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Of Giants with Clay Feet and South Africa's Horror Show

By Ajong Mbatndah L

Just when many thought that Africa was finally hitting the fast lane towards the greatness that should go with its unquestionably immense potential, from South Africa came disturbing, shocking, and traumatizing scenes of xenophobia which may have devastating repercussions on the continent.

Nigerians in particular, and pockets of other African Nationals in Mandela's country, came under attack in the most brutal, and ruthless of manners from ethnic South Africans. It is not the first time, not even the second or third that we are witnessing such scenes. Beyond the gory nature of the attacks, the levity with which the South African authorities responded may be the bigger problem.

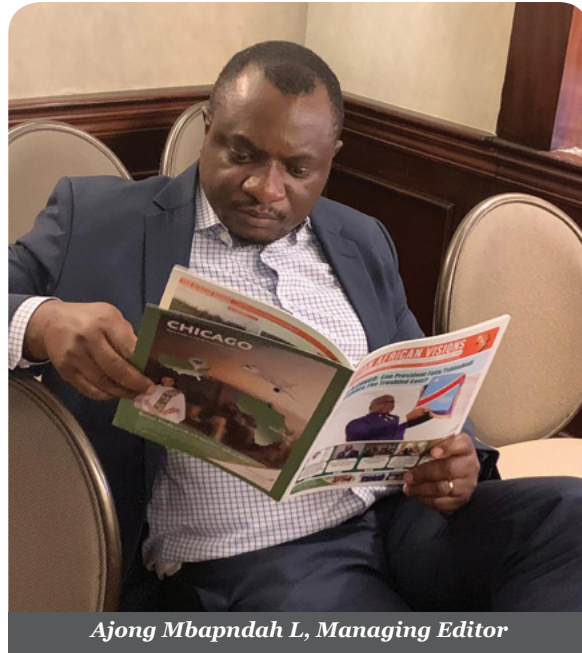
Alongside Nigeria, South Africa is supposed to be the other giant that pulls the rest of Africa towards greatness. Since the end of apartheid, and the emergence of black majority rule in the early 90s, Africans have looked up to South Africa for leadership, for the right examples that the rest of the continent could emulate, from President Mandela, to Thabo Mbeki, Jacob Zuma and now President Ramaphosa. The task is understandable enormous, maybe the expectations have been too high, we can go on and on about the reasons, but the stark fact remains that if leadership is what

Africa has been looking for, the responses to the recent attacks from the South African government are a reminder that we may have been looking in the wrong place.

In the last few months, the African Continental Free Trade Agreement has been launched, the Economic Community of West African States has embarked on a laudable initiative towards its own common currency-the ECO. In these developments and more, Africans have seen additional reasons to hope, hope for greater integration and eventually the united and strong Africa that many yearn for. With the South Africa horror show, even the very strong hearted, and die-hard optimists find it hard to shirk the despondency that this may bring.

In South Africa's hour of need, the rest of the continent responded. When South Africans had no home, the rest of Africa offered them one, Africa opened its frontiers for them. When the rest of the world watched passively as South Africans suffered from the brunt of apartheid, it is the rest of Africa that gave them a shoulder to lean on. When the leadership in South Africa fails to cater to the needs of its own people, foreigners become the easy target.

As we fault the South African government, so too should we fault the leadership in Nigeria and many other African countries. While



Ajong Mbatndah L, Managing Editor

Nigeria and much of Africa may have been united in condemnation of the attacks in South Africa, it must be recognized that the situation is no different in Nigeria with killings along religious and ethnic lines, with galloping unemployment, endemic corruption, and a leadership that does not inspire much confidence. Many may not even remember that at one point, Nigeria had to expel Ghanaians in large numbers who sort refuge there.

Nigeria and South Africa, the giants that Africa is counting on both have clay feet. That Nigeria should be one of the last countries to join the African Continental Free Trade Agreement speaks volumes about its leadership. President Buhari goes at his pace, and beyond his health issues and age,

has few attributes of the kind of leadership that could marshal Nigeria and Africa to greatness. President Ramaphosa has very little excuses, he has been more of a President in waiting for a long time, if the xenophobic attacks were a test of his leadership, he certainly flunked big time with his response.

Talking of a failure in leadership, one of the countries that readily comes to mind is Cameroon where the Anglophone crisis has metamorphosed into a virtual civil. Thousands have been killed, thousands have become refugees and close to a million kids in the English-speaking North West, and South West Regions of the country have not been to school for some three years now. President

Buhari has remained mute, and in a very disturbing precedence, leaders of the Anglophone movement were arrested in Nigeria and whisked off to Cameroon under circumstances that remain unclear and given life sentences in jail.

When leadership is forfeited, foreigners come to the rescue and in the Cameroon situation, instead of Nigeria, South Africa or even the African Union helping to facilitate talks for a peaceful solution, it is Switzerland that is offering to do so.

In this abysmal failure of leadership, Africans need to bond more than ever. The problems facing the ordinary everyday South African, are the same in Nigeria, in Cameroon, in Mozambique, in Malawi, and others. It is high unemployment; it is public resources at the service of a few instead of the majority. It is leaders rushing to European hospitals at the slightest ailment whereas their own hospitals back home are left to ruins.

We have remained consistent in opining that there is no shortage of ideas, there is no shortage of talent. In this September issue of PAV, we discuss the shrinking democratic space in Africa with a heavy dose of emphasis on the Cameroon enigma with Dr Christopher Fomunoy, Senior Associate for Africa and Regional Director at the National Democratic Institute. Undoubtedly, his

proposals over the years would have been used by a serious government to avert the kind of calamity that has befallen the country. But when you have a leadership where the median age is in the mid-70s, lacking in vision, hell bent on protecting their privileges in a system that has crippled one of Africa's most promising countries,

you need not be a soothsayer to expect the chaos that has engulfed the country or understand the desire of the English speaking regions to break free.

Only in Cameroon will you slam heavy jail sentences on leaders on Anglophone leaders in the middle of a campaign of sorts for schools to reopen, only in Cameroon

will a crisis rage on for over three years with a heavy toll on human life, property, massive displacement of people and more without a President as much as making one bold statement or directly engaging with key actors in the crisis until a few days ago. How about even visiting the region to make a strong statement on how he wants

to resolve the crisis. If ideas is what the leadership in Cameroon needs, then Dr Fomunyoh's interview could be of great help to them for a start

In addition to putting Cameroon on the scanner, this issue of PAV Magazine also takes a look at the recent peace accords in Mozambique between President Felipe

Nyusi and RENAMO leader Ossufo Momade, we visit the life and legacy of former Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, the mending of fences between Rwanda's Paul Kagame and Yuweri Museveni of Uganda, the passing of DJ Arafat in Ivory Coast and more. Happy reading !!

Cameroon, Guinea, South Africa'. NDI's Dr Chris Fomunyoh On Africa's Shrinking Democratic Space

By Ajong Mbapndah L

While it may be heartening to see how much Africa has changed in the past three decades, the rate at which the successes of political transitions of the 90s are being rolled back should be of concern to everyone, says Dr Christopher Senior Associate for Africa and Regional Director at the Washington, DC based National Democratic Institute.

A seasoned professional who has played a leading role in some of the most successful stories of democracies in Africa since the early 90s, Dr Fomunyoh says it is disappointing to see the prevalence of armed conflicts, opposition leaders being thrown in jail, elections being stolen, and constitutions amended by leaders who want to perpetuate themselves in power.

African democrats must not relent in their advocacy and must continue to fight for inclusive, and accountable governments, says Dr Fomunyoh in an interview with Ajong Mbapndah L for Pan African Visions.

Speaking with passion about his native Cameroon, Dr Fomunyoh says the overall situation looks bleak, and the



African democrats must not relent in their advocacy, and must fight for inclusive and accountable governments says, Dr Fomunyoh

country's future precarious. Describing the recent trial of Anglophone leaders as a travesty of justice, Fomunyoh says their sentencing further aggravates the Anglophone crisis, and deepens the mistrust, and bitterness that exists between Anglophones and the government of President Paul Biya.

"We must maintain the pressure for dialogue because it is the only means through which this conflict could be brought to an end and the legitimate grievances of Anglophones addressed in Cameroon," Dr Fomunyoh says.

For the dialogue announced by President Biya to be credible, the

government must create an enabling environment in which participants feel that the dialogue would be open and broad based, allowing for different viewpoints to be heard, says Dr Fomunyoh.

"The government must also take confidence-building measures to show that the call for dialogue is sincere. Notably, the killings must stop, the arbitrary arrests and detention of young Anglophones must end, and people who are detained unjustly should be released immediately," Dr Fomunyoh said.

Considering that many Anglophones have lost trust in the Biya government, Dr Fomunyoh said the burden

will be on the government to show that it will not steamroll participants to obtain a predetermined outcome.

Dr Fomunyoh, you have just returned from Guinea Conakry, an African country that has tremendous resources, but has experienced difficult political transitions in the past. What is your overall assessment of the situation there in the lead-up to national elections scheduled for 2020?

You are so right, Guinea is a country with so much potential given its mineral wealth that includes some

of the world's highest reserves of bauxite and iron ore, and timber and water resources. Unfortunately, the impact of past military and authoritarian rule is still being felt, and citizens still crave an improvement in their well-being in this age of democratic government. The overall political situation in Guinea is tense and polarized, as the country prepares for legislative and presidential elections which have to be conducted between now and December 2020. On top of that, there is speculation that the country could run into a major crisis over whether to adopt a new constitution or not. Political parties, civil society organizations, labor unions, academics and other opinion leaders are already taking sides on the airwaves and various social media platforms. Many Guineans remain hopeful that the day would come when a democratically elected president transfers power through the ballot box to his successor, something that has not happened since the country gained independence in 1958.

Recently in Cape Town, South Africa, as a guest speaker at the joint

conference co-organized by the University of Cape Town and the Kofi Annan Foundation, you stated that "political space is shrinking across Africa." What leads you to that conclusion?

First let me say how uplifting it was to be at the University of Cape Town for a conference in memory of two great sons of Africa -- Nelson Mandela and Kofi Annan -- who as world leaders epitomized the best of humanity in terms of their vision and commitment to promoting human dignity, development and world peace. I was truly honored to be invited.

In the spirit of Nelson Mandela and Kofi Annan, it is heartening to see how much Africa has changed in the past three decades: political pluralism is now common practice in all African countries, independent media continues to grow, the continent's youth are becoming politically engaged, and, increasingly, political power is being transferred through the ballot process. Who could have thought that in Sudan, by the sheer determination of citizens engaged in civil protest, a thirty-year autocracy under General Al-Bashir would collapse! At the same time, one must state the disappointment that in too many African countries some of the successes of political transitions of the 1990s are being rolled back. Armed conflicts are still prevalent, opposition leaders are being thrown in jail, injustice is being inflicted on ordinary citizens, elections are being stolen, and constitutions are being amended by leaders who want to perpetuate themselves in power.

So what should Africans



The next generation of Africans expect a better continent from its leaders, says Dr Fomunyoh here with President Roch Marc Kabore of Burkina Faso.

do about the democratic backsliding?

African democrats must not relent in their advocacy and fight for inclusive and accountable government. We need more open political space to engage citizens across the board and harness the rich diversity of talent and expertise that our continent possesses. We must find ways to galvanize our human capital to best utilize the countries' wealth to improve the wellbeing of our fellow citizens. For this to happen, we have to learn to aggregate our efforts as opposed to operating in silos, we have to build alliances across the continent so that the good guys can support each other and draw inspiration from each others' successes. The next generation of Africans expect from us a better continent than we may have inherited from the generation before us.

You were in South Africa around the week of xenophobic attacks by South Africans against Africans of other nationalities. What do you make of these attacks and how was the mood like while you were there?

It is sad and despicable to watch Africans being killed

by other Africans for no other reason than their countries of origin. Nelson Mandela and other founders of today's democratic and free South Africa would be turning in their graves, because they would remember the contributions by other African countries to the liberation struggle. Without the frontline states that include countries such as Zimbabwe and Zambia, and Nigeria, perhaps we would not have South Africa as we know it today. Even if South African youth are exposed to many challenges such as high levels of unemployment, lack of opportunities and a sense of abandonment by the state, that still cannot explain why they would take out their grievances violently against fellow Africans. It is my hope that the government of South Africa would draw the appropriate lessons from

this unfortunate incident and come out with well-crafted programs that can provide a safety net for the less fortunate of South African society, and a sense of safety and security for other Africans that choose to live in this beautiful country. That tragedy also exposes the failures of other governments across the continent whose citizens now feel obliged to flee their homeland to become refugees in foreign lands, because of political repression or because of lack of economic opportunity. What's happening in South Africa today must prick our collective conscience as Africans.

Coming now to your home country of Cameroon, what is your assessment of the political situation there, in what shape is the

country?

Cameroon is in bad shape. Thousands of Anglophones have been killed, others in their thousands are in detention centers spread across the country; members of security forces have lost their lives in hundreds; over two hundred villages have been burned; 40,000 Anglophones now live in refugee camps in Nigeria and 600,000 others are internally displaced, now living in other regions of the country. For three years running, schools have been unable to open in the Anglophone regions of the country. The United Nations estimates that close to 1.4 million Anglophones could be at risk of famine, all because of the ongoing crisis.

At the same time, the runner-up in the last presidential election, Professor Maurice Kamto, and hundreds of his supporters -- many of whom are lawyers, economists and other professionals -- are being detained in Yaoundé, with some charged to appear before a military tribunal.

The country also continues to battle Boko Haram extremists in its extreme north region that borders north-eastern Nigeria and Chad. The overall situation looks bleak, and the country's future precarious. There is reason to be alarmed.

Getting into more recent developments, what is your take on the heavy jail sentence slammed on the Anglophone leader Julius Ayuk Tabe and others?

In my opinion, the sentencing of Ayuk Tabe and 9 others to life imprisonment by a military tribunal in Yaoundé is a travesty of justice on multiple fronts, notably the conditions of



Dr Fomunyoh in the company of Barrister Agbor Balla Felix believes that only dialogue and thorough solutions to the legitimate grievances of Anglophones could end the conflict in Cameroon

their arrest and extradition from Nigeria; their detention incommunicado for an extended period of over 9 months; their trial before a military tribunal constituted only of French speaking military judges; and the all-night trial that ended with a ruling at about 5 am in the morning. There is no doubt in my mind that this sentencing further aggravates the Anglophone crisis and deepens the mistrust and bitterness that exists between Anglophones and the government of President Paul Biya.

The heavy sentence came at a time when there are increasing calls for dialogue, what impact do you think this could have on prospects of dialogue?

This life imprisonment goes contrary to the vein of recent pronouncements in favor of dialogue by the government, multiple opinion leaders, the African Union and the international community. We must maintain the pressure for dialogue because it is the only means through which this conflict could be brought to an end and the legitimate grievances of Anglophones addressed in Cameroon.

As a seasoned professional on

governance and conflict resolution, what proposals do you have for a way out of the present crisis?

I have been consistent in advocating for dialogue and in putting forward ideas that could help the country resolve this crisis. As recently as November 2018, I presented a 10-point agenda on concrete steps that could have been taken at the time to bring an end to the conflict. Since then, the situation has gotten worse, more lives have been lost, and the increasing number of victims only reinforces the urgency of concrete actions that must be taken to end the massacres and conflict. As I've stated over the years, I'm willing to put on the table how that roadmap could be implemented, were there to be an open platform and a genuine effort to end this crisis and get the country out of the mess in which it currently finds itself.

On Tuesday, September 10, President Biya addressed Cameroonians and, for the first time in three years, he discussed the crisis in the North West and South West regions in some detail. What



Dr Fomunyoh making a donation to internally displaced persons, the UN estimates that close to 1.4 million Anglophones could be at risk of famine because of the ongoing crisis.

is your reaction to the speech?

Modern day governance and crisis management demand that leaders be more proactive in communicating with citizens when countries face crises of the magnitude of what Cameroon has gone through over the past three years. It is good that President Paul Biya finally spoke directly to this crisis. The promise of a national dialogue is commendable, although I wish that the rest of the speech was less accusatory and provocative, so as to create an environment in which the dialogue could actually begin.

You have always called for dialogue, and now President Biya says there will be one starting

by the end of September. What are some of the necessary ingredients for successful dialogue and a lasting solution?

First, for the dialogue to be credible, the government must create an enabling environment in which participants feel that the dialogue would be open and broad based, allowing for different viewpoints to be heard. The government must also take confidence-building measures to show that the call for dialogue is sincere. Notably, the killings must stop, the arbitrary arrest and detention of young Anglophones must end, and people who are detained unjustly should be released immediately. Cameroonians still remember that a similar national dialogue in the early 90s came up with recommendations, most of which were ignored by the government. It is therefore important to send strong signals that the underlying grievances of Anglophones would be addressed, so they feel that the outcome of the dialogue would restore their dignity and what they have lost during this crisis. Given that many Anglophones have lost trust in the Biya government, the burden is on the government to show

that it will not steamroll participants to obtain a predetermined outcome.

Given that President Paul Biya is 86 years old and his legitimacy is questioned in some quarters, do you think Biya is in a position to resolve the crisis in Cameroon?

I have serious doubts that a president who is 86 years old, has been in power for 37 years, and has always been aloof and distant from the population can all of a sudden change his governance style and put in the energy and effort required to resolve the crisis. In the past three years, the magnitude of the crisis has grown exponentially, and it now has ramifications both across the country and internationally; I have strong doubts that the Biya government alone can find a way out. Other actors of good will, nationally and internationally, must step in given that trust has been severely broken between the Biya government and a sizeable chunk of the Anglophone population.

What do you think accounts for the levity with which the rest of Africa, and the



Dr Fomunyoh in discussion with President Alpha Conde of Guinea where the overall political situation is tense and polarized, as the country prepares for legislative and presidential elections

broader international institutions like the African Union and the UN have treated the crisis in Cameroon?

I agree that the international community has been slow to respond to the crisis, and so far there have been more declarations than concrete actions. At least, some countries and organizations such as the United States, Germany, the European Union and recently the French Foreign Ministry, have been calling on President Biya to change his approach to the crisis and to engage in genuine dialogue. The United Nations recently expressed its support for a Swiss-led effort to mediate between the government and Anglophone secessionist movements, and the Security Council even held an informal debate on Cameroon in May. However, these measures are insufficient as the conflict continues unabated. One would have thought that after the Genocide in Rwanda in 1994, declarations such as "Never again" would prick the conscience of the international community so as not to allow crises like the one in Cameroon to fester. I truly hope that the African Union and the international community can step up their engagement to bring peace to the country.

You are familiar with the way Washington works; can you help us better understand the different Congressional resolutions that have come up of recent on Cameroon?

I am heartened by the interest shown in the Cameroon crisis by the United States Congress, and I urge Cameroonians

and friends of Cameroon to continue to educate members of Congress as well as the international community at large on the devastating nature of this crisis and its negative impact on millions of Cameroonians. Recently, Congresswoman Karen Bass, who is the Chairman of the Africa Subcommittee, led a congressional delegation to Cameroon to hear firsthand from Cameroonians and victims of the crisis. Congressional resolutions, especially when passed on a bipartisan basis as we've seen in the case of Cameroon, carry a lot of weight. They capture the voice of the US Congress on an issue, and also have the capability of influencing the executive branch of government in its foreign policy approach. The European parliament, the German Bundestag and other important bodies have made similar pronouncements which help raise the level of awareness of the magnitude of the crisis, both within Cameroon and internationally. Hopefully, more concrete actions will follow.

One of the Congressional resolutions called for a return to the Federation that existed between 1961 and 1972. Do you think that could work?

At a minimum, such a concession could create the space for rebuilding trust, given that the government in power was part of the team that dismantled the first Federation in 1972. Moreover, when the current crisis broke in 2016, the Biya government would not entertain proposals for federalism, and even went as far as banning public discussions on the subject. For peace to prevail,

Cameroonians will have to sit around the table and agree on a structure that can guarantee for every citizen his or her liberties and the preservation of their culture and dignity. It is inconceivable that Cameroon could rebuild without acknowledging the specificities of its English speaking population.

What is your take on the issue of school resumption?

As you may be aware, The Fomunyoh Foundation which has been active since 1999 has as one of its priorities to promote and support education in Cameroon. The Foundation has over the years distributed books and other school materials and organized public speaking events in academic institutions in all regions of the country. This underscores my personal commitment to the education of the younger generation. In the context of the ongoing crisis, education entails more than just having kids in a classroom. The back-to-school campaign to be successful, has to be part of a comprehensive package that includes among others, overall peace in the Northwest and Southwest regions of the country; reassurances from both the military and armed groups that neither students, nor teachers, nor parents would be shot at or harassed; that the curriculum is relevant; and that the kids can ultimately be guaranteed a future. This requires a deep analysis and proper preparations to make it meaningful. I am saddened that some people are treating this matter as mere sloganeering for political advantage.

If the government calls

on the expertise of the seasoned professional that you are, will you be willing to provide it?

For the past two decades, I have been consistent in raising concerns about how the country was being governed. I have been pained and truly aggrieved by what has happened to the Anglophone community in the past three years. It has been disappointing to see how legitimate grievances by lawyers and teachers were summarily dismissed by the authorities, and subsequently how other socio-political grievances that were brought to the fore were violently repressed. Here we are, with thousands of fellow compatriots killed, others in detention, in refugee camps and internally displaced – all of which could have been avoided. Under those circumstances, one has an obligation, if called upon, to contribute ideas and recommendations on how to stop the killings and get out of this mess.

Some people have mooted ideas for a transitional government led by someone neutral that could help the country wade through the myriad of crises it is facing. First, what do you think of the idea and secondly were this to happen and you were asked to preside over a transition, is this something you could consider?

With each passing day, as these multiple -- Anglophone, political, and security -- crises we just discussed endure, my faith in this government's ability to resolve all of them diminishes. At the same time, the current constitution of the country doesn't allow for

a transitional government as you allude to, and so I do not see how this could come about.

What lessons will a future Cameroon and the rest of Africa learn from this crisis?

Many. For example, that a people would rise up if their dignity is trampled upon; that truth, honesty and other democratic values matter for people's trust in their government; that preventive diplomacy would save us and our continent a waste of human capital and human resources; and that it is incumbent on our generation to shape and give meaning to institutions that should improve the wellbeing of our fellow citizens.

So, what's ahead for you and the National Democratic Institute (NDI) over the next year?

In the coming year we will be paying very close attention to the transition process in Sudan, as well as political developments across the Sahel and in the Horn of Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Great Lakes region. We will also be paying close attention to upcoming competitive elections in countries such as Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea Conakry, Mozambique and Niger Republic. The beauty of this all is the partnerships that NDI has with civic and political organizations across the board in all of the countries in which we work. They are the true champions of democratic development in their respective countries, and our role is to give them the support and solidarity that they need to succeed.



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Third Time Lucky? Mozambique Signs Another Peace Agreement

By Arnaldo Cuamba

The Government of Mozambique and Renamo signed on 6 August the Maputo Peace and National Reconciliation Agreement with the aim to consolidate peacemaking after violence that erupted several times since 2013. The agreement was signed at Peace Square by Mozambican President Filipe Nyusi, and Renamo leader Ossufo Momade, with the witness of several individuals including the heads of state from South Africa, Rwanda, Tanzania and Namibia.

It is the third such agreement signed between the parties since 1992. Renamo, a former armed movement that became the main opposition party, and the Government Forces, waged a civil war that killed nearly 1 million people for up to 16 years, until a peace agreement that end the slaughter in 1992. Even so, from 2013, violence between the parties erupted causing dozens of victims and declared end with the signing of the 2014 peace agreement. Again, from 2015 there were outbreaks of violence in the country until it was suspended in 2016 with the signing of the agreement for the provisional cessation of military hostilities.

At least the last two clashes were caused by the non-acceptance of the election results by the Renamo party, which accused the ruling party - Frelimo, of stalling in electoral fraud to continue to rule the country as it has been doing since 1975 - the year in which Mozambique gained



The agreement was signed at Peace Square by Mozambican President Filipe Nyusi, and Renamo leader Ossufo Momade

independence from Portugal. As a way of contesting the alleged fraud, Renamo has always opted for the military route by attacking civilians and public institutions.

However, the new agreement aims to put an end to military hostilities and foresees that some 5,000 Renamo guerrillas should surrender their weapons, weeks before a visit by Pope Francis, scheduled for 4-6 September, and a national election scheduled for 15 October.

«We want to settle our march towards definitive

peace,» said Nyusi, for whom «this is an agreement that proves that we no longer want war.» Ossufo Momade, in his turn, reiterated that the ceasefire should mark the beginning of the new era, characterized by free, transparent elections and alternating government.

“It shows that we can find solutions to our problems”

Some African countries who attended the event welcomed the agreement and expressed their full willingness to support the activities envisaged as part of the country's pacification, including the demobilization,

disarmament, reintegration into the society of former Renamo guerrillas.

Following the signing the Rwandan President, Paul Kagame said that the agreement brings the promise of an end to decades of conflict and uncertainty, and the renewal of national unity and cohesion.

“This achievement matters to all of us in Africa. It shows that we can find solutions to our problems, no matter how protracted and difficult,” Kagame stated. “Dialogue and inclusion cannot be imposed from outside. And once consensus is reached, it can only be sustained from

within.”

The agreement follows the successful political dialogue between the Government of Mozambique and the Mozambique National Resistance (Renamo), which culminated in the signing of an agreement on Definitive Cessation of Military Hostilities, on August 1, 2019. Both documents are secret and the details are not known.

Kenyan Interior Minister Fred Matiangi, who came on behalf of President Uhuru Kenyatta, said the agreement paves the way for the country to reunite and the differences between Mozambicans to be resolved peacefully, which will allow normalization of life and the consequent socioeconomic development.

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said the signing paves the way for peaceful elections. «We are honored to see that peace agreement has been achieved», said Ramaphosa.

Namibian President, Hage Geingob said the agreement is one of the African Union's efforts to end violence by the end of 2020 and that with the accord Nyusi and Momade has shown that silencing the guns is not mere rhetoric, but a commitment to implementing peace and a reintegration process.

“Mozambique has shown that silencing the guns is not mere rhetoric. You have walked the talk. To buttress your commitment to silencing the guns, SADC urges all parties to implement the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) process and in this regard, stands ready to support the



Serving and former Presidents from several countries graced the signing ceremony

Republic of Mozambique in her preparations for an international conference to mobilise funds for the DDR process," he said.

In his turn, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat said peace is a vital agreement for the whole continent and that AU was looking forward to monitoring and supporting the elections of October.

In the meantime, the European Union,

represented on the event by the organization's senior diplomatic chief Federica Mogherini, has made available 60 million euros to help pacify the country.

An agreement without enthusiasm from the mozambican people

However, the third agreement was not received with great enthusiasm. Despite the historical character that the Mozambican authorities endeavored to print at the

time of signing, the truth is that, inside and outside Mozambique, the news was met with cautious optimism at the mistrust explained by the fact that this is yet another agreement by the Mozambican authorities established in the country in four decades. In times past, the agreements, which promised to bring ultimate peace, established only temporary truce. Citizens question what is the guarantee that this time the belligerent parties will not defraud the expectations.

In addition, before the agreement was signed, gunmen attacked a passenger bus and a truck in Nhamapadza, Sofala province, central Mozambique, injuring the driver of the bus.

It is not yet known who exactly will have attacked. Renamo's self-proclaimed Junta Militar, which disputes the current leader, is known



South African President Jacob Zuma speaking at the event

to have announced that it will not surrender its weapons in the precarious framework of the cessation of hostilities agreement until it elects a new president of the largest opposition party in Mozambique, insisting that the signed agreement only serves to «deceive the people».

The group, led by Major General Mariano Nhongo, consider that Ossufo Momade is no longer a leader of that force, accusing him of «kidnapping and isolating» Renamo officials who have always following the late party president Afonso Dhlakama, who lost his life on May 3 last year. With the election of the new president, several changes were made in the party's structure, something that did not please all members causing disagreements and creating wards. Thus not all members agree with the current party's disarmament leader's negotiating molds, a situation that argues that if there is no consensus within the party itself, how long will the peace agreement last?



Mozambique President Filipe Nyusi, left, and Renamo leader Ossufo Momade hug each other after signing a peace accord at Peace Square in Maputo.

Malawi: Efforts For Dialogue Failing In Post Elections Impasse

By Joseph Dumbula, Blantyre Malawi

There have been unending physical, legal and verbal war after the May 21 elections as the opposition parties along with some civil society organizations are protesting against the authenticity of the polls while calling for nullification of the presidential results and the resignation of Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC) Jane Ansah respectively.

The Human Rights Defenders Coalition (HRDC) has since May this year been

spearheading protests that have turned violent later on in being critical to, and accusing her of letting fraud clump the elections. The violence involved looting of property, torching of private and public institutions and unending cat and rat chase between civilians and the police. This halted businesses around all major cities to the extent that even public commuters never took to the road.

The news has dominated the headlines over the last four months. However, the



The legitimacy of President Mutharika is strongly contested by the opposition. Photo AFP.

calls and drives for dialogues are fast falling out. Earlier on, former President Bakili Muluzi engaged the HRDC in a meeting Muluzi had reportedly not wanted to be live on the media but gave in after the civil society grouping asked otherwise. He had asked the HRDC to halt protests and involve itself in less violence actions only for the HRDC to carry-on with its quest by announcing of vigils across all borders and airports, a thing that led to unprecedented tensions among the business community and international community. Muluzi had also called on the HRDC to cancel the vigils before the call was denied but the adamant HRDC leadership.

The move however saw the Supreme Court of Appeal grant a moratorium to the Attorney General against the protests and asking the HRDC to engage in dialogue with the police and the attorney general on how to tame down the impasse with peace.

News had also broken out that the HRDC wanted changes in the planned venues for the dialogues as reports suggested that there was an unknown assailant who carried a hand grenade meant to be thrown at the



Opposition challenger Saulos Chilima says the elections were fraught with irregularities.

vehicles of the HRDC leaders.

The HRDC is on record as having said that their private security personnel moved to chase the said person before worrying of their protection. Initially, Pan African Visions understands that HRDC Chairperson Timothy Mtambo was attacked by irate people claiming to be vendors in the capital Lilongwe who accused him of disturbing their business trail through the demonstrations.

Just this week, President Peter Mutharika has told the BBC that he can only give in to dialogue from his end, <should they be convinced by the agenda of the meeting.> Mutharika is a second respondents in a high-profile court case being heard by the Constitutional Court in

Lilongwe and is accused of among other things leading a plot of various irregularities to have results of the elections his way.

But a seemingly irritated Mutharika said: «The opposition is working with the HRDC to vent their political agendas. This is despite that the elections were certified by various local and international bodies as being free and fair. This is bad. Thousands of people are being attacked in the vigils. There is need to understand that the Constitution does not condone any violent demonstrations».

He has also said he cannot fire Ansah saying that as the case is in court, they is a need to let the issue be and wait for the direction of the courts on

the matter.

Initially, the 79-year-old told a public rally that he had instructed armed police and the army to <deal with> protestors in the country before he received widespread criticism for inciting violence.

In an interview however, political commentator Wonderful Mkhutche told Pan African Visions that Mutharika has erred in his remarks arguing he needs to reckon his role towards peaceful courses.

«The President must realize that he is the leader of what he is calling his side. It should be him who should be leading the agenda. When people say the President is not able to handle the situation, it means he is yet to realize that he is a key player.

«Mkhutche told Pan African Visions earlier this month.

He added: «The President is detached from reality on the ground. He should be in a position to understand politics in this country. The nature of the situation is that CSOs and opposition political are approaching the issue from different angles which do not suggest CSOs being used.»

At the moment, vocal and influential quasi-religious grouping, the Public Affairs Committee (PAC) is working to engage all concerned stakeholders into the matter on how to end the impasse.

However, all eyes are set on how the presidential Elections case will go down the wire. Defence lawyers led by Kaphale are continuing to cross examine UTM witnesses after its leader Saulos Chilima underwent the same process in a heated court session.

Among other things, Chilima told the court his party found out that some monitors were reportedly bribed to sign off authentic results and that some ballot papers were held by unauthorized personnel, acts which he believes were aimed by the Mutharika led Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) to rig the elections.



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Will Rwanda-Uganda agreement to ease tensions yield good results?

By Maniraguha Ferdinand

On 21st August 2019, joy filled Rwandans and Ugandans hearts as Presidents Paul Kagame and Yoweri Museveni were signing the agreement that sets to end years of tensions.

The agreement were signed in Angola on the watch of Presidents João Lourenço of Angola, Felix Tshisekedi of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Denis Sassou Nguesso of Republic of Congo.

Both Rwanda and Uganda have been accusing each other of being a threat to the security of another.

Movements of persons and goods seemed to be dormant since March this year when Rwandan government advised its citizens not to cross into Uganda for fear of their security.

As Kampala was the easiest route for goods coming from northern corridor and Mombasa port to Kigali, businesses in Kigali felt the wrath of tensions. Hikes of prices of some primary commodities were reported in Rwanda.

Signing the agreement came as a relief for those who used to do business from Rwanda to Uganda and vice versa.

However, the day after the signing things turned from worse to worst. Uganda blocked some Rwanda pro government news sites, and Rwanda retaliated.

Both countries claimed to block news sites for the sake of national security. This raised fear among those who thought the storm is over.

Professor Christopher Kayumba, a senior

lecturer at University of Rwanda, Journalism and Communication department said implementation of agreement will require strong political will from both Kagame and Museveni.

"The MoU they signed is a very good starting point. It addresses and names the main accusations and commitment to solve them. And it says implementation is with immediate effect after signing. Implementing it will require strong political will on the part of the two presidents" he said

"It's not easy but it's possible with the leaders' willingness", Kayumba told Pan African Visions.

After the signing the agreement, Rwanda's state Minister in charge of foreign affairs told local media that Rwandans are yet to be advised to cross to Uganda, because other Rwandans who are held incommunicado in Uganda's security organs prisons are yet to be released.

Another Kigali based



Cargo truck stuck at Uganda Rwanda border .
Photo credit Monitor

political analyst, Albert Rudatsimburwa said he is optimistic towards agreement because it was dealt beyond two countries.

Talking to local news site IGIHE, he said " I can say good news is that it was not done between Rwanda and Uganda only. Let's wait because history shows that one some occasions Uganda would dodge."

"I am certain 75 % that the agreement will be implemented", he added

Kagame and Museveni knew each other because they fought together a war that liberated Uganda from the

hands of late Milton Obote. RPF Inkotanyi rebel group which Kagame came to lead , launched its invasions in 1990 on Rwanda from Uganda, with the help of Museveni government.

In 2017 when tensions began, some people still believed that both presidents will settle the matter. However the escalations went on to the level even the East African Community (EAC) in which both countries are members, failed to mediate.

Professor Kayumba says EAC failed because Kagame and Museveni are seniors leaders in the bloc.

"EAC wasn't able to help probably because both Kagame and Museveni are senior leaders than the other leaders and no one could take it one."

He added that Tshisekedi must have joined mediation ring because forces that want to destabilize Rwanda and Uganda are found on Congolese territory.

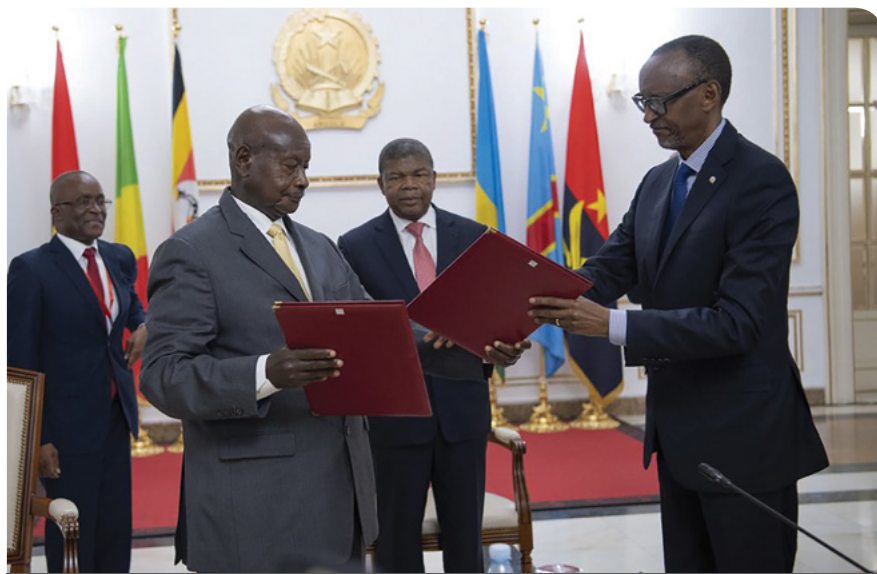
RNC rebel group which Rwanda alleges Uganda to support has its base in South Kivu. On the other hand, ADF rebel group that want to destabilize Uganda also has its base in Eastern Congo.

"Congo got involved because it doesn't want the conflict to fester and be fought on its territory. Remember DRC, Rwanda and Angola signed agreement to defeat all rebels in DRC" he said

For Kayumba, Angola played a mediation role as an old ally of DR Congo. It has been there for Congo twice against Uganda-Rwanda side in second Congo war that ended in 2003.

Inside the agreement, both parties have agreed to respect the sovereignty of each other's and of neighboring countries, refrain from conducive to destabilization or subversion in the territory of other party and neighboring countries thereby eliminating all factors that may create such perception as well as that of acts such as financing, training and infiltration of destabilizing forces.

The agreement also urges both parties to resume as soon as possible the cross-border activities including the movement of persons and goods.



President Museveni and Kagame exchanging folders containing agreement after signing ceremony in Luanda.

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Friend or Foe? The Role of the Media in Fueling Tensions Between Rwanda and Uganda

By Mohammed M. Mupenda

Tensions between Rwanda and Uganda has not only caused troubles and losses to their citizens but also made some media lose their part of professional reporting and credibility as they engage in political propaganda. They are reporting without evidence and engaging in fueling the feud.

For over the last five months, the fourth estate has fueled the spat and aggravated the tension between the two countries in promoting propaganda, instead of reporting facts and serving the public interest.

At least 10 online, print and magazine for both countries have jeopardized journalism ethics and principles by counter attacking each other's country political and diplomatic affairs, giving in to be used by politicians, propagandists and government officials to advance their ambitions and political differences.

Regional observers and many other professionals from both countries are wondering why the media does not uphold its principles on informing, educating and entertaining the public but instead disseminating hatred messages while regulatory bodies for two countries have kept silent on the malpractices.

I wonder whether the media who are giving in to political agendas are aware of their responsibility for which they could be held accountable.

It's Uganda's policy not to comment on our relations



President Kagame on a visit to the Rwanda Uganda border.

with Rwanda through the media because we do believe that the established diplomatic avenues exist, functional and effective in addressing any issues either country may have. The media or journalists that are biased, inaccurate or deliberately distorting information only time and events will prove them wrong. Uganda's media Spokesperson Offono Opondo told PanAfrican Vision in a phone interview.

For instance, a media house in Rwanda such as Igihe.com, Rushyashya an online media, will wake up tomorrow and put down a headline about what politicians think would be informing the other side which would also use "Soft Power" Command Post media house to hit back, all in the name of journalists who are supposed to know their role, duties and the sensitivity of the fourth estate once it is misused.

The New Times publications and KT Press, both Rwanda's pro-government English media, will write about current affairs

twisted to what politicians wish be told and portrayed to the audience as if they were public relations firms or government mouthpieces, and Uganda's The New Vision and Soft power have always published one side stories that point a finger to the leaders of the other country and their wrong side.

In late May, The New Times produced a big piece emphasizing that war between Uganda and Rwanda was inevitable, creating an atmosphere of fear and aggravating tensions among citizens of both countries.

Some of the headlines for each country's media house: By hating Rwanda Museveni wished to buy banished mother's affection, How Uganda's troll army wages war of misinformation on Rwanda, Museveni finally admits he met tycoon Rujugiro, 'Rwanda doesn't need mediation with Uganda', Museveni's letter to Kagame triggers funny reactions, raises more questions, NBS Television/ Media Uganda is owned

by criminal Paul Kagame's die hard-Kin Kalisa, The Ugandan president clearly is a man with a lot to hide, What Is Behind SoftPower Anti-Rwanda Propaganda? Rwanda Propaganda against Uganda divisionary from police aided illegal repatriation.

Dr Christopher Kayumba, a senior lecturer at Rwanda's School of Journalism, has always argued in various opinion pieces that governments should leave media to their own devices in order not to fall in the same mistake the genocidal government did in 1994 in Rwanda.

All these media platforms are aware that it is unethical to be used to promote agendas against journalism principles, moreover not paying attention to the tragic history of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi.

According to Joseph Hakuzwumuremyi, a Senior Reporter at Umuryango.rw said that being a journalist requires selflessness. It's very possible to cover the story

of two conflicting sides but adding salt to their conflict is committing a crime that can make one regret or even be held accountable by society.

He added that a journalist should only inform the general public about the happenings and let responsible powers deal with other stuff.

Noting that when a journalist fails to be neutral, he/she becomes a dangerous destroyer as a bomb, as a very unknown killer virus. The society has given us the chance to hold the candle of truth, and if we choose to light some and ignore others, either we will be punished by that society or perish it, Mr. Hakuzwumuremyi clarified.

The Executive Secretary at Rwanda Media Commission Emmanuel Mugisha said that media should be neutral and objective in covering conflicts.

Currently, there are several Rwandans who cannot cross to Uganda even when their parents in Uganda died. No media in Rwanda has reported that, such that somehow the decision-makers in both countries can be coaxed over the suffering of innocent people.

It is said that Rwandan citizens on the other hand are rotting behind safe houses in Uganda without being taken to court. It would be the work of journalists to report such situations as advocacy for the masses but they are only playing political tunes.

Why are journalists not learning from history that could bounce back or repeat itself? This makes me reflect on the 1994



attacking each other through words exchanged by their heads of state, ministers and other prominent government officials.

Media has been the best tool to disseminate their propaganda, politicians' ambitions, blackmailing and fabricating stories based on each side's sentiments.

When I was studying mass media and society, I learnt that the media sets the agenda which currently the two countries have opted to use

to promote their ambitions and giving space to any form of criticism, undermining the different members who are not working closely with them.

Rwanda President Paul Kagame said, during the

April Press Conference, he preferred the relations for Rwanda- Uganda to be dealt «outside media hype».

In a clear change of strategy, President Paul Kagame told a media briefing in Kigali that the current conflict with Uganda will be dealt with away from the full glare of the media as they are "hyping" it.

Asked about the state of Rwanda and Uganda relations in view of recent spats, the President said: "Yes there is discomfort and issues we have to resolve, but I would rather we focus on resolving problems in the EAC somewhere else outside the media".

He added: "we will be informing you on different things we will be working on."

"I think [the Rwanda-Uganda conflict] is a problem I believe will also come to pass. There will always be problems between countries, with different magnitudes. I would rather we continue finding ways of addressing problems outside of the media."

His Counterpart President Yoweri Museveni, while

addressing journalists on Tuesday at Kabale State Lodge after meeting local leaders from Kigezi Sub-region where he was preaching wealth creation in homesteads, said that mutual talks between Uganda and Rwanda to revive the cross border trade between the countries which was disrupted after the closure of the Gatuna post, are progressing.

"Recently we met the Rwandan leader in Angola and we discussed about the border issue. Leave it to us. Talks shall continue until the matter is completely resolved. It does not make sense to keep talking on radios but what is important is to ensure that the border issue is resolved," Mr Museveni said. "[The issue] took me to Angola to meet President Kagame and other leaders and I will not reveal what we discussed."

Last week, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni and his Rwandan counterpart Paul Kagame met in Luanda, and signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to cease the hostilities between the two central African states.

Rwanda Genocide that was mostly fueled by local media involving many journalists who reported what ended up enhancing violence and mass killings that stained the world history.

The so-called 'stars' in journalism by then are

now serving long term imprisonment in Rwanda and outside Rwanda including Ngeze Hassan who was Chief Editor of Kangura, the newspaper which published the stories that sowed hatred to its full indoctrination.

The two countries have kept



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What future for Cameroon with life sentences of Separatist Leaders?

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

After a yearlong trial, the Military court in Yaounde, Cameroon's political capital sentenced to life imprisonment 10 separatist leaders of the Ambazonia movement. Sisiku Julius Ayuk Tabe, leader of the Interim Government of Ambazonia together with nine others was convicted on charges including terrorism and secession. They were equally ordered to pay in FCFA 250 billion to the court.

To the Communication and Media Committee of the Defense Team of Sessekou Ayuk Julius Tabe and others, Media and Communication Chairman Amungwa Tanyi Nicodemous stated, "Let the entire world be informed that at exactly 5:38 am Tuesday the 20th day of August 2019, the President of the Federal Republic of Ambazonia and the nine (9) others have been slammed the life sentence by the Yaounde Military Tribunal in gross violation of their rights as accused persons."

Ayuk Tabe was the first



The nocturnal trial and sentencing of Sisiku Julius Ayuk Tabe has been been strongly condemned by local and some international actors.

self-proclaimed president of "Ambazonia", a breakaway state declared in October 2017 in two English-speaking Regions of Cameroon. The verdict brings to an end a case that has been dragging for more than a year now. Observers say this decision has killed all hopes of an effective back to school in the South West and North West Regions.

In a communiqué send out by the jailed leaders it stated, "The pronouncement of a life imprisonment sentence on us by the 'Tribunal Militaire in Yaoundé' amidst unbelievable irregularities is a validation of our self-determination and claim to a sovereign and free Southern Cameroons". "This despicable judgment should leave each and every one of us with no other option

than to unite and increase our resolve, fortitude and determination to complete the journey to Buea," the communiqué read in part.

While comparing their imprisonment to an alleged military killing of a four-month old baby, Martha Mbu Neba in Muyuka, the incarcerated leaders entreated Anglophone Cameroonians to be united against the regime of President Paul Biya. "Irrespective of who you are, and what you stand for, we all are nothing but captives, waiting for the opportunity to be slammed such life imprisonment sentences for the fortunate ones, or outright butchering even on your bed," they decried.

In January 2018, Ayuk Tabe was arrested with 46 other separatists in the Nigerian capital Abuja. They were then handed over to Cameroon in a move that was ruled illegal

by a Nigerian court in March this year. In late May, Ayuk Tabe said he was willing to take part in talks with the government, provided this took place abroad and the government released all who had been detained since the start of the Anglophone crisis.

Renowned Human Rights Lawyer Barrister Felix Agbor Balla in a Facebook post categorically stated, "The sentencing of Sisiku and Co. to life imprisonment is an affront to due process and the rule of law". "The right to fair trial is a fundamental human right. The sham process is a reflection of the sham management of the country."

Back-to-school witnesses low turnout across NW and SWRs

The 2019/2020 school year across the South West region of Cameroon has witnessed a low turnout by students on Monday September 2, 2019. The low



The trial was conducted in French, a language not understood by most of the leaders

turnout across the South West Region can be linked to the imposed lockdown by separatist fighters across the North West and South west Regions.

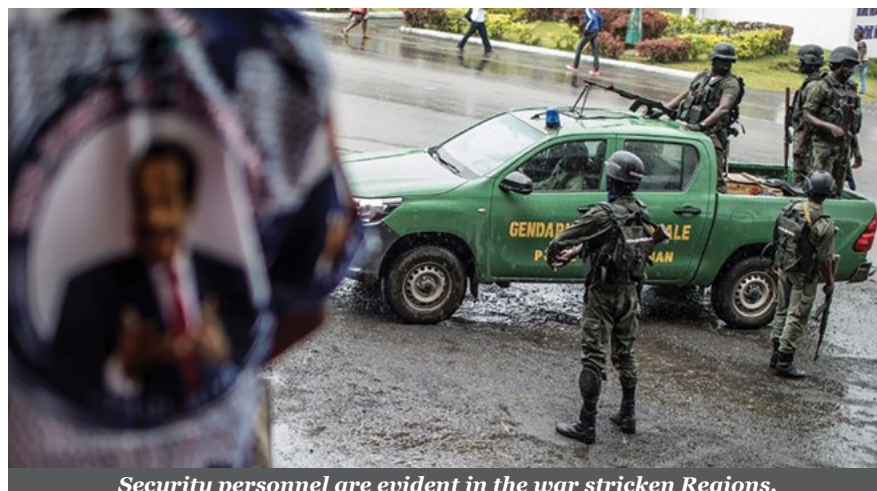
Before school resumption, separatist fighters had imposed two sets of lockdown beginning September 2 to 6 and from September 9 to 13. These lockdown are aimed at frustrating efforts to get school resume in the Anglophone regions.

The low turnout of students in Buea was the same scenario witnessed in educational establishments across Limbe. Many of the schools remained shut while the few who braved the odds to open their doors witnessed just a handful of students present.

Opposition on prolonged lockdown across Anglophone Regions

Barrister Ayah Ayah Abine on a post questioned the reason behind the long lockdown instituted by separatist leaders across the English speaking regions. He wonders why someone/people will impose a lengthy lockdown on other people's families after relocating their own families to Yaoundé/Douala/Bafoussam, which families of theirs peacefully enjoy life to the fullest therein as they punish the families of others who chose to stay on GZ, or who simply can't afford to leave.

"Why people/someone will relocate his family/loved-ones to la Republic, what he/they call enemy territory, make life comfortable for them therein, and at the same time vow never to have anything to do with the same 'enemy', as he/she/they rain-



Security personnel are evident in the war stricken Regions.

down hell on any camp/individual who tries to find a midway with the said enemy by thinking differently from them, in a bid to put an end to the current genocide" He added

He equally wondered "why people/someone will find it easier to brandish anyone who speaks these bitter truths as 'compromised', la republic

agent, the newly created words, rather than look at him/herself in the mirror and face the truth and make amends."

The Anglophone crisis which has been going on for more than 2 years now has seen many killed, displaced or become refugees in neighboring Nigeria. Attacks by both sides have left

1,850 dead, according to the International Crisis Group (ICG) think tank, while the UN says 530,000 people have fled their homes. According to UN aid officials, more than one in six people in Cameroon-4.3 million need humanitarian aid, an increase of 30 percent from 2018.

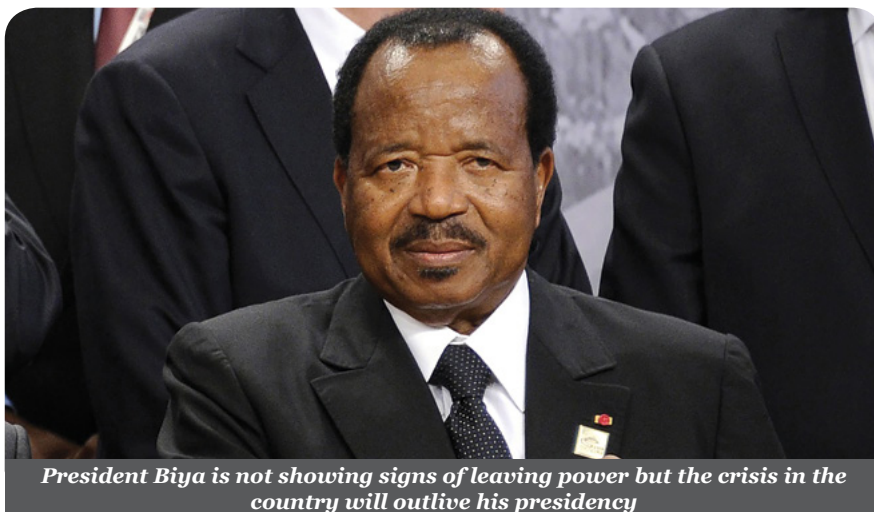
No! Cameroon won't breathe after Paul Biya

By Amos Fofung

Imagine waking up one morning to roaster crows and chipping birds in Cameroon and you're faced with the new reality that Paul Biya, the "strongman" of Africa is no more; no longer president of the Cameroons.

Entering his 7th term at age 85 last year after a landslide victory as is always the case, Biya has proven that he has no intentions of quitting power. Should his wish gets granted and he clings on till life escapes him, what will the next days, weeks and years be like for the over 25 million Cameroonians? Most of whom were born and have grown to know him as their only president.

Yes, a handful of Cameroonian comedians jokingly attribute the noun



President Biya is not showing signs of leaving power but the crisis in the country will outlive his presidency

President to mean Paul Biya, and their audiences are loving it.

For 36 years and counting, he has succeeded to control every sphere of public and private affairs in Cameroon to an extend where forecasting life after him seems hopeless.

With calls for secession from the North West and South West regions who want to create their own country called Ambazonia, - continuous attack from Boko Haram terrorist sect in Northern Cameroon, - protest from the western region who

insist they were cheated in the 2018 presidential elections, and pressure from the Northerners who believe power needs to return to them after one of theirs did so well as first president; yes! Cameroon won't breathe after Paul Biya.

The Strongman of Africa

Sitting comfortably as Africa's oldest leader, Paul Biya, who has ruled Cameroon with an iron fist since 1982 entered his 7th term last year and will remain in power until 2025.

Holding a firm grip of the executive since he took over from Cameroon's first president, Ahmadou Ahidjo in 1992, Paul Biya before now had unmatched control and loyalty.

Escalation of the Anglophone crisis in the two English-speaking regions with call for secession coupled with pro-Maurice Kamto movement known as Brigade Anti-Sardinards, BAS that is campaigning for Biya's removal now threatened his reign.

The campaign to have Biya removed by the BAS who claim their president is jailed politician, Maurice Kamto has fallen on deaf ears. Except for the protest organized in Geneva Switzerland that forced Paul Biya and his wife to cut short their private stay and return home, the anti-Biya group hasn't recorded any successes in Cameroon.

After suffering numerous arrest and detention by security officials in Yaounde and Douala, those opposing the regime of octogenarian president Paul Biya have learnt to look before they leap.

One of the members who spoke to African Argument from Douala in approximate English said; "we have been talking with some military officials for them to see why we need to stand together against Paul Biya as was the case in Algeria and South Sudan. It is for the benefit of

all Cameroonians, if we all come out with the military on our side, he will have no option but to leave power," the militant who requested anonymity for fear of repression said.

Having Cameroon's military on their side to oust Africa's second longest serving president might seem far-fetched. After suffering a coup attempt in 1984, Paul Biya made it his mission that such will never happen to him again, and he's done this by consolidating power.

In the armed forces, he reigns as commander-in-chief with unquestionable control over the navy, air force and motorized battalions.

At the judiciary; he is powered with abilities to appoint, promote, sanction and dismiss all magistrates in the country. Due to the influence he exalts in the judiciary, his interferences are never questioned but

justified.

With an overwhelming majority in Cameroon's houses of parliament and at the constitutional council, his word and decisions are transformed into laws with little or no objections.

Charged with appointing all top members of government right down to divisional officials, including members of state corporations, institutions and agencies, Paul Biya enjoys loyalty which transcend to supports during polls.

Legacy

Considered by the West as Africa's most experienced autocrat, the question of what will be Paul Biya's legacy – has often been received with harsh reaction especially by members of his government and political circle.

Before his reelection, US ambassador to Cameroon, Peter Henry Barlerin, called on President Paul Biya to

"think about his legacy and act like Nelson Mandela". What followed was immense criticism with supporters of the Etoudi occupant calling on the ambassador to know his limits or pack his bags.

He was accused of attempting to meddle in the election and was summoned by the Minister of External Relations and schooled on diplomacy and what is expected of him as an ambassador.

With backing from the state-run media and some private media organs loyal to the regime, Biya's ideologies and policies are propagated with projections of a booming economy and better tomorrow for all who rally behind the head of state.

Nonetheless, many are those who believe that Paul Biya will leave Cameroon far worse than he met it in 1982.

"In 1976 when I visited Douala for my first time,

Douala was beaming with business and economic potentials. Cameroon was the pride of Central Africa, we were not compared with Gabon or Chad as is the case now, but with Ivory Coast – and on several occasion we topped them," says Cletus Fongoh who has experienced Cameroon's two presidents.

"When I came to Chicago in 2005, they were parts of Chicago that were less beautify than Douala in 1974, I was very surprised that my country could compete at such a level."

That's not the case today, Cameroon's glorious days are long over.

This is especially true as the country has been admitted into the circle of Heavily Indebted Poor country several times as the absentee president maneuvers and extends his stay in power despite his growing unpopularity.

Robert Mugabe: Another African Revolutionary Leader Bows Out.

By Chief Charles A. Taku*

A remarkable event occurred during the rebirth Conference of the African Bar Association that took place from 4th to 7th September 2016 in Harare Zimbabwe based on which I will can authoritatively make a personal assessment of the personality of the departed President Robert Mugabe. Some members of the opposition party and civil society activists who organized a demonstration against the government of President Mugabe and were detained by the Police were ordered released by a High Court in Harare but the government failed to execute the court order arguing that



Robert Mugabe was President of Zimbabwe for over two decades.

it had appealed against the court order.

The matter was reported to the African Bar Association by our colleagues of the Zimbabwe Bar and some members of the aggrieved

political party and civil society activists. The African Bar Association summoned the Attorney General of Zimbabwe and told him to respect the court order and he promptly obliged, and

the detained persons were immediately released. This is unprecedented in many countries that purport to hold the keys to democratic constitutional governance where the rule of law informs

governmental action. Hardly, particularly in Africa, where the politicization and militarization of justice are the staying powers of dictatorial regimes.

I found in this circumstance that the role of law operated in Zimbabwe under President Mugabe despite the excruciating sanctions imposed by the supposed democratic world which greatly stifled the economy of Zimbabwe and rendered its currency almost useless. The police intervention to abate the demonstrations in which the opposition officials and civil society activists were arrested, while condemnable, did not lead to the extensive

bloodletting and destruction that is the hallmark of what I may venture to now call African vampiric endemic dictatorships.

If the question were asked to supposed gatekeepers and town criers of democracy, whether Robert Mugabe was a saint or sinner? Many of them will be impeded by the biblical injunction of who has not sin throwing the first stone from providing an answer.

Let me begin with Great Britain. The Lancaster House Agreement was intended to address a historical wrong caused against the people of Zimbabwe by Great Britain. A critical issue that Robert Mugabe placed on the table for determination was that of land reform. That issue was central to the independence issue, because independence per se without a determination of the land ownership problem would have been meaningless.

The saying in my Bangwa ancestral land of birth that land is life is not a subject of reasonable controversy in Africa. Otumba T.O.S Benson, the distinguished colorful Nigerian statesman and First Republic Minister of Information aptly stated that "land belongs to people, some dead, others alive and others unborn". In putting the land reform issue on the table of negotiation when others were more concerned with power for the sake of power, Robert Mugabe distinguished himself as a visionary leader who was closer to the heartbeat of his people's realistic humanity. Without land reforms, independence per se would be deceitful and meaningless, call it a scam for it would tantamount to granting sovereignty over land that did not belong to



Despite political fiction with the current leadership in Zimbabwe, President Mugabe was treated with all honors.

most of the people. Also, it would permanently deprive most of the people rights to their ancestral lands.

History retains that it was the offers made by the British and American governments to compensate white citizens who sold land held by them no matter how it was originally obtained, to facilitate reconciliation, so-called the "Willing buyer, Willing seller" principle that pressurized Robert Mugabe to reluctantly sign the Lancaster Agreement. He signed on the condition that the land reform he sought and obtained the assurances about would occur after ten years. The funding that was to operate it from 1980 to 1990 by the American and British governments and their pledged support for the land reforms after ten years failed to materialize. They and not Mugabe reneged on their pledges on the land reform issue which was a central issue in the Lancaster House Agreement. This was the powder keg that ignited the disagreement between Mugabe and the West leading to the land seizures and the elaborate sanction regime imposed by the West and the campaign to "satanize" Mugabe. This brings back the

question: Was Mugabe a saint or sinner? Can the land issue and related human rights violations based on which the sanctions were imposed on Zimbabwe be blamed on Mugabe?

I submit that to the extent that Robert Mugabe made the land reform issue a critical component of the Lancaster House Agreement, he should be judged based on how the agreement reached was executed and not based on western media reports and ideologically tainted propaganda.

From a dispassionate examination of this issue, Mugabe comes out as a principled, honest, patriotic, visionary and a selfless crusader for justice for his people. He must be praised and not maligned.

Zimbabwe lies in economic ruins not because Mugabe desired it that way, but because of the sanctions that were unjustly imposed by the very powers that initiated and violated the Lancaster Agreement to the detriment of the people of Zimbabwe. Keen observers will conclude that the Zimbabwe sanction regime intended to cripple, and it indeed cripple the economy of Zimbabwe hoping to bring Mugabe on his knees

for him to run begging for a return of Ian Smith or for a recolonization of Zimbabwe. The revolutionary that he was, Comrade Mugabe kept faith with his liberation ideology and refused to betray the independence of his people that he fought for through blood and toil.

The persons to whom he handed over seized land might not have had the resources to develop the lands due in part to the sanctions emplaced to stifle the economy and cause potential regime change. The change of regime occurred. However, those who think that the present government or others to come in future will erase or reverse the imprints of Mugabe on land reforms or his ideological freedom agenda in Zimbabwe should be ready for a long wait.

Mugabe was a commanding continental voice on economic sovereignty and resistance to the recolonization of Africa through unbalanced trade deals such as the Doha rounds of negotiations, reinvigorated neo-colonial onslaught on the continent, emerging challenges such as climate change, immigration, endemic diseases, and regime change.

Robert Mugabe was loved

and hated in equal measure. Those who hated him did so passionately although they hardly ever provided cogent reasons to justify their hate. When challenged to do so, they caricatured him as a brutal dictator. Compared with dictators in the continent who are sustained and supported by the same powers that passionately resented Mugabe, Mugabe can be said to be a saint. He did not deploy the armed forces of his country to turn their guns to slaughter the people he swore to defend and protect when he came to power. He kept faith with his oath in this regard. He did not auction out the natural resources of his country to Western or Eastern economic predators for personal gain as it is the case in many African dictatorships. No matter how he was perceived, he compelled overt and covert respect from his admirers and haters alike. Indeed, everyone will find something good to say about him now that he is dead.

Mugabe is dead but history has chatted a place for him among great Africa leaders and liberation revolutionaries of all times such as the Oseygyo Dr Kwame Nkrumah, Kambarege Dr Julius Nyerere, Patrice Lumumba, Amilcar Cabral, Milton Obote, Samora Marshal, Aghostino Neto, Nelson Mandela, Oum Nyobe, Ernest Ouandie, Thomas Sankara, Augustine Ngom Jua, Dr EML Endeley, Dr Bate Besong and many others. Africa has lost a great revolutionary leader. His shoes will hard to fill.

* Chief Charles Taku, is the immediate past President of the International Criminal Court Bar Association- ICCBA

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Mugabe a leader among leaders

Happyton Mabhuva Bonyongwe*

ON Friday September 6 2019, I woke up to the news that former President Comrade Robert Gabriel Mugabe was no more. His death was something I dreaded for years as I worked to secure his wellbeing.

This larger-than-life figure in the history of Zimbabwe was but the embodiment of life and longevity. He even aimed to live beyond 100 years. The news of his passing came as a shock, even though he was 95 and had been unwell for some time.

The truth is, no matter how much one may psychologically prepare, death remains a dreadful and sorrowful event. So I am very sad and have not found the energy to do anything else since he died, than mourn my former leader and president.

The death of Mugabe reminded me of the manner in which comandante Fidel Castro, the Cuban leader, dealt with his impending death. He had battled and survived cancer for many years and when he knew that his end was near, he was ready and told the world that "the time was coming when I will go the way many others went before".

Not long after this, the indomitable Castro departed on November 25 2016. Mugabe was there to bid farewell to that iconic revolutionary. Now, it is our turn to bid farewell to our own iconic revolutionary who has now also gone the way of all on earth.

While I joined the liberation struggle in 1975, I first saw Mugabe in 1977 in Nachingwea, Tanzania, when I was one of the 5000-strong



Then head of Zimbabwe Central Intelligence Organisation Happyton Bonyongwe with Constantine Chiwenga, the commander of the Zimbabwean Army listen to President Robert Mugabe . Photo credit ALEXANDER JOE AFP Getty Images

Songambele Group of the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (Zanla) combatants who had just completed training under the instruction of the Tanzania People's Defence Forces and Chinese experts of the People's Liberation Army.

Mugabe was the leader of the Zimbabwe African National Union (Zanu). He came to Nachingwea together with Dr Joshua Nkomo who was the leader of the Zimbabwe African People's Union (Zapu).

The two were the leaders of the Patriotic Front, an alliance forged just before the Geneva Conference in 1976 by Zanu and Zapu, the two liberation movements which waged the armed struggle for the independence of the former British colony of Southern Rhodesia, present-day Zimbabwe.

Mugabe spoke first after introductions by Tanzania's

Brigadier Hashim Mbita who led the Organisation of African Unity's (OAU's) Liberation Committee, followed by Mayor Urimbo, the Zanu Political Commissar who did some moral raising before the leaders' speeches. Nkomo spoke last. We were dazzled by Mugabe's intelligence, eloquence and mastery of the English language. In that regard, he was in a class of his own. Our Tanzanian instructors were equally captivated by him and remarked afterwards that it was clear that Zimbabwe should maintain the Westminster system of government, with Nkomo as President and Mugabe as Prime Minister of independent Zimbabwe.

At the time, I was pre-occupied with being a good guerrilla fighter, and I didn't think much about it. I was not interested in politics, thinking that after the war, I

would pick up my life, go back to school and integrate into civilian life. Little did I know that fate would deal me a card where my professional career would be judged on the basis of my service to Zimbabwe under the leadership of Mugabe.

When Independence came in 1980, I became an officer in the Zimbabwe National Army. Mugabe was the Prime Minister and Minister of Defence up to 1987 and later the President and Commander-in-Chief; the man who commissioned me into the officer ranks. The commissioning scroll which he signed ordered me to inter alia, "at all times exercise and diligently discipline in arms those under my command and to observe and follow such lawful orders and directives as I would receive from time to time from him or any superior officer".

Under his leadership, the

Zimbabwe Defence Forces scored successes in counter-insurgency operations in Mozambique, and in conventional warfare in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in pursuit of Pan-Africanist objectives. They were also to participate most successfully in various United Nations peace missions, including Somalia and Angola. Zimbabwean forces were recognised as professional forces; the envy of many on the continent.

The discipline which Mugabe urged on the officer corps of the defence forces is a leadership quality which he lived by. This was very evident from inter alia his strict exercise regime, diet and immaculate dressing in his own life. He was a stickler for detail who strove for excellence.

Meritocracy drove him, and he did not care much about where you came from, but

as long as you were capable he would entrust you to the mission. He was a man of principle and the whole world knows that he consistently stood by his beliefs. Once he took a stand, he could hardly be moved.

He really believed in the emancipation and empowerment of the black man in Zimbabwe, Africa and even the diaspora. His views on the reform of the United Nations Security Council are well-known globally, having been the main theme of his valedictory speech to the chairmanship of the African Union in January 2016.

He believed that Africans could do anything other races could do, and this has been ingrained in the psyche of every Zimbabwean. We are free in mind and spirit. We are independent and speak our minds; we do not lie down and allow others to walk all over us. For this we should thank Mugabe who was above all a true patriot who loved Zimbabwe. Leaving the army was a most difficult time for me, but as a cadre of the struggle, you go where you are deployed.

In hindsight, however, I now consider myself to have been most fortunate to have been selected and appointed to the President's Department in 1998. I was to work with Mugabe on a daily basis, first as the Deputy Director-General, and later as Director-General. I was to become Mugabe's longest-serving director-general of intelligence.

My job was to brief him on security matters, and as educated and knowledgeable as the man was, I have never met such a good listener. I was not surprised to discover that Ken Flower, the late founding Director-General

of the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) also recorded in his book, *Serving Secretly*, that of the Prime Ministers he served, Mugabe was the best in patiently listening to the reports and briefings which he was given.

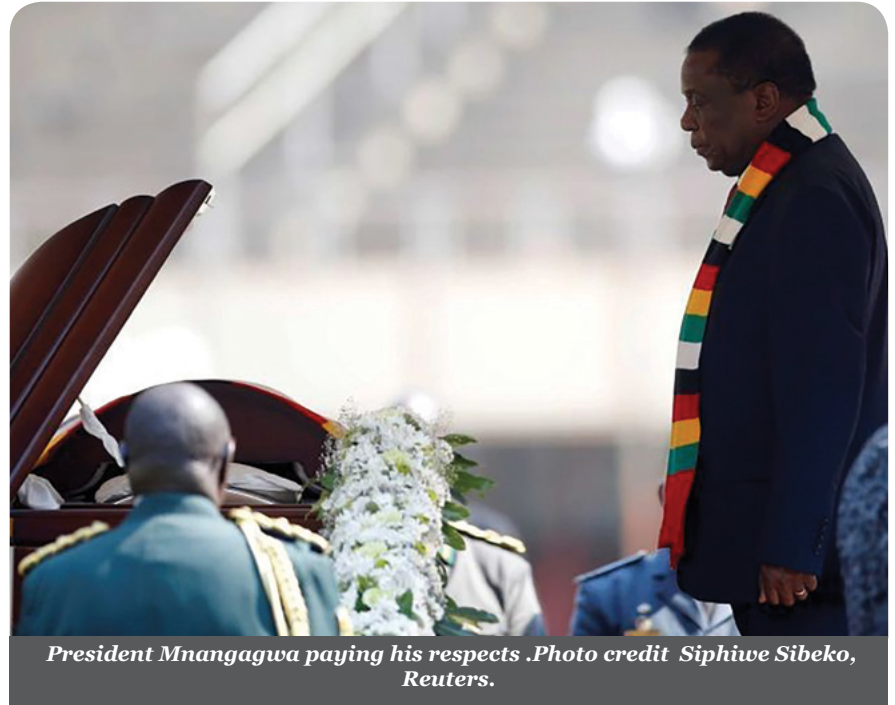
Being a good listener is a most rare quality in a leader. This trait is probably what served the man well and goes toward explaining his staying power in politics.

Those who knew him well will even recall that, although he was served by many aides, he would, especially in the early years, take his own notes in important meetings, giving him the ability to address issues raised effectively. He also had a sharp mind which could store and quickly process a lot of information. I shall forever be grateful for his confidence and the support he gave to the intelligence community when I was director-general.

I thank him also for the honour he bestowed on his intelligence and security service, the CIO, each year. He never missed a single graduation ceremony.

His commitment to duty in this regard was unparalleled. It was on such occasions that he dazzled us by his intelligence and academic prowess. His performance ensured that we remained in no doubt that he was the leader of the Zimbabwean intelligence and new officers became aware that they were joining a most noble and intellectually postured and primed profession.

Such induction into the service, and the inculcation of academic and professional ethos and standards ensured the better execution of our mission, a process which on many occasions moved our country forward. I believe



President Mnangagwa paying his respects .Photo credit Siphwe Sibeko, Reuters.

that these are virtuous qualities which will continue to serve our country well into the future.

In the years I served him directly on a daily basis, I was struck by the man's love for his country, his patriotism, which came through in all he did. The country went through a most difficult period as we faced a huge backlash to the land reform programme. The issues of sanctions and the illegal regime change agenda have now been documented in various biographies of some of the players.

In his famous speech to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2002, his "Blair keep your England and I keep my Zimbabwe" speech was an expression of this deep love for his country and the frustration he was experiencing from the then British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

I remember one day when we flew in the presidential helicopter from Gweru to Harare in the late afternoon. I could see him survey the

landscape of Zimbabwe through the window.

I followed his gaze to the African sunset, well-known for its beauty, and watched the rays of the sun dance on the savannah landscape below through the double glass fronting the windows. It was very beautiful.

We were caught in the moment and I made the remark that Zimbabwe was a very beautiful country. The former president, in his quick and witty way, remarked that this beauty and riches which lay in the land was the reason why 'the British would not let us be!'

For Zimbabweans of course, this country is not only beautiful, but it is the only one we have got. It is the reason why thousands of heroic comrades, country men, women and children paid the ultimate price during the liberation war.

Mugabe's patriotism also found expression in his policies. He gave meaning and content to the emancipation of his people through a whole range of policy thrusts in various sectors, especially in

his early years in office where education probably stands out as the most successful.

Land reform and the economic empowerment of indigenous Zimbabweans were to define his later years in power. In 2000, he said to me at one point that he could not allow a situation where each time he drove on a major highway, he would be seized by the realisation that his people owned only the road on which he was driving and the few metres on either side of it, while most of the rich pasture and agricultural land as far as the eye could see, to the horizon, belonged to the white commercial farmers. This had to be rectified.

His achievement in this regard cannot be taken away from him. Sure, there will be debate on the impact of his policies, but Zimbabweans know that he meant well and was serious in his quest to empower them. Mugabe was a principled and very genuine person. These policies were later extended to minerals and other sectors of the economy. The death of Mugabe must also focus



Nelson Chamisa, left, leader of the main opposition party in Zimbabwe, consoles Grace, widow of former Zimbabwean leader Robert Mugabe. Credit AP.

our minds to the task which remains to be done.

Mugabe's focus on the African personality and the need to progress it, all over the world always came to the forefront. He followed the progress made by Africans everywhere in sport, the arts, film (even the Oscars were a focus), law and politics, science and technology, and in the diaspora, inclusive of African Americans who had a special place in his heart. His own intractable stand-off with Blair ignited by the land issue was in my humble submission never foisted for resolution on Barack Obama, the 44th President of the

United States, who pledged to resolve the intractable problems of the world, such as Cuba.

This was a consequence of Mugabe's carefully considered appreciation of the foreign policy and other intricacies and nuances which the first African-American President of the US had to navigate.

In a meeting with President Jacques Chirac of France in 1999, Mugabe was asked whether he thought that the then incoming President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, would measure up as president and be able to fill the shoes left by the great

President Nelson Mandela. His response was: "Leaders build themselves up by their own actions". Mugabe, a wise person who had a mind of his own, was loyal to his fellow African leaders; he never disparaged them to anyone.

Like him or not, Mugabe's legacy cannot be erased from history. He was the author of many actions which could not be ignored. He was undoubtedly a leader of a struggle and a nation. Our founding father, he was a leader among leaders. In multi-lateral fora, he defined issues without fear or favour. He led and achieved results. He is our hero; Africa's hero.

He had such a long life and did so many things and as a human being, he was like all of us humans, fallible. Indeed we all make mistakes. However, from the outpouring of grief I have noticed, especially from the common man and woman, including the criticisms from some people who suffered from him, many today appreciate the good he did and are genuinely mourning the man.

Some who were in the opposition during his rule have said that they recognise and appreciate his immense contribution to the birth and growth of Zimbabwe. His death can therefore serve to unite us all at various levels, as Zimbabweans. This would make us worthy successors to the good things he did.

As I mourn Mugabe, I regret that after 19 years of seeing him almost every day, circumstances did not allow me to say a proper goodbye. The last time I saw him was at his Blue Roof residence on 21 November 2017 when as Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs I was tasked to go to Parliament, which was sitting at the Harare International Conference Centre that day, to deliver his resignation letter.

As I went out of that door

at his Blue Roof house, I did not know that I would never again see someone who meant so much to me. To the Mugabe family, and especially Mrs Grace Mugabe, Bona and the boys – Robert (Junior) and Bellarmine – I extend the deepest and heartfelt condolences of my family and I.

I also lost my father and it is not easy, the pain never goes away. I urge you to find solace from the fact that he was a great man who had a long and illustrious life. He is being mourned by the majority of Zimbabweans, and many in Africa and around the world. For me personally, I say farewell Comrade President Robert Gabriel Mugabe, the leader of our revolution. I shall forever be grateful for your contribution to my liberation, education and intellectual development. You always appreciated me when I did well, and I promise that I will strive to put on a "good show" in all I do, and this in honour of your memory.

Go well Shefu, a leader among leaders, my icon, my hero, I will never forget. I will ever remember. Rest in Eternal Peace.

*Culled from The Independent (Zim.) Bonyongwe is a former CIO Director-General and retired Major-General

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Ghana's Special Prosecutor; a cover for the rhetoric on the war against corruption in Ghana or genuine intentions with bottle necks?

By Papisdaff Abdullah Ali.

In March 2018, Martin Alamisi Amidu was appointed as Ghana's first Special Prosecutor by President Nana Addo Danqua Akufo-Addo. The former Attorney General's job is to investigate and prosecute corrupt persons in public service. The announcement of this new portfolio was a fulfilment of a major campaign promise by the governing New Patriotic Party (NPP) to save the public purse which they alleged was being heavily looted by the erstwhile Mahama administration. Ghana, like most countries on the African continent has been battling with financial infractions, and exploitation of state resources among others by persons in public office for personal gains. Indeed, issues bothering on corruption often makes headlines in the media, making it convenient for the political class to spin and or center their election campaign messages on that.

As a member of Ghana's largest opposition party, the National Democratic Congress (NDC), Martin Amidu's historic appointment was welcomed by many, including civil society and the general public due to the fact that his appointment was a departure from the usual practice in the country where most appointments are made on partisan basis. Considering his exploits as a citizen vigilante which resulted in winning back millions of cedis allegedly paid illegally as judgment debts back into the state



Special Prosecutor Martin Amidu with President Akufo and Vice President Bawumia. Ghanaians are still expecting results in the fight against corruption.

treasuries, Mr Amidu is considered by many in Ghana to be very independent and strong willed. A former President in Ghana, Jerry John Rawlings said "The President [Akufo-Addo] couldn't have made a better choice." His statement on the nomination said Mr. Amidu rose above "partisanship" and recognized him as "a highly principled citizen."

Eight months after his nomination and parliamentary approval, the Government of Ghana gave the Office of the Special Prosecutor GH¢180 million with a promise to provide additional resources later this year. This comes after series of lamentations by the Special Prosecutor over lack of logistics and funds to help his office carry out its mandate of investigating and prosecution.

The written protest cited the resignation of US Attorney General Jeff Session as a case which could be repeated as a result of the fate he is being left to face. The former Attorney General

and Minister of Justice said he is being starved of resources either deliberately or inadvertently.

"One year down the line, [the Office of the Special Prosecutor](OSP) has only a small three bedroom house as an Office woefully inadequate for lack of sheer physical space to accommodate any reasonable number of employees, lack of subsidiary legislation, and consequently also financially crippled without any ability to acquire the requisite expensive operational anti-corruption and other equipment for the Office let alone to function efficiently," he wrote in the article titled "The Whitaker Scenario – Stifling Independent Investigative Agencies of Funds".

His sentiments reflected largely the concerns and questions about what the office has been doing since its inception. Dean of Studies and Research at the Institute of Local Government Studies, Dr Oduro Osai, is reported to have said, "the Special Prosecutor has

failed us." Others who have also petitioned the Special Prosecutor on cases of alleged corruption express open disappointment in the slow pace of work by President Akufo Addo's entrusted man to fight graft in Ghana. They feel Mr Amidu has not walked his talk nearly 18 months after his assumption of office.

Some actors in the Civil Society space have also been demanding openness from the OSP while questioning the delays in getting results. Edem Senanu of the Citizens Movement Against Corruption has urged the office to be transparent and open with information. «I do not know whether it is the style of the Special Prosecutor not to give anything out, but it is not helpful,» he stressed.

Others wonder how structures had been set for the operation of the newly created six regions, but the government did not seem to have what it took to establish the office properly and completely to work efficiently. This is because even the budgetary allocation

and resource disbursement of the office is anything but certain. The opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC) is however not shocked by the seeming inaction of the Special Prosecutor. The party's General Secretary Johnson Asiedu Nketia declared his 'prophecy' that "Martin Amidu would come under criticism for doing nothing" had come to pass. Member of Parliament for Tamale North, Alhassan Suhuyini, expressed concerns about President Akufo-Addo's approach to the fight against corruption. "Corruption under Akufo-Addo is nothing to write home about. Anytime there is scandal in this government the only pattern Akufo-Addo takes is, 'suspend', 'cleared', 'reinstate' or 'reassign' and this attitude isn't changing. This is the rotten pattern they know," he stated.

Cases

The later part of August 2019 saw the Office of the Special Prosecutor (OSP) sitting on a case involving the Chief Executive Officer of Ghana's Public Procurement Authority (PPA). Mr. Agyenim Boateng Adjei. He was suspended by the President Akufo Addo in the wake of an investigative report alleging improper conduct on his side.

The suspended CEO according to an investigative documentary titled "Contracts for Sale" was found engaging in acts of selling government contracts using a private company. "You are accordingly being

invited both as the Chief Executive Officer of the Public Procurement Authority and a Director and Shareholder of the said companies to assist in the investigations pursuant of section 29 and 73 of the Office of the Special Prosecutor Act, 2017 (Act 959) and Regulation 10 of the office of the Special Prosecutor (Operations) Regulations, 2018” a letter from the Office of the Special Prosecutor said.

Prior to that, the Special Prosecutor had filed one case in court; 24 others are reportedly being investigated by his office. Leaked documents purported to be coming from the office of Martin Amidu shows there are 25 cases on his desk at the moment. Former President John Mahama who is seeking to be president again, is reportedly being sought-after by the Special Prosecutor for his alleged role in the diversion of \$13m from the E.O Group, a company with a 3.5% interest in Ghana’s 2007 oil find. The former President who is said to be a respondent in the case has ridiculed the claims. This is an allegation made by the Special Prosecutor, Martin Amidu in December 2016 during his days of writing articles that became a source of media stories and political debates in Ghana.

There is also a case of money-laundering against Nana Oye Lithur, former Gender and Social Protection Minister in the Mahama administration. Still in the NDC, a case against Mahama Ayariga, a former Minister of Information, who is accused of evading tax in the importation of vehicles. Also a subject of interest for the Special Prosecutor is the governing party’s chairman,



Special Prosecutor Martin Amidu has lamented about the obstacles he is facing.

Freddie Blay after fulfilling an expensive promise to get each of the 275 constituencies a mini-bus in part. The \$11m promise appealed to delegates and got him retained as NPP National Chairman. His re-election however ignited accusations of vote-buying and questions about how Mr Blay who is also the Ghana National Petroleum Commission (GNPC) Board chairman could pull off such a deal that included funding from banks.

Again, former Chief Executive of the Bulk Oil Storage and Transport (BOST) Alfred Obeng Boateng who has been fingered in the decision to sell 1.8m barrels of crude oil at a discounted price which allegedly cost the nation 30m cedis in revenue is also of interest. The wife of maverick NPP MP, Kennedy Agyapong who is a beneficiary of a \$100 million sole-sourced contract is also reported to be on the list of the Special Prosecutor.

Authenticity of list
Board Chairperson of the Office of the Special Prosecutor (OSP), Mrs Linda Ofori-Kwafo, has asked the Ghanaian public to disregard a list of cases making the rounds. She said the list, if

authentic, should rather be a cause for concern for all, as it would mean that there was a mole in the office leaking information not meant for the public yet. «The list that is supposed to come out, according to the law, is a list of investigated cases. So if anyone puts out a list of cases being investigated and others yet to be, it is not right,» she said in response to a publication detailing the cases at the office of the Special Prosecutor.

She said as the chair of the board, she did not know about current investigations at the office, neither did any board member. «If we knew, that would amount to interference in the operations of the office,» she said. «I know the expectation of Ghanaians is to see some prosecutions; however, we must make sure that the office works procedurally,» she stated.

Issues
Director for Advocacy and Policy Engagement at pro-democracy think tank, CDD-Ghana, , in an assessment of the office since its establishment, said there were gaps to be filled at all the stages in the establishment of the office. Dr Kojo Asante said the appointment of an

executive secretary to run the office and consult on the passage of the Legislative Instrument to operationalize the Special Prosecutor’s Act, 2017 (Act 915) was still outstanding.

No lawyers have been recruited yet, a human resource crisis that underlines the office’s slow pace of work and fast-growing public criticism. “Without a bigger place, new officers would not have a workings space. However, the processes of recruitment can start, in anticipation of the office being ready. This means the President must exercise his discretion to delegate the power of appointment of Staff to the Board or the Special Prosecutor himself as quickly as possible,” Dr Asante said.

He again stressed the need for the board of the OSP to draft a medium-term strategic plan for the office despite the fact that a lot of things ought to be prioritized. «Not only does this ensure continuity at their early stage; it also provides a framework for those who want to support the office,» he said. Dr Asante also emphasized the need for stronger coordination among governmental anti-corruption institutions because of the duplication of

efforts in investigations into the same issues. For instance, he said, some tax evasion cases before the OSP were also being investigated by the Economic and Organized Crime Office (EOCO). Dr Asante also identified gaps in the financing and operations of the OSP.

President Akufo Addo’s sworn way out of political graft in Ghana is through a man he has appointed Special Prosecutor, first in the history of the West African Country. Martin Amidu, a former Attorney General and Minister for Justice may have an enviable record of protecting the public purse through his personal initiatives and exploits. But events, actions and or inactions that has characterized his time in office so far is anything but encouraging. Already, there is growing apprehension among majority of Ghanaians; the skeptic are convinced that the office is a cover for the rhetoric on the war against corruption in Ghana judging from what has happened so far. But as time goes by, the optimists are patiently waiting to confirm their position that this is a genuine intention with bottle necks.



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The Mentor's Foundation is impacting lives of vulnerable Cameroonians one project at a time

By Amos Fofung

At the belle of Mount Cameroon, the highest Mountain in West Africa, which stands imposingly at 4095 meters in the heart of Buea, South West region, a local nongovernmental is restoring hope to vulnerable and less privileged Cameroonians via its mentoring programs.

From supporting internally displaced persons, IDPs forced to flee their homes due to the countries simmering Anglophone crisis, mentoring and assisting children through school thus preparing them for official examinations; to donating to the physically challenged and orphanages, The Mentor's Foundation represents the very scoop of humanity.

Via its projects spanning from the agricultural sector, education, vocational training and skill empowerment, the not-for-profit organization is empowering Cameroonians, enabling them to be self-sufficient as the country is faced with an economic impasse brought about by the simmering separatist crisis and the war on terrorism in its Northern regions.

With dozens already benefiting from the organization which launched its activities in 2016, the beneficiaries in turn, use their acquired skills to enrich their peers in their respective communities.

Led by Agbor Paul Agbor, its Chief Executive Officer, The Mentor's Foundation, THEMEFO, a nonprofit community-based organization has its activities centered on;



Entrepreneurial workshops geared at preparing students for life after school.

education, vocational training, sensitizations, poverty alleviation and promoting second generation agriculture.

With its partner organisations and stakeholders, the humanitarian organization has engaged in the following life-changing projects, all geared at assisting the local populace of Cameroon.

Project #1: Empowering Internally Displaced women

The Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon's English-speaking regions has forced more than 300,000 people to be internally displaced with over 30,000 as refugees.

Witnessing the ordeal of these women who could not afford to feed or provide shelter for themselves, the

organization has repeatedly assisted groups of 15 women who are randomly selected, trained and empowered to sustain themselves.

"After realizing that single mothers are amongst the most affected after being forcibly displaced, we are working in close collaboration with a foreign organization to provide 15 internally displaced women

with training and resources to generate income for themselves and their families. This project is ongoing and almost at the conclusive phase of the first edition," says the organization's vision bearer.

Project #2: Education Today

In August 2017 faced with the impending school boycott enforced by separatist fighters who have sworn to prevent school resumption unless they gain their objective, The Mentor's Foundation launched an education-oriented TV program that helped bridge the gap between students and teachers.

Lectures were delivered on live TV to thousands of student audiences who could not sit in school and receive lectures. An initiative which landed the organization an international award and support.

Initially schedule to last for just that academic year since it was anticipated that school will effectively resume come 2018, the program has been up and running every since due to the governments inability to effectively ensure school resumption in the troubled North West and South West regions.

With an estimated 10,000 viewers who are all students forced out of classrooms, the program that was formally broadcasted on local TV will soon hit national TV due to increase demand and the need to reach wider audiences.

Project #3: Entrepreneurship for



Children receive training via live televised programs.



IDP women benefit from agricultural incentives showcase their farms.



Donation to orphans and widows.

youths

True to its objectives of empowering for socio-economic enhancement, the Mentor's Foundation organized a two-day seminar in Buea, Cameroon for students and stake holders of the South West Region. The professional development seminar had as main guest speakers Mr. Peter Ngu Tayong from the Harvard University and Mr. Ayum James-South West Regional Coordinator for Volunteerism.

With a pulling crowd of over 3,000 students and 200 educational stake holders, attendees were groomed on entrepreneurship and the importance of IT know-how as the prepare to connect with the job market.

The training symposium which was the first of its kind, according to its organizers

proved very effective with numerous positive feedbacks. We gathered that plans are afoot to organize them more regularly and rotatory in the regions

Project #4: Provision of Relief items to vulnerable

widows and orphan

In a bid to put a smile on the faces of the less privilege, The Mentor's Foundation paid a visit to a widow center, two orphanages in Buea and another in Mutengene. These visits had as primary

motives to put smiles on the faces of less privileged, and to campaign for more assistance and support for them.

During each visit, tons of food items, household provisions and didactic materials are handed over to

the centers so as to enable them better care for the dozens of orphans they sometime play host to.

Equally, the foundation is currently sponsoring a dozen 12 under privileged children at high-school via its scholarship scheme. To the coordinator, Agbor Paul Agbor, "education is a necessity to all".

In just two years of operation, the foundation has won the award for Best NGO in Cameroon in 2017 by the Guardian Post Newspaper, an international award from Future Africa Leaders Award (FALA 2017) which recognized the necessity and primordial role the foundation via its educational TV program; "Education Today" was contributing in the lives of school-deprived students.



Presenting FELA award to Mayor of Buea, Ekema Patrick Esunge, third from left.

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Jamestown to Jamestown: It's been 400 years, we are going back to Ghana

By Amos Fofung

Over 400 years since the first black slaves landed in Jamestown Virginia, USA, this year has witnessed the greatest number of Africans in the diaspora that are going back home.

'Jamestown to Jamestown', a ceremony that saw African Americans retracing the transatlantic slave route travelled by their ancestors kicked off on August 18 in Washington, D.C. with participants travelling via bus to Jamestown, Virginia, for a prayer vigil and candle-lighting ceremony.

The ceremony marked the African "Maafa," a term that describes the suffering embedded in the past four centuries related to enslavement. The participants would then assemble at Jamestown, Accra-Ghana for an ancestral Healing ceremony which enabled them to for the first time in their lives, learn about



The door of no return at the Cape Coast Castle. photo Wikimedia Commons.

their heritage and connect with their tradition.

"Jamestown to Jamestown represents one of the most powerful moments in the history of the Black Experience," says NAACP President and CEO Derrick Johnson. "We are now able to actualize the healing and collective unity so many generations have worked to

achieve in ways which bring power to our communities in America, Africa and throughout our Diaspora."

Travelling among the dozen participants to on the journey was U.S. famous comedian and host of The Steve Harvey Show, alongside his family, who visited some tourist sites including castles where slaves were kept as he embarked on

the tour to expose himself and learn more about Ghanaian history and culture.

"It's so wonderful to see our brothers and sisters from the African diaspora making the journey to the continent. He is in town with his family and taking in the sights and sounds of Ghana. He even got a brand-new outfit made by a local designer," organizers of

the "year of return" said on a social media post.

Launched last year in Washington, D.C., by Ghana's President Nana Akufo-Addo, for Africans in the diaspora to visit the West African country as part of the commemoration 400th year since the first African slaves landed in Virginia, the initiative witnessed a remarkable participation this year.

Days after, another American TV star, Danny Glover, a legend in Hollywood landed in Ghana. Speaking at the airport, the movie director, producer and acclaimed humanitarian said it is important for the "African diaspora to reconnect with Africa".

"It was important for me to be part of this trip because I think it is important for all African Americans to build a strong relationship with the wider African diaspora and the continent of Africa itself,"



Steve Harvey at Elmina castle. Ghana has received high profile figures in recent times



he said in a tweet about his visit.

Before them, in December last year, actor Boris Kodjoe and some of his Hollywood friends and family including; Nicole Ari Parker, Diggy Simmons, Micheal Jai White, Anthony Anderson (of Blackish), Rosario Dawson, Jidenna, Cynthia Bailey, Bozoma Saint John spent a significant part of their

month in Ghana.

Another Hollywood actor who came to Ghana was Samuel L. Jackson who had earlier traced his roots to Gabon. His adventures in the country included a documentary shoot and visits to local markets in Accra and fish markets in Cape Coast.

Year of return
Speaking at Washington's National Press Club,

Ghanaian president, Akufo-Addo said Ghana would open its «arms even wider to welcome home our brothers and sisters in what will become a birthright journey home for the global African family.»

This year-long initiative builds on a long tradition of looking outwards.

Ghana, the first sub-Saharan African country

to win independence from colonial rule, has a history of pursuing ties with Africans overseas. It dates back to the country's first President Kwame Nkrumah, whose vision of pan-Africanism included alliances with diaspora communities.

Nkrumah enjoyed warm relations with African-American icons such as Muhammad Ali and Malcolm

X, who both traveled to Ghana to meet him. Writer Maya Angelou spent time in the country after its independence and civil rights leader W.E.B. Du Bois is buried in Accra.

These initiatives have had some success. An estimated 3,000 African-Americans had permanently settled in Ghana by 2014, CNN reported.

Washington Braces Up for Mega Forum on Making African Trade Easy -Q& A with Angelle Kwemo on Mate 2019

By Ajong Mbapndah L

Trade, the African Continental Free Trade Area, Prosper Africa initiative, business networks and more will be in focus during the upcoming Making African Trade Easy Forum organized by Believe in Africa Foundation. Considering that this is the 5th anniversary of Believe in Africa, we decided to do something different, says Founder and CEO Angelle Kwemo in a preview of the forum with Pan African Visions.

"We are strongly mobilizing the African diaspora, African, and American firms to explore partnership opportunities," says Angelle Kwemo. Also expected at the event are several African leaders and close to 200 participants from Africa.

With experience working in diverse legislative and policy circles in the US, and Africa, Angelle Kwemo believes that MATE 2019 which runs from October 3-4 will provide a unique platform for delegates to understand and explore the myriad of business opportunities in the light of recent developments in both Africa and the USA.



Angelle Kwemo Founder and CEO Of Believe in Africa

You are Founder and Chair of Believe in Africa, could you start by introducing the organization for us and what it does?

Believe in Africa is a non profit organization created by African diaspora leaders to promote African solutions to African problems, advocate for increasing the role of the African private sector into the continent's economic transformation, promoting intra African trade, and last but not the least promoting investment in women, and youth. What we do is organize meetings, seminars, and create platforms to facilitate partnerships.

The organization is hosting the Making Africa Trade Easy Fair in Washington, DC, can you shed light on this?

This year is our fifth-year anniversary. We decided to do something special in Washington DC where the organization was born. Three important policies changes happen this year that coincided with our mission and will be at the center of MATE. Private sector, Finance and intra African trade.

1- Prosper Africa initiative announced by the current administration is perfectly in line with our vision to put the African

private sector at the center of the continent's economic growth as well as at the center of US Africa cooperation. We strongly believe that Africa should gradually get out of the "Aid dependency". This can only happen if Africa attains its economic independence. That independence will begin when the African private sector will be strong and prosperous. Also, with Africa's population growth exceeding the billion, Job creation is an emergency. Those jobs will not come from the public sector, nor from the humanitarian programs. Therefore, it is imperative that the governments, Africans, and partners like

the US, MUST create the enabling environment for the African private sector to prosper. This also applies on US foreign policies. I believe this is what Prosper Africa intends to do. Support the private sector to double US Africa two ways trade.

2- International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), will open soon. Created by the Better Utilization of Investments Leading to Development (BUILT Act) with 60 billion USD appropriated (double of OPIC), it is one of the biggest changes in U.S. development policy in recent years. The DFC will combine the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) and the U.S. Agency for International Development's Development Credit Authority, add new development finance capabilities, including equity authority, and have a higher lending limit than its predecessor. It is aimed at advancing private-sector-led development and will prioritize low-income and low-middle income countries, where the DFC's services will have the greatest impact.

3- This July the



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African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) became effective, creating the world's largest single market, including the world's fastest growth economies. It is historical and creating the biggest opportunity of our lifetime. By 2030, Africa will have a combined consumer and business spending of \$6.7 trillion in 2030. We should all play a role in making the continental market successful.

It is for these three reasons that as the African diaspora in the U.S., we decided to use our networks to help in promoting these policies with the concept of MATE.

MATE is a collaborative effort between us, USAID, and the Ronald Reagan Building & International Trade Center to promote Prosper Africa, and African Economic integration in order to strengthen U.S. - Africa trade relations and double two ways trade between both continents using the bridge created by the African diaspora.

Any projections on the level of participation

from companies and businesses, and what will represent a successful MATE forum for you?

We are strongly mobilizing the African diaspora, African and American firms to explore partnership opportunities. As you know, the African diaspora is historically, culturally, and emotionally connected with the continent. Their proximity with the continent has been unutilized until today. They are the most effective US ambassadors to the continent. They abide by the American standards and have good understanding of both continent's ways of doing business. With MATE, we want to equip them with tools that they need to trade and invest more in Africa. In doing so, they are not only contributing to the development of the continent, but they also promoting American products and services, and creating badly needed jobs in both continents.

That is why we are also bringing together U.S. agencies under Prosper Africa

hospice, African leaders from both the public and private sectors to discuss and explore partnership opportunities.

How will the program of events look like, what should participants expect?

The MATE program will comprise plenary sessions, workout sessions, seminars and roundtables. We will discuss investment opportunities in various sectors like Technology and digital, AfCFTA, healthcare, agribusiness, textile and fashion, power.

Participants will get more insights or learn about resources available in the U.S through "Prosper Africa", meet potential partners and investors. We will hold exhibitions, and create platforms for B2B and B2C.

Also, we are planning a special session on Women in Agriculture to coincide with our annual "AWAA" meeting., enabling them to become self-reliant, productive and competitive. AWAA network was launched last year in Morocco under the hospice

of H.E. Aissata Issoufou Mahamadou. We will bring women leaders from Africa to Washington to showcase their products and explore the U.S. market.

May we know some of the dignitaries who have confirmed participation at the event?

On the African side, we will have two heads of States in attendance H.E. Roch Kabore, President of Burkina Faso, H.E. Felix Tsisekedi, President of the Democratic Republic of Congo, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahama, Chair AU Commission, H.E. Albert M. Muchanga, AU Commissioner of Trade and Industry, H.E. Lesego Makgothi, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Relations of Lesotho, Chantal Yelu Mulop, SA President of Congo on youth and violence against Women, high level representation of Afrexim Bank, Niger, Lesotho, Guinea, Mauritius, Rwanda, Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, and Senegal.

We will host Africa's biggest women advocate like H.E. Adjoavi Sika Kaboré,

First Lady of Burkina Faso, H.E. Aisha Buhari, and First Lady of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and H.E. Aissata Mahamadou, First lady of Niger.

On the U.S.G side, we will have, Hon. Tibor Nagy, Assistant Secretary on Africa, Hon. Ramsey Day, Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator for Africa, USAID, Hon. Constance Hamilton, AUSTR for Africa, Hon. Oren Wyche-Shaw, Deputy Assistant Administrator, USAID, Matthew Rees, Prosper Africa Coordinator, Tom Hardy, Acting Director, U.S. Trade and Development Agency, CD Glin, President & CEO, US Africa Development Foundation, Hon Alicia Robinson-Morgan, Director for Africa, Millenium Challenge Corporation, and Worku Gachou, Director for Africa, International Development Finance Corporation.

In the private sectors, we have more than 200 companies including large ones

like OCP, MTN, Standard Chartered Bank and many more for more than 20 countries.

How much participation do you expect to come from Africa?

We are expecting around 200 participants from Africa. I must be honest to say that the most recent developments in U.S. immigrations and visa policies have been counterproductive because it is difficult to imagine doubling two ways trade when African partners are unable to visit the U.S. It is also part of our duties to raise awareness about obstacles to trade. America needs to make sure its policies and all agencies policies are not self destructive, and pushing Africa closer to China, Russia and other competitors.

What is your take on the overall strategy of the Trump administration towards Africa, what has



There will be a special session hosted by the African Women in Agriculture and Arts AWAA, a platform dedicated to empowering women in agriculture, especially in rural areas.

changed in the sphere of development and trade?

I want to remain objective and nonpartisan as African policies have always been in the past. On the trade front, I think the administration has good intentions: help Africa

become less dependent on aid. If you run a poll in Africa on this subject, the majority of Africans will agree. The question now is how? I think it will start with a big mind shift that American will have to make. Africa has changed,

and the new Africans are ready for business and they are open to explore different avenues. I think American firms should come to the realization that they are in a competitive field and learn to adjust accordingly. This is the

most difficult part.

Lastly America needs to innovate in their foreign policy approach and use the cultural bridge that the African diaspora represents. I will not emphasize it enough. Diaspora entrepreneurs are also pragmatic. If they don't find support in the U.S. they will find it somewhere else. It would be a waste.

As I said earlier, immigration policies send wrong signal to our African partners. How can you do business with someone who is not welcome in your country?

After MATE, what next for Believe in Africa, any other big projects or ventures in the horizon?

We will continue to build MATE and AWAA. I will give you more details in October 4, 2019. Big announcement are coming.

Free roaming benefits operators, users as One Africa Network reaches 11 countries

By Jean d'Amour Mugabo

Africans have for so long suffered heavy costs on mobile phone communication especially after crossing the home country's borders. There, it means, one faces choking costs as they pay higher on making calls and incurs some charges on receiving calls too.

Some African Heads of State experienced the gravity of the problem and discussed it at the Transform Africa Summit held in Kigali, Rwanda, in October 2013, during which the Smart Africa Manifesto was adopted by seven African Heads of State –Rwanda, Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan, Mali, Gabon, and Burkina Faso – with One Africa Network

being among major projects put forward to pursue the Smart Africa Alliance's goal of transforming Africa into a knowledge-based economy through affordable access to broadband and usage of Information and Communications Technologies (ICT).

About six years since then, four countries in East Africa's Northern Corridor and seven in West Africa have come together to create two separate free roaming zones but the target is to get in one network all the 26 Smart Africa member countries and others that will join in the future, according to Seyni Malan Fati, Head of Projects at Smart Africa Alliance that is headquartered in Kigali.



Seyni Malan Fati, Head of Projects at Smart Africa Alliance. Photo courtesy.

The Senegalese Telecom Engineer says free roaming is benefiting mobile operators as users stay longer on the network while enjoying the costs reduced by 45%.

In an interview with Pan African Visions (PAV), Mr. Seyni explained the plans to expand the Alliance's membership, implementing big projects, and Africa's potentials and challenges

on the way to African Single Digital Market. Below are the interview excerpts:

PAV: Smart Africa Alliance has been in place for about six years now; which major achievements have you registered so far?

Seyni: The vision of the Alliance is to transform Africa into a single digital market. One of the first and big projects that are here at Smart Africa is to achieve One Africa Network. The objective of One Africa Network is to maintain the African network traffic in Africa and to have one network so that all the countries will be able to exchange voice traffic and SMS traffic without going

outside the continent. In the same project it was also to lower the costs and tariffs for the roaming. For example if I am leaving Rwanda heading to Senegal, we want to have the lowest prices for me to call back in Rwanda when I am in Senegal. So, we started by doing two small projects; the first one is here in the East African part, it is called the North Corridor Free Roaming. And today we have low cost and low tariff on roaming between Rwanda, Kenya, South Sudan and Uganda. The retail tariff is kept at 10 cents/min. We have seen the revenues increase by 58% for the operators and the costs reduced by 45% for the users.

In 2017, we implemented the same thing in the West Africa and there we have seven countries: Senegal, Mali, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso, Benin and Togo. Over there, we call it roam like local. When you travel from Senegal to Mali, for example, you will keep your SIM-card, no need to buy new SIM-card, and you receive calls without paying anything extra. You call at the same tariffs as the local subscribers. And now our goal is to extend it to all countries within the Smart Africa space.

There is also Intra-African Cross Border Connectivity. This one belongs to our platinum member, Tata Communications, which is working with Guinea. They want to link all the countries using satellite or fibre optic. The project has already started and they want to connect Guinea, Sierra Leone and Mali before this year ends. In the coming years, they will connect other Guinea neighbouring countries and keep expanding to cover the

entire Smart Africa Alliance.

PAV: Smart Africa has 26 member countries out of 54 on the continent. What is your projection on expanding the Alliance?

Seyni: Our objective is to achieve as many and good projects as we can to attract other countries to join the Alliance. Our goal for next year, we want to have Nigeria because it is a big country (the largest economy in Africa) with a large population, and Ethiopia, and some countries in the North like Morocco and Algeria. We don't want to do a lot of projects; we want to do big projects to achieve big things.

It will depend on what Smart Africa achieves. If you want other countries to come on board, you have to achieve big things and they will see the benefits to be in Smart Africa. We are also working with the African Union and regional organisations. If, within our member states, we achieve big projects like One Africa Network, Digital ID, Smart Cities, other countries will wish to come on board and follow the trend. We won't wait for all African countries to come on board; the thing is to do big things and thereafter others will join us. We have now almost half of the continent's countries, and the number keeps increasing with Zimbabwe being the 26th and latest member.

PAV: What is the current state of Africa's digital transformation?

Seyni: When we created Smart Africa Alliance, we set projects that the Alliance is jointly managing and each country has a flagship. For example, Smart Cities is for

Rwanda; Data Centre is for Djibouti; Cyber Security is for Cote d'Ivoire; Senegal has Broadband and Green Economy; our new member Zimbabwe has e-Agriculture; Ghana has e-payment, etc. Each country has a particular project to deal with. The Alliance is helping each country to build their project's blueprint and help in looking for funds to implement it. This year, we want to start implementing Smart Cities project. We are hiring a consultancy firm to build, for five countries, national strategy for Smart Cities drawing on the Smart Cities Blueprint that Rwanda launched in 2017. We also want to implement Smart Village in Niger with the support of our partner, Inmarsat.

We also want to have data centres in Africa because in Africa we only have 5% of the data centre of the world. So, we want to implement data centre because we don't want our data to be stocked somewhere else in the world. We want to do a study to see where we can establish data centres, how many data centres we need, maybe one in the North, another in the South, one in the central, one in the East, another in the West and the goal is to link all those data centres.

Digital ID is also one of the big projects we want to implement in the coming years. We are also working on broadband connectivity; it's central to African digitisation. We are also working for startup growth. We want to have startup strategy and laws to spur the growth of start-ups in Africa. The StartUp Act has been launched in Tunisia which is leading in this flagship and we want to have the same for

five countries at least.

PAV: What can Smart Africa Secretariat recommend African governments and private sector for better advancement towards digital transformation?

Seyni: The first thing is for countries to work together; not to go to Europe or America to see what they are doing. They can stick here in Africa and work together with other countries to see what they have and what they don't have. If they have something, you can take the positive things, gather all the tools, all the papers, all the laws, all the frameworks and you implement in your country. That's why since June, we are implementing a Smart Africa platform, the database in which we put, for each country, all the documents that they have.

If, for example, one of our members wants to know about a law in Senegal, they will have to go in the database and see that Senegal enacted a law in 2018, and they will take the law and see if they can take it or some parts of it and implement it in Rwanda. So, the first thing is to work together and the role of Smart Africa is to harmonise everything and to spot the big projects we can lead, because we cannot lead in everything; so, we have big projects.

Another thing, if we want to transform Africa, is to have broadband access, because now, internet is the most important thing in Africa. The main project is to have a broadband strategy for Africa, in rural areas and cities.

PAV: What are the available opportunities that African countries can leverage to fast-track

digital transformation?

Seyni: We didn't do a study but, in my view, we have the capacity; we have the knowledge, we have everything. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) ratified last year presents opportunities. The only thing is to remain focused, work together and do things for Africans. We need to find solutions for African problems. We are able to achieve things and help Africa to rise by working together and by doing things ourselves. Everybody is coming to Africa because they know everything is here; operators are coming in Africa; China is coming in Africa, India wants to partner with Africa... everyone knows that Africa has potentials, capacities, everything we have it here but we have to believe in ourselves.

PAV: What do you find as major challenges impeding African digital transformation and what actions are required to overcome those challenges?

Seyni: The major challenges we have include lack of broadband access; financial constraints because most people in Africa cannot afford things like internet, devices... so we have to make things which are affordable to most of the population in Africa. There is also skills gap. We have to develop skills, to build schools and to have training, alphabetisation and everything. There is also Gender divide. We have to fight for women and youth inclusion in our activities because in the next generation, they will implement.

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Susan Dexter: From Sierra Leone To Running The Victorian Candle Bed and Breakfast, the number one getaway in Hollywood Maryland

By Ajong Mbapndah L & Amos Fofung

Planning a getaway from the hustle and bustle that characterize everyday life especially in the DMV are? The Victorian Candle Bed and Breakfast located in Hollywood, Md offers you a unique taste of luxury at a very affordable price.

For those unfamiliar with the term, a bed and breakfast is a small lodging establishment that offers overnight accommodation and breakfast. Bed and breakfasts are often private owned facilities and typically have between four and eleven rooms, with six being the average. In addition, a B&B usually has the hosts living in the house offering exceptional services and giving their guest the home feeling lacking in most hotels.

With an exquisite 8 suits ready to accommodate you and your peers, Victorian Candle B&B according to its



This beautiful Bed and Breakfast is nestled on 12 wooded acres in Hollywood, MD, Photo Ben Bangoura, AlloAfrica News.

founder and Chief Executive Officer, Susan Dexter, prides itself as one of the few African-

owned bed and breakfast in the DMV. Originally from Sierra Leone, Susan Dexter

has put in enormous time and resources

"This is a good place to come because of the food. We can cook anything someone wants us to cook be it African and American cousin. If you have events here, we work with you financially, and I do not think most of the other bed and breakfast do same. Most of them, when they do their breakfast, it is continental but mine is hot food that meets your everyday need, all upon your request and taste," she said in a chat with Pan African Visions.

Asked if accommodations can be provided for private ceremonies, the CEO responded that "it is a bed and breakfast were we have

8 suits and I mind you, the rooms come with a full breakfast menu, we also have a room called Butler room that we host private events be them birthdays, small weddings, conferences and meetings among others."

With a setting capacity of over 75 guests, the Butler room as it is known, resonates calmly with the serene environment perfect for a quiet ceremony or private getaway.

Situated in an environmentally friendly location called Surally plantation with close-by rivers that offer guest the opportunity to purchase fresh fish, the CEO of Victorian Candle B&B makes very



Founder and CEO Susan Dexter says the Victorian Candle Bed and Breakfast is at ease offering American and African cuisines. Photo Ben Bangoura, AlloAfrica News.

good use of the natural environment which provides fresh vegetables and African spices for the cuisine.

"There are a lot of farms that you can pick vegetables or if you like potatoes, fresh corn and others, provided by the Armish people that inhabit this locality. It is a good place for relaxation due to its quiet and beautiful environment," added Susan Dexter.

The strategic location of the Victorian Candle B&B also comes with opportunities

for visitors or patrons to get easy access to other facilities for hiking, horseback riding, fishing, kayaking, picnicking and cycling.

With little over 16 years of experience in the hospitality industry, the founder says thanks to her dedicated staff and love for hospitality the place is gaining momentum with growing customers base who have been entreated with the Victoria B&B experience.



The Victorian Candle Bed Breakfast has well furnished and neat rooms, Photo Ben Bangoura, AlloAfrica News.

Zimbabwe to Invest in Corporate Social Responsibility in Mining Sector to Consummate Global Standards.

By Nevson Mpofu

There is a total of 14 million small scale miners in 80 countries in the World. The biggest population is in Africa. The increasing number is caused by several factors among them economic hardships. Zimbabwe is among those increasing small-scale miners due to economic hardships. Vulnerability, political in-stability and the move towards Indigenisation, Command Mining and finally the big impacting factor of climate change come in as well.

Henrietta Rushwaya President of the Zimbabwe Miners Federation said the increase in small scale miners is a cause for concern at a time the country has severe economic challenges. She also cited that above all artificially economic hardships continue to increase, there-by affecting millions of these. Naturally, she notes Climate Change is a challenge.

Henrietta Rushwaya

President of the Zimbabwe Miners Federation contacted through a call in response to a presentation read on her behalf in Harare at an Institute for Sustainability Africa [INSAF] Annual Mining Business Symposium said the whole World had increasing poverty of Artisanal small scale miners. This, she added was a result of economic difficulties and Climate Change. In the end, she notes, leads to over-increase of Vulnerability, poverty stricken and marginalised Artisanal Mine Workers.

"The main challenges of our concern are with the country that has experienced a number of challenges socially, politically and economically. We as a country, we remain targeted by hardships which we need to over-come. Climate Change has played an increased impacting role in the whole story."

"There are thousands of small scale miners who



Henrietta Rushwaya President of the Zimbabwe Miners Federation.

continue to face challenges because there are also several changes around the circle of poverty. Women have increased in big number owing special attention to economic empowerment. However, pathetic, it is sad to note that these lack mining finance, empowerment, equipment and basic mining resources.

"A number of them are in

a bid to get assistance from the Mining Bank. They eager to start business ventures. Some of them are getting in the mining sector for the sake of fending for their poverty stricken families. The main reason they run away from is that they have no formal employment. Therefore, the number has increased in the In-Formal sector. This is 90% in the country. Among them

the big figure is of small scale miners almost 30% to 40%.

An Artisanal small scale miner from Mt Darwin, Ellen Mukoto said the increase caused by hardships continues to increase thereby affecting women mostly who are affected seriously by worst poisonous chemicals like mercury which affects a big number of women.

"A bigger number in the

Mt-Darwin area is under threat as mercury is used at the expense of these women. Their lives are on danger both as well with the lives of their un-born babies who get affected during pregnancy. A number of women have been affected and some died of un-known reasons. There is no doubt a number of their babies are as well affected”.

In a presentation on Overview of the Extractive Industry in Zimbabwe, an official from the Ministry of Mines Esther Marimba alluded to the statement that had been erroneously taken in line with the situation on ground. An Artisanal Miner Arnold Chireya had expressed that small scale miners were being blocked by the Ministry to do the mining work.

“The Ministry has not restricted small scale Artisanal miners from doing their work because we see them as miners. The challenge they face is finance, Corporate Social Responsibility, Technical Support, basic resources, training and tools to use in the Industry. There are other factors of course, but we have taken them aboard for a long time.

“Financially , the main challenge is that the total amount needed for being a registered , licenced and sustainably grown Small Scale Miner is a total of Zimbabwe \$5 million dollars . Small Scale Miners cannot afford the amount. Secondly, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe does not lend them money because they do not pay back. These miners are nomadic. They move from place to place.

University of Zimbabwe Lecturer Mr Eric Mlambo gave a risky analysis of the mining sector citing



dangers miners face. He gave examples of several mines which have collapsed at the expense of human lives in Kadoma , Mt Darwin and Chinhoyi . A number of them have died in mine shafts during their work.

Corporate Social Responsibility.

A lot of challenges impact small scale miners. Among these, we have extensive shortage of protective clothing, shoes, helmets, overalls and some other kind of clothing worth protective during their work escapades. The most important of all is lack of access to three basic needs, food, shelter and mining clothing. In the end their Health deteriorates as they become affected by Cardio-Vascular Diseases.

“There are a number of challenges related to lack of protective clothing during the time mine workers do their work under ground . Mining needs proper protective clothes, tools and basic resources which can make them be protected from several dangers while underground.

“Because of debt and poverty ,artisanal small scale miners end up involved in gold panning which exposes them to hazardous Health

conditions , like sloshing in muddy , dirty water , germ infested and polluted water as they do their activities in stiff , and harsh conditions .

“The first and fore-most thing they need to do is capacity building so that they can be integrated into the whole system of the mining Activities. These capacity building and trainings, of course needs funding. That is the reason why most countries in the World fail to work and develop these miners who later are exposed to absolute, relative poverty and some forms of poverty. Lastly, dialogue is important so that they can communicate, share ideas and link Governments in the event of any challenges faced”.

Formalising the Artisanal Small Scale Miners.

The most important work is how the sector can be formalised. A mining expert, Mr Kenneth Mungoni said the first and fore-most work is the inclusion of marginalised miners around the country. He notes that these needs to be included in national dialogues, trainings, capacity building and orientation and total integration in-order for them to develop, adapt and adopt skills needed for them to be like large scale miners.

“The first thing is inclusion of marginalised miners through trainings, capacity building and skills inculcation. They later become developed, adapted as well. The revision of the legal frame is important to make these become oriented and get integrated into the system. This at last fosters integration.

Incentivising Miners. Geological data Supply.

There is need for prioritising Small Scale Mining to promote Economic Development, make the country achieve Growth Rates by above 5% and reduce poverty and vulnerability. Miners according to a survey by several mining organisations lack Geological data, adds an expert Mungoni , leads to trial and error as they get into their activities .

“Lack of Geological Data plunges miners into trial and error. At last miners fall into a number of challenges inside the pits as they do their work at try and error mechanism. This leads to unexpected iuaccidents .All the above if not exercised leads to low yields, environmental degradation and loss of Investments. Then it means countries lag behind in terms of economic profits for growth

and development. Benefits are low if this happens. “.he said.

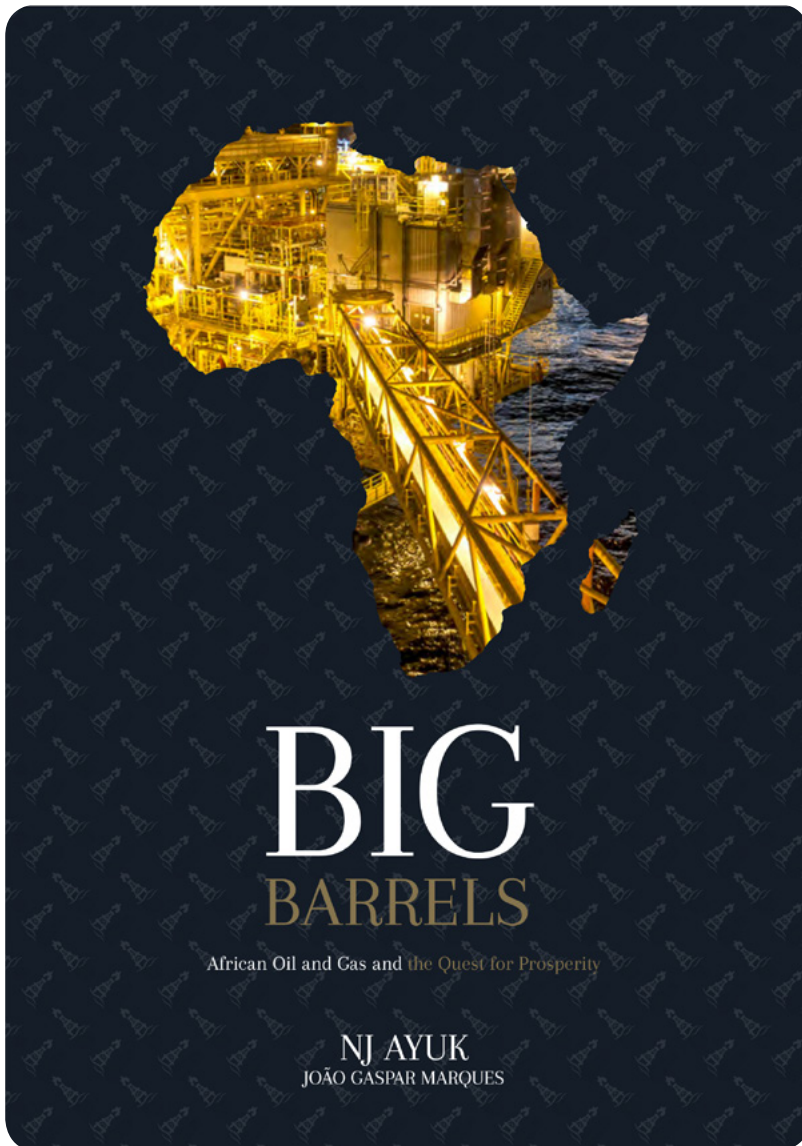
Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative –[EITI]

ZELA, Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association Official Joyce Nyamukunda spoke on the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative. The system is a move to stamp out corruption in the mining sector. It is a way of promoting Accountability so that resources can be accounted for credibly.

“One of the main challenge is that these small scale miners are used by Large Scale Miners who finance them. They do this so that they can later buy Gold from these small Scale Miners at the end. There is also massive corruption in the manner the gold is bought and sold. Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative curbs corruption, promotes transparency as well and makes mining companies accountable.

“As ZELA it is our mandate to make all companies , communities , Civil Society and Government access information related to EITI so that corruption can be ended . This makes Mining companies Governance easier and manageable. “ said Joyce Nyamukunda .

According to the Constitution there is need to curb corruption so as to promote accountability in terms of natural resources so that communities can benefit as well. Section 62 of the Constitution calls for access to Information. Section 9 calls for proper issuance of Mining licences. This, if followed could stick to Global standards.



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African Continental Free Trade Area will be beneficial for Cameroon-Experts Say

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

The African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA) was officially launched on July 7, 2019 during the 12th extraordinary summit of the African Union held from July 4 to 8, 2019 in Niamey, Niger. The government of Cameroon ratified ACFTA on July 19, 2019 after it was signed on March 21, 2018 in Kigali, Rwanda, together with other 43 countries.

Experts in various domains met in Yaounde August 29, 2019, during the second edition of the Nkafu policy debate with theme "Will Cameroon benefit from the Africa Continental Free Trade Area?" According to various experts, Cameroon ratifying this agreement will strengthen economic growth in the country while others are not so sure, saying Cameroon should not open up but should instead protect its economy.

To Dr. Fabian Sundjo, the ACFTA is very good and Cameroon will indeed benefit in the long run. He said, "Trade is the best in terms of increasing growth which will in turn increase the growth of the country" while adding that the "ACFTA will increase competitiveness. It makes the country to be competitive which brings benefit to the country".

He added that, "The free trade was important but there are some issues that had to be handled, some structures put in place before going forth to sign the treaty. The issue that was highlighted could be based on the competitiveness of the economy and the necessity to



Experts discussing if Cameroon benefits from ACFTA.

increase productivity". "Once you increase productivity with good institutions, and a good structure that will permit the transfer of goods. If some countries are not ready and their productivity is low, it becomes difficult to move forward and sign the ACFTA."

According to experts, the ACFTA will bring together 1.3 billion people, create a \$3.4 trillion economic block and usher in a new era of development on the continent. More so, it will enable African economies to strengthen South-South cooperation, conquer new markets and diversify sources of supply.

According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, UNECA, intra-African trade could increase by more than 50 per cent and even double within 10 years after the entry into force of the ACFTA

compared to approximately 15 per cent currently.

Dr. Louis Marie Kakdeu, Economist, Policy Fellow in Economic Affairs, Nkafu Policy Institute said there are two reasons why to him Cameroon will not benefit from the agreement. He stated "the necessity to respect the rules and principles of free trade. The African zone should respect it, if not it is no longer the free trade but something like mercantilism. The second is the necessity to put in place in Cameroon economic reforms before engaging a country into competition. One cannot go to fight when one is not powerful or competitive."

"We are afraid that in the next two years or so, we will have companies created in Cameroon dying as a result of the agreement. Now it is 80 per cent which is very dangerous. We have to stop it and we cannot be having

problems and we still go and add other problems every day. Today, we have to open where we are competitive and if we are not competitive we do not open up", He added.

In an increasingly globalized world, only the most competitive countries (that is, countries with strong economic fundamental and strategic frameworks or with diversified sources of growth) are likely to gain the largest shares in trade.

The Cameroon economy, considered as the driving force of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC), is presently facing major structural change. In a 2018 report by the Nkafu Policy Institute, the poverty level is alarming as less than 17.65 per cent of Cameroonian adults earn more than 200,000 FCFA.

The Small and Medium Size Enterprises landscape

in Cameroon is very young and fragile. In a 2016 General Enterprise Census report, 77.5% of the companies listed were at most 6 years old. Some major challenges facing entrepreneurs to fully establish and grow their enterprises in Cameroon as outlined by the Nkafu Policy Institute comprise taxation, the cost and access to credit, and the formalities.

The second edition of the Nkafu debate was organized by the Nkafu Policy Institute-a think tank under the Denis and Lenora Foretia Foundation, which works to catalyze the economic transformation of African countries by focusing on social entrepreneurship, science and technology, health and the implementation of development policies that will create economic opportunities for all.

Zimbabwe's plant breeders aim to scale up production of African traditional vegetables market

By Wallace Mawire

Plant breeders in Zimbabwe working with the Zimbabwe Plant Breeders Association (ZPBA) are promoting the scaling up and production of African traditional vegetables in-order to help combat the challenges of micronutrient deficiencies affecting at least a third of the developing world's population.

Various scientists and agricultural researchers convened at the Zimbabwe Plant Breeders Association anniversary held just a few kilometres outside the capital, Harare on 9 July, 2019 to present research findings on developments in plant breeding initiatives.

In an interesting research presentation titled: Unpacking the value of African traditional vegetables, researchers Dr Learn more Mwadzingeni, Dr Abe Shegro Gerrano and Dr Willem Jansen Van Rensburg are more important than exotic vegetables in most rural parts of Africa as nutrition and food security crops. They also add that rural and older people in Africa have greater appreciation of the nutritional and health benefits of the traditional vegetable species.

They also add that African traditional vegetables are mostly herbaceous plants whose fresh or dried portions can be used as food. They are described as native or introduced into Africa or evolved over a long period of time.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) on the nutritional security status in Africa, malnutrition is reported to

affect 23% of the sub-Saharan African population. It is reported that at least over 30% of adults and approximately 10 million children in Africa are overweight. Also anemia affects approximately 38% of reproductive African women. About 54% of children deaths in developing countries are reported to be associated with malnutrition.

According to the FAO, urbanisation and highly processed foods are reported to be the major drivers.

According to the Zimbabwean researchers, focus should be put on African traditional vegetables since they provide food security, nutritional security, they have medicinal properties and they adapt locally.

"Many traditional leaf vegetables tend to escape biotic and abiotic stress and are a source for income especially for resource poor people," the Researchers note.

The researchers are saying that exotic crops like cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, kale, Brussels sprouts, collard, turnip, rape, mustard are now common in modern dishes.



"Lets add diverse African leafy vegetables in our dishes together with this brassica pull for balanced nutrition," the researchers say.

Priority African vegetables which the researchers have recommended include okra, cat's whiskers/spiderplant, African eggplant, pig weed, cowpea leaves and immature green pods, pumpkin leaves, blacknight shade, black-jack, sweet potato leaves, African cucumbers, purslane and wild spinach/fat hen.

The researchers say that traditional vegetables like okra are important due to their composition of dietary fibre, potassium, vitamin B,C and K, folic acid, calcium and act as anti-oxidants.

Okra is reported also to help on improving immunity and strengthening of bones, is freely digested and improves vision and skin health. It also helps in combating diabetes and obesity, heart disease and cancers.

Another example given is the African egg-plant (fruit and leaf) which is reported to contain vitamin C,K and B6,fibre,potassium and also acts as an antioxidant. It is also reported to be becoming a major cash crop in some countries.

The cowpea is reported to contain various mineral elements, proteins, vitamin A,B,C and K, beta carotene and calories.

According to the

researchers, the role of the plant breeders in the value chain include germplasm collection and conservation, breeding and selection for improved traits including yield and yield components such as taste, quality and tenderness, identification and characterisation of edible samples based on promotion and value addition of African traditional vegetables based through product development and agro-processing.

On the market for African traditional vegetables, the researchers say that the world's population needs food and a balanced nutrition. They say there is appetite for African traditional vegetables and the markets need to be developed.

The local researcher plant breeders in Zimbabwe are emphasising the need for research collaborations. According to the researchers, it is necessary to partner to share research facilities and expertise with key players in African traditional vegetables research such as the World Vegetable Center (WorldVeg),the African Vegetable Breeding Consortium (AVBC),the Agricultural Research Council Vegetable and Ornamental Plants (ARC-VOPI),private breeding seed companies, national agricultural research systems and higher learning institutions.

According to the Zimbabwe researchers, the Africa Vegetable Breeding Consortium is a joint venture of WorldVeg and AFSTA. They are reported to have held their inaugural workshop in March 2019.



They provide knowledge and expertise in vegetable breeding for example focusing on the African eggplant, amaranth, brassica, carrot, mungbean, peppers and tomato, just to mention a few.

Benefits consortium member companies include

early access to WorldVeg breeding lines, screening protocols and information, access to ten free seed acquisitions per year from World-Veg and preferential World-Veg training access and 20% discount tuition.

According to the researchers, there is also the ARC-

Vegetable and Ornamental Plants Institute which is the leading vegetable research hub in Southern Africa.

The consortium and institute handle potatoes, sweet potatoes, medicinal plants and mostly African traditional species.

They also offer

vegetable research research collaboration opportunities, technical support services to the horticulture value chain and training courses on vegetable production.

As a way forward, local researchers and breeders in Zimbabwe are calling for the promotion and scaling

up of breeding, production and processing of African traditional vegetables, development of the market including partnerships with key players in African traditional vegetable research and development.

Roland Achenjang's soul-searching book; "Who and Why You Are" hits the stands

By Amos Fofung

As humans struggle to comprehend the evolution of our time on earth and how to maximize our experiences with a better understanding of who they are, Roland Achenjang has in his latest book titled; Who and Why You Are provided answers to some of these questions.

In his first book, Roland Achenjang summarizes what he says is who we truly are and why we are here each having an Earth life experience.

Spurred to write the book due to his search and understandings of the "Universal Truths, the author says; "I refer to the information as Universal Truths, because they equally apply to everyone throughout the planet, including you! I wrote the book because of how liberating and empowering the information (Universal Truths) I remembered is. It changed my entire perspective on everything."

In an exclusive chat with Pan African Visions, the visionary who attributes his spiritual awakening to a four-year meditation experience said he "firmly believes there are many souls currently experiencing life on Earth who would benefit from reading this book and being



The Self exploring book now available worldwide .photo Facebook Roland Achenjang.

aware of this information, like I did. And besides, my wife was getting annoyed with me talking about it to her alone."

"I woke up that lovely Tuesday morning and immediately had a strong urge to meditate. During the session, I adopted a yoga posture that caused a rush of energy to move from the base of my spine to the top of

my head in three consecutive waves. With each movement, 'I remembered' the Universal Truths I write about in my book. That day and the proceeding seven days were blissful for me, and they marked the beginning of the rest of my life. Nothing about me has been the same since," he said.

Quizzed on how spiritual awakening changed his life

and why he's now, via his book, campaigning for others to follow suit, he retorted; "the experience itself was humbling and I consider it a tremendous blessing. As far as what changed, honestly, my beliefs and understanding about everything, who we are, and the Earth life experience changed; particularly my attitude towards fear. It is as though the experience

provided me the last piece to a puzzle that revealed a new level of Truth and understanding of the (Earth life) experience; the information is empowering and blissful."

Urging all to grab paperback copies of the book on Amazon and Amazon Prime for just \$22 the enthusiastic author whose book has already hit an e-reading platform said autographed paperback copies could be gotten via his website; rolandachenjang.com.

Roland Achenjang, is an alumnus of Belmont University where he obtained an MBA in Healthcare Management. Motivated during his school days, Roland began meditating to cope with the stress of being both a business school student and the sole overnight clinical pharmacist at a large hospital in Nashville. As a result, his life transformed from a fear-based experience to one filled with creative expressions.

In "Who and Why You Are: All You Need to Remember," Achenjang discusses his passion for helping others remember, experience and express what he says is the ultimate benefit to effective meditating – bliss.

"By recognizing and

understanding these universal truths, you can break free from the endless, self-imposed, creative limitations impeding you from living a purposeful life, expressing joy and experiencing bliss while here on Earth, he said.

Born and raised in Cameroon before relocating to the United States in 2000, Achenjang has always been fascinated with finding, or remembering, meanings and purposes to life on Earth.

Your first book *Who and Why You Are: All you need to remember just hit the stands; can you give us a synopsis?*

Gladly. The book summarizes what I remember about who we truly are and why we are here each having an Earth life experience. I refer to the information as Universal Truths, because they equally apply to everyone throughout the planet, including you!

What prompted you to come up with the book and what is the message you seek to share?

Great question. I wrote the book because of how

liberating and empowering the information (Universal Truths) I remembered is. It changed my entire perspective on EVERYTHING!

I firmly believe there are many souls currently experiencing life on Earth who would benefit from reading this book and being aware of this information, like I did. And besides, my wife was getting annoyed with me talking about it to her alone.

From information about the author, we gathered that after over four years of meditating daily as a means to cope with work and school stress, you had a spiritual awakening on August 21st, 2018, can you walk us through this experience?

With joy. I woke up that lovely Tuesday morning and immediately had a strong urge to meditate. During the session, I adopted a yoga posture that caused a rush of energy to move from the base of my spine to the top of my head in three consecutive waves. With each movement, 'I remembered' the Universal Truths I write about in my book. That day and the

proceeding seven days were blissful for me, and they marked the beginning of the rest of my life. Nothing about me has been the same since.

How was this spiritual awakening like, what changed for you after that?

The experience itself was humbling and I consider it a tremendous blessing. As far as what changed, honestly, my beliefs and understanding about everything, who we are, and the Earth life experience changed; particularly my attitude towards fear. It is as though the experience provided me the last piece to a puzzle that revealed a new level of Truth and understanding of the (Earth life) experience; the information is empowering and blissful.

In what way did the spiritual awakening impact your religious beliefs?

Great question. The change in perspective the awakening experience offers affects EVERYTHING - this includes religious beliefs, too. The experience changed my beliefs and significantly improved my understanding of them as well. And the process is still on-going.

Just how important is it for people to meditate, for you who did it over a year, what recommendations do you give for those who may be curious about it?

I am biased of course, but I believe it's extremely important that everyone meditates (effectively). Meditating (effectively) is my most trusted and go-to-activity for when I feel out of balance, which could mean



At the Sunrise Festival of the Arts 2019 with Pre Launch autographed copies of *Who Why You*.

feeling sick, stressed, tired or what have you. It's a free and healing practice that reconnects you directly with the 'Higher-Being' you believe in! No middleman needed and the benefits are infinite! What could be better?

I commend anyone curious about meditating and invite them to begin by visiting www.rolandachenjang.com to get a copy of 6 Proven Paths to Effective Meditating. It's a free guide that puts you on the right track to personalizing the practice and making it enjoyable.

What are some of the challenges you faced in writing the book?

Great question. With my new perspective, I view challenges as our minds' illusory creations designed to teach us more about ourselves; they (challenges) are great learning opportunities. So what did I learn in writing the book? That I truly am infinitely creative, and I have everything available to me to create anything I am passionate about while here on Earth. This is true for you too!

Could you make a pitch

to the public on the merits of grabbing a copy of this book, from the horses own mouth, from the author, what are some of the reasons people should rush for their copies?

As humans, we are always in search for empowerment, autonomy, and bliss. From this state of being, we become free to express our infinitely creative selves. Our heroes and idols know this. Truth is, these abilities aren't reserved for just them. We each are capable of being great, much more so than we can even imagine. This book is a reminder of this Truth and much more.

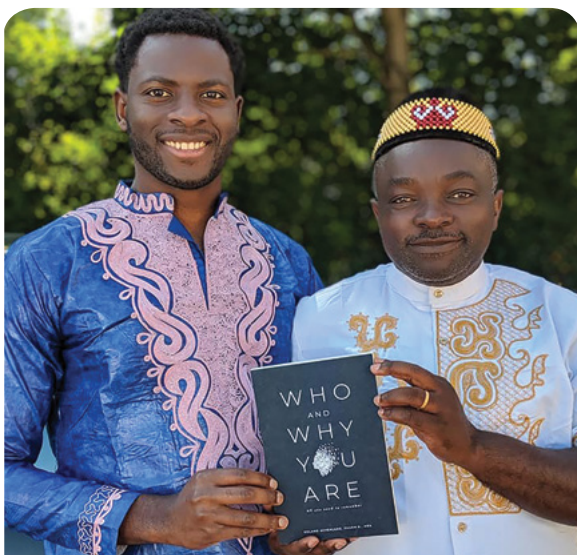
Read it. Remember how amazing you are. Regain control of your life!

How much is the book and where can people procure copies?

The paperback is \$22. It is available at Amazon and Amazon Prime.

Autographed paperback copies will be available through rolandachenjang.com for additional costs soon

The electronic version is available through any of your favorite e-reading platforms.



The book is a reminder of the infinite possibilities of greatness says Roland Achenjang.



**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.

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Contact: info@theafricagas.com

Insight Into The Edewor Foundation

By Ajong Mbandah L

Rollison Edewor has embarked on a lofty mission to transform lives in his local community in Nigeria. The Founder of the Edewor Foundation shares insight his work ,projects, and way forward in an interview with PAV.

Prof Rollison Edewor is Founder of the Edewor Foundation, can you introduce the Foundation and its mission?

The essence of life and true self is to help and love one another. And to better achieve this, one must go where it is most needed and appreciated. Together with my family, we set up this foundation to give back to the society where poverty and lack of fund to further education are at its peak. In general, we want to help reduce hunger, poverty and illiteracy among fellow Africans or those that relatively falls into this category.

The Foundation has been engaged in a number of Peace, Security & Investment initiatives, can you shed some light on this?

Delta state (Nigeria) is plagued with ethnic and violent unrest, as well as insecurity. Resulting to underdevelopment which is one reason why investors and citizens in diaspora refused to relocate or invest. But reality is now setting in as the world begins to advance towards technology, the aging of violence begins to give way to peace. Which is where we had to come in to unite them. For ethnic communities to come together to promote growth is something unheard of in

decades. My goal was to bring all the ethnic groups together but my connection to all is limited. So, I started with where I grew up, SAPELE kingdom. The unity will warrant them to sign a peace and security agreement. This agreement is tendered to prospective investors for assurance.

At one of its recent meetings, representatives of over 30 communities of Okpe Kingdom indicated their willingness to give peace a chance by working out modalities of ensuring peace and security reign in their communities , where is the Okpe Kingdom , what has been going on there and why the need for peace?

The area is underdeveloped. Educational awareness is very low, and the youths are restless resulting to crime and unruly conducts. Thus, we created a literacy center in one of the villages. Where we currently have 5 standing and qualified teachers. We plan to open more. The purpose is to train their mind and prepare them for this peaceful atmosphere. They loved it and thus, the many villages coming out.



The meeting saw the presentation of the Edewor Peace, Security & Investment Agreement papers to all the communities, what is the content of these papers?

The content of the document is nothing but a promise and obligation to protect and maintain peaceful atmosphere with Investors, Investments and other citizens in diaspora. NOTE: Many Nigerians in diaspora are afraid to go back home for fear of harassment and insecurity.

The people of the Kingdom are enthused with prospects of investment, what are some of the opportunities that could be of interest to investors in that part of Nigeria?

The investment comes from fellow Nigerian citizens and any foreigner who wants to invest. Since most of us are afraid of investing at home due to embezzlement and scam. Seeing the action of the youth and community towards advocating for peace will motivate and

compel others to relate about investing at home.

Looking broadly at Nigeria, we see to see either conflicts or potential for conflict everywhere, between different ethnic communities, between political parties, between Christians and Muslims, Fulani etc, what is your take on the situation in the country ?

To be honest, I do believe if jobs are created, these problems will either seize or decrease. All play without work makes Jack a dull boy. They must have something doing. Just take for example the literacy school we opened, hundreds of youths now attending. Imagine when you create jobs.

With the experience you have garnered, how recommendations do you have in mind for a more harmonious country, and does the Edewor Foundation plan to tackle state and nationwide issues or remain limited to your local community of Okpe?

This experience shows that people actually want peace and development. The quest to learn is proof to that. The Edewor Foundation is still in its infancy stage. Thus, our presence or activities are still limited. Sapele is my hometown, easier for us to relate, so I started with them first. If this is successful, we will extend to others.

On politics, President Buhari is into his second and last term, what are some of the priority areas that you think he





must tackle?

Am not a politician and don't do politics. So this question is not for me.

Your reaction the recent arrest of Nigerians in the USA for diverse cybercrimes, how does

Nigeria handle the stigma that comes with crimes of a few been labeled on the entire polity?

Kid you not. This issue affected my moral. Just imagine after building trust and support, such thing

happened. Your spirit is dampened. Mind you, not just Nigerians only, but those who for years had trust in us. But am glad to hear that the Nigerian government partook in the operation to crack them down.

What else will the

Edewor Foundation be working on for the rest of the year and beyond?

For now, we are working on opening more literacy and skill acquisition stations in interior villages.

Hommage a DJ Arafat: His legacy, music, impact, death and afterlife

By Amos Fofung

At a local night club in Bali, Littoral region of Cameroon, as in a disco in U-street, Washington D.C., teens dance to the Afrobeat emanating from DJ Arafat's track. The dance style is unusual and much more physical with every part of the body in motion. This characterizes Coupé Décalé a dance style originating from Ivory Coast which means "to cheat" and "run away" or cut and run.

Nightlife in Cameroon as in most other African states including a handful of Afropop disco the world over is not complete until you find teens dancing to a DJ Arafat's songs. He revolutionized Coupé Décalé, taking it not just internationally but to a whole new level.

The untimely death earlier



In 2016 and 2017 DJ Arafat was named artist of the year at the Coupe Decale Awards .Photo Getty images,BBC.

last two week of the man dubbed the King of Coupé Décalé left fans stunned as they come to terms with the loss of a charismatic, ground-breaking artist who brought Ivorian dance music to the global stage.

At 33, Ange Didier Huon, who burst onto the musical

scene as a Disco Jokey, DJ in Yopougon, one of Abidjan's best-known nightlife districts comes from a musical family according to Quartz Africa. His mother was a well-known singer and his father a prominent sound engineer.

Raising to prominence thanks to his first hit,

Hommage a Jonathan, wherein he paid tribute to his then best-friend he lost to a motorcycle accident, tragic enough, he died the same way as his friend.

"The Coupé Décalé sound and movement started in Paris nightclubs in the early 2000s where it was brought

by Ivorian DJs. In Nouchi (Ivorian slang), Coupé Décalé means "to cheat" and "run-away" or cut and run. The fun, bass-heavy sound embraced the joie de vivre that typifies Abidjan, a city known for its legendary partying.

It also celebrated young resilient Africans who having endured the difficulties of being migrants in Europe, eventually made it big—sometimes by unorthodox means. Hence the concept of cheating the system and getting away with it. It's an aspirational genre that emerged at the time of the first Ivorian civil war (2002-2007) when dispirited youth needed to believe in the possibility of a better life sometimes in the form of finding fame and fortune abroad", Quartz holds.



Fans mourning DJ Arafat.



People hold a portrait of late Ivorian singer DJ Arafat as others take pictures during his funerals in Abidjan, Ivory Coast on August 30, 2019. SIA KAMBOU AFP.

Globalization of Coupé Décalé

Coupé Décalé has had pioneers such as Douk Saga and though DJ Arafat was not the creator of the sound, he took it to the mainstream, first amassing a large following in Francophone Africa then to Europe and North America where significant African diaspora populations are represented, his collaboration with rising Afrobeats artists from Nigeria and Ghana mirrored in a pan-African following to his name.

To many of his youthful fans, DJ Arafat epitomizes the spirit of the sub-genre in that they witnessed his rise to fame and fortune locally. In Coupé Décalé dancing comes first—the popping of champagne bottles, the expensive cars and the fancy houses are merely an aspirational backdrop for the merriment. It is a musical genre that is about people having fun against all odds. DJ Arafat's raspy, energetic voice carried clubbers along with the frenetic percussive styles, deep bass and repetitive minimalist arrangements.

An exceptional dancer of his generation, one of the fun moments that always characterize DJ Arafat's concert was him pitting local dancers to compete against

him and his dancers. This had become such a norm such that once a concert of his was announced in any country, youths around the location where he will perform got their dancing shoes ready to show Arafat what they're made of.

An inspiration to dozens of artists whom he groomed and supported all the way through.

With 11 albums to his name, the young artist leaves behind a remarkable legacy. His star was rising even higher with several cross-continental collaborations and continental hits in the past years. Last year, he was one of the stars highlighted in an expansion of the world's largest music company Universal Music across Africa, particularly for the Francophone Africa.

Tributes

Africa has mourned stars, legends and hall of famers. But Arafat's death stood out. The artist who leaves behind five children goes down in history as one of the few

artists to be buried twice as his corps was exhumed by his followers who after been barred from viewing his corpse refused to believe that he was death.

From the Ivorian president, Alassane Ouattara (who called him «a youth icon and ambassador of Ivorian music and culture»), African football legend including Samuel Eto'o and Didier Drogba, hordes of African musicians—especially Francophone musicians who cite him as having influenced their decisions to get into music, tributes ruled out from all corners with Africa's A-list stars such as Davido, Sidiki Diabate, Fally Ipupa and Serge Beynaud mounting the podium to sing goodbye to the music star who had a lot of shining to do.

His popularity saw the signing of a petition with over 70,000 signatures from fans who asked that he be

accorded a state funeral at Félix Houphouët Boigny stadium in Abidjan. And so, it was.

Culture Minister Maurice Bandaman conferred on DJ Arafat the national order of cultural merit for «his immense contribution to the artistic radiance» of Ivory Coast.

On Saturday morning, before the private burial, DJ Arafat's casket was placed at the center of the 35,000-capacity Felix Houphouët-Boigny stadium in Abidjan, drawing wild

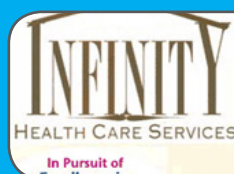
applause before the mood turned sad with many bursting into tears.

Not even the 6,500 security forces deployed across the stadium could hold the fans who from time-to-time tried to break loose and see if it was really DJ Arafat in the casket.

State radio and television broadcast the event live and giant screens were installed in Yopougon and other working-class areas, as well as the upmarket Cocody-Angre district where DJ Arafat lived.



Ivorian singer Tina Glamour pays her respects to his late son Ivorian singer DJ Arafat. Source Gulf.



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Verve Card Goes Global After Penning Landmark Agreement With Discover In New York

By Amos Fofung

Verve, a leading payment technology and card business in Africa, and Discover Global Network, a U.S.-based direct banking and payment services company have sealed an agreement launching the Verve Global Card.

According to the penned agreement that took place in New York, Verve cardholders will now have the ability to use their Verve Global Cards on the Discover Global Network which provide acceptance in more than 190 countries and territories worldwide.

The deal which will greatly expand Verve's existing suite of tailored payment products and solutions for its customers will facilitate new international and cross border transactions for the card holders who can now make payments outside Africa on the Discover Global Network.

An Interswitch digital payment company that prides itself as a pacesetter in facilitating seamless electronic circulation of money as well as value exchange in Africa, Verve now opens its customers to the world.

With the first transaction operated successfully, the Global Card, according to Mitchell Elegbe, Interswitch Group Managing Director, Group Managing Director, commented on the "agreement with Discover Global Network will enable Verve to compete with other global card offerings, providing cardholders with

an enhanced customer experience when transacting globally outside Nigeria."

"Creating a solution which facilitates international payments for our consumers will help to eliminate existing barriers and simplify the process when transacting abroad."

Holders of the Verve Classic card can still continue to freely transact as was before within Africa and can acquire the global card which according to Verve officials works worldwide and can be used for payment across Point of Sale (PoS), ATMs and online platforms in Nigeria, Africa and beyond, wherever the Discover, Diner Club, Pulse Network and Verve logos are available.

To Ricardo Leite, senior vice president of international markets at Discover, customers should be provided with the choices they want.

"It is important to us that we are working with groups around the world to extend acceptance for their cardholders...at Discover, we recognize the importance of being able to use your card of choice no matter where you are traveling," he said.

About Verve

Verve is Interswitch Group's innovative card scheme, offering products and solutions that enable consumers to transact all over Nigeria and across international markets. As the first African card scheme to be recognized as a valid, globally



L-R: Joseph Hurley, Snr. Vice President, Payment Services, Discover Financial Services, Mike Ogbalu 111, Divisional CEO, Verve, Diane Offereins, Executive Vice President, Payment Services, Discover, and Mitchell Elegbe, Founder/GMD Interswitch Group, at the Verve Global Card Launch in New York, on Monday.

accepted e-payment gateway, we have built a world-class value chain ecosystem that benefit from the services that we provide.

About Interswitch Group.

Interswitch is a digital payment company of African Origin focused on providing convenience and real value for consumers. We facilitate the seamless electronic circulation of money as well as value exchange on an ongoing, real-time basis.

We began in 2002 as a transaction switching and electronic payments processing business, building and managing payment infrastructure, delivering innovative payments

solutions and driving transactions across the African continent and other international markets. We provide secure, solutions and services that facilitate convenience and real value for consumers, businesses, governments and other organizations, helping to reduce costs, improve operational efficiency and drive sustainable revenue growth.

About Discover

Discover Financial Services (NYSE: DFS) is a direct banking and payment services company with one of the most recognized brands in U.S. financial services. Since its inception in 1986, the company has become one

of the largest card issuers in the United States. The company issues the Discover card, America's cash rewards pioneer, and offers private student loans, personal loans, home equity loans, checking and savings accounts and certificates of deposit through its direct banking business. It operates the Discover Global Network comprised of Discover Network, with millions of merchant and cash access locations; PULSE, one of the nation's leading ATM/debit networks; and Diners Club International, a global payments network with acceptance around the world. For more information, visit www.discover.com/company.

Verve Goes Global

Verve, a leading payment technology and card business in Africa, and Discover Global Network, a U.S.-based direct banking and payment services company sealed an agreement launching the Verve Global Card.

According to the penned agreement that took place in New York recently,

Verge cardholders will now have the ability to use their Verve Global Cards on the Discover Global Network which provide acceptance in more than 190 countries and territories worldwide. PAV Shares a collection of pictures highlighting the momentous event.



VERVE CARD GOES GLOBAL! L-R: Mitchell Elegbe, Founder/GMD, Interswitch Group, Joseph Hurley, Sr. Vice President, Payment Services, Discover Financial Services, Francis Gbenga Shobo, Deputy Managing Director, First Bank, Olubusola Osilaja, Divisional head, eBusiness, Access Bank, Martins Izuogbe, Divisional Head, Operations, Fidelity Bank, Diane Offereins, Executive Vice President, Payment Services, Discover, Chuma Ezirim, Group Executive, Retail & E-Business, First Bank, and Mike Ogbalu III, Divisional CEO, Verve, at the Verve Global Card Launch in New York, on Monday.



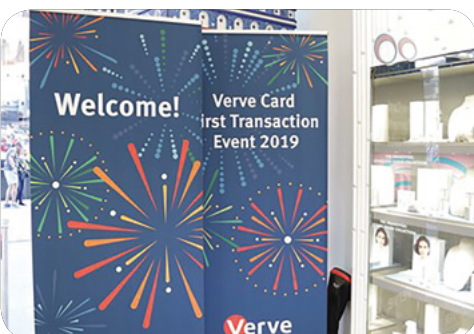
First Bank's DMD, Gbenga Shobo; Head, Card & Messaging Business, Folasade Femi-Lawal and Group Executive, eBusiness & Retail Products, Chuma Ezirim at the Verve Global Card launch, New York.



L-R: Founder/GMD, Interswitch Group, Mitchell Elegbe; Group Executive, eBusiness & Retail Products, FirstBank, Chuma Ezirim; Deputy Managing Director, FirstBank, Gbenga Shobo; Head, Card & Messaging Business, Folasade Femi-Lawal and Divisional CEO, Verve, Mike Ogbalu, at the Verve Global Card launch in New York



L-R: Joseph Hurley, Sr. Vice President, Payment Services, Discover Financial Services, Mike Ogbalu III, Divisional CEO, Verve, Diane Offereins, Executive Vice President, Payment Services, Discover, and Mitchell Elegbe, Founder/GMD Interswitch Group, at the Verve Global Card Launch in New York, on Monday.



Dogfight over Football in Cameroon: FECAFOOT suspends Cameroon Professional League

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

The Cameroon Football Federation better known by its French acronym FECAFOOT has suspended the Cameroon professional League (LFPC) for a period of two years. The former has equally set up an interim body manage (Transitional Technical Committee) to manage the affairs of the league for that period of time.

The move follows the Federation's decision to suspend the activities of Cameroon's Professional Football League (LFPC) due to alleged repeated breaches of its own statutes. However the LFPC president, General Pierre Semengue, insists that he intends to complete his four-year term, despite an offer from the federation to become an honorary FECAFOOT president.

The problems mean that the 2019 domestic league, which was due to start on 1 September, will now begin in mid October.

"We had to step in to save local football that is in a desolate state now. Our championship is far from being glamorous and

the most glaring example is the poor performance of Cameroonian clubs in continental competitions," the FECAFOOT President, Seidou Mbombo Njoya told BBC Sport.

He added, "Prior to every season there has to be a general assembly of the league (according to LFPC statutes) to assess the previous year but this hasn't been held lately. Then there are the constant conflicts between league officials and club presidents. The league can't account for state and FECAFOOT money handed out to them and the two main sponsors of the domestic championships have left. We feel things can be done better and that's what we're trying to change."

Semengue Vows to continue work

Semengue, an 84-year-old military general who was re-elected in July 2016 says he will contest the imposition of the new committee by FECAFFOT. "Everything that has been done by FECAFFOT is illegal" he said at a press conference.

He claims he has taken the

matter before the Chamber of Conciliation and Arbitration of Cameroon's Olympic Committee and is willing to go to the international Court of Arbitration for Sport in Switzerland.

"Clubs have continued registering with us for the next season and we're going to continue working because whatever is going on now is a non-event for us," Semengue added.

To Basil Mbuwe, sport reporter at The Post Newspaper, the suspension of the league is one of the best decisions ever. He said, "There are various issues that have been going on with General Pierre Semengue at the helm of the league. The Cameroon professional league needs a new sleeve and hopefully the league will be professional now as it claimed to be before."

FECAFOOT to pay players directly

Seidou Mbombo Njoya has said that the FECAFOOT will take charge of the payment of players playing in the professional leagues of the country.

The FECAFOOT President was speaking to State broadcaster CRTV, "We have to hurry up because we have to start the competition by the end of October. What we are planning to do is to discuss with the president of clubs and then secondly we define the type of competition that we want Elite one, or two and most probably discuss about the players" Mbombo Njoya said

"As a matter of fact, we are going to take charge of a kind of minimum salary that



FECAFOOT President Mbombo Njoya says he had to step in to save local football that is in a desolate state now.

will be paid directly to the players by the Federation. So this is going to be the big revolution. Financing is very easy. We have the support of the government, we are going to look for resources from partners, and the most important thing is credibility". "Most of the partners left because there is no credibility in the institution. We are going to discuss and give some guarantee to the government that we are going to make a better use of this money" the FECAFOOT boss outlined

According to various sport analysts, this decision they have started may come to bite them. One stated, "They have started what they cannot finish. This is not the best approach which means they will have to force clubs to be accountable. The clubs employ players and let the clubs pay the players."

Women's Football League created

In a communiqué made public by President Seidou Mbombo Njoya, the

individuals appointed will coordinate the activities of the Feminine Football League for a transitional period of two years. The mandate of the officials began on the 4th of September and is expected to end September 3, 2021.

The members appointed include: President, Eko Mendomo Celine, V.P, Yvonne Asta, while the members include Ufei Nseke Anoma, Sonkin Née Awoun Rachel, and Mouaha épouse Dikiongo Marthe.

The newly created league will focus on women's football in Cameroon and ensure the running of activities and organizing competition. The members will have a daunting task to make women's football very competitive in a country where female football has almost been relegated to the background. The change also comes at a time when the Confederation of African Football, CAF has envisage the creation of the female version of the CAF champions league.



FECAFOOT officials discussed on dissolving the Cameroon professional league.

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