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Rich On Promises... But Can They Deliver? African Leaders On 2020



Rwanda Is Ready To
Work With President
Nkurunziza's Successor



African Diaspora State
Strengthens Ties
Between Colombia &
Ghana



What Will It Take For
2020 To Truly Be The
Year Of Gas In Nigeria?



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A Wake-Up Call For African Leaders In Ghana's year of return

By Ajong Mbatndah L

Few are recent events in Africa which have pulled visitors and famous names to Africa like the year of Return to Ghana. Launched last year by President Akufo Addo, estimates from the Ghanaian government indicate that the year of Return raked in circa \$ 2 billion.

Towards the end of the year, information from the Secretariat of Ghana's year of return indicated that arrivals from the USA surged by about 26%, a 24% surge from UK arrivals, while overall airport arrivals saw a 45% increase compared to the previous year.

From music, to sports, business, academics, and politicians, Ghana was the place to be. For all the criticisms and ire that we throw at African leaders, when it is right, we should be ready to say so and give credit where it is due. President Akufo Addo, his government and Ghanaians deserve great credit for the thought, and implementation of the "Year of Return."

As Ghana rightfully basks in the glow of its success, perhaps it is time for Africa to rethink its approach to relations with its diaspora. The opportunities that visitors saw in Ghana are available in a vast majority of African countries, the touristic potentials are similar if not better in some other countries, and the hospitality of people is a trademark of most Africans.

For the year of Return at some point, Ghana made it possible for people to get visas on arrival and President Akufo Addo granted citizenship to hundreds of people. Such laudable actions are in contrast to the depressing conditions of traveling from one part of Africa to the other. From visa processes, to customs and border issues, instead of breaking down the artificial boundaries created by colonialism, some African leaders and countries have opted to excel in strengthening them.

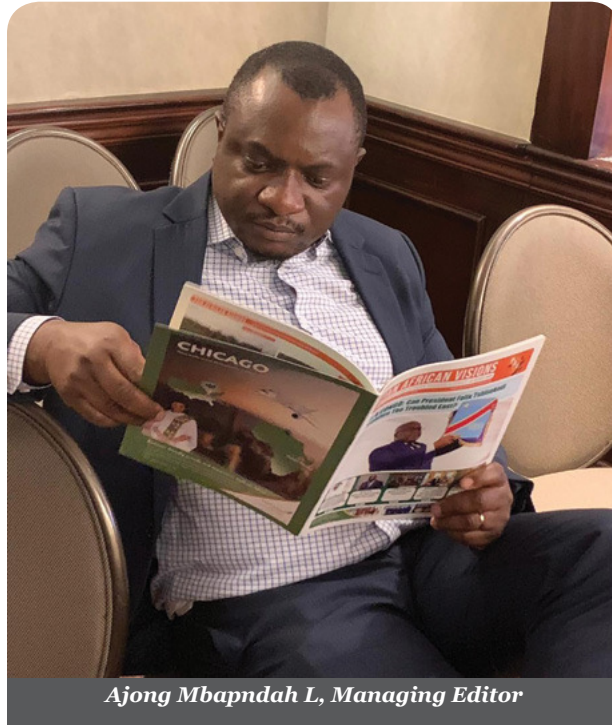
While many countries may salivate at the international publicity and huge

economic windfall from the year of return, with a population of over a billion people, imagine what it will mean for the continent if people were able to move and trade freely. All Africa needs to do is to get its act together and it will be the envy of the world. In conversation with one of the esteemed visitors to Ghana, her concerns were on how much of the economy the country owns. Who has the hotels, who runs the airlines, who controls the resources and what mechanisms are in place to ensure that the wealth of the country is evenly distributed to all sectors for the benefit of all or at least a majority as opposed to a few elite?

The questions she raised, and more are the same questions a growing majority of Africans are asking. How comes for all its vast human and natural resources and its immense potential there are so many who are still in poverty and misery? The continent can and should definitely be doing much better than it is currently doing. Reaching out to the diaspora, and opening doors for them to reconnect with their origins and be part of the development process means getting another part of the African puzzle right.

In a rapidly evolving world, Africa will have so much at stake in 2020. As a continent, expectations are high when it comes to the African Continental Free Trade Agreement AfCFTA. In an interview we had with African Trade Commissioner Albert Muchanga last year, he indicated that plans were on course for the AfCFTA to go operational by July of 2020.

Equally high on expectations will be progress on the African Union Passport. Launched in July 2016 in



Ajong Mbatndah L, Managing Editor

Morocco officials were a little lost when it came to knowledge of the passport.

In West Africa, the huge excitement created with decision to float a common currency called the ECO seems to have given place to growing skepticism on the prospects of keeping France out of the process. Beyond the prospects of a regional bloc having its own currency, and doing away with the CFA, freeing some eight west African countries from the shackles of France the former colonial power formed the basis of the unbridled

excitement. Yet, the French President rained on the ECO parade last month by using a visit to Cote d'Ivoire to join President Ouattara in making pronouncements on the currency changes which seem to fall way short of expectations of the original intent. Developments on the ECO will be keenly watched throughout 2020.

These continental wide initiatives, as well as individual country developments will define Africa at the beginning of this new decade. True to tradition, the new year ritual came with the usual avalanche of promises from the leaders. Promises are debts, and Africa has to do more to hold its leaders accountable for these debts.

Considering the importance, and expectations from leadership, PAV Magazine starts its first issue of the year with the perspective of African leaders on 2020. The issue takes a look at some of the core issues that some of the African leaders will be working on. The issue also looks at trends that may shape developments across the continent as well as developments from the African diaspora. Happy reading!!



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2020: The Year to Turn Adversity into Opportunity - Ramaphosa

By Prince Kurupati

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa delivered his New Year speech on Tuesday 31 December 2019. Addressing the whole nation, the president took time to reflect on the past year praising South Africans for voting peacefully in the general elections. He did acknowledge that in as much as there were many things to celebrate in 2019, the nation also suffered from several setbacks.

We “enter this New Year and this new decade, encouraged by the progress we have made under difficult conditions, knowing that we still have many mountains to climb, and many treacherous rivers to cross.” Moving in the New Year, the president called upon every South African to turn adversity into opportunity. This informed by the fact that “upon the conduct of each depends the fate of all.”

In his detailed New Year speech, Ramaphosa touched on the following issues:

On democracy

Ramaphosa said that South Africa enjoys a robust and vibrant democracy. This evidenced by the peaceful elections that the country held earlier in 2019. “In May millions of South Africans went to cast their votes, peacefully and enthusiastically, this once again demonstrated for the entire world to see that we are a robust and vibrant democracy.”

South Africa is a shining star when it comes to democracy both globally and regionally. Located in a continent that has had its fair share of violent and contested elections, South Africa in May showed that it is a beacon of hope for the many African nations that are finding it difficult to wholesomely embrace and adopt democracy.

On unity and tolerance

The president praised the nation for the unity that exists in the country. While acknowledging that the nation



South Africa must turn adversity into opportunity says President Ramaphosa.

over the past year endured some hardships on the unity and tolerance front, mainly seen in the reports of farm killings, Ramaphosa did thank the nation for accepting to co-exist peacefully with each other.

“We committed ourselves to build a new society founded on the will of the people, in which all South Africans – black and white – truly belong.”

On the economy

In relation to the economy, Ramaphosa said that some positives were recorded in 2019 but unfortunately, the positives were not enough to be felt by everyone in the country. Some of the benefits brought about by new investments and economic reforms were job creation and the upliftment of standard of living for South Africans. However, these benefits were not enjoyed by every South African hence moving into 2020, Ramaphosa and his administration promised to work to ensure that more is done to improve the lives of everyone and to reduce the ballooning unemployment figures.

“While our economy created jobs,

these have not been enough to stop the rise in unemployment or the deepening of poverty. Many South Africans’ lives have changed for the better, but many others are yet to feel the benefits of the economic reforms and new investment.”

As per his promise to improve the lives of every South African, Ramaphosa does have a tough year ahead of him as the country ranks as one of the most unequal societies in the world where only a few own most of the country’s wealth while the majority languish in poverty. It is because of this inequality that political parties such as the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) have emerged hoping to change this by redistributing wealth. How Ramaphosa will work to improve the lives of all South Africans remain to be seen but if he and the ruling party wish to maintain their political power, then something needs to be done as the suffering majority is slowly turning radical by the day in the quest to wrestle wealth and power from the elite few mostly the whites.

The ever rising unemployment figures also pose a major challenge for the president going into 2020. Unemployment figures have gradually been increasing for some years now and if the problem is not addressed soonest, then it can turn into a crisis in a few years’ time. While the economy has been expanding, it has been doing so at a slow rate such that it has failed to accommodate all the graduating young people seeking employment. Idle and restless youths pose major challenges to any government and Ramaphosa ought to put this into mind as he starts his work for 2020. Opposition parties such as the EFF and the Democratic Alliance (DA) have increased their support bases over the past years with the majority of the new members being youths who are not satisfied with the work being done by the ruling party especially solving the unemployment challenge. If Ramaphosa fails to solve this challenge, then he will be indirectly strengthening the opposition parties.

The unemployment challenge has been compounded by the high rate



Beyond the stain from xenophobia, President Ramaphosa envisions a country where different people and groups live peacefully.

of economic immigrants who flock into the country seeking greener pastures. Many of these are illegal immigrants who are willing to accept meager wages just so that they can survive in a foreign land. Employers looking to maximize profits often hire the illegal immigrants knowing full well that they will pay them meager wages. The locals who rightly prefer to work for 'average' wages end up being the losers. As he looks to tackle the unemployment challenge, Ramaphosa will also need to look at the issue of (illegal) immigrants.

Entering 2020, the president promised that economic prospects are set to improve thanks to new investments. If indeed this happens, then issues of poverty and unemployment will be tackled. "Each day, we draw closer to our target of R1.2 trillion in new investment in the factories, mines, refineries, shops that will drive our economic renewal."

On gender based violence

Cases of gender based violence rose exponentially in 2019. Ramaphosa in his speech did point that out stating "This has also been a year in which we have had to confront the darkest forces of our nature. As a nation, we have witnessed the brutality perpetrated by men against women and against children. We have seen lives, both young and old, ended with brutal violence. We have seen fear in our homes, schools and streets."

The rise in the scourge of gender based violence led to the emergence of various social media campaigns including the #AmINext campaign. The number of women and children

who engaged with such campaigns aptly demonstrated how a large section of South African women and children have been affected by gender based violence. There is thus need for concerted efforts to be put in place by Ramaphosa and his government to try and bring an end to violence in the home. While eradicating the problem entirely maybe an insurmountable task, actions need to be taken to ensure that no more lives are lost. The president will have to work with the judiciary to speedily punish any perpetrators and civil society to ensure that the nation is conscientised about the dangers of resorting to violence when trying to solve domestic issues.

On healthcare

The president reiterated that his government is working towards its goal of providing quality health care to all South Africans. Over the years, South Africa through budget allocations has prioritized the health sector with the intention of ensuring that healthcare is affordable for all. Apart from budget allocations, the South African government has partnered with various regional and international organizations in the quest to ensure that every South African has access to quality healthcare.

On land

redistribution

Land redistribution has been a contentious issue in South Africa in recent years. The emergence of the EFF calling for land redistribution without compensation has made the land question a key debate topic both within and outside government circles. Over a year ago, the ruling party did embrace the land redistribution without compensation concept but since then it has not implemented it. While Ramaphosa stated that "we are drawing closer to our goal of...redistributing land to all those who work it and all those who need it," he did not specify if this will be done in the spirit of willing buyer willing seller or if he will proceed with the land redistribution without compensation concept. Regardless of the route that he decides to take at the end, the bottom line is that there is need for land redistribution in South Africa if the inequality gap between the rich and the poor is to be cut.

On education

In relation to education, the president said that his aim in 2020 will be on providing free higher education to students from poor backgrounds. At the same time, he also wants to ensure that every child benefits from early childhood development.

"We are making progress towards our aim to provide free higher education to all students from poor and middle-class families, and to

ensure all children benefit from early childhood development."

In the past, a number of movements calling for the government and university bodies to reduce tertiary fees emerged. Some of the movements saw students protest at various campuses while others saw students vent out their frustrations online, a case in point being the #FeesMustFall campaign. While some efforts were taken, many still believe that the fees are unaffordable for people who come from poor backgrounds. As such, there is need for the government and university bodies to revise the tertiary fees further downwards.

On corruption

Ramaphosa promised to continue his fight against corruption in 2020. "Steadily, we are rebuilding the public institutions that are so vital to our democracy, restoring our law enforcement agencies, and taking forward the fight against state capture and corruption." Ramaphosa' sentiments could not have come at a better time as South Africa still has fresh memories of the State Capture debacle that exposed the rot within the government and also, the private sector.

To the rest of Africa

South Africa assumes the position of chair of the African Union in January this year. As his priority as the chair, Ramaphosa said he will push for the opening of a free trade area. "We will seek to work with our



Still sketchy on definite plans, President Ramaphosa says the ANC government is making progress on the torry issue of land reform.

sister countries to realize an Africa Free Trade Area that stretches from Cape Town to Cairo, and from Dakar to Mombasa.” Though difficult to believe that Ramaphosa will indeed achieve this dream at the end of his tenure, any work that he does will lay down the foundation for such a

free trade area and whenever the idea eventually comes to fruition, then he will be regarded as the founding father.

United – South Africa can achieve

In his conclusive remarks, Ramaphosa said that South Africa

will only be able to realize its dreams, visions and aspirations if it acts as a united front. “We know only too well the enormity of the challenges that confront us, but we are united in the knowledge that we have the means and the determination to overcome them...Just as the strongest steel is

forged in fire, just as diamonds are forged deep inside the earth’s crust under the most extreme pressure, let us turn adversity into opportunity... By working together towards the South Africa that we all want, sparing neither strength nor courage, we will progress and we will succeed.”

Peace restoration will be my top priority in 2020 - DR Congo's Tshisekedi

By Jean-Pierre Afadhali

Almost one year in power Felix Antoine Tshisekedi the president of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has promised Congolese people to focus on peace and stability restoration in volatile Eastern Congo and improve the well-being of the citizens in 2020, but opposition remain pessimistic over president’s goals saying they are not new.

In his New Year’s address the president said that this year he will deal with insecurity in the troubled North and South Kivu amid increasing insecurity that is also hampering efforts to fight the deadly Ebola virus, the second worst outbreak in history.

This month the Africa’s Great lakes country marks one year of historical peaceful power transfer after Independence. However, opposition remain cautious saying the president keeps making empty promises to turn around the country that has historically been hit by armed conflicts, mismanagement and corruption.

In his New Year’s speech the president said peace and stability will be his top priorities in 2020. “Peace restoration on the whole territory through insecurity eradication will remain my priority until effective peace is restored across our country,” president Tshisekedi said in the New Year speech “Without peace and security, our citizens will not fully contribute to the country’s development of our country,”

The opposition was quick to react on the president’s New Year message saying nothing is new in the president’s speech criticizing him for “recycling



Security will be a priority says President Tshisekedi.

“former promises . “I think in 2020, he [president Tshisekedi] will keep making empty promises, he will just recycle previous ones rather than innovating in their implementation,” said Steve Kivuata, the spokesperson of the coordinator of ‘LAMUKA’, an opposition platform.

According to the opposition’s spokesperson, the president ignored the truth by saying he wants to promote social justice yet the situation on the ground is not good. Mr. Kuvuata claims teachers have not been paid and roads are in poor condition.

Among other priorities for 2020 Tshisekedi cited social justice and

the fight against corruption but opposition believes the government will do nothing as there are cases involving the loss of public funds that are yet to be solved such as the “disappearance of \$ 15 million”.

“He [president] always reminds us the fight against corruption but he has failed to trace \$ 15 million involving his government, fraudulent tenders and other cases,” LUMUKA spokesperson was quoted as saying: “Unfortunately he [Tshisekedi] is not the right person to say that everything is going to be alright in 2020,”

Meanwhile, the DR Congo’s president kicked off 2020 with a meeting and his Angolan counterpart

João Lourenço on 5 January to strengthen bilateral cooperation between two countries that are also members of Southern African Development Community (SADC).

According to Congolese media reports, the heads of states discussed the Common Interest Zone (ZIC) for oil exploration projects. Despite massive natural resources, the Central African country remains among the poorest in the world with the majority of citizens living in poverty.

Last year the International Monetary Funds (IMF) gave DR Congo a loan valued at about \$368 million to supports the government’s efforts to restore economic stability and improvements in governance and transparency.

According to IMF, DRC is a fragile, low-income country with poor governance. “The country has been affected by a recent decline in commodity prices, the worst Ebola outbreak in its history, and a sharp fall in international reserves (to the equivalent of about only one week of imports),” noted IMF

Ebola remains international public health emergency. Efforts to fight the disease are being hampered by insecurity in Beni, North Eastern Congo blamed on foreign and local militias groups that have been killing innocent people and attacking Ebola response teams, pushing some health organizations to evacuate their staff from the volatile hotspots in both Ituri Province and North Kivu.

In his new year’s address the president further urged Congolese to stop tribalism, selfishness and promote social justice.



Efforts to fight Ebola have been hampered by security issues.

I will be standing down in 2023 - Buhari tells Nigerians in New Year Message

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

The President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Muhammadu Buhari says he will leave office in when his mandate ends in May 29, 2023 and won't stand for future elections.

Buhari, who is in his second mandate as President of Nigeria said in a message to Nigerians through a letter obtained by PAV. He noted that he is a strong believer of democratic principles and will promote and sustain them in Nigeria and across West Africa.

"I will stand down in 2023 and will not be available in any future elections. But I am determined to help strengthen the electoral process both in Nigeria and across the region, where several ECOWAS members go to the polls this year," Buhari said.

Buhari in the letter stated that fighting corruption, improving the economy, and combating insecurity would remain the planks of his regime in the year. He also noted that his government in the years ahead will improve power supply, build roads/houses for Nigerians, develop agriculture, diversify the economy, create jobs, combat terrorism, and promote democracy.

According to Punchn.com, among the new developments to expect in 2020 and beyond are "47 road projects scheduled for completion in 2020/21, including road leading to ports and many bridges".

The primary concern when President Buhari assumed office was that of rallying neighbours so that they can confront Boko Haram on a coordinated regional basis as he said, "chaos is not a neighbour any of us hope for".

He said, "We have been fighting on several fronts: violent extremists, cultists and organized criminal networks. It has not been easy but as we are winning the war, we also look to the challenge of winning the peace, the reconstruction of lives, communities and markets..."

According to President Buhari the



federal government will work with state governors, neighbouring states, and international partners to tackle the root causes of violent extremism and the networks that finance and organise terror while nothing that the security forces will act on a professional basis, and the respect for human rights.

President Buhari equally lauded the signing of the African continental Free Trade Area and the creation of the National Action Committee to oversee its implementation and ensure the necessary safeguards are in place to allow Nigeria to fully capitalise on regional and continental markets. All measures which will help Nigeria to be self-sufficient.

On the border issues, the President indicated that Nigeria will reopen its land borders once it's sure that neighbouring African nations have stuck to their own side of the agreement on curbing smuggling.

He said, "The joint land border security exercise currently taking place is meant to safeguard Nigeria's economy and security. No one

can doubt that we have been good neighbours and good citizens. We have been the helpers and shock-absorbers of the sub-region, but we cannot allow our well-planned economic regeneration plans to be sabotaged. As soon as we are satisfied that the safeguards are adequate, normal cross-border movements will be resumed."

The executive and legislative arms of government have expressed fears over the use of social media in Nigeria and how it is become an avenue for the proliferation of fake news. The government intends to regulate the social media space in Nigeria.

In his New Year address, Buhari said finding the right balance in the use of technology in Nigeria is priority for him in 2020 and beyond. "We can expect the pace of change in technology only to accelerate in the decade ahead. Coupled with our young and vibrant population, this offers huge opportunities if we are able to harness the most productive trends and tame some of the wilder elements," the president said.



"This is a delicate balance with which many countries are struggling. We are seeking an informed and mature debate that reflects our rights and responsibilities as citizens in shaping the boundaries of how best to allow technology to benefit Nigeria."

Buhari equally assured investors and business persons that Nigeria is doing everything possible to curb corruption.

They (investors) can also be certain of our unshakeable commitment to tackle corruption. As we create an environment that allows initiative, enterprise and hard work to thrive, it is more important than ever to call out those who find the rule of law an inconvenience, or independent regulation an irritation...We expect more funds stolen in the past to be returned to us and they will be ploughed back into development with all due transparency."

Some of the projects Nigerians should expect to come upstream from 2020 include: Major bridges including substantial work on the Second Niger Bridge; Completion of 13 housing estates under the National Housing Project Plan; Lagos, Kano, Maiduguri and Enugu international airports to be commissioned in 2020.

Equally, the government plans to Launch an agricultural rural mechanization scheme that will cover 700 local governments over a period of three years; Launching of the Livestock Development Project Grazing Model in Gombe State where 200,000 hectares of land has been identified; Training of 50,000 workers to complement the country's 7,000 extension workers; Commencement of the construction of the Mambilla Power project by the first half of 2020; and others.

The President has encouraged Nigerians to be tolerant, law abiding and peace loving. According to him, "this is a new year and the beginning of a new decade - the Nigerian Decade of prosperity and promise for Nigeria and for Africa."



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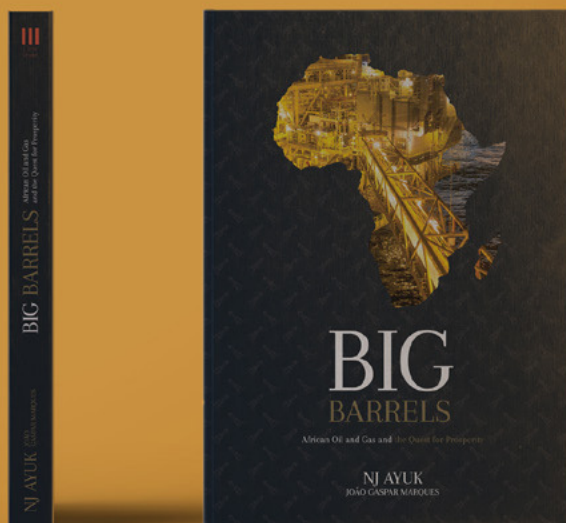
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Uproot Scourges Which Act As Hindrance To Our Progress-Hage Geingob on Namibia in 2020

By Prince Kurupati

Namibian President on 1 January delivered his annual New Year Address. In his address which was televised on the country's national broadcaster NBC, Geingob outlined his 2020 vision for Namibia. The main takeaways from the Address are as follows.

On equal representation in government

The President said his main port of call going into 2020 is to ensure that there is equal representation in government between women and men. The first priority would be to ensure equal representation in the Cabinet as was agreed by members of the Cabinet in 2019's final Cabinet meeting.

"As we seek to be better in the New Year, we should endeavour to uproot from our society those scourges which act as a hindrance to our progress as a nation."

At the same time, the president announced that he is going to trim the Cabinet this year so as to promote efficiency and effectiveness. In addition to trimming the Cabinet, the president also stated that he is going to downsize the government. However, he did not state how he is going to do so.

The pronouncements by the president that he is going to trim the Cabinet and downsize the government have been interpreted in some political circles as a maneuver by Geingob to push out those who were implicated and those with ties to officials implicated in the Fishrot scandal. The Fishrot scandal which emerged just a few days before last year's general election claimed the political lives of several top government officials. However, reports suggest that some top officials who were part and parcel of the syndicate are still in government and it is these individuals who will



A new year with a fresh mandate for President Geingob.

be targeted when Geingob begins the work of downsizing the government.

Some quarters however argue that the move to downsize the government is down to the quest to discontinue the lack of implementation of government policies and programmes. Over the past few years, Namibia has been striving to rise following an economic recession which was compounded by a severe drought. However, efforts put forward by the government have failed to change the country's fortunes and this has mainly been attributed to a lack and poor implementation by those tasked with enacting government policies and programmes. By downsizing and restructuring the government, the president will, therefore, be replacing the incompetent individuals with competent and willing individuals. This being done in the belief that success will be achieved in the shortest period of time.

On fishing quotas

2020 will see fishing quotas being allocated to all 14 regions in the country. While the fishing quotas are still to be issued, the president said some additional quotas have been

awarded to current holders to ensure that fishing production continues to run till the end of March. Allocating fishing quotas to all the 14 regions in the country will ensure accelerated and equal development.

"We will review all fishing quotas in order to ensure that the allocations are fair to those who have made tangible investments in this vital sector to our economic development."

Namibians believe that the new stance taken by the president on the allocation of fishing quotas is part of his plot to evaluate the actors involved in the fishing industry following the Fishrot scandal. The Fishrot scandal which threatened to hamper Geingob's presidential aspirations during the last election has forced the hand of the president to take a new direction when it comes to the fishing industry.

Still on the issue of fishing quotas, the president stated that the government will fast track business applications this year. "Investors and business people will be provided with Yes or No answers in the shortest period of time following their applications for business endeavours."

On the fight against poverty

and corruption

Geingob promised to intensify the fight against poverty and corruption in 2020. In relation to corruption, Geingob said that "Our commitment to transparency and the trust we place in our processes, systems and institutions, should permit us to allow accused persons implicated in acts of wrongdoing to be tried under the due process of the law."

Geingob's pronouncements on the fight against corruption could not have come at a better time in the face of the Fishrot scandal. Towards the general election last year, Wikileaks following 30,000 internal documents it obtained from

a whistleblower within Samherji, a multinational fishing company based in Iceland released the 'Fishrot Files', files detailing the under the table sale of fishing rights in Namibia by the so-called Fishrot six between 2011 and 2018. The leaked documents exposed how the Fishrot six aided Samherji to gain access to Namibia's rich fishing grounds off the African country's shores. The documents consisting of photos, presentations, spreadsheets, internal reports and emails show that Samherji paid millions of dollars to the Fishrot six as pay-offs for continued access to the country's resources. The Fishrot six did share the pay-offs with other senior Namibian officials and politicians who were privy to the dealings.

The Fishrot six as exposed by Al Jazeera are former Minister of Justice Sacky Shanghala, former Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources Bernhard Esau, Esau's son-in-law Tamson Hatuikulipi, his cousin James Hatuikulipi, and businessmen Pius Mwatelulo and Ricardo Gustavo.

In relation to poverty, Geingob said that 2019 was a challenging year for Namibia as the economy was depressed, with low commodity



Celebrating a new fishing vessel. There expectations for additional fishing quotas.

prices. This was compounded by one of the worst droughts the country has ever faced which had adverse consequences on crop and livestock production. The president said he is praying for better rains this season so that the country can feed itself.

“We were forced to declare a state of Drought Emergency, increasing pressure on our national budget. We pray to the Almighty that in the coming days and months, we will receive much needed rain, to revitalize our lands and bring much needed nourishment to our people and animals.”

On gender based violence

Namibia over the years has taken considerable strides to eradicate gender based violence. However, the problem still exists as according to ONE.org one in three women in long-term relationships report physical or sexual violence at some point in their lives, at the hands of their partner. Ending his speech, the president called for the eradication of gender based violence saying “We (the whole nation) should take the collective decision to create a Namibian society, which is tolerant to women and children. A society, in which they feel loved, respected and protected.” —

Cameroon: Elections will go on – President Biya says in end of Year Address

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

Cameroon heads to the polls come February 9, 2020, for the Municipal and Legislative elections. Elections which have already been boycotted by the MRC Party of Maurice Kamto, CPP of Edith Kah Walla, and there is a growing call for the main opposition party in Cameroon, the Social Democratic Party of Ni John Fru Ndi to follow suit in boycotting the elections.

The security issue will be the top agenda this year as was the case in 2019 and 2018 (as Cameroon witnessed the Presidential election). Cameroon heads to the polls for the Municipal and Legislative election, an election that Separatist fighters have called on politicians to boycott in the Anglophone regions.

The SDF party has shown no sign of boycotting the elections. The First V.P of the Party Hon. Joshua Osih in an interview with PAV said, “We are still monitoring the situation in the North West Region and South West Regions. We are evaluating it if elections can take place”

“... We (SDF Party) cannot send people to go and be killed. Recently our Mayor of Bafut and our MP of Bafut got their houses burnt. We never send anybody to take up weapon or



A man in his own world. President Biya has vowed to hold elections despite security chaos in the English speaking North West and South West Regions of the country.

arms. They (Separatist fighters) tried to take up the SDF's case since 1990, and they tried to take a shorty road to it and take up weapons. We did not encourage them to take up weapons and neither did we empower them to do what they are doing, and now instead of burning down Mr Biya's things they are burning down schools, hospitals and the SDF's property.”

Speaking during the End of Year address, President Biya said he had

taken several measures allowing armed groups and fighters to lay down their weapons, but said the fighters, who are mostly youths, have been brainwashed by Cameroonians in the diaspora.

Biya said his military will henceforth show no mercy for those who continue to refuse to surrender and be forgiven. «We will have no other choice than to combat them to protect all our fellow citizens,»

he said. «Our Defense and Security Forces will, once again, perform their duty with restraint, but without weakness. I wish to reassure them of my full support and high esteem.»

Biya accused Cameroonians in the diaspora of funding violence back at home by continuing to buy weapons and said they should, out of patriotism, refrain from destroying their country.

The comments drew immediate

criticism from opposition leaders. John Fru Ndi, leader of Cameroon's opposition Social Democratic Front party, said he was scandalized that Biya did not announce measures to stop the separatist crisis that is in its fourth year.

He said after the Major National Dialogue Biya held in October last year, Cameroonians expected him to free separatist leader Ayuk Tabe Julius and his collaborators to allow peace to return.

«I expected that in a speech like this he would say Anglophone activists, I pardon you. Now with this olive branch that I have extended, can all those in the bushes {fighters} come out let us talk,» he said. «But Mr Biya said if you want peace, be prepared for war. I saw in him then that he was somebody who wanted to fight under all costs before his term comes to an end.»

“As usual, I did not hear what I hoped for from Paul Biya. He said what he had to say from his point of view and that of his party, but the Cameroonians and myself included, we did not hear what we hoped for.”

For him, this war will continue to weigh on the country's economy. “The crisis in the North West and South West regions has killed the Cameroonian economy. When the President says he is satisfied with economic growth, I wonder what he is talking about. Since in Yaoundé and Douala, the economy is not performing normally,” said this former activist of the RDPC, the presidential party.

“Mr Biya did not mention the security aspect. However, people are victims of terror in the North-West and South-West regions. My family and I were victims, several SDF activists such as the Honorable Mbah



Elite Rapid Intervention Battalion members patrol the abandoned village of Elona near Buea in the anglophone southwest region, Cameroon on October 4, 2018 -Reuters .Zohra Bensemra.

Ndam and the mayor of Kumbo saw their residences burnt down,” Fru Ndi noted.

Maurice Kamto, leader of the opposition Cameroon Renaissance Movement (MRC), said Biya is deceiving himself and the world that he is resolving the separatist crisis. He said the president should convene what he called a sincere dialogue.

“The broad inclusive national dialogue must deal with among other issues, including particularly the reform of the electoral system, the guarantee of fundamental human rights and public freedoms and the guarantee of the independence of justice,” he said.

«At the level of the CPP (Cameroon People's Party) we no longer comment Mr Biya because he has never in any of his speeches responded to the needs of Cameroonians nor provided

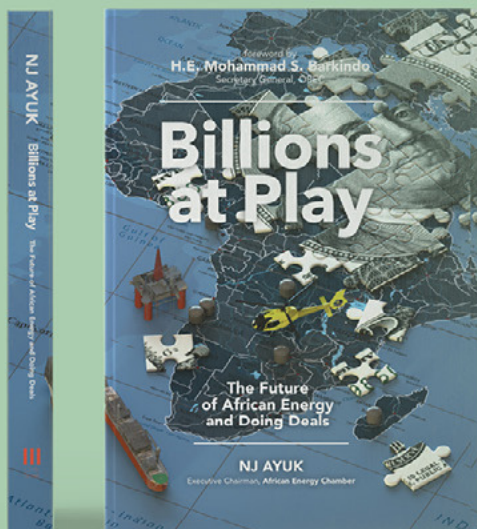
a way forward for the country” Edith Kah Walla noted.

«He, however, hurt the Anglophone population by referring to violence rather than a clear way forward from the crisis and even worse for the population of the three Northern Regions which continue to be under attack from Boko Haram, and from armed groups from CAR. It is like he is not aware that those people are also undergoing a crisis. For us nothing new and nothing to comment, and it confirms our position that the Biya regime has to go.”

Violence erupted in the two regions in 2017 when teachers and lawyers protested alleged discrimination at the hands of Cameroon's French-speaking majority. The crisis has killed at least 3,000 people and displaced over 500,000, according to the United Nations.



Anglophone crisis in Cameroon has led to thousands of displaced persons.



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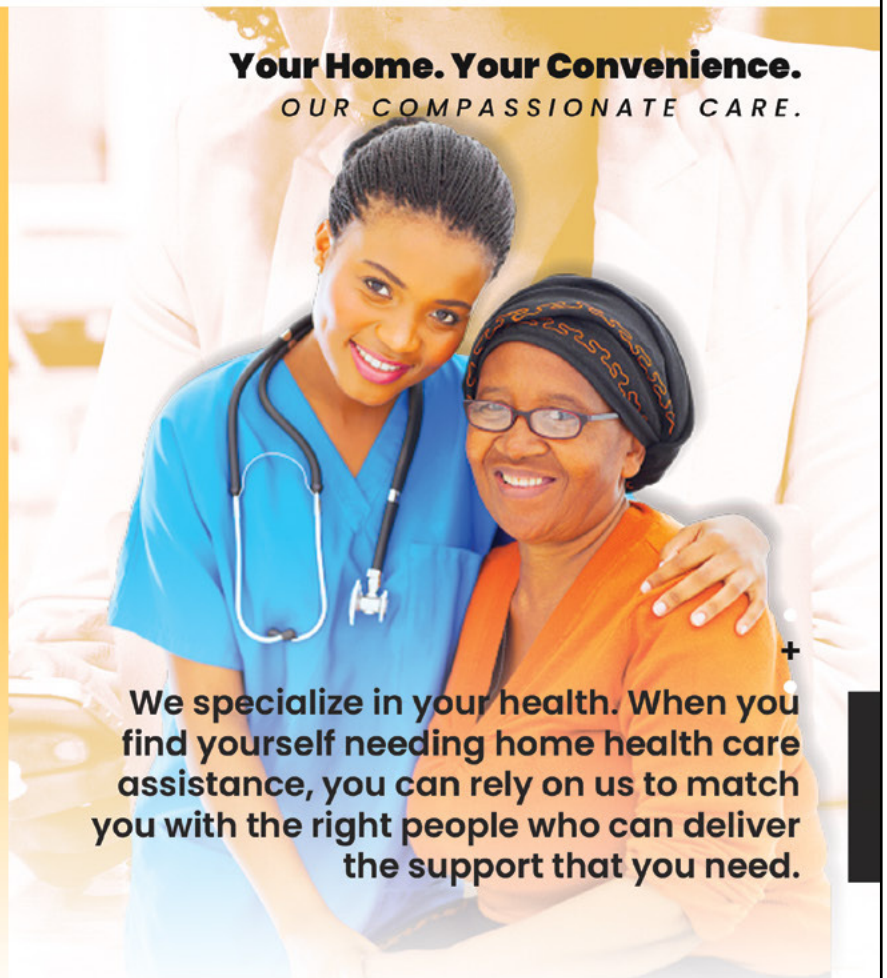


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2020: Kagame envisions cooperation with neighbors as Museveni want tensions to end

By Maniraghu Ferdinand

President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame envisions peace and cooperation with neighbors in 2020, as President of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni want tensions that marked 2019 between both countries, to end.

In his end of year message to the nation, President Kagame started by promising his citizens that 2020 will be better than 2019.

He however urged Rwandans to work hard by pursuing their goals, in order to achieve their dreams.

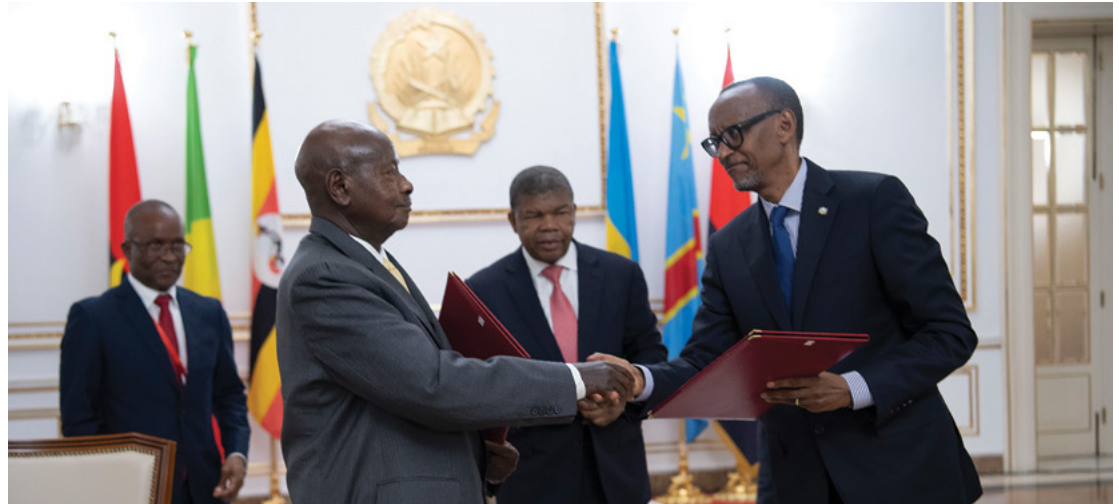
"In General 2019, was a very good year for us, and if we continue doing the right thing as everyone did in the year we are just ending, 2020 will be even better than 2019," he said

In his message, Kagame didn't say much on diplomatic relations, however he said his country will continue to cooperate with neighboring countries as well as those from afar.

2019 was marked by strained relations between Rwanda and Uganda which prompted government to advise its people not to cross to Uganda for their safety.

Rwanda accuses Uganda of inhumane treatment of its citizens, supporting rebel group that want to destabilize Kigali among other things. Uganda denies those allegations.

Strained relations hurt economy as movement of people between both countries reduced significantly and also had a huge impact on other countries economy as Kampala Kigali route was the easiest way for goods



President Museveni of Uganda wants tensions with Rwanda to end, while Kagame wants cooperation with neighbors to blossom.

coming from or going to Mombasa port in Kenya.

Kagame promised his people that 2020 will be characterized by good cooperation with neighbors.

"What I wish for Rwandans in this new year 2020, is to continue to achieve the goals we have set for ourselves, be it in agriculture and farming, in education, in trade and cooperation with neighbouring countries and those from across the globe", he said

Apart from Uganda, Rwanda is not better with Burundi as Bujumbura alleges Rwanda to launch attacks that aims at overthrowing President Pierre Nkurunziza's government. Rwanda denies wrongdoing.

In his message, Kagame commended security organs 'work in collaboration with the people.

"For our education to keep improving, for our health sector to improve; the security that we all work for together, whether it is citizens on whom it is founded or our security institutions, it is clear that everyone is playing their role and progress is being made as a result of our collaboration," he said.

Museveni hopes tensions with Rwanda will end

On the eve of New Year, President of Uganda Yoweri Museveni took to Twitter to announce that soon Rwanda and Uganda feuds will be over.

He based this on 'fruitful discussions' that his special envoy, ambassador Adonia Ayebare had had with President Kagame.

Kagame received Ayebare by the end of December, trying to look for

solutions that will end hostilities.

Museveni promised the easing of tensions soon.

"Ambassador Ayebare was well received by Paul Kagame and they had very fruitful discussions. Soon, the two sides will be taking decisive actions to end the tension. Uganda, I can guarantee, will do its share of the normalization of the relations between our two countries."

It is still unknown what came from Kagame and Ayebare's discussions, but analysts say nothing new can be expected until it ends.

This is because last August both presidents signed memorandum of understanding to end hostilities, but it is not yet in implementation.



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Mnangagwa's New Year's Eve message Full of Promises but Zero Solutions

By Prince Kurupati

On New Year's Eve, Zimbabwean President delivered his speech spelling out the government's agenda for 2020. In his speech which was broadcasted live on the state run ZBC TV, Mnangagwa as has become the norm with most of his speeches promised to transform the fortunes of the country but failed once again to give indications of how he plans to do so.

Coming into the New Year, Mnangagwa said "2020 will be the year of higher productivity, economic growth, job creation and satisfying the needs of the people. We cannot live in the past we can only learn from it. We must craft a future benefiting from the wisdom of the past."

The President's pronouncements while encouraging hardly inspire confidence for the country's people. This is because since he assumed power after the resignation of Robert Mugabe, Mnangagwa's speeches have all been full of promises; promises which fulfilled would have transformed the country's fortunes by now. However, what the past couple of years have taught us is that Mnangagwa is good when it comes to delivering promises but when it comes to fulfilling them, he falters.

Mnangagwa promised higher productivity. Looking to productivity levels in the country, it's obvious that there is need to increase productivity as most industries are operating at only a quarter of their capacity. Some have closed shop with others following. The decline in productivity can be felt in every industry from agriculture, mining, tourism to other secondary and service industries. Overall, the mere fact that Zimbabwe is a net importer does demonstrate the poor productivity levels in the country.

As such, there was need for Mnangagwa not just to regurgitate what he has promised before, this time around, there was a need for



A smile of optimism from President Mnangagwa despite the myriad of challenges he is facing.

him to tell the nation the plans and actions that his government will take in order to increase productivity across all industries. While different industries face different challenges, there are some challenges which are omnipresent in every industry and these include inadequate electricity supplies, liquidity and foreign currency shortages. If anything, the president was supposed to outline the steps that his government is going to take as it moves into the New Year.

Many industries have been forced to reduce productivity owing to erratic power supplies. ZESA, the state run company responsible for generating and supplying electricity in the country has been facing numerous power generation challenges. At Hwange thermal station, it's reported that equipment over there is now obsolete hence resulting in breakdowns every now and then. At Kariba hydro power station, the company has been failing to produce the desired electricity owing to low water levels in the Kariba dam. With the two main power generation stations facing critical challenges, the only option left is for ZESA to import electricity so as to cover the deficit. However, on that front, ZESA has also failed as it does not have the

requisite foreign currency to purchase electricity which ensures consistent power supply to the whole country. These challenges have resulted in many parts of the country going for 18 hours a day without electricity; something which highly affects industries.

Unemployment levels in the country continue to rise to unprecedented levels. The president was right to acknowledge that there is a challenge when it comes to the employment front and he was right to promise to take action. However, what was required of him was to outline the steps that his government was going to take to tackle the unemployment crisis. Already, there are hundreds of thousands of young people who are unemployed. Schools, colleges and universities continue to release thousands more every year. What is therefore needed by these people are not promises but actions by the government meant at tackling the problem. Mnangagwa failed to outline those actions.

In the speech, Mnangagwa talked about satisfying the needs of the people. Promising to satisfy the people's needs is quite a shallow and vague promise as it does not inform the people themselves how the

president wants to satisfy their needs. Different people have different needs and by stating vaguely that he is going to satisfy people's needs without outlining the how part, it therefore becomes difficult to know how he is going to do so and even, to know the 'people' that he so wishes to impact on.

The president also took time to reflect on the bond note (Zimbabwe's local currency). The president insisted that the bond note is going to continue operating as a mono-currency. This despite the fact that the bond note has created market instability and has been eroding at a fast rate which many economists believe if not controlled, could lead to hyper inflation such as the one experienced in 2008 when inflation figures reached a billion. While having a local currency is a good thing, there is a need by the central bank to put in place measures which make the currency a currency of choice for the people. Once the currency is viewed as a currency of choice by the people rather than an 'imposition' as is the case now, the currency can inspire confidence in the market something which will have spillover effects to every other economic sphere.

The worsening economic and social

conditions experienced in the country over the past year led the Mnangagwa regime to introduce subsidies as a cushion to protect the vulnerable groups in both urban and rural areas. Basic commodities such as maize meal, services such as healthcare and the transport sector have all received subsidies. The subsidies have been a relief to many people but they do come at a cost to the government. Millions of taxpayer money is channeled towards subsidies every month. By emptying its coffers paying for subsidies, the national treasury is left with no funds for developmental projects. What this therefore means is that the cycle will just continue with the government taxing the people and using the tax to pay for subsidies.



Former South African President Thabo Mbeki has been trying to mediate in the devastating political feud between President Mnangagwa and Opposition Leader Nelson Chamisa.

As the head of the state and the government, its Mnangagwa's task to break this cycle but it seems he is failing to do that as he has shown no intention of removing subsidies or at the very least leaving significant funds that can be used for developmental

projects.

In as much as Mnangagwa's New Year's eve speech left a lot to be desired, he ought to be thanked for encouraging communities to unite and work together for the common good. "The onus is now on the

various communities to accelerate the formulation and implementation of high impact projects which transform lives of our people...We must all ensure that our ongoing development drive leaves no one behind...Let us all play a part."

The president also took time to shun violence. He spoke in reference to the violence witnessed in January 2019 when state troops and protesters from the main opposition clashed leading to loss of life and property. "Let us declare that never again shall we lose the precious lives of our fellow countrymen, women and children, for the political or monetary expediency of a few. The prosperity we so desire will be achieved only if we keep moving in unity and with purpose."

Zambian President, Edgar Chagwa Lungu reflects on "troubling" 2019, sets ambitious development agenda for 2020

By Amos Fofung

“As we bid farewell to 2019 and eagerly await the dawn of 2020, let us thank the almighty God for his abundant grace which has brought us this far in peace and stability.”

Those were the opening words of President Edgar Lungu as he delivered his end of year address to the Zambian people who have had rough experiences last year and are eager for a better situation.

Taking stock of the past year, President Edgar Lungu urged his countrymen that it was time good enough to plan and face their future saying, “the year 2019 has been a challenging year. Difficult for the country. Difficult for our families, difficult for business and difficult for social services.”

“To begin with, the extreme weather conditions which affected the sub-region did not spare our country, agricultural production suffered, resulting in food deficit in most parts of our country, particularly at the household level. even the Victoria falls, one of the natural wonders of the world, which usually has abundant water, virtually dried up, thereby diminishing the unique attractiveness of our flagship tourism product.”

“Also adversely affected was our



Zambians should be grateful to God for the peace and security in the country in the face of challenging times says President Edgar Lungu.

hydro-power generation. the low water levels in our reservoirs at lake kariba and itezhi tezhi dam triggered the most severe load shedding ever experienced in the history of our country. the effect of the power deficit was low production in most sectors of our economy such as mining and manufacturing.”

Enumerating the devastating effects on the economy President Lungu who's confident of a better 2020 thanks to strategies his administration has put in place.

From stepping up supply of relief food items and material to sourcing out of Zambia for electricity to

fuel local companies, he remained optimistic that the intervention will bring some relief to businesses and our families.

This year, the administration also announced a waiver on duty on the importation of power

generators and solar equipment, removing duty on the importation of gas stoves, other gas cookers, and gas boilers and perhaps most importantly, ensure a steady supply of electricity.

To achieve this, he hopes the new 750 megawatts kafue gorge lower hydropower station expected to go operational this year will in no doubt

significantly ease the power deficit in the country.

He enjoined Zambians to maintain peace and stability saying “we were able to pursue a sustainable development agenda because of peace...let us not take this peace for granted, it is through peace and development that we continued to enhance the welfare of our people.

He did cite progress made to ensure access to health, education as well as water and sanitation services to a greater part of the population including strides in connecting the country through an improved road network, telecommunication, and digital television services.

“Most of our people in rural areas now have access to electricity through the rural electrification program ...it is the duty of each and every Zambian to take good care of all the public infrastructure in order to derive maximum benefit from our investment.”

Calling on the population to each plant a tree during the rainy season so as to better fight climate change the president on behalf of his administration promise to work hand-in-hand so as to deliver on expectations.

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Optimism: President Bio assures Sierra Leoneans of Growth in new year speech

By Uzman Unis Bah

Freetown, Sierra Leone – President Bio in his New Year's speech talked about the achievements of his government, with infused words of hope, giving a reflective view of the elapsing year.

Cruising to its end, 2019 was a challenging year for the government. "As we look back into 2019, we were shackled with high domestic and foreign debt repayments, unfavorable mining lease agreements, low domestic productivity, high youth unemployment, high inflation and currency depreciation..." President Bio affirmed.

In 2019, the government launched the medium term national development plan; increased national revenue mobilization by rationalization and automating revenue collection and deposit procedures; clarified and reduced the tax and duty on businesses; made it easier to form and run a business in a bid to encourage private enterprises, Bio said.

"As we look forward into 2020, our Country is at peace with falling crime rates, lower prison populations and no security threat. At Bintumani 3, Sierra Leoneans suggested ways to further lower tensions and establish a permanent infrastructure for peace"... the President said.

In bolstering freedom of speech



Sierra Leone's President, Julius Maada Bio

and supporting the fourth estate, the president stated, "We have moved to repeal criminal libel laws that successive governments had used to suppress free speech. We continue to open up civic spaces and we encourage our citizens to speak up and make our democracy stronger and better."

"The fisheries, tourism, and agricultural sectors are set for significant foreign private sector investments in the near future. We are focused on rice-sufficiency, cash crop production and agricultural value-chain addition," Bio said.

The government adopted a policy of free education, making the country

one of the few in the world that enjoys free education. "As we go into 2020, more than two million children, especially girls, have access to free quality education, free teaching and learning materials, expanded healthcare services, school buses and free school feeding in some areas. We have intensified our national campaign against early child marriage, introduced robust enforcement and tougher sentencing guidelines for sexual and gender-based violence." The President said.

Bio said the government is investing heavily in STEM education, especially for girls and through the Directorate of Science. According to the president, government is harnessing the power of data and technology to support governance, commerce, healthcare, education, and farming. The government recently launched the first drone corridor in West Africa and the first block-chain-based national digital identity platform that will improve financial inclusion among

other benefits.

"Soon, we will convene a national forum on the future of education. We do so mindful of our national development priorities and goals and knowing that for our children to lead and participate in the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the global economy, they must be equipped with a 21st century education" the president disclosed.

"In 2020, we will turn sod for the construction of an ultramodern diagnostic health Centre using funds recovered from corrupt officials as seed money. Our public sanitation and waste disposal investments have yielded public health benefits." The President said.

"We enter 2020 with a renewed commitment to fighting climate change while improving clean energy access in off-grid rural areas and tackling energy poverty through the nearly-complete regional grid and other new initiatives." The president said.

"We enter 2020 with extensive judicial reforms that have led to more access to justice. Our social protection programmes continue to support vulnerable families and we have launched a \$50 million urban-mobility project." The President states.



Sierra Leone is at peace says President Bio.

We Will Continue To Build Bridges Of Brotherhood Among Our People-Uhuru Kenyatta

By Samuel Ouma |@journalist_27



We will continue to make Kenya a better nation for all her people says President Kenyatta.

Kenyans have put behind them the year 2019 with its problems and are expecting positive changes ahead few days after we waved goodbye to the end of the second decade of 21st Century.

The year 2019 was one of the difficult years in the history of Kenya especially economy wise. High cost of living and unemployment were the challenges faced by the majority according to the end year poll conducted by Trends and Insight Africa (TIFA) Research. Many were forced to dig deep into their pockets to meet the soaring prices of basic commodities like maize floor, sugar, among others.

"The high cost of living is ranked as the number one problem facing Kenyans in all national surveys by TIFA. These sentiments are supported by macro-economic indicators for

example the annual inflation rate rose from 3.38 per cent in September to 5.56 per cent in November 2019," reiterated one of the experts in research in the country.

Unemployment among youths still stands at 9.3 per cent according to Kenya Economic Surveys 2019. Graduates are unlikely to get employed after school due to low rate of job creation by the government and private companies. Last year the situation worsened after many companies laid off workers citing low economic growth which was 5.7 from 5.8 per cent in 2019.

Addressing the nation on New Year eve, Kenyan president Uhuru Kenyatta consoled with those who went through difficult moments assuring them of better future. At the same time he highlighted the progress the country made during the period.

"In 2019, we experienced God's bountiful provision, as our country's profile continued to soar through the world-beating performances of our sports people; ground breaking research –findings and innovations by our scientists and Researchers and our much-improved rankings in the World Bank Ease of Doing Business Index," said President Uhuru.

Other areas he mentioned are anti-corruption fight, fight for environmental protection and renewable energy; good leadership in areas of international peace and diplomacy; being a role model in the entire Africa in offering education as well as 100 per cent transition from Primary to Secondary school. The head of the state also lauded the progress caused by devolution since 2013.

To make the country prosperous,

the president committed to steer forward Kenya's Vision 2030 goals and focus in his Four Big Agenda which include manufacturing, food security, affordable housing and Universal Health Coverage.

Uhuru promised Kenyans that his administration is working towards elimination of poverty, hunger, inequality, unemployment and poor health. In 2019 about a million of Kenyans faced starvation due to severe drought that hit many parts of the country.

He warned Kenyans and political class against propagating negativity noting that he is committed to foster unity among citizens in order to achieve one nation and one people. He urged people to put aside ethnic, cultural, social and religious differences.

"In the year 2020, we will continue to make Kenya a better nation for all her people as we build bridges of brotherhood among our peoples by weaving a stronger fabric of patriotism and nationhood. A key aspect of this quest will be anchored under the Building Bridges Initiative; a process aimed at comprehensively addressing both historical and emerging national challenges," he added.

He continued, "I will continue to foster an environment of unity, constructive political engagement, tolerance and the facilitation of participation by all Kenyans."

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South Sudan: New Year: Litmus Test for Kiir, Machar; Will it be Glee or Frustration!

By Deng Machol

Juba - As South Sudan welcomes 2020, there is growing hopes that the long-delayed unity government will this time be realized by February to ending the country's five – year conflict.

The South Sudanese want to see a new unity government by February but that would not be a blueprint for President Salva Kiir and his former foe Dr. Riek Machar, who are direct or indirect profiteers of the civil war.

Of course, President Kiir and ex-rebel Machar had been making unfilled - promises to the people and partners since they inked a peace deal, that means a person who knows them [Kiir and Machar] very well is pessimistic or skeptical on the establishment of a coalition government in February.

But that would not draw a final conclusion; may be the pairs will do opposite because of a New Year blessing or the God of Pope Francis, who knelt down and kissed their feet a year ago, would have anointed them with a spirit of truth and consistent.

Kiir and Machar signed a revitalized peace deal on September, 2018 under pressure from the United Nations, United States and countries in the region to end a civil war and agreed to form a unity government by May 12, but it was later long-drawn-out to November 12.

In November, last year, President Kiir and Dr. Machar again, brought time by delaying the government's formation for 100 days to allow for the implementation of critical security arrangements, and determine the number and boundaries of the States.

Kiir, Machar met several times since they signed a deal to smooth a deadlock but all ended in vain. But in the latest talks on December 2019 in Juba, as both leaders seek to end the bottlenecks over the number of states and security arrangements



impede the formation of coalition government, there had been a glimpse of hopes as their odium tones has changed.

Because, in a joint press conference, the two principles agreed to form the government of national unity by the end of the extended 100 days of pre transitional period regardless of the outstanding issues.

They agreed to speed-up the implementation of the security arrangements and establish humanitarian fund to assist the internally displaced persons and voluntary returning refugees.

"If there is anything that needs to be implemented we will give the responsibility to the new government, because it is the government of national unity," President Kiir told reporters after three days of talks with Machar in Juba, last year. "The second thing is that we agreed to make sure that the ceasefire continues to hold, nobody has the desire to go back to war," he added.

However, both sides blame each other for not meeting milestones

stipulated by the peace deal, especially the integration of different fighting forces, including the states matters.

On his part, Dr. Machar said, they have agreed to fast track the implementation of the security arrangements by moving the forces to the cantonment sites, training and forming a unified army.

"We have to ensure that forces are assembled in some of the cantonment sites for training. "We have to make sure that we meet the deadline of 100 days. We want to make sure that some soldiers are ready for deployment within the 100 days," said Machar.

Backing deadline

On the New Year's Eve dinner at the State House, President Kiir reaffirmed his commitment, the parties to fully meet a deadline.

He further said those given the task and responsibility should ensure that the key requirements needed for the implementation of the peace deal were in place before a D. Day, something that plant hopes on the citizens.

"I promise you peace through full

commitment to implementation of the revitalized peace agreement on the resolution of the conflict in the republic of South Sudan and change of direction in the government for the hope of all our people," said president Kiir on the New Year's Eve at the state house, attended by Machar's groups and other opposition groups.

Kiir added "let us return peace to our people and our country and let us raise a new foundation for South Sudan."

Meanwhile, the National Pre – Transitional Committee (NPTC), a body tasked with the implementation of the peace deal said was ready to meet the deadline for the formation of a unity government.

Gabriel Changson Chan, Deputy Chaired for NPTC says the security arrangements are moving successfully as the forces began to move to the training centers across the country.

"We are hopeful and confident that by the first week of February all will be in place and we will be thinking of deploying those who are already trained and because of that we say to

our people that let us be hopeful, let us pray that all what we have agreed to implement must be in place,” said Changson, quoted by Juba Monitor local newspaper in Juba.

Crawl back to peace

The number and boundaries of states remains a contentious issues and pending with the government insisting maintain the 32 states or more, while Machar’s groups has been pushing for the country to revert to the 10 states as per the 2015 peace deal.

In last year talks, the issue of the States and their boundaries was left to the deputy President of South Africa David Mabuza who is a member of C5 countries to discuss the number of states and their boundaries.

Machar however expressed hope that the South African deputy president can play a big role in bridging the deviating viewpoints of the parties.

Until now, the South African deputy president is yet to break the deadlock over the number and boundaries of states, while the elapsing 100 days is looming.

This stalemate over the number of the states has prompted analyst to doubt whether the two rivals have to overcome their mistrust of one another.

Analyst says unless the parties compromise and the unity government be formed as per deadline, but without having implemented outstanding key issues on security and the number of states, then ‘peace will remain a pipe dream in South Sudan.’

Machar’s group says the parties are still far to break a deadlock on the outstanding issues, including the number and boundaries of states, something they says it may derail a peace deal if not resolve soon.

The country’s civil society warned that the issues of the number of state should be used by the leaders as a tool for delaying a unity government; it should be addressed in the constitution making process.

“A better solution and long term solution to the number and boundaries of states should be in the



The USA has steadily upped pressure with sanctions on leading government officials including Vice President Taban Deng Gai.

constitution making process where people can have more comprehensive consultation among themselves through the country. There is no reason for us struggling to discuss on this issues,” said Akuei John, a concern South Sudanese.

Kiir, Machar are expected to meet again this month in order to compromise and break logjam on the number and boundaries, otherwise this fragile peace deal may collapse.

Hold-out groups

However, the hide-out groups are also remaining threats to the implementation of the latest peace deal, as they fight for accommodation in expected unity government.

Ex- army chief Gen. Paul Malong, the chair of National Democratic Movement and Thomas Cirilo, is heading the South Sudan National Salvation Front are the hold-out leaders who have refused to sign the revitalized peace agreement.

Gen. Cirilo has often argued that the 2018 peace deal does not address the root causes of the conflict, and that his movement is “not after positions,” in reference to the power-sharing formula adopted by the parties to govern the country for three-year of transitional period.

Gen. Paul Malong demanded participation in the negotiations of the peace talks but was denied the opportunity by the mediators. He fell

out with President Salva Kiir after being dismissed as the army Chief of Staff in 2017.

In the past, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) – broker a peace deal however rejected reopening the whole agreement for re-negotiations after its signing in September 2018.

In his Martyrs Day speech last year, President Salva Kiir reiterated his appeal to General Paul Malong and Thomas Cirilo to return home and support the peace deal, saying he does not consider the opposition leaders, including the two as enemies but the opposition leaders held their defiant positions, viewing from a distance parties to the revitalized peace deal struggle to form a unity government.

Meanwhile, the Ambassador of the United Kingdom to South Sudan, Chris Trott has called on parties to the deal to demonstrate their commitment to implementing the pact in order to encourage the agreement hold-out groups join the process.

According to him, if parties to the peace agreement implement the accord, those who have refused to join the process would be persuaded.

“The holdout groups are holding out because they made it very clear during the negotiation that they didn’t think this agreement was going to deliver peace,” Chris Trott told Eye

Radio in an interview on Tuesday, January 7. “The best way to get them to come on board is to demonstrate that this agreement is delivering peace and then as patriots of South Sudan, they will join the process.”

“So rather than just expecting them to jump on board with an agreement that they still think isn’t going to work and I suspect that the delays in the start of the transition have probably reinforced that view, the very best way is to say right, we have now started, we’ve reached an agreement on the outstanding issues, we’ve started the transition, we are working towards elections, now it is your opportunity to be part of the political future of South Sudan,” Trott added.

Sudan, which is predominantly Muslim, and the mainly Christian south fought for decades of scorched – earth civil war before South Sudan gained independence in 2011, , but less than two years, the civil war broke out in oil – producing South Sudan in late - 2013. The five-year plus conflict has killed an estimated 400,000 people, uprooted over 4 million people both internally and externally from their homes, triggered a famine and created Africa’s biggest refugee crisis since the 1994 genocide in Rwanda.

The country, world youngest nation is struggling to implement a fragile peace deal, which the international

community described as a last chance and litmus test between Kiir and Machar, whether the two principals carry about the citizens or not.

Religious leaders' message

The world's religious leaders sent out an extraordinary Christmas appeal on to the leaders of South Sudan to keep their promise to form at least a transitional unity government early this year.

The brief message was signed by Francis, worldwide Anglican leader Archbishop Justin Welby, and Rev. John Chalmers, former moderator of the Church of Scotland said they were praying for «a renewed commitment to the path of reconciliation and fraternity».

The East Africa's Country is mostly Christian, and a stable peace would allow the pope to visit, something which he has said he hopes to do this year.

The religious leaders said they wanted to show the political leaders «our spiritual closeness as you strive for a swift implementation of the Peace Agreements.»

In April, 2018, weeks before the original deadline [May 12], the religious leaders brought Kiir, Machar and other politicians to the Vatican for a retreat.

In a dramatic gesture on the last day of the retreat, Francis knelt at the feet of the previously warring leaders as he urged them not to return to a civil war that ended with a shaky peace deal in 2018.

Troika

The Troika group [United States, Britain and Norway], which backs peace efforts in South Sudan, jointly statement earlier this year, said South Sudan's leaders has a clear duty to their citizens to deliver lasting peace through forming a unity government on time.

“We welcome the recent meetings between leaders of key parties and their public commitment to form a government of national unity by the February deadline. We urge all sides to build on this, to continue dialogue, and to ensure meaningful progress,” the group said in the press statement.

Though, the permanent ceasefire is on hold, there have been reportedly clashes between the government forces and rebel groups, including Thomas Cirilo and Paul Malong's forces across the country.

It also intensified by the tribal and splinters violence that draw a fear that a fragile peace deal is at verge of collapse if the unity government is not formed soon to persuade the hold-out groups.

However, the Troika in its statement reminded all stakeholders of their obligations to maintain the ongoing Permanent Ceasefire, calling on the South Sudanese leaders to fulfill their commitment to achieving lasting and sustainable peace in the country.

The Troika also urges the signatories to the peace deal to fulfill their obligations to represent the interests of all South Sudanese, do all that is required to form an inclusive national unity government, and lay the foundations for the next steps of South Sudan's peace process and political transition.

The observers said the South Sudanese hope the ceasefire holds for another year so that the country can begin its long crawl back towards peace.

Sanctions

The United States says it will continue to impose sanctions on individual leaders of South Sudan if they do not implement the revitalized peace agreement as planned.

The U.S envoy to South Sudan says earlier targeted sanctions levied against key officials deemed to be obstructing peace will not have a negative bearing on the peace process.

Of recently, the US sanctioned the Country's Minister of Defense Kuol Manyang Juuk, and Cabinet Affairs Minister Dr. Martin Elia Lomuro respectively, adding to a list of already sanctioned senior government officials, opposition figures and individuals in the horn of Africa, it accused of have perpetuated and fomented conflict to cement the political status quo, fueling South Sudan's war economy and for what it describes as “expanding or extending

the conflict in South Sudan including by obstructing the reconciliation process or peace talks.”

Thomas Hushek, the US Ambassador to South Sudan, says the sanctions will put pressure and isolate the individuals to allow the peace process to proceed.

He explained that unilateral efforts administration to push South Sudanese warring leaders to implement the current peace deal will continue through individual and bilateral sanctions.

“I don't see us removing the sanctions we have done and we will continue to use... sanction is one of the tools we have and any government has the ability to do something like this so this is one of the tools we will continue to have in our tool box and we will use them,” said Ambassador Hushek, in a press conference on last year in Juba after returned from the Washington call back.

But Juma Deng, Juba resident criticizes the US sanctions, describe it as an unproductive because are not practical, so, we don't expect lasting peace on this impractical imposed sanctions on leaders.

Hopes as fighters move to training centers

Parties to the peace deal have extended the pre – transitional period twice – in May and November last year to allow full implementation of the security arrangements – that including the cantonments, training and the unification of the necessary 83,000 forces into professional national army.

The new deadline of February 22, 2020 is fast approaching with only a month remaining yet the government and opposition forces have not been unified as required by the peace deal.

But this year, there is a hopes as the Joint Military Ceasefire Committee (JMCC) has started transport a government and opposition forces, including VIP protection forces to training centers across the country, such as Maper, Owinybul, Gorom, Rajaf among others.

Preparations to train the unified forces came a month after the national government allocated \$16.5 million

for the security arrangements or mechanisms to speed up the creation of unified forces, a key requirement of the 2018 peace deal.

A member of JMCC, Brig. General Bol Alang said the transportation of the forces to the training centers is a part of confident building amongst all the different forces and the political parties to the peace deal.

“Taking the troops to the training centers shows that we are implementing what we have signed as parties that belong to the nation. We are also showing the world that what have agreed upon is implemented. It's not again a process but it has come to an action,” said Alang.

The most of the training centers lack basic needs. The forces had been reportedly abandoning the cantonment or training areas due to shortage of food, water and medicines.

However, observers remain skeptical that the training and unification of forces will not be effective within a month, arguing it is a game delay tactics by the parties.

However, if this process once complete, will for one enhance the formation of a unity government as well as all eliminate any fears of reprise of the renewed violence which occurred in July 2016, resulted to collapse of 2015 peace deal.

More so, Kiir and Machar remain a key holder for the glee and frustration for the people of South Sudan because about 50 days out of one hundred proposed to finalize the pre-transitional period outstanding issues have wasted and there is no guarantee whether the deadline 22nd February 2020 would be meets as it was scheduled. What would happen with the remaining days is not year?

Yet, the warring parties' leaders form a unity government by February, South Sudan remains led by the very leaders who brought the country through the horrific chapter of bloodshed and power squabbles. South Sudan will take years to recover from this conflict and prevent a slide back into more fighting.

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Rwanda is ready to work with President Nkurunziza's successor

-Q &A with Rwanda's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Regional Cooperation and EAC Affairs Olivier Nduhungirehe

By Maniraguha Ferdinand

2019 was a year of hope and dilemma for Rwanda's diplomacy. The country registered a number of international summits. It held East African Community chairmanship that ends this February, but its economy was hit by strained relations with neighboring countries including Burundi and Uganda.

Pan Africa Visions sat for interview with Rwanda's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Regional Cooperation and EAC affairs to assess what has been 2019 for Rwanda's diplomacy, what can one expect from 2020.

PAV: How did you see Rwanda's diplomacy last year, what can we expect this year?

Nduhungirehe: Rwandan diplomacy went well as usual. Rwanda is expanding its relations with different countries in Africa and beyond. We opened new embassies such as in Qatar, Morocco, Ghana.

Rwanda kept on developing relations with countries in Africa. Now Rwanda chairs East Africa Community (EAC). In general since 2016 up to now Rwanda played a vital role in promoting good relations on international scene. In 2016 you remember that President Paul Kagame was asked by his counterparts to lead a team that was tasked to reform African Union. In 2018 he was elected to chair AU. The same year Rwandese Louise Mushikiwabo was elected to be secretary general of Francophonie. So it shows trust countries have in Rwanda.

Since June this year, Rwanda will host CHOGM and it will eventually chair that organization for two years. From 2016 to 2022, Rwanda has a big role in development of regional, continental and international organizations. It all comes from good leadership. So in 2020, we will keep the momentum.

PAV: Last year Rwanda was marked with strained relations



Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Regional Cooperation and EAC affairs, Olivier Nduhungirehe.

with Uganda, any hope this year?

Nduhungirehe: It's true we have a problem between Republic of Rwanda and Republic of Uganda. We have always elaborated our concerns. Firstly, they support openly armed groups that want to destabilize Rwanda, we have laid strong evidences on this. Rwandans are mistreated in Uganda. They are arrested illegally, beaten, tortured. Lastly, there is economic sabotage against Rwanda where goods from Rwanda are confiscated through Uganda.

Much has been done trying to address this problem. It began from Kinshasa in May last year during Etienne Tshisekedi's funeral, where three presidents met, namely President Felix Tshisekedi, President Laurengo (Angola) and President Paul Kagame. They issued a communique committing themselves to fighting armed groups and restoring peace in the region. During the meeting, President of Rwanda requested that President Museveni also be invited due to problems I mentioned earlier. In July the same year, President

Laurengo invited the summit where they discussed on those matters, Congo and Angola became mediators and they had to form technical teams aimed at collecting evidences on what Rwanda had been lamenting for.

The team came to Rwanda after and we gave them all evidences we had against Uganda. They later went to Uganda, that is when Angola came with a proposal to sign Luanda Memorandum of Understanding that was signed 21st August last year.

Agreement proposed an independent commission to implement it, led by foreign Ministers, Ministers of local government as well as chiefs of intelligence. The first meeting was convened on 16th September in Kigali. At the end we issued a statement where both countries committed to ending hostilities by not supporting armed forces intending to destabilize another country, to stop mistreating citizens of another country, to stop propaganda in media.

Both Luanda agreement and Kigali statement were written in general, putting both of us on the same level, but it would not have been so because

the problem is one sided. Rwanda doesn't support anti-Uganda rebel group, no Ugandans are arrested or tortured here, there is no economic sabotage on the side of Rwanda.

PAV: But they accuse Rwanda of sending spies on Ugandan soil?

Nduhungirehe: They say that but they never give evidences or written notice. You arrest children, old people, illiterates and common people who are going to market, you beat them [...] how can such person become a spy? That is a ridiculous scapegoat.

PAV: Did you raise your frustrations during discussions?

Nduhungirehe: In December last year in Kampala, we had a seven hour long discussion. We raised our problems. The problem that we had before Luanda agreement, instead of changing for good, they kept on going worse.

We gave them a lot of examples of Rwandans who are still languishing in Uganda, arrested and tortured.

We showed how Rwanda National Congress rebel group is still roaming freely in Uganda. We gave example of attacks, especially an attack that occurred during the night of 3rd to 4th October last year in Kinigi (Northern Rwanda). It was carried out by RUD Ururuna rebel group and evidences collected from the scene show that the master minder of the attack is Philemon Mateke, Uganda's secretary of state in charge of regional cooperation. So you understand when a Minister within Uganda government coordinates an attack?

During a meeting in December, we didn't come to the agreement. We chose to put the matter in the hands both heads of states. On 31st December you have seen president's Museveni tweets, promising to do what it takes to resolve problems soon. It is a good initiative but we will judge it from implementation.

PAV: Does it mean that the advisory notice requesting Rwandans not to go to Uganda is still relevant?

Nduhungirehe: Yes of course! Travel advisory notice had a cause. We had been engaging Uganda for over a year so that they resolve this matter, we had written them verbal notes but with no actions taken. Since the motive of travel advisory notice is not solved, we are not withdrawing it.

PAV: In 2018, Rwanda was at the helm of EAC, but we saw



The grievances that Rwanda has against Uganda are far from resolve despite the handshake between leaders of both countries after signing accords.

EAC projects slowing, was it from bad relations among member states?

Nduhungirehe: No. For example, normally EAC heads of states summit meets once a year. President of Rwanda had invited but one head of state requested the summit to be postponed. I have seen people saying that such head of state is from Uganda or Burundi, but none of them. It was a matter of calendar. We intend to resume the summit in February but other summits occurred smoothly.

It is true community has problems but they are not coming from Rwanda's chairmanship. Not at all.

PAV: Some analysts say that due to the conflicts among member states, EAC is seen as dying?

Nduhungirehe: No, I don't think

so. EAC is one of Africa developed regional blocks. We still have high economic growth which is above 6 percent on average, we have a long term integration agenda. We have agreed on to have single customs and common market. The remaining terms are creating one currency and political harmonization. That shows that EAC has a strong vision. However, It is clear that we have slowed down these past years due to issues like non tariff barriers, economic sabotage among member states and political issues that hinder desired integration. We want to keep on tackling those issues to keep moving forward.

PAV: Burundi has recently accused Rwanda of being behind attacks that were carried out on Burundian soil,

what do say about it?

Nduhungirehe: It's not surprising. Since 2014 Burundians accuse us of everything. They have their internal political problems which they have to solve, but they have planted in their minds that Rwanda is the only problem they have.

Having accused us of the attacks, nothing surprising. Burundi support armed forces against Rwanda. You remember attacks carried out on Rwanda in the Nyungwe park last year (south), they were coming from Burundi, Burundians knew that information, and we know.

That is the real problem but they know to act victims when they are the ones supporting those who want to destabilize our security. We want Burundians to solve problems among themselves then we will resume relations.

PAV: President Nkurunziza announced that he will not run for another term in general elections slated for 2020, are you ready to work with his successor?

Nduhungirehe: Burundians are ones to choose their leaders, but whoever will be elected, we are ready to work with him so as to solve problems, and our countries to be friends again. We are so open to resume relations as long as officials from Burundi are willing to.

PAV: Thank you for giving us this noble time.

Nduhungirehe: Thank you.



Commonwealth Secretary General Patricia Scotland and President Paul Kagame . Rwanda will host the Commonwealth Summit later in the year. Photo Credit Commonwealth Secretariat.

African diaspora state strengthens ties of peace and development between Colombia and the Republic of Ghana

By María Teresa Valencia Rodríguez*



CELEBRATING A PILLAR OF PEACE

HIS MAJESTY
OTUMFUO OSEI TUTU II
ASANTEHENE



Culminating with positive expectations in 2019 and as part of the cooperation efforts between Africa and its diaspora, Dr. Melida Harris Barrow, Vice Prime Minister of the State of the African Diaspora, was invited to the Republic of Ghana as Guest Speaker in the “Pillar of Peace” Award, a distinction awarded to His Majesty Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, Asantehene (King of the Ashanti people), on the last Akuasidae Festival of the year.

This important event took place on December 29th at Manhyia Palace, located in Kumasi, 250 kilometers north of Accra, capital of Ghana. It closes the chapter on the 20th Anniversary Celebrations of the enstoolment of His Majesty on the Golden Stool, in recognition of his management as head and traditional leader of the Ashanti, one of the main kingdoms of the monarchical system of Ghana.

The will of His Majesty Otumfuo to govern with peace, honesty and firmness, assuming as an example

the attitude of King Solomon, are some of the qualities that fit with the mission of Dr. Harris Barrow to serve as a brotherhood liaison between nations, in this case, afro-descendant Colombia and the African Republic of Ghana.

The Diaspora State: an institution for Afro progress

Strengthening the integral development of the African diaspora in the Americas and the Caribbean, has been a challenge that today becomes a reality through the persevering work of Dr. Harris Barrow, discussing and finalizing economic investment and progress agreements with allied countries in various areas.

Within the philosophy of people's diplomacy, Ghana is one of the countries that has the willingness to collaborate with the sisters and brothers of the African diaspora in Colombia.

Apart from the gentle invitation of His Majesty Otumfuo for the

reception of the “Pillar of Peace” Award, the president of Ghana, Nana Akufo-Addo and his ministerial team, have received Dr. Harris and the institution she represents, expressing his interest in joining forces to help Colombia consolidate access to better living standards for its Afro-descendant diaspora.

In her opening speech at the “Pillar of Peace” Award, Dr. Harris emphasized the need for union and cooperation through trade between the countries of the African continent and those that are part of the African diaspora. The communities expect commercial and business opportunities, which constitute the most direct and effective way to make progress and overcome the poverty that these populations have been dragging for over 400 years.

Dr. Harris called for the mobilization and motivation of countries like Ghana to «be strong, know that you have your brothers and sisters ... we are waiting for you, don't make us wait too long».

The State of the African Diaspora was instituted on October 24th, 2019 as a mechanism of intergovernmental alliance and cooperation between the countries of Africa and its diaspora, worldwide. As part of the Economic Community of the 6th Region, the institution intends to participate actively in the Continental Free Trade Area of Africa.

The Afro-Colombian diaspora in the focus of development

To make these dreams of social justice come true, during her stay in Colombia at the beginning of December 2019, Dr. Harris Barrow advanced focused on strengthening the contact she has been making during the last two years, with Afro-Colombian communities located in the cities of Buenaventura and Cali (Valle del Cauca), in order to update the diagnosis of their needs, challenges and potentials.

Harris and his team have made progress with regional institutions in Valle del Cauca, Buenaventura

and Cali, as well as with social organizations and local leaders, including Mr. Gerson Perea Castillo of the Fundación Raíces Afrolatinas y del Caribe, to present proposals that contribute to the empowerment in their enterprises and socio-productive development projects.

Based on this, Dr. Harris held a fruitful meeting in Bogotá with Senator Aida Avella Esquivel, from Colombia Humana UP, who expressed her intention to support the reparation of the social debt with the Afro-Colombian diaspora. She also met with the representative to the Chamber for Chocó, Astrid Sánchez and the leader of the Comité Cívico del Chocó, Mr. Freddy Lloreda Palacios.

These meetings were made possible thanks to the link of Mr. Lucas Gil Ibarguen of the Comité Afro contra la Discriminación y la Xenofobia and the Proyecto Cultural Sur PCSur, already present in 60 countries.

By the beginning of 2020, Dr. Harris Barrow plans to travel back to Colombia to the city of Medellín (Antioquia), where she has been invited by Mr. Gil Ibarguen to make available her motivating capacity in the socioeconomic progress of the communities displaced, a significant portion of the Afro-descendant population from the Colombian Pacific.

Likewise, she will move to the city of Cartagena, cradle of another important part of the African diaspora, inheritance of the Palenquero Maroons, pioneers in the achievement of Afro emancipation in Colombia.

On the other hand, Mr. Lucas Gil Ibarguen is working on a plan of meetings between Dr. Harris



Barrow and high authorities of Quibdó (Chocó), universities and organizations of that locality, in addition to mobilizing links with municipal institutions of Quibdó, Buenaventura and Medellín, with whom it is hoped to consolidate the solidarity cooperation agreements offered by the Republic of Ghana to collaborate with the Afro diaspora in Colombia.

The political, social and economic context of Colombia is full of complexities. Despite occupying territories with great natural wealth, the most impoverished population in economic terms is the Afro-descendant, which historically has had the most disadvantages in terms of access to opportunities for improvement of all kinds in their quality of life.

In addition to this, the consequences of the armed conflict have deepened social inequalities in the country, forcing the Afro-Colombian diaspora to go through an arduous

and prolonged struggle for the reconstruction of entire populations, for their territories, for cultural and environmental preservation.

Ghana and Colombia transform leadership

The case of Ghana, no less complex than that of Colombia, has the leadership of figures such as Otumfuo, who has been working to guarantee his nation's democracy in an environment against violence, impunity and injustice. His Majesty Otumfuo has reached spaces like the UN, carrying the message of the culture of peace, the security of the people and the strengthening of traditional leadership.

President of Ghana, Nana Akufo-Addo has described Otumfuo as «a pillar of peace and development for Ghana», for the education, the fight against HIV and AIDS, the re-energization of tribal ethnic leadership, the restoration of peace in the kingdom of Dagbon in

northern Ghana, among many other achievements.

The theme of this great event is «Acknowledging and Celebrating Legendary and Transformational Leadership on the African Continent and Beyond». The invitation of the Vice Prime Minister of the State of the African Diaspora, Dr. Melida Harris Barrow to Ghana, in her words, is the result of «the action of God Himself» to unite nations for the same cause: the search for positive changes between countries of Africa and the African diaspora, the achievement of peace and opportunities in equality and justice for the full enjoyment of human rights.

Thanks to the Ashanti people of Ghana, for their trust and solidarity.

Ghana and Colombia, ibrotherhood between nations!

****María Teresa Valencia Rodríguez** is an Anthropologist / Reporter in Bogotá,



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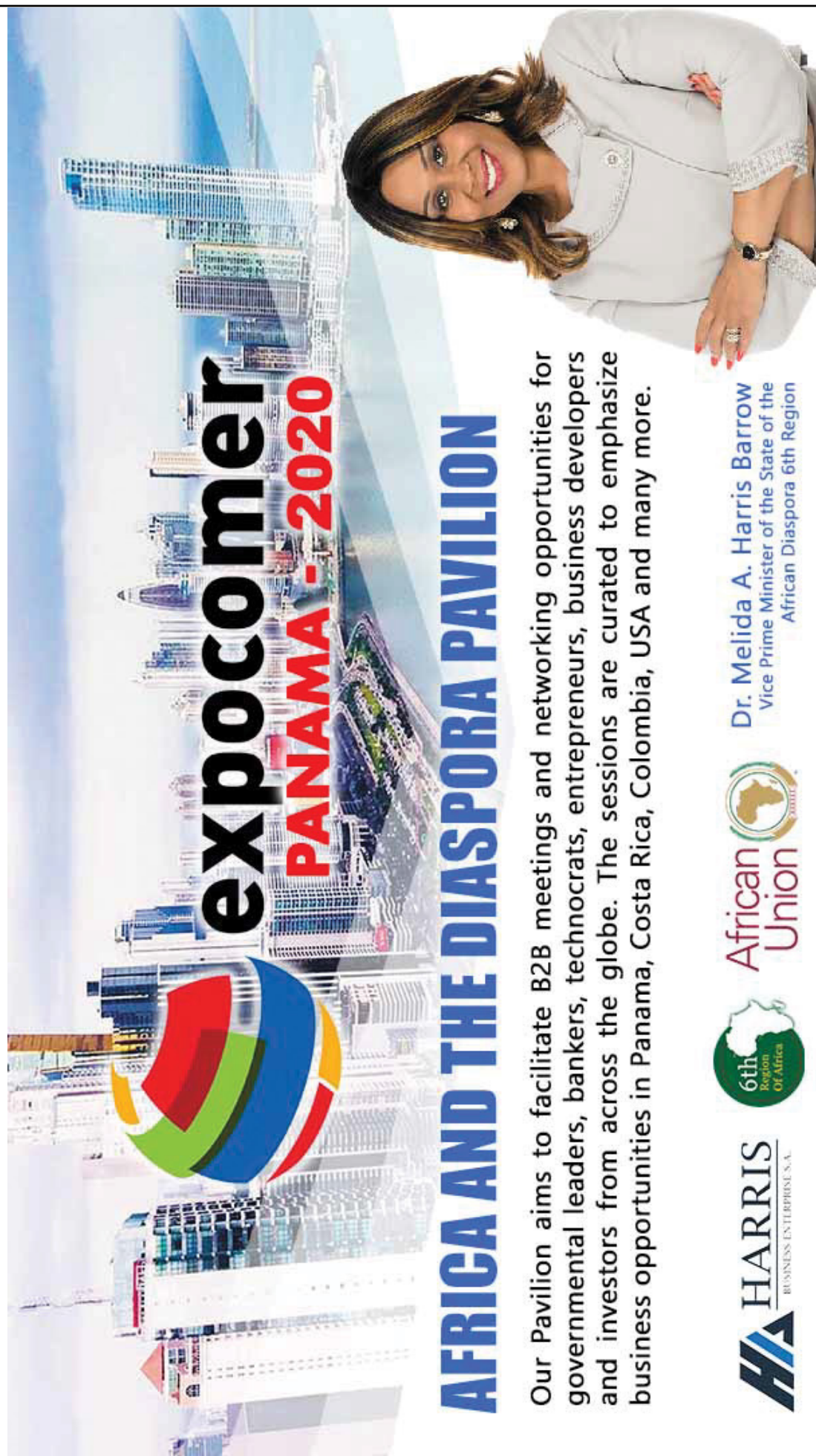
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Dr. Melida A. Harris Barrow
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Of victors and vanquished: Biafra, 50 years after

By Chido Onumah*

January 15 marks the 50th anniversary of the end of the Nigerian Civil War and the official end of the short-lived Republic of Biafra. It is unlikely there will be any national event to mark the occasion other than the annual Remembrance Day ritual which has become nothing but a cash cow for those involved in organizing the ceremony. But the civil war was not only a defining moment for Nigeria, it has continued to

define the country. As Prof. Yakubu Ochefu notes in the introduction to the 2013 book, *Nigeria is Negotiable*, "The corporate existence of the country has been tested twice. It was formally broken once (1967-70) and pronounced broken once (April 1990). It took a horrible civil war to restore the entity when it was broken and an equally brutal attempted coup when it was pronounced."

Fifty years after the end of the civil war, what lessons have we learnt as a nation? It appears not much. At the end of the war in January 1970, when the remnants of the Biafra high command signed the article of surrender, the victors, the "Federal forces" proclaimed, "No victors, No vanquished." Unfortunately, 50 years after, it has become evident that the cheque of "No victors, No vanquished" issued in 1970 is not cashable. The debate is still raging whether the war was necessary and if the region that became known as Biafra had a moral right to secede.

Answers vary depending on who is responding. But one thing is certain. That war was preventable if only the government of the day led by Yakubu Gowon was intent on presiding over a country built on justice and equity.



Gowon and Ojukwu were the main protagonists in the war

Here is Gowon—quoted in *The Man Died*, the prison notes of Nobel Laureate, Prof. Wole Soyinka—not only appeasing the génocidaires but proclaiming a divine right to rule—a right that has become the refrain of the relics of the born-to-rule ideologues: "Fellow Northerners, Today, I want to direct this appeal specifically to you all...You all know that since the end of July, God, in his power, has entrusted the responsibility of this great country of ours, Nigeria, to the hands of another Northerner...Since January this year, when some soldiers put our country into confusion by killing our leaders, both political and military, the country has not recovered fully from that confusion. The sadness caused in people's minds by the January event has led to troubles by civilians in the North in May, causing loss of lives. I receive complaint daily that up to now, Easterners living in the North are being killed and molested, their property looted. I am very unhappy about this. We would put a stop to these. It appears that it is going beyond reason to the point of recklessness and irresponsibility..." That was Gowon as head of state in October 1966, nine months before the civil war began in July 1967.

Fifty years after, those who still live with the victors' mentality that because a people were "defeated" in a civil war, they should perpetually stay under have remained in control of the country. Looking back, it appears the vanquished have not paid the full price—whatever that is—for daring to test the supposedly divinely ordained and non-negotiable corporate existence of the country. A little example will suffice. On Sunday, September 29, 2019, I arrived the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport wearing a T-shirt with the inscription, "We Are All Biafrans," the title of my book first published in May 2016, later updated, and republished in November 2018. I was arrested by officers of the State Security Service (SSS) and detained for more than six hours, first at their office at the airport and later at their headquarters in the Aso Drive area of Abuja. The first question I was asked at the airport was, "You are a Biafran, how come you have a Nigerian passport?" I am not aware there is a sovereign nation called Biafra and I made that known to my interrogators.

That question was not altogether surprising but coming from what is supposed to be the nation's elite

intelligence agency, it struck me that we were in a deeper mess than I had imagined. We can play the ostrich as much as we want, but the truth is that the division that precipitated and characterized the civil war looms large. We will be deluding ourselves to think for once that the civil war is over. Everywhere you turn in Nigeria, the angst, fear and loathing that were the hallmark of the civil war impose themselves. Fifty years after the end of the civil war, we have expanded

the scope of the vanquished. Our country is as divided, if not more divided, as it was at the beginning of the war in 1967.

Today, the chickens of impunity and injustice have come home to roost. Yesterday's men who supervised this tragedy in its infancy are today looking for an easy way out. In 1996, exactly three decades after he became head of state, Yakubu Gowon, with the permission of then murderous dictator, Sani Abacha, set up "Nigeria Prays" "to put an end to the various problems plaguing Nigeria." I am not averse to prayers, but we cannot pray our way out of the current mess whose origin goes back to more than five decades. In what looked like a bitter homecoming, the other retired general, the billionaire businessman, Theophilus Danjuma, who was front and centre in Ibadan in July 1966 when Nigeria's second coup took place, was in the ancient city again in December 2019. This time, in a sombre mood, he told a bewildered audience: "If I tell you what I know that is happening in Nigeria today, you will no longer sleep." This catharsis which ought to be a mea culpa came on the heels of his earlier statement describing the Nigerian

Army as an army of occupation. All I can say is, speak, general, speak! Say what you know. The country needs to reconcile its past with the present.

As part of the healing, on Monday, January 13, there will be a "Never Again" conference in Lagos to mark the 50th anniversary of the end of the civil war. Organized by Nzuko Umunna, a pan Igbo socio-cultural group comprising Igbo professionals both at home and in the Diaspora and Ndigbo Lagos in collaboration with civil society organizations, the aim of the conference is to address the "seeming lack of political will towards a robust and focused interrogation of the civil war, its causes, and hard lessons."

The January 13 conference is aptly named "Never Again." It is going to be a tall order because remembrance entails an appreciation of history, that is, where it exists. Today, there is no official history of the Nigerian Civil War, not even from the "victors." Last year,



I attended the public presentation of the book, *Elections in Nigeria: The Long Road to Democracy* by Prof Shehu AbdullahiY. Shehu. Both

retired generals, Olusegun Obasanjo, a civil war commander, and Yakubu Gowon were at the event. Obasanjo joked about how his boss, Gowon, set

up a high-powered committee at the end of the civil war in 1970 to write the history of the war. By the time Gowon was overthrown by Murtala Muhammed and his cohorts, which incidentally included Obasanjo, on July 29, 1975, not a single line had been written. The audience erupted in laughter. That is the tragedy of Nigeria!

Nigeria can still redeem itself. It has been 50 years since we proclaimed, "No Victors, No Vanquished." It is time to truly end the war; and it is not just the war against Biafra, as Soyinka noted, but that against the millions of duped and dispossessed citizens. That is the only way we can avert another war!

*Onumah is author of *We Are All Biafrans, A Participant-Observer's Interventions in a Country Sleepwalking to Disaster*.

Namibia's 'Fishrot' Scandal Rains On SWAPO's Victory Parade

By Prince Kurupati

Namibians went to the polls on 27 November to select the country's next president and members of Parliament. As has become the tradition in this Southern African nation, the incumbent from the ruling party, SWAPO which has been in power since independence won the presidential race. The ruling party also won the highest number of votes in the House of Assembly.

Despite the recent electoral victory, SWAPO was not entirely impressed with the triumph. The election saw the party lose a significant amount of support. In the 2014 election, the president managed to win the vote with 87 percent but that figure plummeted to just 56.3 percent in the 2019 election. In the parliamentary vote, SWAPO in 2014 won the election with a commanding 80 percent of the vote



but that too plummeted in the recent election as the party only managed to garner 65.5 percent of the vote.

SWAPO's poor performance in the recent election did demonstrate

one thing, that is, the party just like its revolutionary compatriots in South Africa (ANC), Mozambique (FRELIMO) and Zimbabwe (ZANU PF) faces a stern test of transformation

if it is to stay relevant. If the party fails to transform itself, then the future is bleak and the 2019 election effectively spells the beginning of the end for SWAPO.

SWAPO does it a wholesome transformation and the first port of call will be for the party to change the rather dark image that has befallen it. SWAPO's dark image has been brought about by different circumstances and events which include the Fishrot scandal, a scandal which to a larger extent contributed to SWAPO's dismal performance (comparatively) in the recent election.

The Fishrot scandal relates to the corruption case unveiled by the Al Jazeera Investigative Unit in which several figures close to Namibian President Hage Geingob were filmed discussing the laundering of political contributions.

Al Jazeera's Investigative Unit in a film titled *Anatomy of a Bribe* exposed the corruption in the fishing industry in Namibia. Part of the Al Jazeera investigation team posed as Chinese investors looking to acquire highly lucrative fishing quotas for a proposed joint venture with Omualu, a Namibian fishing company.

During the deliberations, Bernhard Esau, Namibia's now former minister of fisheries and marine resources solicited for a 'donation' of \$200 000 from the 'Chinese investors'. The solicitation was premised on the ground that the 'donation' would go towards the SWAPO campaign as the country was gearing towards a general election.

To ensure that the 'donation' reached its destination without raising eyebrows, Esau instructed Sacky Kadhila-Amoomo, Omualu's managing director to receive the donation on behalf of the party under the guise of foreign investment in a real estate. Afterwards, the donation was to find its way to the trust account of Sisa Namandje, Hage Geingob's personal lawyer. Thereafter, the funds would be channelled to SWAPO's election campaign coffers.

The deliberations between the 'Chinese investors' and the government officials including Omualu top brass also resulted in a \$500 000 bribe being solicited. During the deliberations, the 'Chinese investors' were asked to make a \$500 000 payment and give a 20 percent share of the joint-venture to Mike Nghipunya, the CEO of the state-run fishing company Fishcor. For quenching the thirst of Fishcor, the state-run fishing company would in return provide preferential access to its fishing quotas. The fishing quotas are allocated by the minister of fisheries.

The Al Jazeera Investigative Unit decided to undertake the undercover operations following the release of Johannes Stefansson's documents. Johannes Stefansson is a former employee of Samherji, an Icelandic



Bernhard Esau was axed because of the scandal.

fishing conglomerate believed to have colluded with senior business and political figures in Namibia to gain preferential access to the country's lucrative fishing grounds. Stefansson released his documents to the whistleblowing group Wiki Leaks. In the leaked documents, Al Jazeera reports that from 2012 to the present day, Samherji made payments totalling more than \$10m to Esau, as well as to companies owned by Shanghala, Esau's son in law Tamson Hatuikulipi, and to his cousin James Hatuikulipi, Chairman of Fishcor; the payments were invoiced as consultancy fees.

In the wake of the Fishrot scandal, Namibia's minister of fisheries and marine resources Bernhard Esau, the Chairman of Fiscor James Hatuikulipi, as well as the minister of justice Sacky Shanghala, resigned. The CEO of Samherji, Thorsteinn Mar Baldvinsson also stepped down pending an internal investigation by the company.

The Fishrot scandal denotes the huge scale of corruption in the Namibian public sector with top officials from the government (SWAPO) involved. In transforming the party, SWAPO does need to shed off this corrupt image otherwise,

the beginning of the end that's already in motion can exacerbate. Commendable transformation actions have been taken by the party in power with the Election Day arrests but more needs to be done. On the day of the election, Tamson Hatuikulipi, Sacky Shanghala and Bernhard Esau were arrested on corruption and fraud charges. All parties implicated in the fraud in Al Jazeera's film deny any wrongdoing.

The one main area in which the Fishrot scandal affects SWAPO pertains to the urban vote mostly the youth (fishing workers) and the working class. The heavy losses suffered by SWAPO in urban areas such as Windhoek and Walvis Bay bear testimony to this. The first direct consequence of the Fishrot scandal was the loss of employment in the fishing industry. Those who lost their jobs were mostly the youth, a large number of whom hail from urban centres. In the context of economic depression and mass unemployment, the Fishrot scandal came at the worst possible time for SWAPO. This is further compounded by the radical working-class group in Walvis Bay which since the 1971 general strike has demonstrated its ability to voice its anger whenever it senses injustice.

The now unemployed fishing workers could be the spark that gets the working class into action and once this occurs, the future for SWAPO will definitely be bleak.

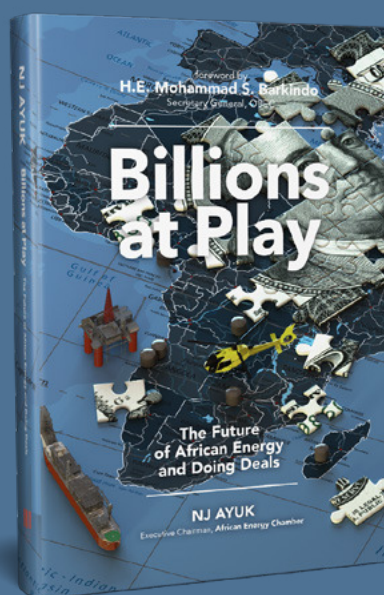
In as much as the recent electoral figures are ample proof of the damage done by the Fishrot scandal, the decision by SWAPO member Panduleni Itula to capitalize on a loophole in the Constitution that allows a card-carrying party member to contest as an independent in the presidential race does show the fissures that now exist in SWAPO. Such fissures resulting in the emergence of splinter parties as has been the case with other revolutionary parties in Southern Africa have the potential to split the revolutionary parties' votes thereby rendering it weaker come election time.

Against this background, the ball is definitely in SWAPO's hands. How SWAPO handles itself in the next five years will determine if the party will continue to be relevant in years to come or if the 2019 election indeed marked the beginning of the end. Many revolutionary parties in Southern Africa have failed to transform themselves; it's now to be seen if SWAPO is going to be the first party to do so.

Billions at Play

The Future of African Energy and Doing Deals

by NJ AYUK



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What will it take for 2020 to truly be the year of Gas in Nigeria?

Naming 2020 the year of gas for Nigeria has a really nice ring to it, but marketing alone will not cut it

By NJ Ayuk*



Chief Timipre Sylva has declared 2020 as the year of Gas for the Nation.

“The Honorable Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, H.E. Chief Timipre Sylva has declared 2020 as the year of Gas for the Nation”, the news piece started. What amazing news! And certainly long overdue. As it seems, Nigerian officials have finally taken the cue. As I have said ever so often, more than an oil nation, Nigeria is a gas nation. It just doesn’t act like it.

Undoubtedly, natural gas has the enormous potential to diversify and grow the Nigerian economy, power its industries and homes, produce ever-so-lacking wealth, create jobs, develop associated industries in the petrochemical sector, raise people out of poverty, the list goes on.

Mr. Sylva’s demonstrated intent could perhaps become the most relevant political action anyone has taken in Nigeria in years and could change the country forever; and yet, the work ahead is so vast, we can only hope he has the strength to pull it off.

To be sure, naming 2020 the year of gas for Nigeria has a really nice ring to it, but marketing alone will not cut it. Concerted governmental action is essential if we are to see true growth in the liquefied petroleum

gas (LPG) sector, and first of all, we need to see a conclusion to the long delayed Nigerian Gas Flare Commercialisation Programme. Sylva stated that this was his main priority, so let’s hope it happens soon.

Once the programme is cleared, oil producers will have a more conclusive alternative to flaring. They will be able to monetize a resource that has so far been wasted, but still that will not suffice.

The flaring issue in Nigeria is tremendous. Every year, 2 million tonnes of LPG are flared, instead of being used as a source of power or feedstock. That means millions of dollars literally going up in smoke. Nigeria’s zero-flaring programme has been on-going for years, and yet, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) has just released results that indicate that gas flaring has been consistently increasing over time. More specifically, “a total of 276.04 billion cubic feet (bcf) of natural gas was flared from Nigeria’s oil fields between September 2018 and September 2019”. Further, NNPC stated that “the volume of gas flared within this period was more than what was supplied to power

generation companies for electricity production which was 275.31bcf”. This is taking place in a country where 45% of the population does not have access to electricity, besides the extremely detrimental effect that has on businesses ability to compete and the extraordinary environmental damage that represents.

Already, the federal government announced in August that it would not be able to fulfill its Zero Routine Flaring target by 2020 and is yet to provide a new deadline for this goal to be achieved.

The problem remains the same as ever. It is much, much cheaper for producers to flare up and pay the fines than do anything about it. This can not continue to be. Stronger action is needed and it falls on Mr. Sylva’s leadership to see it done.

I don’t mean by this to point the finger at oil producers. Most would probably want to monetize that resource, and would if they could. But we lack legislation, infrastructure, pricing regulations, and actors ready to receive the feedstock. They can’t just pipe the gas somewhere and hope for the best. We need to focus on deepening domestic gas penetration

and promote adoption amongst the population, foster the development of gas associated industries like ammonia and urea plants, use this resource for power generation, etc. Demand doesn’t grow out of nowhere.

For this to workout, everybody needs to work together. That means the ministry and the NNPC need to partner with the international oil companies, the indigenous oil companies as well as with the country’s financial institutions to create the solutions that can make this industry flourish. That is a tall job, but an essential one.

Of course, the news that the output of liquefied natural gas (LNG) coming from the Bonny LNG-plant is going to expand by 35% once the 7th LNG train is operational is fantastic. Nigeria will strengthen its position as one of the world’s biggest LNG exporters and that will bring considerable wealth for the country, but its people continue to be in the dark.

And LNG expansion projects are something IOCs are well prepared to do, but there are other important roles in boosting the gas industry that have to be taken by others.

I speak of course of marginal

field development, a topic that is of fundamental importance to me and that I have extensively covered in my most recent book *Billions at Play: The Future of African Oil and Doing Deals*. Both for oil and gas, Nigeria's marginal field development programme showed incredible promise when it was first launched in 2013. It gave opportunities to local companies to explore smaller discoveries that were uninteresting for the majors, which in turn allowed them to gain experience in leading exploration and production projects on their own. Further, it opened opportunities for domestic use of natural gas for power generation. That programme is now being copied by Angola, and yet, it has stalled in Nigeria.

Further, as I have extensively debated over the years, and most extensively in *Billions at Play*, we need to dramatically invest in Nigeria's ability to negotiate and manage contracts. This applies both to the need to respect the sanctity of contracts, a fundamental part of giving international investors the confidence to trust that what they sign for will be respected, but also learning to choose who to sign contracts with. The current debacle with P&ID, an unknown little company that has managed to sue the Nigerian

government for breach of contract in the English courts and is seeking USD\$9.6 billion in compensation, is an incomprehensible situation that should never have taken place. We need to know who our partners are and who we should be signing contracts with, and then stick by them.

Only by combining the role of the majors, the indigenous companies, the necessary infrastructure development for gas transportation, bridging with the nation's banks to help finance projects and by giving a clear legal framework to the sector, can we hope to succeed. I do not doubt that this is possible to accomplish in 2020 and the years to come, but coming from the experience of recent years, it does not seem probable, and no one pays the price for that more than everyday Nigerians, that continue to fail to benefit from its country's resources.

Action is necessary as a matter of urgency.

This week it was disclosed that international oil and gas companies were holding back an estimated USD\$58.4 billion in investments in oil and gas projects in Nigeria because of regulatory uncertainty. Foreign Direct Investment in Nigeria was USD\$1.9 billion in 2018. It's not like we don't need the money.

But how can we expect international



Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Chief Timipre Sylva.

oil companies to feel comfortable signing off on billions in investment if after 20-plus years of negotiations we still haven't managed to settle on the Petroleum Industry Bill that will oversee the sector? Who can blame them for waiting to see what happens? They are waiting for us to figure out how we want to regulate the industry, and after 20 years, we still don't seem to know. That has to change, and soon.

Nigeria has an estimated 200 trillion cubic feet of gas reserves. It is high-time to put them to use. With the right policies we could change the face of the country completely. We could give light to our people, we could power our industries, releasing them from the handicapping dependency on diesel generators that make it all but impossible for them to be competitive, we could relinquish ourselves from our dependency on imported fuel for power and heat, we could create new opportunities for job creation and industrial development, we could take millions of people out of poverty... Further, strong domestic gas and gas-based industries could help boost intra-African trade, create new synergies with our neighbours, boost integration of power generation networks, establish new partnerships, even contribute to peace.

What I am saying, I say as an African, and it applies to many countries across the continent. However, Nigeria is in a prime position to truly enact change and be a beacon to others by showing leadership and resolve. It is the continent's biggest economy and has the continent's biggest reserves of hydrocarbons, both oil and gas. NNPC already works with some of the best major IOCs and the country has Africa's best and most developed indigenous exploration and production capabilities. Let's give ourselves the opportunity to be better and to live better, by taking advantage of the resources we already possess.

Mr. Sylva is showing leadership and drive. So far, he has proven himself to be the leader that Nigeria needs to develop new LPG and LNG industries that will take the country to the next level of development, not only economically speaking, but socially, environmentally, humanly. So let's hope he can pull through the great transformations that need to occur for 2020 to truly be Nigeria's year of gas.

*NJ Ayuk is the Executive Chairman of the African Energy Chamber and author of Amazon best-selling book, *Billions at Play: The Future of African Energy and Doing Deals*.



NJ Ayuk Chairman of the African Energy Chamber.

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What Will Really Make Africa Attractive Is The Contrast It Provides To The Rest Of The World- Barnaby Fletcher on Africa in 2020 RiskMap

By Ajong Mbapndah L

Control Risks, the leading global business risk consultancy, recently published the 2020 RiskMap which reveals key trends shaping the investment landscape in major African markets. The authoritative guide offers a comparative snapshot of market opportunities, investment risks, and a broad longer-term outlook of key trends shaping the investment landscape in major African economies.

"In 2020 what will really make Africa attractive is the contrast it provides to the rest of the world. Efforts to lower trade barriers within

Africa still have a long way to go, but the continent is moving in the right direction when much of the rest of the world – because of economic nationalism and trade wars is not," says Barnaby Fletcher, Control Risks Associate Director and Africa Specialist.

Discussing the 2020 Risk Map with Pan African Visions, Fletcher says each country in Africa is different, with their own unique opportunities and challenges. The countries highlighted in RiskMap 2020 are a combination of those that show the most promise or the most improvement, he says.

The Risk Map also dwells extensively on the growing competition from foreign powers to get a foothold in Africa but Fletcher minimizes the potential for conflict as Africa now is a player in its own right, because of both the growing importance, and confidence of individual countries, and the increasing strength of regional or continental organisations.

"Savvy African governments are increasingly able to play the various geopolitical competitors off against each other and, in doing so, access new financing and opportunities for

their countries," he says.

Thank you for accepting to discuss the 2020 Risk Map, can you start by sharing with us and our readers what the risk map is all about, and what bearing it has on Africa?

Barnaby Fletcher: RiskMap is an annual forecast of political and security risks that face Control Risks' clients across the world. It is less a single report and more a collection of content that lays out how Control Risks sees the world, the key issues we believe our clients need to be aware of, and how these issues are likely to evolve over the course of the next year. What often attracts the most interest are our top five risks, which this year include: Geopolitics and the US campaign trail; The activist society passes judgement; Cyber warfare hits a new level; Economic anxiety meets political fragility; and Leaders without strategies

These top five risks are from a global perspective. All of them manifest across different regions in different ways, and part of the purpose of the country risk ratings and more in-depth articles also included in RiskMap is to explore their implications in specific countries. Looking at Africa

in particular, RiskMap 2020 lays out our political, security and cyber risks for every country on the continent, as well as more in-depth views on how our global risks are playing out in Ethiopia, Angola, Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt and Algeria.

What is the methodology used in making your reports and how accurate have previous risk maps been?

Barnaby Fletcher: Control Risks helps clients understand and mitigate risk. We do this in a variety of ways depending on the type of risk, using a range of different tools and methodologies. As a broad-based report covering a range of different issues, RiskMap 2020 does not have a single methodology behind it. Instead, we deliver each annual edition of RiskMap after months of discussion between our various country-focused analysts and experts in various fields. We also rely on data analysis – we have, for example, proprietary databases of kidnap and security incidents – but we also strongly believe there is no substitute for having country experts.

It is difficult to determine exactly

how accurate previous editions of RiskMap have been, because we are not making precise predictions. We are identifying trends and risks of which investors should be aware, and in previous years we have been ahead of the curve in identifying trends that have subsequently grown in prominence and impact. If we look at specific countries it is easier to assess the accuracy of our forecasts and we have had some great successes, from predicting the downfall of Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe to forecasting Cyril Ramaphosa's replacement of Jacob Zuma as president in South Africa.

On the current report, what is in it for Africa, what are the fears and what are the hopes?

Barnaby Fletcher: Each country in Africa is different, with their own unique opportunities and challenges. The countries we highlighted in RiskMap 2020 are a combination of those that we feel show the most promise or the most improvement, and those that are interesting for a host of other – often less positive – reasons. For some countries 2020 represents a crossroads. In Côte d'Ivoire, for example, the 2020 general elections will be a key test of whether the country can maintain the political stability and economic growth it has rebuilt since the crisis that followed the 2011 elections.

In a statement on the report, you say African markets will become increasingly attractive in 2020, what is going to make them attractive?

Barnaby Fletcher: There are positive developments occurring all across Africa in different regions and in different countries. Perhaps



Barnaby Fletcher, Control Risks Associate Director and Africa Specialist.

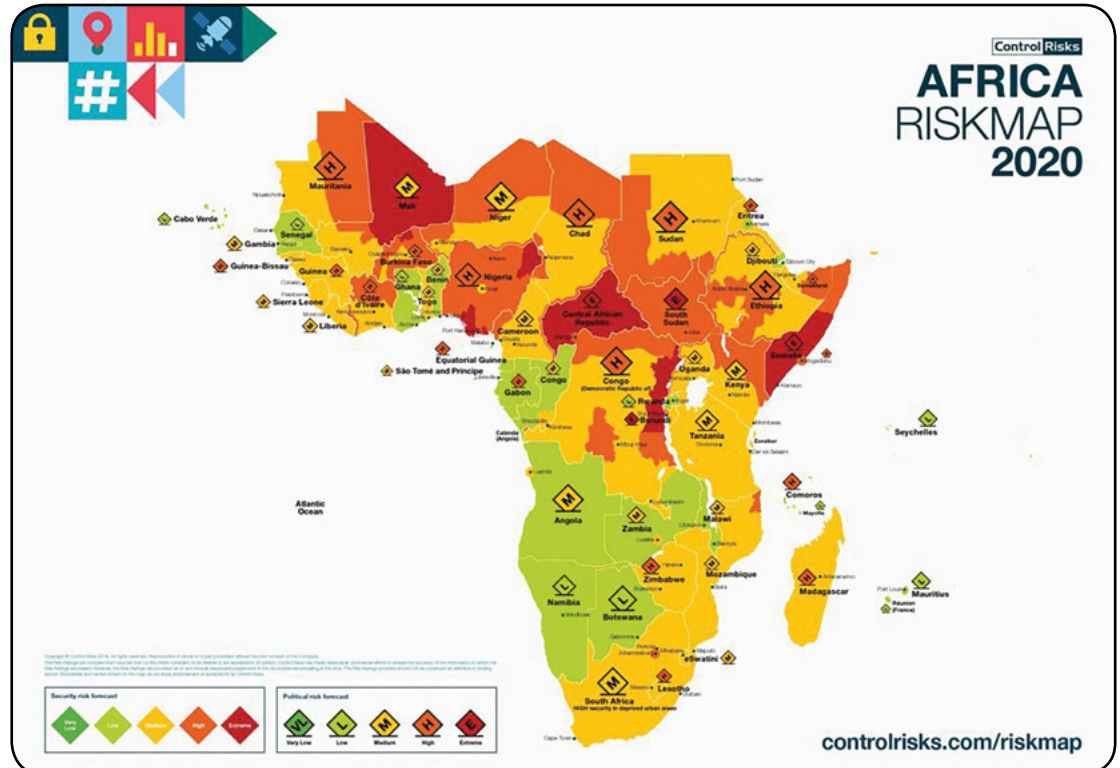
most exciting are the ambitious reform agendas being pushed by relatively new leaders such as Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in Ethiopia or President João Lourenço in Angola; two countries we provide more in-depth perspectives on in RiskMap 2020. There are also promising steps being made towards lowering barriers to intra-Africa trade. The African Continental Free Trade Area is an important symbolic step in this regard, but in terms of tangible benefits progress within regional blocs such as the East African Community is far more advanced.

However, in 2020 what will really make Africa attractive is the contrast it provides to the rest of the world. Efforts to lower trade barriers within Africa still have a long way to go, but the continent is moving in the right direction when much of the rest of the world – because of economic nationalism and trade wars – is not. As rising populism in the Americas, in Europe and in parts of Asia pushes leaders into short-term thinking new leaders in Africa have clear visions for their countries, even if the implementation of their strategies is uneven. The risk environment across much of Africa may be improving only slowly, but it is nonetheless improving as investors elsewhere face an increasingly volatile and unpredictable landscape.

Because of this attractiveness you say New players will even out Africa's investment battlefield in 2020, who are these new actors?

Barnaby Fletcher: There is a stereotypical narrative around African geopolitics that portrays the continent as dominated by a US-China rivalry, in which the US pushes for governance reforms in exchange for financial assistance while China pursues commercial opportunities but steers clear of politics. This narrative has been outdated for a while and we expect this to become clear in 2020.

Over the past decade a host of new players have sought influence and opportunity in Africa. Russia, Turkey, the Gulf states and others have aggressively sought to establish



a presence on the continent and have used a variety of different tactics to do so. The one similarity between these new players is that they want both political influence and commercial opportunities. In response, the traditional giants – the US, China and the EU – have adapted their own approaches. The US and other traditional Western donors are now more openly pursuing commercial opportunities for their own companies, while China is attempting to leverage its economic clout to push for political reforms.

You make mention of Africa's tactical rivalries, can you shed some light on how these are expected to play out in 2020?

Barnaby Fletcher: The efforts of Russia, Turkey or other new players to establish a presence in Africa have been ongoing for at least a decade, even if they have intensified in recent years. In this regard 2020 will not suddenly mark some new phase or sudden shift in strategy. Nonetheless, further intensification of these efforts will lead to further intensification of the geopolitical rivalries we are already seeing. Russia marked its intentions with the Russia-Africa Summit in Sochi in October 2019; a post-Brexit UK wants quick trade

deals to prove it can mark its place in the world; Saudi Arabia views the Horn of Africa as strategically important given the ongoing war in Yemen; and so on.

For investors a more complex and competitive geopolitical landscape around Africa presents both challenges and opportunities. Growing geopolitical interest means increasing flows of development finance, which is opening new sectors. But private-sector capital also risks getting crowded out or getting entangled in diplomatic tensions. As always, those investors that succeed will be those that take the time to understand an increasingly complex landscape.

While these countries have upgraded their African policies, you say most if not all of the policies prioritize short term wins over long term strategies, can you shed some light on this?

Barnaby Fletcher: All the geopolitical players looking to increase their presence and influence in Africa have adopted different approaches. China has built its presence through concessional loans and trade but is now pushing to strengthen its political influence.

The EU and the US are looking to leverage their longstanding positions as development partners to access commercial opportunities. Russia is promoting engagement through security cooperation, while Turkey over the past decade has massively increased its diplomatic presence.

Some of these approaches are reflective of long-term strategies that have been implemented over the past decade. Other appear to be more short-term, ad hoc and sometimes opportunistic tactics. This is partly because geopolitical players are reacting to events; the fall of President Omar al-Bashir in Sudan, for example, prompted a rapid realignment of the geopolitical landscape in the country. But it is also because of a wider global trend of leaders without strategies. Leaders such as US President Donald Trump have made foreign policy decisions based on short-term domestic considerations and their approaches towards Africa have been no different.

There are some who consider the increasing interest of major world powers as another scramble for Africa, do you see in this the potential for conflict?

Barnaby Fletcher: There are

clear tensions between different geopolitical players in Africa, which are reflective of both their competition within and outside of Africa. These tensions do occur in hotspots across the continent, Russia and France in the Central African Republic serving as an archetypal example of this. However, it seems unlikely that these tensions will lead to serious conflicts that will raise risks within Africa. This is not a Cold War situation in which Africa serves as a battleground for proxy conflicts between external powers. Africa now is a player in its own right, because of both the growing importance and confidence of individual countries and the increasing strength of regional or continental organisations. Savvy African governments are increasingly able to play the various geopolitical competitors off against each other and, in doing so, access new financing and opportunities for their countries.

In terms of specific countries and regions, any key predictions for 2020 on those that may do well and those that may be in trouble?

Barnaby Fletcher: The reform agendas of new leaders such as Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed in Ethiopia, President João Lourenço in Angola and President Cyril Ramaphosa in South Africa hold great promise. In 2020 these reforms are likely to start resulting in economic improvements, although there is also a risk; if the expected economic recovery does not transpire, the backlash could derail these leaders' grand plans.

The East African Community also looks set to have a positive 2020. It is already the fastest-growing region in Africa and – in everything from its technological hubs to its innovative legislation around the energy sector – exemplifies a growing trend of African countries rejecting established

paradigms in order to come up with solutions tailored to their specific needs. It will be interesting to see whether there is any more progress in 2020 towards the proposal that Congo (DRC) joins the regional bloc, which would bring challenges but also make it a major economic force.

We see so much about relations between Africa and the outside world, what consideration is given to intra African relations in making your assessments?

Barnaby Fletcher: One of the key issues we monitor is intra-Africa cooperation, especially when it comes to reducing trade barriers. The progress made towards ratifying the African Continental Free Trade Area in 2019 was hugely positive, but in reality its implementation will likely be slow; 2020 is not going to be the year it really starts to have a notable impact. Far greater steps have been

taken within regional trade blocs such as the East African Community or the Economic Community of West African States.

At Control Risks we believe that this regional integration is essential to Africa's future development. As a continent Africa cannot follow the same development path as Asia, in which developed economies outsource manufacturing operations that can be used as a stepping-stone towards middle-income status. In an age of growing automation and economic nationalism this is not realistic. Instead, Africa must attract and develop manufacturing that is intended to serve African markets. That task becomes much easier if the size of these markets – the number of countries that can be easily reached by a factory in Rwanda or Senegal or Uganda – continues to increase.

Heroin seizures made by Mozambique: a drop in the ocean

By Jorge dos Santos

Mozambique surprised the world in late 2019 with a series of heroin seizures with its proper traffickers, however, the total drug is just a «drop in the ocean» in the South African country known as the great heroin corridor - a situation facilitated by influential personalities in the ruling Frelimo party.

Some 10 to 40 tonnes of heroin enter Mozambique by sea on dhows (sailing boats) every year, in addition to an unknown amount smuggled in by container through the different ports of the country - especially those in the center and north. However, of these estimates,

the Mozambican authorities managed to seize a super insignificant part in 2019.

The first major apprehension was

made on 14 December when the Mozambican authorities intercepted a boat carrying more than 1500 kilograms of heroin, supposedly from



threw themselves into the sea. Of the 15 occupants, three died during the escape attempt, while 12 were rescued and held in Pemba where they are being accused of international drug trafficking.

Again, in the same bay, on 28 de Dezembro, the Mozambique detained 13 Pakistani citizens who were attempting to smuggle over 430 kilos of heroin that was being carried in plastic bags and bowls. The Pakistanis were arrested when their boat ran aground on a sandbank in the Bay of Pemba. When they realised they were being pursued, the traffickers tried to sink their boat and destroy the evidence. They damaged the boat but the authorities was

able to seize the drugs, and arrest all 13 people on board.

The two seizures show in brief how Mozambique is used as a corridor in

the heroin trade. The worst is that the situation continues to be so thanks to a well established trafficking network involving senior members of the government and the Frelimo party. Even the seizures in question were made not only at the end of the year, but also at the end of the first term of Filipe Nyusi's current government, which has been in administration since 15 October 2015.

Nyusi tried to close his first five years of governance by showing good work in combating heroin trafficking, but was fought by other senior members of his party who control the scheme. He had no choice beside trying to set up his own means of surveillance and patrol to stop the trafficking and ensure that he gains more international donors for his current governance that started on last 15 January.

Thus, at the end of November he sent his Minister of National Defence to India where he held meetings with his counterpart and which culminated in the signing of the specific protocol on the Promotion of Maritime Safety in the Exclusive Economic Zone of Mozambique. After that, the Indian navy came to the country and has been helping in the fight against

drug trafficking which has already culminated with the two seizures mentioned above.

Therefore, the evidence shows that if there is political will, it is possible to stop the entry of drugs into Mozambique, where the heroin trade is worth up to \$100 million per year to the Mozambican economy and is probably the country's second most valuable export after coal. The value lies in Mozambique in the form of bribes, profits and payments to various influential intermediaries linked to the government and the Frelimo party. Some of the beneficiaries are disguised as entrepreneurs who build hotels through money laundering and are the ones who contribute financially to the party activities, such as the election campaign.

In the beginning of the year, Momade Rassul, a businessman based in Nampula province, where is located the Port of Nacala which is also used for the entrance of heroin to Mozambique, was being charged of money laundering, illicit enrichment, contraband, and criminal association. As part of his trial, former minister of trade Aiuba Cuereneia was called to testify on behalf of Frelimo regarding accusations that Rassul had used

Frelimo's political party exemption on import restrictions for smuggling purposes. Rassul is known to be an important funder of Frelimo's election campaigns in Nampula province and elsewhere.

Ten years ago, US authorities named Mozambican businessman Mohamed Bachir Suleman as a 'drug kingpin', prohibiting US citizens from conducting financial or commercial transactions with his businesses including the Kayum Centre and Maputo Shopping Centre. Suleman is also known to have close ties with Frelimo.

The drug in cause is produced in Afghanistan and shipped through Pakistan, then moved by sea to east Africa and particularly northern Mozambique. From there it is taken by road to Republic of South Africa, from which it is sent to Europe.

The situation is also affecting the region. At the beginning of December, South African police discovered what they believe to be around \$185,000 worth of heroin in the spare wheel of a vehicle which had crossed the Mozambican border into South Africa. Police officers in Pongola had received intelligence about a vehicle transporting drugs and stopped the

vehicle at a checkpoint. A 40-year-old suspect was arrested and confessed.

Tanzania's anti-drugs watchdog, the Commissioner General of the Drugs Control and Enforcement Authority, said in December that the east African country's commercial capital Dar es Salaam and southern region of Mtwara were leading as conduits for drug trafficking mainly from Mozambique.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) warned in September that Mozambique has become a corridor of large volumes of illicit substances, mainly heroin, advocating greater international cooperation to prevent drug trafficking. However, the fight will only be possible if the major corruption scheme installed in the country is dismantled - a task that would not be easy.

In fact, the fragility of the surveillance of the Mozambican coast associated with the impunity of corrupt politicians also favors illegal industrial fishermen, who, according to the local authorities, cause the country to lose around 60 million dollars annually.

US Recalls Ambassador to Zambia over Gay Rights Row with Host Government

By Prince Kurupati

The US State Department recently recalled the US Ambassador to Zambia. The decision came after an exchange of words between the ambassador and the Zambian government mainly over the issue of gay rights.

Daniel Foote who served as the US Ambassador to Zambia for over two years made some critical remarks

regarding a court decision which jailed two men for having consensual sexual intercourse. The Zambian High Court sentenced Steven Samba

and Japhet Chataba to 15 years in jail; this came after the court heard that the two had booked into a lodge in 2017 and were seen having sex by a

worker who peeped through an open window. Foote in a heavily worded letter said that the court's decision undermined human rights.

The highly conservative Zambian government which criminalizes acts of homosexuality was not pleased at all with Foote's remarks and quickly



Ambassador to Zambia Daniel L. Foote Presents Credentials to President Lungu. Photo credit US Embassy.

through the Foreign Minister Joseph Malanji issued a statement saying, “You (Foote) cannot ask a government to make a decision at gun point – ‘because we are giving you aid, we want you to do this’ – you can’t.”

The response by the Zambian government led Foote to defend himself saying his statement regarding the sentencing of the two men was simply his belief and that belief is that the sentence was harsh. Foote went further to state that the relationship between his country and Zambia was ‘decaying’ as the Zambian government only prefers to deal with diplomats “with open pocketbooks and closed mouths.”

Aside from the issue of the gay rights, Foote also weighed in on the issue of donor aid which has been misappropriated by the Zambian government. Zambia as stated by Foote is one of the largest per-capita recipients of US aid, getting about \$500 million annually. However, despite the massive aid inflows the country receives, there is very little work on the ground that suggests that the aid is being put to good use. According to Foote, this is as a result of funds misappropriation by top government officials who channel the funds for their personal use.

The ‘direct’ words uttered by Foote in relation to the gay rights issue and the misappropriation of donor aid forced the Zambian President Edgar Lungu to speak out saying, “Even animals don’t do it, so why should we be forced to do it?...because we want to be seen to be smart, civilized and advanced and so on.” The Zambia President proceeded to send a protest letter to Washington over Foote’s remarks calling for the US Ambassador to be withdrawn stating his position is untenable.

Washington’s response was to recall Foote. Tibor Nagy, the Assistant US Secretary of State for African Affairs in a Tweet stated that “Dismayed by the Zambian government’s decision requiring our Ambassador Foote’s departure from the country.”



There were mixed reactions in the US on the recall of Ambassador Foote.

US embassy sources who spoke to the New York Post said that Washington’s decision was taken solely on the basis that it was difficult for the Ambassador to conduct his duties in a country that no longer wanted him. “Since Lungu says he does not want to work with Foote, there was no point of him remaining. Also don’t forget that there are security issues so Washington wants their man back.” “The US cannot be paying a salary to someone who cannot work because the hosts don’t want him,” another source said.

Though the US government took the decision to recall its Ambassador, the statement issued by the State Department spokesperson clearly shows that Washington took the side of its Ambassador. “The United States firmly opposed abuses against LGBTI persons; Governments have an obligation to ensure that all people can freely enjoy the universal human rights and fundamental freedoms to which they are entitled.”

Though Washington backed its man, some Americans were not pleased with the decision taken to recall the Ambassador. Writing for

CNN, Jill Filipovic said the move taken by Washington was a cowardly move which aptly shows the Trump administration’s penchant for siding with shady actors over US interests. Jill Filipovic likened the decision to Trump administration’s decision to continue friendly relations with Saudi Arabia despite the country’s atrocious human rights record. Filipovic states that Foote said nothing but the truth in lambasting the Zambian government for its stance on gay rights and government corruption. “Foote’s claims were true...there is not a question that the country does indeed jail people for homosexuality. Various watchdog groups have repeatedly noted Zambia’s corruption, and an assortment of European governments suspended aid to the country in 2018 because of embezzlement schemes.”

Filipovic went on to state that Foote’s claims are in line with the American values, the values that ambassadors are supposed to promote abroad. As such, recalling a man who was upholding and promoting American values shows the errors with the Trump administration. The decision taken by

the Trump administration according to Filipovic proves to the corrupt and bigoted world leaders that they have a friend in America. To Americans, the decision proves that they might not have a friend. Filipovic believes the government should have backed their ambassador, making clear that American diplomats will indeed have the space to voice American values – basic things like “don’t put gay people in jail” and “don’t steal aid money” – even when inconvenient for a host country.

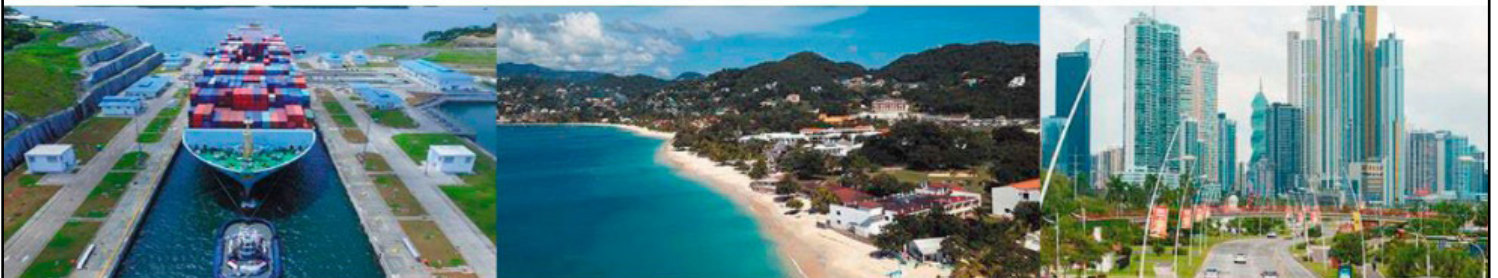
Writing for the BBC, Kennedy Gondwe said the US Ambassador’s recall is a victory for the Zambian government as it is rare to hear of an African country forcing a superpower to recall its ambassador. Though this is the case, the big question is, will be victory last. America may retaliate by cutting aid especially after Foote’s remarks concerning the misappropriation of donor funds. If such happens, then Zambia might lose big time as it depends heavily on donor aid especially when it comes to combating diseases which include HIV/AIDS.

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Rwanda eager to know results on 1000 human skulls taken by Germany during colonialism

By Maniraguha Ferdinand



There is still dilemma on the origin of skulls that Germany says are from Rwanda.

Rwanda awaits results from a joint commission which was formed to identify the real origin of skulls that are believed to have been taken to Germany during colonialism.

In 2017 Germany launched a two-year study to determine the origins of more than 1,000 human skulls, mostly from Rwanda, brought to Europe during the colonial era.

The research is led by four researchers from Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation and four from Rwanda.

The skulls were shipped to Germany around 1907-08 for the anthropologist Felix von Luschan, who was studying human development and superiority of Europeans.

Director General Institute of National Museums in Rwanda,

Robert Masozera told this magazine that research has begun, and soon the findings will be out.

Most of these skulls were in poor conditions to the extent no sufficient detailed documents were available in 2011 when Berlin's Charite hospital handed them over to Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation.

Masozera said that the task for researchers includes but not limited to identifying the real origin of the skulls, the way they were found, their use after reaching Germany etc.

"We are collaborating with Germans. We set a joint commission of researchers so that they make a deep analysis of the skulls. Their task is to know where those Rwandans were taken from, how did they get them, how did they take them to Germany, what did they use them

after reaching Germany and the way forward."

The question that still surrounds this saga is to know exactly how the skulls were obtained.

Some say that they are skulls of Rwandans who rebelled against Germany colonial masters, but historians deny that, saying Germans in Rwanda had never met any rebellion to the extent of killing 1000 people.

In 1908, a man only known as Basebya, led a rebellion against the German colonialists in Rwanda and was eventually captured and shot by the Germans in 1912.

Bernard Rutikanga, an academic who has taught African History for more than 30 years, told Rwanda's New Times that there may be another way those skulls were taken.

"I doubt so many people died", he said before adding that "We are following closely. We want to know where and when exactly did this happen, and much more."

Masozera said that they are waiting for findings of researchers and recommendations which will determine what to do with the skulls.

"After that, they will give us recommendations to be considered by both governments", he said.

In 2018, Germany has handed back human remains of indigenous people killed during a genocide in colonial Namibia more than 100 years ago.

More than 25 remains are part of those taken in 1904 after thousands of Herero and Nama people were murdered by Germans in response to an anti-colonial uprising.

2019 CAF AWARDS: Sadio Mane, Asisat Oshoala Wins Top honours

Morocco right-back Achraf Hakimi wins Youth Player of the Year award
Cameroon picked up the prize for African Women's National Team of the Year, with Africa Cup of Nations winners Algeria taking the men's honour

By Boris Esono Nwenfor



Sadio Mane scored 30 goals for Liverpool last season in all competitions.

Senegal and Liverpool forward Sadio Mane has been named Confederation of African Football's (CAF) Player of the year. The player picked up the award in a star-studded ceremony held in Hurgada, Egypt on the 7th of January 2020.

The Senegalese forward beat teammate Mohammed Salah (Liverpool and Egypt forward) who had won the award in the previous two occasions and Algeria/Manchester City attacker Riyad Mahrez, both of whom were absent in the award ceremony.

Mane got 447 votes as opposed to Mohamed Salah with 325 votes and Mahrez with 267 votes.

Sadio Mane helped Liverpool to

the 2018/2019 UEFA Champions League title, scoring 30 goals in all competitions last season. He and the Reds, however, missed out on the English Premier League title – missing out to Manchester City by just one point.

This season, He has scored 15 goals so far in 2019-20, with Liverpool 13 points clear at the top of the Premier League table. The side looks likely to bag home their first league title in some 30 years.

"I am really happy and proud to win this (CAF Best player). Football is my job, I love it," said Mane. "I would like to thank my family, my national team, staff, the federation and Liverpool Football Club. It's a big day for me."

Mane has finished in the award's

top three for the last three years and has long targeted the prize to emulate the achievement of one of his heroes, former Liverpool striker El Hadji Diouf, who won it in 2002.

Riyad Mahrez did win one award – the African goal of the year for a free-kick he scored for Algeria against Nigeria in his country's AFCON semi-final victory.

Oshoala reclaims women's Best Player gong

Nigeria and Barcelona forward Asisat Oshoala was named the African Women's Player of the Year ahead of Valerenga and Cameroon forward Nchout Njoya Ajara and Beijing BG Phoenix and South Africa forward Thembi Kgatana – 2018 winner.

It is the fourth time that she is picking up the award, and in doing so equalled her compatriot Perpetua Nkwocha, who equally won the award on four occasions. Oshoala last won the CAF women's player award in 2017 after having won in 2014, and 2017.

Despite scoring two goals at the last FIFA Women's world cup, Ajara could only come in the second position to Oshoala who managed to score just one goal in the competition. Nchout Njoya scored 11 goals for Valerenga FD in the Norwegian Premier League championship, finishing as the club's top scorer – a performance that greatly contributed to qualifying Valerenga for the first time in the UEFA Women's

Champions League.

Algeria Coach wins CAF Best coach award

Djamel Belmadi, who guided Algeria to the AFCON title, won Men's Coach of the Year,

Diseree Ellis, the coach of the South Africa national team, was crowned as the women's best coach for the year 2019.

He beats Aliou Cisse (Senegal – Senegal) and Moïne Chaâbani (Tunisia – Esperance) to win the award.

He led Algeria's Les Fennecs to the 2019 Total Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) title, quenching a thirst that had gone on for 29 years.

For the women's team of the year, the Cameroon national team won the award. The team who participated at the FIFA Women's World in France was beaten by the England Women's national team in the round of 16. African Cup of Nations winners Algeria picked up the award in the male category.

Morocco right-back Achraf Hakimi, 21, who plays for Borussia Dortmund on loan from Real Madrid, was the winner of the Youth Player of the Year award.

Cameroon was well represented in the African best XI team as goalkeeper Andre Onana and Joel Matip both made the cut. Andre Onana was at the goal post as his side Ajax Amsterdam made it to the semifinals of the UEFA Champions League, just missing out of the final as they were beaten by



Spurs.

Liverpool centre-half Joel Matip had a stellar year as he won the UEFA Champions League, UEFA Super cup and recently the FIFA Club World cup.

African best XI:

Andre Onana (Ajax/Cameroon), Achraf Hakimi (Borussia Dortmund/Morocco), Kalidou Koulibaly (Napoli/Senegal), Joel Matip (Liverpool/Cameroon), Serge Aurier (Tottenham/Ivory Coast), Riyad Mahrez (Manchester City/Algeria), Idrissa Gana Gueye (Paris St-Germain/Senegal), Hakim Ziyech (Ajax/Morocco), Mohamed Salah (Liverpool/Egypt), Sadio Mane (Liverpool/Senegal), Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang (Arsenal/Gabon).

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