's army.

President Kiir further blamed the huge financial mismanagement in the world's youngest nation on poor management in the country's revenue institutions.

"Let me admit that over the

last four years my government encountered serious financial challenges, some of which are the result of weak governance in our revenue generating institutions, but mainly due to the internal war," Kiir said referring to the ongoing conflict which started following a disagreement in December 2013 between him and former vice-president – now a rebel leader – Dr. Riek Machar.

In this year of conflict, South Sudan have huge debts in the regional and international treaty, for instance, South Sudan representatives are likely to be kicked out of the East Africa Legislature Assembly (EALA) over Juba government failure to pay

its annual contributions or membership fee which stands at \$8.4 million. According to the lawmakers at the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), South Sudan currently owes the regional parliament \$27 million.

South Sudan is a virgin in term of agriculture productivity, natural resources, but its citizens are in the verge of hunger due to the long-conflict, as the UN agencies and government has warned that nearly 7 million people in South Sudan could face acute food insecurity at the height of the May- June lean season this year, indicating the number of acutely food insecure in South Sudan, has increased by 13 percent since January 2018.

“Security will return to South Sudan, our economy will thrive and we will be able to better deliver important services to our people such as schools, clean drinking water and create jobs for our people,” said president Kiir.

Michael Makuei, country’s Information Minister says the country is progressing well despite the years of political violence and graft.

“Well, as a country, as an independent country which is celebrating its 8th years of its independence, I believe that South Sudan is progressing and whatever had been happening is a normal thing. It is a normal thing that any independent country faces – there is no country in the world that got its independence and went on just smoothly like that. This is a normal step in which all the countries of the world passed through when they got their independence,” said Minister Makuei. “So, to us, this is a normal thing and the situations is now



The enormous potential of the oil sector was neglected because of the civil war.

back to normalcy and South Sudan will emerge from all these difficulties soon and will take its place in among the countries of international community.”

Information Makuei, is also optimistic that his country is gearing toward peace and stability that means its populations will enjoy peace and tranquility soon.

“We are sure that South Sudan will enjoy peace soon, not tomorrow but even soon, we will enjoy peace and in after all, the enjoyment of peace or peace coming to South Sudan or to any country in the world, is a process, so peace is already started and the people of South Sudan are now enjoying peace but it is a process as I say, it starts gradually and you continue to implement it, so peace is already in South Sudan and we are here to ensure that it prevails all over South Sudan,” said Makuei.

Apparent, eight (8) years of independence have only earned multiple experiences of crises to the people of the Republic of South Sudan.

Though, it has been a wish of every South Sudanese

that the half century wars of liberation must have been the end point to violence, however, power has always been seen as the only ambition seen in most politicians in the country.

After, South Sudan seceded from Sudan, was the best economy in East Africa countries till war broke out in 2013 and worsen later on in 2016 till date, it keeps worsening.

“Our civility is consumed majorly by war and the challenge to the SPLM led government is to understand the need to have a proud flag and or rule to shame the people with lack of care to the extent of seeking all primary services as security, food (from UN), education and health from sisterly states and or well-wishers,” said Reech Malual, Executive Director for the Screen for Rights. “Even constitutional post holders are never ashamed but proudly seek health attention outside the country in a sisterly state made great by leaders like them. This is the measure of eight years after independence.”

Although with huge

wealth in natural resources, these are exploited without any consideration to the population in oil rich areas. Safety and welfare of citizens living in oil areas which is dangerous, said Malual. “It is my wish that the government learns from the experience and start to set trends right.”

Economic crisis

With the oil-rich country struggling financially, president Kiir’s government has been unable to pay troops and civil servants for six months old, prompting the parliament last month to block the budget presentation in protest.

On the independence, President Kiir has also apologized to civil servants for the failure of his government to pay salaries on time, promised to personally ensure that all salary arrears are paid soon.

The President said he is aware that the living conditions of the people have worsened due to unpaid salaries, attributed these to internal wars that the country experienced and weak systems of governance

as it affected service delivery across the country.

“I am fully aware that our people are hungry because of the difficult living conditions imposed upon them by insecurity and economic hardships. This is further exacerbated by the failure of my government to pay the salaries of our civil servants on time. However, that salary maybe little, it does make some difference in the livelihood of the families of our civil servants,” said president Kiir.

“I want to sincerely apologize to you my people on my own behalf and on behalf of the government for those failures.” “My government undertook several resolutions directing the ministry of finance and planning to pay all the outstanding arrears of our workforce and scheduled prompt payment of salaries to the employees of the government Republic of South Sudan at both the national and states level of the government,” said president Kiir. “I am reliably informed that finally progress is being made in that regard and I promise you that I will

personally follow that up,” Kiir added.

The payment of civil servants comes viral in late June after chaos erupted at the parliament following the legislators refused to give the Country’s Minister of Finance a chance to present the budget, without accounting for the unpaid arrears of all civil servants. The legislators’ remained threatening to impeach the Finance Minister, if he does not resolve the matter of salary arrears soon.

The research report says that deliberate cover-up of public information creates mistrust in the world youngest country.

“Lack of transparency and accountability denies political

Exposed in oil sector

A report released by an independent research, the Sudd Institute, on July 16, 2019 revealed that non-compliance to petroleum management laws has worsened, leading to deliberate covers-ups of information and increasing risks of corruption in the sector in the last three years, despite the existence of strong petroleum transparency and accountability legal rules.

According to the report, only 26 percent of the information required by the petroleum laws has been published in 2019, compared to 42 percent in 2016.

“This seriously violates the petroleum transparency and accountability rules and poses high corruption and reputational risks,” said the report.

The report continue says, petroleum revenue

information disclosed was 92 per cent in 2016, compared to 44 per cent in 2019, while regulatory or policy information disclosed was 75 per cent in 2016, compared to 50 per cent in 2019. Also, contracts transparency has dropped by more than half; as 13 per cent in 2016 and 6 per cent in 2019.

The research report says that deliberate cover-up of public information creates mistrust in the world youngest country.

“Lack of transparency and accountability denies political

leaders a political legitimacy and companies a social license to operate among the petroleum producing communities,” it said in part. “Operating in darkness prepares an enabling environment for corruption to thrive, which can lead to looting of resources by individual, resulting in poor economic development and political instability.”

The report recommended the parliament to establish an independent body to account, coordinate and publish petroleum information as provided for in the Petroleum Act 2012, Petroleum Revenue Act 2013 and Public Financial Management and Accountability Act 2011 respectively.

Arms embargo

Due to the going killing in the South Sudan, the United Nations Security Council



Pope Francis kisses the feet of President Salva Kiir while his opposition rival Rick Marchar looks on after a two day spiritual retreat for South Sudan leaders in April 2019..

has recently renewed arms embargo on South Sudan despite objection by other member states. The measure renews the arms embargo along with an assets freeze and global travel ban imposed on eight South Sudanese nationals for their role in fueling the war. It will remain active until May 31, 2020.

Evasive peace

It is just four months into the extended pre-transitional period, real progress remains slow and there is risk of the process failing behind the revised schedules.

Under the terms of the agreement, opposition leader Dr. Riek Machar is to return from exile to serve as vice first president, the same position he held before a conflict erupted, in a power – sharing which must now be in place by November, 2019.

President Kiir echoed that

the peace deal was the key to the country’s turnaround.

Of recently, the UN says while the peace deal had seen decrease in violence, fighting in southern Central Equatoria province had continued.

To safe it, the focus should turn to bringing the different security-related institutions and mechanisms closer with better understanding of each other’s mandate and coordination which hopefully will result into expediting implementation of all the pending tasks.

The peace monitoring body, Revitalized Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (RJMEC), Interim Chairperson, Ambassador Augustino S.K Njoroge, expressed a lot of concerns about the peace implementation, adding that they aim at improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the security sector

mechanisms to ease the peace process implementation.

Besides the challenges to the September 2018 peace accord, there is an inadequate funding and its timely disbursement of the National Pre-Transitional Committee (NPTC) and to the various mechanisms and institutions of agreement – lack of effective coordination and communication amongst the mechanisms of the agreement has been identified as one of the critical issues that requires urgent attention.

South Sudan has been battered socially and economically by the long civil conflict, but with the ceasefire negotiated between president Kiir and opposition groups presents an opportunity to international and regional companies to build a sustainable economy and improve the lives of the people of South Sudan._____

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 16th, 2019

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MAKING AFRICA TRADE EASY (MATE) "The African Diaspora linking U.S. and African businesses" HIGH LEVEL DIALOGUE

September 5th to 7th, 2019

(Washington, D.C.)- 15 Mai 2019– BELIEVE IN AFRICA (BIA) is honored to announce its first and largest African diaspora gathering conference called “Making Africa Trade Easy” (MATE) scheduled from September 5th to 7th 2019 at the prestigious Ronald Reagan Building & International Trade Center located at 1300 Pennsylvania Ave NE in Washington, DC 20004, USA.

“MATE is a collaborative and nonpartisan effort between the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center and Believe in Africa to unleash the African Diaspora potential as a catalyst for trade between the U.S. and African economies. This first edition aims at promoting the new U.S. Africa

strategy “Prosper Africa” as well as advancing Africa’s economic integration,” said Mrs. Angelle Kwemo, Founder and Chair of Believe in Africa.

She added: “It is more importantly a platform that will allow two-way trade between African businesses and their U.S. counterparts, and therefore help strengthen mutually beneficial partnerships that create wealth, prosperity and lasting jobs on both continents.”

In attendance will be African Leaders from both the public and private sectors, U.S. Government agencies, African and American Business Leaders, the African Diaspora, potential investors and representatives of relevant international and global Institutions.

MATE’s program comprises a

three-day trade fair, high level discussions, seminars, workshops on how to do business with U.S. agencies, a fashion show and cultural activities. We are expecting 500 selected high-level delegates from the U.S. and Africa, dozens of speakers and exhibitors and 2,000 visitors.

Believe in Africa (BIA) is an African Diaspora-led initiative founded by former U.S. congressional staffers and African leaders in the U.S., to empower young Africans, promote the role of the African private sector, harness the power of the African Diaspora, educate policy makers and the public about African economic growth and highlight the continent’s gradual rise in the global community.

To learn more about BIA visit www.believein africa.org

Is africa rising narrative a propaganda or a reality?

By Moses Hategeka*

Why is it that African continent which is a home to sixty percent of world's remaining arable land, and is vastly blessed with numerous utilizable water resources and various agro-ecological zones, is still a net food importer and is persistently failing to break the food import chain and food trade deficit that it is trapped in?

Africa's annual food import bill of 35.00 USD billion, and which is expected to reach 110.00 USD billion by 2025, is extremely worrying. This is almost the same amount, the continent needs to close its power deficit, which is among the key needed ingredient to make the continent meaningfully diversify its economies.

My firsthand accounts of seeing extremely malnourished children in many areas of Uganda, Kenya, South Sudan, Burkina Faso, Malawi, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Zambia, Burundi, Zimbabwe, and Liberia, coupled with very low agricultural productivity, stemming from, overdependence on rain, minimal fertilizer application, use of rudimentary tools, absence of use of appropriate irrigation and water harvesting technologies, and poor farming practices, accompanied with agricultural policy distortions, I have witnessed in many African countries, casts a gloomy picture of Africa's agricultural sector.

Africa's annual food import bill of 35.00 USD billion, estimated to rise to 110.00 USD billion by 2025, is besides annihilating



its agriculture, also a key continent's growth and development decelerator. Currently, 250 million people in Africa, are undernourished, and with dwindling agricultural yields, and skyrocketing population, the continent food import bill, is poised to keep on expanding.

Two years back, while on a research assignment, in South-Kivu, North-Kivu, and Tshopo provinces, in DRC, the dilapidated human shelters housing thousands

of malnourished and undernourished families, I witnessed shocked me. This is a vast country, which besides, being almost the entire size of Western Europe, is the world's largest producer of cobalt and is also richly endowed with uranium, diamond, gold, copper, oil, and other precious metals, in addition to possessing large swatches of fertile lands, and world's second longest River, Congo River, but majority its citizens are extremely very poor.

The situation is not different in other African countries. Forget the rising GDP figures, which the cunning politicians and economists, base on to advance the African rising narrative, and embark on extensive journey in rural areas of many African countries, the skyrocketing poverty levels you will witness, will surprise you.

The persistent use of per capita income as a gauge of African economies growth, should be discarded. It is

largely misrepresentative of real situation on the ground, as it does not factor in, the distribution of growth. For instance, according to GDP figures, Uganda economy, has from, 2017/2018 to 2018/2019 expanded from, 25.00 USD billion to 29.00 USD billion, but collaborative government and civil society statistical data, shows that, poverty levels, have in the same period tremendously increased, which in essence implies that, the so called economic expansion is of no value to the majority of its citizens.

All African countries are debt- distressed and billions of monies, they have for years borrowed and are still borrowing from world bank, IMF, China, and other lending institutions and countries, to finance, roads, standard gauge railways construction, power, and other infrastructural developments, with the main aim of attracting foreign direct investments, have not and are not translating into economic wellbeing of the masses. The machinery and technologies used in these infrastructural projects, is foreign imported, very few Africans are employed in these projects, and a big percentage of this borrowed billions, is often swindled through syndicated corruption, involving African leaders and their thieving cronies.

There is no ground-breaking inventions, innovations, and technologies, being generated by Africa's academic institutions, meant for spurring Africa's industrial development. All



Traffic congestion in Lagos.

the industries in Africa, are majorly powered by imported technologies. Why is this so and yet we have science, technology, and interdisciplinary faculties in our universities?

Research is now a major growth and development accelerator of leading world economies. All the ground-breaking technologies that translates into economic well-being of the citizens are attained, through heavily investing in research. Is research financing a priority to African countries? How much does each country apportion to research each financial year? Can that research financing amount enable each country to produce ground-breaking technologies to leapfrog its forward in meeting the needs its citizens?

All over the continent, youth unemployment is on rise, and so is endemic corruption, both of which are deleterious economic bombs, that have been and are set, to continue exploding causing political unrest and destabilizing Africa growth agendas. What has happened and is happening in Nigeria, Somalia, Mali, DRC, Kenya, Ethiopia, Togo, among others is largely a governance question.

Almost all African leaders are pursuing two personal egoistic agendas: personal/family wealth accumulation, and creating a sort of political system/dynasty that provides for continued enjoyment of ill-gotten wealth even when not in power. Creating societal wealth is not their main agenda.

In sum, Africa rising



narrative, will only become a reality, when the continent get visionary and transformative leaders, whose main agenda, is to trigger accumulation of an all-inclusive societal wealth. Today's Africa rising narrative that is mainly

advanced basing on GDP growth figures, is largely deceptive, as reality on the ground shows that it is fundamentally exclusive of majority of continental citizens.

*Moses Hategeka, is

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West Africa Single Currency- Is It All Hype or Helpful

By Prince Kurupati

In an effort to transform Africa's economic prospects, the African continent is moving towards more integrated rules-based trade regime. On this front, West African states have taken the first major step towards economic integration by releasing a blueprint which paves the way for the introduction of the 'ECO', a single currency that's going to be used by all West African states both as legal tender within individual countries and legal tender in cross border transactions.

Following the release of the blueprint, many African leaders and the general populace from all corners of the world have welcomed the 'soon to exist' ECO currency stating that it will strengthen economic ties between West African states. The warm



reception that the ECO currency has received from African leaders both those in West Africa and outside has led to a media frenzy across the whole continent. It is in light of this that in this article, we seek to unpack 'ECO' in an effort to come to

a conclusion on whether the single currency will live up to its hype or not but first, let's check out in more detail what ECO is all about.

What is ECO

The idea for a single West African currency has been

in existence for 30 years now. In 2000, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Liberia, Guinea-Conakry, Ghana and Gambia launched the West Africa Monetary Zone (WAMZ). The main objective of WAMZ was to establish a common currency that would be

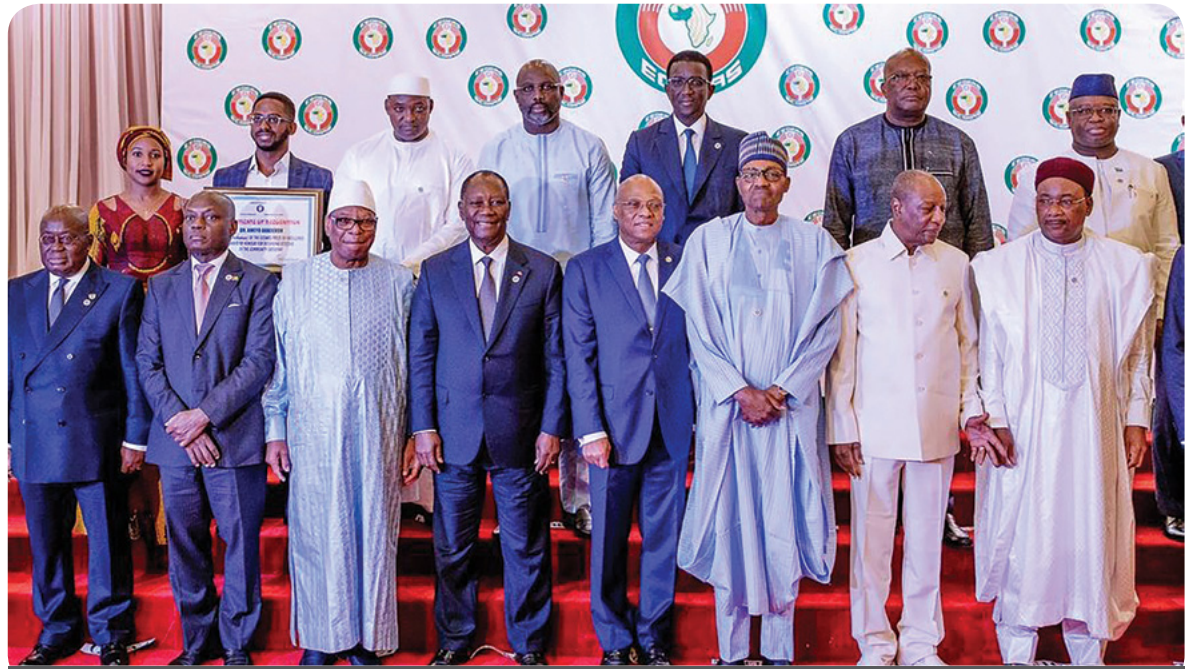
used by all WAMZ member states. Not much was done by WAMZ however to realise its objective as the body kept postponing the launch of the common currency. In 2012, realizing that WAMZ was not taking the decisive steps in the effort to achieve its objective, ECOWAS decided to partner with WAMZ in an effort to expedite the launch of West Africa's common currency (by this time, only the WAMZ member states were eager to have a common currency used in the West Africa region). ECOWAS like WAMZ in the first years did move at a snail's pace in its attempt to launch the single currency. It was only in 2018 that the regional body decided to expedite the matter affirming its intention to restart and expedite the process of launching the

single currency in 2020 without fail. Essentially, this was, therefore, a declaration of intent.

ECO is going to be used by all fifteen countries that are a signatory to ECOWAS including the eight-member states which use the CFA franc, a currency backed by France. ECOWAS, however, says that the ultimate goal, in the long run, is to merge ECO with the CFA franc. The CFA franc is pegged to the euro. The eight countries that use the CFA franc are Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo, and Cape Verde.

According to ECOWAS, ECO is going to be rolled out gradually with countries that meet the laid out criteria joining first. The laid out criteria entails four primary and six secondary criteria. ECOWAS member states must meet the four primary criteria in a single fiscal year in order to satisfy the regional body's qualification requirements. The four primary criteria are as follows:

1. A state must have a single-digit inflation rate at the end of each year
 2. A state must have a fiscal deficit of no more than 4 percent of the GDP
 3. A state's central bank must have deficit financing of no more than 10 percent of the previous year's tax revenues
 4. A state's gross external revenues must give import cover for a minimum of three months
- To complement the four primary criteria, there are other six secondary criteria which are as follows:



ECOWAS Leaders.

1. A state must prohibit new domestic default payments and liquidate any existing ones
2. A state's tax revenue must be equal to or greater than 20 percent of the GDP
3. A state's wage bill to tax revenue must equal or be less than 35 percent
4. The state's public investment to tax revenue, must equal or be greater than 20 percent
5. A state must have a stable real exchange rate
6. A state must have a positive real interest rate

Ghana was the first country in West Africa to meet all of the primary as well as secondary criteria all the way back in 2011.

A Great Move

When it comes to ECO, there are those who argue that the single currency is not just being hyped for nothing but rather, it's a move that's going to be of immense help to the whole West African

region as well as the African continent as a whole. Among those who argue in ECO's favour are two economists, Ferdinand Backoup and Daniel Ndoeye.

Writing in a briefing for the African Development Bank, the two economists said: "West African countries – like most other developing countries – are not immune to monetary shocks caused by policies implemented in the rest of the world." As such, by launching and using a single currency, West African states would be able to put up a 'collective and effective front' against such disruptions.

Additionally, the economists also say that the ECO will facilitate trade, lower transaction costs and facilitate payments amongst ECOWAS' 385 million people.

On the politics side, some economists argue that the ECO will play a significant role in cutting colonial ties more so for francophone countries. The appeal to be part of an African project will

be too strong for francophone countries using France backed CFA franc to turn down hence they will swiftly move to meet entrance requirements and adopt the ECO as a gesture of cutting colonial ties.

Its all a Case of Hype

While there are those who are optimistic about the prospects of ECO, there are also some who find themselves in the opposite spectrum. Most notably, those who argue that the noise around ECO today is just hype that will soon fade when the currency is launched as the region's biggest economy Nigeria will dominate monetary policy and stall any projected benefits. Nigeria is the dominant economy in West Africa accounting for two-thirds of the region's GDP. By this, Nigeria can be seen to be more dominant than Germany is in the Eurozone.

Responding to Ferdinand Backoup and Daniel Ndoeye's

argument that the single currency will act as the real solution to external shocks and volatility, Martial Belinga, author of *Liberate Africa from Monetary Slavery* says the real impediment to trade in the region is not the lack of a single currency but that countries don't have much to trade. The real solution to external shocks and volatility is for West Africa to transform its economy by prioritizing diversification and value addition.

In reference to the notion that the single currency is meant at facilitating and enhancing trade between West African states, Sanyade Okoli who is the head of Alpha African Advisory states that ECO will fail on that front if the region's infrastructure is not developed first. Sanyade Okoli said "We struggle in Nigeria alone to get produce from the north to Lagos, and to other southern parts where it can be consumed...If goods can't move freely, how can we

talk about a single currency... implementation of reforms.

we need to address poor infrastructure, bureaucracy – the lower hanging fruits first.”

The case of sovereignty is also another impediment that may work against the ECO. Some argue that there may be member states who are not willing to cede much of their sovereignty to a regional body in the form of a single currency hence any sort of a lack of political will to make the ECO community successful may be detrimental or even disastrous to the ECO. There is, therefore, need for a separate body to be created which will see to it that all member states are willing and working for the fruition of the ECO. According to Ferdinand Backoup and Daniel Ndoeye, the creation of a presidential task force to monitor the single currency creation process, headed by the heads of Ivory Coast, Ghana and Nigeria and the Committee of Central Bank governors is a step in the right direction. More however still needs to be done by the taskforce in accelerating the

2020 Date: Is it Possible

ECOWAS is adamant that the ECO will come into existence in 2020, that is, next year. The body is also hoping that all fifteen member states will start using the single currency by the time of its launch. However, considering that there is a criterion to be met before a state can use the ECO, at the present moment, it's looking unlikely that the ECO will be launched in 2020 and highly unlikely that even in the case that it does, all fifteen member states will start using the single currency. As alluded to before, Ghana was the first country to meet the laid out criteria for joining the ECO community back in 2011 but ever since only Liberia (2016) has managed to emulate it. This, therefore, means that the majority of ECOWAS member states have to meet the laid out criteria in this fiscal year if there are to join the ECO community next year. A big ask which will definitely not



West African nations that meet the criteria to join the single currency should do so by 2020 says Alassane Ouattara of Ivory Coast.

be met by any if not all.

ECOWAS did say joining the ECO community will be a gradual process meaning that those countries that manage to meet the criteria will join will those who fail will have to join at a later date when they satisfy the entrance requirements. Despite this though, it's difficult to fathom a scenario in which two countries only (Ghana and Liberia) join the ECO community at its inception with 13 others left on the sidelines.

Togo, Senegal, Guinea,

Ivory Coast and Cape Verde are the next likely states to meet the laid out criteria for joining the ECO community as each of these have the single currency's criteria of a budget deficit no higher than 4 percent and inflation rates of not more than 5 percent. To stratify the criteria, they have to meet the remaining two primary criteria coupled with the secondary criteria.

ECOWAS is going to assess country by country at the end of 2019 looking at whether states have managed to meet both the primary and

secondary criteria.

With evidence on the ground suggesting that the 2020 deadline is not going to be met by the majority of the member states, some economists including Martial Belinga say that people should not look much on the deadline as its just a symbolic deadline that's meant at pushing states to reach the criteria. Mr Belinga says if ECOWAS is serious about the 2020 deadline, then it will seriously need to consider revising the entrance criteria.



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What President Muhammadu Buhari should do to tackle insecurity

By Teslim Olawore

The spate of renewed killings that is now the order of the day in Nigeria has reached worrisome dimensions. Nigerians are getting agitated about the massacre and kidnappings by bandits and herdsmen in various part of the country. This unfortunate situation that has gotten the 'Giant of Africa' will need to be defeated for the country to achieve its true potential. However, insecurity is not the only challenge facing the country. The poverty level of Nigerians is contributing to insecurity in the land. It is my considered opinion that the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari must make deliberate efforts to combat poverty, which is a root cause of insecurity.

President Muhammadu Buhari and all stakeholders in charge of security in the country must rise to the occasion and deal decisively with all those who have chosen to take the laws into their hands. This is not the time for blame game as we got from the opposition

Peoples Democratic Party. The party in the wake of the renewed killings claimed that President Muhammadu Buhari was not concerned and clueless on how to save the situation. This is unnecessary and uncalled for as it amounts to reducing the serious issue to child's play by the opposition. At this time, all well-meaning citizens must join hands with the government to end the criminality in all ways possible. I believe President Muhammadu Buhari must tackle this significant security challenges that will be mentioned as you continue to read, to restore the peace in the land.

Boko Haram

The deadly terrorist group has disorganized the North-Eastern part of Nigeria. For a decade now the group has killed tens of thousands of people and displaced millions more. About 2.5 million people fled their homes and towns, and the direct consequence of the conflict



President Buhari at a meeting with his security chiefs, Nigerians are getting alarmed at the situations.

was that the North-East was plunged into a severe humanitarian crisis - as of 2018, one of the worst in the world - which has left about 7.7 million people in need of humanitarian aid. As part of his first term campaign promises, Muhammadu Buhari promised that his government would bring an end to the national suffering inflicted by Boko Haram. The government made significant military gains, reducing the number of Boko Haram

attributed deaths from more than 5,000 in 2015 to less than 1,000 in the past couple of years.

However, the war is not yet won, and it would be a grave mistake for the president to disregard the continued importance of the conflict. Suicide attacks and kidnappings have been carried out by the group this year. At this time, the government should not just focus on security but invest in peace-

building, reconstruction and rehabilitation, and socio-economic development.

Herdsmen crisis

The kidnaps and killings by herdsmen is already a national crisis. The needless loss of lives and massive destruction of property caused by open grazing of cattle which led to prolonged violent clashes between the predominantly Christian farmers and the mostly Muslim cattle herders is said to be one of the effects of poor leadership, which is seen as a significant problem in the country. The public outcry against the atrocities of armed herdsmen across the nation has been unabated, compelling Nigerians to call on the President Muhammadu Buhari-led government to proffer a permanent solution to the crisis.

With the suspension of Ruga, an acronym for Rural Grazing Area, plan by President Buhari, I think the federal government needs to re-examine the problem



it is trying to solve and find, perhaps, a less controversial approach to it.

The Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN)

The Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN) is an Iranian backed Shia group in Nigeria. The leader of the group, Ibraheem El-Zakzaky, is opposed to the federal system of government in Nigeria. Correspondingly, El-Zakzaky has called for an Iranian-style revolution in Nigeria. The group's strong position on these issues and their regular protesting has resulted in clashes with security forces. However, recently, these clashes have become more frequent and more violent. In 2015, the leader of the sect was arrested, and in 2016 a judicial inquiry revealed that the army had unlawfully killed 347 members of the group in Zaria state.

Early July, hundreds

gathered outside government buildings to demand the release of their leader Ibraheem el-Zakzaky, who has been in detention since 2015. This escalating violence, the emergence of a charismatic leader, and excessive use of force by the Nigerian military are reminiscent of the rise of Boko Haram. President Buhari has to ensure that the army has learned lessons from how they dealt with the then emerging threat of Boko Haram, and make sure that the situation does not repeat itself.

Niger-Delta

The oil-producing Niger Delta has for decades suffered from oil pollution, which has led to the loss of livelihoods and sources of food for locals. The area has also been neglected by the federal government even though the bulk of the country's



El-Zakzaky has called for an Iranian-style revolution in Nigeria.

fund comes from the region. In the last decade, clashes between armed groups in the area and the security forces reached an all-time high; kidnappings were rife, and oil infrastructure destroyed at a phenomenal rate. In 2016, one of the most prominent armed groups in the region, the Niger Delta Avengers (and other smaller groups), destroyed

oil production infrastructure reducing production from 2.2 million barrels per day to the two decades low of 1.4 million barrels a day. The infrastructure vandalism contributed to the onset of one of Nigeria's worst economic recessions on record. There is every reason for the government to make efforts to better foster peace and development in the

region, especially given the havoc the Avengers (and similar groups) have already brought to the country.

The federal government needs to be proactive in its response to the conflict through helping to mediate and deescalate the conflict and also through making proper policies.

HRW accuses Cameroon security forces of raping women, killing civilians

Human Rights Watch has accused Cameroon security forces of killing at least four civilians and raped one woman in mid June during operations in the North West region of Cameroon.

Amongst those killed was an elderly man with a physical disability and a young man with a mental disability, Human Rights Watch said.

"These latest crimes add to a long string of abuses by Cameroonian security forces," said Lewis Mudge, Central Africa director at Human Rights Watch. "Instead of seeing that justice is done, Cameroon's authorities deny that their forces are killing and raping people, so it is essential to



This footage shows the destruction of Kuke Mbomo, 16 miles north of Mount Cameroon.

remind them that the world is watching."

Human Rights Watch which has not been able to access Cameroon since April 12 said they had interviewed witnesses, family members

of victimns and medical personnel who testified to military atrocities.

"In the Alachu neighborhood of the city of Bamenda, on July 10, soldiers from the Cameroonian Air

Force, which is stationed nearby, killed Nche Otaghie, a 20-year-old man with a mental disability, and Godlove Neba, a construction worker, during security operations. Fru Benego, an 80-year-old man, was also killed that day by a stray bullet during confrontations between the soldiers and armed separatists," Human Rights Watch said in a recent report.

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Cameroonian security forces have killed at least four civilians and raped one woman since mid-June 2019 during security operations in the North-West region. Those killed include an elderly man with a physical disability and a young man with a mental disability.

"These latest crimes add to a long string of abuses by Cameroonian security forces," said Lewis Mudge, Central Africa director at Human Rights Watch. "Instead of seeing that justice is done, Cameroon's authorities deny that their forces are killing and raping people, so it is essential to remind them that the world is watching."

Human Rights Watch interviewed witnesses, victims' family members, medical personnel, and other residents who described the security forces' actions. Human Rights Watch has not been able to access the country since its researcher was denied entry, without explanation, on April 12.

Over the past three years,

Cameroon's Anglophone regions have been embroiled in a cycle of deadly violence that has claimed 2000 lives and uprooted almost half a million people from their homes.

Unlawful killings and use of excessive force by government forces during security operations have been rife since the crisis started. Human Rights Watch has documented extensive burning of villages by members of the security forces between 2017 and 2019 in both the North-West and South-West regions, as well as killings of civilians and sexual violence.

In the Alachu neighborhood of the city of Bamenda, on July 10, soldiers from the Cameroonian Air Force, which is stationed nearby, killed Nche Otaghie, a 20-year-old man with a mental disability, and Godlove Neba, a construction worker, during security operations. Fru Benego, an 80-year-old man, was also killed that day by a stray bullet during confrontations between the soldiers and armed separatists.

Soldiers were deployed to Alachu after clashes between the security forces and armed separatists broke out at about 11 a.m. and continued their operations until about 4 p.m.

One resident saw soldiers enter Otaghie's home around noon. The witness said: "The military were all over, searching homes and threatening people. I saw them entering Nche's home, and then I heard a gunshot. When the soldiers left, I rushed there and found Nche on the ground, outside the house. He had been shot in the chest. We covered him with plantain leaves."

Another witness said that

later that afternoon he saw Air Force soldiers stop Neba, who was on his motorcycle, force him to dismount, abuse him, and then kill him: "I work in front of where Godlove was killed. He was stopped by the military, forced off his motorbike. The soldiers immediately put the motorbike behind their truck.... There was an argument between Godlove and the military. I saw the military stripping off his clothes and dragging him on the road. Then one of the soldiers came forward and shot him twice."

Neba's body remained on the road until residents collected it the next day for burial.

The residents of Alachu are too frightened of the authorities to lodge formal complaints with them about the killings.

This is the second time, in less than two months, that Air Force soldiers targeted civilians in Alachu. On May 15, dozens of homes were burned and a man dragged out of his home and killed. The authorities announced an investigation into the burning of homes and the establishment of a commission of inquiry to evaluate the material damage and property destroyed. The commission was due to submit its report by May 24, but the authorities have made no information about the findings public.

Human Rights Watch spoke to many victims of these earlier attacks. The majority said that they had not been contacted to register their losses, and none had yet received any compensation or knew of anyone in the neighborhood who had.

On July 4, Cameroonian soldiers killed Yuo Carine

Fru, a 24-year-old nurse, and severely wounded her 15-year-old sister in their home in Bamenda. Armed separatists had killed a soldier near their home that afternoon, and neighbors said the killing may have been an act of retaliation. A brother who was also there managed to hide from the soldiers, they said.

A family member said: "We found Carine and her sister in a pool of blood. Carine died on the way to the hospital." A nurse confirmed to Human Rights Watch that Fru had been shot in the neck. Her sister was still receiving treatment for her injuries.

On June 21, a group of at least 20 soldiers that included members of the Rapid Intervention Battalion (Bataillon d'intervention rapide, BIR), killed an elderly man with mobility and hearing impairments and raped a 40-year-old woman in Kumbo, North-West region.

Several residents told Human Rights Watch about the killing of Pa Vincent Winkar, who was described as being in his 80s or 90s. One man from Kumbo said: "Many fled when they heard gunfire. But there was this old father who couldn't run and remained behind." The witness, who fled when he saw the military arriving, helped to bury the elderly man. He said: "He had hearing problems, so he didn't hear the shooting. The military entered his home and killed him in the kitchen. He was shot in the stomach." The residents have not lodged a formal criminal complaint, fearing retaliation.

The rape victim said: "Five soldiers broke in, beat me, and brought me out in front of my neighbors' house. They



A man in Kuke Mbomo holds ammunition shells he says were brought to kill residents. Photo BBC

asked me and my neighbor, a woman, where the Amba Boys [separatists] were. We said we didn't know, so they beat us. I was hit in the stomach. A soldier asked a colleague for a condom and told me to go toward the toilet. He followed me with a gun. He said, 'If you scream or say anything, I will kill you.' He raped me and left. When I went back home, I found that all my money had been stolen."

The woman was able to go to a hospital to receive post-rape treatment the same day. But she said she did not report the rape to the authorities, fearing retaliation. She has since fled Kumbo.

The international community has become increasingly aware of the serious crimes in the Anglophone regions, despite Cameroonian government efforts to prevent coverage and documentation of violations. The office of the United National High Commissioner for Human Rights in 2018 requested access to investigate abuses in the region, raising concern about lack of access for human rights and humanitarian actors, but has not received

permission. In recent weeks, Switzerland took steps to mediate talks between the government of Cameroon and separatist leaders, amid international calls to address the crisis.

Both Cameroonian authorities and the separatists should stop abuses against civilians and strictly respect human rights law, Human Rights Watch said. The government should immediately investigate these killings and all allegations of abuse, including unlawful and excessive use of force by its forces. It should permit human rights monitors to operate without hindrance and allow independent scrutiny of its efforts to adhere to international human rights law.

"Security forces seem to have little fear of what will happen as they commit brazen crimes against civilians," Mudge said. "These attacks only further entrench the perception that the government cares more about crushing dissent, real or perceived, than it does about protecting its people and ensuring justice."

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Youths in Malawi move with rural communities in environment and energy conservation

By Joseph Dumbula, Blantyre Malawi

A grouping of youths in the commercial city of Blantyre is not taking the issues of climate change, the continued depletion of the environment and the spate of natural disasters in Malawi lightly.

The youths, through an organization known as Youth in Agriculture for Economic Development (YAED), has been engaging rural communities in areas in Blantyre, Chikwawa and Chiradzulu - districts in the Southern African nation that have been faced with huge effects of disasters.

The Malawi government revealed that up to 922,990 people were impacted by cyclone Idai that hit Malawi and neighboring nations of Zimbabwe and Mozambique earlier this year. According to the United Nations Office for Coordinating of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), there were 56 deaths reported, 577 injuries and up to 82,700 people displaced and left destitute.

Over the decades, Malawi's environmental concerns have spanned from natural disasters, droughts, floods, armyworms, excessive tree cutting and lack of alternatives to energy.

But youths, are not tomorrow's leaders if their impact is not being felt in the time they are way strong enough, say members of YAED. The adage, 'youths are tomorrow's leaders' is not what the representation of the organization believe should be on the minds of the people.

They have been engaging rural communities in conservation agriculture,

conservation energy and nutrition based cropping. In the recent projects, the grouping has worked with communities in the area of Traditional Authority Machinjiri, Blantyre, in a project that saw the communities receiving training about creation of improved clay stoves known in the vernacular Chichewa as Chitetezo Mbaula. The stove uses less firewood to produce an amount of heat enough for cooking by conserving the heat against the tradition way of firewood use which consumes a lot of firewood.

The project has also seen the targeted women drilled on the use of the stoves towards ends of earning income and also meant for improved minimum environmental risks. Other stakeholders such as the Electricity Generation Company (EGENCO) have also opted for the stoves to communities that are depleting the trees along Shire River in Machinga district. The continued tree cutting around the area was identified as leading to unprecedented siltation in the river subsequently causing siltation which disturbs energy generation for the entire nation power grids.

In the rural communities in Malawi, people bank on firewood and charcoal for energy. The sustained depletion of trees has also led women, socially left with culinary tasks find it hard to find firewood. While efforts have been intensified by various stakeholders including the donor community, conservation energy appears to be left out.



"I think as a nation there are no coordinated and joint efforts made to come up with policies that would put those endangering our environment. As a country, we have failed to end poverty and people are finding solace in earning a living from the environment by depleting it. We need to stop cutting down trees for charcoal or bricks curing as a source of income," says YAED Executive Director Happy Arnold.

He told Pan African Magazine that at the moment, the government needs to consider working with as

numerous stakeholders including those operating in rural areas towards conserving the environment adding that there also has to be policies that will guide industries to use clean energy.

Malawi's National Energy Policy (NEP) which was launched and adopted in 2003 and few other policies guide the conservation of energy in the country. Previous referential paper work such as the National Energy Plan in 1987 and the National Sustainable and Renewable Energy Program (1997) have been describing as policies that emphasize on

energy conservation but the rather were too split.

The NEP in fact states improving access to improved energy services, in the Southern African nation holds the ability to raise income and enhance the well-being and sense of empowerment of the poor by among other things; reducing drudgery, time and effort spent gathering traditional cooking fuel and reducing health risks through the use of cleaner burning fuels and better cooking equipment.

It adds that improvements in the availability and quality of energy services for small firms and communities will indirectly benefit the poor by easing pressures on destructive natural resource exploitation, particularly the depletion of forests for firewood.

Thus far, tree cutting rages on to be one overarching issue. The Riffle Africa states that in every ten minutes, an area of forest like the size of a football pitch is cut down every ten minutes. Floods that have been hugely been synonymous with the lower land of Shire River in districts of Nsanje and Chikwawa are associated with incessant depletion of the environment in the Shire Highlands.

Some of the initiatives include the one YAED has engaged in and the tree planting season notion spearheaded by the government through the Natural Resources Ministry. Other stakeholders have also roped in having patrols, instilling the sense of ownership of the forests, continued media coverage and sensitizations.



Models of a Dialogue Assembly

By Mwalimu George Ngwane

So much ink and spittle have been spilled since 2016 on the need for a Dialogue platform or Assembly to seek sustainable solutions to the current crisis. However both the form and the content of such an Assembly are still shrouded in conjectures and speculations. A few models of or approaches to a Dialogue Assembly would help state and non-state actors who believe in creating dialogue spaces make decisions, recommendations, proposals, and implementation benchmarks that hopefully should resonate with the aspirations of the citizenry. Models identified below do not include those targeting trade unions or socio-professional groups. The focus here is on grievances of a national character where the Dialogue Assembly is both dynamic in process and structured in event.

National model

A National model can be referred to as an inclusive national dialogue, a broad-based dialogue or simply a National Conference. This model seeks to debate issues on a national scale. It often occurs when a country is in the throes of a national crisis (power vacuum, military intervention, pre and post election agitations, national insurgency or civil war) and is in search of a national restructuring. Like in the African palaver theory where the village sits under a tree to agree or disagree until there is a consensus, the national model attempts to take into account all the frustrations and demands of citizens.



Mwalimu Ngwane speaking at the House of Lords.

The predominant issues on the table are, but not exclusive to, power-sharing reconfiguration, resource allocation, governance paradigm shift, electoral reforms and geo-political grievances. This model may be in the form of a bottom-up formula in which discussions and representations are held at the lower indaba (subdivisions or divisions), medium indaba (provinces, regions, districts, states), and upper "indaba" (nation's capital). This bottom-up three-tier formula gives the citizens a voice and visibility at all levels and helps to filter grassroots petitions into the national receptacle. It gives value to democratic entitlement as virtually every geopolitical locality feels their articulations are being taken into consideration and conveyed faithfully to government. On the other hand, a top-down formula would require an election of representatives from the medium indaba who carry the concerns of their people to

the upper indaba. It is more or less like a nation's lower or upper houses excerpt that in this situation this is a new call for new voices with a new vision in a new dispensation. A top-down formula could also give room for selection by the central powers of representatives based on geopolitical balance, state and non-state actors, partisan and non-partisan considerations and sometimes parochial interest. For the top-down formula to have a semblance of legitimacy, those selected would have to first hold consultations with the lower and medium indaba before any upper indaba Dialogue Assembly.

Constitutional model

This model is born out of the need to engineer or negotiate a constitution that would bring back aggrieved parties within the mainstream of the body-politic. Such a Dialogue Assembly is often linked to a governance or constitutional grievance whose solution can only be found in fashioning a

win-win constitution. Indeed most governance grievances emanate from biased power-sharing structures (hypercentralisation, clientelism, personality cult, and the culture of patronage and prebendalism); unbalanced development (unfair resource allocation, non-compliance with the law of derivation, critical development deficiencies and poor national economic agenda); truncated historical and constitutional manipulations (periodic constitutional tinkering, skewed perception of nation building, flawed prisms of binary and multiple identities and civil war). A constitutional model only succeeds when the citizens and especially the state actors identify the source(s) of the governance grievance. Without pride or prejudice, power or pretence, falsehood or fanaticism, the political elite have an obligation to discuss all the details of rancor and requests that may have shaken the very foundation of the

nation's edifice. Hopefully the outcome would be to build not break, heal not hurt and save not sink a new or amended architecture that guarantees a positive peaceful coexistence. A constitutional model requires first and foremost the expertise of constitutional statespersons guided by the input of informed citizens and the religious implementation of policy makers. What this therefore suggests is that a constitutional model is one that goes straight ahead to convening a constitutional forum in the guise of a Dialogue Assembly.

Holistic model

This is a combination of the national and the constitutional models. It aims at seeking solutions to a national crisis in tandem with constitutional grievances in the hope that justice, good governance and peace shall be restored. This model reminds us of the Tripartite Talks of 1991 in Cameroon where the draft electoral code and the draft decree on the access of political parties to the official media were the main items on the agenda. However even though the government had emphasized that there would be no additions to the proposed conference agenda, four Anglophone participants attending the conference in different capacities pulled out after the rejection of their proposals relating to the constitutional concerns of the Anglophones. Yet the 18th January 1996 constitution was born from the 1991 holistic model. It is important that the focus of a holistic model be on a balance between the national

and the constitutional, so none eclipses or dilutes the other. To this end the choice of participants should reflect a fair mix of state actors, civil society, aggrieved parties and constitutional experts.

Whatever Model

Research reveals that six political context factors play a decisive role in whatever model is chosen. First, the political elites can for self or group interest stand on the way of governance reforms. Even when far-reaching agreements of a model are arrived at, the political elite may either reverse the gains of the agreements or refuse their implementations. Still to this end aggrieved parties without any linear coordination can torpedo the agreements because of internal wrangling. Second, frustration from the citizens may hinder the progress of



Story 12 Pic 2. The ongoing armed conflict in the English speaking North West and South West Regions of Cameroon started as a peaceful protest.jpg

the model if there are delays in implementation. Therefore a lack of buy-in by the public often results in the resurgence of the initial governance grievance. Third, the presence of regional or international mutually accepted and credible facilitators helps in whatever model is selected. Fourth, there is always a merit in what is known as

homegrown or indigenous expertise. No country should ignore the role of neutral, impartial and inside-outside local facilitators who have firsthand knowledge of the dynamics of the grievances. Fifth, many countries have had repeated occurrences of governance grievances. Experience from these occurrences should serve

as corrective measures that would avoid stalemates and deadlocks even though it is rightfully argued that deadlocks are mere signposts to re-strategising. Lastly whatever model is chosen the aim is to stop talking past each other and start talking to each other. The aim is to hold hands and not guns.

Conclusion

Dialogue Assemblies are not new to the African. Indeed Africa's palaver tradition is informed by the fact that it is only by sitting under the tree or an open market square can people talk sincerely, listen actively, confront creatively before reaching a consensus. Trees and market squares are today especially in urban settings metaphors for halls called in most of Southern Africa "indaba", in Lesotho "kgotla" and in some East African countries "mbuza". These are all indigenous expressions of modern community dialogue assemblies where debate about the state and future of society are determined. The outcome is to restore sanity in a fragmented or failed society by charting a way forward for justice, development, growth and positive peace.

A Memo to Paul Biya, President of Cameroon on: The Urgent Need for Public Policy Mediation and Negotiations in the Ongoing Armed Conflict in the Anglophone Regions of Cameroon

By Rev. Fr. Wilfred Emeh

How did we get here?

It has been nearly three years since the unprecedented outbreak of the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon - a crisis that has dealt a heavy blow on the facets of life of our beloved nation. The UN has reported nearly 2,000 deaths, property has been destroyed, schools have been torched, and uncertainty looms as thousands of people continue to live in misery. The devastation on our economy and human resources are inestimable; businesses have been forced to close, and talented citizens continue to flee their homeland.



Father Wilfred Epie Emeh.

Thousands of families have been displaced, and many others have become refugees in foreign lands.

How did we get here? The escalation of the ongoing conflict is consequent upon grave administrative failures

that include mass arrests and brutal force and extrajudicial killings at a time when peaceful civilians merely sought to express their grievances against the ruling government. Over time, insurgent groups emerged,

acquired arms, and targeted the military and security officers, in what has become a full-blown armed conflict in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon.

In retrospect, crass failure to implement educational

and judicial policies, that are foundational principles of our co-existence, was the main cause of the Anglophone uprising. This was a glaring neglect of pertinent policies on equal partnership, the preservation of cultural heritage and identity of each region as stipulated by the union-agreement between the Francophone and the Anglophone regions. Evidently, this failure of policy implementation was a symptom of more profound ailments within our political institution that favors corruption, marginalization and social injustice. The implementation of policies, especially those that are



President Biya has remained largely silent in the face of unprecedented crisis in Cameroon.

constitutionally founded, are essential in the democratic decision-making process of every nation.

Despite the current situation, it would be in our national interest if all parties resort to the public policy mediation process which is an inclusive, transparent process of negotiations among government agency officials and diverse stakeholders that often results in consensus agreements rooted in nuanced understandings of a conflict (Potziba, 2019). This memo largely seeks to identify the root causes of the current crisis and propose recommendations for a swift resolution of the ongoing armed conflict.

Where are we?

So far, the government's approach and tactics have been futile; attempts to set up a bilingualism commission failed no less than the authoritative leadership style. On the other hand, opposition groups have engaged in propaganda and destructive ideologies. Several factions have emerged with multiple pseudo-leaderships, void of any clear sense of direction. Civil rights activists are in jail while young people have been radicalized. The future is bleak as there seems to be no real leadership on either side of the aisle. And, while the government persists in

cracking down on political activists and insurgents, the latter seem resolved to resist and fight back to the last ounce of their blood. It is rightly said, "as hunters have learned to shoot without missing, birds will have no choice but learn to fly without perching."

Consequently, our people are hurting. Worse still, both the government and the separatist forces seem to be on extreme ends of the political spectrum. Clearly without any strategies or plans for a resolution, an already precarious economy is worsening by the day, while armed bandits continue to terrorize and harass hard working civilians.

Brief theoretical framework There is urgent need for public policy mediation, which should include revisiting the political roots of the problem in a spirit of dialogue, conferences and negotiation. "In several Western democracies, attempts have been made to find a way out of these problems by trying out new forms of conflict resolution based upon negotiation and participatory procedures such as policy dialogue, consensus conferences, participatory technology assessment, mediation, or facilitation" (Holzinger, 2001).

The benefits of policy

mediation and negotiation are enormous; it brings together policy experts from international platforms who will forge the path to a lasting resolution. Usually policy mediation fosters deliberations among parties that represent every aspect of a situation, supported by expertise as needed, resulting in agreements that avoid unintended consequences (Podziba, 2019).

Another important benefit of policy mediation is face-to-face deliberations that promote civil discourse. This is quite different from the vitriolic attacks and incivility that we have also witnessed on social media platforms, spewed by both the government spokespersons and opposition groups.

Negotiation and policy mediation are bedfellows, encouraging the willingness of both parties to shift positions with a clear focus on a win-win outcome. During successful negotiation, emotions are separated from the factual basis of the problem, shifting the focus to the benefits without the pride of clinging to positions. Lines of communication are opened, paving the way toward rational analysis of arguments, discussion of concessions and pursuit of compromise to the benefit of everyone.

Understandably, the ruling government has an uphill task in initiating dialogue with diverse opposition groups, some of which have been tagged as terrorists. This must be dealt with initially as it is the outcome of the delegitimization of the premier civil rights consortium. A committed public relations bureau of the government with sound knowledge on the issues

should identify the main rival groups and extend an invitation to them.

What must we do?

- Amidst these tumultuous times, political leaders need to rise beyond personal feelings, hurt, and mistakes of the past and look at the bigger picture: the future of our children, peace, and stability are priceless. It is time to demonstrate true leadership by involving the grassroots in a process of dialogue that can bring real change in Cameroon. Richard Box (1998) explains that finding a way to equitably resolve differences is a key interpersonal skill, opening the door to more citizen-oriented governance. For elected leaders and public service practitioners, this means a flexible attitude toward change, shedding of protective feelings of personal turf, and a willingness to engage in open dialogue on issues facing the community (as cited in Denhardt et al., 2014).

- The time for blame games is over. It is urgent for warring factions to come to the negotiating table in a spirit of sincere dialogue that allows deliberations on all options including federalism. The current efforts being made to host an All-Anglophone Conference (November 21-22) is commendable. These kinds of initiatives - notably dialogues led by civil society, whether secular or religious - should get strong support from governments and international organizations, including the U.S., the European Union, the African Union, and even the Vatican. The International Crisis Group has recommended the Catholic Church as potential mediator of the crisis.

- There is need for a

neutral arbiter in the policy mediation process. This is no longer an internal affair as often claimed by some overzealous political pundits. The constant refrain by Anthony Guterres, Secretary General of the UN, that Africans should solve their own problems, is unrealistic, perhaps even bizarre. We would be repeating mistakes of the past to the detriment of human life and human dignity.

- A decentralized form of government should be considered to better serve the needs of the people, which would devolve power and control to the local communities, limiting the concentration of management of the nation's resources in the hands of a few high-positioned officials. By shifting control rights from the central bureaucrat (who otherwise acts like an unregulated monopolist) to a local government, decentralization typically tends to expand service deliveries as authority goes to those more responsive to user needs (Bardhan, 2002).

In conclusion, our nation must strive toward good governance. Most armed conflicts in Africa are caused by bad governance. All over the world, people naturally rise against regimes that deprive them of their rights and privileges due to institutional corruption. In retrospect, armed conflicts in Nigeria, Mali, Sudan, Liberia, just to mention a few, were all linked to bad governance. The United Nation Children's Fund notes, "corruption and bad governance were among the causes of war. The majority of the people had no voice in the government and no opportunities in life and so

they were easily provoked to violence” (as cited in Yiew et al., 2016). Good governance is key to mitigating armed conflict. Empirical studies show that countries that uphold democratic principles, where corruption is under control, where law and order is maintained, where the people are served accordingly, are less vulnerable to armed conflicts (Yiew et al., 2016).

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African Energy Chamber, oil executives pay courtesy visit to President Macky Sall

BY EMMANUEL OKOGBA*



Executive Chairman of the African Energy Chamber, N.J Ayuk and top oil executives paid a courtesy call to the Senegalese President Macky Sall during a symbolic visit to Goree Island.

Goree Island was a huge slave holding facility and at the center of the European slave trade from the sixteenth century until 1848, when France abolished slavery. Countless African slaves passed through the island for centuries on their way to the US, Haiti, and Cuba. The oldest building on the island, the House of Slaves,

is a reminder of the inhuman conditions in which African slaves were treated for over three centuries. The whole island was inscribed on the Unesco World Heritage list in 1978.

“Slavery was a sin and a crime against humanity. Visiting Goree Island should remind us that slavery continues when we shrink civic freedoms, encourage legislation that stifles dissent, stand idle by on rising populism that has stirred xenophobia, limit opportunities for Africans and women in oil and gas and put a blind eye on African

families that continue to earn unworthy wages.

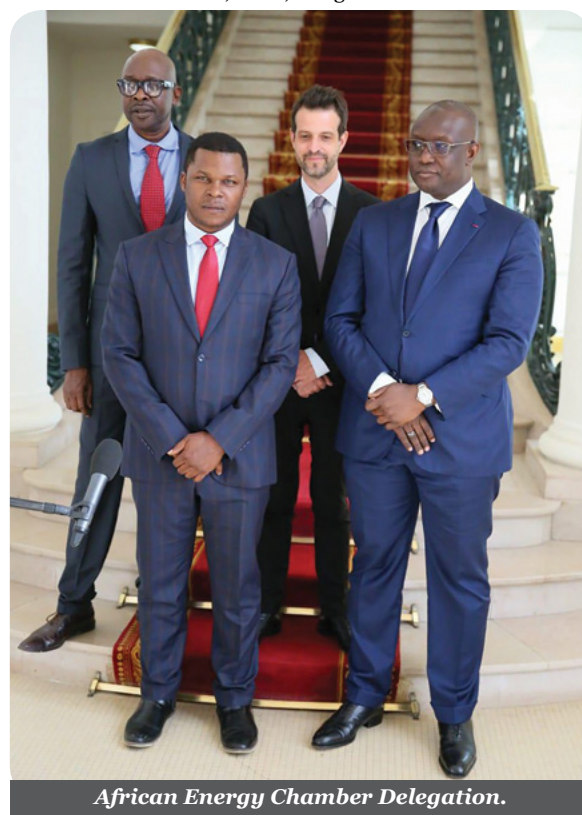
The high powered meeting with President Sall had discussions centered on transparency, local content, empowering women in the oil and gas industry and creating an enabling environment for investors. During the meeting, the president assured them of his drive to make the Senegalese oil and gas industry become more viable for investors. Also in attendance at the meeting was CEO, Africa Oil and Power, Gulliaume Doane and Senegal’s recently appointed minister of petroleum,

Mouhamadou Makhtar Cisse.

The African Energy Chamber is looking forward to working with various African civil society groups to fight issues of modern-day slavery. And all of these starts with us creating an environment where all are treated with fairness, love,

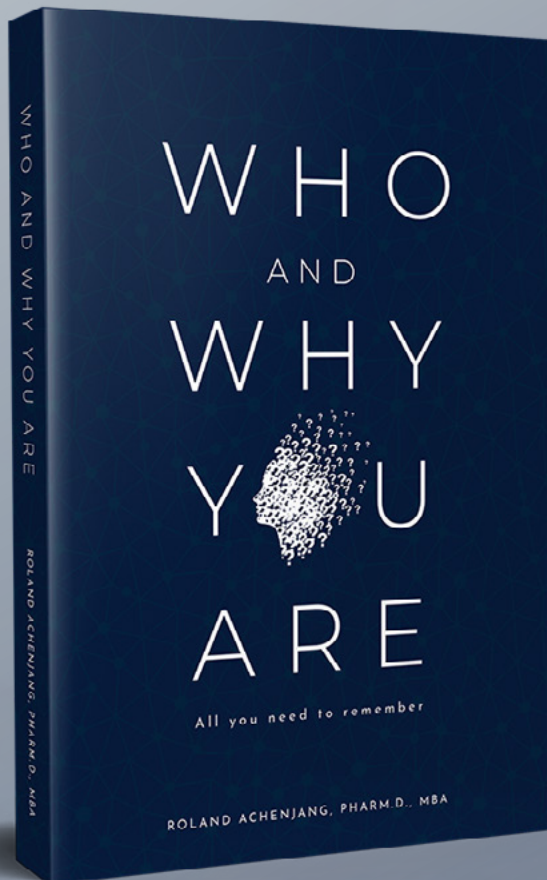
and equity”. N.J Ayuk is also the CEO of Centurion Law Group which recently scored a first in South Sudan where it brokered the release of 15 inmates in an unprecedented presidential pardon.

*Courtesy of Vanguard Nigeria



African Energy Chamber Delegation.

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The African Energy Chamber Debunks the Senegalese USD\$10 Billion Scandal that Never Was

The potential royalty figures referred to in the programme are wholly inaccurate and exaggerated beyond the realm of reality

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa, July 29, 2019/ -- The oil and gas industry is well known for being a very capital-intensive industry. The likes of BP, Exxon-Mobil, Saudi Aramco or Shell, routinely make the top-ten of the world's largest companies by revenue, and the figures can be so strikingly large as to cause confusion from the point of view of the individual. That could have been a possible explanation for the BBC's Panorama show's outlandish claim over an alleged USD\$10 billion "scandal" taking place in Senegal and involving the highest levels of government and most of the country's main oil and gas players. It was either that or the sheer necessity to present an oversensationalized view of the facts for the sake of audience shares, which I liked to believe was beneath such a respected media institution.

If not let's see. Panorama's story covers the sale and acquisition of two offshore oil and gas blocks in Senegal by a company named Petro-Tim, an unknown company registered in the Cayman Islands as a subsidiary of another ghost-like global enterprise named PetroAsia resources. Petro-Tim is controlled by Frank Timiş, a Romanian-Australian businessman with a rather cloudy reputation, to put it extremely mildly.

In 2012, former president Abdoulaye Wade and his economy minister Karim Wade approved the deal



after allegedly doing some extensive due diligence and assessing the "proven track-record" of PetroAsia, which backed Petro-Tim. Timiş later sold much off its license to Kosmos Energy, another well-known exploration company with an impeccable track-record. After massive natural gas discoveries were made in the company's two licenses, Timiş sold his remaining shares to global oil company BP for a reported USD\$250 million and some undisclosed "royalty concessions". After some share exchange with Kosmos, today, BP controls an operating 60% stake in the Cayar Offshore Profond and St. Louis Profond licenses, with Kosmos retaining 30% and Petrosen, Senegal's national oil company, controlling the remaining 10%.

Now, Timiş initial acquisition of the licenses during the Wade

administration might have happened under suspicious circumstances, as the BBC alleges, and might certainly be worth investigating, which president Macky Sall has already initiated. That, however, is no reason to demonize the whole of the country's oil sector and produce false claims that jeopardize the work being done to develop an industry with the potential to bring considerable wealth, jobs and economic development to this impoverished nation.

The Figures

The BBC states that BP paid USD\$250 million for Timiş' share of the two oil licenses, but that besides that hefty figure, Timiş was still entitled, or "could receive" as the narrator tells us, to anywhere between USD\$9 and USD\$12 billion dollars in royalties, depending on the price per million British

terminal unit of natural gas. The reporter decided to round up the figure to USD\$10 billion, for no other reason than to make the title of the story more appealing, I believe.

Now, let's put that figure, which is allegedly to be paid to one single individual, into perspective. Senegal's annual gross domestic product in 2017 amounted to USD\$16.37 billion. From a corporate point of view, BP, which ranks as the world's seventh biggest company and has operations all across the globe in several different sectors, recorded record profits in 2018, more than doubling its 2017 earnings, at the tune of USD\$12.7 billion.

In light of these values, the statement that BP had agreed to pay Timiş the sum of USD\$10 billion as royalties for his former minority stake in two non-producing natural gas licenses in Senegal is

not only outlandish, it is irresponsible, and reveals a thorough ignorance of how the oil and gas industry functions.

It is somewhat ironic that when, during the half an hour reportage, the BBC journalist shows opposition MP Mamadou Lamine Diallo a sheet of paper with the BP logo featuring what the reporter claims is a scaling payment sheet of royalties due to Timiş (BP has since said it "does not recognise the document shown that referenced these figures"), Mr. Diallo's reaction is one of disbelief, looking around and repeating the sentence "is this true?" several times. Well, it is a question worth asking, for it can not be true. As BP stated, and industry standards confirm, "the potential royalty figures referred to in the programme are wholly inaccurate and exaggerated beyond the

realm of reality". Whatever royalty agreement it has with Timis "would be less than one percent of what the Republic of Senegal would receive. And again – very importantly – anything paid would not in any way affect the agreed share received by Senegal", since it would be paid from BP's share of profits and does not being stolen from poor Senegalese people, as the story claims.

The Agenda

Further, this report is unfairly damaging on several fronts. It perpetuates an image of inevitable chronic corruption in African business that so many African leaders, including president Macky Sall, having been working hard to reverse by promoting good governance and transparency. It jeopardizes the many efforts made in recent years by the current Senegalese administration to promote the development of an oil and gas industry that could help lift millions out of

poverty and bring economic development to the nation. It causes uncertainty for investors and raises political instability.

It also perpetuates the image that the oil industry is inherently destructive for African nations like Senegal, ignoring considerable evidence of the contrary, and smudges the reputation of some of the most regulated companies in the world by accusing them of knowingly supporting corrupt deals when all the information about the deal has been submitted and evaluated by the Securities and Exchange Commission in the United States and other oversight institutions without raising any flags. Finally, it seeks to attack the work made by president Macky Sall in trying to promote foreign investment and economic development in Senegal.

The Contract

Finally, let us look at the actual contract made between

the government of Senegal and the license holders, which the story deems as so damaging for the Senegalese coffers.

First of all, when the initial concession contract was made for these two licenses, Senegal had no relevant commercial oil and gas discoveries at all, particularly in the high-cost deep offshore region. This represents a considerable added risk to investors and is commonly associated with more favourable contract terms than other proven oil regions. Nothing new there. Within this context, the contracts covering the exploration and production of Cayar offshore Profond and Saint-Louis Offshore profound foresee that once first oil or first gas is attained, the operating company can recover up to 75% of its extensive operating costs from the production profits. After costs are paid for the production is divided between the state and the license holders in

a scale depending on how much oil or gas is being produced. Within that scale, the Senegalese state receives between 35% and 58% of the production. On top of that, we must consider Petrosen's 10% participation, which can be expanded, under the contractual conditions, to 20% if there is a discovery. So, at a 20% share, Petrosen could receive between a minimum of 8.4% (20% of 42%) and 13% (20% of 65%) of the production. Once divided, the production kept by the producing companies is taxed as profit by the State at a rate of 25%. To sum it up, the Senegalese state will receive anywhere between 61% and 74.8% of all production coming from these licenses. What the BBC has said to have been described as "the most generous (contract) in the industry", even though it never said who described it that way, seems very much standard for the region.

Within this framework, it is difficult to understand why

this story would be drafted in such sensationalistic terms to involve companies that are well-known for its adherence to anti-corruption and due diligence procedures. It is also strange that the reporters would choose to so blatantly attack political leaders that were not even in power when the deal was done, and that have been responsible for ground-breaking reforms that are already producing benefits for the Senegalese economy.

Senegal is well on its way to become a de facto oil and gas producer by 2022 and with it, billions of dollars will be injected in the Senegalese economy, supporting job creation and economic development in a country that still depends mostly on a non-industrialized agricultural sector. Senegal's efforts to develop its oil industry and its economy should be supported and lauded by international well-informed observers and not harmed by inaccurate reporting.

Anadarko announces FID on Mozambique LNG project

By Arnaldo Cuamba.

Anadarko and its partners formally took the Final Investment Decision on their 13 million tonnes per annum LNG project at a ceremony in Maputo on 18 June, attended by President Nyusi and heads of state from across the region. The \$25 billion project – which will be financed with \$11 billion equity and \$14 billion debt, is not only the largest direct foreign investment in Mozambique, but in "in the history of this continent," Anadarko chief executive Al Walker told attendees. He said the project should ultimately double Mozambique's GDP.



Gov and area 1 partners Anardako.

The Area One LNG project involves the construction of two liquefaction plants

(known as "trains") on the Afungi Peninsula in the Cabo Delgado district of Palma,

producing 12.88 million tonnes of LNG a year. At present the Area 1 facility

has 5,000 workers on-site progressing works associated with the construction of a resettlement village, camp expansion, airstrip, and Palma-Afundi Highway.

President Filipe Nyusi, who witnessed the signing, declared the ceremony was "the guarantee of exploiting a resource that is fundamental for the development of Mozambique. Today the present meets the future". He called for "calm and good sense" and recognition that "the results will not come today or tomorrow. They will come with time". Expectations needed to be managed, since "we must

take into account that the return on the investment will take time”.

“We must know how to take advantage of our natural resources to invest in key sectors such as agriculture, agro-processing, tourism and infrastructures, as well as social sectors such as education and health”, said Nyusi. He hoped to see rural households advance from subsistence agriculture to commercial farming

The Mozambican government, he added, is well aware that development cannot be managed in an environment of political uncertainty or insecurity, and pledged continued efforts to secure effective peace, through the government’s dialogue with the former rebel movement Renamo.

Al Walker told the

pleased to announce it today”.

The Under-Secretary of Economic Affairs in the US Department of Commerce, Karen Kelley, said the “historic partnership” between the Mozambican government and Anadarko will open opportunities for further US investment. “Our presence here shows that we believe in the growth of Mozambique in the long term”, she declared.

Since October 2017, an unknown armed group has been terrorizing the north of Mozambique with rogue attacks that have left over 200 dead and many villages destroyed.

The attacks occur mostly at night and in the early morning in remote parts of Cabo Delgado province, near the border with Tanzania.

Armed with guns and

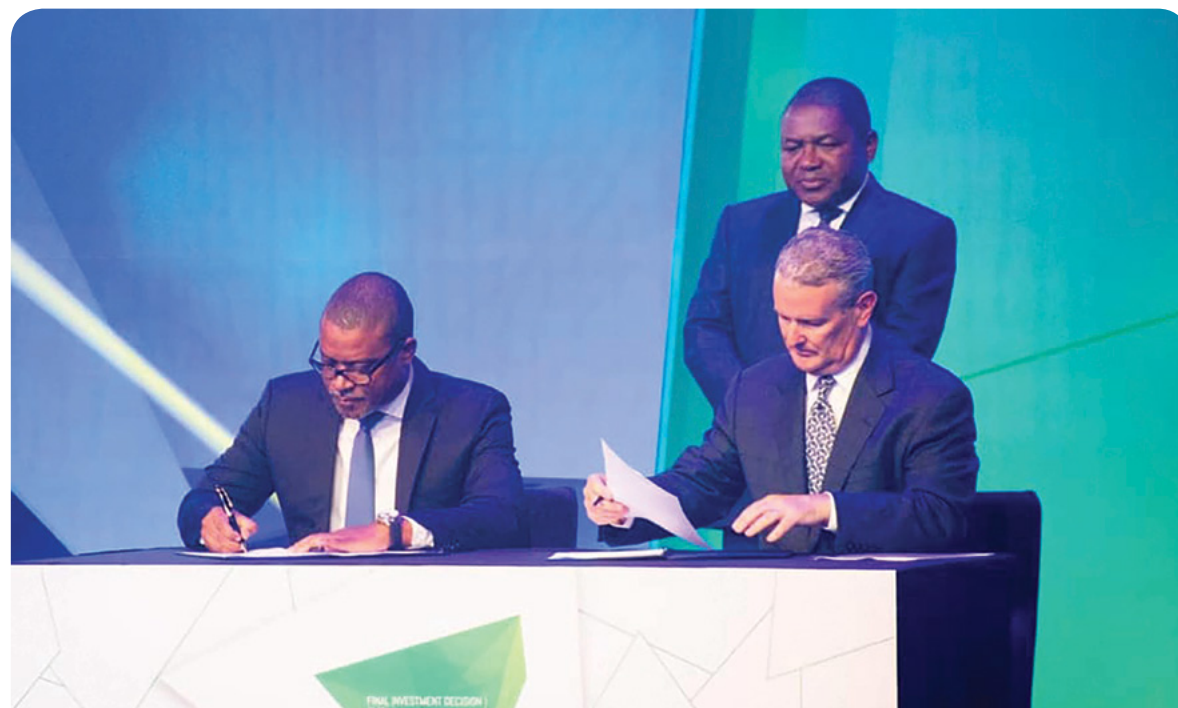
its activities, but resumed in that northern province of Mozambique. At the ceremony, President Nyusi said his government is aware that development can not happen “in an atmosphere of political

terror among the people of Cabo Delgado.”

French oil major, Total, is expected to lead the Area 4 development from 2020 onward, after Anadarko accepted a takeover offer by fellow US independent Occidental Petroleum. Occidental plans to sell Anadarko’s sub-Saharan Africa upstream assets – including the Mozambique LNG project – to Total in an \$8.8 billion deal.

The Area 1 block is operated by Anadarko Mozambique Area 1, Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Anadarko Petroleum group, with a 26.5% stake, ENH Rovuma Area One, a subsidiary of state-owned Empresa Nacional de Hidrocarbonetos, with 15%, Mitsui E&P Mozambique Area1 Ltd. (20%), ONGC Videsh Ltd. (10%), Beas Rovuma Energy Mozambique Limited (10%), BPRL Ventures Mozambique BV (10%), and PTTEP Mozambique Area 1 Limited (8.5%).

ceremony “We are not talking about an opportunity that comes once in a generation. This goes beyond that and is something for several generations to come.”



President Filipe Nyusi witnessing the signing Anardako.

machetes, group members invade a village, shoot and decapitate people, set fire to houses, steal food, and run away to the nearby forest.

others. The deceased was an employee of Portuguese construction group Gabriel Couto, which was hired in October 2018 to build an

mistrust and insecurity,” saying he was committed to achieving “effective peace” in the country, and doing “everything to ensure that

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Egypt protest the selling of 3,000-year-old statue of King Tutankhamun in London for over \$6million

By Amos Fofung

Once again, another historical African artifact has fetched millions of dollars to Europeans merchant.

On Thursday, July 4, London auction house Christie's went ahead to sale the 11-inch sculpture of Pharaoh Tutankhamun for some £4.7 million (\$5.97 million).

Despite the outcry by Egyptian authorities who engaged in talks with UNESCO and the UK Foreign Office in London to return the statue, the controversial sale went unperturbed.

Tutankhamun, was King of ancient Egypt at 9, until his unprecedented death at 19, from around 1333 B.C. until around 1323 B.C.

His tomb, situated in the Valley of Kings across the Nile River, is famous for having been discovered relatively intact, and for containing thousands of impressive artifacts which continues to startle Egyptologist.



The statue is said to have features reminiscent of Pharaoh Tutankhamun. Credit, Christies.

After it was revealed that his statue had been put for sale, Egyptian authorities embarked on a mission to recover the artifact which they say was collected under doubtful means.

Mostafa Waziri, secretary-general of Egypt's Supreme

Council of Antiquities, told Reuters he was disappointed the sale was going ahead, despite requests for information and protests from government officials and Egypt's embassy in London.

"I believe that it was

taken out of Egypt illegally ... They have not presented any documents to prove otherwise," Waziri said.

"We aren't going to stop, we are going to keep following these guys, even the (buyer). We are going to keep asking again and again (for it to be returned)," he added.

The auction house weighed into Egypt's claims saying; "while ancient objects by their nature cannot be traced over millennia, Christie's has clearly carried out extensive due diligence verifying the provenance and legal title of this object."

"This is a black day for archaeology because Tutankhamun is the king of the kings," said Zahi Hawass, Egypt's former Minister of State for Antiquities Affairs. "The whole world has to be angry because there is no ethics here...This piece has to be in a museum, not to be in a dark room of a rich man," he told CNN.

This is however not the first

time Egypt has raised worries over the illegal acquiring and sale of its historical artifacts. Last January, a section of a tablet that was stolen from the Karnak Open Air Museum in Luxor in 1988 was successfully recovered and returned to Egypt after being listed for auction in London.

The Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities had been monitoring international auction houses for its artifacts for a long time now.

Egypt is not the only African country whose artifacts are sitting in a dark room of a rich man's house in Europe or America. Nigeria, Benin, Ethiopia, and South Africa among others are all hunting for the recovery of their missing artifacts catered by European explorers and merchants from Africa.

We gathered that Egyptian authorities are gearing up engage in a legal battle; efforts all geared at recovering the lost historical treasure.

Rwanda's VUP safety net restores resilience for the most vulnerable

By Jean d'Amour Mugabo

Agnes Mukankusi, the 64-year old resident of the rural side of Kigali City, lost sight four years ago. Before joining the Vision 2020 Umurenge Programme (VUP) in 2017, Mukankusi would hardly put food on the table. Her house was being destroyed but she wouldn't afford to get it repaired.

VUP is the flagship of Rwanda's social protection programmes. It was established in 2008 with the



VUP beneficiaries work on a road in Nyanagabe District, Southern Rwanda, in February 2019.

aim of eradicating extreme poverty by the year 2020.

"Neighbors had started

advising me to beg on streets and markets but I refused as it was out of my values,"

elderly Mukankusi recounts from her home in Kibenga Cell, Rutunga Sector of Gasabo District.

She receives Rwf18,000 (about \$20) every month from the VUP Direct Support scheme which consists of a monthly direct cash transfer for very poor households who cannot work.

"At the beginning, I used the money to repair my house. I can't buy a cow but I can live and save little by little. I use part of the VUP support to

cover my eye checkup bills twice a month and invest the rest in farming activities," she says. "I wonder what my living conditions would be if I was not admitted in the VUP."

She says she also uses the money to help her granddaughter to go to school by providing her with the school materials and school feeding contributions.

More VUP beneficiaries said the programme's earnings have helped improve

their livelihoods, stand resilient to small shocks, do saving and accumulate assets, afford children's education needs, among other benefits.

VUP raises saving culture

Edouard Nkundiye, 82, says his family live on Rwf12,000 from the Government's direct support and the savings from VUP support helped him to buy pigs and a bull calf. He lives with his wife and grandson in Uwindekezi Cell of Kibilizi Sector in Nyamagabe District, Southern Rwanda.

"When the old age caught me and my wife, we failed to till the land; then VUP came in to support us with Rwf60,000 at first which I used to buy a pig. The pig produced six piglets, I sold some pigs and bought this bull calf at Rwf100,000 in order to get manure for our farms," says Nkundiye.

"If it wasn't due to this VUP support, my family's life would now be a misery or I would even be dead now because we earn all our livelihoods from VUP support. When I hear that our cash has been deposited on the bank account, I get happy and go to withdraw it and start paying for the farm

labour."

Many other VUP beneficiaries have told Pan African Visions that they lived in despair without hope for tomorrow but their welfare started changing since they got onto VUP scheme. Thanks to the VUP earnings, they are now able to meet their basic needs and save some money for starting small businesses or buy livestock.

Orphaned Wellars Hakizimana, 19, who lives with his younger brother in Mpanga Sector of Kirehe District managed to buy a bicycle at Rwf45,000 from VUP earnings in his first year on the scheme. He keeps doing VUP classic public works and makes at least Rwf1,000 daily by carrying people and goods on his bicycle.

Justine Gatsinzi, Division Manager for Social Protection Programmes at Local Administrative Entities Development Agency (LODA), reaffirms the VUP has improved the living conditions of many citizens.

"Most of them can save and this saving is reflected in the way they buy small and big livestock, home equipments; they improve their houses, they rent farms, they buy seeds to grow, they start small

income-generating projects and buy farm land."

Poverty levels drop

As many other Sub-Saharan Africa countries, Rwanda has kept a low income status for long but the country's economy even fell further into turmoil after the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi which claimed over one million lives and devastated the country's infrastructure and economic resources.

When the second Household Living Conditions Survey (EICV2) indicated that poverty rate was at 57% in 2005/06 while 36.9% Rwandans lived in extreme poverty, the government and stakeholders started charting a strategy to ensure that the population in extreme poverty could meet their basic needs, and that led to the VUP in 2008.

The poverty line was set at Rwf250 per adult per day or Rwf90,000 per adult per year while the extreme poverty line was at Rwf175 per adult per day or Rwf63,000 per adult per year to enable one to buy a minimum food basket of 2,500 kcal per adult per day. The average income of the poor was Rwf150 per adult per day.

The VUP was launched in



Wellars Hakizimana and his younger brother have been able to withstand life shocks of losing parents, thanks to the VUP.

30 sectors, one in each district of the country, and every district went on selecting its next poorest sector for inclusion in the programme every year.

The programme has four pillars: direct support that currently covers 416 sectors of the country, classic public works that covers 244 sectors, expanded public works that covers 150 sectors; and financial services available in 271 sectors.

The National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda indicated in the fifth Households Living Conditions Survey (EICV 5) released in December 2018 that the VUP benefits 4.4% of households in Rwanda.

The EICV5 VUP Panel survey shows that 49.9% of the VUP beneficiaries were poor in 2016/17 compared to 54.2% as measured by the EICV4 VUP survey of 2013/14. EICV5 also shows 38.2% Rwandans were in poverty and 16.0% in extreme poverty in 2016/17. The rates have dropped from 57%

and 36.9% respectively in 2005/06, thanks to the VUP and other programmes.

The VUP Qualitative Evaluation commissioned by the Ministry of Local Government and UK's Department for International Development (DFID) in 2018 indicated that key factors promoting livelihood opportunities are the regularity of income from the VUP direct support, availability of public works employment throughout the year, and reduced and flexible hours on expanded public works especially for women and people with disability.

The VUP started with the budget of Rwf4 billion in 2008 but the funds went on increasing to reach Rwf30.4 billion in 2012/2013 and it is currently at the tune of Rwf45.3 billion in the 2018/2019 fiscal year. It has so far benefited around 1.5 million people countrywide, according to LODA.



Nkundiye feeds his calf he bought with savings he made from the VUP earnings.

Book on Zimbabwe's frequently asked questions about climate change launched

By Wallace Mawire

A booklet titled: Zimbabwe's frequently asked questions about climate change has been launched in Zimbabwe with support from partners involved in assisting the country to combat the climate change crisis.

According to Mr Washington Zhakata, Director, Climate Change Management Department in the ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Water, Climate and Rural Resettlement the initiative was started by author Anna Brazier and supported by the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS). It saw the first version of the book being published before being reviewed by several eminent authors from Zimbabwe's top universities, captains of industry and government departments.

Highlighting on the importance of the book, Mr Zhakata said that whilst much of the climate discussions have been confined to teak-furnished and air-



Climate Change Management Department director Washington Zhakata.

conditioned boardrooms, rural folks who constitute the majority of the population in Zimbabwe have largely been excluded from the climate discussion.

"This is partly due to language issues, complexity of the subject and poor infrastructure including energy and communication," he said.

Mr Zhakata added that most experts, including government officials at provincial, districts and

ward levels have difficulties in translating climate issues into the languages spoken by people they serve.

He said that sometimes it is really not necessary for the officials including extension staff to be bogged down by translation issues which come at the expense of implementation of the climate issues.

"The use of vernacular therefore becomes critical," Zhakata added.

He added that as the

government prepares to implement devolved programming and devolution approach to work, it is critical for the climate resources including information, education and communication material on the climate change subject to be in local languages which people are comfortable with.

Zhakata added that this necessitated the translation of the booklet which empowers people, especially the rural folks with information and

knowledge on climate change

According to Zhakata, people in the rural areas are often accused of being primitive and relying more on their traditional beliefs, indigenous knowledge and spiritual beliefs.

"These are sometimes problematic when trying to manage climate change issues such as evacuations ahead of disasters, departure from historical ways of doing things such as planting dates, times to be working in the fields amongst others," he said.

He said that one of the reasons for the so called resistance to change is simply lack of information.

He says that the booklet will provide quick answers to people's frequently asked questions on climate change.

It also provides local insight of Zimbabwe's climate priority areas, impacts as well as interventions that can be

Denis and Lenora Foretia Foundation Celebrates International Nelson Mandela Day

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

The 2019 edition of the International Nelson Mandela has been commemorated by the Nkafu Policy Institute-a think tank under the Denis and Lenora Foretia Foundation. The event to celebrate the former President of South Africa took place July 17, 2019, at the ST Muna Foundation in Yaounde.

The event was attended by a host of personalities such as the former Governor of



Foretia Foundation's COO Fri Asanga hands the Nelson Mandela Memorial award to Cardinal Tumi, represented by Father Michael Tchoumbou

the South West and North West Regions and Former Secretary-General at the Presidency of Cameroon, David Abouem A Tchoyi, Human Rights Lawyer Barrister Felix Agbor Balla, Dr. William Arrey, Madam Fri Lehfune Asanga, Interim CEO and COO of the Denis and Lenora Foretia Foundation respectively amongst others.

In the inaugural Nelson Mandela Memorial lecture,

Barrister Nico Halle speaking on the theme «Nelson Mandela-A fighter for justice and human rights said peace, dialogue and concertation are important for solving a crisis in the world. According to him, there are no known nations in the world that solve a crisis by using violence.

Barrister Nico Halle called on the participants at the event to change their mindset henceforth and follow in the footsteps of former President Mandela. «If our mindset does not change, then we did not come to celebrate Nelson Mandela». «Africa is usually synonymous to power. They arrange all the time to always be in power, while there are people we are making money when there is a crisis anywhere».

He added that Nelson Mandela was well recognized for his fight for peace and human rights while indicating that Mandela was a selfless person, sacrificing himself for telling the truth which most people can't do. «...Africa is on her knees because we have refused to love each other. There cannot be any peace at all without justice and it cannot be neglected. Peace is a weapon for the wise and it was what Mandela used to become great while violence is used by the weaklings».

Barrister Nico Halle was presented with a certificate of recognition for championing peace in Cameroon by Fri Lehfune Asanga, Chief Operating Officer at the Denis and Lenora Foretia Foundation. She further called on him not to relent his efforts in fighting for peace and justice. While receiving the award, Nico Halle promised to do more and not to rest until peace returned to Cameroon.

In 2009, the UN General



Staff of Foretia foundation, guest speakers and participants during the International Nelson Mandela Day

Assembly declared the 18th of July as «Nelson Mandela International Day» in honour of Nelson Mandela's contribution to peace and human rights. Following that declaration, the UN joins the Nelson Mandela Foundation's call for people worldwide to spend 67 minutes every July 18 to acknowledge and celebrate President Nelson Mandela's contribution and dedication to peace and human rights. This year's conference comes at a critical context as Cameroon, once described as a heaven of peace in Africa has been sinking into a spiral of conflicts.

Experts advocate for back-to-school

During the panel discussion on «Nelson Mandela's fight for justice-what lessons for the peace process in Cameroon», Barrister Felix Agbor Nkongho proposed various measures Cameroon should put in place to bring a long-lasting solution

to the Anglophone crisis. According to him, an all-inclusive dialogue should be implemented.

He added: «never again will one group of people marginalized and oppress another. The fear now however those who were oppressed are becoming the oppressors. We gave to abandon our individual goal for a general one, while peace is something very important».

Barrister Balla further indicated that children should be allowed to go back to school in areas where security is much better. He, however, did not regret calling for school boycott but said however the school boycott has turned out is not what they had earlier wanted.

Barrister Balla's message to the youths was simple and clear: «youths should be active in politics by registering to vote and changing their country and should not be social media politicians-those who spend most of their time criticizing

social media but can't even register and vote.»

The same sentiment was shared by Madam Suzanne Bih Awenti, who called for children to be allowed to go back to school. «Education is very important and is a holistic approach. It irks me when our children are deprived of going to school». «We must value education and revisit the kind of education we give our children».

Cardinal Tumi wins 2019 Nelson Mandela Memorial Award

His Eminence Christian Cardinal Tumi named the 2019 Nelson Mandela Memorial award, edging out Politician Edith Kah Walla and Achaleke Christian.

Receiving the award on behalf of Cardinal Tumi, Father Michael Tchoumbou, personal assistant to the Cardinal thanked all those who voted for the prelate and said it is a call for all Cameroonians to join hands advocate for peace, justice

and human rights in the country.

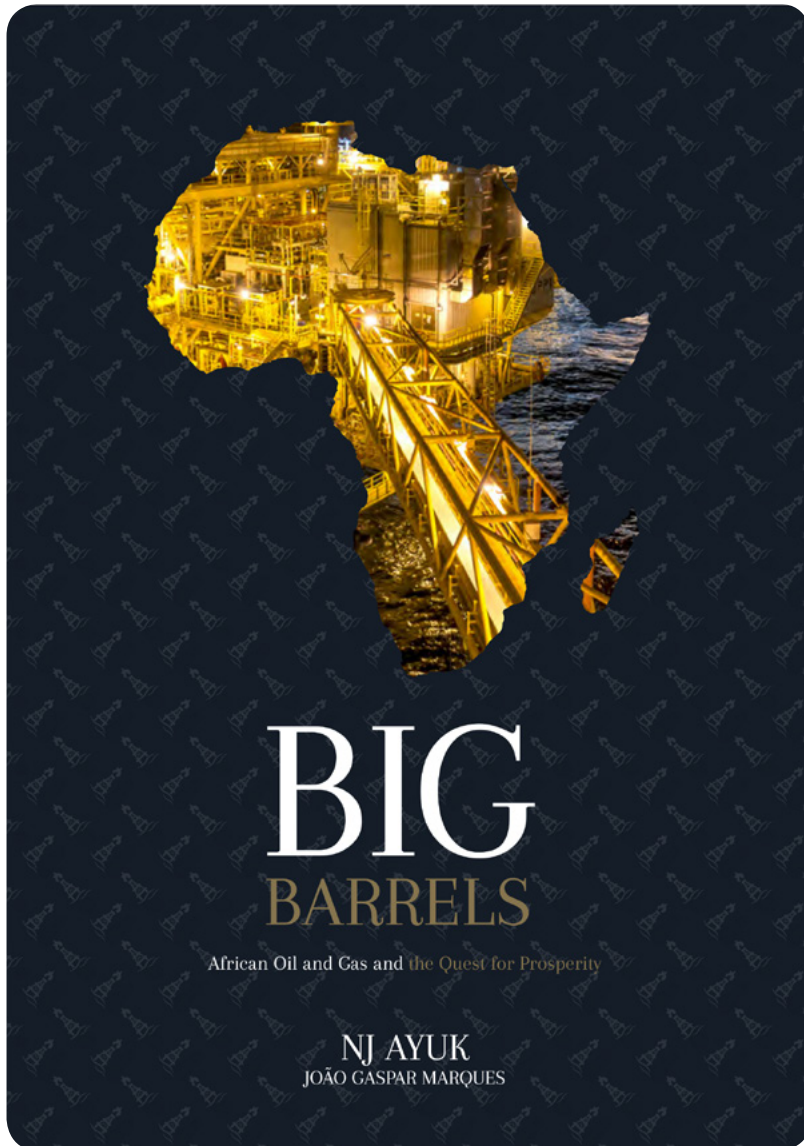
For the past year, Cardinal Tumi has brought together religious leaders from various denominations under the Anglophone General Conference to brainstorm on ways of putting down proposals for an inclusive dialogue to end the crisis in the North West and South-West regions of Cameroon. The conference has however suffered a series of postponement but an indication from one of the officials is that things are going on behind the scene.

The International Nelson Mandela Day which comes up every July 18 was used by the staff of the Foundation to do community assistance. A family of 11 who lived in a single room in the nation's capital Yaounde with humanitarian assistance provided. The family's present condition is as a result of the absence of peace due to the crisis in Cameroon.



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South Sudan vows to end early child marriage

By Deng Machol

Juba - South Sudan has launched a program aimed to ending early child marriage and pregnancy by 2030 in the restive country after years of war, poverty and starvations.

The campaign, officiated by the organization run by the first lady, Ayen Mayardit, Concern South Sudan in partnership with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) launched under the theme: "Let's join hands together to end early child marriage and pregnancy in South Sudan," saw various government officials and leaders from the humanitarian agencies start a fundraising initiative to support the fight against early child marriage and pregnancy in the country.

South Sudan which seceded from Sudan in 2011 after the decades of civil war, concurred with 2013 violence, has a colossal record of early child marriages in the horn of Africa due to poverty caused by the conflicts.

Taban Deng Gai, South Sudan vice president, described the event as a milestone and starting point for the country to calibrate the positive approaches that will find a critical solution to early child marriage practice.

"Early child marriage negatively affects our country's economy and will lead to inter-generational cycle of poverty," said Taban. "It is therefore, our duty to ensure our children are safe, provided with better education, health and sanitation," he added.



First Lady Ayen Mayardit.

In South Sudan, is very complicated, traditional, marriage underage girl is a pride in all tribes of South Sudan.

In the same breath, the UNFPA country representative, Dr. Mary Otieno pointed out that child marriage is a gross human rights violation in the global.

"Child marriage in South Sudan affects over 40 per cent of girls' nations," said Mary. It's a gross human rights violation which constitutes a grave threat to young girls' lives, health and future prospects putting them at risk of violence, poverty, HIV and complications related to pregnancy and childbirth which in developing countries like South Sudan are main causes of death among 15-19 year-old girls," she added.

The UNFPA head also registered her unwavering intervention in this noble journey and fight to end early child marriage, to ensure that there is zero child marriage in South Sudan by 2030.

"To ensure that women

have a stake rights of adolescent girls, including preserving their dignity by eliminating early child and forced marriages and ensuring access to youth-friendly health services to protect young from unintended pregnancies as well as sexually transmitted infections and HIV," she said.

If eliminated, this will create a potential to improve South Sudan economic development and harness the demographic dividend.

Mary further argued that millions of girls do not have an accessed the skills, knowledge and opportunities due to the early child marriage practice, something that would enable future generations to be lifted out of poverty.

Ms. Jemma Nunu Kumba, ruling party's Acting Secretary General, urged all the actors to join in fight early child marriage across the country.

"It is one of strategic plan to protect girls," said Nunu. We join hands together to stop early marriage, we appeal

to all politicians to continue with the campaign of ending child marriage in forum."

Deng Deng Hoc, Education Minister, says child marriage is a global problem that cuts across countries' regions and ethnicities.

Child marriage is one of the wide spread violations of children rights in South Sudan. It is a serious problem with serious consequences that need a critical attention, said Minister Deng.

This phenomenal practice, Deng said it is the cause of fistula of which about 60,000 cases of fistula are being handled now across the country.

According to the 2010 household survey, 7 per cent of women aged 15 – 49 are married before age 15 and 45 percent of women aged 20-49 married before the age of 18. Although, there is a small variation across age groups from those who married before age 13, the percentage of women 15-49 who married before age 18 varies from 32 per cent in the age group 40-

44 and 45-49 to 52 percent for the 20-24 age group. This is an erratic trend across age groups, survey said.

However, child marriage is almost equal in urban and rural areas, it added. Regional variations about 40 percent of young women aged 15-19 were married in 2011 with the highest proportion of marriages happening in Jonglei State [67%] and the lowest in Central Equatoria, Lakes, Warrap and Western Bahr el-Ghazal regions respectively.

The proportion is also higher (59%) for women without education compared to 2015 for women with secondary and tertiary education.

"We shall continue to advocate for girls' rights to education, to economic independence and to be whatever they aspire to be because young women and girls are powerful, equal and they are badass," said Aya Chebbi, African Union (AU) Youth Special Envoy. Noting that about 150 million [girls] will be married in childhood in Africa if we do not do anything about this; if we do not act now."

Fathers blames

As the battle to eliminate early child marriage are blatant in the East Africa's youngest nation, the fathers in South Sudan have been blamed for perpetuating the vice.

In another development, in workshop organized by ministry of culture and youth together with Crown

the Women Organization with support from the United Nations Population Funds (UNPA) to enrich the participants in ending early marriage in the country, the Culture, youth and Sports Minister, Ms. Nadia Arop Dudi says mothers of young girls do not have a strong say when it comes to decision on girl child marriage, but fathers do.

"Fathers of young girls are the ones behind early marriages not mothers," Nadia stated this week in Juba.

Despite that, Minister Nadia said much should be done

To change the mindset of fathers, Ms. Nadia says

much need to done to the fathers so that they can view their daughters as source of incomes, especially among rural communities.

In the same workshop, Aya Chebbi, AU youth Envoy emphasized that putting to an end early marriage in Africa required empowerment of the women to have an access to education and to become economically independent, as well as have a freedom of choice in regards to whom they want to marry.

She further said the country's better future depends on ending all forms of violence against women and young girls.

"Child marriage will not end until women and

young girls are empowered to have an access to education; empowered to be economically independent and have a freedom of choice of their partners," said Aya.

UNFPA representative, Dr. Kidane Abraham, says in developing countries like South Sudan, every pregnant women believes she will die during child birth due to child marriage and poor access to healthcare.

He added that the vice, "child marriage" has to stop for its remains devastating on women's health in South Sudan.

"Everyday women die while giving birth and this should never happen," said kidane.

Child marriage is one of

the concerns in the world youngest country that has frustrated the early marriages' agents' efforts to reduce mother and child mortality.

The UNFPA has been in the forefront since then in ensuring the practice put into an ends in South Sudan and that has given hope among producing age women in some parts of the country.

Executive Director of Crown the Women, Ms. Riya William registered that many women and young girls especially in rural areas are ignorant of their rights and child marriage practices.

"Young girls are highly vulnerable to early marriage in South Sudan," said Riya. I

urge fathers to stop marriage off their daughters at young age."

This practice is common in African countries, but particularly in South Sudan is written in the hearts of South Sudanese as good practice due to their existence cultures and norms, which need some critical civil education in both rural and urban areas. With high illiteracy in the country, parents think dowry are much importance than education. Therefore, the parents' mindset must be changed and then empowering the young girls – this will create drastic change in the community and may pave a way to eliminate the early child marriage.

S. Sudan launches its first mobile Money platform, creates new jobs

By Deng Machol

Juba - South Sudan has launched its first-ever mobile phone-based money transfer service, aims to easy cash flows transactions and to create new job opportunities in the world restive country, last week in Juba.

However, trading under the brand name m-GURUSH (m-for mobile and GURUSH for money in Arabic), the new mobile commerce platform is a joint partnership between South Sudan's own Trinity Technologies Limited, a local tech firm, and Zain Telecoms South Sudan.

The product is licensed by the Bank of South Sudan and the National Communication Authority of South Sudan to roll out Mobile Money Services. Users with no bank accounts can access the numerous m-GURUSH outlets distributed across the



country.

South Sudan has become 92nd in the global among the countries operated mobile money platform services.

m-GURUSH is a virtual banking system that provides transaction services through

a SIM card on the Zain network. Once the SIM has been inserted into the card slot of the mobile device, users can make payments and transfer money to vendors and family members using SMS messages. The service

is available on USSD and on a Mobile App that customers can download from the Google Play store.

In his keynote speech, South Sudan information, Technology and Communication Minister,

Michael Makuei, said this will ease financial transaction in the country's existence in five – plus years of war and graft.

Minister described it as a great achievement, urging the m-Gurush to be conformed with the rules and regulations and laws of South Sudan.

"The most important part of this ICT sector is not a money making but it is a services to our people – we need to rendering an effective and efficient services to our people," said Makuei. "It will provide better service to people who are badly in need, so many people have been moving all the way to come to Juba to receive their money but with m-GURUSH definitely the services will reach our people whoever they are and this is very important on the other hand, our people will be getting



better," he added.

Makuei appealed to the m-GURUSH to sensitize the public about m-GURUSH services.

"M-GURUSH you have a very big tasks to do, you need to sensitize the people of South Sudan, including regularization of the m-GURUSH works," said Minister Makuei.

The launch of m-GURUSH signals the start of a major shift in the mobile money industry in South Sudan, which will promote broad digitization of the economy: mobile money customers will not just have access to an account, but rather to a full suite of services that are relevant to their daily lives, encouraging them to keep their funds in digital form and building resilience to financial shocks.

"We are not just launching a brand name today. The m-GURUSH money mobile commerce platform presents a complete transformation from your first interaction with it, which is a simple, easy to use customer friendly access menu that makes it fast and convenient for customers and dealers to carry out transactions. The platform provides consumers with a robust offering of products that cuts across, Service

Payments, Airtime top up and money transfer services." said Mr. Joseph Arinaitwe, Trinity Technologies Vice President, adding that m-GURUSH is further supported by a state-of-the-art platform ensuring system stability and a great customer experience.

"Today, we celebrate a great milestone. This is a dream comes true – and to ensure people of South Sudan, the financial landscape has now been changed for a best and forever," he said. "m-GURUSH is not only about technology – m-Gurush is about positively impacted lives – as we rolled out the services, we would like to assure the people that the transaction – the way, they will interact with money – the way, they will move money – the way, they will receive money, will be more convenience, will be safe and secure – this is our pledges and the commitment to great people of South Sudan."

For South Sudan's most vulnerable, especially displaced persons and women, the benefits of mobile money are real and far reaching. m-GURUSH will actively pursue partnerships with the Government and humanitarian organizations to ensue ease of access to affordable financial services.

The m-GURUSH representative says it will work closely with network partner and the Government in reaching Small and Medium Enterprises and the underserved population, including female customers with relevant and tailored products and services.

Any business that is legally registered in the Republic of South Sudan can apply to become an m-GURUSH Mobile Money Agent in any of the 32 states South Sudan in partnership with Zain telecom – South Sudan. m-GURUSH offers affordable rates to its registered customers who can send any amounts between 1 Pound and 100 Pounds for FREE. Customers can self-register for m-GURUSH by dialing *355# on their mobile Zain mobile phones. The cost of sending between 501 pounds to 1,000 pounds at 15 South Sudanese Pounds. Customers can send and receive up to South Sudanese £100,000 per day and hold a balance of £200,000 in their mobile wallets. Customers can also pay for goods and services using m-GURUSH PAY at registered merchant outlets countrywide.

Mr. Arinaitwe further explained that m-GURUSH will drive financial inclusion and economic empowerment

and economic growth for millions of unbanked citizens across the width and breath South Sudan, enabling enterprise development, new employment opportunities and uplifting the living standards amongst the youth and the entire rural and urban population of the country.

Mr. Arinaitwe said besides the money transfer business, the new features on m-GURUSH money will enable the company to fully tap into the mobile commerce business in South Sudan.

The m-GURUSH will also be used for the government in making payment and reduce the use of cash and eliminate paper – based payment.

m-GURUSH will work in partnership with Zain telecom as the mobile operator in the country.

Zain telecom representative, Wilson Lado, stated massive benefits the citizens stands to reap from the partnership.

"We believe that we bring people together, connecting services and as such mobile money is one of the services and we as Zain want to assure that each and every person in the rural area can be able to send money," said Lado.

Richard Raja, Trinity Technologies Limited Director, says there is no

need to carry cash now that the country has embraced on mobile money.

"Our mission is to transform South Sudan through technology. We expect to create thousands of jobs to the citizens of the country," said Raja. "We expect to roll out mobile services in South Sudan to create not less than 20,000 to 30,000 new jobs – it is going to stimulate innovation in the country."

All the money that will be in circulation and transaction in m-GURUSH will be banked at Equity Bank – Kenya – based private bank operating in South Sudan.

"We are going to be holding the pool account which is a trust account, which means that we will be holding all the money that deposited in m-GURUSH in trust for the benefits of the customers and agents of m-GURUSH. As people transfer money from one wallet to another, the money will still be sitting in the bank account up until it is written from an agent that is the only time the money will get out of the account," said Victor Omondi, Equity bank representative.

Dr. David Nalo, Chaired of Finance and Economic committee in the national parliament, asked the m-GURUSH management to be steadfast in averting any case of money laundering through their system.

"I hope; you will stop all those who want to launder money through m-GURUSH because for us as a government, we would not want people who are laundering money in the region to temper with our m-GURUSH," said Nalo, adding that the government want to see a revenue that will join the non-oil revenue to be

flowing to the East Africa's youngest country's coffin.

More so, Information Minister Makuei says the government will continue to license more companies to offer mobile money services in the interest of better service delivery to the people of South Sudan.

"It is all up to m-GURUSH to exert more efforts and capture the market before other players join," said Makuei. The market is a free economy in South Sudan and there is no room for monopoly and anybody who fails checks out.

The country gets almost all



Communication Minister, Michael Makuei, says this will ease financial transaction in the country in five plus years of war and graft.

of its revenue from oil and as it tussles to rebuild its wreckage of a five-year civil war, that broke out in late

2013, killed nearly 400,000 people and uprooted four million people from their homes.

President Kiir and key opposition groups, including Dr. Machar reached a fragile ceasefire and peace deal in September, 2018, promising to end the political violence, but plans to form a power-sharing in May, this year were delayed after there was no funding to disarm, establish cantonments, rehabilitate and integrate militias and rebels across the country.

Brilliant Idea But A Few Years Late: c

By Prince Kurupati

Zimbabwe and its citizens are no strangers to hardships be it political, economic and social hardships. Ever since the turn of the millennium, Zimbabwean citizens (barring, of course, the rich and powerful) have been bedevilled by different challenges every single day.

Politically, Zimbabwean citizens have lived in constant fear of a highly paranoid government, economically they have had to deal with the currency uncertainty challenge (mostly volatile wise) and socially, they have had to deal with grand and petty corruption vices. As if the above challenges aren't enough, a new and utterly devastating challenge has emerged, that is, power outages.

For over a month now, starting in earnest at the start of June 2019, Zimbabwe Electricity Supply

Authority (ZESA) has been implementing a very tight load shedding problem which sees most locations spread across the country spending 17 hours every day without power. The only exceptions being critical institutions such as international airports.

While the challenge presented itself only as recent as June 2019, there is cause for concern for all Zimbabweans as senior officials from the energy

ministry have stated that the country's power challenges are set to continue for several years. Speaking at an annual congress of the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries, secretary for energy and power development Patson Mbiriri said the country can expect to suffer longer and more frequent power cuts for years. According to Patson Mbiriri, at the moment, the country is pinning its hopes on the ongoing 600

MW Hwange Power Station expansion funded to the tune of US\$1.5 billion by China Exim Bank. The project is set to be completed by March 2022.

According to data from the energy ministry, Zimbabwe generates 1,300 megawatts (when all is normal). The 1,300 megawatts, however, do not meet the demand as the country needs 2,200 megawatts per peak consumption. To cover for

the deficit, the country has to import from countries such as South Africa, Zambia, Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of Congo. While this is normally the case, everything is not normal at the moment in the country and as such, out of the 1,300 megawatts that it should be producing, Zimbabwe is only generating less than half of 1,300 megawatts. To compound the already pitiful situation, foreign countries are now refusing to grant the country electricity owing to unpaid debts.

Combined the above has created a situation in which the power utility only has the potential to supply less than a quarter of what it's supposed to supply when all is normal.

Faced with such a problem, the Zimbabwean government has been busy identifying and assessing different alternatives in the view to



address the power problem. One of the alternatives that has gained traction and is largely being talked about in governmental circles and also among the public is the creation of solar farms.

The solar farm alternative marks a different trajectory from previous alternatives that Zimbabwe so fit when it was faced with the same problem in previous years. Namely, in 2016, the government decided to ease power challenges the country was facing by establishing the Dema Emergency Diesel Peaking Power Plant. Though the Dema Emergency Diesel Peaking Power Plant managed to ease the country's power problems at the time, it proved that it's not a sustainable solution cost-efficient-wise. The plant was highly expensive to run and maintain. It relied on diesel which is an expensive commodity. The plant also required regular maintenance to keep it running which was doubly expensive, on one part, the personnel required to maintain the plant were experts commanding huge paychecks and secondly, spare parts to keep the plant running were costly and imported hence they required a huge outlay of the scarce forex.

While the above two factors meant that the Dema Emergency Diesel Peaking Power Plant was expensive for the country's power utility to run, it also put a huge burden on the government as it had to heavily subsidise generated power. After all expenses had been factored in, in order for the power utility running the Dema Emergency Diesel Peaking Power Plant to



make profits, they had to set tariffs at 0,22 or 0,23 US cents per kWh. This meant the consumers had to pay double what they normally paid. Acknowledging that charging such as exorbitant fee would not be welcomed by the consumers mainly households, the government decided to subsidise the electricity tariffs which then saw households paying the average price of 0,13 US cents per kWh.

Against such a background of previous expensive alternatives, it's only expected that the Zimbabwean government when looking for another alternative as a solution in solving the crippling power challenges would opt for a more sustainable and affordable alternative hence the reason why solar farms have gained traction as a possible long-lasting solution.

Solar farms in comparison to the Dema Emergency Diesel Power Peaking Plant are similar in that both are expensive to start but different in that solar farms are cost-efficient in running once everything is in place. Therefore, solar farms, in

essence, can be termed sustainable. However, it's important to note that solar farms are more affordable when factoring in the 'economies of scale' concept. This simply means that a proportionate saving in costs is gained by increasing the level of production; for Zimbabwe to truly realise the 'cost-efficient' benefits of solar farms, it has to begin building solar farms at a larger scale.

It's no secret that the idea to build solar farms comes rather late as the idea is only starting to emerge when the country is already in darkness. It would have been better to prepare for this day (times when there are heavy power outages) in advance rather than to wait for the problem to strike before doing what's necessary. Be that as it may, its nonetheless a smart move that ought to be appreciated by every progressive citizen. The hope is that the government will not dilly dally in paving the way for the first solar farms to be built. All efforts now ought to be concentrated in making solar farms a reality in Zimbabwe so as to create a future that's great

for all Zimbabweans both present and those to come in upcoming years.

Solar farms do not just help in lighting up the country, they also do have many other benefits. Most notably, solar farms by nature require large areas of land, on average, 25 acres of land is required for every 5 MW installations. Such vast tracts of land can only be found in rural areas and by building solar farms in rural areas, the government will create employment opportunities for the many idle rural youth, women and men. Creating employment in rural areas will, in turn, address the rural to urban and 'rural to South Africa' migration which has left many rural households with a dearth of productive people. Additionally, solar farms can also expedite the rural electrification program that ZESA established several years back but has been finding hard to complete.

Installations of the solar panels at a solar farm are done above the ground. What this therefore means is that the land beneath the solar panels can still be utilized for other purposes such as animal grazing.

Overall and above, there is a need starting at the earliest to review electricity tariffs. This is a practice that's supposed to be ongoing at all times including when solar farms become fully operational. By constantly reviewing its tariffs, the country's power utility will ensure that it manages to break even at all times so that it does not fall further into debt as is the case now. At the moment, ZESA charges US\$0.028 (according to current Inter-Bank rate) per kWh. This despite the fact that it costs US \$0.11 per KWh to produce electricity locally and slightly more when it comes to importing. Such mismatch in pricing only means that ZESA is continuously falling into debt with no prospect of getting out of the situation anytime soon. Reviewing tariffs in an effort to make them competitive will also help the many registered Independent Power Producers (IPPs) as well as other energy investors to operationalize their operations as they currently do not see the business sense of operating when selling power at tariffs that do not see them break even.



The Africa Gas Association

THE LEADING VOICE OF AFRICA'S NATURAL GAS & ENERGY INDUSTRY

WHO WE ARE: The Africa Gas Association sponsors and participates in a number of forums, partnerships and coalitions to foster dialogue on energy policy and achieve a better understanding of natural gas in Africa.

OUR VISION: The Africa Gas Association is the leading voice of the natural gas and energy industry in Africa. It seeks to become one of the most influential and respectful organizations in the global natural gas & energy industry.

OUR MISSION: TAGA's mission is to influence and support policies which promote a strong, viable and sustainable natural gas industry in Africa and beyond in an efficient and environmentally friendly manner.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS: When you join THE AFRICA GAS Association, you join a community with thousands of leaders in the industry. THE AFRICA GAS Association provides many opportunities to get Involved, learn and network in various settings – from intimate dinners to the annual conventions & exhibition, the new big Africa conference featuring experts and partners from all over the world.

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Making Agriculture Work For Africa: Inspiring Next Generation of Farmers

By Anthony Awasom *

Global food demand is forecast to double by 2050. Meeting this need equitably and sustainably will require innovation throughout the entire food system, from the sourcing of raw materials to processing and packaging, to the evolution of consumption patterns and waste. Changing demographics, including the growth and urbanisation of the global population, is just one of many factors threatening food security in the 21st century.

Climate change has the potential to derail progress in rural economies and disrupt supply chains. Ensuring the safety and quality of food remains a paramount concern,

with direct impacts on human, economic and social

development. Addressing these challenges will require collaboration through knowledge, skills and mobilising capital to promote inclusive and sustainable business models.

With a couple billion more people estimated to join the global population in the next few decades, world food production could use an upgrade. Africa has a key role to play: agriculture is her biggest industry and asset, but much of Africa's agricultural land is currently underutilised. Crop yields could be increased with more efficient farming techniques and new equipment — but that would require investment capital, which is often an obstacle for farmers.

According to International Financial Corporation

(IFC), agriculture is a \$5 Billion industry, supporting 500 Million farmers and responsible for 10% of consumer spending. Over 1/3 of all food that is grown is wasted. By 2032, food demand will increase by 20%, driven by growth in the developing world, and that food production will need to increase by 70%.

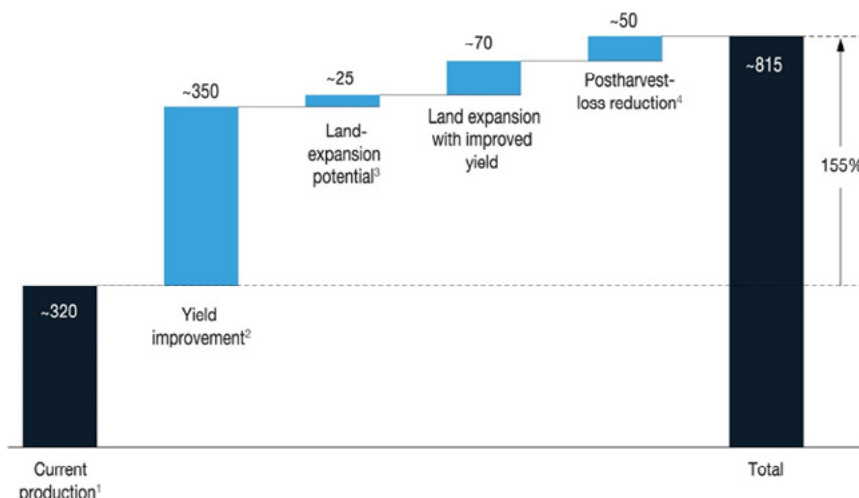
African Development Bank Group (AfDB) alarmed that Africa spends \$35 Billion annually on food imports, a figure that is expected to increase to \$10



Anthony Awasom.jpg

Africa could be two to three times more productive if it intensified its agricultural productivity.

Cereal and coarse-grain production potential, Africa, millions of tons¹



¹Cereal and coarse-grain production in 2014, from FAOSTAT (latest year available).

²Economic-yield improvements without irrigation for main cereal crops for sub-Saharan Africa only, excluding South Africa; some discounts made for less "commercializable" crops, such as sorghum and millet; based on Global Yield Gap Atlas.

³Assumes 20-million-hectare land-expansion growth, based on McKinsey analysis.

⁴Based on sub-Saharan Africa moving from 14% agricultural and postharvest loss to 10% (Latin America benchmark).

Billion net by 2030 of which we have 65% of the World's uncultivated arable land.

Agriculture in Africa has a massive social and economic footprint: more than 65% of the population of sub-Saharan Africa is smallholder farmers, and about 30% of sub-Saharan Africa's GDP comes from agriculture. Yet, Africa's full agricultural potential remains untapped.

In a recent analysis, McKinsey determined that Africa could produce two to three times more cereals and grains, which would add 20% more cereals and grains to the current worldwide 2.6 billion tons of output.

Africa has been left out in several industrial revolutions. We can't afford to miss the fourth industrial revolution (4IR) and must be very impatient about it.

To fix this trend, African agriculture requires a re-branding, to carry that appeal

that youth are looking for: a profitable, lucrative business that uses technology and leverages all their skills, as well as an enterprise that uses Social Media, Feature and Smart Phones, Big Data, Artificial Intelligence, IoT.

There is need to leverage on emerging technologies and trends like AI, Machine Learning, Blockchain, Drones and Robots to do more with less. It is imperative to leapfrog.

To do this, youth must see the monetary value in agribusiness, by leveraging on these available technological tools and innovation of course which requires capital.

Increased access to education and new forms of agriculture-based enterprise mean that youth can be a vital force for innovation in family farming, increasing incomes and well-being for both farmers and local communities.

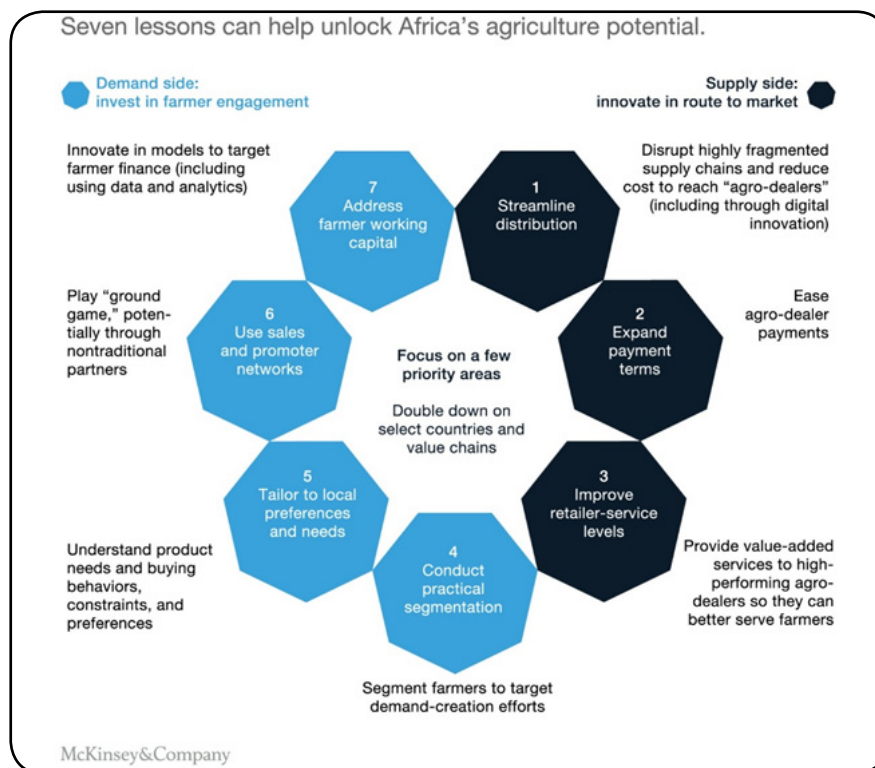
Without access to finances, African youth will not be able to purchase quality agricultural inputs and make the much-needed investments that are necessary to create the agriculture young people are yearning to partake in. Presently, even though agriculture contributes 30% of Africa's GDP, it attracts less than 5% of lending from financial institutions in Africa, leaving young farmers starved of the capital they need to operate modern-day agribusiness.

Today, Africa's youth make up 65% of the continent's population. Yet, many of them want nothing to do with agriculture, because it is tedious and «dirty». To many, agriculture is unsexy. It is for the illiterate and the old.

Such a glaring distaste for agriculture by the youth, even under the projections by the African Development Bank that Africa's farmers and agribusinesses could create a trillion-dollar food market by 2030, should concern all the African agriculture stakeholders, including African governments and the private sector.

Many African farmers lack the capital to invest in yield-increasing upgrades like new irrigation systems, new machinery, new fertilizers, and technology for sensing and tracking crop growth. The most common path to capital is bank loans, with land as collateral. This is an unattractive proposition for farmers, who already bear the many risks of production, including bad weather, changing market prices, or even the shocks of geopolitical events.

Lenders, on the other



hand, have an incomplete assessment of their risk, especially with potential borrowers who have no credit history. Lenders also lack data and tools to predict their return on investment.

“Building a platform for risk-sharing is key to upgrading farming practices,” says Munther Dahleh, a professor of electrical engineering and computer science at MIT and director of IDSS. In order to create such a platform, Dahleh and the IDSS team aim to better predict the value of employing advanced farming practices on the production of individual farms. This prediction needs to be accurate enough to incentivize investment from economic stakeholders and the farmers themselves, who are in competition with each other and may be reluctant to share information.

Complementing this will be the need to fund programs that brand agriculture not as

drudgery but an opportunity to use creativity, earn employment and build strong communities, coupled with supporting new agricultural ventures that use tech, biotech, and rapid exchange of information to make the most out of agriculture.

The good news is that across Africa, the private sector is leading the charge by investing in youth led agricultural technologies startups, which, according to Forbes, have taken up a record \$19 million in investment.

To drive change and revolutionise this sector, investors should look at powering blockchain enabled farmer to consumer agricultural marketplace for African farmers, perhaps starting with the \$100 Billion Cocoa market for instance, and expanding into other soft commodities such as coffee, cotton cashews and grains.

Another focus should be to empower local farmers

in Africa to increase overall production and also improve productivity using mobile centric applications accessible both off and online (using smartphones or feature phones - USSD) that allow them to manage the value chain of their crops, pre and post-farmgates, automate payments from end consumers.

Such platforms will promote sustainable, ethical practices and empower small farmholders, local communities and surrounding economies. The end consumer also benefits from the increased traceability, trust and transparency provided on these platforms that contributes both to their bottom line and the communities where goods are sourced from.

“There is a 1.2 trillion dollar opportunity for nutrition. If that's not an opportunity, nothing else will be.”

Kamel Chida, Deputy

Director, Private Sector Partnership Development for Nutrition, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

“Traceability helps farmers raise a standard and get certifications, which results in more demand and satisfaction from consumers, hence more profits’ Bruce Blakeman, Vice President, Corporate Affairs, Cargill

“Traceability can support smallholder farmers in applying for microfinance by building data and increasing the credibility of the farm.”

Krishna Kumar Founder and Chief Executive Officer, CropIn Technology.

“From a financial perspective, food loss and waste represent 940 billion dollars of economic loss every year.” Ruth Thomas, Director, Global Agribusiness Alliance.

Written by Anthony Awasom, with excerpts from McKinsey Company report and contributions from Prof. Esther Ngumbi, a Plant Biology PhD student at UC Davis

*Anthony Awasom is an independent business consultant focusing on energy, agritech and IoT.

He is also a self-taught, self-motivated purpose driven goal achiever with an in-depth marketing management and business development background that produces business results and delights stakeholders. He is an AfrOptimist, and an advocate for economically viable projects for Africa that are renewable, regenerative, responsible, sustainable, and resilient.

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Kenya: 'Man up', a highway to grave

By Samuel Ouma | @journalist_27

Children were highly valued in the traditional African society. Birth was the first rite of passage and there was great joy when a child was born. This new life would be welcomed with ululations and celebrations by the parents, neighbours and relatives. They would eat and drink together and also bring gifts for the newborn child.

Before children became fully grown, they underwent serious education where they were enlightened about their roles, good behaviors and customs of the society. Boys would be taught by the older males such as uncles and grandfathers whereas the girls would be taught by grandmothers and other female relatives.

Children were considered as the source of wealth, security and family propagation and were expected to eventually take care of their aged parents. They were thus keenly observed and any form of misbehavior attract punishment.

In the past, children were precious and were well taken care of. In the modern era by contrast, children have started being perceived as baggage. Many parents dump their children with the house helps. They leave very early when their children are asleep and come back late at night so playing insignificant roles in their children's growth.

One unfortunate result is a generation which lacks confidence, cannot handle rejection, emotional, mental and physical tasks have been raised.

In recent years boys and men are facing the



consequences of negligence by the society, parents, guardians, relatives and even by the government. Society expects much from them even the impossible ones.

Boys and men no longer have place in the society. Before 1980s women and girls were the inferior in the society. They were denied rights to education, freedom of association, expression. Their place was in the kitchen. They were betrothed at an early age without their consent.

Later, the sun dawned on them when the activists stood up to fight their rights via movements and campaigns. All these efforts have borne fruit as the influence of women is felt all across the country.

The contrast of this is that the male child has been neglected. It is assumed that boys and men are sturdy and independent by nature thus they should take care of themselves. Boys are wired in a way that

they are discouraged from speaking their feelings and sharing their challenges.

If one attempts to share his problems, they are told to man up. Moreover, they go through mockery and ridicule. An attempt to cry attracts rebuke. Due to lack of proper guidance most young men end up caught in vices such as drug abuse, violence, crime, sexual immorality and gambling.

Edwin Maina, a counselor and high school teacher is the founder of Men Challenge Africa, an organization that works to help at risk young men become better citizens. He believes the home is the

source of many behavioral problems in today's students.

"As a teacher and boarding master, I encountered a lot of behavioral problems among students. These include bullying, absenteeism and rudeness."

"When I took time to engage the boys, I realised that 80 per cent of the problems originate from home."

As attention shifts on girl child empowerment, the boy child was left to his own devices. Without hope or social support, depression and trauma followed. A high numbers of boys reportedly have dropped out of school, yet little effort has been taken to find out the reason.

Edwin Maina, founder of MenChallenge

A study conducted by a local media house in 2015 found out that the number of female graduates has grown to 51 per cent. More and more women are holding political offices, top

management positions in companies and organizations.

"In 1980 Kenya began a programme called girl child empowerment. Women organizations were formed. Entry points for university admission were lowered in girls favour. By diverting attention to girls and women, boy child has been forgotten, not intentionally but by default. Ladies have become more empowered; they hold top positions in organizations in the country," said Mr. Edwin Maina.

In a bid to bridge the gap between men and the entire society, Mr. Maina came up with an initiative dubbed as Men Challenge Africa. The initiative provides a platform where male child shares his tribulations and the like-minded people provide solutions.

In an interview with Pan African Visions, Edwin narrated how he has been moved by the predicament boys/men go through in the society.

"I became concerned about the plight of men from my background (Central Kenya). Many are not productive, live frustrated lives, their homes are broken and drink illicit brew. I wondered what I could do to give these people hope," he noted.

Edwin attributes his own tribulations as the trigger that led to the formation of Men Challenge Africa.

"In 2017, I went through a turbulent year marked by an acrimonious divorce and two court cases. My in-laws ganged up and took some of my property. I retained my sanity through the support of my family and friends.



Edwin Maina, founder of MenChallenge

I decided to come up with an initiative to help men speak up. Opening up eases trauma.”

Edwin uses conferences and talk forums to achieve his agenda. He also created a WhatsApp group which has over 120 members of the same interest. He is regularly hosted on radio and TV and in this way is able to reach out

people across Kenya.

The 46-year-old man is calling for the abandoning of the African culture that hinders men from freely speaking out when they are going through problems.

«You know that gruesome murders have flooded news headlines. In many cases, it is either a man killing his wife plus children or a man

taking away life of his lover. Gender violence is denying our country potential of men who have the capability to drive forward the economy.»

The 2017 World Health Organisation (WHO) report shows that more men than women are likely to commit suicide. According to the study suicides cases reported in Kenya rose by 58 per cent

between 2008 and 2017. The report also shows that 800,000 people commit kill themselves every year.

In April BBC Africa investigative reporter revealed that Central Kenya leads in cases of suicides. The region is losing at least five lives every day, almost all of them men.

Edwin hopes that Men

Challenge Africa can reduce these grim statistics. «By working to change the African culture that men should not speak out, we hope to enable more men to speak on their issues. This will enable them to seek help and thereby reduces cases of suicide and gender based violence.»

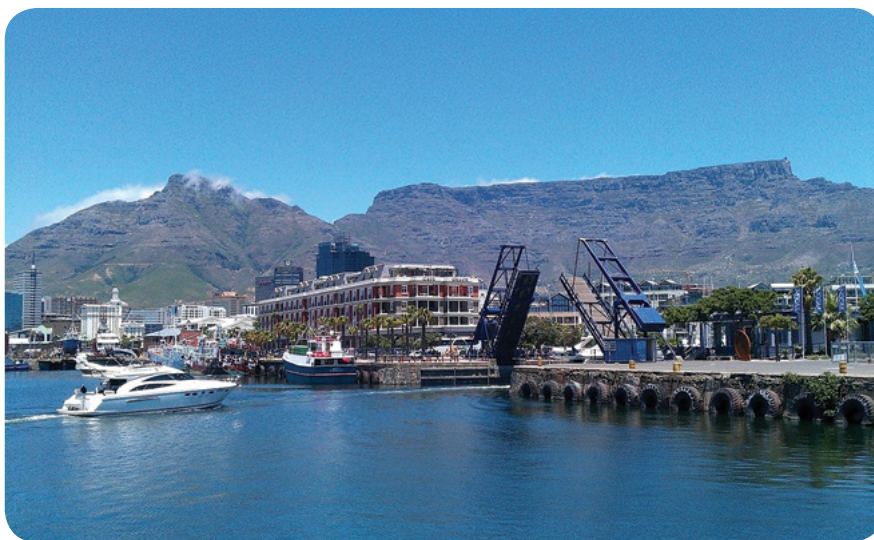
Why Cape Town has been voted the best city in the world multiple times

By Amos Fofung

From the Cape Winelands to the Cape of Good Hope, adorning the Mystic Cliffs on a haven peninsula, beneath the imposing Table Mountains, Cape Town, a port city on South Africa's Southwest coast is not your ordinary getaway destination.

It's an abode, a harbinger of peace which should be top on your bucket list of places to visit. Noted for its exquisite touristic attractions and multicultural population, its flourishing arts, dining, and nightlife scenes are proof of a modern metropolis' creativity and innovative spirit that can only be offered by the rainbow nation.

Designated multiple times for its glamorous lifestyle topping most European and North American cities, Cape Town is truly world class with recognitions such as; #1 city in Africa for business and tourism (International Congress and Convention Association - 2018 marks the fourth consecutive win), best art and cultural destination (AFAR Travelers' Choice Awards 2017), #1 city in Africa and Middle East (Telegraph Travel Awards 2018-four years in a row), and the Most Affordable



Long-haul Destination in the World (Annual UK Post Office Report 2018) among others.

In case you are still not convinced, here are five reasons why Cape Town has been named the best city in the world multiple times.

Touristic wonders.

Set imposingly between mountains and the sea, Cape Town flaunts its natural beauty with pride. Rising above the city, its iconic Table Mountain provides the perfect plateau for panoramic views that stretch to the Atlantic, botanical gardens beckon from its slopes, and the city's long blonde beaches

backed by towering peaks are some of South Africa's best.

Smiling beneath the surface is an irrepressible sense of adventure, inviting travelers to join in the fun. From a range of outdoor activities like hiking, biking, surfing, and paragliding to whale-watching trips and cage dives with great white sharks, Cape Town offers quite the adventurous experience you crave for.

Named a UNESCO World Heritage Site, in Cape Town, you might want to visit its National Botanical gardens, Signal Hill and the Noon Gun, Table Mountain, Clifton and Camps Bay Beaches, the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront,

night market, and Robben Island among many others.

Nightlife

The true beauty of a town can actually be revealed by its night glamour and Cape Town has stood the taste of time. When the sunsets beneath the ocean, Cape Town comes to live. It is for this reason that the town was voted one of the top party cities in the world.

Flowing with numerous nightlife precincts, guests in Cape Town are greeted to the Victoria Road in Camps Bay, aka the «sunset strip», an increasingly grungy area attracting dozens, a concentration of hip and

rooftop bars. Don't forget to join the Sunset Yoga Class on Clifton Beach.

Transportation

To have a full dose of what Cape Town has to offer, commuting from one end of the town to the other has been made easy and affordable.

With services such as Uber, metered taxi, a collection of city bus networks including sightseeing buses, Metrorail trains, and its coveted table mountain aerial cableway, there's no way you can miss a spot in Cape Town as its Slowly rotating cable cars climb to the mountain's flat top, from which there are sweeping views of the city, the busy harbor, and boats heading for Robben Island, the prison that once held Nelson Mandela, which is now a living museum.

If you decide to have helicopter rides or go sea diving, Cape Town can also accommodate you.

Cuisine

If you are a foodie, then you will love the town even more. It's for no reason that a South African restaurant was named the world best this year.

Cape Town's eclectic mix of tastes is in no way overrated. The city's history, combined with its acceptance of global food trends presents its visitors with a food paradise.

Once there, don't forget to try out Cape Towns, Fish and Chips, Wild game meat, Gatsby, Bunny Chow, Bobotie, Biltong and Droëwors. Its traditional dessert menu comprising of Milk tart, malva pudding, and koeksisters will you with sweet-tooth satisfied.

Visitors must try some of the wines crafted by South Africa's world-renowned vintners, either at a Cape Town bar or at one of several



wineries nearby.

Cultural / historical heritage

From its prehistory to its settlement, explorers,

colonialism, apartheid and today South Africa, Cape Town has played a vital role in framing today's South Africa.

Cape Town is a melting pot of people from diverse

backgrounds – from both in South Africa and around the world, but certain cultural attractions stand out.

There are a number of Townships around Cape

Town, and tours into these areas, which include Gugulethu, Langa, and Khayelitsha, offer great insight into Cape Town's communities and a unique experience of South Africa's past and present.

A peek into Robben Island, the infamous prison island that held so many of South Africa's political prisoners during the Apartheid years, former president Nelson Mandela paints a picture of how far the country has come.

As you plan your next vacation, visit Cape Town so you can have an even better story to tell.

AFCON 2019: Algeria Wins Second Crown

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

The 2019 edition of the Africa cup of Nations has been won by the Desert Foxes of Algeria, the second crown in their history. Algeria defeated the Teranga Lions of Senegal by a goal to nil thanks to a second-minute strike from Baghdad Bounedjah, in the final of the AFCON played at the Cairo International stadium July 19, 2019.

Algeria's only victory until now in the competition was back in 1990-some 29 years to this day. Before reaching the final, the team defeated Nigeria 2-1 after outsmarting Ivory Coast in the quarter-finals.

For Senegal, the wait is still on for their maiden title. The team can, however, take solace to have reached the final but just fell short of clinching it. Congratulations have been extended to their coach Aliou Cisse for having guided the team to such a level.

Algeria succeeds Cameroon



Riyad Mahrez lifts the trophy as Algeria celebrate winning the Africa Cup of Nations. Photograph- Suhaib Salem-Reuters.

as the best team in Africa with Cameroon eliminated in the round of 16. Their next challenge will be that of defending the trophy during the AFCON 2021 that will be hosted by Cameroon.

A milestone for African coaches

Algeria and Senegal's meeting in the final created a huge milestone for local coaches. Two local coaches were competition for the Holy

Grail of African football, with one joining the prestigious list of African coaches to have won the competition.

After 32 editions of the competition, it was only the fifth time two African

coaches have met at the AFCON finals. Just four times before the final was an All African affair. In 1962 hosts Ethiopia coached by legend Yidnekatchew Tessema won their first (and only to date)

AFCON title, defeating Egypt 4-2 in the final. The Pharaohs were then coached by the duet of Mohamed El Guindy and Hanafy Bastan.

Ghana won the 1965 edition, beating hosts Tunisia 3-2. The Black Stars coach Charles Gyamfi had his second successive AFCON glory then, defeating Tunisian counterpart Mokhtar Ben Nacef. Another Ghanaian, Fred Ousam-Duodu led the Black Stars to the 1978 title at home, defeating Uganda led by local legend Pete Okee 2-0 in the final.

And in 1998, Egyptian Mahmoud El Gohary became the first man to win AFCON as a player (1959) and coach. He guided the Pharaohs to their fourth title in Burkina Faso, defeating South Africa, coached by local icon Jomo Sono 2-0 in the final.

Overall, 11 local coaches had won 15 AFCON titles in the previous 31 editions. Ghana's Gyamfi and Egypt's Hassan Shehata had each won record three titles, Nigerian Stephen Keshi won it in 2013. Djamel Belmadi now joins the illustrious Africans to have won the award.

Nigeria's Odion Ighalo made History



Senegalese coach Aliou Cisse.

Super Eagles forward Odion Ighalo finished as the top striker in the competition and it that light created history. The forward scored 5 goals in the competition, second by Sadio Mane, Riyad Mahrez, Cedric Bakambu, Ounas with 3 goals each. His 5 strikes were the best in the tournaments' history for the past 25 years. The last time a player scored 5 goals was in 1994, with Nigeria's Rashidi Yekini who also scored 5 goals.

Ighalo came to the tournament as the top goal scorer in the qualifier with a total of 8 goals. His brace

against Cameroon was the first brace a Nigerian player has scored since Victor Moses (against Ethiopia) in 2013.

Reports from Kick442.com indicate the player after the game against Tunisia resigned from International football, citing Nigerians huge criticism of him for it.

Match Bonus row seems not to go away

As with every major competition, one big issue seems not to go away for African countries-issue with match bonuses. Be it the Africa cup of Nations or the FIFA World Cup,

African teams are always embroiled with this issue in every competition. In the 2019 AFCON, the issue of bonuses was very visible in the Zimbabwean and Cameroonian football selections.

The Zimbabwean national team before the start of the competition threatened not to take part in the opening game unless their bonuses are paid. It took a last gasp effort for the Federation who negotiated and the players agreed to play their first game.

For the case of Cameroon, the issue of match bonuses is in their history. This year as in every competition, the Indomitable Lions threatened not to participate in the AFCON unless their bonuses are paid. The team had been promised 20 million CFA each; up from 17 million FCFA they received at the 2017 AFCON. However, the team wanted more, demanding 5 million FCFA be added to every player. The issue made Cameroon to travel on the day the competition kicked off in Egypt, after missing their deadline.

After negotiation with the

management of football in the country, the Lions decided to travel and participate with their bonuses promised after the competition. Many Cameroonians are wondering why they should be paid huge sums of money for not even reaching the semi finals.

The Football Federation of Burundi, FFB Vice president Aimable Habimana was reportedly arrested after bonuses meant for the team which participated in the AFCON allegedly disappeared. The BBC reported Habimana was picked up for questioning relating to missing money, due to be paid to the Burundi team. The team however finished bottom of group B, failing to earn a point or score a goal.

Surprise packages in this AFCON

Guinea, Madagascar were the surprises in the 2019 AFCON after going right up to the quarter finals-having not participate in the AFCON for a long time. Madagascar finished top of their group that contain the mighty super eagles of Nigeria, surprisingly beating them in the last game. In the round of 16,



Seedorf and Kluijvert were sacked by Cameroon after a dismal performance.

Madagascar defeated DR Congo on penalty shootout. They however fell short in the quarter finals losing to Tunisia.

For Benin, their fairytale saw them beaten Morocco in the round of 16. Unfortunately for them, they were eliminated by Senegal in the quarter finals. The can however take solace that they lost to one formidable team in Senegal who made it all the way to the finals.

Coaches sacked after losing in the competition

Javier Aguirre (Egypt)

The Mexican was among the first to get the boot when he could not guide the hosts past the second round stage. Egypt qualified top of their group, winning all their matches and conceding zero goals. But the Pharaohs succumbed to a South African sucker punch and Aguirre quickly became the scapegoat.

Emmanuel Amunike (Tanzania)

Former international Emmanuel Amunike became an instant hero in Tanzania when he led the Taifa Stars to their first AFCON appearance in over two decades. Emmanuel Amunike of Tanzania was sacked following the country's elimination from the tournament. Tanzania had been out of the tournament for 39 years but poor results cost him his stay. He took over the helm of the Taifa Stars in August 2018.

Ricardo Mannetti (Namibia)

Ricardo Mannetti had already done a great job qualifying Namibia for the AFCON but more miracles were expected of him by the nation renowned for fast runners and not top quality football.

However, in a group that had three former champions, Namibia never stood a realistic chance of picking up a point, much less making it through to the next stage. Three losses in three matches did not cast the coach in glory and he was duly cast aside.



Djamel Belmadi Coach of Algeria.

Sebastien Desabre (Uganda)

Madagascar's very impressive, giant-killing exploits took the shine off the more modest but equally pleasing feats of Uganda at the Africa Cup of Nations.

The Cranes made it past a group that had Egypt, Zimbabwe and Congo DR, losing only to the host.

Uganda gave a good account of themselves against Senegal in the second round losing by the narrowest of margins. Sebastien should feel unlucky to be without a job after such a decent outing.

Clarence Seedorf (Cameroon)

The former Netherlands midfielder was given only one objective by the defending title: retain the title. All

was going to plan as the Indomitable Lions navigated the group stage without conceding a single goal or losing a game.

But Seedorf's men came unstuck against the Super Eagles in the Round of 16. A thrilling 3 – 2 loss to neighbours Nigeria smashed the set objective and has cost the former AC Milan manager his job.

Paul Put (Guinea)

The Belgian is the latest man to be fired from his post despite guiding his team to the Round of 16 at the Africa Cup of Nations. The former Burkina Faso coach saw his team lose to former champions Nigeria and draw debutants Madagascar.

But a fine win over Burundi pushed the Syli Nationale to third in the group and the next round as one of the best losers. However, a sour 3 – 0 loss to eventual finalist Algeria, proved to be the end of the road for the Guineans.

In total, some 6 coaches have been sacked since the competition ended.



Madagascar reached the quarter finals.

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Lessons From Mandela on the Crisis in Cameroon

The 2019 Nelson Mandela Memorial Forum held recently in Yaounde organized by the Denis & Lenora Foretia Foundation. Barrister Ntumfor Nico Halle delivered the Inaugural Nelson Mandela Memorial Lecture. The 2019 Nelson Mandela Memorial Award was presented to His Eminence Christian Cardinal

Tumi. Barrister Agbor Balla joined a Distinguished panel reflecting on Madiba's legacy for Cameroon. The event was also graced by the presence of David Abeoum A Choyi, former Sec. Gen at the Presidency of the Republic of Cameroon, and member of the Bilingualism Commission.



Barrister Nico Halle chats with Foretia Foundation's Interim CEO Dr. William Arrey



Abouem A Tchoyi David, former Governor of the North West and South West Regions and former Secretary General of the Presidency of the Republic



Barrister Nico Halle described Nelson Mandela as a colossus, someone who has contributed enormously to bringing peace in his nation.



Denis and Lenora Foretia Foundation's Interim CEO Dr. William Arrey delivering his keynote address during the Nelson Mandela International Day.



Barrister Nico Halle described Nelson Mandela as a colossus, someone who has contributed enormously to bringing peace in his nation.





Foretia Foundation's COO Fri Asanga hands the Nelson Mandela Memorial award to Cardinal Tumi, represented by Father Michael Tchoumbou.



Staff of Denis and Lenora Foretia Foundation engages in community services in remembrance of the former President.



Staff of Foretia foundation, guest speakers and participants during the International Nelson Mandela Day.



Felix Agbor Balla-Human rights defender addressing participants.



Foretia Foundation's COO recognizes Barrister Nico Halle for his contributions to bringing peace in Cameroon.

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Uganda
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Marian Nkansah
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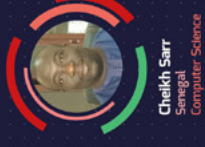
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Chelkh Sarr
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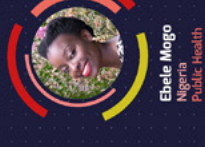
Jessica Thorn
Namibia
Climate Sciences



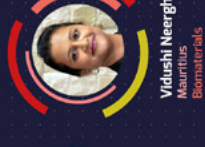
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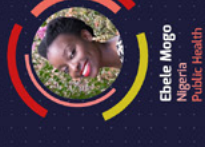
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Obstetrics &
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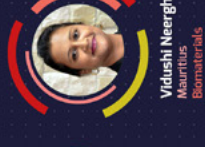
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