

Bobi Wine and the Looming David v Goliath Fight In Uganda



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A Complicated Year For Africa's Naked Emperors

By Ajong Mbapndah L

On a visit to Paris recently, the world was treated to the comic, yet agonizing spectacle of President Paul Biya of Cameroon, aged 86 struggling with his steps to meet the 41 year old French President Emmanuel Macron. A few weeks later on yet another trip to France for the Paris Peace Forum, President Biya was literally treated to another dose of public ridicule at a panel discussion animated by Mo Ibrahim. When you add to this the protests that trailed him during the second trip, the conclusion is that indeed, the Emperor is naked.

For African leaders, few have had the kind of rough year that Mr. Biya had. The two cubes of sugar that they expected the two English speaking provinces to be have refused to melt in the big teacup that French speaking Cameroon is expected to be. The safe haven that Switzerland has been for him for decades has become a living hell. Demonstrations by irate Cameroonians against the presence of President Biya at the InterContinental Geneva hotel resulted in serious clashes with the Swiss police, and the arrests of some members of his security detail in June.

In Guinea, Alpha Conde, a cult figure in African opposition politics prior to becoming President, decided to do the unthinkable by embarking on a perilous project to terminate constitutional term limits. The venture, designed to

enable him to seek a third term at the end of his constitutional two term mandates met with stiff oppositions from Guineans home, and abroad. The massive protests in the streets of Conakry against the move were amongst the defining pictures of 2019 in Africa. For someone who went through thick and thin to bring about democratic reforms in Guinea, many found it scary that Conde will even entertain that kind of thought, talk less of toiling hard to bring it to fruition.

After serving as President for 20 years and wheelchair bound, 82-year-old Abdelaziz Bouteflika had his eyes set on a fifth term when weeks of massive protests compelled him to resign in April. His departure was overwhelmingly received with huge jubilations.

Until April 2019 for the last thirty years, Sudan was literally under the spell of Omar al-Bashir. He had absolute power in the country, and Sudan's track record on issues of human rights and democracy was far from flattery. Few are those who shed tears when he left. Curiously, prior to his fall, he was a key figure talks between President Salva Kiir and his estranged VP Riek Machar to bring peace to South Sudan. The jubilations that reverberate across the continent each time one of these sit tight leaders falls speaks volumes on how much detestation Africans have for them.

Back to the specific case of



Ajong Mbapndah L, Managing Editor

Paul Biya in Cameroon, if the man is subject of ridicule and scorn around the continent and the world today, he is just earning the wages of bad leadership. He inherited one of the most promising countries in Africa in 1982. Cameroonians offered him all the tranquility needed to move the country forward. Even when salaries were brutally slashed amid a crippling devaluation of the local currency, Cameroonians soldiered on with stoicism.

Asked about the crisis in the English speaking regions, while he spent time dwelling on the colonial legacy as the genesis of the crisis, in moment of rare candidness, he indicated that the policy of trying to have the English system assimilated into the French system had failed. Prior to the ongoing chaos, English speaking Cameroonians had expressed discontent for

decades. The crisis is today hanging like an albatross on Biya's neck. In one of our editorials earlier in the year, we opined that the crisis in the English speaking regions will not be wished away. For a leader who has been in power for 37 years, Mr. Biya has been scored very low on his handling of the crisis. The more he toys with it, the more it grows serious and out of control. For a man who shuns the spotlight, the world has its eyes firmly focused on him and developments in the country. Talk of the wages of a life presidency and that is what is Mr. Biya is enjoying now. Those who refuse to learn, the examples Bokassa, to Idi Amin, to Samuel Doe, Mobutu, Blaise Compaore, and most recently Bouteflika and Bashir, should be a reminder.

Fortunately for the continent, the gargantuan short comings from its

political leaders have not deterred others in diverse fields from moving the continent forward. Taking the list of the 100 most influential Africans published recently by the famed New African magazine, only a handful of African Presidents made it. Kagame of Rwanda, Akuffo Addo of Ghana, Mahamadou Issoufou, and Prime Minister Abiy of Ethiopia are lucky to make the cut.

On the list are some of the most brilliant minds pushing Africa forward, Akinwunmi Adesina at the African Development Bank, NJ Ayuk of Centurion Law Firm and the African Energy Chamber, Prof Benedict Oramah, President and Chairman of the Afreximbank, Aliko Dangote, Strive Masiyiwa, Karim Awad, and others. The change that the continent needs will not necessarily be driven by the political leader, but also, by these dynamic Africans. Add in the mix the talent that is taking African music global, the fashion gurus, the sports men and women and upcoming entrepreneurs.

Moving the continent forward requires big dreams, it requires people who are bold, innovative, and daring. One of those who fits well in this category is Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu, aka Bobi Wine. The MP representing Kyaddondo East constituency in the Wakiso District, of Uganda's Central Region has emerged as the leading opposition figure in Uganda. Intimidation and jail have only helped to fuel the fire of change he incarnates.

Ugandans have embraced him, Africa has recognized him, and the world has taken note. Bobi Wine features on the New African Magazine list of 100 most influential Africans, he features on the

Time Magazine's list of next 100 most influential people in the world, he was named a 2019 Global Thinker by the Foreign Policy magazine. The 37-year-old recording Artist says the movement he

leads will end the over 30-year political rule of 75 old President Yoweri Museveni. A herculean task, but one that does not scare Bobi Wine. In this end of year issue, PAV shares with you an

interview with Bobi Wine, a discussion with NJ Ayuk on his groundbreaking book, Billions at Play: The Future of African Energy and Doing Deals. From politics, to sports, the environment, and

more, the December issue is a good blend of recent developments, and some of the major issues and events that defined Africa in 2019. Happy reading!

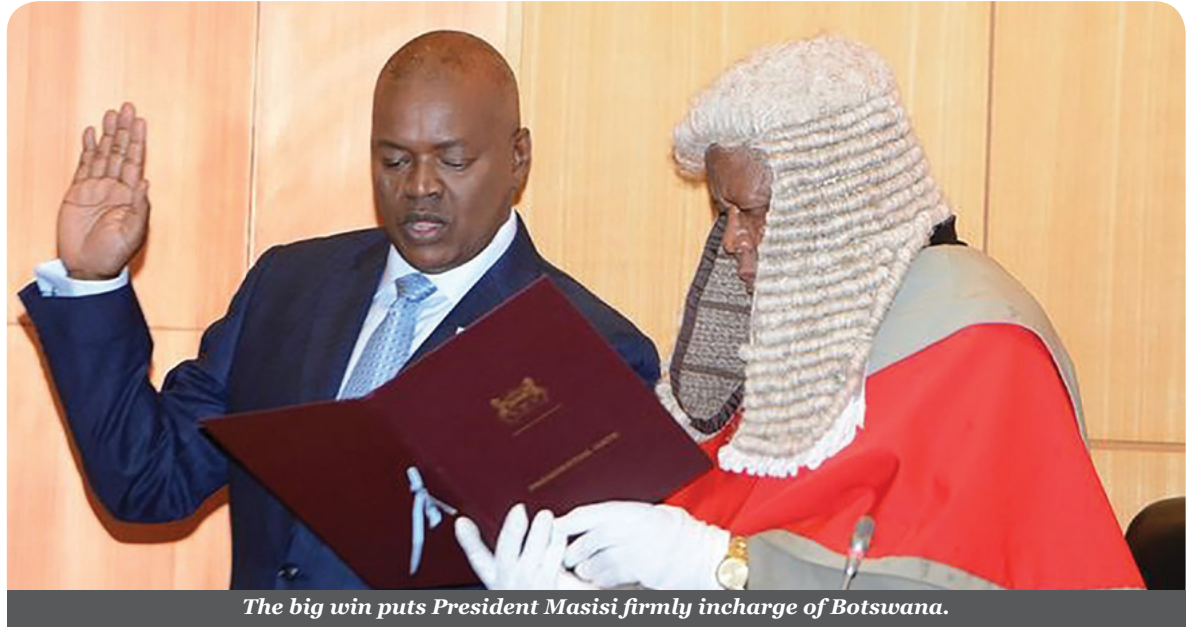
Botswana Enters a New Era

By Prince Kurupati

In one of the most competitive general elections that Botswana has ever witnessed, the Botswana Democratic Party which has been in power since 1966 when the country attained its independence managed to retain power. Using the first past the post electoral system, the 29 seats that the Botswana Democratic Party managed to win were enough for the party to retain power and elect Mokgweetsi Masisi as the fifth president of the country.

Masisi's victory was by no means guaranteed as he faced a surging opposition fronted by former president, Ian Khama. Masisi and Khama were once close allies and it was Khama who handed the presidency to Masisi when his term (as leader of the Botswana Democratic Party) came to an end. The Botswana Democratic Party has a gentlemen's agreement that when two terms of the leader of the party who often is also the president of the country comes to an end, he or she has to relinquish his position and select a successor who will guide the party towards the next election.

While things were all cordial and the transition of power from Khama to Masisi was smooth in April 2018, Masisi's first actions after assuming power angered Khama as most of them sought to reverse all the measures that Khama



The big win puts President Masisi firmly in charge of Botswana.

implemented during his presidency. The rift between Masisi and Khama therefore posed a major threat to Botswana Democratic Party's hold on power. However, this threat failed to affect the outcome of the elections mainly due to two factors and it is these two factors that may solidify or weaken Masisi's rule. Firstly, there is the issue of the crippling divisions in the ranks of the opposition parties and also, the populist stance that was taken by Masisi in a bid to retain power.

Going into the general elections, on the surface, it looked as if Khama's Botswana's Patriotic Front had entered into an alliance with other opposition parties under the banner Umbrella for Democratic Change. In some constituencies, the

Botswana Patriotic Front did not field any contestants as doing so was perceived to split the vote in favour of the ruling party under Masisi. While all these measures gave an illusion of a strong opposition alliance determined to dethrone Masisi and the Botswana Democratic Party from power, it was all but an illusion when one takes a closer look. To put this into perspective, we take the candid view of Prince Dibeela, the deputy leader of the Botswana National Front, the main party in the Umbrella for Democratic Change alliance who said that it was a 'blunder' to ally with Khama during an interview with the Institute of Security Studies in Gaborone. Dibeela's sentiments came before the general elections hence even before the polls;

strong divisions were already starting to show in a few months old alliance.

The divisions that emerged in the opposition ranks can work for or against Masisi's quest to break the Khama hegemony over Botswana politics, a hegemony that started way back in the 1870s right through the modern presidencies of Sir Seretse Khama who ruled from 1966 to 1980 and Ian Khama who ruled from 2008 to 2018. As a shrewd politician and tactician, Khama certainly knows that the only way to remain relevant and the only way for the Khama lineage to maintain its strong hand over Botswana politics is to look for a new front man, a man who does not carry the Khama name but someone who will do all the bidding on behalf of Khama and his family. It

is for this reason why Khama will remain committed to the Botswana Patriotic Front and why he will always back the Umbrella for Democratic Change so as to contest as a united opposition come the next general election. Contesting as a united front, the Umbrella for Democratic Change will pose a significant threat to the Botswana Democratic Party.

Masisi's handling and response to the unified opposition will go a long way in consolidating or weakening his position in power. In addition to that, his election promises will also determine how his tenure in office will be assessed. The populist stance that Masisi used during campaigns played a huge role in his ascension to power. However, making promises is only

the first step. After making promises, the promises need to be fulfilled in order to maintain the people's trust. Masisi during his first few months in power did fulfill one of his promises, that is, lifting the controversial ban on elephant hunting. By fulfilling his promise, Masisi won over many rural votes as people complained that the population of elephants had become a real threat to human life. As one of his promises, Masisi also said that he is going to decriminalize homosexuality. As of yet, nothing from the executive



Former Botswana President Ian Khama and current president, Mokgweetsi Masisi were strong allies before the feud.

nor legislature has been done on that front except the striking down of colonial era laws against homosexuality by the judiciary. Masisi also promised to review upwards the salaries of most government workers including the military, police, and prison workers something that instilled joy in the hearts of urbanites.

Masisi's ability to fulfill his promises will determine whether the new era takes root in Botswana politics or the Khama lineage resurfaces come 2024.

Ugandan opposition MP Bobi Wine set to oust incumbent President Museveni

By Mohammed M. Mupenda

The pop star-cum opposition politician and vocal critic of the Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, made it in Washington DC, U.S. on November 13, 2019, along with his people power team. He was from Canada, where he had spent a day and night meeting Ugandan Diaspora.

Bobi Wine spent more than a week in the United States, visiting different cities to drum up support among Ugandans living abroad. He said that most Ugandan professionals have left the country and he hopes they will either return or continue "giving ideas back home." "The best way we can bring them back is to make conditions better," said MP Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu alias Bobi Wine.

"I am committed for better service delivery, and accountability," he told a heavily crowded hall.

He revealed to the attendees what Ugandans go through oppression and torture that he faced



The Growing international profile of Bobi Wine adds credibility to his Presidential ambitions.

himself, stressing that he has not completely healed of the injuries he sustained throughout the time he was beaten, tortured, detained, but he feels a huge sense of confidence.

Wine assured the Diaspora that Ugandans are already determined to oust the incumbent President, "We have embarked on the practical phase for the solution."

"We have been witnessing this through massive registration as voters and

millions of Ugandans have already registered, coordination teams all over the country are in place, these include structured, unstructured, open and excluded teams."

"People in Uganda still live under oppression and brutality by the military, the regime squeezes life out of Ugandans, robs the nation and mortgages it to the highest bidder," said the singer-cum politician, accusing police of killing the people in broad daylight

giving an example that he witnessed a police patrol car number UP 255 running over a man and killed him instantly."

He explained his manifesto which entails eradicating high unemployment rate amongst the youth, who have only seen one regime of the 33 years in power.

"I will change the education system which trains job creators rather than job seekers, improve health care system in the country that lacks medication in hospitals and health centres and this gets worse in case of accidents," he said.

Wine pledges to revamp agriculture and help Ugandans get their land back for farming, which he believes it has been taken away and people have been evicted illegally by the first family.

Uganda Natural resources is another area to be revised for the citizens' involvement. "President Museveni and his family are signing deals with China on behalf of forty-five million Ugandans which is

unfair, and I am going to challenge it."

While most people believe that it is almost impossible to oust the ruling party, Wine said that 2021 elections will change the history of Uganda.

"Have faith, believe that it is possible, do not doubt," he said, giving an example of Sudan, Eritrea, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Tunisia and assuring them that they can oust President Museveni.

He advised the Ugandans in Diaspora to use social media to share and disseminate information because they influence so many Ugandans.

Wine, whose real name is Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu has spent time in and out of jail after being arrested over the last two years and accused Ugandan security forces of torturing him while he was detained. He has frequently spoken out about the state's rampant corruption and crackdowns on opposition politicians.

Wine, 37, was selected for the TIME 100 Next list, which



Music was also a source of communion between Bobi Wine and his supporters at some of the events during his recent tour.



Bobi Wine has been a hit with the Ugandan diaspora who see in him a source of hope for the future of the country.

is dedicated to spotlighting the leaders of tomorrow.

The opposition lawmaker was named male politician of the year by the Young Africa Leaders' Summit 2019 (YALS 2019) in Accra, Ghana.

He was unanimously voted as one of the continent's most exceptional youth figures aggregating ideas into relevant themes able to shape policy in Africa.

Defeating Museveni will be an uphill task, but there

is a clear indication that Bobi has struck a nerve in Ugandan politics. Prior to his issues with the authorities, his rallies were crowd pullers with enthusiastic followers clad in their trademark red colors and berets.

Beyond the combination of music, street smarts, raw courage, attachment to everyday Ugandans and the desire to make things better, the growing international profile of Bobi Wine should

give the government of President Museveni anxious moments. The world now sees him as the face of the Ugandan opposition, and the contrast to President Museveni is been drawn. He is young, and energetic and fired up and represents the future, whereas President Museveni in his 70s and with some 30 years in power is a man of the past.

Scheduled for 2021, the election has the potential

to be one of the most exciting races that Uganda has seen in recent times. Should he decide to run, President Museveni will always have the advantage of incumbency, the resources, control of the leverages of power, and literally the electoral apparatus and state security at his disposal. Still, this is no reason to think that beating him is impossible. If Bobi Wine won a parliamentary seat,

he can win the presidency. It can only be a win win for him, said a Ugandan analyst. If he wins, he will make history, if he doesn't, he gains useful experience which will only be useful down the line considering his relative youth.

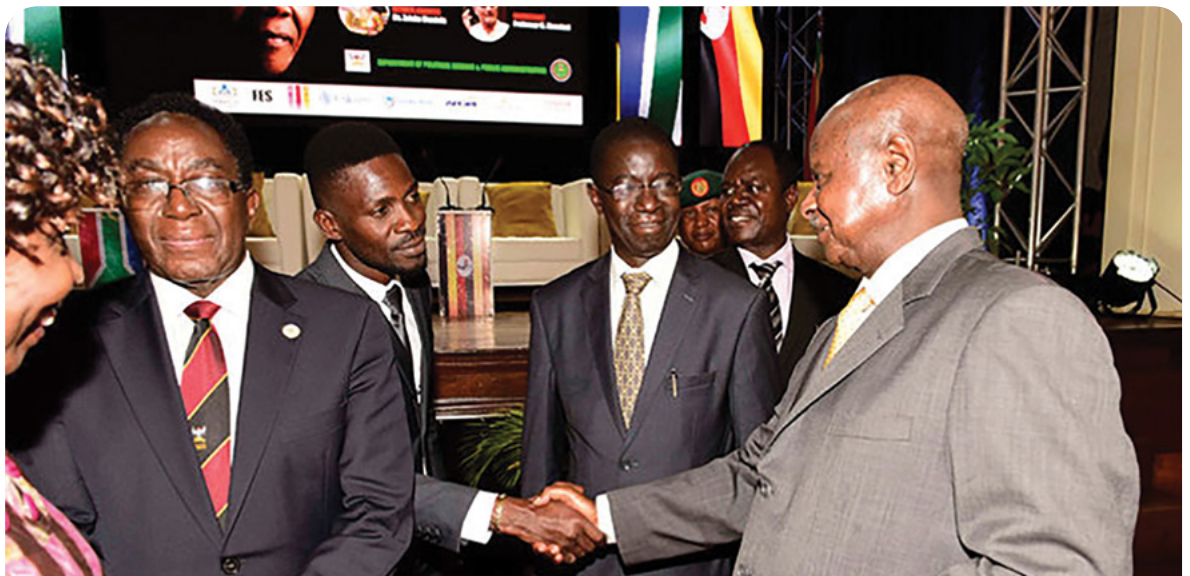
*Pictures for story obtained from Bobi Wine's Official Facebook Page

Africa Needs Servant Leaders - Ugandan Opposition figure Bobi Wine

By Ajong Mbapndah L

Boston, Washington, DC, New York, Canada and others, it was a super hectic schedule for Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu better known as Bobi Wine on his recent North American Tour. Town Hall Forums with his Ugandan compatriots were full to capacity, and prestigious institutions and media organs were scrambling to host the 37 old musician turned politician.

Serving as Member of Parliament for the Kyaddondo East constituency in the Wakiso District, of Uganda's Central Region, the political stock of Bobi Wine has sowed to the point where his eyes are firmly set on unseating and replacing President Yoweri



A rare picture of Bobi Wine and President Museveni, it will be a stiff contest for both men in 2021. Photo credit Chimp Reports.

Museveni. In power since 1986, Museveni, aged in 75, has dominated Ugandan politics and literally controls

everything, but it is time for him to go, says Bobi Wine.

Interviewed in a car in between his hectic schedule

on the Washington, DC, lap of his recent North American Tour, Bobi says he considers himself more

of a revolutionary than a politician.

"I am representing an idea, a revolutionary movement

called People Power which believes in returning power back to the people," he says.

On what makes him think he is the one to unseat President Museveni, when so many others have tried and failed, Bobi Wine says it is not about him as an individual but rather the movement he leads and Museveni has never faced the kind of threat he sees

"Bobi Wine is leading a mass of Ugandans, and we as Ugandans are going to get Museveni out of power, and not me," he says.

Charting a new path forward for the continent requires servant-leaders, Bobi said as he fielded questions on other key developments that defined the year in Africa from Ethiopia to Cameroon, Guinea, South Africa, and more.

You just spoke to a group of Ugandan compatriots and reiterated that you will be running for the 2021 elections. Under what platform will you be running, and what political program will you be presenting to your compatriots?

Bobi Wine: I am running on behalf of the people of Uganda, all the marginalized people of Uganda. I am not representing any political party, but I am representing an idea, a revolutionary movement called People Power which believes in returning power back to the people. Our program is a huge one but I could only name about five programs we are focusing on amongst them is the return of the rule of law and respect for human rights, changing our educational system, revamping our



Bobi Wine says the movement he leads will usher in a new dawn for Uganda.

healthcare system which is sick, revisiting our land policies, and making sure our people are re-empowered to re-embark on agriculture — it is the backbone of the country, and Uganda is the food basket of the region. Finally, we want to have our nation living together as we are in a country deeply divided along ethnicity, along class, and all the vices. We hope to heal our nation, and that is what we are focusing on doing, at least as soon as we get into power.

What pushed you into politics, considering that you were a household name in music and doing relatively well?

Bobi Wine: I am not in politics. Whereas it is reality, because when I was not in what you want to call politics, I was paying taxes, and I was oppressed. The local businesses are oppressed, the local woman who sells charcoal is oppressed and for her to stand, and defend her rights and stand, and represent her people, I do not call that politics. The level that it is, is responsibility,

activism, it is everybody's social responsibility. So, I look at myself as a revolutionary and not as a politician.

Barring last minute changes, you will be running against President Museveni. Others have tried to get him out of power without success, so what makes Bobby Wine think that he is that person who can get him out of power?

Bobi Wine: First of all, I am not him, I am Bobi Wine. Secondly it is not Bobi Wine that is going to get Museveni out of power. Bobi Wine is leading a mass of Ugandans, and we as Ugandans are going to get Museveni out of power, and not me. Of course many have tried unsuccessfully and it offers very valuable lessons. It is a person that has failed that knows how to fail. And if you know how to fail you can avoid it. Museveni has never faced a threat like when he faces us — we are young people and constitute more than 85% of the population.

You have been a member of parliament since 2017, what has the experience

been like, and what are some of the changes you have brought to your constituency, and the country?

Bobi Wine: It has been a horrible experience in parliament. It has been brutalization, there has been violence. As we speak now, I am a member of parliament who cannot have a gathering in my constituency. As we speak now, I am a musician who cannot perform in my country, so that is what it has been. One thing we can say is that we have succeeded in exposing the regime for what it is. We have left it naked for everybody to see and now our next step is an attack on the regime — to crush it once and for all.

In Africa, age is supposed to go with wisdom. You are in your late 30s, and President Museveni is officially in his late 70s is age a liability or an asset when it comes to getting power?

Bobi Wine: Looking at things, our history, age is proving to be a liability. Age will be a resource if it is

dignified. Museveni's age is a sign of indignity because he was once a revolutionary in his younger ages, but the older he gets the worse he becomes. So, in the case of Museveni, age has been disgraced. If I were his age mate, I would be really mad at him for disrespecting our age.

On this current tour you were in Massachusetts, Maryland, you have met people in DC, you were in Canada, what is it that your compatriots in the Diaspora are telling you?

Bobi Wine: All Ugandans from different locations have different roles, and I have had different contributions. For example, the Ugandans here in DC have done a great job pushing back against the regime, pushing back against sanctions. Ugandans in Canada and others are pushing their leaders to speak out and hold the regime accountable. They have been able to do fundraising, support events and activities back home. So, the Diaspora has different roles, and they are playing it very well.

What do you think of the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement?

Bobi Wine: I think it is a good thing and Africans should be united by their values, sports, and most importantly by trade.

In Ethiopia there is a Prime Minister almost the same age as you — PM Abby, and he recently won the Nobel Peace Prize, what is your take on his leadership?

Bobi Wine: That is more evidence that young people can be great leaders, especially young people by

the verge of their age and are reminded that they are going to still be there either to benefit from the good works that they have done, or to pay for the evil deeds that they do. Prime Minister Abiy is an inspiration, and every African leader will want to achieve what he has achieved. He inspires me personally.

In West Africa there is a talk of a common currency – the Echo, what do you think about it and should Africa be doing more to move towards a common currency or a unified monetary policy of its own?

Bobi Wine: Africa should have united one hundred years ago. Seeing that some countries are moving towards a common currency is very motivating. For nations to reach a level of sharing currencies means they share values such as democracy, respect for human rights. So, it is very encouraging, and I wish the East African community had gotten to that level, but I know by the grace of God we will get there.

What is your opinion about the situation in Guinea where there is a protest, and counter protest with the President trying to



People Power believes in returning power back to the people, says Bobi Wine.

change the constitution to get a third term?

Bobi Wine: President Museveni of Uganda said four years ago, and I agree with him that the problem of Africa and its leaders is that they want to overstay in power. It is shameful that a leader that has led for two terms will want to change the constitution so, he can stay forever. That is dictatorship that must be resisted and shame on those people that are being paid, or manipulated to support a dictatorship, or a life Presidency as if Guinea does not have other leaders or it is a barren state. It is wrong, I disagree with it and I condemn it in the strongest

terms possible because that is how it begins.

On the political crisis in Cameroon, what does Bobby Wine think of the silence of African leaders and the African Union in the face of what many considers being one of the biggest humanitarian disasters in the continent today?

Bobi Wine: Shame on the African leaders for keeping quiet about the crisis in Cameroon. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. Cameroonians are our brothers and sisters, and we need to stand behind them.

Last question on South Africa, in the course of the year we notice a resurgence of xenophobia. What came to your mind when you saw all these images and do you think leaders in that country are doing enough to address it?

Bobi Wine: It is ignorance by the people, and the leaders. I must remind those brothers and sisters in South Africa that the whole of Africa stood with them when they were being oppressed and during the unfortunate period of apartheid. It is very ignorant of them to mistreat fellow Africans. No African is a foreigner on the African

continent and in the same spirit, I want to condemn the dissatisfying effort of their leaders because people are a reflection of their leadership. If the leaders wanted to protect Africans that are living in South Africa, they would have done it. They still can do it, and they should do it because Africa is our home.

Last question on your projections and wish for 2020. What will Bobi Wine want to see in Uganda and Africa?

Bobi Wine: I want to see in Uganda a leadership that is accountable to the people and you can be sure that we will achieve it. What I want to see in Africa is servant-leadership, – leaders that are serving in the interest of the people. I must remind all African leaders that the Americans, Europeans and all those who came to their continent, they were not planning Africa for their individual gains, but for their people. All the Gold that was stolen in Africa developed countries and not individual wealth. That should be the communication to our fellow Africans. Our continent is rich but poor because we have greedy leaders that do not think beyond their stomach.

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Zimbabwe after Mugabe: A Perfect Testimony That Change Is Not Always For the Better

By Prince Kurupati

On 9 November 2017, Tafadzwa wrote his final exam at a local Zimbabwean university. The following day, Tafadzwa woke up early to board a bus back home. During the journey, Tafadzwa was happy and sad at the same time. He was happy because he had finished his studies; he now was no longer going to be a burden for his parents due to the high costs of university tuition and life. Tafadzwa was however saddened by the fear of the unknown; many before him (graduates) in the recent past had found it difficult to secure employment with some resorting to migrate into neighbouring South Africa in the hope that something positive on the job front would pop up, some resorting to engage in 'hustling' in various CBDs in Zimbabwe while some had completely resigned and just resorted to sit by the street bridges drinking harmful substances to escape the terrible reality that confronted them on a daily basis.

Tafadzwa wondered was he going to be one of those lucky graduates who found employment soon after graduation. The odds were highly stacked against this outcome considering the economy. If not, then what was he to become, an economic migrant, a hustler or a benchwarmer sitting on the street bridges. All these options did not instill any sort of confidence in Tafadzwa, in all of his life, he had never fathomed leaving his birth country, he had always wanted to remain in Zimbabwe to play a part



Zimbabweans are still waiting for President Mnangagwa to fulfil campaign promises. Photo credit AFP.

in developing this beautiful Southern African nation. Though entrepreneurial, Tafadzwa had always envisioned using his skills in the workplace rather than becoming a street hustler. On becoming a street warrior, that was completely a non-starter for Tafadzwa.

For a few days after arriving at home, Tafadzwa's mind was still a battlefield with various thoughts arising and conflicting each other for recognition. On the morning of 15 November, in a whisker, that all changed as Tafadzwa received a WhatsApp message from one

of his close friends telling him that a military man had just appeared on national TV informing the nation that several individuals close to the President (then Robert Mugabe) were to be arrested as they were responsible for causing all the challenges that the country was facing. Analyzing the military man's statement and also the presence of soldiers on every corner in the capital city and also other main towns and cities in the country, Tafadzwa was convinced that a coup was certainly underway. The notion that coups beget coups did not cross Tafadzwa's

mind as he was hopeful that the removal of the Mugabe administration was going to change the country's fortunes and also his fortunes. Maybe after all, he was going to find employment soon after graduation as the corrupt and nepotistic Mugabe administration was going to be deposed. It is this line of thinking that made Tafadzwa participate in the mass demonstration against the Mugabe government when the military and the war veterans called for a demonstration when they were looking to pressure Mugabe into resigning.

Mugabe on 21 November did give in as he tendered his resignation letter to the Speaker of Parliament in accordance with the country's supreme law. Mugabe's resignation letter was met with joy, pomp and fanfare in the August House by legislators and also in the streets of Harare and many other cities. A new 'dawn' for Zimbabwe had finally arrived, many thought. Zimbabwe, the country was called the 'jewel of Africa' by former Tanzanian leader Julius Nyerere was soon to reclaim its former glory. The so-called basket case of Africa was soon to become the bread basket of Africa as was the case in the early years after independence in the 1980s. As Tafadzwa states now though, what was set to become a new era has effectively become a new error. All the positive changes that he thought were going to be ushered in by the post Mugabe administration have been non-existent, instead only a flurry of negative changes have emerged.

What went wrong is the question that many ask. For those who have been observant enough, the answer simply lies in the fact that what was thought to be a new dispensation was rather a new deception. Mugabe's successor and his erstwhile comrades from the word go were really not concerned with improving the country's fortunes as they had promised when they stated that they were going to remove the 'criminal' elements around the President. Rather, all they were concerned with





Motorists wait in a fuel queue in the capital Harare, Friday, Jan. 11, 2019.
Photo credit AP.

is power, self preservation and accumulation of wealth. To better understand this, all that one needs to look at is the actions that the new dispensation has undertaken ever since it assumed power.

Power is the all important element that prompted Mnangagwa and his comrades to depose Mugabe. Just a few weeks before Mugabe resigned; Mnangagwa had been relieved of his duties as the country's vice president owing to gross incompetence. The action taken to relieve Mnangagwa of his duties as vice president meant that Mnangagwa had lost the political power that he had used for so long to intimidate his opponents and to protect his vast empire. Without power therefore, it was going to be a difficult task for Mnangagwa to live in Zimbabwe without fear of retribution by the people he had offended in the past under protection his political power and network. Without power also, it meant that his vast empire which he had build would be open to attacks from his opponents and he would not be able to do anything about it. Such threats to his person and

properties therefore played a key role in forcing the hand of Mnangagwa to depose Mugabe. In light of this, we can note that the need to protect the country from its saboteurs was non-existent from the word go hence Tafadzwa and many other Zimbabweans' thoughts that by his ascension, Mnangagwa was hell bent on improving the lives of the ordinary man were erroneous.

Self preservation also played a huge part in forcing Mnangagwa and his comrades to do the unthinkable and depose Mugabe. Since the country attained its independence in 1980, Mnangagwa and his comrades had spent all their lives working in government. Government thus had become their all and they knew no other way to earn a living. Being booted out of government therefore threatened their existence together with the incredible perks that came with it. The perfect example of how life could become very difficult for them once outside the government and ZANU (PF) structures was starkly brought out by former deposed top government officials namely

Joice Mujuru and her cabal. In 2015, Joice Mujuru and her cabal were relieved of their government duties and they were expelled from the ruling party ZANU (PF). Many of her cabal including the once powerful Didymus Mutasa since the expulsion were constantly reported in private media and also state media of how they had fallen on hard times, finding it hard to pay for even their electricity bills. Mnangagwa and his comrades after their expulsion from the government were determined not to follow in the footsteps of Joice Mujuru and her cabal hence they were eager to preserve themselves. It is for this reason why they took the action they did in November 2017, to protect themselves and not any other person.

Power brings with it many benefits and it's no surprise that Mnangagwa was still keen to enjoy the benefits of power when he was shown the door by ZANU (PF) to exit both the party and the government. Eager to continue enjoying the benefits, Mnangagwa took the only action that enable him to enjoy those benefits, that is, throw away the man who was blocking his

pathway to riches and ascend to the throne himself. While claiming to fight and eradicate corruption, Mnangagwa himself and his close friends have been implicated in numerous corrupt deals. Fuel monopolization in the country is being carried out by one of Mnangagwa's close allies. The forex black market industry is flourishing because of Mnangagwa's close allies; his son also allegedly included as a key player in the industry. Government and top ZANU (PF) officials who are synonymous with corruption including Obert Mpofu and Rugare Gumbo still find themselves in the Cabinet as is the case with the latter.

The reasons that propelled Mnangagwa to depose Mugabe bear testimony to the fact that he was not concerned with the welfare of the ordinary man when he assumed power but rather, his own selfish interests. It is for this reason why Tafadzwa states that the new dispensation is rather a new deception. To illustrate how things have negatively changed since November 2017, let's look at a few interesting scenarios.

In November 2017, a loaf of bread in Zimbabwe averaged \$0.90 Bond (local Zimbabwean currency). At the time, most civil servants and other private sector workers took home on average \$500.00 Bond. Today, a loaf of bread averages \$14.00 while salaries have only increased by 50 percent to \$1000. What this therefore means is that in November 2017, with a salary of \$500.00, workers could buy 556 loaves of bread. However, now with a

salary of \$1000, workers can only buy 71 loaves of bread. Essentially this illustrates how salaries have massively eroded in the two years that Mnangagwa has been in power. It's not only the cost of bread that has exponentially increased; all other products are now beyond the reach of many including cooking oil, mealie meal, sugar and fuel. The prices of data across all networks have effectively become a tool against freedom of speech and expression as the majority cannot afford to purchase data bundles.

The post Mugabe era clearly demonstrates two lessons to Zimbabweans in particular and the world in general. Firstly, it ought to be noted that change is inevitable, but change is not always positive. As such, when change occurs, there is need to guard against early celebrations, rather, it's important to read more into the change to note if it is ushering in positive or negative changes. If positive changes are noted, celebrations can follow but if negative changes are noted, then there is a need to transform the negatives into positives. Secondly, the post Mugabe era in Zimbabwe teaches us that democratic transition of power is very important. While we may yearn for change, coups are not to be celebrated. Not only do they beget other coups but they bring with them unpleasant elements such as militarization of the state. As such, looking into the future, Tafadzwa and many like him need to focus more on who to vote for come the next election if they desire real change.

From Friends To Foes: Things Fall Apart for President Kenyatta and VP Ruto In Kenya

By Samuel Ouma |@journalist_27

President Uhuru Kenyatta and his deputy William Ruto are enduring toxic relationship, the worst in Kenyan history. Prior to the enactment of 2010 constitution the president had power to dismiss and appoint a new number two which is not the case with the new law.

Articles 144 and 145 of Kenyan constitution states that the deputy president can be kicked out of the office on the ground of gross violation of a provision of this Constitution or of any other law, sufficient evidence indicating that the he or she has committed a crime under national or international law and gross misconduct.

The impeachment process is not that simple as it involves complex procedure. The motion must be backed by at least two-third of the legislators followed by the convention of a meeting by the Speaker of the Senate House to hear the charges. The Senate may resolve to appoint a committee of 11 of its members to probe the matter and report the findings before the house within a period of 10 days.

By any chance the deputy president is guilty, the Senate shall accord him a chance to be heard then call for a vote of no confidence. At least two-third of the members of the Senate must support the impeachment motion.

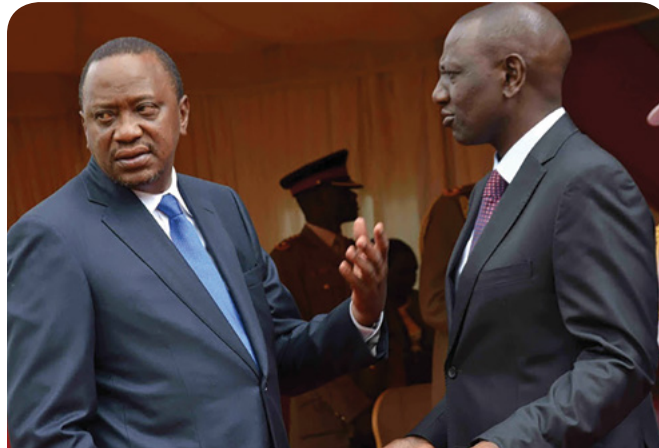
Through observation the president and his number two are not reading in the same script and the calls asking Ruto to resign are growing

everyday. Some of the leaders allied to President Kenya had threatened to initiate a motion calling for Ruto's impeachment whereas others are proposing a change in the constitution to give president powers to sack his deputy in case he or she becomes rogue along the way.

"We need changes in our Constitution so that the President can sack a deputy who decides to be rogue midterm. You cannot claim to be a deputy when you continuously undermine your boss," reiterated one of the legislators.

Building Bridges Initiative (BBI), the outcome of the March 2018 peace deal between Kenyatta and the opposition Chief Raila Odinga has further widen the rift between the two who used to call each brother. BBI team had concluded collecting Kenyan views on how to fix political challenges few months ago and is set to submit report to Kenyatta and Odinga today (November 26).

BBI report is likely to call for constitutional amendments to allow the formation of inclusive government and could the task force recommend changes, the country will head



President Uhuru Kenyatta and Deputy President William Ruto at a past function. Relations between the two men have been strained

to referendum before the next polls.

Unlike Kenyatta who is backing the constitutional review, his deputy has vowed to oppose any attempt to amend the country's supreme laws. He argued the plebiscite is spearheaded by perennial election losers who want to create position for themselves. Ruto further claimed that the referendum will divide the Kenyans along tribal lines.

"The country is not ready for politics of division, those who have a hangover of a tsunami are looking for a way

to divide Kenyans. You can't apply the same tactics over and over and expect different results. We have been told about this tsunami for many years, but it has turn out to be mere threats," said Ruto.

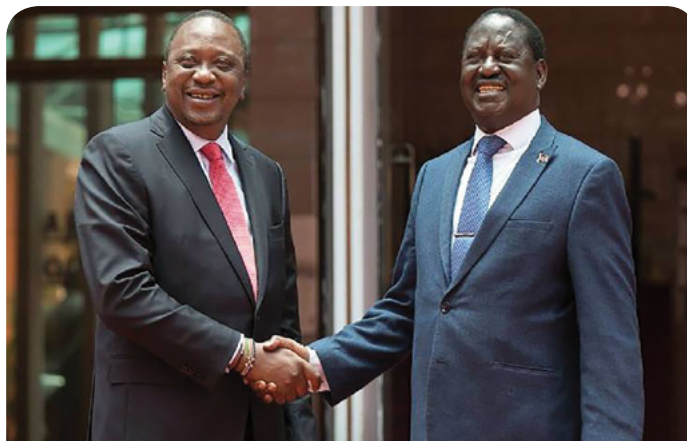
He continued, "We want to ensure as a nation that whatever it is that is going to be proposed must be a national conversation by Kenyans and it should be done in a way that does not create winners or losers because we want a win-win arrangement for all Kenyans. We have been there (referendum) before and it has been a lose-

lose arrangement. I want to encourage Kenyans to focus on ensuring that whatever the debate, it should be a debate of issues and everyone must be listened to so that we can achieve the outcome of any conversation we have without necessarily pitting any group against each other."

President Kenyatta who is in his second and final term is aiming to leave behind a good legacy when he vacates office in 2022. He is mobilizing resources and leaders to support his four big agenda which include manufacturing, food security, affordable housing and universal health care. However, Ruto and his lieutenants are touring the country to solidify support ahead of 2022 general elections despite numerous warnings from the Head of State to stop premature campaigns.

Anti-graft fight has also weakened the bond between the duo, Ruto allies have been in the forefront in accusing the president of unfairly targeting them. They claim that the anti-corruption drive is aimed at derailing Ruto's presidential bid. The deputy has done nothing to calm his allies if he truly supports fight against sleaze.

Handshake is another factor which has caused jitters in the ruling party, Jubilee. The party has witnessed internal conflicts from the moment President agreed to work together with Odinga. The outfit is divided into two factions, one embracing the peace deal and the other opposing it.



President Uhuru Kenyatta and opposition leader Raila Odinga have become inseparable since the handshake.

What Next For Mozambique after big election wins for Frelimo and Filipe Nyusi?

By Alexandre Nhampossa

Mozambique held its general elections on 15 October throughout the country, in which Filipe Nyusi, the Frelimo party's candidate for the presidency of the republic, won with 73% of the vote. With a turnout of 50.74%, Renamo's Ossufo Momade came second with 21.88%, MDM's Daviz Simango third with 4.38%, and Mario Albino of AMUSI got 0.73%.

"The results clearly show that we, FRELIMO, have achieved a unequivocal and unquestionable victory," Nyusi said during his first speech after the announcement of the results by the National Election Commission. "The Mozambican people through this result, said yes, it is with you that it works," he added.

The overwhelming victory makes Frelimo and Filipe Nyusi the winners who takes all. The results of the provincial elections are also satisfactory for the party that should govern in all 10 provincials that went to the polls. In the Assembly of the Republic, the party has also added victories. Of the 250 deputies that make up the Mozambican parliament, Frelimo managed to elect 184 sists. Renamo managed 60 and MDM six

With this scoreboard, Filipe Nyusi and his party can do whatever they want. In power since national independence in 1975, the Frelimo Government has been very closed and lacking in transparency, due to the country's few years of democracy. After



Our victory was unequivocal and unquestionable said a jubilant Filipe Nyusi.

independence, the party chose to be a communist/socialist state, a situation that changed in 1990 when it introduced the democratic rule of law, based on the separation and interdependence of powers and pluralism.

However, the practice has been different. Journalists and activists who dare to criticise the government are persecuted. They are generally kidnapped and beaten, in some cases to death. Others are shot. In parliament, any bill coming from the party is passed, but the opposition's proposals are rejected without discussion.

The party's authoritarianism has proved even more so with the largest corruption case ever recorded in the history of Mozambique involving \$2.2bn. It was a small nucleus of the Frelimo party that secretly approved billionaire loans, without the knowledge of the Assembly

of the Republic, but today they are imputing to the Mozambican people to pay.

Called "hidden debts", the loans were revealed in 2016 by The Wall Street Journal. The corrupt core group designed security projects that were sold to international banks on the basis of secret and illegal guarantees issued by the then government of President Armando Guebuza. The money was then diverted to private matters rather than national interest.

Details coming from a trial in the United States of America, just to give an example, indicate that the current president of the Republic, Filipe Nyusi, received about \$2m when he was a national defense minister at the time. The Frelimo Party, as a legal person, received \$10m of hidden debts.

These are situations that were made thanks to the

lack of transparency of the government, the state and the party itself, and often made through arrogance. The Mozambican Constitutional Council, the highest organ of justice, decreed that the \$2.2bn debts were illegal and therefore the Mozambican people should not pay. Despite this, the government of Mozambique is paying because alegaly because it does not want to be seen internationally as a failed state that does not meet its commitments. Mozambican law says that the judgments of the Constitutional Council are binding on everyone, but it has still been kicked in to give way to the arrogance of the regime.

Last January, Mozambique joined Angola and Guinea-Bissau in the group of "authoritarian regimes" of The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index precisely because of their

undemocratic actions. The question now is, with the more than two thirds of the seats that the Frelimo party managed to get in the last general elections, what could happen?

The party can, if it wishes, approve amendments to the Constitution, for matters relating to the status of the opposition leader, for the election of the Ombudsman and also to initiate criminal proceedings against the President of the Republic or to prevent presidential vetoes to re-examined laws. The Frelimo parliamentary benches can also increase the term of office of the current President of the Republic, as the then President Armando Guebuza tried to do. The law currently sets a maximum of two terms, each of which is 5 years old. More than ever, the Mozambican parliament will now be made up, ultimately, by a single voice, making the

so-called “people’s house”, a parliament without balance.

The authoritarianism of the Mozambican government was highlighted in November including by a Self-exiled G40 kingpin Professor Jonathan Moyo and MDC-ALLIANCE leader, Nelson Chamisa, who have allegedly written a letter to South African President Cyril Ramaphosa and selected SADC leaders requesting for them to push for exclusive dialogue between President Mnangagwa and Chamisa, outside the Political Actors Dialogue (Polad).

Chamisa and Moyo have



Mozambicans are hopeful that the peace accords President Nyusi and his main rival Osufo Momade of Renamo will be respected. Photo credit Facebook.

agreed that they would claiming that the regimes uncertainties remain as to not send the letter to the in these countries are as what the new government Presidents of Mozambique, repressive as Zimbabwe. of Filipe Nyusi will be like, Zambia, Malawi and Angola, However, while he assures that it will be

inclusive and democratic in order to make Mozambique “a reference in the region, in the continent and in the world”.

“I assure the commitment of Frelimo and my staff to work with everyone to create a system in which trust is the rule of coexistence, because the condition for Mozambique’s economic development is the continuous improvement of our democracy” Nyusi said in his first speech after the election results.

AU, Commonwealth, Francophonie Join Forces to End Cameroon's simmering Crisis

By Amos Fofung

African Union Commission Chairperson, HE Moussa Faki Mahamat; the Secretary-General of Commonwealth, Rt Hon. Patricia Scotland QC; and the Secretary-General of La Francophonie, HE Louise Mushikiwabo, have engaged a joint mission to Cameroon to seek an end to the Anglophone Crisis.

The trio, engaged in the peace mission, visited Cameroon from November 26 to 28, to encourage the Cameroon government and other forces to address the Anglophone Crisis.

They were received by Prime Minister, Chief Dr. Joseph Dion Ngute at the Star Building, to commence talks on how the three world bodies can help in addressing the root causes of the Anglophone Crisis and, consequently, provide a solution, and an end to the three-year ongoing war.

A press statement issued



President Biya meeting with Moussa Faki Mahamat; the Secretary-General of Commonwealth Patricia Scotland, and the Secretary General of La Francophonie, Louise Mushikiwabo.

by the Commonwealth revealed that: “While in Cameroon, they will meet with the country’s leadership and other stakeholders to encourage momentum in efforts to address the conflict (in the Northwest and Southwest Regions of the country).”

The press statement also

quoted a Commonwealth Spokesperson as saying: “Cameroon is a valuable member of the African Union, the Commonwealth, and La Francophonie, whose rich diversity is to be celebrated. Every Cameroonian deserves peace and a return to normality.”

On the Major National

Dialogue convened by the Government of Cameroon, the Commonwealth wrote that it “...welcomes the outcomes of the recent Major National Dialogue held in Cameroon, as well as other existing home-grown initiatives aimed at addressing the conflict.

“We look forward to

engaging with President Paul Biya and other stakeholders on the progress that is being made in addressing the root causes of the conflict, and how we can lend our collective support in promoting lasting peace in the country,” the press release said.

After the visit to the PM’s office on November 27, the trio also made a stop at the Unity Palace, where they discussed with President Paul Biya.

In a tweet, Biya stated that he had a “Fruitful discussions with the Chairperson of the African Union Commission – Moussa Faki Mahamat, the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth of Nations – Patricia Scotland, and the SG of the International Organization of La Francophonie – Louise Mushikiwabo”. He, however, did not talk about any details relating to the discussions.

“We believe that we have an obligation to contribute modestly through advice,

interventions in mediation activities or on technical subjects such as bilingualism and multiculturalism,” said Louise Mushikiwabo. Patricia Scotland, for her part, said that the Commonwealth is committed to doing everything possible to support the ongoing peace process initiated through National Dialogue. “The President of the Republic has once again expressed his willingness to engage in dialogue and appeasement,” the president of the African Union Commission added.

In a joint deceleration after their mission ended in Cameroon, the trio in a release dubbed; joint declaration of the tripartite mission” they welcomed the convening of the Grand National Dialogue which according to them has “ushered in a new dynamic and which recommended, inter alia, the acceleration of decentralization, the special status of the North West and South West regions, and the review of the education and legal systems, including the measures taken by President



President Biya meeting with Moussa Faki Mahamat; the Secretary-General of Commonwealth Patricia Scotland, and the Secretary General of La Francophonie, Louise Mushikiwabo. The world is growing impatient with his response to the crisis in the English speaking regions

Biya to defuse political tensions.”

They point to the fact that “Convinced that dialogue remains the preferred path to be encouraged within the present Cameroonian context, they encouraged all the stakeholders to continue on the path of wisdom and responsibility, particularly that of the government in the implementation of the conclusions of the Grand National Dialogue.”

The Chairperson of the AU Commission and

the Secretaries General reaffirmed their commitment to support the national actors in the quest for ways and means to reach the necessary national political consensus, and the creation of conditions conducive to the conduct of legislative and local elections, particularly in the North West and South West regions of the country, in peace, national unity and in accordance with our shared democratic values.

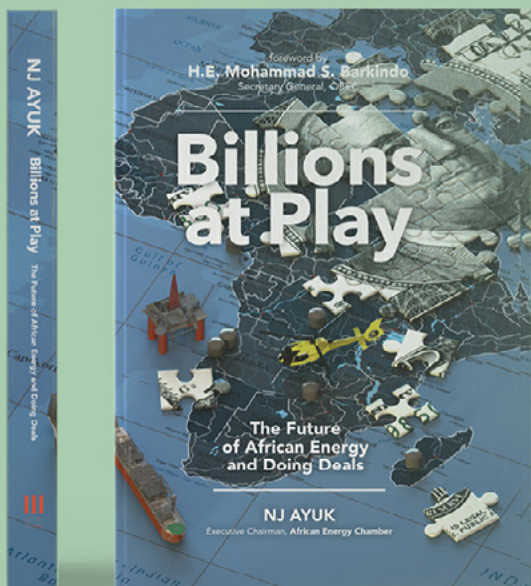
The three leaders also urged for every effort to be made in order to restore security,

justice and the conditions for the resumption of normal life in the regions affected by the crisis.

It has been almost three years since a socio-political crisis broke out in northwestern and southwestern Cameroon. The said crisis began with corporate demands from lawyers and teachers but turned into violent separatist claims with armed groups spreading death and desolation.

According to the

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 21,291 Cameroonians fled violence and fights between secessionists and the army, towards Nigeria. The NGO International Crisis estimates that about 2000 people died after 20 months of fighting. The UNICEF, on its part, indicates that the widespread insecurity has forced more than 4,400 schools to close in the English-speaking regions of the country.



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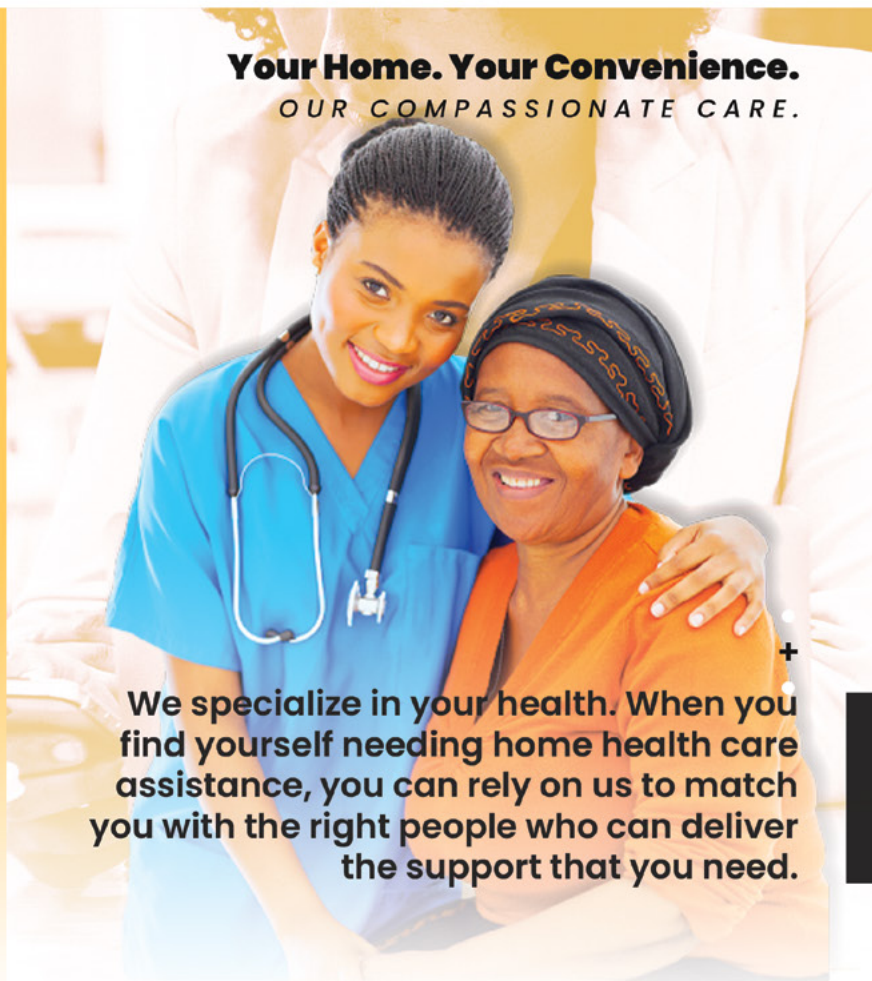
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Parliamentary/Municipal Elections: Biya Convenes Electorate amid Armed Conflict

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

In a 10 November decree, President Paul Biya convened the electorate for legislative and municipal elections across the country. The decree sets aside Sunday 9 February 2020 as date for the two elections. The decree which came after the said elections suffered two postponements falls within the legal framework as the current term of office of the councilors, and parliamentarians are expected to end by 29 February 2020.

As stipulated in section 169 (3) of the electoral code, voting shall be done 20 days to the expiration of the mandate of councilors and not more than 40 days to the end of the term of office of the members of parliament as stipulated by section 148 (3). The long awaited election would bring in new councilors across the 360 councils in the country, and 180 parliamentary seats.

The elections are coming when the crisis in the two English Speaking regions are getting worse. Many thought the President will hasten up

the implantation of some resolutions of just ended Major National Dialogue to calm the rising nerves across the two troubled regions and create an enabling environment for campaigns before the election proper. Apart from the crisis in the two Anglophone regions, the Far North region is also facing security challenges following attacks from Boko Haram terrorists.

MRC boycotting twin elections; SDF to follow?

The leader of the Cameroon Renaissance party, MRC of professor Maurice Kamto on November 25 indicated that the party will not participate in the upcoming elections next year.

According to him, the reason for the boycott is because the crisis in the two English-speaking regions has yet to be resolved.

He equally indicated during the compilation of documents, the non-revision of the electoral code as other contributing factors to the withdrawal of the MRC party



MPs of the opposition SDF during a tense session, Legislative elections have already suffered two postponements because of the political crisis in Cameroon.

in the elections.

This decision has been hailed by many of his supporters who are equally calling for another opposition parties to join suit in boycotting the February 9 elections.

The leading opposition meanwhile did a u-turn earlier in indicating that they will participate in the elections after they had earlier decided not to. There is however greater pressure at the moment for them to follow the MRC Party.

To Joshua Osih, SDF National VP, "the fact that we submitted candidacy files does not mean that we will be there on February 9," He said. "We need Cameroonians that the only person capable of putting an end to the war in the North West and South West Regions is President Biya alone. And what we hope is that he will do that before elections day." "If he doesn't, it will be impossible for us to participate in the elections because we don't want bloodshed," Osih added.

they needed them most. Many of these politicians have been unable to fulfill their campaign promises and might be heading to their constituencies to tell fresh lies to the population.

Amba war to mar elections in Anglophone regions

It is still unclear how elections will hold in two Anglophone regions with the ravaging wave insecurity cause by the crisis. Many people have expressed fears as to how campaigns, and a free, fair, and transparent election will be conducted with such fear instilled in the locals by the gunmen and election officials.

Runaway politicians, elites to face voters

The ongoing Anglophone crisis has forced many politicians to escape their constituencies and forget about their electorates. Many of these politicians stealthily get to their base during under military escort and are unable to commune with their voters. The election will therefore provide an opportunity for runaway politicians to face the population they escaped from and abandoned when

Ayah's PAP to Boycott Twin Elections

The leader of the Popular Action Party, PAP, has declared that the party won't be part of what he termed "dubious and fraudulent" upcoming legislative and municipal elections convened for 9 February 2020 by President Paul Biya. Njang Denis made the statement November 13, 2019, adding



Currently the leading opposition party in Cameroon, the SDF has threatened to boycott the elections as well.

that the sociopolitical atmosphere and economic conditions in the country do not enable for any sincere elections to take place in any part of the country.

To him, elections can't be convened when "the call for ceasefire and demilitarization of the Anglophone zone has not been respected, thousands of those arbitrarily arrested in connection with the Anglophone crisis is still in prisons under deplorable conditions and more than fifty thousand refugees in Nigeria and more than half a million internally displaced persons suffering from the consequences of a senseless war declared by Mr Biya."

Njang adds that the party cannot be part of the election, when the electoral code is not revised under what they call "fraudulent and manipulative



Maurice Kamto who came second in the last Presidential elections says his MRC party will not participate in the elections. Photo REUTERS,Zohra Bensemra.

electoral body designed by the to confiscate and maintain power."

Calling Elections Now Is a Distraction — Kah Walla

Edith Kah Walla's response is contained in a communique

issued in reaction to the President decree convening polls for the upcoming twin elections. The 'Stand Up For Cameroon Movement' leader believes elections cannot hold in Cameroon without a veritable dialogue that will resolve the Anglophone

problem, redefine the nature and form of the Cameroonian state.

To her, a quick, practical, effective, and sustainable solution to the problems of water, education, electricity, health, and roads, rather than rush into elections would be a

panacea to the risen tensions across the country. "...At a time when we are tired of seeing our children recruited by Boko Haram, the Amba and the gangs of thieves because they lack schools, jobs, and any hope for the future, at this very serious time, what President Biya has found to offer us is elections? Kah Walla questioned.

Expressing worries as to how voters will go to polls in the crisis-hit Anglophone region when no ceasefire has been called, Kah Walla reiterated that she and her party would "...carry out non-violent protest to say NO! This time it's NO! Cameroon needs transition, Cameroon needs reconciliation, and Cameroon needs to rebuild its foundation."

Cameroon: Chaos, Controversies and Misery As Biya's Life Presidency Clocks 37

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

November 6 marked 37 years since President Biya became the President of the Republic of Cameroon. Since then, there has been a number of positives, and equally negatives.

Paul Biya became president of Cameroon on November 6, 1982, following the resignation of then President Ahmadou Ahidjo.

One of president Paul Biya's greatest success came when he signed the Green tree Agreement on June 12, 2006, with Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo which "formally" put an end to the Bakassi peninsula border dispute, yet Biya by his reign, has hugely been considered a tyrant and dictator in a



With the country mired in unprecedented crisis, it may be a miserable end for the life presidency of Paul Biya.

world-class of his own.

Paul Barthelémy Biya Bi Mvondo is currently the longest-ruling non-royal leader in the world, and

the oldest ruler in Africa. He recently won the 2018 Presidential election in the country by a landslide victory, which gave him another

seven-year mandate. He will be 92 when his current mandate ends in 2025. The election in 2018 as previous elections

was clouded with lots of misdeeds as the ruling party was accused of various malpractices. Similar to the election in 1992, the opposition party, Cameroon Renaissance Movement has continued to challenge the legality of President Biya's victory in the last Presidential election. According to its leader Maurice Kamto, he was the winner of the elections, and not President Biya.

Maurice Kamto has continued to call for mass protest against the election result. President Biya's government's action has raised concerns about the spirit of peaceful protest in the country. Individuals, politicians cannot carryout peaceful protest in the

country as they will be met with heave handedness from security personnel. Maurice Kamto's protest led to him and his supporters being arrested and imprisoned for about eight months.

In 2009, Biya was featured 19th in Parade Magazine's Top 20 list of "The World's Worst Dictators." "Tyrants, the World's 20 Worst Living Dictators", a book by David Wallechinsky also ranked Biya among the world's worst dictators.

David wrote, "Every few years, Biya STAGES an election to justify his continuing reign, but these elections have no credibility.

Anglophone crisis putting a dark cloud on Biya's stay in power

President Biya's reign is being clouded with what is now known as "The Anglophone Crisis," across the North West and South West Regions. Separatist forces in the said regions have waged a war as they fight to gain independence from the rest of Cameroon.

The European Union says that the violence in Anglophone Cameroon has

caused enormous damages; rendering about 530, 0000 persons internally displaced, and about 42,000 others as refugees in neighboring Nigeria.

The UN says the conflict has created a humanitarian emergency for nearly two million people with no indication that it will end soon despite the Major National Dialogue held in September, a welcome gesture of reconciliation.

The three-year armed conflict has claimed over 3,000 lives, with half a million people displaced from their homes and 40,000 more having fled to Nigeria, according to data from International Crisis Group: the regime says these figures are inflated.

An insurgency by Nigerian jihadist group Boko Haram, which continues to carry out attacks against civilian and military targets in Cameroon's Far North region, and spill-over from the Central African Republic refugee crisis in the East Region, has also stretched the security apparatus.

Persistent Corruption in



The preference of President to respond to legitimate concerns and demands of the English speaking regions with brute military force has backfired spectacularly.

the country

President Paul Biya's regime has been hugely accused of corruption, embezzlement and dictatorship with the continuous silencing of political opponents, activists, and journalists opposed to his regime.

Besides security concerns, weak governance and endemic corruption - the country was ranked 152 out of 180 countries in 2018 Transparency International corruption perceptions index—have undermined the effectiveness of state institutions and scared away investors. The country is ranked 166 out of 190 economies in the World

Bank's Doing Business 2019 report.

1984 coup d'état

Biya savored Anglophones' benevolence during the attempted coup d'état in 1984. It was an Anglophone technician at a then Radio Cameroon, Achu Samba, who switched off the high frequency support system to frustrate the message of the coup plotters from being broadcast across the country.

Accomplices of the coup plotters in other parts of the country, who were waiting for the broadcast on radio, did not get it and failed to take to action in joining the coup. This, historians have said, was one of the immediate causes of the coup's failure. Within the same period, Biya's bodyguard then Captain and now General Ivo Yenwo, is said to be the person who protected the president from harm. In the heat of the attack, Yenwo, an Anglophone, is said to have preserved the life of the man still presiding over the destiny of Cameroon. Yenwo saved Biya from the trap of the coup plotters.

1992 presidential election

Cameroon would have slipped into a civil war following the October 1992 elections largely believed to have been won by the opposition SDF and Union for Change candidate John Fru Ndi . Analysts say if Anglophones and Fru Ndi in particular had not expressed restraint, the nation would have been buried in chaos. At that time, the International community thought a civil war was imminent in Cameroon. Yet, Fru Ndi, an Anglophone, said "I can't walk on the blood of Cameroonians to take power." On the occasion of his 37th anniversary in power, observers say Biya should be indebted to an Anglophone, Fru Ndi, for putting on such a human face against the leisure of power.

With all that is presently going on in Cameroon — Boko Haram crisis in the North, Anglophone crisis in the South West and North West Regions, the refugee crisis in the East Region, and others, the Head of State's stay in power will certainly be a tough one. Life presidencies come with a price and for all the heat that he is facing, Mr Biya has no one to fault but himself.



Swiss police in battle with Cameroonians marching towards a hotel hosting President Biya in June.



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Insight Into Tshisekedi's DR Congo: Is The Presidency Living Up To The Promise?

By Jean-Pierre Afadhali

2019 ushered in a new era in the Democratic Republic of Congo following historic peaceful power transfer between the former president Joseph Kabila and ex-opposition leader Felix Tshisekedi, but challenges remain on multiple fronts in the mineral rich central African country.

President Tshisekedi took office in January after disputed, and delayed elections. The results were contested by another opposition candidate Martin Fayulu saying he was the winner. Despite the controversy that surrounded the 30 December 2018 elections, the new president appears to have been accepted by the International community to lead the once troubled country amid insecurity in the Eastern areas.

Earlier this year the new president unveiled his vision to transform the country. The copy seen by Pan African Visions details how the son of Etienne Tshisekedi—a prominent opposition politician who passed on in 2017, hopes to promote foreign direct investment, fight corruption, strengthen rule of law, reform the electoral system, develop physical infrastructure, revitalize the mining industry, diversify economy, restore peace and help pacify and grow economy of the Great Lakes region among other reforms.

The ambitious vision was unveiled in the United States of America (USA) during Tshisekedi's first official trip outside Africa. The USA



Felix Tshisekedi took office in January 2019. Photo Reuters.

endorsed president's political and economic reforms agenda during a working visit. On the diplomatic front, the new president seems to have improved the relations with neighboring countries, and Western partners. African countries Tshisekedi visited to strengthen ties include Kenya, Congo Brazzaville, Uganda, and neighboring Rwanda. The president called upon Congolese refugees to return home.

Still on regional cooperation, DRC expressed interest to join the East

African Community (EAC). If accepted the membership could boost trade, free movements of goods and persons in the Great Lakes region that is already trading with members of the East African block. DR Congo formally applied for admission to the six-member block in June.

"This request follows the ever-increasing trade between the economic players of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and those of the states of the Community," Tshisekedi said in a letter to

his counterpart Paul Kagame, the current chairman of EAC in June.

On local political scene, one of major reforms was the release of political prisoners. In March Mr. Tshisekedi pardoned three prominent political prisoners and 700 regular ones. A move welcomed by many; some analysts said it signaled the "break from the predecessor who had imprisoned his opponents". The freed included opposition figures Franck Diongo, Diomi Ndongala and

Firmin Yangambi, who had been imprisoned on charges such as insurrection against the Congolese state, under former president Joseph Kabila.

Former presidential hopeful Moise Katumbi returned to the country after a self-imposed exile. Mr. Katumbi who was the governor of Katanga and ally of Kabila but fell out with him was facing various charges. He was eventually acquitted.

"I think I am changing the human rights situation of Congolese people. I have introduced many reforms; opponents are now free to do what they want. There are no longer arbitrary detentions," said the Congolese president in a recent interview with a Russian TV. He was commenting on criticism that nothing has changed since he took office.

The new authorities introduced the promised free primary education that appears to face challenges in implementation. Some schools have implemented free education but others are still charging students.

The delayed government formation drew criticism some saying the former president Joseph Kabila is still in control. Tshisekedi has been leading under a coalition between Kabila's movement FCC and his own platform CASH.

In August, seven months after the new president was inaugurated, the coalition government was announced. The power-sharing agreement saw 23 members of the executive drawn from Tshisekedi's Direction for



Kabila may be out of office, but he still wields considerable influence in the Tshisekedi Administration.

Change party (CASH), and the remaining 42 from former long-time president Joseph Kabila's Common Front for Congo (FCC) coalition.

"It [the political situation] is now calm; we are now focusing on the goals to make Congolese people at the center of what we do. We will also first restore security," president Felix Tshisekedi stated in a recent interview.

Rampant insecurity in North East

Insecurity remains the biggest challenge in North Eastern provinces that have also been affected by Ebola outbreak since August 2018. The deadly disease appears to be difficult to end amid population mistrust and increasing attacks on Ebola treatment centres.

South Kivu that was largely peaceful is also grappling with insecurity blamed for locals, foreign rebel groups and militias.

In Early November the

Congolese armed forces announced new offensive against rebels in North Eastern Congo but the situation remain tense in the region especially Beni where most civilians killings are attributed to the Ugandan rebel group known as the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). Insecurity is hindering efforts to end Ebola.

Angry residents have resorted to violent protest against UN peacekeepers (MONUSCO), one of the largest peacekeeping forces in the World. Residents accuse the UN force for doing nothing to protect them from militias. However, the UN peace keepers said they have not been invited by DR Congo government to support the Congolese armed forces in the latest operations.

On Tuesday 26 November, WHO evacuated 49 non-essential staff out of the 120 people working on the epidemic in the city of Beni in



Meeting with US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo .Tshisekedi has improved existing Congolese alliances around the world.

North Kivu, one of the Ebola hotspots. According to WHO Ebola has killed more than 2000 people in DR Congo since last year. Although the number of confirmed cases has decreased in recent weeks the disease remain a global emergency.

On Thursday 27 December a local news website '7sur7' reported that an attack on Ebola treatment centre at Ebola epicenter was foiled by

the police.

"Each day that we don't have full access to all Ebola-affected areas in DRC we cede ground to the virus, prolonging the outbreak." Said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the General Director of WHO on his twitter account in the wake a violent protests and attack on UN camp in Beni "This is a tragedy because it will only add to the suffering of already

overburdened communities."

Meanwhile, the future of coalition of Tshisekedi and Kabila hangs in balance following recent misunderstanding. Radio France International (RFI) reported that On Monday 26 December Kabila's FCC went into a retreat to discuss various issues with focus on the future of the alliance with the president's platform.

Rwanda -Uganda Feud Stalls Progress In East Africa

By Maniraguha Ferdinand

The only survivor of political hurricane that hit East Africa Community (EAC) members in 2019 was Tanzania. It is a year that started with tensions and is likely going to end with tensions.

EAC is made of six members including Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and South Sudan with the Democratic Republic of Congo is seeking to enter.

EAC activities were stuck firstly because of members failing to pay their annual contributions on time. The second hindrance came from tensions among its members mainly those of Rwanda and Uganda.

This year inherited



The peace deal between Museveni and Kagame is still to produce desired results.

problems from 2018 but they burst out in March this year. Rwanda took up the chairmanship of the body in February at the time its

relations with Uganda were at daggers drawn.

Rwanda accused Uganda of harboring and aiding groups that want to overthrow its

government, and the illegal detention, and torture of its citizens living in Uganda.

Though Uganda did not publicly air its frustrations,

the media reported that was unease and frustration with Rwanda sending spies to create chaos aimed at overthrowing president's Yoweri Museveni government.

In March this year, Rwanda issued an advisory note to its citizens warning them on the dangers of crossing to Uganda.

The incident happened at the same time when Rwanda was closing the busy border of Gatuna that links it to Uganda. It was a way of blocking goods that come from the northern corridor, meaning those that are coming from Mombasa port in Kenya, to Kampala and

then to Kigali and Eastern DRC.

By June, it was reported that Kampala had lost more than \$664 million's worth of exports to Rwanda while Kigali had lost \$104 million during the three months following the closure of the Gatuna border, according to Uganda's East African Community Ministry.

It also affected Kenya because most of goods that were coming from Kenya to Rwanda or Rwanda to Kenya ought to pass through Uganda as it is the easiest route.

Earlier in March, President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya had a one-day official visit to Rwanda where he discussed with President Paul Kagame. He immediately flew to Uganda to meet President Museveni. Though the



Trucks at the Uganda-Rwanda border. The standoff took a serious toll on the economies of both countries. Photo, Uganda Media Centre.

outcome of his abrupt visits was not shared, the belief was that he tried to mediate but did not succeed.

Kenya and Tanzania were the only right mediators, but they failed. Burundi could not do it as its relations with Rwanda have been strained since a failed coup

in 2015 when the opposition wanted to depose President Pierre Nkurunziza. Burundi says Rwanda received coup plotters and equipped them to destabilize Nkurunziza's government. Rwanda denies those allegations.

South Sudan could not mediate because it is a new

member which knows little about old allies, Kagame and Museveni.

In August, Angola and DRC tried to mediate in Luanda, and Rwanda's Paul Kagame and Uganda's Museveni signed a memorandum of understanding to ease tensions. Both leaders agreed

to refrain from actions that could jeopardize the security of either countries.

The fruits of the initiative remain to be seen, as border movements are still low on both sides, and security personnel control them tightly. Uganda is yet to release Rwandans that are said to be in the hands of its security organs illegally.

The meeting that was scheduled to review the results of Luanda agreement in Uganda was postponed from November.

EAC heads of state held a summit in February when Rwanda was given chairmanship baton. The next summit slated for November, was postponed to 2020.

A Recipe For African Success In NJ Ayuk's Billions At Play

By Ajong Mbapndah L

Launched recently in South Africa at a heavily attended event, NJ Ayuk's new book *Billions at Play: The Future of African Energy and Doing Deals* has received rave reviews.

"Africans are more than capable of making our continent a success," says NJ Ayuk in an interview with Pan African Visions to discuss the book. Past deals have not worked for a majority of African countries and *Billions At Play* is a roadmap to the future we Africans want to build for ourselves, says NJ Ayuk.

With key roles as CEO of Centurion Law Group, and Executive Chairman of the African Energy Chamber, Ayuk says Africans need to know the worth and value they bring into any oil and gas deals.

"Oil only becomes a curse



NJ Ayuk speaking at the launch of Billions At Play in South Africa.

when it is mismanaged, and when extraction is done without proper supervision and regulations, without pragmatic solutions that promise sustainability," says Ayuk.

Described by OPEC Secretary General

Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo as a dreamer who has taken the time to develop a detailed roadmap for realizing that dream, Ayuk says he cherishes the battles he fights to get opportunities for fellow African to have a seat at the table.

"We are showing that we are not a helpless continent and we don't want handouts – our future will not be based on aid," says Ayuk in the interview which also discusses the role of the diaspora, women, alternative sources of energy, and more.

NJ your new book Billions at Play: The Future of African Energy and Doing Deals is now available, what is the message you seek to convey?

Billions At Play is a roadmap to the future that we, Africans, can build for ourselves by getting a few things right. The biggest message that I seek to convey is that of our shared responsibility towards improving Africa and creating the Africa our future generations will thank us for. It goes beyond the African energy sector. I hope everyone can see how they can be part of the solution in a more practical, sustainable way. Africans are more than capable of making our continent a success.

In terms of doing deals,

what is it that African countries have failed to understand, and what are some of the suggestions that you are offering?

It's no secret that in the past deals have proven not to work for a majority of African countries – only benefitting a selected few. We see the repercussions of that daily, where African countries are rich in oil and gas, but their communities at large suffer from poverty and unemployment. My biggest recommendation? Better deal-making abilities and implementation of local content regulations. We need to learn how to negotiate better deals that benefit everyday Africans. We are getting smarter at building new models for managing petroleum revenue. Africans need to know the worth and value we bring into any oil and gas deals and be confident in that. Our laws must create an enabling environment for international investors who want to transfer technology and empower Africans, to be able to do business with us. As I write in *Billions At Play*, good deal-making is crucial. We need to negotiate

deals that result in long-term benefits for the people, African companies need to negotiate deals that keep them on an equal playing field with their competition and empower them to grow, to create and sustain jobs, and to support the communities they are based in.

Looking at the continent we see some countries that have produced oil for decades unable to maintain a single functional refinery, in other countries the resources seem to benefit a few and not the broader interest of the people, how does Africa turn the resource curse to a blessing?

Oil only becomes a curse when it is mismanaged, and when extraction is done without proper supervision and regulations, without pragmatic solutions that promise sustainability. Otherwise, it can be a true blessing. We need infrastructure – we need to build and own our own refineries, pipelines, urea, ammonia, and fertilizer plants, power plants etc. The same applies to setting



Gabriel Mbagha Obiang Lima, Minister of Mines and Hydrocarbons of Equatorial Guinea, Abdirashid Mohammed Ahmed, Minister of Petroleum of the Federal Republic of Somalia, Kola Karim, Group Managing Director of Shoreline Energy, and Rene Awambeng, Global Head of Client Relations at Afreximbank were at the launch

up technology hubs! We have seen how some African countries have started taking steps in this direction, and that makes me really proud.

When we talk of energy, the immediate focus is on oil, could you talk on the potential of other forms of energy like wind and solar and how this could shape the future as well?

Africa will never fulfill its true potential until access to reliable power is widespread, and that can only be attained

once we have functional, well-funded, transparent power utilities that make use of new technologies and solutions and that partner with the private sector to promote the continent's ability to power itself in a sustainable manner. Yes, most of Africa has solar exposure that is very adequate for power generation, not to mention wind, hydro, and other forms of clean power generation. The likes of Kenya, targeting a 100% clean energy mix is a good example.

world recently are in Africa. We are showing that we are not a helpless continent and we don't want handouts – our future will not be based on aid. Good things really are happening across the continent, and the petroleum industry is a common denominator. You can find plenty of examples of natural resources contributing to meaningful changes for the better. I'll forever be optimistic, and I know my hard work and optimism is contagious.



Africans are more than capable of making our continent a success, says Ayuk.

"Africans are more than capable of making our continent successful," you say in the book, looking at what is going on in the continent, what makes you so optimistic?

Take a look around you and across the globe and you will easily spot African brothers and sisters actively doing amazing things in their spheres of influence, each playing a role in transforming the lives of hundreds of thousands of Africans. Similarly, the biggest discoveries made in the

What role do you see for the African diaspora, especially those with the skills set that could make a difference on the energy future of the continent?

The diaspora can actively engage with foreign partners, which is essential to Africa's growth, and contribute to spreading a more objective narrative on the promising future the continent has. Similarly, and as we seek to build better organizations and run better businesses, skills learned and acquired abroad

can be highly beneficial to the continent.

“Africa needs companies that are willing to share knowledge, technology and best practices, and businesses that are willing to form positive relationships in areas where they work,” you say, what leverage do African countries have to compel companies from China, Europe, the US and other parts of the world to implement this?

We need foreign oil and gas companies to continue operating in African communities and to continue hiring African people, purchasing from African suppliers, and partnering with African companies. Like I said, foreign partners are essential to Africa’s growth, we need to push ahead, and we cannot live and prosper in isolation. We can also benefit from the companies working on the continent for investment collaborations and to build the infrastructure necessary for industrialization.

You also talk about the paucity of women in the energy sector, what accounts for this and how important is it for the trend to be reversed?

I sit in a lot of boardrooms,



Billions At Play is a roadmap to the future that we, Africans, can build for ourselves by getting a few things right, says Ayuk.

I speak at a lot of conferences, and I am always faced with how few and far in between women executives are in these spaces. It’s a fact that amongst African oil firms, women in leadership only account for only about 2-3%. So who is going to push the agenda for women, if not me? Not us? I know and work with a lot of amazingly hardworking, innovative, strong women that I believe need to take their spaces in executive roles. Women have a great deal to offer, and good jobs for women contribute to a more stable, more economically vital Africa. We

have to do more to ensure that women and men receive equal compensation, whether it’s wages, community programs, or property royalties, etc. If I can do my part to put pressure, I’ll be happy.

Billions at Play is also hitting the stands at a time of great excitement and growing optimism with the African Continental Free Trade Agreement, AfCFTA, how does this factor in into the vision you share?

The AfCFTA like in every other industry or sector, can

yield great results for the oil industry. I love unity! I love making money together! I have Centurion Law Group offices in South, West, and East Africa already – I’m glad the entire continent is catching up. I continue to embrace strong regional economy give the continent a competitive edge in the global economy and it will make a lot of pan-African work easier. Lets’ win together.

In his foreword, OPEC Secretary General Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo describes you as a dreamer who

has “taken the time to develop a detailed roadmap for realizing that dream,” how far is NJ Ayuk willing to go in rallying Africa and friends of Africa towards the fulfilment of this dream?

That’s what I live for every day. Opening opportunities for fellow African to come and have a seat at the table. It is an honor for me to be able to do that and call it my work. To open doors for other people, the same way as doors were open for me and knowledge imparted. That is what it is all about.

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Investigation links Global oil giants, influential Westerners as facilitators and benefactors of South Sudan war

By Amos Fofung

A global link of

facilitators, benefactors, and influencers who either directly or indirectly benefit from the war in South Sudan War has been exposed due to an investigation conducted by The Sentry organization.

An investigative and policy team that follows the dirty money connected to African war criminals and transnational war profiteers and seeks to shut those benefiting from violence out of the international financial system.

The investigation shows how corporations have profited from the country's civil war - and the links between armed groups, global oil giants, as well as British and American citizens.

For years now, the world's youngest country has been thrown into civil war in what many term a man-made humanitarian crisis that engulfed the country since 2013.

Titled; *The Taking of South Sudan*, the report names tycoons, brokers, and multinational corporations that are Complicit in Hijacking the World's Newest

Nation. "The men who liberated South Sudan proceeded to hijack the country's fledgling governing institutions, loot its resources, and launched a war in 2013 that has cost hundreds of thousands of lives and displaced millions of people," an executive summary of the report reads.

"They did not act alone. The South Sudanese politicians and military officials ravaging the world's newest nation received essential support from individuals and corporations from across the world who have reaped profits from those dealings. Nearly every instance of confirmed or alleged corruption or financial crime in South Sudan examined by The Sentry has involved links to an international corporation, a multinational bank, a foreign government or high-end real estate abroad.... the extent to which external actors have been complicit in the taking of South Sudan."

Naming and shaming those benefiting from the war, the report notes that benefactors have pocketed billions of dollars and will reap more so long as the war rages on.



"The local kleptocrats and their international partners—from Chinese-Malaysian oil giants and British tycoons to networks of traders from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, and Uganda—have accumulated billions of dollars. The country's natural resources have been plundered, lethal militia and military units responsible for atrocities have received financing and kleptocrats have lined their pockets with untold billions of dollars allocated by government programs meant to improve the livelihood of some of the poorest, most vulnerable people in the world."

Released in September 2019, the report profiles international actors who have provided

direct support to South Sudanese perpetrators of violence; actors who have formed private businesses with top South Sudanese officials responsible for human rights abuses and international actors who have benefited from major public procurement scandals in South Sudan.

As per the report; "the men who liberated South Sudan proceeded to hijack

the country's fledgling governing institutions, loot its resources, and launched a war in 2013 that has cost hundreds of thousands of lives and displaced millions of people."

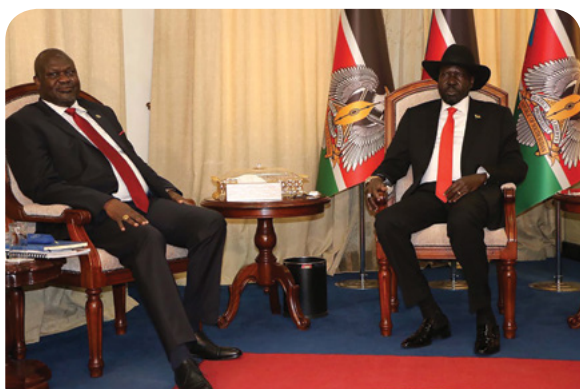
Reiterating the devastating effects on the war-torn state, they added that "they did not act alone. The South Sudanese politicians and military officials ravaging the world's newest nation received essential support from individuals and corporations from across the world who have reaped profits from those dealings. Nearly every instance of confirmed or alleged corruption or financial crime in South Sudan examined by The Sentry has involved links to an international corporation, a multinational bank, a foreign government or high-end real estate abroad. This report examines several illustrative examples of international actors linked to violence and grand corruption in order to demonstrate the extent to which external actors have been complicit in the taking of South Sudan."

The report directly points to local kleptocrats and their international partners—

"from Chinese-Malaysian oil giants and British tycoons to networks of traders from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya and Uganda—" whom they accuse of having accumulated billions of dollars.

"The country's natural resources have been plundered, lethal militia and military units responsible for atrocities have received financing and kleptocrats have lined their pockets with untold billions of dollars allocated by government programs meant to improve the livelihood of some of the poorest, most vulnerable people in the world. The spoils of this heist are coursing through the international financial system in the form of shell companies, stuffed bank accounts, luxury real estate and comfortable safe havens around the world for the extended families of those involved in violence and corruption."

Urging a broad-base investigation into the scandal in South Sudan, the report warns of more that any peace efforts will yield no fruits as these "gang" will rather not lose their mines.



President Salva Kiir and former Vice President Riek Machar have been grappling with challenges of implementing a peace deal.

Celebrating Africans Who Made History in 2019

By Prince Kurupati

Many Africans managed to raise the African flag high in 2019. As we come to the end of the year, we take a look at some these African greats, giants and heroes. The African giants covered in this piece are drawn from all walks of life including advocacy, education, business, sports, politics, and arts.

Caster Semenya (South Africa)

Caster Semenya is a sporting personality who divides opinion. There are those who are of the view that her sporting prowess is a talent that we should all admire and appreciate no need to take into cognizance other factors that may diminish or reduce the brilliance of her talents. There are also others who argue that her biological traits give her an unfair advantage in women's competitions. Regardless of where one falls, the simple fact is that Semenya has proved to be a resilient fighter in her quest to achieve greatness and that is a symbol

of a heroine, an African heroine. Taking the words of Olympian Edwin Moses, "sports eligibility...should not be based on hormone levels or other differences of sex development. If successful, Semenya's effort could open the door for all who identify as women to compete in track events without having to first medically lower their testosterone levels below a proposed limit."

Abiy Ahmed (Ethiopia)

Abiy Ahmed won the Nobel Peace Prize award in 2019. That on its own is a testament to his efforts to bring peace to Ethiopia specifically and Africa in general. To better understand the impact that Abiy Ahmed's efforts have had, let's take the words of Feyisa Lilesa, an Ethiopian Olympic silver medalist exiled from the country in 2016 after protesting against the then government at the Rio Olympics, "In Ethiopian history, we have never seen a leader like him. He's an educated person who talks about unity. He has released thousands of people from jail. He brought peace between



Prime Minister Abiy.

Ethiopia and Eritrea after 20 years of war. And he made it possible for me to come home...Yes, people are still protesting. But now, when they protest, they aren't going to jail. To me, that is democracy. That is hope."

Given (Tanzania) Edward

They say success often comes to those who manage to find great solutions to difficult challenges. This is exactly what happened to Tanzanian innovator Given Edward. In his desire to ensure that every child in his

native country Tanzania gets access to quality education with limited resources, Given Edward decided to create an artificial intelligence-powered SMS platform and app which delivers educational content to students without internet access and access to pricey smartphones or textbooks. What students simply need to do is to text a question to a number provided by Given. Afterwards, replies with answers already curated by Tanzanian teachers and stored in a database are sent back to the student.

Siya Kholisi (South Africa)

Siya Kholisi made history as South Africa lifted the Webb Ellis Cup recently. In the process, Kholisi became the first black captain of the Springboks (nickname of the South African male rugby team) to lift the World Cup trophy in its 128-year rugby history. The victory meant that South Africa now holds the record together with New Zealand of the most titles in World Cup history (3). Speaking soon after the match, Kholisi said he was delighted to lift the Cup and

that, the World Cup triumph signified an important moment in South African history as people coming from different backgrounds and races managed to come together with 'one goal'.

Rami Malek (Egypt)

On the film and movies front, Bohemian Rhapsody ranks easily as one of the best productions to come out in 2019. For Africa, the beauty of Bohemian Rhapsody is that the leading role was played by Rami Malek, an Egyptian-American actor. Malek's prowess in front of the screen did prove that Africa can compete with the very best if the right foundation is put in place. As stated by Robery Downey Jr., "I contend that his mother Nelly, his father Said, his sister Yasmine and his brother Sami are the foundational pillars to his rise. Mighta just been destiny...more likely it's yet another testament to hardworking immigrants raising their kids right and pushing our culture toward the light."

Fred Swaniker (Ghana)

Africa's most valuable



Siya Kholisi became the first black captain of the Springboks.



Eliud Kipchoge.



Trevor Noah with President Ramaphosa of South Africa.

asset are the youth. Fred Swaniker realized this and decided to develop this asset so that it can in turn help in the development of the continent as a whole. Fred Swaniker, an entrepreneur and leadership development expert came to a conclusion that the only way to develop Africa's most valuable asset is by imparting knowledge and skills such that these skills and knowledge can be used in turn to develop the continent.

As stated by Mo Ibrahim, "Fred understood that the key to success was not about leading the youth along a preordained path, but about allowing them to become authors of their own stories... That is what has inspired his educational initiatives: the African Leadership Academy, African Leadership Network and African Leadership University. Together, they hope to educate 3 million leaders of tomorrow."

Eliud Kipchoge (Kenya)

Many people are comfortable doing the ordinary. However, Kenyan athlete Eliud Kipchoge is not comfortable with being ordinary; Kipchoge prefers doing the extraordinary. Kipchoge set himself a superhuman target, the target was to run a marathon in under two hours! Unbelievable to many, Kipchoge actually worked on achieving this target

and during the INEOS 1:59 Challenge in the Prater Park in the Austrian Capital of Vienna. Eliud's achievement is comparable in the annals of human achievements to standing on the moon and reaching the pinnacle of Mt Everest.

Trevor Noah (South Africa)

South African comedy guru Trevor Noah did the unthinkable as he managed

to fill the Madison Square Garden in New York. During his Loud and Clear Tour in the city of New York, Noah performed before a crowd of over 20,000 people! In the process, he became the first African comedian to achieve the feat and joined other comedian gurus including Kevin Hart, Chris Rock and Eddie Murphy in achieving the honour of filling up Madison Square Garden.

A Robust Response in Gestation from African Mayors to Fight Climate Change

By Ajong Mbapndah L

Higher temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, drought, and increased climate variability are some of the climate changes pushing scientist and experts to make dire predictions on the future for Africa if nothing is done. Determined to meet the challenge of climate change head on, African mayors and local governments leaders are taking urgent actions to cushion the effects.

Working under the aegis of The Covenant of Mayors in Sub-Saharan Africa (CoM SSA) – African cities and municipalities are developing



Frederic Vailler and Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi.

The Covenant of Mayors in Sub-Saharan Africa (CoM SSA) is the "regional covenant" of the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy (GCoM). It is a bottom-up and voluntary initiative that invites cities to define and meet ambitious and realistic energy and climate targets. Cities and Local authorities are encouraged to define their long-term vision and actions towards a sustainable future based on the pillars of Climate Change i) Mitigation, ii) Adaptation, and iii) sustainable, affordable and secure Access to Energy.

The CoM SSA initiative was launched in 2015, just around the same period as the historic Conference of Parties (COP) 21 and is funded by the European Union, with the ambition of bringing together local governments in Sub-Saharan Africa voluntarily committed to fighting climate change.

The main objective of the CoM SSA is to increase the capacity of cities to provide access to sufficient, sustainable and safe energy related services to urban and peri-urban populations, with special attention to energy efficiency and renewable energy as drivers for local low emission, climate resilient, sustainable development. Given the major challenge of urban growth in most African countries in the coming decades, the specific objective is to increase local governments' planning capacities on urban design, mobility and energy.

What would you cite as some of the success stories of CoM SSA since its creation?

Frédéric Vallier, Secretary General, CEMR : In Africa, cities and municipalities are particularly vulnerable when it comes to climate change. Increasing floods and droughts threaten city's social and economic health, and the need for clean, stable energy is constant. One of the major successes is that the initiative has over 200 signatory cities across sub-Saharan Africa, and is working with 13 pilot cities which are receiving funding from the European Union to develop climate action plans and implement pilot actions in their territories. Thanks to CoM SSA, mayors and city civil servants have been mobilized, their awareness increased, their capacities built, and their readiness to face climate change improved.

How many members does CoM SSA have and what does it take to join?

Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi, Secretary General, UCLG Africa :Joining CoM SSA, now more than 200 cities strong, is open to any city or municipality in Sub-Saharan



Mr. Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi, Secretary General, UCLG Africa.

Africa regardless of size.

Benefits of joining the initiative are numerous but a snapshot view includes:

- Capacity building and support to implement climate change policy commitments that contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the drive for cities and local governments to be recognized and included in the development of Nationally Determined Contributions
- Access to general

and technical support on climate and energy planning including the very important step to access finance

Gaining access to best practices and taking part in city to city partnerships leading to knowledge exchanges and peer support at regional and local workshops in Senegal, Kenya and Cape Town to name a few.

Engaging in networking opportunities with other global cities including the participation of the Mayor of Accra representing Africa on the Executive Board of GCoM at the UN Climate Action Summit in New York in September 2019 where he spoke passionately about the impact of climate on the health of people in his city through air pollution highlighting solutions that Accra the city aims to introduce to address this

Increase international visibility for Sub-Saharan Africa local governments' climate and energy actions through joint events such as Climate Chance and the participation in key Global events including COP 25 scheduled now to

take place in Madrid, Spain between 2-13 December 2019.

The 2nd African Climate Chance Summit, featuring the Conference of the Covenant of Mayors in Sub Saharan Africa (CoM SSA) took place in Ghana, can you shed some light on how the Summit went and some of the major outcomes?

Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi, Secretary General, UCLG Africa :Jean-Pierre Elong-Mbassi, Secretary General of the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa, chaired the first day's opening and he highlighted four key messages from the Conference

i) The need to correct the imbalance in financing Climate Adaptation to enable African local governments to achieve their ambitious climate action plans, with Africa demanding more adaptation finance;

ii) Ghana to position itself as Africa's Climate Hub and champion the localisation of Nationally Determined Contributions. The Mayor of Accra, who is the Global Covenant of Mayor's Executive Board member



Frederick Vailler CEMR SG.

and CoM SSA Ambassador, is well positioned to take these messages to the international stage;

iii) The Climate Chance Summit Africa to become the preparation conference for COPs representing cities, local governments and non-state actors in Africa to formulate and deliver their messages, declarations and recommendations at an international level where these ambitious climate plans that are now called "The Accra Climate Dialogue"; and
iv) The most critical of messages from the conference is to ensure climate finance is accessible at the local level.

The theme of the conference was "Towards the Institutionalization of Local Climate Action and Access to Finance," how did it tie in with the objectives or agenda that CoM SSA has?

Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi, Secretary General, UCLG Africa: The idea is to make climate action a component of most of the municipalities in every country in Africa. National governments have a role as they can create the enabling environment, such as new institutional framework, in order to generalize local climate action

and make it more effective.

In terms of climate change, how is this manifested in some of your member cities, what are some of the changes worthy of concern that have been reported?

Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi, Secretary General, UCLG Africa :Some cities have created teams of civil servants within their municipal structure, sometimes in cooperation with other supporting stakeholders from civil society and universities, to address the issues of climate change and energy access. The institutional dynamic at city level was boosted by the capacity building activities that cities could benefit from the CoM SSA program, as well as thanks to the peer-learning with other cities from the continent, such as Bouaké in Ivory Coast and Tsévié in Togo, which both almost finalized their climate plans. These cities already implement local projects such as safer and cleaner cook stoves, public lightening powered by solar energy and waste management initiatives.

Looking at the realities on the ground, in the cities across Africa, how bad or alarming is the situation compared

to some of the dire reports that we see in some international publications?

Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi, Secretary General, UCLG Africa :According to IPCC regular reports, Africa is one of the most vulnerable continents and it is already one that is experiencing the consequence of climate changes in the most spectacular way. Droughts, flooding, desertification, biodiversity loss, etc. are happening more often and in worse proportions than before.

We noticed that that the activities of CoM SSA are funded by the European Union, what kind of support are your members and CoM SSA as a group getting from African governments?

Frédéric Vallier, Secretary General, CEMR :CoM SSA initiative does not receive specific support from African government. However, in some instances, contacts have been established with agents from ministries so they can promote the initiative back to their countries or promote the cooperation of cities with national statistical agencies for example. The President of Ghana spoke in support of CoM SSA during the last

Climate Chance conference in Accra.

Besides the funding that it provides, what other support do you get from the EU and other international partners, and how do you balance local or African realities with dictates of some of the international partners?

Frédéric Vallier, Secretary General, CEMR : In addition to its financial support, the European Union supports CoM SSA through the involvement of its Joint Research Centre, a European research agency, which developed key material for the development of climate plans (Guidebook for the elaboration of climate action plans) and still provides technical support.

CoM SSA implementing partners from Europe have also shared experiences acquired with the European Covenant of Mayors and promoted city partnerships of African cities with European cities in the area of climate action. CoM SSA also relies on its partners based in Africa, with their strong local experience, to provide support in capacity-building, technical support, opportunities for advocacy and opportunities of cooperation with African civil

society.

What kind of mechanism does CoM SSA have in place to monitor progress with recommendations from the recent forum, and what next in the months and years to come for CoM SSA?

Frédéric Vallier, Secretary General, CEMR :CoM SSA Help Desk based in Accra, at UCLG-Africa's West Africa regional office, is in constant contact with signatory cities in order to provide them with technical support and monitoring their progress towards the development of their climate action plans. The Help Desk, together with other partners such as ICLEI-Africa, is also liaising with cities on possible funding opportunities.

The European Union will continue to support the CoM SSA, including with specific support to African cities ready to implement a climate plan from 2020. African partner organisations, such as UCLG-Africa (based in Accra), ICLEI-Africa (based in Cape Town), Sustainable Energy Africa (based in Cape Town) and ENDA Energies (based in Dakar) will continue their work in guiding the CoM SSA signatory cities through their climate action.

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Q & A with Twiga Foods Co-founder & CEO, Peter Njonjo

By Ajong Mbapndah L

As Twiga Foods Takes Lead in Setting Standards for production and distribution in Sub-Saharan Africa, PAV caught with its Co-Founder and CEO Peter Njonjo for a Q&A on important developments, and way forward for the Kenyan company.

Could we start by getting an introduction of Twiga Foods, and how its creation came about?

Peter Njonjo: Twiga Foods was created to address issues around food production and distribution in Sub-Saharan Africa. When you consider that a disproportionately high percentage of disposable income is spent on food - 55 percent in Kenya and 60 percent in Nigeria. Compared to 8 percent in the UK - it made sense to explore ways to bring costs down.

Since we started Twiga in 2014, we have also come to realise that Africa's food production challenges actually begin with fragmented consumer retail. The Continent is dependent

on small farmers because the Continent's retail is dependent on small informal vendors.

With current fragmentation, it makes no sense for a farmer to plant 50 acres of potatoes, or 30 acres of bananas, because they'd have no route to sell those volumes into a fragmented marketplace. However, staying small is extremely inefficient: a farmer with less than 3 acres achieves only 14 percent of the yield/acre of a farmer with more than 20 acres, ensuring the cost of food remains far too high.

Our approach is to "re-engineer" the agricultural value chain as an end to end tech-enabled market, rather than seeking to optimise existing fragmentation. By aggregating a fragmented retail space, we aim to enable the creation of an efficient domestic agricultural production industry, when before there was none, while generating incremental value for all market participants.

How are your services provided and how much

of Kenya does it cover?

Peter Njonjo: Twiga's m-commerce platform enables vendors to order fresh produce, as and when needed, from farmers across Kenya. As a result, farmers have guaranteed access to a fairly priced, transparent, mobile marketplace and vendors can consistently source high-quality produce, which is conveniently delivered for free to their doorstep within 18 hours of ordering.

At the moment, we are mainly working with vendors in Nairobi and farmers on the outskirts, but we are hoping to expand into Mombasa and Nakuru in the coming months

Twiga Foods was recently in the news for Securing \$30M to digitize food distribution, can you shed some light on this?

Peter Njonjo : Our latest funding round was led by Goldman Sachs, with participation from existing investors including the International Finance Corporation, TLcom Capital



Twiga Foods Co Founder Peter Njonjo is leading innovation in food distribution across the continent.

and Creadev. An additional \$6 million in debt was raised from OPIC and Alpha Mundi.

This new investment will fund the continued development of our proprietary technology and logistics assets to support the roll-out of its distribution system and lay the foundations for expansion into other cities on the continent.

Our aim is to bridge gaps in food and market security, and this funding will also help us to do that. Since launching in 2014, Twiga Foods has transformed the lives and businesses of more than 17,000 farmers and more than 8,000 vendors but there is still a long way to go.

With the financing, where does this lead Twiga Foods, any projections for the next five years for instance?

Peter Njonjo: We plan to expand into Mombasa, and possibly Nakuru, within the next year. After that, the next step would be to expand across the continent, starting with French-speaking West African countries (Côte

d'Ivoire, Mali, Burkina Faso, Togo, Senegal etc) and then Nigeria.

We are also building a new distribution centre that will have state-of-the-art cold rooms, conveyors and sorting equipment, which will enable Twiga to offer supply chain services for both agricultural and FMCG products. The distribution centre should be ready by February 2020.

To other young aspiring entrepreneurs who will want to emulate the success of Peter Njonjo, what words of wisdom can you share with them based on your experiences?

Peter Njonjo: The first piece of advice I would offer aspiring entrepreneurs is that they should always seek to be part of the solution. In the early days of my career, I was so keen to identify problematic situations and things that didn't work but didn't always prioritise finding a solution to these problems I'd identified. On one occasion, my boss actually told me he would fire me if I brought him one



more problem. Thankfully, that did not kill my curiosity. It was the trigger I needed to think differently which has been a great asset for me in my career.

The second thing would be to always stay curious. Curiosity is a state of mind that allows you to discover so many things. It will also lead you to ideas that will differentiate you from everyone else. As an entrepreneur, this differentiation is an invaluable asset to have. One that will be very useful for helping your consumers and customers see value in the

product or service you have to offer

The African Continental Free Trade Agreement is expected to go into effect next year, any strategy in the works for Twiga foods to benefit from the changes it will bring?

Peter Njonjo: One of our main objectives is to solve the problem of reliable access to food across Sub-Saharan Africa and the AfCFTA provides an effective framework for achieving that. At the moment, we are focusing on Kenya because it is the market we know.



Founders Grant Brooke and Peter Njonjo at work . Photo Credit Jeff Angote .NMG.

However, when the time is right for us to expand outside Kenya, we will be doing so with a nuanced approach that

factors in all the peculiarities of each market. The AfCFTA makes it easier for African countries to trade goods and

we are looking forward to exploring the opportunities that come with it.

There is still Tremendous Potential for US-African Trade Ties - Prince Ayotunde Adebayo on 2020 Trade Expo

By Ajong Mbapndah L

Boosting trade ties between Africa and the USA, and forging stronger bonds between the continent, and its sixth region, are some of the key objectives pushing Prince Ayotunde Adebayo and his team into organizing the 2nd U.S. Export-Import Opportunities For African Consumables 2020 Trade Expo.

Billed for the USA in Baltimore, Maryland, Prince Ayotunde says his team is hard at work for a hitch free event with multiple business deals expected, building strong networks, a celebration of culture, recognizing meritorious talent, and more on the menu.

A graduate of International Marketing from the London School of International Business, Nigerian born Prince Ayotunde believes that the experience garnered from the maiden event in 2013 will be put to ample use in making sure sponsors,

partners, and participants all leave satisfied.

In-between the event of 2013 and that of 2020, Prince Ayotunde has been busy with other initiatives to build bridges between Africa and its diaspora. From the Ooni-US Tour and Oduduwa Economic Development and Leadership Transformation Awards Dinner 2016, to the Ooni-Smithsonian African-American History Museum Tour ,the Ooni-National Great Blacks In Wax Museum Tour in July 2018, Team Familiar, (A GoGo Music) Tour to Ile-Ife, Nigeria, December 2017, Africans In Diaspora-Olojo Festival Tour, Ile-Ife, Nigeria, September 2018 and Rebranding Africa's Identity that featured Professor PLO Lumumba, in October 2018

Opportunities like this do not come everyday said Prince Ayotunde Adebayo who is also the Founder of several start-ups and



Prince Ayotunde Adebayo has been a strong force in building bridges between Africa and its diaspora.

oversees the operations of the companies: NaviGroup, Inc., Navigators Group, Inc., GlobalTel Telecom, Inc., Pan-Afrikan Back To The Roots, Inc. and The EventsSpace, Inc.

Can you start by introducing us to the US Export -Import events that you manage?

It's my pleasure to introduce and welcome you to the 2nd U.S. Export-Import Opportunities for

African Consumable Products Expo 2020 (<https://www.usximafraevent.com>) will be held on July 15-18, 2020 at the Baltimore Convention Center, Baltimore, Maryland, United States.

The event is focused on promoting Africa and the sixth region businesses and culture. It is also designed to attract investors from around the world to have a different mindset on what type of investments and investors Africa deserves. For decades, Africa has been looped holed by our leaders and foreign investors are taking advantage of this opportunity and rendering the continent into a divided community.

Can you shed light on the next Annual, Exhibition and Awards that you have announced?

The 2020 US EXIM Africa Entertainment & Awards are designed to cast a light on the key players within the

young undiscovered youths in the African and African Diaspora entertainment industry. In recent years, the entertainment business has evolved, changing how the world conducts business alike globally in a variety of industry platforms.

With an increasing rise in demand for high-quality entertainment, corporations have paved the way for creativity, efficiency and cost effective management, thus providing organizations with an invaluable and immeasurable reach to clients and customers in all stages of entertaining.

US EXIM Africa Entertainment & Awards reward these leading actors, creative individuals, and innovative firms who have provided the world with new, cutting-edge techniques. These awards bring to center stage those, who through creative flare, commitment, and hard work have developed and shared their ideas to fundamentally evolve the business world and the lives of consumers for years to come.

How did the previous event go and what improvements or innovations should participants expect at the 2020 event?

During the first and maiden event, we had a lot of challenges and difficulties in putting the event together due to finances and acceptance by the top Government officials, whose portfolios/department were relevant to the program. The event had a significant number of participants, but unfortunately, most of the attendees were from Africa and not everyone was able to obtain visas to attend. So, this created a slight shortage

of attendees in the 2013 expo. **You have been doing promotion for a few months now, what has the response been both from Africa and the USA?**

Since we commenced the promo on the event a few months ago, we have obtained a huge acceptance by professional and well experienced speakers from all works of life, including a well-known African-American film celebrity, Brian Hooks. Brian is very keen in networking with Africa, and the Maryland State Governor, His Excellency, Governor Larry Hogan, who endorsed the event and welcome all prospecting and potential participants from around the world and stressed further that he congratulates the organizers of the event. Due to the fact that we are working in collaboration with other African countries and its sixth region, it has helped in creating more awareness in Africa and high interest for participation continues to grow.

May we know some of For companies out the early companies there interested in

and personalities that participation, what do have already booked they need to do, and participation at the for those coming in from Africa, anything been done to ease visa procedures for them?

We have extended invitation letters to various businesses, government and private individuals and we are receiving positive indications with confirmations from invited speakers from Chairman/Founder of African Diaspora Chamber of Commerce, Patricia McCants, Founder, President & CEO of Global Institute of Planning and Sustainable Development in United States, Managing Director of Anaheim Investment Group Services Ltd., Antigua, Executive Consultant of Anaheim Investment Group Services Ltd., Antigua, DR. Gloria Bozeman Herndon, Founder, President & CEO of GB Group Global and Sterling Bank Nigeria Plc. I cannot give you a complete run down of all who have expressed interest, but believe me it is a long and growing list and we are still open. Participants will not be disappointed.

For companies interested, they should visit www.useximafraevent.com for registration or contact any of our representatives within their countries of origin. Presently, we are covered in about 15 countries in Africa; Nigeria, Cameroon, Ghana, Republic of Benin, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Gambia, Togo, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Cote D'Ivoire and Central Africa; Antigua, Columbia, Germany, United Kingdom and of course, France. For African participants, we have notified the American Embassies/Consulate in Africa and the Department of States about the event. In addition, there's a link on the website which directs all foreign applicants to the US Embassies around the world to schedule their visas interview dates easily upon registration for the event. The link to the U.S. Embassies/Consulate can be found on the Travel Plans tab

on the website, once clicked read the instruction on that page and follow the "Click Here" to schedule their visa appointment.

What can participating companies typically expect to benefit from the event?

The US Export-Import Opportunities for African Consumable Products Expo is intended to create a unique market assess in the non-oil exports to Buyers and sellers attending the summit. Attendees will have access to an even better experience at U.S. Export-Import Opportunities for African Consumable Products 2020 Expo.

Educational Benefits

Admission to Smart Thursday's educational sessions (complimentary, except where shown).

U.S. Export-Import Opportunities for African Consumable Products Expo 2020 Keynotes on Thursday & Friday.

Up to 30 educational sessions throughout U.S. Export-Import Opportunities for African Consumable Products 2020 Expo week.

Networking Benefits

U.S. Export-Import Opportunities for African Consumable Products 2020 buyer – supplier receptions.

What is the state of business ties between the USA and Africa and what are some of the lucrative sectors that you see strong prospects of mutually beneficial deals?

From agricultural commodities to airplanes and oil, two-way trade between the United States and Africa

is booming. That's due largely to a reciprocal free trade agreement called the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGO).

Since that law went into effect in 2001, non-oil trade between the U.S. and Africa has tripled.

The theme, "U.S. Export-Import Opportunities for African Consumable Products 2020 Expo ." Of particular interest is the importance of women, civil society and the private sector in powering economic growth in Africa.

The African Union has launched the operational phase of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which will be the world's largest free trade area by number of countries once it's fully up and running.

After years of talks, the goal is to establish a single



The previous edition of the event led to business deals and partnerships in millions of dollars.

market for goods and services across 54 countries, allow the free movement of business travellers and investments, and create a continental customs union to streamline trade - and attract long-term investment.

The agreement is seen

critical for growth and job creation for Africa and its 1.27 billion people. Clinching Nigeria's agreement and moving into the operational phase this July was a significant step:

"We now have leaders of 54 countries putting their neck

on the line for this agreement. It's a game-changer. There's much more political energy today than there has ever been on integration," said Arancha Gonzalez Laya, Executive Director of the International Trade Centre (ITC). She was speaking

during a session at the World Economic Forum on Africa, developed with the Forum's Platform for Shaping the Future of International Trade and Investment.

We end with an opportunity for you to make a pitch to businesses and people out there to join the event in 2020, why should they be part of the event?

They should join because this is an opportunity for Africans and Individuals of African descent across the sixth region to merge in doing business together, hence this will create economic empowerment for them at the same time bridge the gap between Africans and Individuals of African descent across the sixth region to create unity.

Demonizing Oil and Gas companies is not a constructive way forward on energy transition. Africa will push for 'the Right to Drill'

African nations must and will take advantage of their hydrocarbon resources for economic development. Environmental sustainability is a part of it, not an impediment.

By NJ Ayuk

Johannesburg, 14 November 2019: In an article written for the Guardian newspaper this week, Nobel Peace Prize Winner Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa argued for an Apartheid-style boycott on coal, oil and gas companies as a solution to fight climate change and help ensure global environmental sustainability goals. "We must stop climate change. And we can, if we use the tactics that worked in South Africa against the worst carbon emitters," the subtitle of the piece reads.

The sentiment expressed by Mr. Tutu is laudable and

speaks to many across the world that have become rightfully concerned by the effects of climate change on our environment.

However, it is also a misguided sentiment. Oil and gas companies are not autocratic regimes focused on oppressing the people and steal their resources. They are businesses, which yes, are focused on profit, but they are also focused on the sustainability of the business itself. In practical terms, it means that these companies adapt to the needs of the economies they are integrated in. Boycotting oil and gas

companies will not have an impact on carbon emissions, but it might raise the price of fuel in the long run. That is not the goal intended.

While there is demand for hydrocarbons, there will be production. The shift in the dynamic of supply and demand in recent years can already be spotted in the way oil and gas companies have restructured. More and more, these companies are diversifying their portfolios to include renewable energy assets and many of them are at the forefront of research and development of new technologies to help exploit



renewable resources. I cover this extensively in my recent book, Billions at Play. Oil and gas companies are shifting into becoming "energy companies", they are even rebranding, with Equinor (former Statoil) being the

most evident example, to showcase that change in corporate paradigm. And in all honesty, who else would be better prepared, better funded and better placed to drive the energy transition that we all seek. Demonizing

energy companies is not a constructive way forward, and ignoring the structural role that carbon-based fuels have in today's society distorts the public debate. Bringing energy companies, governments and civil society groups together to find functional solutions will achieve much more.

This is especially the case in Africa. While the concerted effort amongst all of the world's nations is fundamental to curb the effects of climate change, it is paramount to have a clear understanding of what efforts will be most decisive, and which regions of the world are in a better position and have the biggest responsibility to tackle these issues.

To be sure, Europe, North America and China, by and large responsible for much of the CO₂ emissions that are behind the changes in our climate, have to live up to that responsibility and move towards more sustainable practices.

We can not expect African nations, which put together have polluted 7 times less than China, 13 times less than the United States, and 18 times less than Europe since the beginning of the industrial revolution, according to Carbon brief, to undermine their best opportunities for economic development by simply aligning with the Western view of how to tackle CO₂ emissions.

Gabriel Obiang Lima, Minister of Mines and Hydrocarbons of Equatorial Guinea, summed it up quite decisively to the press last week during the Africa Oil Week in Cape Town. «Under no circumstances are we going to be apologising,» he said, «anybody out of the continent saying we should



NJ Ayuk.

not develop those [oil and gas] fields, that is criminal. It is very unfair.»

Minister Lima's blunt words are an answer to a number of misconstrued views about the African continent, and about the oil and gas industry it is striving to develop. While a few nations across the continent have been producing hydrocarbons for decades, these resources have mostly been exported to fuel industrial development in Europe, the US and Asia. The reasons for this are varied and have as much to do with the European colonial legacy as with the lack of existing financial resources and expertise to develop local economies over the last century.

That, however, is coming to a change. As I have argued and championed for years, African nations are finally starting to make use of these resources to develop their own national economies. We must remember that nearly half of all Africans still don't have access to electricity and that nearly every company in the continent struggles with the lack of power reliability, which raises operational costs, reduces productivity

and hurts their ability to compete in international markets. African leaders are now painfully aware of the damage an unreliable energy network causes on national economies and are moving to change that.

Today, natural gas is by far the most economically sustainable way of producing power in enough quantities to fuel economic development. Petrochemical plants represent a massive economic opportunity to produce byproducts from oil and gas with a higher value within the supply chain, an opportunity to create jobs, develop infrastructure and produce wealth. Refineries too have a dramatically positive impact in curbing the need for fuel imports. All of these are fundamental pieces of the puzzle that will foster Africa's economic growth and promote the betterment of the lives of its people. I have been saying this for a long time and have helped with that development through the African Energy Chamber, supporting cooperation amongst African nations to promote intra-African trade on energy resources and build synergies, which is the way forward.

The African Development Bank has estimated that between USD\$130 and USD\$170 billion a year in the run up to 2025 would be needed to close the infrastructure gap across the continent. How are African nations to fund these fundamental developments if they give up on exploring their natural resources? How can the Western world, or anyone for that matter, suggest, or demand, that African nations leave these resources underground when it was these same resources that powered economic development everywhere else?

After decades of colonial occupation and subsequent political and military infighting, many African regions have now reached the level of stability that will allow them to build working functioning economies. The fuel for that will be these countries' natural resources, be it oil, gas, coal or diamonds. Boycotting the companies that can help these countries develop these resources would be paramount to economic suicide.

This is not to say that environmental sustainability and climate change should

not be at the top of the list of concerns when debating the African energy sector, but it should inform environmental impact assessment policies and foster best practices in the industry, not put a stop to it.

Yes, renewable energy sources can have a role in contributing to expand electrification in Africa, and solar and wind power have become competitive when compared to carbon-based generation, but that will always depend on the resources available in each region and will always have to be supported by other forms of generation capacity that can overcome the issue of intermittency that follows renewable power generation.

This is already happening. Kenya, for instance, is one of the world's leading nations in terms of the share of its energy matrix coming from renewables, on its way to reach 100% in the coming years, but it also holds some of the world's largest geothermal energy reserves, and it will continue to develop its oil reserves because it needs the money to fund economic development.

Africa's time to grow and develop is finally here, and it will be funded by its natural resources. Misguided moral lessons from the West will do little to change that because the financial resources coming from these activities are crucial and irreplaceable. In a somewhat ironic way, even if Africa wanted to stop using fossil fuels and shifted every power station to renewable sources, it would still be forced to develop its oil and gas fields in order to fund that transition.

There is no point in promoting radical approaches to the energy transition,

particularly for Africa. A balanced manageable and well-lead approach of progressive transitioning combining hydrocarbons and renewable energy development alongside strong environmental

protection policies in the sector is the option that is not only realistic, but that will allow to combine economic growth and environmental sustainability. The New York Times quoted Mr. Gwede Mantashe,

South Africa's Energy Minister, in an article covering the Africa Oil Week. «Energy is the catalyst for growth,» he said, «they even want to tell us to switch off all the coal-generated power stations,» «until you tell

them, «you know we can do that, but you'll breathe fresh air in the darkness». Enough said. *NJ Ayuk is the CEO of Centurion Law Group and the Executive Chairman of the African Energy Chamber.

His experience negotiating oil and gas deals has given him an expert's grasp of Africa's energy landscape. He is the author of "Billions at Play: The Future of African Energy and doing deals."

Contentions over Malawi elections continue: Eyes on the Constitutional court

By James Mwala

The Constitutional Court in Malawi's capital Lilongwe continues to hear the Presidential elections case in which two top opposition party leaders are contesting against the results of the presidential poll in May this year.

The two, Lazarus Chakwera of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) and Saulos Chilima, former President but took part in the poll on a UTM ticket want the nullification of the May 21 2019 presidential election and an order for a rerun.

From mid this year, after the two were named as second and third placed respectively, the court has been hearing submissions from witnesses from the parties.

They have both appeared in the witness box for cross examination and re-examination.

The parties petitioned President Peter Mutharika and the Malawi Electoral Commission (MEC) over the final results of the elections, in which Mutharika triumphed.

At the moment, the court is hearing evidence from Mutharika's witnesses. The President had only paraded 2 witnesses as he confirmed the withdrawal of 68 others.

Lead counsel for Mutharika, Frank Mbete, said only Ben Phiri who served as Mutharika's ruling

Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) Elections Officer and Bob Chimkango, a rogue elections monitor will testify in court out of the 70 registered witnesses.

Initially DPP planned to parade 243 witnesses before presiding judges ordered them to trim the number to 70.

One of MCPs witnesses, Daud Suleman, told the court that there were ghost users in the MEC system that manipulated the figures from tally centres and logged in in wee hours.

However, at the end of his cross examination, Mbete said that Suleman had no evidence to show that were no ghost users in MEC system.

Mbete accused Suleman, whose presentation focused on MEC's system by demonstrating how rigging was done of bringing to the court speculations and not facts.

At the end of his testimony, Suleman had said that together with his family he was receiving security threats. The judges then moved to issue a strong warning to the parties involved in the election petition case and the public against threatening court witnesses.

After these events, lawyers for the first petitioner Chilima asked the court not to allow



MEC director of ICT Muhabi Chisi to transverse evidence which Suleman presented.

Chisi had filed an application to the court to respond to the evidence of Suleman when he finishes testifying.

The sworn statement signed by Chilima's lawyer Chikosa Silungwe had argued that Suleman was on court record since 6 August and that MEC had never responded to the matters in the statement.

Silungwe said the lawyers for MEC needed to only be allowed to cross examine Suleman instead of Chisi traversing evidence of Suleman.

The court has however hinted on having the case concluded by early December.

However, analysts keep advising political [parties to make their party supporters ready for the put come of the court.

In several public rallies, Mutharika has kept saying

that he remains the legitimate winner of the elections, something analysts say may work towards creating negate reactions of his party supporters should the court ruling not go their way.

Mutharika had described as reasonable the use of correction fluid Tippex in the 2019 elections, an election the opposition are contesting.

Asked on how he perceives the election, Mutharika described the election as free and fair arguing the certifications made by the United Nations, European Union and SADC observers were evidence things went well.

He was however quick to describe the current political turmoil and the wave of demonstrations as being the work of his political rivals.

"The opposition decided not to accept the results, it is not like it was nor free and fair. The results come from schools where teachers use Tippex to correct error.

However tippex was used to correct normal mathematical errors and it was agreed by monitors from all parties at the centres for the changes to be made," he told Aljazeera.

Apparently, the use of tippex is one of the highly contentions that the opposition have carried in their testimonies.

Mutharika has also claimed that the demonstrations are a political conspiracy against his regime saying the there was a clip that circulated before the elections involving the MCP leader Lazarus Chakwera and Human Rights Defenders Coalition Chair Timothy Mtambo making a conspiracy to cause lawlessness should the MCP lose the poll.

Mutharika won with 1.9 million votes representing 38.57%, narrowly ahead of Chakwera who got 1.8 million votes representing 35.41%. Chilima got just over 1 million votes representing 20.24%.

Expectations remain high on every Malawian on what the court will finally rule on the matter.

There are apparent calls from various stakeholders including the religious community for parties to preach and let their supporters accept whoever stance the court is going to make on the matter.

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Considerations for School Choice at the K-12 Level

By John Nkennji, Ph.D.

At the beginning of each school year, parents and guardians enroll their children in a K-12 school: public, private, religious, magnet, chartered, or online school. K-12 schools can be divided into three levels (elementary, middle and high school). Children under the age of 18 are mandated by the state to enroll and complete high school or obtain a GED. Educational institutions in the USA fall into two general categories: private and public. Private schools are usually for-profit, and public schools are covered by local, state, and federal funds. Regardless of the type of school, each state provides regulations and standards that must be followed. This paper examines why some parents prefer to enroll their children in private institutions (which are typically costly) over neighborhood public schools (which are relatively inexpensive).

It is often assumed that attending private schools leads to better outcomes in comparison to receiving public school education. However, research/available information does not support this claim. Since state assessments are used to measure academic attainment and growth in student proficiency, the curriculum of private schools and public schools are the same. Therefore, any differences in outcomes stem from other variables and not curriculum.

Some reasons why parents may prefer private schools



Prof John Nkennji.

over public schools pertain to school building maintenance, specialized instructional support staff, low student-teacher class size ratio, and religious affiliations. The higher cost of tuition that comes with private schools also entails well-maintained buildings and specialized instructional support staff (e.g. guidance counselors, social workers, school psychologists, school nurses, language and technology experts). If a classroom has a high student-teacher ratio, it results in students receiving less personal attention from teachers. Large class sizes may also present discipline problems and make it difficult to control problems like

bullying. The ideal class size for the primary to high school age population is 20 students or less.

Most immigrant parents (especially from developing countries) do everything in their power to give their children a good education in the USA, in an attempt to narrow the achievement gap. Some parents fear that if their children do not go to or succeed in college it may be because of a poor educational foundation. They place a high value on good education and do not want to take chances.

The advantages of enrolling children in public schools are location, cost, and keeping children in a familiar environment. Neighborhood

public schools are in closer proximity to a family's home and result in a shorter commute time to get to school. Given the public schools are funded by the government, the financial burden on parents is minimal. The amount of money that can be saved by choosing public schools may result in parents having the ability to spend more time with their children at home. It is essential to balance the time spent at work with time spent with your child/children at home. Assistance at home with school related activities like reading and writing and quality

time with parents and family eliminates the hefty school expenditure in private schools. Children's academic results are determined by the expectations set by themselves, their parents, and the schools. Children have a better opportunity to achieve their goals if parents are active participants in their lives, school assignments, and their welfare.

Additionally, the student demographics in a neighborhood school will reflect the demographics that students are exposed to within their community. This lessens the chance of being put in an unfamiliar environment and potentially having difficulty integrating

into the new environment.

Some schools have a history of crimes related to the use of alcohol, illicit drugs and firearms. Parents strive to avoid such school. One disadvantage that may be associated with public schools is that not all public schools offer specialized programs. Parents may wish to have their children in STEM programs, bilingual immersion programs or other programs like gifted and talented, special education, band, choir, sports, after-school activities, and others.

As discussed, it is not the type of school that determines/dictates better outcomes. All things being equal, there is no significant achievement discrepancy for students in private schools over those who attend public schools. Rather, low student-teacher ratios, available school resources, parental support/involvement, socioeconomic/racial background, and school environments that cater to the needs of the students are the determining factors that impact a student's performance in school. Schools not only prepare students academically, but the content they learn and how they learn help prepare them for life.

Proper afterschool followup of homework and social activities should be provided by parents and adults whether the children attend public schools or private schools. Children should be monitored and not allowed to use electronic toys, tablets, or computers

endlessly. These tools cannot substitute parental or adult supervision. The extra time spent at work (sometimes on two jobs) to raise funds to support an expensive private education could be more useful if such time and effort were spent with the children on after-school educational tasks. It is only for very specialized academic programs that an expensive school choice makes sense. Such a choice will ensure that the school embodies a culturally responsive, inclusive, sound physical, emotional, and social safety of the students. Demographics, class size, teacher preparation, discipline and



location, and safety, play a role in school choice. Most schools are accredited and held accountable by the accrediting agency (private or public) for effective learning. This paper does not extend its conclusions to school choice issues beyond the K-12 cycle (college education issues). School choice for a college career requires a different type of analysis, especially given the fact that financial disparity is not usually much.

*John Nkennji is Professor Emeritus, Educational Technology. He has family both in public and private K-12 schools.

South Sudan Launches 100 MW Power Plant To Light Up Capital For First Time

By Deng Machol

Juba - South Sudan has launched a newly built 100-megawatts (MW) power plant that will supply electricity to Juba's residents for the first time in history.

The power plant built by Ezra Company Limited since November 2017, will help the world's youngest nation to embark on post-conflict recovery after more than five years of conflict.

South Sudan split away from Sudan in 2011 after decades of scorched - earth conflict but the country's descended into another civil war in late 2013 after president Kiir sacked his deputy Riek Machar.

Ezra Juba power project has four phases of electrification that will supply 100 MW to thirty thousand households in Juba. The power plant is located at Kondokoro village of Mangala county, outskirts of Juba capital.

Phase one, which has



Ezra Juba power plant, Nov 21, 2019 Photo Deng Machol.PAV.

33 MW out of 100 MW is working now. The value cost of the Ezra power plant is over \$200 million and each phase will be launched yearly.

The project is a first of its kind since the country's independence. The country's population was relying on generators and the usage of the fuel was high and unstable, making businesses

and life very hard.

The power plant and power system distribution were commissioned by president Salva Kiir on Thursday, November 21, 2019.

Speaking at commissioning event, President Kiir says over 70 percent of population were using independent diesel generators to run their businesses but with the

project will help to put an end to the power crisis and pollution.

"This project marks a major milestone in the nation - more importantly, it is hope for us as the people that our dreams will not remain just dreams but will become realities. This project will spur development across all sectors.

"Today marks the beginning of new era, no more wars - time for development and service delivery [has come] and in this context, I urge our development partners and other members of the private sector to join us in this journey," said Kiir.

President Kiir said that the government - owned power facilities were ruined in the wake of the outbreak of the December 2013 conflict, it closed due to operational costs, which also devastated the economy after halting oil production leading to hyperinflation.

"During the 2013 crisis, the government-owned power stations were all shut down due to operational challenges. The government took tangible steps to address the dire situation and decided to involve the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the private sector in efforts not only to revive

the sector but also to achieve stability,» said Kiir.

Electricity is regarded as one of the most serious business constraints. "This is a problem that this will eliminate. It will also eradicate the pollution that comes with large scale use of the diesel in our environment."

"I assure that the government is focused on exploiting and developing our hydro-electric and renewable energy resources. With funding from the AfDB, we aim to generate 10-40 MW of renewable energy. The government also plans to invest 1,080 MW grand Fula hydropower project to generate and distribute power across various states in South Sudan,» said Kiir.

Kiir also said the government is making tangible pro-investor policies to make South Sudan attractive to investors and welcome investment in this sector from across the world, and to build stable national power.

South Sudan plans to connect power from Uganda's 400 MW Karuma dam by 2023 to connect its border towns.

Juba also plans to source power from its northern neighbor Sudan to supply the northern areas of Renk and Malakal near the border with Sudan.

«Plans are underway by the ministry of energy and dams and South Sudan Electricity Corporation (SSEC) to participate in bilateral interconnection with Sudan which will provide 220 KV transmission line from Renk to Malakal,» said Kiir.

South Sudan is one of the richest countries in minerals



South Sudan president Kiir inspects a newly Ezra Juba power plant. Photo Deng Machol. PAV.

and hydro-electric potential, but ninety-nine percent of its population have no access to electricity.

Dhieu Mathok Diing, Minister of Energy and Dams, lauded Ezra Company and Chinese firm PowerChina which has also completed major work on the Juba Power Distribution System and Rehabilitation Expansion Project funded by AfDB.

Minister Dhieu said the other phases from a joint venture power plant will be commissioned soon as per the plans and demands of Juba/this project started in November 2017, and it has been implemented in four stages, the first stage with 33 MW as completed and commissioned by the president.

"The other remaining three stages will subsequently follow according to the plans and demands of Juba city. This project has brought some benefits to the country, among others are capacity building, employment of the neighbouring community, building the health centers

for neighboring community, building the private primary school for the neighboring community, offer scholarship for children of neighbouring community to the universities; to rehabilitation of access roads in the areas and provision of tractors for agriculture by the community, construction of five-houses for community's leaders," said Dhieu, adding that the implementation has started.

He said his ministry is working very hard to construct hydro-electric and dam to provide electricity to the local populations.

At the same event, Jubek State Governor, Augustine Jadalla, said the electricity supply will help in combating insecurity in the capital and its outskirts.

"Electricity is one of the most important offers that science has given to mankind, especially in the modern life of today, one can't function well in the world without it because it has many utilities in our day to day life activities. The commissioning

of this electricity plant today will improve the security environment within Juba city, especially in facilitating the work of security organs in surveillance and accessibility to all areas that will be within the network, streets lightening coverage."

This project will enhance the investment opportunities and benefit our citizens in terms of employment and improve the livelihood of our people in the areas.

The project was funded by African Development Bank for \$38 million and will be privately managed by Ezra independent construction and development company.

African Development Bank established its operations in South Sudan in 2012 following the country's independence.

Benedict Sorie Kanu, Country Director for AfDB, said the bank has so far funded thirteen developmental projects in South Sudan, and will continue to support South Sudan's efforts to develop its energy sector.

"The AfDB is financing

the Juba power distribution system and re-facilitation expansion project to the tune of \$38 million dollar. It is this platform that the hydro power plant is using to distribute the energy generated," said the country director.

It is the first energy project that the African Development Bank has financed since its establishment in the country.

Meanwhile, Ezra Construction Group said it is investing \$289 million in the plant to provide 100 MW once it is completed.

«Ezra group is willing to invest in this project without any guarantee. This first phase is going to supply electricity to about 50,000 to 70,000 households in Juba,» Meron Ezra Ghebrenu, the company's Managing Director told reporters on Thursday.

Ezra said his company has employed about 300 South Sudanese engineers

Electricity in South Sudan has been a major challenge since its independence eight years ago, with most residents, businesses and government offices operating on personal generators.

South Sudan has one of the lowest electricity access with over 90 percent of its 12 million population lacking access to electricity.

The power plant is managed by Ezra power company, an Asmara – based company that comes to Southern Sudan in 2003 before the Comprehensive peace agreement, which later gave birth to the Republic of South Sudan. Ezra will operate the power plant for about 17 years and then transfer ownership to the government.

Africa's Growth Lies on Competition for Sustainable Economies in the 4th Industrial Revolution.

By Nevson Mpofu

While Africa has enjoyed Economic Growth for the past 2 decades, it has not seen an increase in Industrialisation. This is a Report from the European Parliament and World Bank.

Africa's economic growth has been at high pace over the past decade. It scored a pulse by almost 5% per annum. Several factors spell down on the core main reasons why Africa over the past decades lop-sided and later dove-tails to poise for economic growth. This tells it had ups and downs, sundry vicissitudes of successes and challenges. A number of countable reasons socially, economically and politically stand as pinnacle..

Africa's GDP [Growth Domestic Product] was less 2, 3% by 2018, focused to reach 2,8% by 2019. In-Spite of its fortunes around from the past up to this decade, several factors have been cited why it has not seen Industrialisation. Global Experts in Macro-Economic Growth and Development yell absence of competition in the African perspectives.

From the General African Perspective looking at the African Continental Free Trade Area. ----- Albert Muchanga AU Commissioner for Trade and Industry, Akinwumi Adesina – African Development Bank President.

African Continental Free Trade Area has come at an opportune time Africa is urged to tighten its stockings and get into full business competition. Albert Muchanga the Commissioner for Trade and Industry sees a strong vision by July 2020.

"Competition is a sure



tool to take with the AFCFTA Commercial activities. Competition pegged at 40% is projected to increase Business to Business spending in Manufacturing by US\$200 Billion to total \$666, 3 billion by 2030.

"We already have 10 countries among the 100, 2018 Global Competitiveness Index. These are South Africa, Seychelles, Morocco, Tunisia, Botswana, Algeria, Kenya, Egypt and Namibia. There is large supply market, free movement of people, manufacturing specialisation and no restrictions to achieve Agenda 2063"

Akinwumi Adesina added that the 4th Industrialisation Revolution is achieved through focus of special attention on three areas in the Region.

"The focus must be on Agriculture for food security and food industries growth, job creation, poverty alleviation and economic growth and development. Agricultural Industrialisation, Mining and Manufacturing Industry and Tourism stands no doubt sectors of focus for Africa

in the 4th Fourth Industrial Revolution."

"The Hi-5 of the African Development BANK are key to Africa's development and economic growth. They are light up and power Africa, feed Africa, and Industrialise, integrate and improve quality of life for the people". 'Says Adesina .

From the political perspective. Respondents Otiende Amollo , Patrice Lumumba and Julius Malema .

Africa's colonial legacy is a labyrinth bag of colonial challenges accompanied by civil wars, post aftermath of colonial wars, civil strife, disobedience of political factions and civilian displacements leading to poverty and vulnerability. It gained maginalisation from sins of its erstwhile colonisers, greedy dictators, corruption and mal-administration and miss-management.

Much has been put to destruction through unrepentant wars, taking of the continent out of the Global Marketing mix. Wars have devoured total sums close to US\$50 billion close up

to the millennium from the early 60s. Genocides, wars, diseases and disasters have reduced expert competency totalling death of close to 500 million, half a billion of its human resource power in expertise.

Corruption has eaten much in total dragging Africa to a corruption burden of US\$148 billion yet it needs US\$93 billion for Infrastructural development. Much of its budget during times of wars means has been pooled for military spending, stripping multi-lateral donors of close to US\$7 billion annually since 1990. This crippled the economy by almost 10% per annum, the figure bigger than its expected annual growth. This turns to be extremely horrible.

A legal Expert brought up , born and bred in Kenya Dr Otiende Amollo amass views and sharp perspectives on this subject of a competitive African continent in need of bountiful well managed resources. During his visit to Harare this year speaking on corruption, the Pan-African Visions posed questions in line with the importance of competitive markets in the absence of grant corruption.

"Yes there is need for stamping out corruption first if ever we are to rely on competition in order to come out with economic growth . Corruption at the moment remains a thorny burden but once it is out we could realise growth of African economies.

"Many barriers restricting Investor confidence need to be removed. At the same time there is need to fully empower and indigenise capable Africans to compete

with the foreign World. There are fears that foreign markets can cause monopoly. These fears can only be cooled down by implementation of appropriate policy framework that encompasses gradual opening of the market with strong competition laws and policies and consummating enforcement agents. Existing Laws and policy frameworks must harmonise liberal economy for Africans as well.

"The importance in my line of thinking is countries in Africa move towards middle in-come economies by 2030. They can as well achieve the African Agenda Goals by 2063. Africa if ever it is in competition, corruption can as well slow down because countries become poised for transparent and accountable growth."

Patrice Lumumba a strong Pan-Africanist shares and echoes similar to close statements. He points out that Africa needs to bury colonial mentality, unite for economic growth and human development. Secondly, Africa needs to move out of the path of continuous Donor Syndrome and dependency all the times.

"Africa still dines and wines with Western powers who sponsor bad practices done by bad people who turn against those developing the continent. This is the most challenging and daunting obstacle we have in the continent. There are antagonistic forces pulling down what is pushed forward. There we get lost forever in darkness.

Julius Malema during his visit to pay respect to the late Robert Mugabe pointed out

that Africa needs a bevy and bunch of new Pan-Africanists who take over from what has been left by Robert Mugabe. He further notes that Africa can grow by almost more than 8% per annum if Black people are empowered, put to equality with the Whites and as well indigenised for Black economic growth and development.

"Growth in Africa is impossible if there are no black people empowered. Take note of my first point. How is that possible when they lack skills, entrepreneurial education and basic resources, lack of finance and projects that make them get out of poverty? There is no competition where in which in the continent Whites, Chinese and other foreign races dominates at the expense of the Blacks.

"For this to succeed, Africa needs economically empowered, socially and politically empowered new Pan-Africanists of new economically developed minds geared for new Africa. Once the competition is of less or no inclusivity, it means we are still a dumping ground because all / everything goes back to those who have been owning our wealth."

From the Economic Perspective ... Patrick Imman of IMF, Kitabire AfDBank, Muthuli Ncube, Zimbabwe Finance Minister

IMF has come out with a study analysing the importance of competition for growth. The regional economic out-look. It states that level of competition among firms impacts on economic growth. IMF Resident Representative notes that developed economies made it through by supporting competition in firms so that they remain at

the helm.

Competition increase in Sub-Saharan Africa has been viewed as very low. International Monetary Fund Country Representative for Zimbabwe Patrick Imman in an interview with the Pan-African-Visions said competition in the Region has been very low over the past decades because countries have low capacitated manufacturing industries. Imman gave a good example of food manufacturing firms which he said because of failure to create competition prices of food increases. This he said is the main reason why prices of food and drugs become high.

"There is need to increase competition in the Sub-Saharan region's manufacturing sector in food and drugs. The increase reduces prices of foods and drugs. Once the prices increase there is inflation. The fact that competition is low foreign monopoly becomes high. This monopoly becomes foreign based industrial monopoly.

"This is the main reason why food and Health services are far un-affordable in many countries. This in the long run exposes people to extreme poverty, vulnerability. Our research indicates that product market competition in Sub-Saharan Africa is really low. Median Data shows that more than 70% percent of countries in the Region are below World Median in terms of competition indicators"

Imman goes further to state that large firms owned by Foreign Whites from Europe, USA and Asia still have growing interest to monopolise the African Market because they are well financially resources. Secondly it is the fact that



AU Trade Commissioner Albert Muchanga wants things to change for the continent.

they have competition policies for open up lucrative business. Corporate Market Power, he points out opens more business for foreign based firms at the expense of firms in Sub-Africa.

Imman clearly points out on the analysis of firm level data which he says indicates on corporate market power. He says this reflects the wedge between prices and costs as higher in the region. In some parts of the World, evidence is clear mark-ups have been increasing in recent years. The decline in competition has grown higher in recent years even in some developed countries because those countries of which they deal with in developing World have failed to create long term results competition.----

"African Development Bank Country Representative in Zimbabwe Kitabire took over from what Imman. He pointed out on what stands as effects to communities in the region. The Empirical Analysis suggests that, an increase in competition to the top quarter of the Global distribution can increase the annual rate of growth of real per capita GDP BY 1% point. Kitabire points out that this could be possible, economically significant over

time.

"An increase in 1% point is possibly significant. It is driven by an improvement in productivity and export competitiveness. Lack of competition has effects on welfare. Analysis shows that price levels for most goods and services including food, clothing and health services are significantly higher than 20% in Sub-Saharan Africa than those of some other countries. Increasing completion therefore reduces prices of basic commodities in the region.

"Africa needs a holistic approach which should encompass a well-defined and executed competition policy framework. This should include complementary trade and investment liberalisation and reforms to foster productive private sector activities. The other core problem Africa faces is that foreign entrants in Business comprising of Investors are taking much space than Africans themselves. Local companies become and remain in their 'infancy'. This is the danger still ahead with Africa.

Zimbabwe's Minister of Finance and Economic Development Muthuli Ncube sheds more views on the Zimbabwean economic

situation. Professor Ncube asked how Zimbabwe can improve competition in its Markets to enhance growth. He reiterates that while competition policy is important in the medium to long term, development is derived for the future generations. In the short term some policies can be important if well implemented. Yes, we can come up with policies but the challenge is how to implement them. Sometimes they hit a snag, this in the long run fails to stimulate economic growth.

"There are some policies which can be important to stimulate growth to long term but the challenge would be failure to grapple with global standards, competition velocity and strategic management. Some policies are of medium term and some we need as well are short term. We need to succeed in implementing them at home before we get into competition.

'Currently the country needs economic stability before getting into foreign competition. The moment you get into foreign competition yet not stable, it means you are likely to get conquered by those whom you compete with. We need to address



Textile Industry in Nigeria.

policies back home but we are not economically stable. We however need to be in competition so that we are able to economically adapt to the environment of business.

Muthuli highlights on the need to look at key

challenges of containing fiscal spending consistent with non-inflammatory financing. Secondly, the need to tighten monetary policy to stabilise exchange rate and start rebuilding confidence. We as a country we have eliminated

fuel subsidy. There is need to strengthen foreign exchange market operations and improve transparency on monetary statistics. The path of International Re-Engagement is vital as we move forward as a country.

"We are on the move as a country to re-engage the International community. It is true then we have to fast-track on political reforms. Besides looking at economic in-stability, we are on the move and track to reform and privatise in-efficient state owned enterprises. This is where we start with long terms competition success." Muthuli steps down the Interview.

Several Experts note that Africa needs lucrative competitors with the vision for a new economically developed Africa. The vision is a move towards seeing

Africa free of all the there-on challenges experienced at the moment. The Goal is poverty eradication, no hunger, HIV free generation and a stable sustainable developed communities. The Fourth 4th Industrial Revolution is a World with competitive markets to create jobs, improve sustainable lively-hood projects meant to regenerate on Macro-Economies of high GDP, Growth per capita, National Domestic Product and Empowering and indigenising Africans who have the strength to beat the competition.

Africa's development agency rebrands

By Jean-Pierre Afadhali

The newly transformed Africa's development agency is expected to boost the continent's agenda 2063, the blueprint for African Union's development in a 50-year period amid increasing public debt, political, economic challenges that are hindering countries' transformation and regional integrations.

The former New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) has recently rebranded to African Union Development Agency –NEPAD (AUDA-NEPAD) after it was given a new mandate and legal status that the agency's leaders and AU hope will increase its role in Africa's economic development. Officials from AUDA-NEPAD say Africa's transformation's journey is being slowed by traditional development partners who are pushing for their own interests.

The transformed institution has recently held a brand awareness drive



in Nairobi, Kenya to tell the media, communication experts mainly operating in East African region, about the rebranded agency, what is doing to support African's regional integrations and continental development projects such infrastructures and others.

"History once again has been made in Africa now that it is having its own first ever continental development agency," noted Daniel Osiemo, the CEO of AUDA-NEPAD Kenya "As a newly transformed entity, it's imperative that we engage our media stakeholders as they are our partners in

informing citizens," added Osiemo.

In July 2019, the executive Council of the African Union adopted the statute, rules of procedure and structure of the African UNION Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) at the 35th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council, in Niamey, Niger.

Now AUDA-NEPAD has a defined mandate and legal identity to coordinate and execute priority regional and continental projects, to promote regional integration towards the accelerated realization of Agenda 2063 among others.

According to Osiemo,

some Africa's traditional development partners are driven by they own interests. "First and foremost they are interested in their own interests. So they do things in their own way," noted AUDA-NEPAD Kenya boss.

Despite positive changes that are set to increase the role of Africa's development agency, many countries on the continent are grappling with public debt raising concerns over their capacity for repayment. Officials from AUDA-NEPAD said foreign debts are slowing Africa's progress as they are based on unfair lending systems.

"It's [public debt] a very

big issue! A lot of loans that we are getting as countries are not being based on sound analysis of investments," said Martin Bwalya, the Head of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) in AUDA –NEPAD in an interview. "They are not connecting to systems that will actually be able to repay those loans."

Data from 'Public Finance International', a global publication for finance professionals, show that at the end of December 2017 African governments owed \$66bn (16% of the debt) to the World Bank, \$18bn (4%) to the IMF and \$61bn to other multilateral institutions (15%).

Mr. Bwalya says borrowing is not a problem but African countries lack of proper analysis before they engage lenders. "There is lack of proper investments plans against which we borrow, we actually many times have ended up borrowing money,"

he explained.

By the end of December 2017 African governments owed a total of \$417bn. Of this, \$100bn (24%) was owed by African governments to the Chinese government and \$40bn (10%) to the 'Paris Club' governments – an informal group of official creditors, including 22 countries, data from Public Finance International show.

AUDA-NEPAD'S role

include strengthening the capacity of African Union Member States and regional bodies; advance knowledge-based advisory support.

While the rebranded agency is promoting regional integration, some economic blocks are facing political and economic challenges that have led the closure of borders, threatening the future free movement of people and goods.

For instance Rwanda, a member of East African Community closed its border with Uganda earlier this year citing security reasons and advising its citizens against travelling to the neighboring country. Similarly in August, Nigeria banned all movements of goods from Benin, Niger and Cameroon. The West African country said it was curbing the smuggling of goods.

Mr. Bwalya further told Pan African Visions that border closing is not new in Africa. "Those are things that we have seen! And again, I would say that if you go back there was a lot more of that than what we are seeing now,"

However, the AUDA-NEPAD official warned that countries that close borders will also lose. "When you close a border like that it's very likely that you are not going

to be a winner," Mr. Bwalya stated there are some reasons that could justify border restrictions such as diseases, conflicts and markets.

The development agency will also accompany the implementation of Africa's flagship trade deal- Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) that entered into force in May.

Gambia Tourism Industry expects Booming Seasons Ahead; After Record 250,000 Visitors in 2019

By Bakary Ceesay

Gambia unarguably, is the closest West African tourism destination to Europe with barely six hours flying time from most European capitals thus placing the country at an advantageous position to attracting European tourists' into its shores.

The year 2019 has been a turning point for the country's tourism industry after more than 250, 000 tourists visited the country during this period. Most of these visiting tourists' hailed from European Countries mainly from the UK, Germany, Holland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Austria, Spain and Portugal.

After agriculture, tourism is the main contributor of Gambia's GDP, contributing close to 30% to the economy. The sector continues to grow from two hotels in 1995 to 35 hotels in 2019, creating over 200, 000 jobs directly and indirectly for the teeming youthful population availing opportunities to both the skilled, semi-skilled or the unskilled populace.

Pioneered by Berthil Hardings and his Swedish Tour Operating Company



Vengrosser that brought 211 tourists from Scandinavia in 1965, the tourism sector has since taken a different dimension. Harding discovered the hidden treasures of Gambia's tourism when he accompanied a group of tourists from Northern Senegal to Southern Senegal in 1964.

In 1965, Berthil Hardings felt the need to tailor a package tour to the country, this has opened the ways for the development of tourism in the Gambia at a time when the country has not put in place any national tourism policy or even considered the idea of conceiving tourism business.

The idea of tourism at the

policy level only came about in 1967, when the government of Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara thought of diversifying the country's economy that only survived on agriculture and grants from its British Colonial Masters and other friendly nations.

Since then the growth of The Gambia's tourism industry has been anchoring mainly on the relative peace and security the country enjoys until 1994, when the country experience military coup led by then Army Lieutenant Yahya Jammeh with group of soldiers resulting to the issuance of British Travel Advice. The British Travel Advice issued in September of 1995 adversely

affected the prospect of the sector witnessing slight improvement for most part of the 22 years rule of former President Yahya Jammeh that was largely characterized by various forms of human rights abuses.

In 2017, with the reign of a new dispensation in Banjul headed by President Adama Barrow, the country has picked up its growth in the sector hitting a record 200, 000 tourists in 2017, that has since increased to 250, 000 tourists in 2018/19 tourists' season as indicated by the Gambia Tourism Board (GTBoard).

The current Minister of Tourism and Culture (MoTC), Hamat N.K Bah has

disclosed that the Gambian Government plans to increase the number of arrivals into the country that will also grow in parallel to increase in bed capacity, and efficient and effective customer service, projecting that by 2022 the country will for the first time become an all year tourism destination. He has also promised the building of 10 five-star hotels across the country in its efforts to diversify the sector.

The Gambia's survival in the tourism business also has to do greatly with various attraction sites, the hospitable nature of the people, rich cultures and traditions, varieties of bird species, affordable accommodations, and related tourists services that it has to offer.

Today there are more than thirty five (35) hotels that are dotted along the 40kilometers coastline of the country that continues to provide tourists with the needed dwelling during their stay. Among these are various classes of hotels that includes five, four, three and two star hotels all readily available. Most of these hotels provides food and beverage services

to the teeming number of customers that stay with them.

These growth in the number of hotels and attractions has also translated into number of visitors visiting the country from about 200, 000 in 2017 to 250, 000 in 2019 according to tourism officials with high prospective for growth and development that is also characterized with the building of new hotels in the country.

Senegambia Beach Hotel, Kairaba Beach Hotel, Ocean Bay Hotel, Coco Ocean Resort Hotel, Coral Beach Resort are among the renown five star hotels in the country. Other hotels that provides distinguish customer services to tourists includes the Kombo Beach Hotel, Badala Park Hotel, Kololi Beach Club, Sunswing Hotel, Palma Rima Hotel, Djembe Beach Hotel, Tamala Beach Hotel among host others that continue to cater tourists with distinct accommodation in making their stay worthwhile.

Indeed, other forms of accommodations such as motels, lodges, Inns, Guest houses are also available in the country as well around the Tourism Development Area (TDA), and with the recent intervention of the Tourism Authorities most of these accommodations are now proving the needed services that tourists looks for.

The coming of eco-tourism sites and accommodations is also making a mark in the development of tourism in the country, proving new lease for tourists coming to the country and notable among the eco-tourism sites is the Makasutu Cultural Camp in Brikama, the Sandele Eco-tourism Camp in Kartong, Nemban Eco-Lodge, Tumani Tenda Eco-Lodge as well as Kaurien Eco-Lodge in Kaur.



This new form of tourism is cognizant of the protection of the Fauna and Flora of the country, the Environment as well as the local people, it continues to provide job opportunities for local people thus minimizing rural urban drift that is badly hitting the country.

Nonetheless, Gambia's morphology and landscape offers a lot of attraction sites throughout the country that tourists continue to enjoy through various visits they made to these sites. The Kachically Crocodile Pond in Bakau, Abuko Nature Reserve, Banjulinding Women's Garden, Wassu and Kerr Batch Stone Circles, Janjanbureh and Dingiri Stone Circle.

Janjanbureh which is the Regional Headquarters of the Central River Region of the Country and about 270 kilometers away from Banjul continues to attract hundreds of tourists each year irrespective of the distant in travel. It harbors the Slave house and provide a rich history of the Trans-

Atlantic Slave Trade as well as the Freedom Tree that provide sanctuary to slaves who escapes capture. The town also housed the Methodist Church, the longest serving Church in the sub-regions that continues to attract religious tourists, researchers, students and independent travelers.

Today the community's tourism is on the rise due largely to the intervention of The Gambia Tourism Board (GTBoard), boasting of new restaurants, accommodations and Safari tours to the teeming visitors who frequent the provincial areas. GTBoard recently trained tourists' guides to make live easy for the number of visitors who visit Janjanbureh and other tourists' attraction sites within the region and by far the provincial areas.

Significant progress has also been registered in the restaurant industry with new and upgraded restaurants coming on the fray that includes but not limited to Gaya Arts Café, Clay Oven, Butchers Shops, Reos Bar

and Restaurants, Paradiso Bar and Pizzaria, Big Apple Lounge among others. These restaurants, Bar and Lounges continues to provide the best of food and beverage services to the tourists' who visits the country irrespective of which country comes from.

Most of these restaurants have been fine tuning the capacity, efficiency and effectiveness of their staff in terms of customer services and the quality of products dashed to the customers. Thanks to these improvements witness in the restaurant industry, today customers coming from diverse countries can easily have access to their choices of food and beverages they prefers to eat or drink during their holidays.

Notwithstanding the growth and development of tourism cannot be measured successful without the provision of transportation, communication and other related services. These sectors also continue to witness impressive developments in terms of quality and services.

There are a number of ground handlers and tourists taxis that ease the transportation of tourists within the country and key among them is Gambia Tours, West African Tours, Tilly's Tours, Alkamba Tours as well as tourists taxis dotted around Senegambia stripe, Kombo Beach, Palma Rima, Cape Point among other sites.

The ground handling companies provide tailor-made trips for tourists who want to embark on visits to attraction sites and tourists facilities within the country and whereas tourists' choses to taste a different experiences the official tourists taxis chips in to provide the transport services they desires.

There are many GSM Companies in the country that also continue to improve in their services as far as tourism is concerned, they provide roaming services and various means of communication to tourists' visiting the country among which you have Gamcel, Africell, Qcell and Comium whose offices can be found at the Airport Terminal building and other entry points of the country.

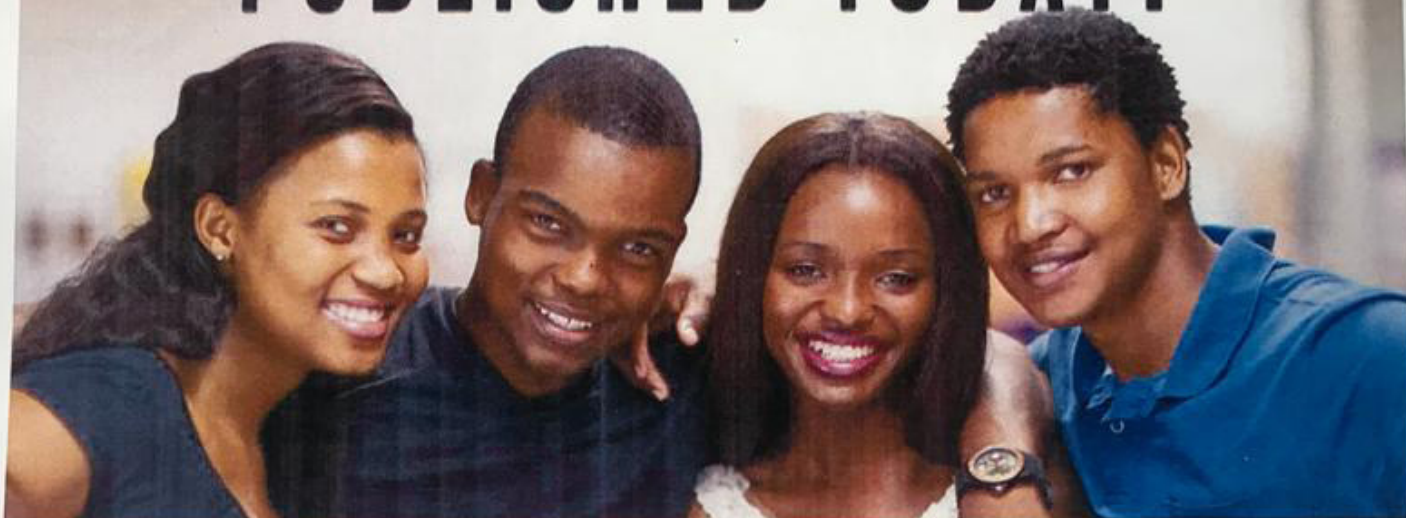
With the coming of more Banks in the country, this means most of the financial difficulties that used to be experienced by tourists in the country have melted down. Today most of these banks continue to provide all kinds of financial services including ATM to the teeming customers visiting the country thus meeting their financial obligation while they stay in the country.

However, Gambia's tourism is expected to register more successes as officials are not relenting in the fight to defeat the negative vices that characterizes tourism all over the world.



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FORMAT

For the purpose of this essay competition, all essays must be original; not more than 2000 words; written in Times New Romans; Font 12; Line spacing 1.5. Put your address and date of birth at the bottom of your essay. You can write in English or French but only 20 essays (10 in English and 10 in French) shall be selected.

CONTACT

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Les jeunes Camerounais âgés d'au plus 30 ans en 2019 et vivant au Cameroun sont invités à produire un essai sur leur vision de l'état et du futur de la démocratie au Cameroun. Ils devront préciser ce qu'ils aiment ou n'aiment pas sur les pratiques actuelles de la démocratie, et ce qu'ils voudraient voir améliorer, en proposant les méthodes pour cette amélioration.

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Chaque essai doit être original, ne comportant pas plus de 2000 mots saisis de taille 12 et interligne 1.5. Les candidats porteront leurs adresses et dates de naissance au bas de la dernière page de l'essai. Les candidats peuvent écrire en Français ou en Anglais, mais seulement 20 essais (10 en Français et 10 en Anglais) seront sélectionnés.

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The 4th Industrial Revolution and Knowledge Based Economies Take Centre Stage In Africa ARIPO Region.

By Nevson Mpofu

World Intellectual Property Organisation [WIPO], African Regional Intellectual Property Organisation [ARIPO] and African Intellectual Property Organisation [OAPI] have joined un-tide hands of scientific hope for Africa of the 4th Industrial Revolution. The Age we live in, its generations, Infrastructure and Development demands Knowledge Based Economies. ARIPO Conference held in Harare from 6 to 8 November carried a notion in line with creation and development of scientific minds meant to consummate with modern Global standards.

The Conference received full support from the Japan Patent Office and the Government of Zimbabwe. Francis Gurry, WIPO Director pointed out on the opportunity Africa has to exchange information and experiences on how the continent can use Intellectual Property System. This is done to enable an environment for socio-economic, scientific and technological development.

"This is time for Africa to create an enabling environment for socio-economic, scientific and technological development. It is also time to exchange information and experiences on how the continent can use Intellectual Property System.

"There is a strategic agreement among the three organisations managing, Intellectual Property [IP]. The agreement will allow partners to develop more clear, appropriate and practical responses to the



Zimbabwean Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education Professor Amon Murwira.

needs of African countries.

"Practical ways must be instituted in-order to use IP System, to foster Innovation and cultural production to put the continent as a whole on a more sustainable footing. Innovation for economic growth is the way to go in an era of Modernisation and Globalisation. Modern knowledge must wrestle traditional methods of economic growth. May be we are, we are dragging behind somewhere, somehow. Let us follow the forging ahead times", Gurry takes a snapping note.

In recent years countries in Africa have achieved among the fastest and sustained rates of economic growth in the World. There is an interestingly expanding population that is future workforce. It is estimated by 2050 more than 60% of the African workforce will be under the age of 25 years. Expanding technological developments have fuelled the command for the continent to leverage the continent's wealth of innovation and creative talent.

Zimbabwe's Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education Professor Amon Murwira expounds on the link between IP and Development. He explores in depth on the Global Knowledge economy, Innovation, creativity and IP. "The Four are by far vital in developing a new World. It is now advisable to bring Africa in between the lines of economic development so that countries like Zimbabwe can move further on with the zeal to create, weave and join together ideas meant to develop it.

"University – Industry Linkages and benefits that could flow from adoption of IP Policies can be important in the whole push to attain economic growth and sustainable Development. Such Policies could improve the relevance of Qualitative Research programs to local needs. This enables Universities and Research Institutions to monetise their outputs and secure Research Funding."

In 2006 ARIPO IP Academy developed Training Programs on Awareness

enhancement. This is in line with Professional skills training which links with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals like Goal Number 9. This recognises the role of Innovation in Economic Growth so as to drive Sustainable Development. Innovation and value addition, experts at this conference noted, this pushes for Business competition.

ARIPO supports Post-Graduate Degree programs in IP in Zimbabwe at Africa University in Mutare, Kwame Nkrumah University, Kumasi in Ghana and at the University of Dare-Salaam in Tanzania. The degree programs have helped young academic people to move on with their Education to higher levels of Education.

The kind of Education has pushed young academics in Africa to become Professionals outside their continent in other countries where they seek better paying top jobs. Besides, Experts note, Small To Medium Enterprises have grown bigger than how they have been. This has

supported Indigenisation in the continent a move meant to increase Business competitiveness, Industrial growth for more jobs opportunities and increase in Gross Domestic Product.

Kunihiko Shimano, Deputy Director, Japan Patent Office, Tokyo Japan appreciates their country in promoting IP and Innovation in Africa. He points out on the advantages so far reaped by young Africans, Small To Medium Enterprises and Businesses. He further digs into areas the continent must take focus on so that it can move forward.

"Innovation and the Policies to support it, including in the field of Intellectual Property, are essential to achieving Sustainable Economic growth in Africa."

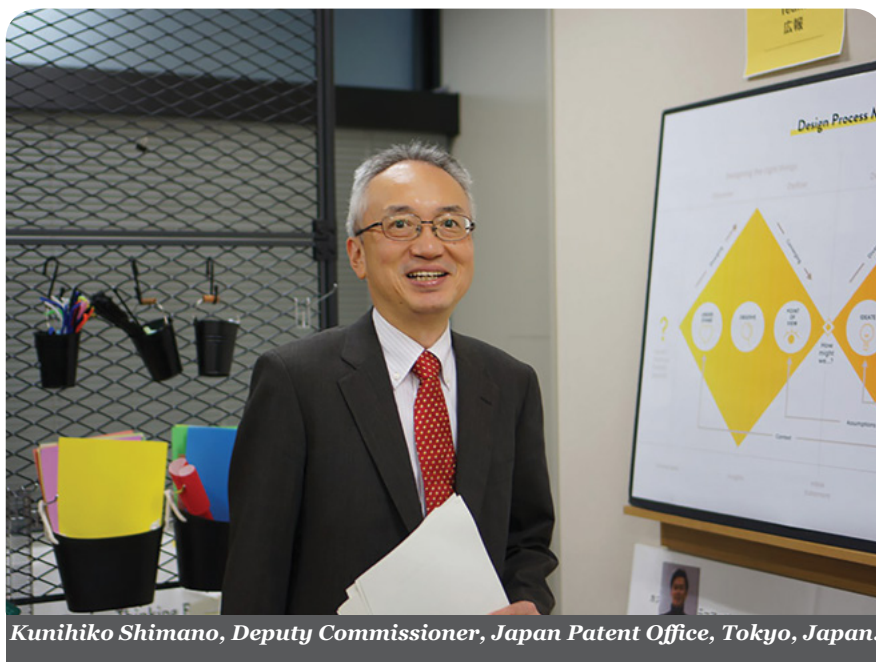
"Africa has much potential in terms of socio-economic development looking at all angles. Once these work well in the continent without any forces of antagonism, the continent is expected to reap an output of 3.5% economic growth per annum. This quite possible taking into consideration Africa's resources, experts, educational attainment and the growing population advancing technological education in IPs.

In Promoting Innovation in Africa ARIPO administers four protocols covering Patents, Utility Models, Industrial Designs, marks, new varieties of plants, traditional Knowledge and folklore. ARIPO has a mandate to co-ordinate initiatives regarding copyright and geographical

indications. ARIPO Member countries span an area of 7 million square kilometres. It has a combined population of 230 million people and a GDP of USD 368 billion dollars.

Fernando Dos Santos Director General of ARIPO based in Harare, Zimbabwe adds a mouthful that ARIPO Member States pool their resources to develop an effective IP System that would support the Region's economic, social, Scientific, technological and industrial development. ARIPO plays a central role in this process by facilitating 19 Member States.

"On top of administering the four protocols, we have initiatives to improve up-take of IP System in Africa. In buttress to the above, we have focal point for training at ARIPO. Our ACADEMY is



Kunihiko Shimano, Deputy Commissioner, Japan Patent Office, Tokyo, Japan.

responsible for developing and delivering training programs to enhance general understanding of IP Issues, creating and nurturing

professionals in specialised programs.

"In line with supporting IP we launched in 2008 Masters In Intellectual Property

Programs in Zimbabwe at Africa University, Mutare. The program has so far produced 324 graduates from 26 countries. We launched

similar programs in Ghana and Tanzania in 2018 and 2019 respectively". Fernando said.

The Conference yielded constructive and progressive initiatives resulting to the plenary deliberation on 5 Key strategies as a road-map to value addition for Business and Sustainable Development in Africa on Intellectual Property. ARIPO deliberates on IP Policies, Legal Framework, Awareness raising and capacity building, fostering partnerships between Universities and Industry. Lastly, Innovation and IP Incentives and Technology Development Transfer and Commercialisation

African Xenophobia: A Diagnosis

By James N. Kariuki*

Nigerian Xenophobia

South Africa did not invent xenophobia in Africa. On large scale, that dubious tradition was initiated by Nigeria in 1983 when the Giant of Africa expelled two million 'undocumented immigrants' mostly from Ghana.

That Afro-phobic expulsion was extra-poignant to the extent that it was official, undertaken in the name of the state. On January 17th 1983 President Shehu Shagari's made a public announcement that all 'foreigners without proper papers' had to depart from Nigeria forthwith or face arrests. A quarter of a Century later, Nigerian nationals in faraway South Africa would complain bitterly of being 'targeted' in brutal xenophobic attacks. Had the Nigerian chickens come home to roost?



Nigeria's Economic Cycles

Nigeria's xenophobia was prompted by swings between economic success and economic stress. In 1956, the country struck oil. By the 1970s it blossomed to its golden decade, skyrocketed by high worldwide oil prices. Almost suddenly, Nigeria became destination of choice for citizens of its poor

neighbors.

Unfortunately for Nigeria its economy faltered in the early 1980s. A combination of declining demand for oil due to a recession in the West, and increased oil production elsewhere, undercut oil prices substantially. Due to the collapsing oil market, the source of Nigeria's economic bonanza, its rise to economic prosperity halted.

A faltering economy, a sizeable non-Nigerian presence in the country and the approaching 1983 general elections, which were laced with anti-immigrant undertones, converged upon Shagari, pushing him to the infamous executive order of 1983. In contrast, South Africa's xenophobia invariably arises ex-officially and from the indigenous

masses.

Remarkably, harsh as it was, the Nigeria's exodus was largely free of hateful and incriminating xenophobic criminality. Yet, the event caused horrendous suffering. To this day, the bag that the 'illegal immigrants' used to haul away their belongings, the 'Ghana Must Go', is permanently etched in the mind as an indelible reminder of human tragedies in Africa.

South African Xenophobia

The demise of apartheid was largely derived from the black armed struggle in the quest to make the country ungovernable. But the 1976 Soweto Uprising also inserted its unique input. The unarmed children of Soweto stared at the apartheid monster in the eye with an unequivocal old American-inspired challenge:

'give me liberty or give me death.' After that, obliterating the demonic apartheid became an all black people's obsession.

Even in prison, Nelson Mandela was the anti-apartheid's uncontested torch-bearer; its ultimate anti-thesis. Yet there were reticent critics who were convinced that, in negotiating apartheid away, Mandela underestimated the primacy of 'economic kingdom', especially regarding land. The diehard among these was his wife, Winnie Mandela, whose views were willingly bequeathed to the political firebrand, Julius Malema and his Economic Freedom Party. In name and inference, Malema's party was remarkably reminiscent of Oginga Odinga's famous book, Not Yet Uhuru.

Mandela is said to have been a widely-read prisoner and was probably captured by Kwame Nkrumah's famous dictum, "Seek ye the political kingdom first and the rest shall be added unto you." In negotiating apartheid's demise he overestimated the primacy of political kingdom at the expense of economic kingdom, allowing the latter to remain safely in white man's domain. Was Mandela mindset compromised by his inner-most commitment



Shattered and battered, victims of xenophobic attacks in South Africa return home in Ngeria. Photo credit CNN.

to racial reconciliation and peace for the motherland and honoring Nkrumah's popular anti-colonial slogan of political primacy?

Whatever the case, Mandela did not foresee that by 2019, the World Bank would rank South Africa as the most unequal society in the world. Yet, other than shallow trappings of power, political kingdom had delivered little for his fellow blacks. Professor Ali Mazrui would later lament that in the 1994 settlement, «...the white man said to the Blacks 'You can take the crown and we'll keep the jewels.'» Did Mandela's economic concession become democratic South Africa's original sin?

Meeting Basic Needs

Lack of jobs and services for the poor has consistently bedeviled post-apartheid South Africa since xenophobic violence started to erupt in 2008. And, to emphasize the point, these Afro-phobic attacks have invariably erupted in the poor neighborhoods.

The perpetrators of the attacks are mostly the so-called 'born frees', the post-apartheid generation. They are young and willing to earn honest living, but there are no jobs to be had; South Africa's youth unemployment rate is at 31 percent. Yet, the impoverished 'born frees' see foreign intruders owning

running corner stores in their own neighborhoods.

The tormented 'locals' resent the non-South Africans owning retail stores in their neighborhoods. They are seen as neither neighbors nor comrades; they are intruders. They are reachable and vulnerable targets in the path of least resistance. Venomous political inciters take advantage of the situation; the non-South Africans are subjected to indiscriminate attacks and looting. What starts off as domestic protests for jobs and service delivery transform into xenophobic attacks. The ensuing mayhems are officially categorized as criminality; but nobody is prosecuted.

Conclusion

Against this background, what binds the Nigerian and South African versions of xenophobia? We need not be flag-waving Marxist ideologues to realize that economic determinism plays a critical role in fuelling xenophobia in Africa. After all, if you toss a few bones to a bunch of hungry dogs, fights are inevitable.

* James N. Kariuki is a Kenyan Professor of International Relations (Emeritus). He comments on public issues in various international publications. He runs the blog Global Africa



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A Change of Mindset the Only Way to Root out Xenophobia for Good in South Africa

By Prince Kurupati

The ugly face of xenophobia showed its face in South Africa once again this year. While the number of casualties and the injured was significantly lower in comparison to the last attacks in 2015, this year's xenophobic attacks threatened to disrupt continental peace.

The xenophobic attacks which took place in August this year saw South African citizens take to the streets attacking and damaging business premises run by foreigners mostly those that belong to Nigerians. Just as is the case with other attacks that have taken place before, on their part, South Africans supporting the attacks said their actions were justified as foreigners were responsible for killing the future of many young South Africans by selling them drugs and recruiting young females in prostitution.

The justification given by South Africans for the recent wave of xenophobic attacks is different from reasons that they used to justify past attacks such as lack of employment opportunities due to the influx of foreigners. This change (in terms of justification) is important in the quest to understand the culture and 'violence' in South Africa. The change tells us one thing, that is, violence is often seen by South Africans as a panacea to any problem that they are facing. When faced with economic vices such as deteriorating living conditions and unemployment, they resort to violence. Also, when faced with social vices such as rising crime levels, they view violence as the solution.



Essentially therefore, what this teaches us is that violence is part and parcel of South Africans' fabric hence any efforts to root it out have to aim at a change of the mindset.

A change of mindset is not something that can be done overnight, rather, it's a long process that can take many years. To ensure that future generations do not witness what we witnessed in August this year, it's imperative that South Africans start now to change their mindset. This article is going to share some of the steps that are necessary in changing the mindset of a nation.

Inspiration is a key ingredient to any transformation. For there to be real transformation in this

instance a change of mindset, South Africans need to draw inspiration from someone or something. In South Africa's case, politicians are the best source of inspiration. Their actions and their words do carry the power to wholesomely change the very nature of the nation itself. The unfortunate part for South Africa at the moment is that some politicians are actually responsible for fuelling xenophobia owing to their selfish interests of retaining power at all costs by uttering anti-immigrant, xenophobic and afrophobic rhetoric. Unfortunate as it is, this is something that can be changed more easily. All that's required is to impart politicians with the wisdom that promoting xenophobic

and afrophobic rhetoric does no good both to them or the nation. While they can earn sympathy and votes in the short term, in the long run, they will be exposed for their intolerance while the country risk isolation as exemplified by the recent diplomatic rifts. Once politicians acknowledge that they are doing no good to their country by promoting xenophobic and afrophobic rhetoric, they will be 'forced' to preach a different type of gospel, one that unites. A change in the actions and words of the politicians will subsequently mean that their multitudes of followers will be able to draw positive inspiration from their leaders hence fulfilling the first step towards changing the mindset.

While inspiration plays a huge part in any transformation, for there to be real change, the will to change has to come from deep inside rather than from external actors and factors. This therefore means that individuals themselves have to embrace change in their hearts wholeheartedly. This is not something that's easy to do. Nonetheless, it has to be done. Inspiration from politicians can warm the heart making it easier for more radical changes to come to the fore. Governmental programs meant at conscientising the public on the dangers of xenophobia and afrophobia will also play a part in fuelling the change of mindset. The media and various other institutions will also play some part. Combined, these actions will make it easier for an individual to take a moment to introspect, make important decisions and to change the way that he or she thinks.

When introspecting, it's important that South Africans take responsibility for their current circumstances. The need to look for someone to blame when one is in an unfavourable position should be replaced by the desire to change one's circumstances in a civil manner. If blame has to be apportioned, it has to be followed by civil actions only which can come in the form of voting (voting for change) and at times peaceful protests. Only when South Africans undertake this process of a change in mindset can there be any hope of long lasting co-existence between them and foreigners mostly other African nationals.



President Buhari of Nigeria met with South African President Cyril Ramaphosa over the attacks.

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African Countries Begin To Adopt Global Initiatives To Enhance Transparency In The Management Of The Natural Resources Sector

By Wallace Mawire

African countries are slowly appreciating the essence of the adopting global standards and embracing the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) model and its benefits along the extractive sector value chain to the general public, according to a recently released analysis by a local think tank in Zimbabwe.

The Institute for Sustainability Africa (INSAF), an independent multi-disciplinary think-tank and research institute founded in Zimbabwe says that EITI is becoming the most widely used instrument for transparency in managing natural resources.

INSAF was commissioned by OXFAM-Zimbabwe to research and document on the topic highlighting on the business case for Zimbabwe to follow other African countries.

According to Rodney Ndamba, INSAF Executive Director, illicit financial flows in the natural resources sector in Africa remain the biggest threat to domestic resource mobilization to finance sustainable economic development.

In 2013, the Africa Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) reported that managing natural resources especially in Africa is very challenging.

In the report compiled by INSAF, according to EITI, in 2018, 24 countries in Africa had joined EITI resulting in more revenue being reported by respective governments and corruption being lowered



Rodney Ndamba, INSAF Executive Director.

in some of the countries.

It is also reported that at least 3,5 billion people in resource rich countries live below average growth, combined with high levels of poverty and corruption.

According to the INSAF report, the Africa Mining Vision (AMV) encourages African countries to effectively utilize their natural resources to finance Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and ending poverty as espoused by the African Union (AU). This is reported to be a similar position advocated by EITI.

One of the six key tenets of the AMV is sound mineral resources governance based on transparency and accountability.

In the INSAF report, it is said that the Africa Mining Vision urges African countries to adopt and implement the EITI as an instrument for transparency

and accountability on mining revenue and contracts.

The think tank report says that AMV has recommended that EITI is included in the term specific actions and includes EITI as the first country-level action to implement the short term objective of promote natural resources governance, manage stakeholders engagement throughout the mine life cycle, improve management of transfer payments and mainstream EITI principles and the Kimberly Process Certification Scheme in national policies, laws and regulations.

EITI was launched by the United Kingdom government in September 2002 at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa.

It was formed as a multi-stakeholder initiative which included governments,

private companies (oil, gas and mining), industry bodies, international institutions, investors and NGOs.

African countries which participated from the beginning include the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Mozambique, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

According to INSAF, only Equatorial Guinea is no longer a member, but they have expressed their interest in re-joining. It is also reported that by 2014, of the 24 EITI candidate countries, 14 were mining countries and of the 40 companies which were supporting EITI, 23 were mining companies.

It is further added that the coverage of EITI has grown rapidly with 52 countries globally applying the standards of which 46% are African countries.

It is also estimated that 30% of global natural

resources reserves are in Africa, but the continent remains underdeveloped.

The INSAF report says that the continent has proven oil, gas and mineral resources which are expected to contribute to public finance for economic development.

"This makes EITI an imperative for resource rich African countries, with many already making significant progress in implementing the standard," said Rodney Ndamba, INSAF Executive Director and Chief Researcher on the initiative.

On the progress status, up to date, on the adoption of the EITI by African countries, according to the INSAF report, it is reported that DRC is yet to be assessed against the 2016 standard. On Senegal and Nigeria, progress is reported to be satisfactory. Countries which are reported to have made meaningful progress include Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Republic of Congo, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Sao Tome and Principe, Tanzania, Togo and Zambia.

Liberia and Central Africa Republic are reported to have been suspended, but a reason is not provided.

On disclosures by African countries, it is reported that a number of the countries have been making progress in disclosing beneficial ownership, a requirement of EITI reporting from 2020. These include Cameroon, Chad, Ivory Coast, the

DRC, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe and Togo.

It is reported that countries like Republic of Congo, Chad, Ghana, Guinea, DRC, Liberia, Malawi, Senegal and Mali have been disclosing mining contracts.

"This provides evidence that great progress is being made by African countries to enhance transparency in the extractive sector," the INSAF report notes.

On case studies in West Africa, it is reported that Nigeria faced a number of challenges in managing its

revenue from its oil and gas sector. It is reported that to date, Nigeria EITI (NEITI) reports have been informing citizens on all the inflows and outflows in the sector and has been effective in improving transparency and accountability in the same area.

It is reported that Senegal started implementing EITI in 2015 and became the first African country to make satisfactory progress in meeting the EITI standards. Liberia has been listing the largest mining companies and linking them to their licences

and relevant payments through a centralized register. Liberia has been publishing mining contracts for some time, it is reported.

Guinea is reported to have an online contract portal with 71 published contracts. In Sierra Leone, it is reported that there was an absence of inter-agency coordination identified by the EITI process which was a major challenge for revenue collection. It is reported that the government resolved it by establishing an extractive industries revenue taskforce to help follow up on the opportunities identified

for making revenue collection more efficient. EITI reporting is reported to have helped much.

In Southern Africa, the DRC government is reported to have committed to implement EITI to attract FDI and to ensure that revenues are well managed and that citizens benefit. The reports from 2007 to 2015 are reported to indicate an increase in revenues.

Mozambique is reported to have been disclosing contracts for some time. This is reported to have helped improve in tax collection and

inter-agency collaboration due to EITI reporting.

In Zambia, EITI reporting is reported to have identified major discrepancies in production figures held by different government agencies.

Tanzania is reported to have faced some challenges in the process of implementing EITI. Tanzania EITI (TEITI) is now reported to be working with the government and companies to identify the best practice when publishing additional contracts in the future.

A Mother Theresa Emerges For Maternity Health in Zimbabwe

By Nevson Mpofo

Harare - - - -
An Apostolic Traditional Mid-Wife bare handed, with no gloves, no enough water, no suitable clothing for salvaging neo-natal babies born in Harare's high density of Mbare is doing maternal service wonders. Esther Zinyoro, popularly known as Mbuya Gwena of St Johns Apostolic Church of the Whole World a traditional mid-wife has saved more than 300 lives of neo-natal born babies since the time nurses strike took toll in Zimbabwe.

This has occurred at a time nurses were on strike following the Government's failure to come up with better inflation beating salaries. The mid-wife does not charge even a cent for the maternal health services. Many expecting pregnant women have consulted her free maternal health services from all walks of Harare.

"I deliver more than 200



Esther Zinyoro Gwena holds one of the babies she has just delivered in her tiny apartment in the poor suburb of Mbare in Harare, Zimbabwe, Saturday, Nov. 16, 2019. Grandmother Esther Zinyoro Gwena claims to be guided by the holy spirit and has become a local hero, as the country's economic crisis forces closure of medical facilities, and mothers-to-be seek out untrained birth attendants. (AP Photo/Tsvangirayi Mukwazhi)

babies in 10 days up to this week. I receive knocks on my door in the middle of the night. My sympathetic heart makes me do this freely because I know the situation on ground. It is now my 4th month doing the work. At first

in two weeks I delivered 79 neo-natal. The past 2 weeks I have delivered more than 200 making it close to 300.

"Sometimes I get invited in Municipal clinics to deliver women or a woman who nurses fail to help. Sometimes

they can- not come to my place because I only have two rooms. The problem is space in my rooms. Water is disconnected. I am helped by some sympathetic men and women to fetch water so that I can do the work well.

"I started working without even gloves but now it's a bit better but still I am facing the similar problem. There are some people who heard of me. They sacrifice to buy gloves, cotton wool and all the necessary facilities. I use

to do this on the floor but now it's a little bit better than ever before. Still I have challenges because some mothers fail to get anything.

"Sadly, mothers with HIV who fear transmitting the virus are at a disadvantage. I do not know anything about HIV. Such mothers are disadvantaged in this case. HIV pregnant women testify before I work for them. This is my challenge but I am happy not even a single woman or neo-natal has died during my service delivery to them". She said.

Role of Traditional Mid-Wives in Africa Comes of Age Again

...Asked to comment Esther Muia UNFPA Country Representative commented that it shows the role of Traditional Mid-Wives is a story in the African culture that must not be ignored. She pointed out as well that Governments in Africa

must take such roles and responsibilities seriously because this is all about life and care of the new born baby.

"The role of traditional mid-wives comes of age again. It means that our tradition and culture is so wonderful to go by. Africa must emulate this Heroine Esther Zinyoro."

"Traditionally women used to do the work rather than clinics and hospitals. This is excellent work at a time in Zimbabwe the country has no enough budget for medicines, drugs, health facilities, infrastructure and enough to pay Health Workers. Such kind of challenges are everywhere in Africa because traditionally mid-wives are everywhere around the continent.

"Let us see traditional mid-wives increasing in the African continent. We shall as United Nations fight to see this taking place so that



First Lady Auxillia Mnangagwa greets Ms Esther Zinyoro, popularly known as Mbuya Gwena, during her visit to her home in Mbare. Picture John Manzongo. Nehandaradio.

we ease the burden of health professions, allopathic drugs shortage and the little Health Budgets African countries get. They get less than 3%. Ministries of Health in Africa have challenges. This is against the Abuja Declaration of 2002 which proposes them to get 15%,".

Civil Society working with African Health Organisations and those looking at general issues have vowed to amass

resources for the woman. Among them AFRICARE is working on a plan to get help. USAID, DFID and Elizabeth Glacier Paediatric AIDS Foundation have come to the rescue. The Government has planned to give a full house to the woman. Some Directors from International Organisations still to be mentioned out names have done and given full package of support. Esther Zinyoro in conclusion reveals that there are sweet deals in the pipeline so far

"I have come of age in terms of my work coming from the talent I have. There are sweet promises. Many organisations are now certain and confident of importance of our Tradition and Culture. They now give support to traditional mid-wives work, a move meant to reduce extreme poverty and vulnerability in terms of maternal health.

" The Government has

taken heed to several calls. I will be working in a full house with all the facilities, health care equipment and supplies. This will spread the whole continent because still women play this role in Africa as a whole."

The Government of Zimbabwe has completely failed the Health sector with nurses on strike. Many Doctors have been fired. Women expecting to deliver find all doors closed at maternity clinics where all the necessary clinical and medical facilities are seriously lacking. Bevy of pregnant women are being turned away from clinics and hospitals owned by the Government. Private clinics and hospitals have become extremely and highly expensive this causing challenges with pregnant expecting mothers. At the time of going to Press Government had no solution at all.



Esther Zinyoro Gwena has become a household name in Zimbabwe.

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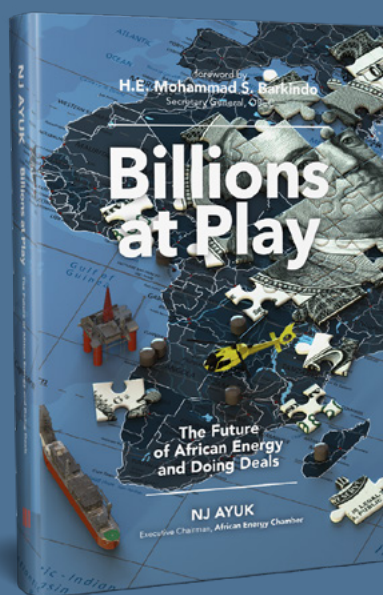
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Billions at Play

The Future of African Energy and Doing Deals

by NJ AYUK



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World leaders have no choice but to listen to climate change young activists, BirdLife International official says

By Mohammed M.Mupenda

Climate change has recently become more of global concern than before, thanks to an introverted 15-year-old Swedish girl, Greta Thunberg, that came in to speak out, protested and other youth movements across the world followed the move.

Very early in the morning, she sat in front of the headquarters of national parliament of Sweden in Stockholm armed with a sign that said "school strike for the climate"

This lonely strike was the beginning of the protest for a good cause and its message should make us all reflect.

Now a 16-year-old teenager rubs shoulder with the world's leaders such as Angel Markel, Pope Francis, Barack Obama, as well as with public figures such as Arnold Schwarzenegger.

During the recent UN climate summit held in New York, United States, youths protested calling on mostly world leaders for action against the climate change.

Greta has become the visible head of the fight against climate change. She arrived in New York after two weeks trip aboard of a ship with zero Co2 emissions to raise awareness about polluting effect of airplanes. Her journey across the Atlantic lasted 14 days and left no trace of carbon. However that ship is used in yacht races worldwide, has a cost of 5 million euro and according to some people I interacted with while attending the 74th United General Assembly held at the united nations headquarters in New York



last September, it would have cost about 40,000 Euro to make the trip.

I applaud this girl myself, because her right is grounded in the reality of climate change and the destruction of this planet from pollution. The melting glaciers represent a sign that we are destroying the planet through our consumerism that gives us the false belief

that the earth's resources are endless. But all we have to do is just watch the videos of garbage in the sea to realise how marine species die from our irresponsibility

Whenever floods come and wash away houses, crops, take lives of citizens and countless properties in The East African countries, the authorities will send condolence messages and compensate those they

can in their capacity. But This action lasts for a week or more and makes headlines, after life goes on and everything becomes history.

As supposedly rational and civilised beings, we need to start changing our consumption habits and concrete actions should be taken.

At the 74th United Nations General Assembly

(UNGA) that followed the climate summit held at the United Nations headquarters in New York, the Journalist in me struck up a conversation with most of African conservationists, environmentalists, climate change activists, and experts in climate change,; they all supported the move by the young activist.

According to Ken Mwathe, BirdLife International's Policy and Communications Coordinator for Africa, the Fossil fuel is old school, it belongs to the dead past adding that renewable energy that does not negatively impact biodiversity is the future and argued that coal-based energy must be decommissioned. At the same time, renewables such as wind energy must be deployed in a manner that does not pose a threat to biodiversity including migratory birds.

But behind the struggle of Greta Thunberg, some doubts have arisen about her credibility. It starts with the fact that, just one week after her lonely strike, her mother an opera singer in Sweden, published a book that is being sold today and has been translated into several languages, the local media articulated.

The cover of the book shows Greta herself with her poster outside parliament. I can't judge whether this was mere coincidence or was part of an advertising campaign to sell her mother's book.

And this young girl is accompanied by the people with power who have a great interest, both political and economic.



News media with an opposite editorial line began to dig a little deeper to bring light to the interests of the people who sponsored this young lady and found some quite disturbing details which led to some quite hard and interesting reflections.

The assertion was that what should have been a protest for the good humanity apparently began a good publicity campaign for the sale of her mothers' book as well as an attempt to fatten the bank accounts of the few interested in the matter.

At this point I don't want to blame Greta for her good intentions. I want to continue believing that her intentions were at least in the beginning, quite honest. We cannot blame this young girl for having been used by others.

"Let us not be so cruel



Ken Mwathe with an award in recognition for the work of birdlife.

to her. Rather we must be so critical of those who have used her as a puppet," environmentalists advised.

Instead of criticizing Greta, we must criticize the opportunists who appeared in the midst of her fame. Greta's message even if she is surrendered by less honest people, should shame us all and make us more responsible, so that

the future generations, the generations of our children and grandchildren, have a place with good conditions to live.

«World leaders have no choice but to listen to young people,». Mwathe pointed out. He however applauded Greta's push saying that it has demonstrated youth power.

Mr.Mwathe clarified

that world leaders will ignore these voices to their detriment. Even in the U.S, voters are watching and the next elections are unlikely to be decided on the basis of rhetoric, but on climate action.

BirdLife International is the largest partnership of conservation organisations in the world, covering 113 countries globally including

23 African countries for about 10 years working with governments and communities to find practical solutions to climate change.

It is currently implementing many projects in East African countries such as Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya to identify and indicate the vulnerability of communities and design interventions that could work. The approaches in place include maintaining and restoring healthy ecosystems as they play a key role in enhancing people's resilience. This is supported by effective planning and advocating for effective policies to underpin transformative change, said BirdLife International's Policy and Communications Coordinator for Africa.

Sports: What a 2019 for Eliud Kipchoge!

By Samuel Ouma |@journalist_27

Kenya is the best country when it comes to producing talented athletes globally. The East African country has produced notable runners ranging from Kipchoge Keino to now Eliud Kipchoge and many others. The country has consistently shown exemplary performance in Summer Olympics and other events which has earned her respect in the whole world.

Many reasons have emerged why Kenya is topping the list of the countries in athletics. According to scholars genetic factor has given Kenyans an upper hand. Their argument is that majority of athletes hail from Kalenjin community whose members have long legs, lighter calves, and thin ankles which support theories stating that light and



A year to remember for Eliud Kipchoge.

lean body is a requirement to every prominent runner.

Geographical factor is another reason. They hail

from mountainous Rift Valley which have high altitude and help them carry out outdoor activities successfully in an

environment with low oxygen. The government has also been lauded for offering much support to the athletes.

In the last seventeen years Eliud Kipchoge, a long distance runner, who comes from Nandi, Kenya's Rift Valley has won many accolades for his country which has earned him the state honour. On October 20, 2019 when Kenya was celebrating her heroes' day, Kipchoge was among those who received the Elder of the Order of the

Golden Heart medal is a presidential award issued in honour of the individuals who sacrificed on behalf of the country.

"On this day we celebrate those who have built Kenya with their bravery, their sacrifice and their fidelity; we celebrate and honour those that go above and beyond the call of duty. Today we honour the Kenyans called to serve around the world, our Kenyans in the diaspora who continue to be our brand ambassadors in countries far from their home and who continue to support millions of Kenyans in their homeland," reiterated President Kenyatta.

The award came few days after he became the first man on earth to run a marathon under two hours. On October

Golden Heart medal issued by Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta.

The Elder of the Order of



President Uhuru in a congratulatory handshake with Eliud Kipchoge after he was awarded the Elder of the Order of the Golden Heart Award. Photo credit Kenyan Presidency.

12, 2019, he set a new record of 1:59:40 dubbed INEOS 1:59 challenge in Austria, Vienna.

In April this year, the 34-year-old became the first man to win London Marathon four times recording 1 hour 2 minutes and 37 seconds. He finished ahead of Ethiopia's Mosinet Geremew and Mule Wasihun finished second and third respectively.

In recognition for his 2019 achievements in the field, the International Association of

Athletics Federations (IAAF) crowned Kipchoge the male athlete of the year at the annual World Athletics gala held in Monaco, France on November 23.

He trounced the World 10,000m champion Joshua Cheptegei of Uganda, world 400m hurdles champion Karsten Warholm of Norway, World 200m champion Noah Lyles and World Paul Vault champion Sam Kendricks both of USA.

Key Political Events to Watch Out in 2020

By Prince Kurupati

2019 was a year full of events on the political front in Africa. Several countries conducted general elections among them Nigeria, Senegal, Malawi, Mozambique, Botswana and Namibia. In South Africa, a new wave of xenophobic and afrophobic attacks emerged which threatened to disrupt the harmony that exists between South Africa and other African states chiefly Zambia and Nigeria. In Sudan, long-time leader Omar Al Bashir was overthrown thanks to massive nationwide protests. In Ethiopia, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed scooped the Nobel Peace Prize Award

for his outstanding work in unifying the Ethiopian nation and also in working towards the ending of hostilities that existed between Ethiopia and Eritrea. In Algeria, since the early months of the year, protests have been raging on which have resulted in the country's general elections being postponed several times.

Just as 2019 was full of events, 2020 also promises to bring much of the same. In this article, we are going to share with you the key political events that are likely to shape Africa's political front come 2020.

1. Pope's Visit to South Sudan



Addressing multitudes of people during the Angelus prayer in St Peter's Square in Rome, Pope Francis said that he is planning to visit South Sudan in 2020. Pope Francis had planned to visit

South Sudan in 2017 but the trip failed to materialize due to political instability and poor security at the time. Though the situation has not drastically improved since, it looks likely that this time around, the Pope will finally pay a visit to Africa's newest nation.

In his own words, the Pontiff said, "the South Sudanese people have suffered too much in recent years and look forward with great hope to a better future, especially the definitive end of conflicts and lasting peace. I, therefore, urge those responsible to continue, tirelessly, with their commitment to an inclusive dialogue in the search for consensus for the good of the

nation."

The Pope's planned visit comes at a time when the tensions between President Salva Kiir and Rick Machaar are escalating. Kiir and Machaar's differences divide the nation along ethnic lines and to date, its reported that the tensions between these men has resulted in an incessant conflict amongst their supporters which to date has claimed the lives of nearly 400 000 people while millions are believed to have flown from their homes and others pushed to the brink of starvation. The Pope's visit can, therefore, pacify the existing tensions between the two men, something which South Sudan definitely needs



After kissing the feet of political leaders, a Papal visit to South Sudan maybe in the works.

at this point in time.

2. Proposed withdrawal of UN peacekeepers in Sudan

Sudan is pushing for the withdrawal of UN peacekeepers stationed in the country by June 2020. The Sudanese's UN Ambassador Omer Mohammed Siddig during an address to the council said that it was high time the UN shifted from peacekeeping to peacebuilding in the country. Omer's remarks came after the successful ouster of Omer Al Bashir. The peacekeeping mission in Sudan known as UNAMID has almost 5,600 Blue Helmets (UN troops)

located in Darfur.

UNAMID peacekeepers are stationed in Darfur as a way of maintaining and also preventing the escalation of hostilities between ethnic Africans and the Arab dominated Sudanese government. The hostilities between these two started back in 2003 when the ethnic Africans rebelled accusing the Arab dominated Sudanese government of discrimination. The inclusion of some ethnic Africans since then and also in the current Transitional Authority according to the current administration means there is no more need for UNAMID.



Prime Minister will face the electorate in Ethiopia.

While the UN has shown reluctance of withdrawing the peacekeepers, it has however muted reducing the force size from 5,600 to 4,050. If the UN does manage to reduce the force size, then this will be testament that some progress towards achieving peace in Sudan is being realized. This is not only good for the country itself but for the whole of Africa.

3. 2020 Ethiopian Election

Ethiopia is set to hold its general election by May next year. The Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said plans are already underway to have the polls by May as any delays may result in political violence as has been the case in recent years. "Democracy needs exercise. If we say we cannot hold elections now, it will bring a lot of problems. We

should work wholeheartedly by building public trust."

In building up to the general election, PM Abiy said that he wants to merge the fractious ruling coalition which has been running the country since 1991 into a single party. PM Abiy's suggestion has however been quashed by one of the coalition's four ethnic-based parties, the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF). The TPLF in the past was the main force in the coalition but its power and influence have significantly diminished since PM Abiy's ascension to power. With PM Abiy running as the coalition's candidate, the TPLF worries its power and influence will further erode if he wins hence the formation of a single party may signal the end of its political relevance. How PM

Abiy and the TPLF are going to iron out their differences will determine to a large extent the performance of the coalition in the upcoming elections.

4. Ivory Coast Elections

Ivory Coast will conduct its presidential election in 2020. While the situation in the country has generally been calm, there are still doubts that the country has attained lasting peace. The upcoming election will, therefore, show if truly the country has attained lasting peace or if the existing calmness is just an illusion. The acquittal of former President Laurent Gbagbo by the International Criminal Court has made the election more interesting more so if Gbagbo decides to contest the polls.



After serving two terms, President Ouattara says he may be eligible to run for more terms.



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