Africa’s Epic Succession Feuds

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n a continent where incumbency in most of the countries is an automatic guarantee for re-election by hook or by crook, decisions nullifying Presidential elections are very rare. Defying all odds in 2017, Justice Maraga and the Supreme Court in Kenya stunned the world by nullifying elections because of gross irregularities and calling for a rerun. Three years after, the Southern African country of Malawi has followed suit with a similar decision nullifying the victory of President Mutharika and calling for a rerun.

Declared winner with 38.6% of the vote, with less than 200000 votes more than runner up Lazarus Chakwera in the May 2019 elections, the Constitutional Court in Malawi annulled the victory of President Mutharika, and called for a rerun. While the opposition sees this as justice, activists and the civil society see it as victory for democracy. The 79-year-old President Peter Mutharika will have to gird his loins for the political battle which may see him earn a second and last term the right way, or outrightly end his political career.

The decision of the Constitutional Court is a strong indictment of the Malawi Electoral Commission accused of conniving with the ruling party to rig the elections in favor of President Mutharika. With the rest of Africa and the world watching, there will likely be less room for the kind of conduct that cast doubts on the last elections.

From the courage of the Judges to the impartiality and independence manifested by the Judiciary, this landmark decision in Malawi has been hugely saluted across Africa, and so for right reasons. In 1992, when opposition candidate John Fru Ndi claimed victory over incumbent Paul Biya whereas the official results said something different, the Supreme Court President in Cameroon said his hands were tied. In most African countries, the judiciary is a rubber stamp for the executive. Judges are appointed and fired at the whims and caprices of the President. Yet, it is common knowledge that a free and unfettered judiciary is a pillar in every democracy.

In Kenya, in similar circumstances, the Supreme Court in Kenya nullified the victory of President Uhuru Kenyatta from winning the rerun though without the formidable opposition challenger he had earlier. In between the 2017 elections in Kenya, and the recently annulled elections in Malawi, there is a fairly long list of elections across the continent with strong issues, considerable tensions, and even jail for some opposition leaders as was the case with Prof Maurice Kamto in Cameroon.

As the continent starts the second decade of the century, expectations are high. It is time for the continent to definitely switch gears in terms of development priorities. Doing so involves strong institutions and the competent people to handle them. It involves leaders that have the legitimacy to act on behalf of the people. We have on several occasions indicated that the definition of acceding to power through unconstitutional means abhorred by the African Union should go beyond military coups and include those who rig elections or change term limits to stay in power. If it is the will of Malawians to have President Mutharika in power, so be, if it is their choice to have opposition challenger Lazarus Chakwera in power, so be it, but the elections should be fair, and the will of the people respected.

The complex political equations in Africa also involve very contentious succession battles and tense relations between sitting Presidents and former Presidents. It was the case in Cameroon between late President Amadou Ahidjo and his handpicked successor Paul Biya in 1982. Soovic was the post transition feud that the former President went on exile first to France, then to Senegal, where he died in 1989 and his remains were never brought back to Cameroon, nor was he given any state burial till date. It was contentious between former President Robert Mugabe and his estranged Vice President and later successor Emmerson Mnangagwa.

In Botswana, the dust had hardly settled before former President Ian Khama felt out with his hand-picked successor and former Vice President Mokgweetsi Masisi. So bad was the feud that former President Khama left the ruling party and backed a different candidate in the last elections. In Angola the feud between President João Lourenço and his predecessor Eduardo dos Santos has engulfed the entire former first family putting the multi billion business empire of Isabel dos Santos at risk.

In this issue, PAV takes a look at some of these feuds and their ramifications. The issue also takes a look at the recent Transparency International rankings for Africa, how the candidate is bracing up to fence off the coronavirus. There is also news from the African Development Bank on the economic outlook of the continent. The AFDB has proved itself as one of the most vibrant institutions in the continent and this probably explains why in the face of what it considers unfair criticisms from World Bank President David Malpass, a powerful response can be issued and we share that in this issue.

What is Gianni Infantino up to with questionable decisions and opinions that could damage the progress of the game in Africa? This issue takes a look at growing concerns that the world football governing body (FIFA) President maybe consciously or unconsciously working against African interests.

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In a conflicting process, Filipe Nyusi completed the appointments of the ministers who will form the new government of his second term as Mozambican president, having kept his friends in the economically strategic ministries, despite the unwelcome intrusion of his party’s Political Commission.

Nyusi took office on 15 January after being declared the winner of the presidential elections in December 2019. However, his new government was only established after 17 January and very slowly. Not because Nyusi did not know with whom he would like to work, but because his party’s powerful Political Commission did not agree with certain names.

One of those worth mentioning is the Mozambican Prime Minister, Carlos Agostinho do Rosário. He was appointed to the post in 2015 and was resigned by Nyusi in 2020 as part of the government’s restructuring. Do Rosário had already been informed by Nyusi that he would not renew his mandate, but a restricted circle of the Frelimo party disagreed. After a long process of discussion, Nyusi gave in to the pressure, but warned that he would not accept that his decisions be hampered in certain ministries.

Nyusi is the president of the republic and of the Frelimo Party, but has no power over a narrow and powerful circle of only 12 members called the Political Commission -- the highest body in the party structure, as in communist movements. The body should serve as a consultative body, but in practice it is the one that makes the most structuring decisions. If the majority of the members of the Political Commission disagree with a certain decision, then President Nyusi has no way to forward.

And the problem is that the Policy Committee is made up of members with various interests. There are basically three wings there. That of President Nyusi and also that of former presidents Armando Emílio Guebuza and Joaquim Chissano. Without consensus between the three wings, or at least two, no decision is made.

This was assisted in the case of the Prime Minister. Nyusi had proposed the technocrat Celso Correia, but the other two groups refused and ended up renaming Carlos Agostinho do Rosário, who had already packed his bags. So he had to go back to the office.

With the discomfort caused by the intrusion of the Political Commission, Nyusi presented a new proposal suggesting that at least five of the 17 ministries should not be touched. That he alone would nominate and the rest could stay with the Political Commission. The proposal was accepted.

Thus, as in the construction of a building, President Filipe Nyusi maintained his pillars where ministers Celso Correia, Carlos Mesquita, Max Tonela, Osvaldo Machatine and Adriano Maleiane support the walls appointed by the Political Commission.

Correia, a young businessman who secured the victory of Filipe Nyusi, first within the party and then in the 2014 General Elections, was appointed to the post of Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. It is a strategic ministry insofar as agriculture is considered by the Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique to be the priority of priorities. In fact, Nyusi announced on the day that took office that this sector would now have 10% of the State Budget. Correia has the challenge of making agriculture in Mozambique productive and profitable with the greater objective of fighting poverty.

Mesquita, a school friend and colleague in Nyusi’s former job, was
appointed to the Ministry of Industry and Trade. He has vast experience in the area, once he is a renowned and highly respected businessman in the class. In the ministry where he will deal directly with several investors he has the challenge of industrializing Mozambique.

Another personal friend of the Head of State is Max Tonela who will take over the portfolio of Mineral Resources and Energy. Nyusi did not want to give up on this ministry as he is responsible for managing the gas boom that will be exploited in Mozambique. Major oil multinationals like Total, Exxon, Sasol, Rosneft etc will have to negotiate directly with President Nyusi’s personal friend in order to materialize their investments estimated in billions of dollars in the country. There are also other valuable resources such as ruby, coal, gold etc that will be treated in this sector.

And because no government works without finances up to date, Nyusi has appointed his former professor of economics, Adriano Maleiane, to the position of Minister of Economy and Finance. He is knowledgeable in the area and has been part of several management bodies. One of the highlights goes to the position of governor of the Mozambican central bank. Maleiane has the challenge to negotiate with Mozambique’s creditors and close in perfect conditions the controversial dossier of so-called hidden debts involving about $2Bn. Filipe Nyusi was part of the fraudulent scheme and it will be up to his former teacher to manage the problem smoothly.

Finally, Osvaldo Machatine was appointed to the Ministry of Public Works, Housing and Water Resources. Nyusi would not leave this ministry in the hands of the other wings within the party as it is in this sector that Nyusi deals directly with the masses through the inauguration of various social infrastructures. The supply of drinking water, the construction of schools and housing for young people are all subjects of this ministry and Nyusi will appear at the inaugurates conveying the image of problem solver. Experience shows that ministers in this sector work in off, but it is the President of the Republic who appears in the cameras when it comes to delivering infrastructure to the people.

With these five ministries Nyusi wants to assert his power by ensuring that his building is secure, even when the walls indicated by the powerful Political Commission shake. Before the appointments he had already warned that he would not accept pressure and that his government would tend to rejuvenate and with gender balance. But because of the influence of his party, his wish was not fulfilled. Many of the other ministries are people linked to the veterans of the liberation struggle that the Political Commission was imposing against the will of the Head of State.

One of the new government’s challenges has to do with resolving the armed attacks in Cabo Delgado province where more than 600 people have died since 2017 - while the identity of those responsible, as well as their motivations and sources of funding, remain unknown. Although the government has significantly expanded its military presence in the region over the past year, reports of armed incursions that result in civilian and military deaths remain frequent. Although the authorities have not established the identity of the attackers, some attacks have been claimed by the self-proclaimed Islamic state.

To address this problem, President Nyusi has appointed Jaime Neto, an inexperienced civilian to the Ministry of National Defence. At first analyse, the appointment doesn’t make sense, but it is a strategy for Nyusi, as Commander-in-Chief of Mozambique’s Defence Forces, to deal almost directly with the issue of attacks, since there are suspicions that internal Frelimo forces are involved on the attacks trying to sabotage the government. Indeed, on 3 February, Nyusi told the press that the attackers are financed by external and internal agents. However, he did not go into detail. The resolution of armed violence is urgent as it causes deaths and is a danger to the economy.

On the other hand, at least 30 people have died in central Mozambique since August last year as a result of armed attacks on vehicles on the main roads of the region, and the authorities have held the guerrillas of the main opposition party, Renamo, accountable, which in turn denies involvement in the episodes. Nyusi will also have to deal with this dossier, which is taking on new proportions every day. So far there is no strategy that makes there less social differences and the absence of a clear matrix for development fosters violence and conflict.

The new government also starts work with bad news coming from abroad in relation to the country. Mozambique is back in the world ranking of democracy, ranking 120 out of 167 countries evaluated by the Economist Intelligence Unit. Since 2016, Mozambique has been among the states considered «authoritarian». In the last year of his first mandate, President Nyusi devalued this index from the British publication «The Economist» saying that «there are some people who consider democracy when it wins those they would like». The fact is that electoral processes have been fraudulent and freedoms of expression and press are almost non-existent. People considered enemies of the government of the day are kidnapped and tortured in an attempt to silence them. Mozambique is also at the tail end of Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index occupying position 146 of 180 assessed. Reversing the situation of these indices is another challenge of the Filipe Nyusi government.
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Malawi: Twists And Turns After Court Orders Fresh Presidential Poll
By James Mwala

History was by far written on Malawi’s walls on 3rd February as the Constitutional Court in the capital Lilongwe made a landmark ruling by ordering a fresh election. This followed a hearing of a case that has lasted for over five months.

Opposition Malawi Congress Party through President Lazarus Chakwera and blossoming party UTM led by Saulos Chilima petitioned the court to nullify the May 2019 elections. In the poll, Democratic Progressive Party’s Peter Mutharika was declared winner.

The petitioners cited the use of erasing fluid tippex, mismanagement if results and the alleged use of unauthorized monitors as something that marred the poll. In its ruling, the Constitutional Court was quick to admonish the Malawi Electoral Commission for acting incompetently in managing results of the election, not clearing parties on the use of tippex and having fewer or no security on some electoral accessories.

The court also lambasted Commissioners of the electoral body for delegating its judicial powers to Chief Elections Officer Sam Alfandika in leading activities about auditing results and addressing complaints from parties.

Lead Judge Healey Potani described as unprofessional the conduct of the Jane Ansah led Commission in the election.

According to Potani, what the court found demonstrated that the elections were not free and fair, something that saw the court order a fresh poll in 150 days.

It also ordered the status of the presidency to revert to one before the 2019 poll implying that Chilima who fell out of favour with Mutharika retain his role as Vice President. Furthermore, the judges asked for the full enforcement of the 50+1 electoral law in the next poll.

Parliament had however shot the bill down in one of its sitting only for the bill to appear critical in the description of what majority is in the court ruling. However, Mutharika and the electoral Commission have indicated they will be appealing against the ruling.

In his address aired in state television, Mutharika said his legal team feels the ruling erred in some areas something he says has compelled him to appeal. While claiming that he would still win the next election, Mutharika said that the ruling was a miscarriage of Justice.

The electoral body has together with Mutharika also appealed to the supreme Court to hold the enforcement of the ruling until their appeal is heard in court.

Meanwhile, political tensions have risen as former lawmakers want the court to also nullify the parliamentary election. The members of Parliament leader Jessie Kabwila, a vocal activist said that they question how authentic the Parliamentary election was since it was the same electoral body that oversaw the process.

On the other hand, human rights campaigners have indicated they will carry on with protests they held.
Burundi : A Successor Emerges for President Pierre Nkurunziza

By Maniraguha Ferdinand

President Pierre Nkurunziza of Burundi is stepping down, a move that surprised the world for a president who grabbed a third term in 2015, that triggered crisis in the country.

More than 500 People were killed according to United Nations and more than 400 000 refugees and asylum seekers have left the country since 2015.

Nkurunziza announced that he will not seek another term after changing constitution, allowing him to run until 2034.

To confirm that he will never run for another term, 26th January ruling party’s congress chose Major General Evariste Ndayishimiye as its flag bearer in May presidential elections.

Nkurunziza’s government was criticized to be harsh on opponents, some were killed, imprisoned or fled the country.

Inter-Burundians dialogue that followed a failed coup and crisis in 2015 yield nothing as the government felt legitimate, elected with nothing left to negotiate with losers.

Major General Evariste Ndayishimiye with President Nkurunziza, his election will give Burundi the opportunity for a fresh start. Photo credit Berthier Mugiraneza, AP.

Arusha accords helped Burundians to live together but Nkurunziza ignored it. The day he started ignoring it, that’s when people began to be killed, to flee.”

It is the Arusha Accords that ended a ten year civil war between Burundians in 2003, with CNDD-FDD ,the former rebel group being integrated into government which resulted in Nkurunziza being elected in 2005.

Pierre Claver Niyonkuru, a Burundian journalist says that any new president will have the task of bringing good relations with other countries, so that people stat free movement and that of their goods.

Since 2015, movement of goods and people reduced significantly between Rwanda and Burundi, countries whose people used to trade among themselves.

Though CNDD-FDD new candidate, Maj Gen Ndayishimiye seems to have been loyal to Nkurunziza, Niyonkuru still believes that he can make changes.

“I believe that every new leader brings his own changes. Even if the successor comes from the ruling party, he may not be supporting the routine. Even in the ruling circle,
Seven African countries among 12 most corrupt: Poor leadership is the cause –analyst John Mugabo

Corruption statistics have always been haunting for Africa, the world’s poorest continent, since 1995 when Transparency International (TI) started measuring corruption in public sector.

With Somalia and South Sudan ranked the most and second most corrupt respectively among 180 countries, Corruption Perception Index 2019 (CPI) released last month ranked seven African countries among the 12 most corrupt in the world.

This state of corruption in Africa will remain the same until countries on the continent change political culture and build firm systems to be followed by all leaders who successively rule those countries, according to a Kigali-based political analyst, Mr John Mugabo.

Mugabo told Pan African Visions on Tuesday that many African countries have a political crisis whereby countries are marked by coup d’états and more political instabilities which create gaps for corruption.

“When the country’s leadership hasn’t laid firm foundations, corruption finds its way in. We are in a crisis of leadership in Africa. We can’t compare ourselves to these western countries whose political culture has been shaped for many years. In most of African countries, we do not have national character in our political systems on which the leadership keeps running smoothly. Most of our leaders come in power with their own systems,” he said.

This is reiterated by TI stating in the report that a cross analysis with global democracy data reveals a link between corruption and the health of democracies.

“Full democracies score an average of 75 on the CPI; flawed democracies score an average of 49; hybrid regimes – which show elements of autocratic tendencies – score 35; autocratic regimes perform worst, with an average score of just 30. More generally, countries with high levels of corruption can be dangerous places for political opponents. Practically all of the countries where political killings are ordered or condoned by the government are rated as highly corrupt on the CPI,” reads part of the report.

Analysis of the results also finds that countries in which elections and political party financing are open to undue influence from vested interests are less able to combat corruption. Governments must urgently address the corrupting role of big money in political party financing and the undue influence it exerts on our political systems,” Delia Ferreira Rubio, Chairperson of Transparency International, says in the report.

Sub-Saharan Africa as most corrupt region

CPI 2019 also ranks Sub-Saharan Africa as the last region with an average of 32 scorers from 49 countries assessed while Western Europe and European Union is the best with the average score of 66 from 31 countries assessed in the region.

Asia Pacific comes second best at 45 average score from 31 countries, Americas as third at 43 average score from 32 countries, Middle East and North Africa region is fourth with 39 average score from 18 countries while Eastern Europe and Central Asia is fifth at 35 average score among 19 countries assessed.

CPI analyses public sector corruption and ranks 180 countries and territories, drawing on 13 surveys of business people and expert assessments. The 2019 CPI reveals that a majority of countries are showing little to no improvement in tackling corruption. It uses the scale of zero as highly corrupt to 100 as the cleanest.

CPI 2019 ranks Denmark and New Zealand as the first tying at the score.
of 87, followed by Finland, Singapore, Sweden and Switzerland to wind up the top five.

More than two-thirds of countries along with many world’s most advanced economies are stagnating or backsliding in their anti-corruption efforts. More than two-thirds scored below 50, with an average of 43. Only 22 countries have significantly improved their scores including Greece (+12), Guyana (+12) and Estonia (+10) since 2012 while 21 countries have extremely declined including Australia (-8), Canada (-7) and Nicaragua (-7) in the same period.

Four G7 countries score lower than last year. These are Canada (-4), France (-3), the UK (-3) and the US (-2). Germany and Japan remained constant while Italy gained one point to 53 score, tying with Rwanda, Grenada, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia at the 51st position.

**African least vs most corrupt**

Africa which consists of 54 countries has 9 only among 76 countries which scored the world’s average of 43 while 6 African countries featured among the 59 which scored 50 and above.

Seychelles is the least corrupt in Africa and 27th globally with a score of 66 and is followed by Botswana, Cape Verde and Rwanda while Mauritius and Namibia tie as the fifth on the continent and 56th globally with the score of 52.

The most corrupt in the world are Somalia as 180th with the score of 9, preceded by South Sudan at 179th place with 12 score, Syria as 178th with the score of 13 and Yemen as 177th with 15 score. Other African countries on the bottom line of the report include Sudan and Equatorial Guinea tying with Venezuela and Afghanistan as 173rd behind North Korea. Guinea Bissau and Libya tie with Haiti on the 168th position to wind up the last 10.

Comparing Africa’s least and most corrupt countries, analyst Mugabo said the difference lies in those countries’ leadership, stressing that political stability is key to fighting corruption.

“Apart from Rwanda which features among the top four in Africa because of the political will picking up fast from the ashes of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, others have had peace and stability for many years,” he said, referring to Seychelles, Botswana and Cape Verde.

**New dawn in Africa**

Citing Angola which, though still ranked poorly as 146th with a score of 26, jumped seven points in this year’s CPI and making it a significant improver as a result of the work of new president who is waging war on corruption, Mr Mugabo said there is hope for Africa to improve the leadership and reduce corruption in years to come.

“There is hope for Africa with the new breed of leaders coming up. We shall get better when some African leaders leave power and are replaced by leaders who are inspiring young generation. Africa needs good leaders who build good systems, the rest we have got it all to do better,” he said, referring to the continent’s natural resources.

Citing insecurity, poverty and huge migration of Africans to other continents as consequences of the continent’s bad leadership and corruption, Mr Mugabo said African leaders should be ashamed of seeing their citizens drowning in Mediterranean Sea trying to flee bad political systems back home.

As a way to curb corruption, Transparency International recommends countries to manage conflicts of interest, control political financing, strengthen electoral integrity, regulate lobbying activities, tackle preferential treatment and empower citizens.
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Uhuru is Kenyatta is married to Margaret and I am married to Rachael. There is no marriage business here. We were elected by the people of Kenya to do a job. Uhuru Kenyatta as president, me as his assistant.” This was the Deputy President (DP) William Ruto’s response when he was asked about the bromance with his boss during an interview in the local media.

Rifts in Jubilee Party, Kenya’s ruling party are growing wider every day and the emergence of Building Bridges Initiative (BBI), a taskforce aimed at offering recommendations on ways to harmonize existing institutions so that critical issues such as corruption, historical injustices and cycle of violence related after every poll are addressed is threatening to tear apart the relationship between President Kenyatta and his deputy. BBI was conceived in March 2018 following peace pact between President Kenyatta and his then nemesis the Chief opposition leader Raila Odinga dubbed as ‘Handshake’ following 2017 polls that was marred with violence and name-calling.

After spending one year collecting Kenyan opinions on issues that need to be addressed, the taskforce team in November 2019 presented its reports to the two leaders. It proposed numerous recommendations ranging from re-introduction of hybrid system of government featuring the President and the Prime Minister to inclusion of poll losers in the running of the government.

Ruto has boldly gone against his boss’s stance by opposing calls for a referendum. He has been criss-crossing the country calling Kenyans to stand against leaders who want the constitution amended for their selfish ambitions. Ruto has constantly made veiled attacks against Odinga accusing him of using a handshake to stop him from succeeding Kenyatta comes 2022.

“Let the former Prime Minister be sincere and walk to the BBI Secretariat and point out the specific clauses which he thinks should be amended for him to concede defeat in 2022,” reiterated Ruto.

He added, “They are disturbing us with a lot of politics saying we should amend the constitution. They should leave us alone. Only Kenyans know what they want.”

The political bad blood between Ruto and Odinga has extended to their allies. Ruto lieutenants have claimed BBI is a political tool used by the Head of the State and his new ally, Odinga. They have argued that there is a plan to bar Ruto from ascending to power. On the fight against graft and lifestyle audit, Ruto’s diehards averred that he is being targeted.

“If it was to allow President Kenyatta and Jubilee to deliver on the Big 4 agenda, we could have seen the results by now. But it looks like this handshake was more political than unity of the country. I think we no longer have the Big 4 agenda but have the Big 1 agenda which is BBI,” noted Senator Simon Cherargei, deputy president’s ardent supporter.

On the other hand, leaders allied to Kenyatta and Odinga have taken Ruto head-on calling him to resign for allegedly disrespecting the President. They have accused Kenyatta’s Deputy of peddling lies about BBI to gain political mileage.

“It is clear that DP Ruto is hiding behind former Prime Minister Raila Odinga and the BBI to fight the President and those public officers the President has entrusted with power of helping him run the government.”

“One of the biggest lies he had spread was that BBI is a waste of public funds,” reiterated the leaders.

Going by Kenyatta’s latest statement on achieving a united country at a luncheon organised to mark US National Prayer Breakfast in Washington DC, it is now clear BBI is unstoppable. He and Odinga were invited by US Congress to speak about the handshake. He rued over negative impact of post-election violence which has destabilise the East African country for the last three decades.

“The greatest gift that my brother (Raila Odinga) and I can possibly ever leave the people of Kenya is the gift of peace, gift of love and the unity of all our people. And that is the mission that we are on.”
’Correcting Past Mistakes’: How the Feud between President Lourenco and Dos Santos Started

By Prince Kurupati

From 1979 to 2017, Jose Eduardo dos Santos was the President of Angola. During his reign, Eduardo dos Santos was the supreme leader possessing extensive power that allowed him to control every economic sector in the country. As is often the case with absolute power, the power ultimately corrupted Eduardo dos Santos and instead of serving the people, he began to serve himself and those closest to him only.

As the 2017 general elections drew closer, Angola’s long time leader Eduardo dos Santos shocked the entire nation when he stated that he was not going to run in the election. Instead, he was going to step down and allow another leader to take the country forward. For a man whom many thought was destined to die on the thrown, Eduardo dos Santos’ decision was clearly a surprise but nonetheless a welcome surprise.

For those closest to him, Eduardo dos Santos took the decision to step down as the President simply because he wanted a peaceful and smooth transition of power. Those who spent much of their time with him state that during his last days in office, he was afraid that if he failed to leave at that moment, the country would end up witnessing a bloody power transition and that’s something that he was not prepared to experience.

The man who replaced Eduardo dos Santos at the helm of the presidency is Joao Lourenco. In the quest to create his own legacy, Joao Lourenco decided to declare war on corruption. According to him, his predecessor Eduardo dos Santos during his long stay in power had made a number of mistakes and one of the biggest mistakes was to let the scourge of corruption devour the moral fabric of the nation. “The corruption, nepotism, flattery and impunity of recent years are enemy number one.” Determined to leave a positive legacy, Joao Lourenco took it upon himself to correct Eduardo dos Santos’ main mistake.

As noble as Joao Lourenco’s intentions were, the unfortunate thing for Eduardo dos Santos was that the new anti corruption drive by his successor targeted him and his family first. Speaking at an event that Eduardo dos Santos attended soon after being chosen as the new leader of the Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola (MPLA), the ruling and majority party in Angola, Joao Lourenco said that “The MPLA must take the lead in this anti corruption crusade, even if its militants or senior leaders are the first to fall.”

Eduardo dos Santos, eldest child, Isabel soon after Lourenco assumed power was ejected from her position as the president of the national oil company, Sonangol. Soon after, Jose Filomeno, the eldest son of Eduardo dos Santos was alleviated from his position from the Angolan sovereign wealth fund and was immediately placed in pre-trial detention as part of a fraud investigation.

Joao Lourenco’s early moves as the new president of Angola shook the whole nation. Eduardo dos Santos quickly realized that the end was near for him and his family and he immediately left for Spain. Though the two were supposed to brief each other during the transfer of power period, Eduardo dos Santos wanted nothing to do with his successor and unbeknown to many including Joao Lourenco himself, he departed for Barcelona. In Spain, Eduardo dos Santos has decided to keep a low profile only granting a few media outlets interviews in his new ‘home’ country. In one of these interviews, though he is yet to declare his interest in the top seat, Odinga’s influence is giving Ruto sleepless nights. The ODM party leader has consolidated strong support across the country unlike the Deputy President.
when asked about Joao Lourenco’s anti corruption crusade, he said “The changes are necessary but should not be so radical.”

It’s clear therefore to note that Eduardo dos Santos is not particularly happy with Joao Lourenco’s anti corruption crusade more so considering that his first port of call has been his family. However, he has decided to remain quiet while leaving his children with the task to take on Joao Lourenco.

As the head of the family (with Eduardo dos Santos looking to remain quiet), Isabel dos Santos has rallied the family to give an image of a united clan whenever appearing in the media. All of the dos Santos family has moved to Europe with Jose Filomeno who is not able to leave owing to legal proceedings being the only one to remain in Angola. Despite her seemingly strong character, it’s clear to see that the pressure is on Isabel. Her expulsion from Sonangol and the decision to freeze her assets and accounts by the Angolan government has destroyed her from the inside.

Any form of reconciliation between Joao Lourenco and Eduardo dos Santos seems unlikely considering mostly that Joao Lourenco has decided to attack Eduardo dos Santos’ family. For his part, however, Joao Lourenco by his decision has endeared himself with a majority of Angolans and has thus created for himself political capital that he can use for his benefit for many years to come. The onus is on the dos Santos family to initiate the path of reconciliation but that seems highly unlikely considering the maneuvers taken by Isabel in recent times.

Known to be a billionaire, the corruption crusade has hit hard on Isabel dos Santos.
As Ivorians prepare to cast their ballot come October 2020 for the presidential elections, tensions are high that the West African country which is barely recovering from sores of its second civil war, will once again be plugged into another.

And as was the case during the 2010 civil war, Guillaume Soro, former rebel leader cum retired speaker of National Assembly; and now, a presidential aspirant, is not unconnected to the pandemonium that awaits Ivory Coast.

The ongoing battle between Guillaume Soro and president Alassane Ouattara reached a boiling point with the dispute coming to a head-on Monday, 23 December 2019 when the former rebel leader unsuccessfully attempted to return to Côte d’Ivoire.

To understand how deep the feud and betrayal acquisition is, let’s go back in history.

Guillaume Soro led the rebels who tried and failed to oust then-president Laurent Gbagbo in 2002. His forces installed Ouattara in the presidency during the civil war that followed the 2010 election, which was fought largely along regional and ethnic lines.

About 3,000 people died in the brief civil war that followed the victory of President Alassane Ouattara in 2010. Ouattara won re-election in 2015 but has given mixed signals about whether he will seek a third term, adding to uncertainty about the vote in Francophone West Africa’s largest economy.

Soro, as part of his compensation and in a means to have a say in the management of the country then served for several years as speaker of the National Assembly but has since fallen out with Ouattara, who is widely expected to back his prime minister, Amadou Gon Coulibaly, in the 2020 presidential election.

On February 2019, Guillaume Soro resigned from the presidency of the National Assembly, after succumbing to pressure from President Alassane Ouattara.

This came after Soro refused to join Ouattara’s political party – The Rally of the Houphouëtists for Democracy and Peace (RHDP),

Soro wanted an alliance with Henri Konan Bédié, the leader of the Democratic Party of Côte d’Ivoire (PDCI), in the run-up to the October 2020 presidential election. Bédié also broke off ties with Ouattara by refusing to join the RHDP.

In an interview with Radio France Internationale, RFI, Ouattara laid bare his frustrations and warned Soro against joining the opposition platform, especially with their history as “allies”.

“I think it is not in the interest of Guillaume Soro to do so. And I told him,” said the Ivorian president in a firm tone.

Seeing this as a public challenge meant to belittle him, especially from someone whom he placed at the executive mansion, Guillaume Soro replied, “I am a free man,” and has since then continued with his plans.

Ivory Coast’s public prosecutor on December 23, 2019, issued an international arrest warrant for Guillaume Soro on allegations of “attempting to undermine the authority of the State and the integrity of the national territory and conspiracy against the authority of the State; concealment of misappropriation of public funds and money laundering”.

The former rebel leader who was in Paris called off a planned homecoming where he was expected to fully engage in the upcoming elections.

The move against Soro, who retains the loyalty of many former rebel commanders who now hold senior positions in the army, has significantly increased tensions in Ivory Coast.

Public prosecutor Richard Adou said on state television that an arrest warrant had been issued for breaches of state security, receiving stolen public resources and money laundering.

“In reality, the bone of contention dates back to November 2016, when the vote to adopt the new Constitution was taken,” says political journalist Jules Claver Aka in an interview with Jeune Afrique.

Before that date, the president of the National Assembly took over the position as the country’s president in the event of a vacancy.

The new Constitution allows the vice-president to assume the role of interim president.

According to Aka, “Guillaume Soro has undoubtedly understood that he was no longer in the succession scheme, especially since Alassane Ouattara had taken measure to increase the power of Prime Minister Amadou Gon Coulibaly”.

Public prosecutor Richard Adou is quoted by The African Report to have said one of Soro’s close allies, Souleymane Kamara Kone, and two other people, whose connection to Soro was not immediately clear, had been arrested on corruption charges.

Police also detained Soro adviser Lobognon and took him to an unknown location, his wife, Amira, told Reuters.

Despite the arrest warrant on Soro’s head, fears are high he might orchestrate another takeover or disrupt the upcoming presidential in a bid to send a strong signal to Ouattara and restore his pride. Affaire à suivre...
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History is awash with stories of great friends whose relationship transformed into enmity within a short space of time. The feud between the former president of Botswana Ian Khama and his successor Mokgweetsi Masisi looks set to become a new addition to relationships that quickly turned into enmity.

There have been many tales that have been told by political analysts and the general public owing to the reasons why Khama and Masisi became great enemies. However, despite the multiplicity of the reasons, it’s quite clear that one of these, that is, the threat of a legacy being wiped away in a whisker is responsible for prolonging the feud that exists between former friends Khama and Masisi.

During his presidency, Khama was a huge fan of Masisi. As he edged closer to concluding his tenure in office, Khama spoke glowingly about the man who was his first pick as his successor, that is, Masisi. On the eve of April’s fool’s day in 2018, Khama made an appearance on state television assuring the nation that from April 1, he was going to step down and a new man (Masisi) was going to become the nation’s leader.

According to plan, Masisi was indeed sworn in as the new President of Botswana on April 1 in doing so continuing a tradition that has attracted envy from neighboring countries which saw the country complete a fourth bloodless transfer of power.

While the swearing in ceremony of the new President ensured that everything was going according to plan, little did Khama know that, that was going to be the end of his cordial relationship with Masisi. The man whom he had glowingly praised as he took the oath to lead the nation of Botswana had his own ideas pertaining to the path that the country was to take during his time in office. Unfortunately for Khama, Masisi’s ideas were all bent of reversing the work that Khama had done during his presidency.

A few months after taking the oath to lead Botswana as the President, several reports from local media stated that the country was now a safe haven for poachers looking to cull the huge elephant population in the country. From the opinions of the locals who commented and contributed to the reports, it was crystal clear that a large majority of them were actually in support of the decimating of the huge elephant herd.

Presenting a dilemma to Masisi however was the fact that Khama, his predecessor had signed a bill that prohibited the culling of elephants. This despite the fact that Botswana has the largest population of elephants in the world at over 100,000.

To make matters worse for Masisi, the reports surrounding the issue of elephant poaching soon attracted the attention of global media. With the global media snooping around the country, Masisi was afraid that such attention would cause harm to the country’s tourism industry, one of the key industries in the country. Masisi’s fears were also echoed by Tshokchedi Khama, the brother to the former president who was then the minister of Wildlife.

Presented with a huge dilemma, Masisi decided to take the position of the locals, that is, to allow the decimating of elephants. At the same time, Masisi called for all wildlife officers charged with hunting down poachers to be disarmed. His decision angered Khama who saw it as a way of destroying his legacy, a legacy that he had worked hard for during his two terms in office. Though Masisi and Khama’s brother Tshokchedi Khama at one point agreed that the global media attention surrounding the elephant poaching issue possesses the potential to harm the country’s tourism industry, Tshokchedi Khama was however not impressed with the decision that Masisi took in disarming wildlife officers. “I do not really know the reason why the wildlife officials were disarmed. But it was unfortunate. It is possible that the decision could be partly responsible for the increase in poaching.”

The threat to his legacy forced Khama to come out in the open and publicly criticize Masisi for taking a populist stance instead of protecting and preserving the country’s resources. Masisi saw this as an attack on his person and from there afterwards, a fully fledged feud began. To demonstrate that he was now doing things in his own way, Masisi began to reverse many of the policies that Khama had enacted.

Most notably, Masisi granted some individuals entry into the country even though they were restricted to do so during the reign of Masisi. At the same time, Masisi started to deport some expatriates under unexplained circumstances. Masisi went further to decline a request by Khama to use a state aircraft, something that he thought as a former leader of the country he was entitled to. To exacerbate the existing friction between him and Khama, Masisi also went on a rampage firing and suspending most of the Khama loyalists in the government including Kham’s most trusted lieutenant Mr Isaac Kgosi, the country’s former intelligence chief.

Though Masisi and Khama tried to play down the feud at first, it became very clear in a short space of time that everything was not rosy between them. Masisi during the 2018 State of the Nation address stated that “Batswana are all aware that the transition from the previous administration has not been as smooth as expected.” Khama on the other hand has granted several...
local and international media outlets interviews stating candidly that relations between him and Masisi have irretrievably broken down. At one point, Khama did state that elders of the party have the potential to contest Masisi for political power. Owing to this, divisions in the Botswana Democratic Party are bound to happen. In the last election, for the first time in the history of the party, the position of the President was challenged by Venson-Moitoi, a known associate of the former Botswana president. Though Venson-Moitoi ultimately lost the race, a precedent was set, one which is likely to continue in future. The feud between Masisi and Khama in all honesty regardless of the winner will harm the Botswana Democratic Party more than anyone else. Already the party has started experiencing factionalism and this is only going to continue. There is need therefore for the party to solve the feud if it still needs to continue dominating the political scene as it has since the attainment of independence. The last election bears testimony to this as the Botswana Democratic Party for the first time fell below the 50 percent threshold in the popular vote category as it recorded 47 percent.

African Development Bank President Akinwunmi Adesina on African Economic Outlook 2020

Good afternoon everyone! Welcome to the African Development Bank for the launch of the 2020 African Economic Outlook.

The African Economic Outlook is the flagship publication of the African Development Bank that projects economic growth trends on the continent and discusses policy approaches that can be used to improve economic growth and development.

There is nothing like local knowledge.

The African Development Bank (the Bank) speaks authoritatively on Africa, through its African Economic Outlook, because of its unparalleled local knowledge and close partnerships with governments. Simply put, the African Development Bank is the development partner of choice for African governments.

I would like to congratulate the team of economists at the African Development Bank, led by Dr. Hanan Morsy, for their work in putting together this outstanding piece of research.

As always, we are delighted that Ministers, Ambassadors, senior policy makers, and international organizations are here with us to participate in the discussion of the findings of the report.

Africa is where the focus of the world is right now as the growth and investment frontier. Just last week, I was in London for the UK-Africa Summit. There has been China-Africa Summit, Japan-Africa Summit, India-Africa Summit, Korea-Africa Summit, Russia-Africa Summit, US-Africa Summit and several others.

What do all these countries see? They see opportunities that Africa offers.

With a population of 1.2 billion people that is expected to rise to 2.5 billion by 2050, a rising middle class, rapid urbanization - and a labor force that will rise from 705 million today to well over 1 billion in the next 10 years - Africa offers huge market and investment opportunities. The Africa Continental Free Trade Area makes Africa a market worth $3.3 trillion.

Africa can no longer be ignored.

African economies are growing well, higher than the global average. Our African Economic Outlook estimates show that growth is projected to rise from 3.4% in 2019 to 3.9% in 2020 and 4.1% in 2021.

This aggregate growth rate masks highly diversified and resilient growth patterns. Indeed, 20 countries are projected this year to grow at 3-5%, while 20 countries are projected to achieve growth rates of 5% and above. That’s impressive!

Even more impressive is that 6 of the 10 fastest growing economies in the world are now in Africa: Rwanda (8.7%), Cote d’Ivoire (7.4%), Ethiopia (7.4%), Ghana (7.1%), Tanzania (6.8%) and Benin (6.7%).

Some regions are growing faster than others. East Africa is the fastest growing region with growth rate of 5% in 2019, followed by North Africa (4.1%), West Africa (3.7%), Central Africa (3.2%) and Southern Africa (0.7%).

For the first time in more than one decade, growth in Africa is due largely to expansion of investments rather than consumption, as well as from exports.

Just think of the following: Foreign Direct Investment to Africa rose by 11% in 2019, compared to just 4% in Asia, while it declined by -13% globally and by -23% for developed economies.

However, Africa faces important economic headwinds that could affect future growth. Global trade tensions have weakened global trade volumes, whose growth rate declined from 5.7% in 2017 to just 1.1% in 2019.

Another challenge has been the impact of climate change, especially from the extreme weather patterns such as cyclones that devastated Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe, as well as widespread drought across southern Africa and East Africa.

The African Development Bank provided $106 million to support Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi in the immediate aftermath of the cyclones, in addition to other emergency support.

African countries cannot continue
to reel from one emergency to another emergency. The African Development Bank has used its Africa Disaster Risk Insurance Facility to pay for insurance premiums for countries facing extreme weather events that have helped to provide $36 million in payout to countries. It is time now for the international community to help scale up this facility to reach many more countries.

We must also address issues of insecurity. Growth in West Africa, which improved as Nigeria’s economy recovered from recession, has been dampened by the rising insecurity challenges, especially in the Sahel. Several countries in West Africa, such as Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso and Chad are spending a very high share of their budgets on security.

It is now time for the African Development Bank, IMF and the World Bank to work out a financial support system that will help address these exogenous security shocks, which if left unaddressed, will have broader spillover effects that will lower growth and investment in the region. In this context, I wish to commend the ECOWAS Heads of State and Governments for their bold decision to set up a fund to help address these insecurity issues in the sub-region.

We must tackle rising debt levels. Total debt stock (external and domestic) currently stands at $500 billion. Median Debt to GDP has risen from 38% in 2008 to 54% in 2018. But there is no need for the panic button.

Let me be clear: Africa does not have a systemic debt crisis.

However, we must watch the quality of debt, the mix of debt in terms of concessional and non-concessional, the potential negative effects of rising domestic debt in crowding out private sector access to finance, the increasing level of non-Paris Club bilateral debt, and rising volumes of Euro bonds.

While there is no cause for alarm, greater prudence is needed. We all must now collectively focus on sustainable debt management and greater reliance on domestic resource mobilization to finance rising fiscal deficits.

The bulk of the debt is actually spent on infrastructure, which remains a major challenge for many countries. Governments can improve the cost effectiveness of their expenditures on infrastructure by sharply focusing on quality infrastructure, improved efficiency of public expenditure on infrastructure, while promoting greater participation of private sector in the provision of infrastructure.

Physical infrastructure, while important, is not enough to drive much needed greater growth and productivity of African economies. African countries should accelerate investments as well in the development of human capital.

Youth unemployment must be given top priority. With 12 million graduates entering the labor market each year and only 3 million of them getting jobs, the mountain of youth unemployment is rising annually.

Given the fast pace of changes, driven by the 4th industrial revolution - from artificial intelligence, to robotics, machine learning, quantum computing - Africa must invest more in re-directing and re-skilling its labor force, and especially the youth, to effectively participate.

The youth must be prepared for the jobs of the future - not the jobs of the past.

Especially critical is training in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The Bank is already working on this, with our support to build scientific centers of excellence, such as the African universities of science and technology – all part of the Mandela Institute of Science and Technology. We have invested in the Kigali Institute for Science and Technology that is providing world-class training in ICT at the Masters level in collaboration with the Carnegie Mellon University.

As part of our Jobs for Youth in Africa strategy, the Bank launched the establishment of Coding for Employment Program, designed to develop young digital entrepreneurs. We hope to develop 130 centers of innovation over the next five years to help create 9 million direct and indirect jobs. Our experience so far from ongoing programs in Rwanda, Nigeria, Kenya and Senegal has been impactful. Some 2,000 youth (46% women) were trained in just three months, between March and June 2019.

Without any doubt, there is need to expand financing for education at all levels, primary, secondary and tertiary. The educational system must adequately prepare the youth for the labor market. Priority must be placed on improving access to vocational skills training, reducing the mismatch between training and needs of the labor market, and providing greater incentives for the private sector to support young people with on-the-job training opportunities, as well as entrepreneurship.

At the end of the day, it is not GDP growth that matters. Nobody eats GDP.

Growth must be visible. Growth must be equitable. Growth must be felt in the lives of people. That is why the African Development Bank places particular emphasis on one of our High 5s: Improving the Quality of Life of the People of Africa.

We are a “People-focused Bank”. People are our core business; and their quality of life is our greatest return. It is the people of Africa who motivate us to keep doing what we do best: making prosperity a reality for all.

I hope that the findings of this African Economic Outlook will further challenge us that, while much has been achieved on growth, we still have ways to go to make that growth much higher, more equal and impactful in the lives of people, everyday.

And every single day we work, let’s look at the real lives behind the statistics. Let’s hear their voices. Let’s feel their aspirations. Let’s do a better job to make the dreams of improved quality of life for millions of Africans a reality.

Welcome once again! I wish you fruitful discussions.

Thank you very much.

*Speech delivered by Dr. Akinwumi A. Adesina, President, African Development Bank at the launch of the African Economic Outlook, 2020, January 30, 2020, African Development Bank Headquarters, Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire*
Robert Mugabe and the Succession Question: How Personality Politics Blinded Him in Choosing the Right Successor

By Prince Kurupati

When it comes to African leaders, there are a few who are well known globally than Robert Mugabe. During his long stay in power, Mugabe was a constant feature both in local as well as international media. In the earlier days, the young Mugabe was endeared by many both those at home and those in foreign lands. Such was the love shown to him that he was bestowed by the Queen the highest honour that any foreigner can receive. However, that love soon transformed into hatred.

In his older days, Mugabe had become a villain both to people at home and also to the foreigners. Most notably, this was as a result of the fast track land reform program which he implemented. The fast track land reform was a populist policy that was hurriedly implemented as a way of garnering support and votes towards the 2000 and 2002 parliamentary and presidential elections. Earlier on in 2000, Zimbabwe held a referendum for a new constitution with Mugabe’s party, ZANU (PF) calling for a new constitution to come into effect with provisions allowing the presidency to confiscate white-owned land without compensation while the opposition was calling for a NO vote. Unexpectedly for ZANU (PF), a high percentage of the voters rejected the constitution much to the dismay of Mugabe and his party. The referendum loss acted as a wakeup call to Mugabe and his party. The upcoming elections that they thought they were going to win convincingly as they had for the past 20 years since independence were now a major source of anxiety. Acting fast but rashly, Mugabe called on all war veterans to take the land which they had fought for during the land. With no properly laid down provisions on how the war veterans were going to take back ‘their’ land, most of them violently attacked the white occupants on the farms and confiscating everything.

The violent nature of the land reform immediately made Mugabe a villain to the West as they sympathized with their white relatives and friends who were at the mercy of the war veterans. The majority of Zimbabweans bar the war veterans were also dismayed by the fast track land reform. Farm workers lost their jobs; most of them had lived on the farms all of their lives and had no other home to go to. Mugabe’s decision to save his and ZANU (PF)’s political life by adopting populist antics worked and from thereafter, it became his number one strategy. However, in as much as it aided him to retain power, it blinded him from focusing on the future. All he was concerned about was how to survive for now neglecting to think about how he and the country were going to survive in years to come. It is against this background that Mugabe completely ignored the matter of succession.

After implementing a populist policy, Mugabe would be praised by those benefiting from the policy and they would call him a messiah, a man who is supposed to continue leading and not by words. However, after repeated attacks (unsurprisingly) on his person by Mugabe and also his wife Grace Mugabe, Mnangagwa did eventually decide to respond not verbally but by actions. Every senior government official who was seen to be sympathetic to Mugabe was branded an enemy and as such, not fit to remain as a government official. Many of those aligning with Mugabe thus lost their jobs and others were forced to flee from the country owing to perceived political persecution.

Till the time of Mugabe’s untimely death, Mnangagwa kept on fighting his battle with Mugabe by deeds and not by words. However, after Mugabe was gone, that all changed. In the quest to appear as a statesman, Mnangagwa sought to lead the burial and not by words. However, after Mugabe’s widow declined the offer of National Heroes Acre. Out of spite, Mnangagwa sought devices to ‘rectify’ this and thus paving the way for the 2017 coup which dethroned Mugabe from his position.

Unsurprisingly, Mugabe was extremely angered by those who orchestrated the coup as he felt he still had in him to lead the country. Full of rage, Mugabe broke all lines of communication with those who had partaken in his dethronement namely his successor Emmerson Mnangagwa and key conspirators including the now Vice President Constantine Chiwenga. With all the levers of power gone, there was nothing much that Mugabe could do to fight back rather than to express his opinions to those willing to listen via media outlets.

As for his successor, Emmerson Mnangagwa, he clearly knew that his decision to overthrow his former boss via a coup had angered him and as such decided not to say anything bad about Mugabe. However, after repeated attacks (unsurprisingly) on his person by Mugabe and also his wife Grace Mugabe, Mnangagwa did eventually decide to respond not verbally but by actions. Every senior government official who was seen to be sympathetic to Mugabe was branded an enemy and as such, not fit to remain as a government official. Many of those aligning with Mugabe thus lost their jobs and others were forced to flee from the country owing to perceived political persecution.

When it comes to African leaders, there are a few who are well known globally than Robert Mugabe. During his long stay in power, Mugabe was a constant feature both in local as well as international media. In the earlier days, the young Mugabe was endeared by many both those at home and those in foreign lands. Such was the love shown to him that he was bestowed by the Queen the highest honour that any foreigner can receive. However, that love soon transformed into hatred.

In his older days, Mugabe had become a villain both to people at home and also to the foreigners. Most notably, this was as a result of the fast track land reform program which he implemented. The fast track land reform was a populist policy that was hurriedly implemented as a way of garnering support and votes towards the 2000 and 2002 parliamentary and presidential elections. Earlier on in 2000, Zimbabwe held a referendum for a new constitution with Mugabe’s party, ZANU (PF) calling for a new constitution to come into effect with provisions allowing the presidency to confiscate white-owned land without compensation while the opposition was calling for a NO vote. Unexpectedly for ZANU (PF), a high percentage of the voters rejected the constitution much to the dismay of Mugabe and his party. The referendum loss acted as a wakeup call to Mugabe and his party. The upcoming elections that they thought they were going to win convincingly as they had for the past 20 years since independence were now a major source of anxiety. Acting fast but rashly, Mugabe called on all war veterans to take the land which they had fought for during the land. With no properly laid down provisions on how the war veterans were going to take back ‘their’ land, most of them violently attacked the white occupants on the farms and confiscating everything.

The violent nature of the land reform immediately made Mugabe a villain to the West as they sympathized with their white relatives and friends who were at the mercy of the war veterans. The majority of Zimbabweans bar the war veterans were also dismayed by the fast track land reform. Farm workers lost their jobs; most of them had lived on the farms all of their lives and had no other home to go to. Mugabe’s decision to save his and ZANU (PF)’s political life by adopting populist antics worked and from thereafter, it became his number one strategy. However, in as much as it aided him to retain power, it blinded him from focusing on the future. All he was concerned about was how to survive for now neglecting to think about how he and the country were going to survive in years to come. It is against this background that Mugabe completely ignored the matter of succession.

After implementing a populist policy, Mugabe would be praised by those benefiting from the policy and they would call him a messiah, a man who is supposed to continue leading and not by words. However, after Mugabe’s widow declined the offer of National Heroes Acre. Out of spite, Mnangagwa sought devices to ‘rectify’ this and thus paving the way for the 2017 coup which dethroned Mugabe from his position.

Unsurprisingly, Mugabe was extremely angered by those who orchestrated the coup as he felt he still had in him to lead the country. Full of rage, Mugabe broke all lines of communication with those who had partaken in his dethronement namely his successor Emmerson Mnangagwa and key conspirators including the now Vice President Constantine Chiwenga. With all the levers of power gone, there was nothing much that Mugabe could do to fight back rather than to express his opinions to those willing to listen via media outlets.

As for his successor, Emmerson Mnangagwa, he clearly knew that his decision to overthrow his former boss via a coup had angered him and as such decided not to say anything bad about Mugabe. However, after repeated attacks (unsurprisingly) on his person by Mugabe and also his wife Grace Mugabe, Mnangagwa did eventually decide to respond not verbally but by actions. Every senior government official who was seen to be sympathetic to Mugabe was branded an enemy and as such, not fit to remain as a government official. Many of those aligning with Mugabe thus lost their jobs and others were forced to flee from the country owing to perceived political persecution.

Till the time of Mugabe’s untimely death, Mnangagwa kept on fighting his battle with Mugabe by deeds and not by words. However, after Mugabe was gone, that all changed. In the quest to appear as a statesman, Mnangagwa sought to lead the burial and not by words. However, after Mugabe’s widow declined the offer of National Heroes Acre. Out of spite, Mnangagwa sought devices to ‘rectify’ this and thus paving the way for the 2017 coup which dethroned Mugabe from his position.
over where he was to be buried. The family ultimately won and Mugabe was buried secretly at his rural home.

The decision by Mugabe’s widow to reject him the chance to bury Mugabe at the National Heroes Acre really did anger Mnangagwa and through his spokesperson and various top government officials, he condemned the decision. It was clear from their pronouncements that the actions taken by Grace Mugabe had made her inherit Mugabe’s enemies. After the whole drama surrounding Mugabe’s final resting place, Mnangagwa resorted back to fighting the Mugabes with deeds. Most notably, there were attempts to take the Mugabe residence and one of the farms belonging to Grace Mugabe; this only possible undoubtedly with Mnangagwa’s blessing. Grace Mugabe did fight back but Mnangagwa retreated. However, with little to no power on her side and with Mnangagwa wielding absolute power, it’s clear who is likely to emerge victorious. Grace Mugabe’s hatred and spite for Mnangagwa makes any form of reconciliation virtually impossible.

Cryptic Zuma Keeps Taking Aim at Ramaphosa

By Prince Kurupati

J acob Zuma is a man who is not short of controversy. Since the 90s, Zuma has been a key figure in the media circles owing to various reasons. Most notably, his involvement in the arms deal as well as his polygamous lifestyle has always attracted attention everywhere he goes. It’s no surprise now that Zuma finds himself at the centre of yet another controversy, but this time, it has nothing to do with his harem nor does it have anything to do with the arms deal. Rather, it is his frosty relationship with his predecessor that’s making him a centre of attraction.

Like most before him, Zuma left his position as the head of the African National Congress (ANC) and subsequently as the President of South Africa, one of the most prosperous nations in Africa after nine years. When he left his position, he had his own choice of successor in Nkosazana Dhlamini Zuma, his ex-wife. Even though the two had their differences on the marriage front, Zuma felt that his legacy and the right side was meant for): “The narrative by some individuals in the leadership who claim that there was policy uncertainty in the last nine years spanning the terms of the Fourth and Fifth Administrations – the so-called ‘Zuma nine years’ – is an erroneous and dishonest narrative. Nothing can be further from the truth.”

Zuma went further stating: Statements that there has been policy uncertainty in the last two administrations are dishonest and untrue, particularly if they are made a narrative by senior people of our movement, who have been part of these important and thorough policy formulation processes...No one can say in the last nine years there was policy uncertainty, particularly those who were in the leadership of our movement (ANC) and Government during this period.”

While Zuma has found an ally in Twitter, his nemesis Ramaphosa has found allies in several local media outlets. Several local media outlets seem to have aligned themselves with the current president and they play a huge part in exposing Ramaphosa’s good side while showcasing the bad that Zuma has done before during and after his presidency. With the local media outlets in his favour, Ramaphosa hasn’t really been cornered to respond to any of Zuma’s cryptic messages personally.

This therefore makes any form of reconciliation unlikely for as long as they continue to act like everything is normal between them.

The feud that exists between them is equally damning to both as a Zuma defeat may see him have a day in court to answer for the many allegations of corruption mostly emanating from the arms deal. With some institutions fronting Ramaphosa, it’s likely that the court case will be treated as a political issue rather than legal issue hence the odds will be heavily stacked against Zuma. For Ramaphosa, however, Zuma has already shown in the past that he has the potential to destroy one’s presidency as was the case with Thabo Mbeki who lost his presidency owing to Zuma’s populism antics. As such, a battle with Zuma is one to enter only when guaranteed to win. At the moment, it seems both Zuma and Ramaphosa are in a stalemate position but anyone who gets the first big break will definitely end up being the winner.
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Dr. John Nkengasong, Director at Africa Center for Diseases Control and Prevention, reveals continents readiness to tackle Coronavirus.

By Amos Fofung

More than 1000 people, and counting, have died from the new virus in China with the number of confirmed infections rising to 37,198, according to China’s National Health Commission.

From Hubei Province, the center of the outbreak, Coronavirus has already spread to 26 countries by the time of this report.

Declared a global emergency by the World Health Organization, WHO, the virus currently has no cure but intensive research towards that in underway by over half a dozen pharmaceutical companies.

The 2019 Novel Coronavirus as medical practitioners now call it has as of February 9, 2020, claimed the lives of 814 people globally, with 813 in Mainland China. First death outside Mainland China occurred in the Philippines.

Various nations have issued travel restriction, some strengthening cross border security checks and obligatory quarantine to travelers suspected to have come in contact with the virus. So far, a few cases have been reported in South America and Africa, but none has been confirmed yet.

For a continent still reeling from the devastating blow of the Ebola outbreak which killed some 11,300 people, Africa is not ready for another health emergency and better doubles its efforts to keep the Corona Virus out.

Confirmed cases have been reported in United Kingdom, Malaysia, Taiwan, Spain, South Korea, Vietnam, Singapore, Germany, United Arab Emirates, France, Japan, Thailand, Canada, Australia, Italy, Philippines, Belgium, India, Sweden, Russia, Sri Lanka, Finland, Nepal, Cambodia, and the US.

In Africa, suspected cases are on the rise with many of them been dismissed daily. In Nigeria, two men were arrested from creating a public scare that they had been affected by the virus.

Suspected cases under observation have been reported in Equatorial Guinea, Ivory Coast, and Kenya Sudan and Angola.

Indonesia, Colombia, Brazil, Pakistan, Poland are also monitoring cases that might be their first as reported by Pharmaceutical Technology, which is closely monitoring the spread of the virus worldwide.

Just as was the case during the Ebola outbreak, Africa’s readiness to tackle a potential outbreak of the Corona Virus has been put to question.

Dr. John Nkengasong, Director at the Africa Center for Diseases Control and Prevention, confirmed that “we have not yet reported confirmed cases in Africa; however, they are some suspected cases."

A leading expert in the medical field, Dr. John Nkengasong until recently was Associate Director for Laboratory Science and Chief of the International Laboratory Branch at the Division of HIV & TB, Center for Global Health, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Atlanta.

Also, Dr. Nkengasong co-chairs the US President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief’s (PEPFAR) Laboratory Technical Working Group and serves as the founding chair of Board of Directors for the African Society for Laboratory Medicine.

In a televised interview with SABC, the Cameroon-born health expert believes that Africa is better prepared to face the virus after observing and learning from outbreaks in China and the rest of the world.

“This is a fast-evolving outbreak, the advantage Africa has is we have...”
seen it spread in China and other countries which has given us some space to prepare and we are doing that as quickly as possible with coordination from the World Health Organization.”

“All member states are on very high alert. We just conducted a meeting a few minutes ago with all member states coordinated from the African Union to check with them how prepared they are and we continue to provide them support in the areas of laboratory testing, enhance airport screening and monitoring and also in the areas of infection prevention and infection control especially at the hospitals. We continue to coordinate our efforts in the continent while hoping that we will be able to deal and cope with this potential outbreak in case it becomes a huge issue in the continent.”

To better face the virus, Dr. Nkengasong said the African center for diseases control and prevention is working with most public health institutions across the continent to harness its assets across the continent and support counties deemed less equip to handle a potential outbreak in the areas of surveillance, laboratory testing, and reporting.

“We don’t expect that every country will be able to do the entire spectrum of analysis and support but with the network model we hope that we can support one another and cope with this outbreak in case it becomes a massive situation in the continent.”

Reiterating that very little is known by the virus, Dr. Nkengasong revealed that the outbreak is related to the SARS coronavirus which hit China between 2002/2003 having relatively related genetic material or sequences.

On the mode of transmission, he said it could be transmitted from person to person and though much research is still ongoing, he applauded the remarkable findings over the past month which has helped to better understand the virus and is now fueling research.

Dr. Nkengasong holds a Masters in Tropical Biomedical Science at the Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp, Belgium, and another Master’s Degree in Medical and Pharmaceutical Sciences at the University of Brussels School of Medicine and a Doctorate in Medical Sciences (Virology) from the University of Brussels, Belgium.

Between 1993-95 he was Chief of the Virology and the WHO Collaborating Center on HIV diagnostics, at the Department of Microbiology, Institute of Tropical Medicine, Antwerp, Belgium.

He joined CDC in 1995 as Chief of the Virology Laboratory, CDC Abidjan, Ivory Coast, and became Chief of the International Laboratory Branch, Global AIDS Program in 2005. His work on HIV diagnosis, pathogenesis, and HIV drug resistance has been extensively published since 1988 and has published over 120 health journals.
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Several countries, including France, the United States, Germany, Japan, South Korea, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, are trying to evacuate their nationals from Wuhan, the Chinese city where the new coronavirus was first reported. The new coronavirus has reportedly left at least 360 dead while an estimated 17,000 have been contaminated.

But what about the Africans there?

Initial reports say a Cameroonian student from Jingzhou city in Hubei province has been diagnosed with the new coronavirus. According to his university press release dated February 2, 2020, he is responding well to treatment at the hospital. I would like to draw attention to the difficulties the African community in China faces and the deafening silence of the respective countries for any attempt to bring their citizens home for treatment or a as a precautionary measure.

Apart from Morocco and Algeria, which have sent planes to repatriate their fellow citizens - 167 Moroccans, 36 Algerians, 10 Tunisians and a few Libyans subject to a fortnight of observation -, the other African countries have yet to make similar efforts like the North African counterparts.

African students from Wuhan to Beijing describe a pretty morbid atmosphere, and are afraid to go out because the virus is transmitted by air. And yet, to feed, you have to go out! But then again, you have to wear a mask, gloves and, according to an African who has lived in the Chinese capital for several decades, «disinfect oneself with alcohol at 90 ° or even with bleach on the way home». These latter protective items are out of stock in stores, and food is scarce. You may starve if you don’t wake up early to go to do grocery shopping.

As time goes by, they will encounter real difficulties and therefore call for help to get them out of the affected and quarantined areas. The psychological pressure is great, staying confined to the house for an indefinite period brings a lot of anxiety or a cabin fever even could create psychosis.

Some African embassies in Beijing have already requested financial assistance from their respective governments for their communities. «Our needs are more than financial,» said an African student. «What to do with money on my account in a deserted city? The city of Wuhan is quarantined because it is the epicentre of the virus, therefore highly infected. No matter how many millions I have, this sum will not be of much use to me (...) if I cannot find a place that is holy and reassuring enough to stock up on supplies,» he added in a letter to his embassy.

Media silence in the face of an African Chinese puzzle

When I watched the news on France 24, I had tears in my eyes when I saw these French parents reassured to find their newly repatriated children. What about the parents of these young Africans who remained confined to China without any way out? Have we thought about ascertaining how they are doing?

One should know that China is the second destination chosen by young Africans after France for their university studies. The number of African students residing in China was 80,000 in 2018 according to figures provided by the Chinese Ministry of Education, a figure which will sure increase. This, as the Chinese government decided to grant 50,000 university scholarships to the African continent until 2021.

On January 30, WHO declared an international emergency in response to the epidemic. The Chinese authorities do not envisage the end of this situation before June 2020. Several questions bother me ... what prevents African countries from coming together and establishing a strategic emergency plan for their citizens with their Chinese partners for practical, adequate and immediate solutions?

After talking on the phone with an African diplomat based in Beijing, I could understand that several factors hindered repatriation: first, the lack of medical means and reception facilities to welcome African nationals in their respective countries. Indeed, on the spot, they should be put in solitary confinement for two weeks, with an inherent risk of spreading the new coronavirus on the African continent.

Is it necessary to leave its nationals at the epicentre of a global epidemic in view of the tensions over local resources, isn’t it more dangerous?

On the other hand, the diplomatic puzzle: systematically repatriating African nationals could cast doubt on the ability of the Chinese to master the virus is transmitted by air. And yet, to feed, you have to wear a mask, gloves and, according to an African who has lived in the Chinese capital for several decades, «disinfect oneself with alcohol at 90 ° or even with bleach on the way home». These latter protective items are out of stock in stores, and food is scarce. You may starve if you don’t wake up early to go to do grocery shopping.

Open-mouthed diplomacy even on matters of life and death?

Do we not de facto condemn all those who are not - yet - infected by leaving them in Wuhan? Is leaving these Africans the only way to prevent the virus from arriving on the continent? Not sure what you mean...

So far, no cases of coronavirus have been reported in Africa.

To limit the risk of contamination by travellers from China, the airports of African capitals are strengthening their sanitary facilities. Several countries such as Ghana, Senegal, Kenya, Ethiopia, South Africa and even Nigeria and Côte d’Ivoire have implemented preventive measures at airports for flights from China in order to diagnose possible cases of coronavirus.

However, Chinese travellers from
Wuhan or other Chinese cities have been or are allowed to travel to major African cities. The question of control and observation in this case arises. In Mauritania, for example, it was the Chinese Embassy that asked its recently arrived nationals to remain confined for at least 14 days to prevent the possible spread of the new coronavirus. What are the arrangements that African states themselves make on their territory? Why are Africans left behind in the epicentre of the virus?

I call for a real pan-African awareness. On February 9 and 10, African heads of state will meet in Ethiopia for the annual summit of the African Union. So this is an opportunity for a solution to be found for this community in China ... before it is too late.

Raïssa Girondin is a freelance journalist, specialist in African issues. She previously worked for the Voice of America, based in the United States, where she anchored Washington Forum television debate, and the radio news. Prior to her position at VOA, she was a TV news anchor in French-language for the Chinese state media CGTN in Beijing. She started her journalist career in the press in Paris with Amina, the magazine for African women and earlier with the French group Lagardère as a communication professional.

With a fortune estimated at more than US $3bn, Isabel dos Santos is the richest woman in Africa, the first billionaire on that continent, according to the American magazine Forbes, and also one of the names most referred to in the press in recent days. Over the last few years she has built an empire that encompasses various sectors, construction, banking, large-scale distribution, oil, diamonds or even telecommunications, to name but a few. But the empire may be in free fall.

The only daughter of former Angolan President José Eduardo dos Santos’s first marriage to former Russian chess champion Tatiana Kukanova, Isabel dos Santos was educated at one of England’s best private schools, St. Paul’s Girls School, and graduated in Electrical Engineering from King’s College, also in London, where she had lived since she was ten years old with her mother, who had meanwhile divorced. Already an adult, Isabel took over the reins of the family business and made her fortune grow. Together with Sindika Dokolo, a Congolese art collector, she got married 17 years ago and has four children with him. She will have found not only a passionate husband, but also a business partner, now equally involved “Luanda Leaks” scandal.

It all started when an investigation carried out by a group of journalists from various countries in the world and led by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists revealed how Isabel dos Santos had amassed a billionaire fortune in an illicit manner. The investigation was based on a set of over 715,000 documents provided by the Platform for the Protection of Whistleblowers in Africa, a Paris-based organisation.
The set of reports indicates that Dos Santos took advantage of the ease of moving embezzled money to tax havens to invest and keep part of his fortune spread in countries also experiencing serious problems with corruption, a common practice of making money «clean» outside her country and counting on the difficulties in tracking the money. In recent months, the richest woman in Africa has been surrounded by a series of scandals and accusations such as fraud, embezzlement of public funds and money laundering.

She also refers to overbilling for services that were not carried out in concrete during Isabel dos Santos’ management of the country’s largest company, the state-owned oil company Sonangol. José Eduardo dos Santos, known as JES and father of Isabel dos Santos, was in power for over 35 years in Angola, in a government marked by human rights violations and censorship of freedom of expression, with journalists and critics often being persecuted. In 2016, JES appointed his daughter to Sonangol’s highest office.

Isabel dos Santos’ business has two sides. It has an Angolan side and an international side. For a long time, the Angolan side financed the international side, for example, through the participation of Angolan public companies in international investments where the engineer Isabel dos Santos also had assets. Dividends from loans from her companies and Angolan public companies supported the group outside Angola.

As the daughter of the President of the Republic, she had a red carpet at her disposal. She did everything without hindrance. A company owned by Isabel dos Santos was involved in buying Angolan diamonds below market price, a policy that resulted in losses for the National Diamond Company of Angola of around US $3bn over the last 10 years.

The diamonds were bought by three companies, one of them belonging to her. The sale of diamonds below market price was first revealed when the Angolan state asked a court to freeze the accounts and properties of Isabel dos Santos and other associates. Another Angolan diamond company, Sodium, lost US $200M when, on orders from then President José Eduardo dos Santos, it financed the formation of a company to buy the luxury jewelry store De Grisogono, in favour of her daughter’s husband, Sindika Dokolo, who recently filed for bankruptcy.

Because of these scandals, the companies of dos Santos are falling into free fall. She has three main historical areas. The first is telecommunications. The second sector is banking and the third sector is energy, with Galp mainly. What can be said is that the telecommunications sector has already collapsed. The administrators associated with Isabel dos Santos resigning from the companies immediately. Everything in Angola in this sector is seized.

In the last decade, these companies have obtained consultancy contracts, loans, public works and licences worth a billion dollars from the Angolan Government. The Provincial Court of Luanda also ordered the seizure of bank accounts of Isabel dos Santos in Portugal, Nuno Ribeiro da Cunha, was found dead on the night of 22 January. He appeared dead with serious injuries, which may indicate suicide, after on 7 January he was also found injured after a suicide attempt that he himself said was for non-professional reasons. But observers disagree and associate suicide with «Luanda Leaks».

Isabel wants to cooperate with justice

The Provincial Court of Luanda also ordered the seizure of personal bank accounts of the businesswoman justifying that they are responsible for the loss of more than US $1bn to the Angolan State. The court order also explains that the defendants are hiding the assets obtained at the State’s expense, transferring them to other entities and it is revealed that Isabel José dos Santos, through one of her partners, is trying to transfer some of her business to Russia, and the Portuguese Justice Police intercepted a transfer worth US $10m.

By the way, dos Santos has changed residence, now lives in Dubai, and has assumed his Russian nationality. Assuming that Russia does not extradite its citizens, Isabel dos Santos may escape a possible trial in Angola or in Europe. Therefore, in case of despair, living in Russia could be her salvation.

On the other hand, Isabel dos Santos’ lawyers have begun talks with the Angolan Attorney General’s Office in an attempt to reach an agreement for the businesswoman to pay the amount owed, in exchange for suspending the seizure of her assets in Angola. This change of attitude of Isabel dos Santos, who at the beginning opted for confrontation, having accused the government of João Lourenço of persecution, is due to the pressure that the former President, José Eduardo dos Santos, will be exerting on his daughter to stop exposing herself in the media and avoid extremes of positions to save her assets in Angola.

The case that leads Isabel dos Santos to negotiate with Angolan justice is related to the seizure of her and her husband’s assets worth US $1.13m.

This coup in the empire of the dos Santos family follows the opening of several criminal inquiries into other children of the deposed President. Angolan journalist and human rights activist Rafael Marques, who was persecuted when dos Santos was president, believes the time has come for the judiciary to act firmly in investigating the responsibilities
Study in the USA: Achieve the American Dream

By: John Nkemnji, Ph.D.*

Experiencing the “American dream” is the fancy of people, not only Americans, but many youths around the world. Ambitious youths around the world who face challenges to achieve their full academic or career potential in their native countries seek solace in other countries that can afford them with better opportunities. The United States of America is one of those sought after countries.

This article explores opportunities that are available to those who seek refuge in another country to make a better life for themselves. Two of the best ways are 1) legally coming to study in an institution of higher learning and 2) immigrating through the annual Diversity Visa Lottery (DV) program. Enrolling in an institution of higher learning is possible if you have enough funds to pay the cost of tuition and board, scholarship, or sponsor. The DV Lottery program is less expensive and relies on chance. Additionally, if you immigrate via the DV Lottery program, you can still attend school.

Pursuing a student visa is an expensive pathway to moving to the United States. Applicants must prove that they have adequate funds to study in a program that is not readily available in their home country. Depending on the length of study, they may be required to show proof of at least twenty thousand dollars. Some people who do not have adequate funds attempt to enter the United States indirectly through another country. This method can be expensive, risky, and unsafe as their journey can be faced with unknown circumstances. Once the costs of procuring documents and transportation fees are added up, it may end up costing just as much as providing evidence of funds available for study in an accredited school abroad. There have been instances when immigrants have died during their journey abroad or have been deported back to their home countries.

It is always best to immigrate legally as it ensures a safe path and avoids legal challenges. One must plan ahead when studying abroad. It takes time to apply for admissions, gather documents, seek a visa, and arrive in time for the start of the academic program. Many schools have application deadlines for students from other countries because the mailing system is usually not as fast or reliable. You may have to resubmit missing documents and wait for a favorable reply. Using an online school application process is convenient if you have reliable internet connection. A high degree of honesty and transparency is valued in the USA.
All schools require evidence that you will be able to succeed academically in your field of studies such as transcripts of your prior academic work, recommendations from teachers, and standardized tests (e.g. TOEFL, SAT, ACT, GRE, or GMAT) depending on the initial screening. Results of the tests will be required before final admission is granted.

An encouraging note about seeking to study abroad is that many schools know the benefit of enrolling students from other countries. The qualified applicants come to enrich the total learning experience of other students on campus. Students from nations with different values and belief systems enrich American culture. Over a million students from other countries are enrolled in US colleges, according to the Open Doors report. I know schools with about 500 students who count over 500 students and staff from other nations each year. That gives a ration of about a tenth of the population originating from other nations. International students contribute a lot to the economy of the USA and support many jobs in a variety of important fields. A great number of researchers, doctors, professors, engineers, computer scientists, nurses, and other highly priced workers are students or personnel from other countries.

Students enter the country through a number of visa programs ranging from the popular F-1, M-1 to J-1. The F-1 visa is issued to full-time students seeking to study at an academic institution while the M-1 visa is issued to students for a vocational or non-degree granting institution. The J-1 visa is for sponsored graduate students or students on cultural exchange program who will be returning immediately to their homelands after their program completion. It is not necessary to know more about the visa types.

The order of names and the way dates are written is peculiar to systems like the Arabs, Chinese, British, French, and the US. You need to become familiar with the US system. The name format in the USA system is usually in the following order: FAMILY, MIDDLE and FIRST. If you have just two names or more than three names, use your common name as your first name and your Family/parents’ name as the Family name. You may omit the middle name and other descriptors like: née or espouse. Your parents’ or the popular name used by the family is FAMILY Name. The name you were given at birth is your MIDDLE name and your ENGLISH or CHRISTIAN name is your First name. Do not leave the space for FIRST NAME or Family name blank because these names will be your core identity in your new nation. Some students from the Middle East with difficult to write or pronounced names adopt a popular English name while studying in the USA and relegate their real name to official documents.

The order in which dates are written is also different especially when using numbers. Americans depict dates using the following format: Month/Day/Year. Admission and application forms usually have spaces in blocks requiring you to enter a letter or number in each block while leaving an empty block between words or numbers. Another legal way to migrate to the USA is through the annual DV program but you need to apply and be one of the successful applicants. If you are in the USA for studies, nothing prevents you from applying for the DV program and if you are in the USA on the DV program you are well off going to school. Both programs are not mutually exclusive. The DV program comes up annually but it takes time to get ready with documents to apply for the program. The program requires some documents that may take planning and time to acquire. Some of the other documents may take time to acquire. You need a current passport, a current passport size photo and at least a high school diploma to qualify. Your chances for success are slim but it is worth trying. The DV application is in three parts. Like the admissions process, the applicant does not need professional help in completing it. If you (the applicant) cannot complete the application by yourself, the chances of you succeeding in your new nation are slim.

The electronic application details are usually posted at the US department of State website: https://dvlottery.state.gov/. The first part of the application asks for information about yourself. Your name, gender, birth information, residence, identifying documents, contact information, and marital status. Remember that you have to fill the form as advised in the admissions application process. After completing part one, you are required to proceed to the second part and the final part.

Part 2 of the application is necessary only for those who are married. You (the applicant) will be required to complete identifying information for your spouse and for your children if you have any. Prepare your text and photo before you begin the online application process. Select a period with less internet traffic.

Part 3 of the application requires that you confirm that the information entered is true and up-to-date. You will be asked to submit the information and your current passport-size digital photo. Details of the format are described on the electronic application. A receipt with identifying information will be provided which you have to keep securely for use in checking if you are one of the lucky applicants selected for interview. The next and final step comes in about a year with the release of the result.

Living and learning with people from different nations helps everyone discover the benefits of getting along, avoiding stereotypes, and becoming broad-minded with informed opinions. It also helps strengthen personal and professional connections that are necessary to survive in today’s techno-global village. This article has discussed only two opportunities for youths from other nations to migrate and study in the USA. Please, if your documents are not written in English, it would be to your best interest to have them officially translated into English before you arrive the USA. You will be required to submit official English documents. More opportunities come up regularly and anyone with adequate finances and a spirit of adventure will be able to explore and live the American dream.

Dr. John Nkemnji is Professor Emeritus, Educational Technology. He is an educational consultant and a proponent for life-long learning. Prof. Nkemnji is a board member on a number of corporations. He is not a legal immigration adviser.
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African Development Bank Rebuts World Bank President's Comments On Africa's Debt Profile

In several news reports, World Bank President David Malpass was recently quoted as saying some Multilateral Development Banks, including the African Development Bank, have a tendency to lend too quickly and in the process, add to the continent’s debt problems.

This statement is inaccurate and not fact based. It impugns the integrity of the African Development Bank, undermines our governance systems, and incorrectly insinuates that we operate under different standards from the World Bank. The very notion goes against the spirit of multilateralism and our collaborative work.

For the record, the African Development Bank maintains a very high global standard of transparency. In the 2018 Publish What You Fund report, our institution was ranked the 4th most transparent institution, globally.

The African Development Bank provides a strong governance program for our regional member countries that focuses on public financial management, better and transparent natural resources management, sustainable and transparent debt management and domestic resource mobilization. We have spearheaded the issuance of local currency financing to several countries to mitigate the impacts of foreign exchange risks, while supporting countries to improve tax collection and tax administration, and leveraging pension funds and sovereign wealth funds to direct more monies into financing development programs, especially infrastructure.

The African Development Bank's Africa Legal Support Facility (ALSF) supports countries to negotiate terms of their royalties and taxes to international companies, and terms of their non-concessional loans to some bilateral financiers. We have been highly successful in doing so.

These are the facts:

The World Bank, with a more substantial balance sheet, has significantly larger operations in Africa than the African Development Bank. The World Bank's operations approved for Africa in the 2018 fiscal year amounted to US $20.2 billion, compared to US $10.1 billion by the African Development Bank.

With regard to Nigeria and South Africa, the World Bank's outstanding loans for the 2018 fiscal year to both countries stood at US $8.3 billion and US $2.4 billion, respectively. In contrast, the outstanding amounts for the African Development Bank Group to Nigeria and South Africa were US $2.1 billion and US $2.0 billion, respectively, for the same fiscal year.

With reference to the countries described as “heavily indebted,” our Bank recognizes and closely monitors the upward debt trend. However, there is no systemic risk of debt distress.

According to the 2020 African Economic Outlook, at the end of June 2019, total public debt in Nigeria amounted to $83.9 billion, 14.6% higher than the year before. That debt represented 20.1% of GDP, up from 17.5% in 2018. Of the total public debt, domestic public debt amounted to $56.7 billion while external public debt was $27.2 billion (representing 32.4% of total public debt). South Africa’s national government debt was estimated at 55.6% of GDP in 2019, up from 52.7% in 2018. South Africa raises most of its funding domestically, with external public debt accounting for only 6.3% of the country's GDP.

Development Banks continue to play critical roles in development efforts and in the aspirations of developing countries, most especially in Africa. Given substantial financing needs on the African continent, the development assistance of the African Development Bank, the World Bank and other development partners remain vitally important, with increasing calls for such institutions to do even more.

The lending, policy, and advisory services of these development institutions in their respective regions are often coordinated and provide substantially better value-for-money to developing nations, compared to other sources of financing. As a result of the African Development Bank’s AAA-rated status, we source funding on highly competitive terms and pass on favorable terms to our regional member countries. Combined with other measures to ensure funds are used for intended purposes, it helps regional member countries finance debt and development in the most responsible and sustainable way.

With regard to the need for better lending coordination and the maintenance of high standards of transparency, the African Development Bank coordinates lending activities, especially its public sector policy-based loans, closely with sister International Financial Institutions (notably the World Bank and the IMF). This includes reliance on the IMF and World Bank’s Debt Sustainability Analyses (DSA) to determine the composition of our financial assistance to low-income countries; and joint institutional approaches for addressing debt vulnerabilities in the African Development Fund (ADF) and International Development Association (IDA) countries.

In addition, country economists of the African Development Bank fully participate in regional and country level IMF Article 4 missions. Contrary to suggestions, these are just a few concrete examples of historic and ongoing coordination between sister...
Multilateral Development Banks, IFIs, and development partners. The African Development Bank is committed to the development of the African continent. It has a vested interest in closely monitoring debt drivers and trends in African countries as it supports them in their efforts to improve the lives of the people of Africa.

We are of the view that the World Bank could have explored other available platforms to discuss debt concerns among Multilateral Development Banks. The general statement by the President of the World Bank Group insinuating that the African Development Bank contributes to Africa’s debt problem and that it has lower standards of lending is simply put: misleading and inaccurate.

_Citations and Sources_


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here are dates you can hardly forget in the event which unfolded between the two countries, Rwanda-Uganda when their communiqué was made official; those are, an advisory note issued to advise Rwandans not to cross the border to Uganda, Luanda signing pact which never yielded the positive results and the release, deportation of Rwandans who were incarcerated in Uganda’s military cells.

These dates with their happening could always be abrupt to the citizens of both countries and some put a smile on them as they wait to see the outcomes of pact but of course free movement to both citizens is paramount and they would mostly wish to see pact signed in Luanda being implemented as peaceful and diplomatic solution to the row that paralysed business, took peoples’ lives, separated family and friends and made life a misery to both countries’ ordinary citizens.

In the move of having the row ended, Uganda made a surprise towards early this year and released nine detainees who were considered political and accused of espionage to Uganda. This political move ignited various reactions on twitter, Facebook and in the local media. Some activists in Uganda protested the move by calling on Uganda’s government to avail justice to those who believed these people had committed crimes against humanity such as involvement in killing many Rwandans who had fled from Rwanda.

Self worth initiative, the non profit organisation headed by Ms. Prossy Bonabana executive director was the first to protest and others brought it on facebook and twitter supporting the move of which Rwanda citizens and officials including Minister of East African affairs Olivier Nduhungirehe rebuffed the protest and called it off saying that Ms. Nduhungirehe rebuffed the protest of East African affairs Olivier and officials including Minister the move of which Rwanda citizens on facebook and twitter supporting first to protest and others brought it Bonabana executive director was the organisation headed by Ms. Prossy fled from Rwanda.

In killing many Rwandans who had fled from Rwanda.

According to Dr. Frederick Goloba-Mutebi, political scientist and an anthropologist, the decision to release them was political, in the interest of repairing relations. On those grounds alone, it was right. The tensions are not good for either country.

But also we have to establish whether the Government of Uganda withdrew charges or lost interest in the case. Whatever it did, however, raises questions about whether it had prima facie evidence against them or not, given they were in custody for 2 years or more.

They can sue, and that will be good, if they have grounds for doing so. It’s their right, if their rights were violated.

Rwanda Ambassador Frank Mugambage said it was (only) a step in the right direction. That suggests it is not enough.

While exchanging chats with friends and family advising them to go ahead to visit families, friends and transact business with Uganda since I knew the borders were opened, to many people, this was a dream which never came true when Rwanda’s Head of State told the diplomats that he is not about to tell his citizens to return to Uganda, because he has no control over their safety while there.

Addressing more than 60 diplomats at the Presidency in Kigali on Wednesday evening, Kagame said there were still hundreds of Rwandans in Ugandan jails and that telling his people they were safe in Kampala would be a lie.

This perhaps gave the clearest hint on the progress of the efforts to resolve the dispute between Rwanda and Uganda, indicating the two countries are far from reaching a resolution.

Kagame told Rwandans “just stop going there because if you go there, I have no control. They may arrest you, and your families will come to me and say you have been arrested. And there is nothing I can do about it.”

He revealed that he and Museveni will be going back to Luanda, Angola soon to review the progress in implementing what was agreed in the first meeting in August last year clarifying that the issue is between him and Museveni.

Note that ad hoc commissions failed to reach a solution after meeting in Kigali and Kampala and resolved to consult presidents.

It is also said that what’s happening between the two countries is an issue between their two first families.

The disappearance of ordinary citizens has not ceased to happen as Uganda citizens keep asking Uganda government about the citizens being killed while trying to cross the border and one of the Ugandan, Kigali based engineer who went missing end of last year.

It is a year now since Rwanda decided to close the Gatuna border with Uganda.

Second Luanda meeting resolutions which set 21st February for next meeting at Gatuna, and this gives hope to many that the border would be opened right away.

*Mohammed M. Mupenda is a news correspondent and freelance reporter, who has written for publications in the United States and abroad. He is also a French and East African language interpreter.
Billions at Play

The Future of African Energy and Doing Deals

by NJ AYUK

“Billions tells us the answer lies in the abundant, accessible and affordable natural gas reserves that dot the continent.”

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Opportunities abound on the African continent. It’s home to six of the world’s fastest-growing economies; and has an average annual GDP that has consistently outpaced the global average. In addition, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) — ratified in July 2019 — holds the promise of greater economic development, job creation and poverty reduction, as well as a healthy return on investment for those looking to expand into developing nations.

It is clear that these factors, and others, have encouraged global investors to sit up and take a closer look at Africa as an opportunity for growth. The UN Conference on Trade and Development’s (UNCTAD) World Investment Report 2019 stated that Africa has not only defied the previous year’s global slump in foreign direct investment (FDI) but it actually saw an 11 percent increase in investment up to June 2019.

In order to achieve meaningful growth by harnessing the opportunities the continent has on offer, companies need to take calculated risks, and expand their footprint and their capabilities. It’s important to understand which countries are appealing to investors, and why. Ideally you want to focus on strong markets, with a large pool of potential customers. Countries that are making it easier to do business there, by offering rebates, or shortening the length of time it takes to register a business, are also attracting investment. Countries that can act as hubs, potentially opening supply chains into different regions, are equally as important.

Apart from regulatory compliance, one of the biggest challenges you’ll face as you move into the continent is understanding how to identify and speak to local stakeholders, and connect with local audiences. The ability to address them — not in a homogenised, global voice — but rather one that is localised, authentic, and relevant will prove a critical step in your expansion journey.

Where the opportunities lie
There are 54 countries on the African continent, each one as diverse as the next, and each one offering different opportunities, in different sectors. If you’re planning on expanding your company’s footprint across the continent you need to confront this diversity and work towards understanding the accompanying nuances, and the regulatory environments that can affect your ease of doing business.

As we’ve worked towards our own expansion into Africa, we’ve made a point to consider markets that are consistently growing, that are attracting sizeable international investment, that offer us the opportunity to connect with the different regions from a logical and strong base, and very importantly — growth in sectors in which we are well-experienced in servicing.

According to UNCTAD’s report, much of the continent’s FDI comes from France, the Netherlands, the United States, the United Kingdom, and China, and it is interesting to see which regions, and specific countries and sectors are driving the bulk of inbound investment.

FDI in North Africa rose by seven percent to $14 billion spurred on by investment into Morocco which increased by 36 percent. In Sub-Saharan and Southern Africa FDI rose by 13 percent to $32 billion. FDI held steady at $9 billion in East Africa — the fastest-growing region of the continent. West Africa’s overall inflow of FDI, dropped by 15 percent to $9.6 billion.

Notable countries included Kenya, and Nigeria. Kenya’s FDI grew by an impressive 27 percent during the reported period, with investors favouring the manufacturing, hospitality, chemicals and oil and gas sectors. Their progress in facilitating private enterprise and foreign investment has improved the country’s Ease of Doing Business ranking, and its export processing zones (EPZs) are also proving appealing to investors.

Nigeria experienced a 43 percent drop in FDI, with most investment going to extractive sectors including oil, gas and minerals, however it was among one of the world’s top improvers in The World Bank Group’s latest Doing Business Study, having conducted reforms that impacted six indicators in the study.

Kenya also carried out six reforms including improving the reliability of its electricity supply and introducing an online system for social security contributions, positioning it third-highest in the regional rankings.

Expanding your footprint and capabilities
One of the most important lessons to learn when you’re thinking of
expanding into Africa, is that it’s not a one-size-fits all scenario. You are not simply expanding into Africa, more specifically you are expanding into Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Nigeria, or Rwanda, etc. Each country has its own set of rules and regulations, culture and traditions, legacies that need to be embraced or enhanced, and most definitely its own ways of communicating. Each market is different. Each audience is unique. Your strategy for expansion will need to be well-researched, and appropriately focused, and communications strategies will need to be created with each specific market and industry in mind.

Expansion is always a risk — no matter who you are — and when you do decide to take the plunge and invest in new operations in a new country, realise that you will need to give it time to gain traction, sometimes years. Growth is about the long-term view. You will need to be prepared to weather any temporary storms that might result in a subdued income, such as an election, or a sudden rush for your product or service that could cause problems on the production side of your business, requiring you to suddenly scale to answer demand – which may not be possible. At such times, you’ll need to quickly manage the risk and protect your brand’s reputation too, to ensure the sustainability of your business, not just in that region, but in your home market too.

You will need to stay current with local market trends and consumer behaviours, as well as regulatory developments, all of which can have a huge impact on your bottom line. This is something that you can achieve by developing deep local connections and partnerships that can not only give you solid insights into your market and but also help you connect with customers. By having the right partners in place at the start of your journey or and localised business models, you can gain a more solid foothold as you begin your journey, and can increase your organisation’s skillset, abilities and offering across a diverse geography. Building relationships and partnering with trusted local advisors who are able to assist you by providing context into local culture, regulations, working practices, and insights into your customer-base is hugely valuable.

**Be brave**

Working closely with partners and affiliates across the continent will bring localised insights that really make a difference, enabling you to take bigger risks with your business solutions and create truly unique and carefully targeted communications. Having insights into infrastructural and regulatory challenges in the countries that you’re operating in will enable you to build comprehensive risk profiles, and craft specific and plans. Fostering these important relationships allows an otherwise impossible level of oversight, and the ability to talk authentically to your audiences in their own language could be lost and your overall success impaired.

Growth is brought about by change, by taking risks, and by giving your business the best possible chance to succeed, and it all starts with confidently taking that first step. Let 2020 be the year you take that risk, that you set your business on a path to growth. Allow yourself to try something new — especially because you can’t be entirely sure of the outcome — and see where it takes you. You’ll certainly learn something new, and who knows, you might discover strengths and capabilities you didn’t know existed within your business — and that’s growth.

*Jordan Rittenberry is CEO of Edelman Africa*
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Young Africans benefit from $500,000 Scholarship funding under the Africa Industrial Internet Programme

Port Louis, Mauritius—31 January 2020—General Electric (NYSE: GE) and the Africa Leadership University (ALU) have announced the kick-off of the 3rd cohort of the Africa Industrial Internet Programme (AIIP) which is aimed at equipping young Africans with skills that will enable them to take part in the fourth industrial revolution.

The 2020 cohort has enrolled 35 students from 8 countries across Africa, drawn from Oil & gas, transportation, power, energy, manufacturing, healthcare, telecoms and aviation industries. Over the last two years, the rigorous training programme has graduated 64 students, of which 50 were fully sponsored by GE from a scholarship fund totalling US Dollars 500,000. GE will give 10 full scholarships for the current cohort.

Launched in 2018, the programme has empowered participants with essential skills for building applications for the Industrial Internet, which enables machine-to-machine communication that results in systems that can collect, analyze, and deliver data in real-time. These features provide significant benefits such as predicting when a device will require maintenance, enhancing logistics management, enhancing quality and optimizing safety.

The training takes place at a time when spending on the Internet of Things is predicted to reach a trillion US dollars by 2022, with the total number of connected devices being projected to rise to 75.44 billion worldwide by 2025, a fivefold increase in ten years.

Commenting on the Programme, Farid Fezoua, President & CEO for GE Africa said, “As a digital industrial company, it’s exciting to see how over the last two years the AIIP has developed an ecosystem of digital engineers that utilise data science as an enabler for their work across industries, developing solutions for the most pressing challenges. Our partnership with ALU for the AIIP is a testament of our commitment to develop the next generation of leaders that will drive solutions made in Africa for Africa in this transformative digital age.”

The AIIP is designed using a project-based approach where participants get to apply their learning in real world contexts. The Programme includes regular assessments in each module culminating with a final project where participants are tasked with applying their learning to solve an existing problem either in their business or in a partner organisation’s business operations. This is achieved through modules in machine learning and big data analytics, Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT) and Cloud-based Application Development. A unique aspect of the Programme is a deliberate focus on creating links to industry for participants by inviting industry experts to intensives to share case studies, projects of interest, trends and opportunities, through industry field visits and mentorship opportunities with data science professionals.
Lake Chad to become world heritage site in effort to saving most severe environmental crises in Sub Saharan Africa

By Amos Fofung

Once considered the sixth largest lake in the world, Lake Chad has over the years shrunk to one-tenth of its original size bringing with it a trail of famine, conflict, and death to the countries that lie on the Lake Chad Basin.

Situated in the Sahel zone of West-Central Africa at the conjunction of Chad, Cameroon, Nigeria, and Niger, Lake Chad has for decades supported the livelihood of over 40 million people.

The dramatic shrinking of the lake has had far-reaching consequences. The populations of the Chad Basin countries, and beyond, have traditionally relied on its waters and those of its source rivers for survival.

A cocktail of unprecedented population growth, unregulated irrigation, climate change, and Boko Haram terror group activities, have conspired to choke the Lake forcing governments, climate activists and organizations to strategize on saving the Lake and its species.

According to Fair Planet, “in the 1960s, the Lake had on average 135

There is a need to act and save the Lake Chad Basin .photo FAO.
fish species, with fishermen netting 200,000 tonnes of fish each year which birthed a thriving fish business in the country with about 20,000 commercial fish sellers engaged in booming business.”

The report adds that “as the population continued growing and more people embraced farming and fishing demand for water increased. With government failing to encourage replenishing of water, and with climate change in Cameroon taking a toll on the lake, the water levels slowly started deteriorating.”

“Numerous alerts from both local scientists and international bodies as water levels started receding. If quick interventions had been taken by the early 1990s when the water levels started dropping too fast this could have been salvaged,” said Patrick Muhinze, a Ugandan scientist and expert in resources related conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Initially, the lake covered some 26,000 square kilometers, but is today a pale shadow of its former self now only occupying a paltry 500 square kilometers.

Most alarming is the fact that experts are now warning that if the trend continues the lake will completely disappear in the next two decades.

**Saving Lake Chad**

Following on from decades of efforts to address the ongoing environmental decline, which has led to mass migrations and wide-scale insecurity in the sub-region, a three-day, International Conference on Saving Lake Chad took place in Abuja, Nigeria in February 2018.

It was organized by the Federal Government of Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin Commission, LCBC, with the support of UNESCO. This included a high-level meeting of leaders of member states of the LCBC. The conference aimed at creating global awareness of the socio-economic and environmental challenges arising from the dwindling of Lake Chad and the resulting threat to livelihoods that have seen increased insecurity; as well as to discuss ways of stopping the lake from drying up any further.

As part of efforts to preserve the area, the Lake Chad Basin is to become a world heritage site, following its nomination to the World Heritage List of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO within the Biopalt Project.

Director, Water Resources Planning and Technical Support Services in the Federal Ministry of Water Resources, Nigeria, Alice Ojowu, disclosed at a consultative/informative meeting on the nomination of the Lake Chad to the World Heritage List.

The issue of preserving the Lake Chad came up for discussion between the Lake Chad Basin Commission and UNESCO after the summit of the Heads of State and Government in 2010, when UNESCO was called upon to nominate Lake Chad on the World Heritage list as a protected area and develop it with the preservation of its biodiversity and ecosystem as a priority, to ameliorate the livelihood of the population of the basin.

The provisional nomination file for the Lake Chad on the world heritage list is titled Lake Chad Cultural Landscape and will seek to address the fundamental problem of restoring the Lake Chad through participatory protective mechanism; while enhancing the sustainable development of the area.
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Why FIFA’s Intrusion in CAF could damage African Football

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

Gianni Infantino’s continuous involvement in the affairs of CAF and African football may have a disastrous effect in the long run. This is just one of the comments coming out from football stakeholders in the African continent.

This comment, however, is not shared by all, as others see the FIFA President’s role as one who is there to bring a change in the management of football in Africa.

Viewed from whatever prism, what is certain is that, CAF and African football stakeholders should brace up from additional encroachment from FIFA’s President Gianni Infantino in the management of African Football with all the risks involved and not least the pride of the whole continent.

From controversially putting Fatma Samoura as General Delegate for Africa at CAF, to proposing African showpiece to be held every four years than its normal two years, and the proposition of creating an African super league, FIFA President Gianni Infantino is slow managing the affairs of CAF.

FIFA’s putting in place of its Secretary-General, Fatma Samoura as General Delegate for Africa for six months caused outraged amongst many African football stakeholders and football lovers. Many on social media platforms tagged the decision as one of colonialism.

With numerous allegations levied against him, and his back to the wall, and a dose of naivety, the President of CAF Ahmad Ahmad has failed to publicly voice any concerns on the interference from FIFA, a thing that is shocking to many football observers.

Before FIFA’s intervention, the leadership of the Confederation of African Football was enmeshed in multiple corruption cases. The problems continued to pile up, including the sacking of former allies by the Confederation’s President Ahmad Ahmad, controversial management decisions, multiple legal cases, sexual harassment claims, and the termination of crucial media contracts.

FIFA Proposing Four Years for AFCON

FIFA President, Gianni Infantino, has proposed that the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) should hold every four years.

Infantino made the proposal known to African football delegates from the 54 member Associations at a meeting in Rabat, Morocco.

“What I’m asking you, and it’s your decision, is to discuss and consider moving to a Nations Cup every four years,” Infantino said.

“The AFCON generates 20 times less than the Euros. Having the AFCON every two years, is that good at the commercial level? Has this developed the infrastructure? Think about spending it every four years.

“We have been talking about the development of African football for many years. Pele once said that an African team would win the World Cup, but this hasn’t happened and it seems we are not making progress. Today must be the day we turn that page. “Our objective must be to project African football to the top of the world,” Infantino said.

The AFCON is currently staged every two years, which makes it unpopular with European clubs. The tournament was expanded to 24 teams for the first time in Egypt last year, which held between June and July.

The 2021 edition will be held in Cameroon, and revert to its original calendar of January and February.

FIFA Appoints General Delegate for Africa to CAF

FIFA appointment of Fatma Samoura was met with opposition from some members of the football governing body, such as UEFA’s chief Ceferine wrote to Infantino in a letter seen by The Associated Press.

“Never in this history of our institutions has the FIFA Secretary-General, who under the FIFA statutes lead the organization, been placed secondment to take control of a federation, even with the latter’s consent.
Ceferin said Samoura becoming FIFA General Delegate for Africa while retaining the title of secretary-general «raises a large number of questions and in particular the likelihood of conflicts of interest» as well as doubts over whether it complies with the statutes of FIFA and the CAF.«

“You must understand that this is not the type of decision to be taken lightly and in haste,» Ceferin wrote. «Without our legal analysis of the situation and consultation of the European members of the FIFA Council, I am not at liberty to approve the proposal you put forward.”

It can be said that CAF brought it upon itself with the numerous corruption allegations that were placed on them. Its President Ahmad Ahmad was briefly questioned by French Police, a move that caused anger amongst Africans.

FIFA’s six-month receivership in Africa has left a mark on African football. Infantino is seeking to sanitise the management of the game but he is failing to incorporate a broader development plan that is inclusive of local objectives.

Infantino Proposing African Super League

This is another decision that will not sit well with authorities in the African continent. This is because there are two vital competitions such as the CAF Champions League and the CAF Confederation Cups.

The controversial tournament will be going in line with that proposed and validate by FIFA – the expanded club world cup.

In the meantime, a bigger disruption is contained in Infantino’s suggestion that an elite club league of 20-24 teams should be created. In my view, this too is a bad idea. It would lead to stronger countries having multiple teams vying for the same trophy. And with over 50 countries in Africa, the law of natural selection will ensure that only a few big nations will participate. The rest will struggle to even qualify.

FIFA has proposed the creation of an African Super League featuring the biggest clubs on the continent that could generate an estimate of $200m

With a new competition proposed by the Infantino, the pan-African league developed in conjunction with the Confederation of African Football (CAF) is aimed to become one of the top 10 competitions in world football.

“I want to create a real pan-African league that would feature 20-24 clubs with a maximum of maybe two clubs per country that would still play in their national leagues but that would play during the year so we can crown the club champions of Africa,” he said, as per Reuters.

FIFA said in a statement that the permanent member clubs would be urged to provide an investment of $20 million annually over five years and would also have to meet other participation criteria such as investment in youth and women’s football.

The decision has raised a lot of debates on social media with some for and others against.

“For that, it will be a well-recognized league as the CAF Champions League is not even recognized by FIFA. Many African teams will love to play in such which will mean them getting more money,” a football writer wrote online. “There needs to be proper competition infrastructure. I think it is fair to say that competitions in Africa are 30-to-40 times less successful than in Europe.”

“What’s wrong with the CAF Champions League? Why doesn’t he (Infantino) just give CAF more money instead of making it about him?” another said.

FIFA’s claim that the proposed new league will generate increased revenue for CAF does not tell the complete truth. The creation of an expanded World Clubs’ competition would benefit FIFA directly. The existence of a new competition of global value, not dominated by Europe, would increase its earning capabilities. The new elite African league would theoretically feed into a wider competition comprising strong teams with globally recognizable players. It would improve FIFA’s ability to attract generous sponsors, who would be drawn by a large global audience seeking balanced competition.

It’s hard to predict the long-term effect on the continent’s game if the proposed reforms are adopted. But creating an elite African league and reducing the frequency of a supreme tournament, while abandoning continent-wide development, would almost certainly alter the direction of African football for good.
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