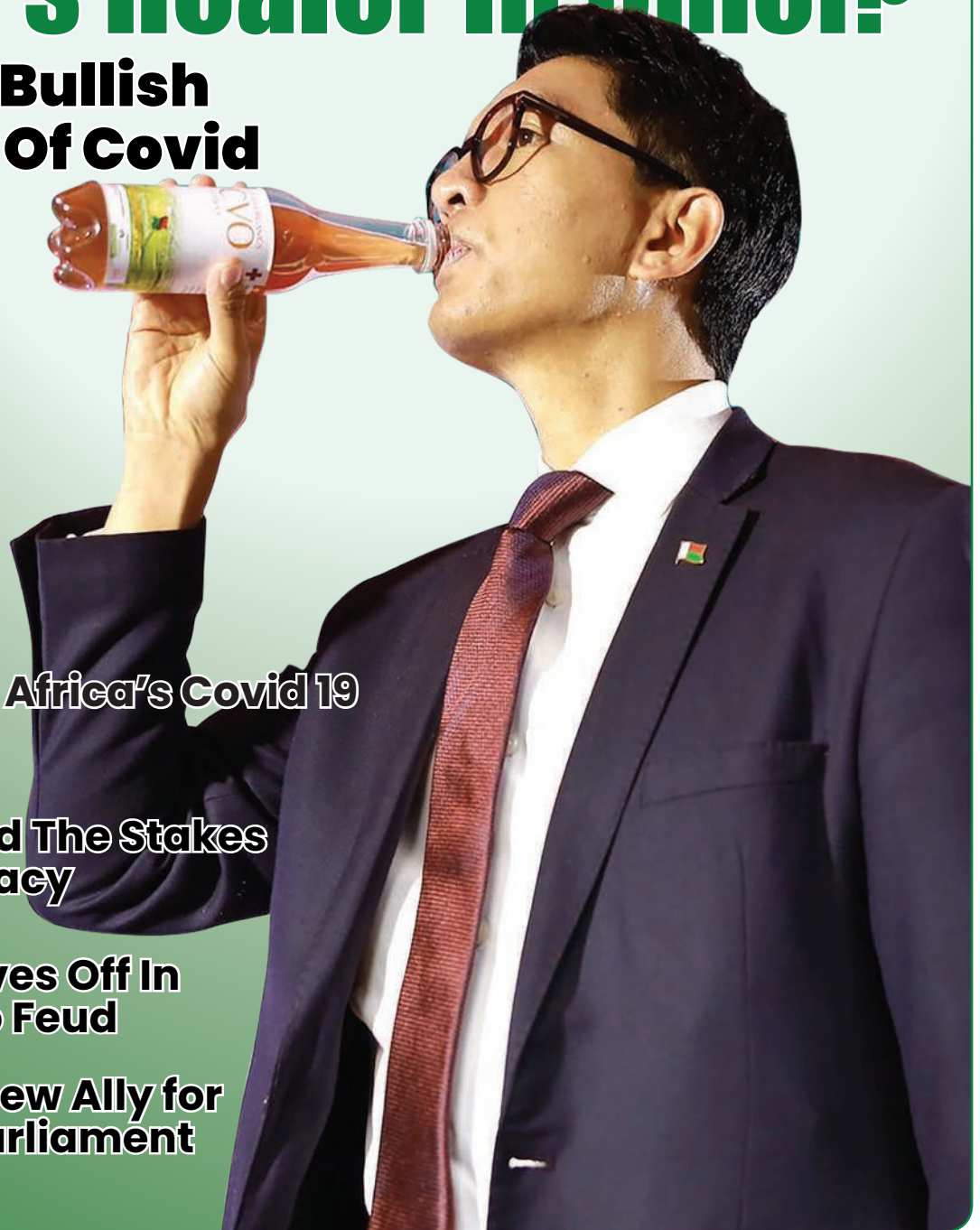


Africa's Healer In Chief?

Rajoelina Bullish On Merits Of Covid Organics



★ Insight Into Africa's Covid 19 Response

★ Covid 19 and The Stakes for Democracy

★ Kenya: Gloves Off In Uhuru/Ruto Feud

★ Guinea: A New Ally for Conde in Parliament

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A Time For Africa To Recognize Its Own Prophets

By Ajong Mbatndah L

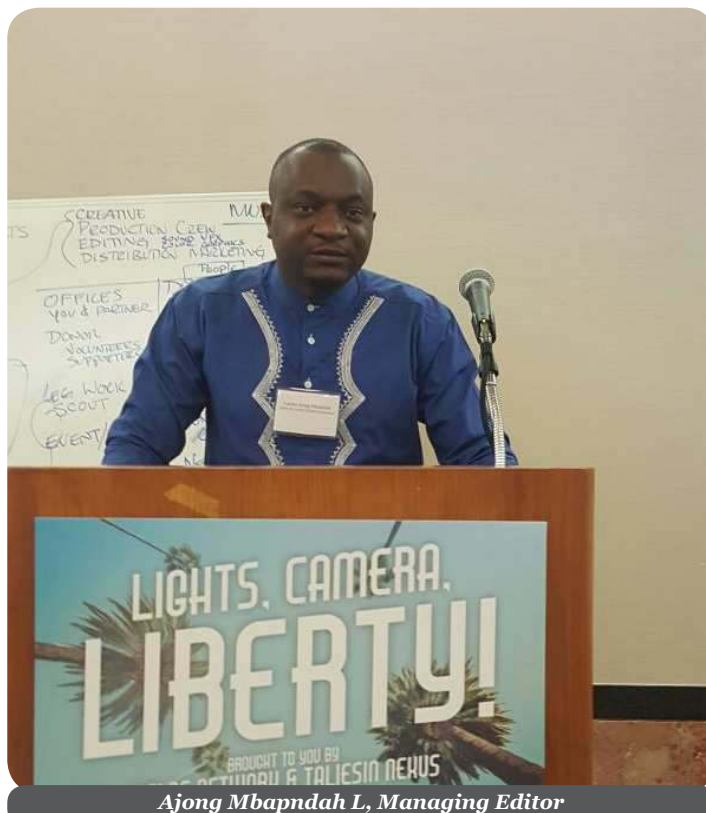
As COVID-19 continues to shake the world, surprisingly, the impact on Africa has not been as hard as many would have anticipated. The predictions have been dire, and with the precarious nature of health care infrastructure, way of life, misplaced priorities of a leadership that does not inspire confidence, and a penchant to sheepishly follow the rest of the world in times of crisis, there was indeed every reason to fear for Africa --- But so far, the continent has been spared the worse.

«Anywhere between 300,000 and 3.3 million African people could lose their lives as a direct result of COVID-19,» read a report released by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) in April. Recently a report in the Guardian indicated that Africa was facing a quarter of a billion coronavirus cases according to WHO projections. As alarming as these projections have been, the realities on the ground have been different.

According to recent statistics from Africa CDC which has been pivotal in the African response, Africa has 81,882 confirmed cases, 2,715 deaths, and 31,399 recoveries. While every life definitely matters, for a continent with a population of over a billion people, Africa remains one of the enigmatic cases in the ongoing COVID-19 saga.

In our previous editorial, we did harp on the importance of collective leadership, where every African takes responsibility for his or her own protection and that of others around him. No matter the myriad of reasons that may be advanced for the way Africa is coping with the ravages of COVID-19, we believe these collective leadership has been a strong part of the equation.

While we continue to hope for the best, one of the huge lessons that we must learn is for Africa to believe in itself, for Africans to learn to trust and believe in their own genius. All that is good must not necessarily come



Ajong Mbatndah L, Managing Editor

from outside. An example worthy of great respect is the spirited way in which President Andry Rajoelina of Madagascar has touted the merits of Covid-Organics as remedy to the pandemic.

«Covid-Organics is a preventive and curative remedy against COVID-19, which works very well,» said President Rajoelina in an interview with France 24, and Radio France International. While much of Africa has been greatly enthused with the prowess of Covid-Organics as touted by President Rajoelina, the international community has entertained skepticism.

«The problem is that it comes from Africa. And they cannot accept that a country like Madagascar, which is one of the poorest countries in the world, has discovered this formula to save the world,» President Rajoelina said. «If it were a European country which had discovered this remedy, would there be so many doubts?» he asked?

Whereas previous discoveries touted by Africans as remedies to

major ailments have not gained traction both domestically and internationally, President Rajoelina has been a strong in promotion of Covid -Organics, and along the way he has garnered a huge following of everyday Africans. With his good looks, energy, generosity in sharing with other African countries and the sheer guts to tout the efficacy of the remedy to the wider world, President Rajoelina has endeared himself to many Africans, and has become a sort of cult figure overnight.

African leaders like Macky Sall in Senegal, Obiang Nguema in Equatorial Guinea, Felix Tshisekedi in the D.R.Congo, Sasou Nguesso of Congo, and Magufuli of Tanzania and others have warmed up to the idea of using Covid Organics. Even in Nigeria, the Secretary General of the Federation Boss Mustapha recently revealed that a consignment was on its way to the country, and President Buhari had given strict instructions to put the medication through the rigorous validation process.

While it is necessary to test the medication for efficacy, what Africans must learn is to shun blanket dismissal as has been the case in other past discoveries. The solutions can come from Africans as well. In addition to the remedy from Madagascar, there are many other tradi-practitioners hard at work in the quest for solutions.

In Cameroon, Archbishop Samuel Kleda of the Douala Metropolitan Archdiocese has come out with a herbal remedy that has generated a lot of excitement. Even with calls for scientists to thread with caution when it comes to local remedies, the remedy from Archbishop Kleda is proving hugely popular with more people literally going to him than public hospitals. The efforts from Kleda have been rewarded with growing financial support from diverse quarters in Cameroon.

President Rajoelina and Archbishop Kleda are just two actors whose work has gained media attention because of their profiles. There are many unsung heroes doing selfless work, with little means but with tremendous results. To them, it is less about money and the limelight, and more about saving lives and giving hope to Africans who have neither the means nor access to adequate medical facilities.

To many Africans, it is relieving to see the continent take the bull by the horns in response to a major crisis instead of waiting on handouts from the rest of the world. From companies like Dangote, to ECOBANK, Nestle, and Centurion Law Firm, from political leaders making donations or forfeiting part of their salaries to cushion the economic impact and more, Africa maybe turning a critical curve-one that makes it take more responsibility and ownership of its destiny.

When we talk about celebrating our own prophets, it is about the people who toil hard to change the fortunes of the continent, often times with little credit. It is about the believe that Africans are capable of responding or

atleast contributing in a significant way to respond to its own crisis, and yes help the world. It is to the traditional midwives who successfully deliver babies in areas with no hospitals, it is to the herbalist curing people at minimal cost, it is about teachers putting in long hours to mold the next generation of Africans. It is about the medical Doctors, Nurses

and, other health professionals who earn paltry salaries for the amazing work they do.

Africans are already well known for their resilience. In times like this, Africans must be reminded that there can be African solutions to African problems. Solutions that are adapted to African realities and specificities. The continent has survived all forms

of imaginable health challenges with Ebola been the most recent prior to the outbreak of COVID 19. There is every reason to remain hopeful that this one too will eventually come to pass and will be another hurdle that the continent surmounted.

This issue of PAV dwells heavily on the African response .From the efforts to get remedies to support from

corporate Africa, from reminders from elder statesmen not to forget agriculture , and how to adequately adjust the electoral calendar in Africa , the issue highlights a continent making progress in handling its own problems. Happy Reading!!

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Kenya:Gloves off in Uhuru-Ruto feud

By Samuel Ouma

The entire world at the moment is focusing on the fight against Coronavirus pandemic, which has infected millions of people and claimed a hundred thousands of lives globally. The novel virus has brought to a standstill economic, political, and social and sports activities as it ravages from the North to South and East and West.

Instead of paying attention to the disease which the World Health Organization (WHO) had declared a global pandemic, Kenya's top-ranking government officials are busy jostling for the control of a political party. President Uhuru Kenyatta's allies and Deputy William Ruto plus his allies are on each other's neck on who should be appointed as the party officials and who should not.

The current tussle in Jubilee, Kenya's ruling party, was necessitated by the vacancy created after three of its officials resigned following their state appointments. The three are Veronica Maina, Fatuma Shukri and Pamela Mutua. Ahead of 2022 polls, Ruto and his allies on one side and Kenyatta and his allies on the other side are working extra hard to gain control of the party's National



Relations between President Uhuru Kenyatta and his Deputy William Ruto are at daggers drawn. Photo credit Baz Ratner, Reuters.

Executive Council whose primary mandate is to oversee primaries and determine the presidential candidate.

The NEC members include the President, his deputy, chairman, the vice-chairman, secretary-general, deputy secretary-general, treasurer, deputy treasurer, organising secretary, deputy organising secretary, majority leaders in Parliament (National Assembly) and

the Senate, as well as chief whips in the National Assembly) and the Senate.

The Ruto's camp is now contemplating of going to court to block the appointment of Ms Lucy Nyaguthii Macharia, Prof Marete Marangu, former MP Walter Nyambati, Ms Jane Nampaso and Mr James Waweru by the party's Secretary General. The 5 will now sit

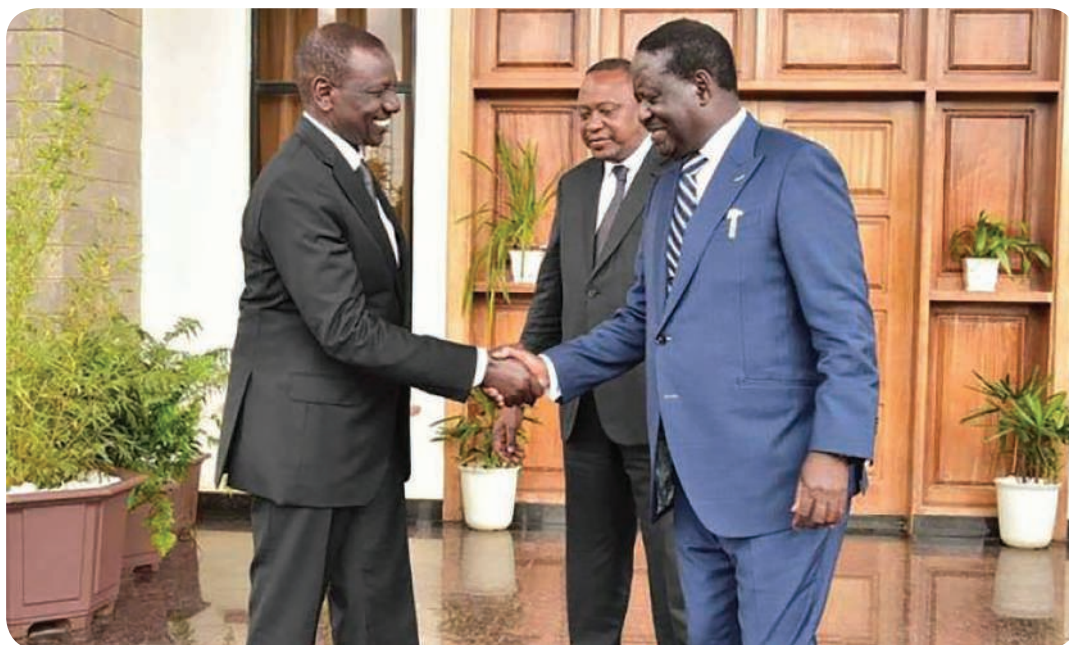
in the party's National Management Committee (NMC).

They have claimed that the secretariat went ahead and confirmed the names despite the objection from some party members led by William Ruto. The second in command had termed the proposed names as fraudulent and illegal. The deputy President (DP) and his allies went ahead and wrote to the Registrar of Political Parties Anne Nderitu objecting the changes.

"As Kenyans are focused on the Covid-19 pandemic, some shadowy characters are attempting to fraudulently institute illegal changes in officials of Jubilee party. As a deputy party leader, I have alerted the registrar of the fraud. Party members should know that the matter is being handled," Ruto tweeted.

His allies claimed that the President's camp is pushing for the changes to take full control of the party in order to scuttle Ruto's Presidential bid by forming an alliance with the DP's rivals. They singled out opposition Chief Raila Odinga, Senator Gideon Moi, the son of late President Daniel Moi, Wiper Party and ANC party leaders Kalonzo Musyok and Musalia Mudavadi.

"We are aware that they want to



Deputy President Ruto and Opposition leader Raila Odinga in a handshake while President Kenyatta looks on. 2022 succession politics seems to be a core part of the feud

steal the party and form a coalition with ODM and Kanu without our approval. That is why they want to pick people who sing their tunes to powerful positions," claimed MP Cornelly Serem.

It also emerged that NEC never had a meeting to appoint the new members as required by the party's constitution according to Ruto's diehards.

Registrar of Political Parties Ann Nderitu had rejected the changes in a letter addressed to Mr. Tuju directing the party to resolve its disputes. Nonetheless, the secretariat went ahead and approved the names; a move political experts think would further tear Jubilee apart.

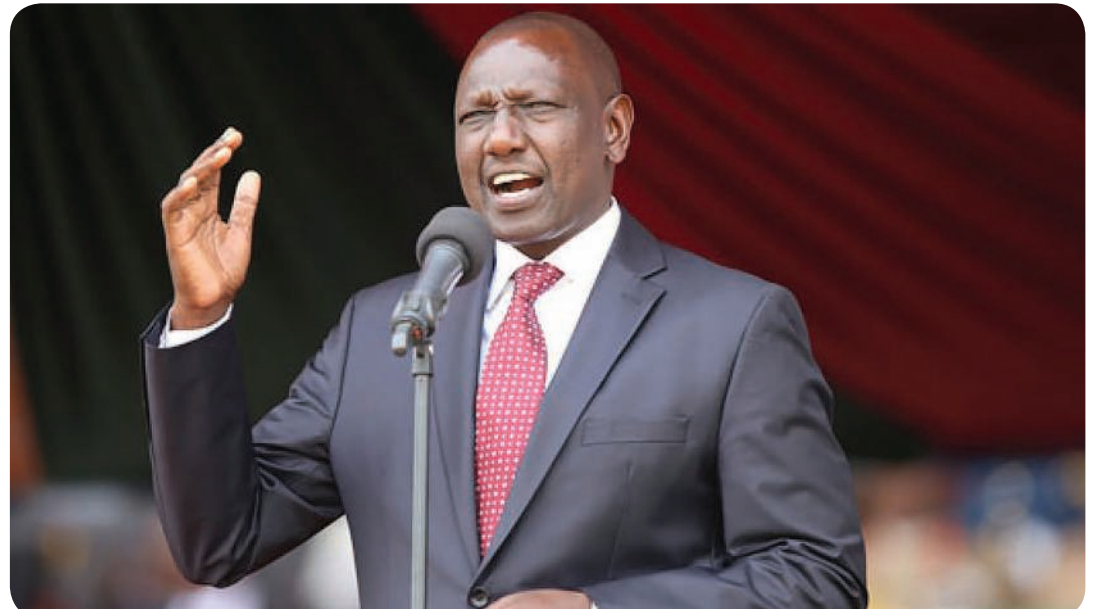
"There is no way this can happen. Tuju has not complied with what the Registrar of Political Parties Anne Nderitu said. He does not want to follow the law and we will deal with him accordingly," reiterated the deputy Secretary General of Jubilee Party Caleb Kositany.

They claimed there is a plot to push Ruto out of Jubilee, a party that was formed ahead of 2013 elections. Ruto's United Republican Party and Uhuru's National Alliance Party plus ten others were dissolved and one political vehicle known as Jubilee was born.

"Anyone who is uncomfortable in Jubilee should just quit. We are not going to leave. We have invested so much in this party economically, emotionally; we have given it our all. Those that think they can push us out are in for a rude shock," said lawmaker Nelson Koech.

"We will no longer turn the other cheek. We have decided that we will see them eye to eye. Let them walk out. We are the majority and are not going anywhere. We are the owners of the party. They should leave if they want," legislator Moses Kuria said.

In rejoinder, Uhuru's wing said the President has the power to fill vacant party positions on an interim basis but would only appoint loyal members. They described Ruto's



Deputy President Ruto may be down but not out as he is still nursing strong Presidential ambitions.

allies as politicians looking for an opportunity to fight.

"Any vacant office can be occupied by an appointee of the president. And because he has the authority to do this without consulting anyone, I doubt he would appoint people not loyal to his vision of where he wants the party to go," said MP Ngunjiri Wambugu.

The party's vice-chairman David Murathe, a staunch supporter of the President labelled the changes as a foregone conclusion.

"For them to move to the dispute tribunal, there has to be a grievance, right? Certainly that grievance can only be the changes in members of the national management committee, which to us is already taking effect," he noted.

Political marriage between Kenyatta and his deputy hangs in the balance following two major decisions made by the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Force in less than two weeks. Jubilee has entered into a post-election coalition deal with KANU, the longest serving party in the country, against Ruto's wish. The agreement which had been deposited to the Registrar of Political Parties will allow Gideon Moi led party attend Jubilee Parliamentary Group

meetings.

"To avoid any challenge of ambiguity, the two parties have chosen the path of a post-election agreement to formalise the relationship they already have" said Tuju.

On Monday, May 11, 2020, Senators Kipchumba Murkomen and Susan Kihika, Ruto's staunch allies were kicked out of the Senate Leadership after Jubilee Parliamentary Group meetings for Senators chaired by Kenyatta in the State House. The duo have been accused of sabotaging the Head of the State.

Senator Samuel Poghiso of KANU was appointed as the Senate Majority Leader replacing Murkomen and Kihika's post of Majority Whip was given to Senator Irungu Kang'ata. The changes have so far been effected despite the uproar from Ruto's camp.

Political Parties Dispute Tribunal had issued an interim order barring execution of any action accruing from the deal between KANU and Jubilee after Kihika, Caleb Kositany, Jubilee party's deputy Secretary General, National Assembly Majority Whip Benjamin Washiali and Jubilee treasurer Albert Mutai moved to the tribunal protesting against the changes. However, the directive

fell into deaf ears. Senate Speaker Kenneth Lusaka went ahead and confirmed the changes.

Senator Kihika claimed the law was not followed during their ouster saying the quorum required by the party's Constitution was not met. According to her, those who attended the meeting were less than half but the minutes from the meeting showed that 20 Senators were in the State House on Monday.

Ruto's allies have maintained that the numbers were cooked and signatures forged. They headed to court to challenge the decisions. There are also plans to kick out leaders allied to Ruto out of their leadership positions in the National Assembly.

Business has not been as usual in the Kenya's ruling party since March 9 truce between President Uhuru Kenyatta and his foe-turned ally the former Prime Minister Raila Odinga known as handshake. Ruto who is eyeing to succeed Kenyatta feel threatened by the presence of the AU Infrastructure envoy in the government.

Product Sheet

Champagne De Watère: Cuvée Premier Cru Brut Rosé de Saignée



Origin:	Vallée de la Marne, Champagne, France
Composition:	100% Pinot Noir, Méthode Saignée
Tasting Notes:	<p>Deep, bright orangy-pink with faint copper, reflection of a rose. Abundant, light foaming in serving. Very vivid, followed by very fine and sustained ropes of pearls.</p> <p>The nose is complex and energetic, opens up to red fruit in syrup notes, then delivers vegetal undertones. Aromas of red fruit, specially blackberries and raspberries are very expressive.</p> <p>Rich, fruit-forward palate with a lush attack that contrasts with a firmer finish. Upright and vivid, while tactful and fruity. Light dosage allows the wine to unfold its complex aromas. A great length in the mouth.</p> <p>Excellent Rosé for an aperitif and throughout a meal. Try with beef fillet.</p>
Awards:	<p>International Wine Guide Awards (2016) – Great Gold</p> <p>Gilbert & Gaillard (2016) - Silver</p> <p>Catavinum World Wine & Spirits Competition (2020) - Great Gold</p> <p>Gilbert & Gaillard (2020) - Silver</p> <p>Berlin Wine Trophy (2020) - Gold</p>
RRP (Europe):	from 145,00 EUR (75cl), from 23 EUR (20cl)
Distribution:	Ex-Cellar Munich, Germany

Guinea: A Controversial New Choice to Do Conde's bidding in Parliament

By Alseny Ben Bangoura

As the Guinean leader Alpha Conde pursues his agenda designed to stay in power beyond his two legal terms due to expire in December 2020, a new National Assembly was installed on Tuesday, April 21, in Conakry. In this sense, the 82-year-old Conde found an ally in the person of Amadou Damaro Camara, a controversial figure who was the majority leader in previous parliament.

During the inaugural meeting at the Palais du Peuple, he was easily elected to head the new Assembly, which is made up of 114 members including 79 from the RPG-arc-en-ciel who, in the Chamber of Deputies, will work with a small group of political parties in support of the ruling party.

With a comfortable majority, Mr. Damaro Camara is able to give Alpha Conde what he wants to reign as "Dieu le Père" by adopting all the laws that are dear to him. Damaro and his team are also expected to ratify important mining agreements recently signed with foreign multinationals.

The inaugural ceremony of the new Assembly took place with no participation from the international community. No foreign embassy accredited to Guinea was represented there. This was not only because of COVID-19, which is sweeping the planet. Above all, the cause was the deeply undemocratic character of this parliamentary body. There were deep divisions over the electoral rolls and Conde's opponents believe the real motive for change is to reset presidential term limits, so he could run for a third term in office later this year.

Main opposition parties including UFDG and UFR which held 46 per cent of seats in previous parliament boycotted polls in March marred with violence that left 2 dozen people dead.

Another major absentee at this dark ceremony was President Alpha Conde himself, who remained



With a comfortable majority, Damaro will be able to give Alpha Conde all the support he needs in the National Assembly of Guinea.

cloistered in his presidential palace at Sèkhoutoutouréya. According to a well-informed source, the Guinean leader was afraid of contracting the coronavirus, which mostly affects seniors with underlying health issues. For the FNDC and the main opposition parties, this return to parliament is simply "a non-event."

"This is a zombie assembly that has no credibility in the eyes of the Guineans and the international community. It will disappear with Alpha Conde who, as we all know,

is not going to be able to cling to power beyond December 2020, even if that is unfortunately his ultimate goal," said a senior opposition official contacted by AlloAfricaNews.

In his inauguration speech, Damaro Camara called on the opposition to dialogue and solve the political crisis, but the opposition maintains that the new assembly is illegitimate and called instead for a new election.

Who is Amadou Damaro Camara?



Dominated by the ruling RPG party, the new Assembly leader comes from the same ethnic group as President Conde

The president of the Assembly installed in Conakry is a 68-year-old, educated in the former communist country of Yugoslavia. Amadou Damaro is no stranger to Guinean politics. He was an opponent of General Lansana Conté's regime and was involved in a coup attempt with Colonel Diarra Traoré in July, 1985. He was imprisoned, and then released before going into exile in the United States. Following Conté's death in 2009, Damaro returned to the country and later became a member of the National Council for Transition (CNT).

In the previous legislature, Mr. Damaro Camara distinguished himself in numerous reckless remarks disparaging critics of the regime, even invoking the use of force and threatening to nail them to the pillory. At one point, he supported the idea of sending the army to UFDG opposition strongholds in the suburbs of Conakry to suppress demonstrators. This earned him strong criticism from the Fulani community, which considers him as an ethno-nationalist bigot. But not everyone agrees.

"There's no question that Mr. Damaro is an impulsive and perhaps arrogant person but I would not call him an ethno bigot because two of his wives I know are fulah", says Amadou Diallo, Founder and Editor of Aminata.com, an online publication based in New York.

"I think he is just an opportunist politician hungry for a spotlight before his people who may need a new leadership at top when Alpha Conde is no longer around." He noted.

Recently, observers noted that Damaro has been one of the prime sponsors of inter-ethnic violence in N'Zérékoré, in the south of the country, where confrontations between the Konianké and Guerze communities have torn apart hundreds of families.

Damaro is also perceived as an

ambitious, corrupt politician and one of those who plunder the natural resources of the country. According to sources close to him, he received many retro-commissions with mining companies in Guinea and owned some 100 trucks operating in the mines and gold fields of the country.

"The United States has no lesson in democracy to give to Guinea"

Internationally, Damaro poses as a hawk who does not hesitate to disparage and threaten Washington. During his visit to West Africa in 2019, the Under-Secretary of State for African Affairs Tiibor Nagy said in an interview that "the United States recognizes the sovereignty of each state" and that "the states can change their constitutions as they please." However, the American diplomat added, "But we have a problem if it becomes obvious that the president-in-office uses this power only to stay in power."

From the Shepherdess to the Shepherdess

As a defender of the regime,



Once a leading political figure in Africa, the ambitions of President Conde to hang onto power have turned him to a pariah

Damaro responded with a roar had no lessons in democracy to give to by saying that the United States, Guinea. Damaro appears to be more particularly President Donald Trump, interested in rapprochement between

Guinea and China and Russia than with the United States or France.

Mr. Damaro Camara is of the same ethnic group as President Alpha Condé, the Malinké. On social networks, observers believe that "his nomination" to the presidency of the National Assembly, a position previously held by Kory Koundiano, a native of the forest region, is another sign that Guinea has indeed become a totalitarian ethno-state where almost all of the key positions of the government are held by Malinkes. This prompted the reaction of a Guinean resident in the United States.

"Guinea is not a family. We are in the Manden Republic," said Bob Sow.

Experts familiar with Guinea, a West African nation with a long history of reckless governing system, believe that the new Assembly forcefully imposed on its people, is likely to further the political crisis in the country for months, if not years.

***The writer is the Editor of AlloAfricaNews**

Madagascar's COVID-19 'Cure' Divides Opinion

By Prince Kurupati

Madagascar is one of the few African countries that have managed to keep a low profile on a continent that often draws both harsh and dulcet international headlines. Rarely does Madagascar make international headlines. In fact, for many people both those on the African continent and abroad, the name Madagascar is synonymous with the 2005 animation film franchise Madagascar.

While Madagascar has managed to keep a low profile for quite a long time that has since changed following the revelations by the country's president Andry Rajoelina that a cure and preventative herbal remedy for the devastating COVID-19 had been found.

Unsurprisingly, the revelations by the Malagasy president have attracted worldwide attention. Some governments, institutions and individuals have welcomed the



Madagascan President Andry Rajoelina has forcefully touted the efficacy of COVID Organics as a remedy to COVID-19. Photo credit RIJASOLO AFP

revelations with massive interest citing that a return to normalcy may be on the horizon while others are skeptical.

African governments mostly are the ones that have welcomed and embraced Madagascar's COVID-19 miracle cure. The massive interest

that several African countries have shown begs the question; is their interest justified – after all, the Artemisia plant the main ingredient in the cure is widely used in southern Africa to treat flu, an illness which in several aspects is similar to COVID-19. Artemisia is also used to

treat malaria.

Madagascar's medical body, the Malagasy Institute of Applied Research (IMRA) says that Covid-Organics (CVO), the herbal remedy which cures COVID-19 is safe for consumption and it does serve its purpose. IMRA says that it began very early to find a cure for COVID-19 as soon as the disease was declared a disaster by the World Health Organization. IMRA says it combined its efforts with those of traditional practitioners and their endeavor to find a cure was buoyed when China said that chloroquine and the use of Artemisia had shown promises as potential remedies for COVID-19.

Buoyed by the prospects of finding a cure through the use of Artemisia, IMRA finally hit the nail when the concoction of Artemisia and endemic medicinal plants such as ravintsara was put to a clinical test with the results showing that the concoction

did cure COVID-19. IMRA said that Congolese doctor; Dr. Jerome Munyagi played a significant role in helping the body to come up with Covid-Organics.

Soon after conducting its clinical tests, IMRA presented the results to the Madagascar President Andry Rajoelina who proceeded to share the news with the world while speaking at the launch of Covid-Organics at the Malagasy Institute of Applied Research (IMRA).

At the launch of Covid-Organics, Andry Rajoelina assured the people that there is no need to be worried when it comes to using Covid-Organics as tests have already been carried out to determine the effectiveness of the herbal remedy. President Rajoelina's remarks were also echoed by his chief of staff Lova Hasinirina who in an interview with the BBC said that the herbal remedy had been tested on fewer than 20 people over a period of three weeks.

To ensure that everyone who is in need of the cure gets it readily, President Rajoelina said that the herbal remedy is to "be distributed free of charge to our most vulnerable compatriots and sold at very low prices to others. All profits will be donated to IMRA to finance scientific research."

The herbal remedy according to President Rajoelina works in just seven days and can also be used as a preventative measure. "There are two treatment protocols (curative and preventive). The state of health of Covid-19 patients who took Tambavvy CVO CovidOrganics improved after 7 days and fully recovered after 10 days."

Owing to the Covid Organics' preventative power, President Rajoelina said that he is making it mandatory for all returning school children to take the herbal remedy. "Schoolchildren should be given this to drink...little by little throughout the day."

Speaking at the launch of the miracle cure, IMRA's Director General Dr Charles Andrianjara supported the president's sentiments saying the herbal remedy should be



Despite skepticism from the WHO, the salesmanship of President Rajoelina has won over many Africans.

used for prevention. He also weighed in saying the results of the clinical observations they did showed "a trend towards its effectiveness as a curative remedy."

Some of the African countries that have welcomed COVID-Organics include Tanzania, Guinea Bissau, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Comoros and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Tanzanian President John Magufuli said that he will be sending a plane to Madagascar to ferry Covid-Organics back to his country. Addressing the nation on state TV, John Magufuli said, "I am communicating with Madagascar, and they have already written a letter saying they have discovered some medicine. We will dispatch a flight to bring the medicine so that Tanzanians can also benefit. So as the government we are working day and night."

Chad sent a jet to collect the miracle cure. In a Tweet accompanied by photos of an official Chadian plane in Antananarivo posted during the handover ceremony, President Rajoelina said "With respect to CovidOrganics, Madagascar is with his African brothers to heal and save lives. Our duty is to preserve the health of our people. Chad sent a plane to collect CVO donations. Thanks to President Idriss Deby Itno

for his confidence."

Earlier on, Madagascar did deliver a shipment to Guinea Bissau while another shipment went to Equatorial Guinea.

Speaking after receiving the shipment, the deputy minister of health in Equatorial Guinea Mitoha Ondo'o Ayekaba said that "Equatorial Guinea wanted to be the first country to recognize and use this remedy discovered by Malagasy researchers. And we hope that health cooperation between the two countries will be further strengthened."

The president of Comoros, Azali Assoumani did have a teleconference with his Malagasy counterpart in which he made a formal request for Covid-Organics. In a Tweet that was posted soon after the teleconference, Madagascar president said, "He (Assoumani) wishes to benefit from CovidOrganics for Comoros. We will supply them as a sign of solidarity with our brothers in the Indian Ocean."

The Democratic Republic and Congo as well as Senegal have also shown great interest for Covid-Organics saying they are preparing to import the herbal remedy in the coming days.

Madagascar's medical academy (Anamem) however is still skeptical about the effectiveness of the herbal

remedy saying the remedy had the potential to cause damage to people's health as its "scientific evidence had not been established."

World Health Organization (WHO) shares the same skepticism saying there are no short cuts when it comes to finding cures for COVID-19. Soon after the revelations by Andry Rajoelina, the global health body said that it does not recommend "self medication with any medicines...as a prevention or cure for COVID-19." WHO however through its regional director for Africa Matshidiso Moeti said "We are advising the government of Madagascar to take this product through a clinical trial and we are prepared to collaborate with them."

The African Union has also expressed skepticism over Madagascar's COVID-19 cure saying it wants to discuss first with the Malagasy government before it can take any definitive stance. In this regard, the AU Commissioner for Social Affairs H.E. Amira EiFadil on the 30th of April convened a meeting with the Charge d'Affaires of the Republic of Madagascar Mr. Eric Randrinantoandro requesting for technical data regarding the safety and efficiency of the herbal remedy. Once the AU receives the data, it intends to review it through the Africa Centers for Disease Control

and Prevention (Africa CDC).

ECOWAS took a different stance as it outright rejected COVID-Organics. The regional body issued a statement distancing itself from COVID-Organics as well as from reports that it has ordered COVID-Organics from Madagascar. Part of the statement read "We wish to dissociate ECOWAS and its health institution, West Africa Health Organization WAHO, from this claim (ordering COVID-Organics) and inform the general public that we have not ordered the said CVO medicine."

Guinea-Bissau which is a member of ECOWAS was one of the first countries to order COVID-Organics from Madagascar. At the handing over ceremony of the herbal remedy to the Guinea-Bissau officials, the packaging of COVID-Organics boxes had flags of all countries that constitute ECOWAS. Madagascar President Rajoelina said Guinea-Bissau had agreed to handover some of the boxes to neighbouring ECOWAS countries hence the intricately designed package boxes. It is President Rajoelina's statement which necessitated the response of ECOWAS to reject the herbal remedy as well as the talk that it had ordered COVID-Organics.

Several health experts including Professor Brian Klaas at University College London have also expressed concern over the miracle cure from Madagascar. Professor Brian Klaas

said President Rajoelina may put the lives of his people at risk owing to his remarks. Professor Brian Klaas said President Rajoelina's remarks are dangerous for two reasons, "one is that some people will be taking it who should not be taking it...And secondly, that it will give people a false sense of security, so they'll end up doing things that they would not otherwise have done and put themselves and others at greater risk."

South African health minister Zweli Mkhize said that the South African government at the present moment does not advise its citizens to use Covid-Organics as a cure for COVID-19. The minister however went on to state that the South African government received a call from Madagascar in which President Andry Rajoelina asked for help with scientific analysis of the herbal remedy.

In a statement, Zweli Mkhize said "We received a call from the government of Madagascar, which asked for help with scientific research...Our scientists would be able to assist in the research. We will only get involved in a scientific analysis of the herb."

Since the launch of Covid-Organics,



Tanzanian Foreign Minister Palanagamba Kabudi receiving a consignment of COVID Organics from Foreign Minister Tehindrazanarielo Djacoba of Madagascar .Photo Credit.Gertraud Van E.

President Rajoelina has instructed soldiers to set up road blocks, patrol streets and move door to door doling out sachets of the herbal remedy and instructions for use. Many residents have welcomed the move - one happy resident said that "It reassures me that soldiers are watching out for my family's health and security."

In face of the criticism that he has received as well as the skepticism shown by several governments and institutions including WHO, President Andry Rajoelina in an exclusive interview with France 24 and RFI strongly defended his promotion of Covid-Organics saying that despite an absence of clinical trials, the herbal remedy "works very well." President Rajoelina said that the skepticism expressed by governments and health institutions

over the effectiveness of Covid-Organics as a cure and preventative remedy against COVID-19 is largely necessitated by the fact that the remedy was discovered by an African country.

"What is the problem with Covid-Organics, really? Could it be that this product comes from Africa? Could it be that it's not OK for a country like Madagascar, which is the 63rd poorest country in the world... to have come up with (a remedy) that can help save the world?" in response to the concerns raised by WHO, President Rajoelina expressed defiance saying "No one will stop us from moving forward - not a country, not an organization."

At the present moment, as can be seen from the above, there is sufficient evidence to be optimistic about the cure as there are no reports of any adverse effects being touted by those who have consumed the herbal remedy both in Madagascar and beyond. At the same time, there is also sufficient cause of concern to be pessimistic as the results of the scientific testing have not been made public by the Malagasy government thereby leaving everyone to second guess if indeed the herbal remedy has been scientifically tested or not. The most important thing at the moment therefore is to wait and see what third party scientific tests will say with regards to COVID-Organics starting with those being done by the South African government.



President Buhari receives Umaro Sissoco Embaló of Guinea Bissau, who brought the Nigerian consignment of the Madagascar organic remedy for COVID-19.

COVID-19: Madagascar's President Andry Rajoelina defends homegrown Coronavirus cure

The President of Madagascar, 45-year-old Andry Nirina Rajoelina has defended the homegrown "COVID Organics", a supposedly cure for the deadly coronavirus pandemic.

Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Niger, and Tanzania have already taken delivery of consignments of COVID-Organics, which was launched last month.

However, the World Health Organization has said that the herbal drink promoted by the President of Madagascar as a cure for covid-19 should be tested to see if it is effective, as the organization has no evidence the drink works.

In an interview with Marc Perelman of France 24 and RFI's Christophe Boisbouvier the President said the COVID-Organics works really well as several persons have recovered while taken the tonic. He equally questioned the WHO's response to other cures that have been known to kill several persons.

Rajoelina went further to categorically state that if a European country had discovered the remedy, people would not be so skeptical.

Christophe Boisbouvier: Mr. President, good morning.

President Andry Rajoelina: Good morning, it is a pleasure to be your guest, especially in this period of war against the coronavirus.

Marc Perelman: We are going to talk about what you call this "war" against Covid-19. In addition to the lockdown, the wearing of masks, the social distancing, Madagascar is distinguished by the use of Covid-Organics, a remedy based on artemisia, a plant with a recognized therapeutic effect against malaria. You have already sent it to several African countries, but do you have any evidence that it works back home, that it cures people of Covid-19?



President Andry Rajoelina responding to questions on his Covid remedy from Marc Perelman of France 24 and Christophe Boisbouvier of RFI.

President Andry Rajoelina: Actually, yes, we have launched this remedy based on Malagasy medicinal plants. It should be noted that in Madagascar, we are used to it and 80% of the population is cured through the medicinal remedy. Having said that, Covid-Organics is obviously a preventive and curative remedy against Covid-19 which works very well. And besides, it is the result of research carried out by the Malagasy Institute of Applied Research [IMRA], which has the status of a regional research centre recognised by the African Union. I would just like to point out that IMRA is a medical and pharmaceutical research and training centre, founded in 1957 by Professor Rakoto Ratsimamanga, who is a leading figure in African science.

You speak of "evidence" and I spoke of "war" earlier. The world situation today shows that there are almost 300,000 dead. Does that allow us to ignore an alternative treatment? And when we are also in a time of war,

what proof can we demonstrate and provide at this time? It is, of course, the healing of our sick, because it should be noted that today, in Madagascar, we have had 171 cases, 105 of which have been cured. And the majority of these coronavirus patients have been cured, and you are talking about evidence. As evidence, I want to tell you that the patients who were cured took only this Covid-Organics [also called Tambavy CVO] product. In summary, a marked improvement in the health of the patients who received this Tambavy CVO remedy was observed within 24 hours after the first intake of Tambavy CVO. Healing was observed after seven or even ten days after taking Tambavy CVO. This remedy is natural, non-toxic and non-invasive.

Christophe Boisbouvier: Only, not everyone is convinced by the evidence you are talking about. And it's not just anyone. The African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West

African States (ECOWAS), and above all the World Health Organization (WHO), the WHO's Africa office, have multiplied warnings in recent days against the illusion of a miracle cure. Not only does the WHO doubt the effectiveness of Covid-Organics, but it fears side effects for the people who consume this herbal tea?

President Andry Rajoelina: Of course, you're quoting Dr. [Matshidiso] Moeti's warning against the use of Covid-Organics. I would just like to ask the question: had the Mediator [the anti-diabetic drug responsible for the death of patients in France] received and obtained the authorizations? And my question today is: how many people have died from the Mediator drug? You know as well as everyone else the statement by Professor Bernard Debré and Philippe Even. They presented almost 58 drugs manufactured by prestigious laboratories that not only do not cure, but in their own words, are "dangerous" and "deadly".

These drugs have been and are being distributed in Africa and I have never heard Dr. Moeti or the WHO make a statement that does not authorize the taking of these drugs. Now, as I said earlier, we use decoction. When we talk about decoction, it's a method, it's the action of boiling medicinal plants in water to extract the active substances. It is our traditional medicine which is known and recognized for its effects.



A plane from Chad to pick up a Covid Organics consignment.

There is much talk in this remedy of artemisia. What is at stake today, you asked me the question, but I still have a question to ask you: if it was not Madagascar, but a European country that had actually discovered this remedy, would there be so many doubts? I do not think so. What I can tell you today is that in the case of the patients in Madagascar and also of those who have taken these medicines, in fact today this Tambavy CVO or this decoction, we have had proof that we have treated our patients so far.

Marc Perelman: *Precisely, we will take the example of France. The National Agency for the Safety of Medicines has very recently published a warning regarding the purchase of artemisia-based products, stating that the therapeutic virtues are "false and dangerous". Do you have the impression that these doubts, or even suspicions, let's say, of charlatanism, come from the West, or perhaps even from Western pharmaceutical lobbies?*

President Andry Rajoelina: You may have seen and watched Professor Montagnier, having made a statement, he has nevertheless received the Nobel Prize for Science and Medicine, that artemisia is one track to cure the coronavirus. That is one thing. But you may also be aware of the study by Professor Tu Youyou in China, who was able to extract artemisinin from artemisia. So, today, I don't understand why so many questions, why so many problems. But the problem today with Covid-Organics is not its formula. It's not clinical studies that we pretend not to know about. People are saying bad things about this product, about Tambavy CVO, while it is doing only good and saving lives right now. In this battle, they want to slow us down. They want to discourage us or even forbid us to move forward.

Marc Perelman: *Who is "they"?*

President Andry Rajoelina: But nothing prevents us from advancing, neither a country nor an

organization. "they, you mentioned a few organizations earlier, such as the World Health Organization. "We" is us; Madagascar, with our decoction, is in the process of making, and nobody can stop us. We are a sovereign country and we are here to help our people, our population, so that we do not become true victims or die from this pandemic.

Christophe Boisbouvier: *Quite simply, what everyone is asking you for is clinical trials. You mentioned the Malagasy Institute of Applied Research (Imra), but for the moment, this institute has only made clinical observations, not clinical trials. So, when are you going to do them and who is going to do them?*

President Andry Rajoelina: So, one must not confuse clinical trials with clinical observations. At the moment, when we talk about Tambavy CVO, we have the status of an improved traditional medicine. When we talk about improved medicine status, the validation system is different from that of a drug. We do not conduct clinical trials, but rather clinical observation, according to the guide developed by the WHO. And that is what we have done. We have conducted a clinical observation. A study protocol to be observed and we looked at and made a clinical observation on the effect and the state of health of patients with the coronavirus. So today, we have complied with universally recognized ethical standards for clinical studies and research.

Christophe Boisbouvier: *But last Thursday, you announced that clinical trials would soon be conducted. They won't take place after all?*

President Andry Rajoelina: There are two things. There's no confusion. There are several protocols that we have put in place. First of all, like every country in the world, we are facing this pandemic. We are obliged to find a solution to cure the sick. And when Professor [Didier] Raoult announced the effectiveness of chloroquine and azithromycin, we used them, and I



A delegation from the Comoros Islands picks up their own consignment of Covid Organics. Photo Twitter.

would like to thank him here because without his proposed solution, we would not have been able to save the first victims of the coronavirus.

Afterwards, we all know that high doses of chloroquine have side effects and undesirable side effects. This treatment has presented risks of toxicity and requires greater clinical surveillance. The second protocol we adopted was Tambavy CVO, or the decoction that I announced to you earlier, following the principles of clinical studies and observations according to WHO recommendations. The vast majority of the new patients who took this decoction were observed, and obviously the result is there. There are currently no deaths in Madagascar.

We have only healed our patients. But you spoke earlier about clinical trials. Obviously, we have a third protocol and a clinical trial on a drug in injection form, different from the remedy we are currently proposing. This is part of a regional cooperation and in collaboration with doctors and scientists in the United States, and of course in the Indian Ocean.

Marc Perelman: *The Malagasy Institute of Applied Research refuses to reveal the exact composition of Covid-Organics because we imagine that this Institute does not want to be overtaken by a competitor before filing a patent. But many Malagasy people in the interior of the country do not have access to this remedy. So, so that they can make it themselves and thus protect*

themselves, can you tell us what are, in addition to artemisia, the two other plants that make up Covid-Organics?

President Andry Rajoelina: Of course, Covid-Organics is essentially based on medicinal plants. Mostly with artemisia up to 62%, but also with endemic Malagasy medicinal plants. It cannot yet be unveiled today. This is the result that we are expecting today and, moreover, we are really going to launch clinical surveillance at the regional level at the moment. If you want, we have our formula. And as I told you earlier, we are working with the Malagasy Institute of Applied Research. I would like to show you the Madecassol product, which is produced today by Bayer, which makes about 100 drugs. And this is the result of research by IMRA. And it is a drug that was concocted in 1961. This is to tell you that we should not underestimate African and Malagasy scientists. We are here, and it is true that today there are questions that arise: why, what is the problem with Covid-Organics? I think the problem is that it comes from Africa. And we can't admit, accept that a country like Madagascar, which is the 63rd poorest country in the world, has in fact set up this formula, this Tambavy CVO to save the world. But this is a war, but it is not military force or economic power that is currently at play. But God and the Lord has given us the medicinal plants to help other countries and the whole world to fight this disease.

Christophe Boisbouvier: *You are asking France for the*

restitution of the “Iles Eparses” (Scattered Islands), those four islands off your coasts. A joint commission was set up a year ago. But in October 2019, French President Emmanuel Macron went to one of these four islands and said: “This is France”. Can a solution be found between your two countries between now and 26 June, the 60th anniversary of your independence?

President Andry Rajoelina: Our wish was indeed to find a solution for the return of these islands to Madagascar. The second meeting of the joint commission was scheduled for the end of March. But it was postponed because of the coronavirus. But I have faith and confidence in our ability to find a quick solution that



Successful exchange with Dr. Tedros who commends Madagascar's efforts in the fight against COVID-19
Rajoelina said in a twitter post after discussions with the WHO Director General

will satisfy our request for restitution.

management agreement with France?

Christophe Boisbouvier: Rather restitution or rather a co-

President Andry Rajoelina: We have claimed sovereignty over these

islands. And we are talking about restitution.

A Look At The Response of African Countries to COVID-19

By Prince Kurupati

All African countries with the exception of the tiny Lesotho have recorded cases of corona virus. Some countries such as South Africa, Algeria, Cameroon, Egypt, Ghana, Morocco and Nigeria are faced with a huge battle to contain the virus as they have already recorded thousands of cases while others such as Seychelles, Mauritania, Namibia, Gambia and Eritrea are praying and hoping that they eliminate the virus in their countries before they reach the 100 cases mark.

Whatever the number of cases that a country faces, the one common denominator that exists amongst all affected African countries is that the governments have adopted certain measures, strategies and policies aimed at combating and containing the spread of the virus with the intention of totally exterminating it in the near future.

It will be premature at this stage to conclusively make any judgements as to the success of the measures, strategies and policies adopted by different governments as many countries are still battling to contain



Leaders of the Economic Community of West African States had an extraordinary Summit via teleconference.

the virus. As such, as we take time to look at the response measures that have been taken by African countries in the fight against COVID-19, we are going to highlight all without surfing

the fruitful ones from those that possess the potential to derail the success of the response mechanisms. It is in light of this that you will find Madagascar's 'miracle' cure as part

of some of the measures adopted by countries even though the World Health Organization has cautioned countries against opting for 'shortcut' cures.

Egypt

Egypt was one of the very first African countries to record cases of corona virus. In an effort to stay in control of the situation, the Egyptian government from the onset decided to implement a raft of policies meant at containing the spread of the virus. The very first response mechanism was the implementation of a partial lockdown in the country. Normal activity was permitted only from 6 am to 9 pm. During the curfew hours, only emergency permit movement in public spaces was allowed including also transportation of essential goods and services such as petroleum.

It's a known fact that COVID-19 spreads fast when people are densely populated. As such, the Egyptian government also so it fit to ban all social gatherings, an enactment which is still present to this day. By order of the government, all clubs, casinos, cafeterias, cafes, beaches, gardens, parks, bars as well as nightclubs were closed. Shopping malls though allowed to operate were restricted to open from 5 am to 9 pm.

While public transport was allowed to continue operating during the none-curfew hours, the government stressed the need for all transport operators to strictly adhere to good hygiene practices and health precautions.

In relations to the services offered by the government, Egypt only opened departments that deal with public health and closed departments such as civil registry services, work permits, passports and renewal of traffic licenses offices. To combat the spread of the virus amongst school going children, the government ordered all educational institutions from kindergartens, schools, colleges and universities to close.

Other notable measures adopted included the suspension of international air traffic, the suspension of any gatherings that require the presence of a large gathering and orders to reduce the number of employees in the units of the state's administrative apparatus, public sector companies as well as



President Museveni released an indoor workout video to encourage Ugandans to stay at home.

public business sector companies.

Algeria

Just like Egypt, Algeria was also one of the very first African countries to record corona virus cases. To control the spread of the virus as well as to ensure that the economy remains strong in face of the pandemic, Algeria adopted a number of response strategies. These strategies can generally be classified into three main categories.

The first category relates to direct and indirect tax measures. The government extended the subscription period for monthly declarations (tax returns) by three months. The government also extended the subscription deadline of the annual statement of income by 6 months allowing corporations to pay their subscriptions up until the 30th of June 2020. The government also effected the suspension of the taxation of non-affected benefits amongst others.

The second category relates to employment related measures. From the 23rd of March 2020, the government ordered for a 14 day period the mandatory placement on leave of 50% of the workforce for both the public and private sectors. The government stated that priority when it comes to the exceptional leave should be given to pregnant women, women raising children, as well as people with medical vulnerabilities

and chronic diseases.

The third category relates to economic stimulus measures. On this front, the most notable measure was the suspension of contractual deadlines and application of penalties for late payment. In a government gazette, the government said "The suspension of the application of penalties for delay is applicable from the date of publication of Executive Decree No 20-69 of 21 March 2020, relating to measures to prevent and combat the spread of the Corona virus."

From the onset when the Algerian government started to implement response measures against the impact of COVID-19, it made it clear that all measures were going to be country-specific. It is no surprise therefore that while many countries took the decision to borrow from international financial institutions to finance their stimulus packages, the Algerian government decided against that opting instead to borrow from the people. Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune declared that his government would not approach the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for support but would ask the citizens to bail out the government. He went on saying "Accumulating debt harms national sovereignty," hence he prefers to stay clear of the IMF.

Morocco

To minimize the negative economic and social effects of the corona virus pandemic, Morocco adopted a raft of response and mitigation measures. Firstly, the government extended the period in which companies with a turnover lower than MAD 20 million for the 2019 fiscal year could pay their tax returns from 31 March 2020 to the end of June 2020. The returns include tax result declaration, additional corporate income tax due for the financial year 2019 and the first installment due for the current fiscal year.

In relation to labour, the government strongly recommended companies to encourage their employees to work from home whenever possible. Employees with chronic diseases were fully authorized to work remotely. For employees whose job description makes it impossible to work from home, the government instructed their companies to undertake all necessary precautionary measures to guarantee safety, health and dignity of employees.

The government also ordered the Supreme Judiciary Council, the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Ministry of Justice to see to it that all hearings are suspended with the exception of urgent matters whose delays could cause prejudice to one of the parties concerned.

Other notable measures enacted include the closing of borders except

for essential flights, mandatory 14 day confinement of persons returning from a high risk area, restrictions on movement with all movement requiring the pre-approval of Moroccan authorities, suspension of all educational activities, limitations on gatherings, closure of public places, and regulation of pharmaceutical products.

Cameroon

Cameroon is one of the few African countries that have recorded over 2000 corona virus cases. The government of Cameroon announced response and mitigation measures against the virus after it had recorded 10 cases – all of whom had been abroad or had come in contact with persons from abroad. The following are the measures that have been taken by Cameroon.

The first measure was to close all borders to international travel. The only exception was reserved for cargo flights and vessels transporting consumer products and essential goods and materials. Consequently, the issuance of visas at entry points was suspended.

Urban and inter-urban travel was restricted with exceptions reserved in cases of extreme necessity. Public transport was allowed to continue operating but drivers were instructed to ensure adherence to good hygiene practices while at the same time enforcing social distancing measures.

The government allowed places of social gatherings such as bars, restaurants and entertainment spots to remain open but to ensure that the strictly adhered to good hygiene practices as well as enforcing social distancing measures.

For the purposes of accommodating and transporting infected persons with dignity, the government said that competent authorities when the need be could requisition private health facilities, hotels, lodgings, vehicles and specific equipment. Over and above, the government instructed the public to strictly observe the hygiene measures recommended by the World Health Organization, including regular hand washing with soap, avoiding close contact such



President Magufuli welcomes a guest at the State House in Tanzania.

as shaking hands or hugging and covering the mouth when sneezing.

Nigeria

Nigeria is one of Africa's most populous countries with thousands of people living in slums around major states such as Lagos, Ogun and Abuja. When the first case of corona virus was recorded there were fears the virus could spread rapidly infecting thousands and leaving thousands of corpses in its wake. Fortunately, that hasn't been the case thus far owing to a number of response and mitigation measures which have been taken by the government.

Most notably, the Nigerian government from the 30th of March ordered states to impose lockdowns. The lockdowns mainly restrict public movement with exceptions for those who have pre-approved exemption letters from the authorities. After it was announced that the state of Kano had exceeded some states in corona virus cases, the government ordered the state to extend its mass lockdown by an additional 2 weeks, a move which was welcomed by of health authorities.

In addition to mass lockdowns, the government also ordered the closing of the borders, closing of educational institutions, mandatory placements of returning citizens in isolation, as well as restrictions on public gatherings.

The government has also taken steps to partner with various

organizations and institutions. Some of the institutions that have partnered the government include the Aliko Dangote Foundation which has spearheaded the opening of a testing centre while at the same time aiding the government in providing social grants to those in need.

Ghana

The first response and mitigation measure taken by Ghana was to impose a partial lockdown. Restrictions in public movements were imposed; mass gatherings were banned while public transport operators were instructed to only allow a certain number of people per trip so as to adhere to social distancing measures. At the end of the partial lockdown timeframe, Ghana eased restrictions but stated that it would monitor COVID-19 hotspots and if need be re-establish localized lockdowns.

In relation to employment measures, Ghana encouraged all workers who possess the capability to work from home to do so while those who owing to the nature of their work could not work from home were required to observe health precautionary measures including social distancing.

In relation to the economy, the government ordered all those who were having difficulties in filing their tax returns to apply for extension of time to file and pay

tax. The government through the Commissioner-General assured the nation that if good cause is shown, it would extend the time to file and pay tax for up to 2 months.

Moreover, the government did cut the key interest rate to an 8 year low of 16% from 14.5%. The government also extended its hand to the IMF asking for rapid disbursement of a credit facility to help the country face the negative economic impact caused by the COVID-19 outbreak.

South Africa

Immediately after the country recorded its first cases of COVID-19, the South African government declared a national state of disaster. South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said the move was taken in enable the government to "have an integrated approach and coordinated disaster management mechanism that will focus on preventing and reducing the outbreak" of the virus. The declarations enabled the government to issue a slew of regulations, directions and guidelines to contain and mitigate the impact of the corona virus.

Some of the regulations included the implementation of a nationwide lockdown. The lockdown forced the citizens to stay indoors except when they are in need of an 'essential' service. Public gatherings were prohibited with funerals permitted to have 50 or less mourners. Public

transportation was banned; South Africa has since eased the lockdown allowing workers involved in industry and commerce to return to their workplaces but doing so in adherence to social distancing measures. Public transportation is now allowed but public sedans are allowed to carry 50% of their capacity while minibuses and buses are allowed to ferry 70% of their maximum capacity.

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa also unveiled a 500 billion rand economic stimulus package meant at helping industries including small scale enterprises to remain afloat during the trying times. The stimulus package also created a temporary "special benefit under the Unemployment Insurance Fund" to help those who have lost income owing to the pandemic and the national lockdown. The South African government also issued a notice regarding the compensation for occupationally acquired COVID-19 under the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act which shall extend payment to the family of a person who would have succumbed from COVID-19 that s/he acquired during the conduct of his/her work.

Other notable measures that have been implemented include the enactment of a travel ban, suspension of visas for all foreign



Medical workers wait for visitors at a COVID-19 inspection point in Johannesburg, South Africa. PhotoXinhua.

travelers, creating synergies with tech companies to help increase the pace of contact tracing and testing as well as the enactment of price gouging to protect consumers from excessive, unfair, unreasonable or unjust pricing of goods and services.

Tanzania

Tanzania is one of the very few countries not only on the African continent but the world at large that have taken less tough and stricter measures in response to the corona virus pandemic. The country has not imposed a lockdown nor banned public gatherings more so those that have to do with religious practices. To contain the spread of the virus, the Tanzanian government has simply

urged the public to observe good hygiene practices and to adhere to social distancing measures.

Another measure taken by the Tanzanian government is to impose mandatory quarantine at all points of entry. The mandatory quarantine is for all travelers from countries which are most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The 14 day mandatory quarantine will be footed by the traveler at government designated facilities.

Madagascar

To contain the spread of the virus, Madagascar imposed a nationwide lockdown. Under the lockdown, all non-essential businesses were closed, public transport was suspended,

a nationwide curfew was effected from 08:00 am to 5:00 pm, and all educational institutions were closed while public gatherings of more than 50 people were prohibited.

On 20 April, the Malagasy government eased the nationwide lockdown following the reported successful domestic testing of a remedy for the virus. The easing of the lockdown restrictions saw public transport resuming operations while schools were allowed to reopen.

Uganda

In Uganda, the government released a statement on March 18 which outlined 34 measures to be implemented to control the spread of the pandemic. The measures include closing all education institutions, suspending communal prayers in stadia, mosques and churches, stopping all political rallies, gatherings, and conferences, banning inter-city and intra-city movement, mandatory quarantine for all returning citizens at own cost, discouraging weddings, limiting mourners at funerals, banning of public transport, suspension of public gatherings, maintaining hygiene measures, banning movement of all privately owned passenger vehicles, and banning gatherings of 5 or more people.

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The African Utopia at the End of the COVID-19 Tunnel

By Cesar A. Mba ABOGO*

In 1990, when Cameroon's football team did the unthinkable and beat Argentina in the World Cup, the proportion of the world's population living below the poverty line was 37.1 per cent. Fast-forward 35 years later to 2015, following a global adoption of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), this figure now stands at 9.6%.

The concept of a universal benevolent dictator - a classic assumption in beginner economic courses to escape the complexities of real-world decision-making - such a person would no doubt have said «The world is doing infinitely better!»

But on the contrary, the world has not been doing as well as it should. The fact is, there have been warning signs all along.

The proportion of people living below the poverty line in sub-Saharan Africa in 2015 was an astonishing 41%, about the same as the global rate of extreme poverty in 1981.

On October 17, 2018, the then President of the World Bank Group, Jim Yong Kim, presented a report titled «Poverty and Shared Prosperity 2018: Piecing together the Poverty Puzzle.» With rigorous data but in a simple and direct way, the report clearly indicated that global conditions were not in place to bring the rate of extreme poverty below 3% by 2030.

The most alarming case in point was, where even in the most optimistic of scenarios, the poverty rate would continue to be in double digits.

The report was a pitcher of cold water in my state of mind. But it was not the first time Jim Yong Kim had jolted me. A few years earlier in 2015, in Lima, Peru, at the Annual Meetings of the IMF and the World Bank, during a panel moderated by Femi Oke, the British journalist of Yoruba descent, Jim Yong Kim's projections caught my attention. In attendance were Peruvian President Ollanta Moises Humala Tasso; Ban Ki-Moon, UN Secretary General;



Cesar A. Mba ABOGO, Minister of Finance, Economy and Planning of Equatorial Guinea.

Christine Lagarde, IMF Managing Director; and Justine Greening, UK Secretary of State for International Development. For 90-minutes, they spoke eloquently about the type of partnerships that would be needed to make Agenda 2030 a reality; the international cooperation that would be deployed; the necessary financing mechanisms and formulas; and the creativity and citizen action required.

Gathered in this august venue, the guardians of the global architecture responsible for eradicating poverty spoke convincingly and articulately about the world of tomorrow. Collectively, they concluded that by 2030, we would end up, to quote Oscar Wilde, in a country called Utopia. The Road to Lima was a party.

But barely three years later as 2018 dawned, the same global architecture presented us with a new story: The end of Utopia.

In December 2019, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched its Human Development Report titled «Beyond Income, Beyond Averages, Beyond the Present: Human Development Inequalities in the 21st Century». As with the World Bank, the conclusion was straightforward and clear: While humanity is progressing, something is just not working in our globalized society. A new

generation of inequalities, beyond basic capabilities, is emerging and threatens to render people living in developing countries obsolete in the future.

Combining the alarming 2018 World Bank report with the no less alarming 2019 UNDP report, the picture is not one of optimism: not only was the aspiration to eradicate poverty by 2030 not going to be met, but a new inequality gap was opening up as well.

These challenges had previously been the focus of the World Economic Forum Regional Strategy Group (WEF RSG), of which I had had the privilege of being a member.

One of the ideas behind the WEF RSG was very simple and irrefutable: Africa must leapfrog into the Fourth Industrial Revolution or risk being left behind inexorably.

In 2019 as well as in previous years, several countries, including Equatorial Guinea, my country, made important policy decisions to define and prioritize national development aspirations in alignment with the UN's Agenda 2030 and the African Union's Agenda 2063. Additionally, to take advantage of the Fourth Industrial Revolution we scaled up our investments in ICT and technology and in developing the capacity of our youth. And then,

COVID19 arrived!

In just a few short months the world has changed. When we return to 'normal,' it will be a 'new normality' and a brave new world.

COVID19 is an existential crisis. It is severely testing Africa's social, economic and political resilience. In a post-COVID19 world, the continent's leaders will therefore have to rethink many prior assumptions and find new balances for individual and collective behavior.

What I am absolutely certain of is that opportunities will emerge. Innovative minds previously imprisoned by institutional inertia and interest groups will rise to the challenges that we collectively face.

What will the brave new world post-COVID19 look like in Africa? The African Development Bank estimates that Africa will lose between 35 and 100 billion dollars due to the fall in raw material prices caused by the pandemic. The World Economic Forum estimates that global losses for the continent will be in the order of \$275 billion.

There is a real risk therefore that Africa's inequality gap will worsen in the coming years.

Ever since the virus crossed the continent's borders, regular bilateral and multilateral consultations among African finance ministers have philosophically revolved around the need to rethink our multifaceted responses to COVID19 and other future threats that have equal or greater potential for disruption.

Today, African States are developing strategic and in-depth approaches to human development, regional integration, digitalization, industrialization, economic diversification, fiscal and monetary policies, and international solidarity. In short, they are rethinking the causes of the continent's underdevelopment and coming up with feasible solutions. The outcomes will undoubtedly be good for Africa and for all humanity.

To better understand the scenarios before us, there are three sparks that

could light a flame in the brave new world that is before us:

In 2001, African leaders pledged to invest around 15% of their budgets in health. By 2020, only five countries have fulfilled this promise. No one doubts today that the health sector in Africa will be strengthened by the COVID19. There are decisions that can no longer be postponed. In mid-March, a Togolese activist, Farida Nabourema, mocked African elites who used to go to Europe to have their ailments treated, saying: I would like to ask our African presidents who travel to Italy, Germany, France, the UK and other European countries for medical treatment, please when are you leaving? On April 2, Bloomberg published an article entitled: Trapped by Coronavirus, Nigeria's Elite faces squalid hospital, signed by journalist Dulue Mbachu. Things are going to change.

The vast majority of African countries, after COVID19, will have to put in place social protection systems to mitigate the suffering of the continent's most disadvantaged. Kenya and Equatorial Guinea offer excellent examples of countries that have regulated and put in place social protection systems that will survive and outlast our battle against this common enemy.

The continent's poor pharmaceutical capacity has been a



A sign of changing times in Africa with President receiving updates from the Presidential Task Force on coronavirus via teleconferencing. Photo credit Bashir Ahmaad

source of amazement to locals and foreigners alike. Bangladesh, a poorer country than many African countries, produces 97% of the national demand for medicines, in contrast to Africa which is almost 100% dependent on imports.

This last note has triggered another debate: the necessary industrialization of Africa, to transform and add value to the continent's vast and valuable raw materials.

Many African countries have already been deprived access to COVID19 essentials. Excessive global demand has relegated Africa to the

But there is much reason for

optimism. African leaders recently lauded artemisia annua tonic that Andry Rajoelina, President of Madagascar, presented to the world as Africa's solution to COVID19.

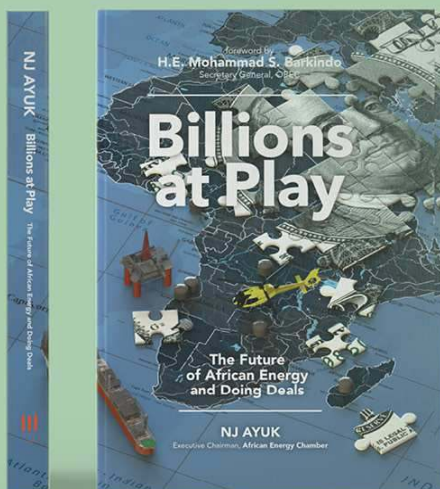
Our enthusiasm as Africans, is rooted in wounded self-esteem. For way too long, we have been victims of marginalization. The power to regain our dignity has too often been stripped away. Today, nestled in the souls of all Africans is an unshakable faith that the most important resource that Africa needs in order to rise up, is none other than Africans themselves.

No one will help us if we do not help ourselves. Africa is no longer

asking to be taught how to fish. Africa is already rowing towards the utopia enunciated in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and the Africa Union's Agenda 2063.

In spite of dire predictions and narratives, humanity always has a way of ending up in that country called utopia. Africa is humanity.

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Africa in the path of Covid-19: Promises of traditional remedy in face of WHO rebuttal

By Amos Fofung

At the Douala Metropolitan Archdiocese, in Cameroon's most populous city, His Grace Samuel Kleda, Archbishop of the diocese says over 500 people including patients and doctors who took the herbal medicine he concocted have recovered from the deadly coronavirus.

He affirmed that his herbal concoction against the Coronavirus pandemic is effective and plans to carry out mass production and distribution to all catholic schools and pharmacies in the country.

There are at least two other medical Doctors including a herbalist in the Central African economic nation who have gone public to promote traditional remedies for coronavirus which has now killed over 280,000 people with some 4 million confirmed cases worldwide.

With 58,000 confirmed cases, 2,000 deaths, and 20,000 recoveries, the effects of the global pandemic in Africa is decimal as compared to "wild" projections by international bodies, the World Health Organization, foreign governments, and personalities including Bill Gates.

Aside from Cameroon, traditional remedies against covid-19 are also been promoted in Nigeria, Madagascar, South Africa, and many other African states who insist their traditional plants when concocted mitigate and even kills the coronavirus in humans without side effects.

The World Health Organization, WHO has issued a warning against people using untested remedies for coronavirus saying "Africans deserve access to medicines that have gone through proper trials even if they are derived from traditional treatments."

One of the most popular herbal treatments making news from Africa is from the island nation of Madagascar where President Andry Rajoelina has been promoting a herbal tonic "Covid-Organics.



Archbishop Samuel Kleda of Douala Archdiocese, who has practiced herbalism over the years, is making waves with his COVID 19 remedy

The remedy contains Artemisia annua, (Sweet wormwood) a plant often used to treat malaria. Over the past weeks, the remedy continues to gain momentum across the continent and has already been ordered by Tanzania, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, and Congo-Brazzaville.

Reports indicate that it will soon be distributed to 14 other countries in Africa.

At the time of this report, Madagascar had 193 confirmed cases of coronavirus, with 101 recoveries and zero death. This places the island nation among the least affected countries in Africa and the world.

The World Health Organization has been cautious about promoting the use of Covid-organics maintaining it supports scientifically-proven traditional medicine. "Medicinal plants such as Artemisia annua are being considered as possible treatments for Covid-19 and should be tested for efficacy and adverse side effects," the global health governing body said in a statement.

"The normal process of testing (a drug) takes long because you have to do all the phases," says Dr. Zabulon Yoti, WHO Africa Regional emergency director. "You need to do testing in animals before you come to

humans. When it comes to humans, you need to test a small group of people and also watch for all effects while testing—the positive ones, side effects, and some medium to long term effects. Then you can give to a larger population."

"Normally it takes 10 months plus to get medicine but for Ebola, we had a vaccine within a short time," says Dr. Zabulon. "We use those processes of trying to hasten and working in a shorter time. It is not only for African traditional medicines, but it is for every medicine all over the World," Dr. Zabulon.

Due to mounting pressure, Madagascar agreed to have its herbal tonic developed by the Malagasy Institute of Applied Research tested by another country.

South Africa expressed willingness to assist Madagascar to undertake scientific analysis of COVID Organics.

>>We received a call from the government of Madagascar, which asked for help with scientific research,>> Health Minister Zweli Mkhize, said in a Twitter post.

>>Our scientists would be able to assist in the research. We will only get involved in a scientific analysis of the herb,>> he added.

Effects of coronavirus on Africa Since its outbreak in 2019, in the Chinese city of Wuhan, the novel coronavirus has spread rampantly across the globe, overwhelming health systems and crippling the global economy.

With millions now affected and without a medically approved vaccine expected anytime soon, governments have instituted social distancing as a means to reduce the spread of the deadly virus. This has forced industries, schools, organizations and all public places to shut down.

Most developed nations have put their citizens on economic sustainability programs such as the issuance of stimulus checks in the United States to support households.



The normal process of testing takes long because you have to do all the phases,says Dr. Zabulon Yoti.

The economic impact of these “social distancing” strategies has been severe, triggering a global recession that economist fear will surpass the Great Depression.

African nations are unlikely to enjoy this luxury of choice. More than 70 percent of African urbanites—approximately 200 million people—reside in crowded city slums with limited access to plumbing or electricity.

From Lagos- Nigeria to Cape Town in South Africa and Asmara in Eritrea, most African city centers are crowded with denizens who go out every day to make ends meet. In those environments, social distancing may be effectively impossible.

Some 40 percent of Africans are subjected to water scarcity and obtaining access to clean water—let alone soap—is an insurmountable daily hurdle, and for those populations, even simple measures to prevent the spread of the virus, such as frequent handwashing, will be out



Most African markets are crowded just like this Nigeria open market in Cotonou, Benin. Photo Courtesy.

of reach.

With 85 percent of Africans living on less than \$5.50 a day, work stoppages will pose an existential threat. Sheltering in place for long periods—weeks or more—will simply not be possible. Reasons why most Africa countries are putting an end or limiting their coronavirus preventive moves. A good example is South Africa and Cameroon that have lifted

restrictions barely weeks after they were instituted.

Africa’s smaller, middle-income, and more-industrialized nations like Senegal, Rwanda, and Botswana and Mauritania are likely to fare better than large countries that serve as regional transit and economic hubs like Ethiopia, Nigeria, and South Africa because they have greater control over their borders and are

better equipped to implement social distancing measures than countries with large urban slums and international transit corridors.

Worst still, countries in conflict including Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria’s northern regions, parts of Cameroon and Mali, and remote rural villages are also likely to be hit especially hard by COVID-19.

There, medical services, electricity, potable water sources, and internet connectivity are mostly lacking. In these least-served and least-accessible areas, news of the virus may spread far more slowly than the disease itself, and COVID-19 will join a list of other killers, including malnutrition and violence. Many coronavirus deaths in conflict-hit and rural zones are likely to remain undiagnosed and unrecorded—there, as in previous epidemics, the extent of this pandemic may never be fully known.

COVID-19 response must target African agriculture and the rural poor

Agriculture contributes 65 per cent of Africa’s employment and 75 per cent of its domestic trade

By Olusegun Obasanjo and Hailemariam Desalegn Boshe*

Africa has so far escaped the worst health consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the continent looks like it could be the worst hit from the economic fallout of the crisis: 80 million Africans could be pushed into extreme poverty if action is not taken. And disruptions in food systems raise the prospect of more Africans falling into hunger. Rural people, many of whom work on small-scale farms, are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of the crisis. It is therefore vital that the COVID-19 response address food security and target the rural poor.

At this time, the international



Former President Obasanjo is a successful farmer himself in Nigeria.

development agenda is prioritizing health, economies and infrastructure. But there must also be a focus on food security, agribusiness and rural development. This is especially

important on the African continent.

Agriculture contributes 65 per cent of Africa’s employment and 75 per cent of its domestic trade. However, the rich potential of agriculture as a

tool to promote food security and fight poverty is at risk from the effects of COVID-19.

In March, the UN Economic Commission for Africa predicted growth in Africa would drop from 3.2 per cent to 1.8 per cent in 2020. Within the continent, lockdowns are disrupting inter-regional trade. The effect of restrictive measures on food trade is especially worrying, in particular for food-importing countries, but also because of shrinking export markets for the continent’s farmers.

Across the European Union (the largest export market for Africa’s fresh fruits and vegetables), demand

has dropped for popular produce such as Kenyan avocados, South African citrus and Moroccan vegetables. Kenya has also recorded an 8.5 per cent decline for tea exports to destinations like Iran, Pakistan and UAE. Within countries, we are already seeing that interruptions to transport and distribution systems are impeding small-scale farmers from accessing essential inputs – like seeds and fertilizer – and from getting their food to markets.

African governments have defined stimulus measures to mitigate national and regional economic impacts of COVID-19. As they do, they must remember that investments in agriculture can be up to five times more poverty-reducing than investments in other sectors. Investments in rural, small-scale agriculture are particularly important for the region's food security, for safeguarding the livelihoods of some of its most vulnerable people and for sustaining the gains in poverty alleviation and wealth creation.

Small farms everywhere traditionally make a huge contribution to global food security. Around the world, small-farm dominated systems produce 50 per cent of all food calories on 30 per cent of the world's agricultural land. In sub-Saharan Africa, however, the role of small-scale farms is even more significant: 80 per cent of farms are small in most of these countries.

Even before the current crisis, globally more than 820 million

people were going hungry daily. And the majority of the world's poor and hungry people live in the rural areas of developing countries. In Africa, reliance on food imports, and lack of services and infrastructure to enable small-scale farmers to produce and market food, along with the shocks of climate change, have all increased the fragility of food access.

In April, the World Bank projected the pandemic would hit Africa the hardest of any region, pushing 23 million people into poverty. This raises the question of how small producers in Africa can get access to inputs and finance to grow and sell the food needed to ensure food security and support livelihoods. African leaders must be in the vanguard of funding solution

In April, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) launched a multi-donor fund-COVID-19 Rural Poor Stimulus Facility (RPSF) - to address the immediate fallout of COVID-19 for rural people in Africa and elsewhere. IFAD specializes in investing in poor rural people, targeting the poorest and most marginalized. Among other goals, the new facility will provide small-scale farmers and fishers with basic inputs, and help them access



Members of a cooperative supported by IFAD in Africa are slicing pineapples into small pieces to dry for export .IFAD Edward Echwalu.

markets and maintain cash flow. IFAD committed US\$40 million to the new fund, but aims to raise at least \$200 million more from UN Member States, foundations and the private sector.

The Facility will complement and scale-up the work IFAD has already been doing to repurpose existing project activities. In Malawi, for example, a programme is providing social cash transfers to ultra-poor farmers and delivering messages about financial literacy and COVID-19 prevention. In Eritrea, vulnerable households are receiving small ruminants and seeds to strengthen, maintain production, access markets and safeguard household food security during the crisis.

These immediate actions are essential to mitigate the worst risks of the crisis. They are also important to safeguard IFAD's past and ongoing investments to build the long-term resilience of rural livelihoods. Ultimately, we need to ensure that rural people and their businesses are the foundation of resilient rural economies and food systems across Africa. Then, when the next crisis strikes, the vulnerable people of today will be better able to protect their livelihoods and avoid the risk of falling into poverty and hunger.

So while it's urgent to feed people today, we also must look to the days, months and years ahead. This is one reason why IFAD prioritizes long-term rural and agricultural development and building resilience to future shocks. It is also why we urge policy makers to adapt any relevant lessons from how previous outbreaks like the Ebola virus affected agriculture and food systems.

In the long term, this pandemic underscores the need for Africa to transform agriculture and agribusiness as the surest path to inclusive economic growth, wealth generation and greater resilience.

As Special Envoys, we believe in IFAD's exceptional mandate and will continue to work closely with the Fund in mobilizing resources to support the most vulnerable on the African continent. The pandemic will expose the livelihoods of rural marginalized groups to unprecedented challenges. To restore hope to those affected, we commit strongly to the idea that no one will be left behind, especially in Africa.

*The authors are Olusegun Obasanjo, former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Hailemariam Desalegn Boshe, former Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Both are International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Special Envoys engaged to mobilize support and advocate for greater investment in rural areas.



Former Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn visiting a farm owned by President Museveni during a visit to Uganda in 2017.Photo credit twitter.



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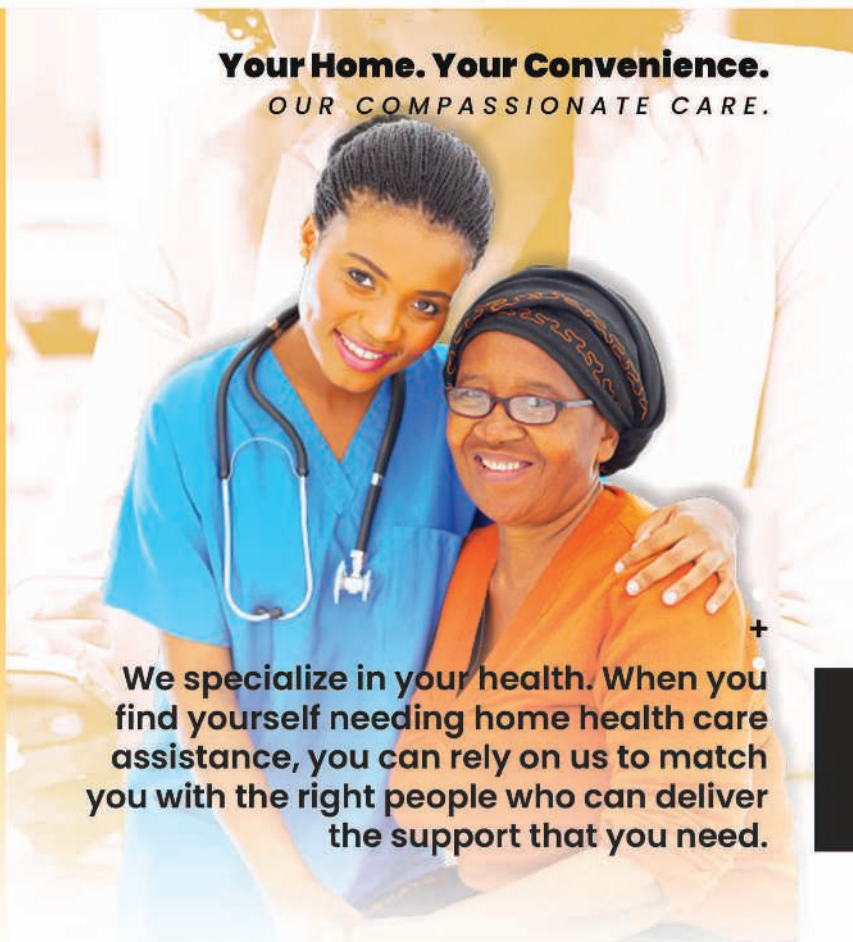


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Remembering Influential Africans Who Have Succumbed to Corona Virus

By Prince Kurupati

It's a known fact that the corona virus pandemic has wrecked havoc world over and the prayers and wishes of everyone is that we find a vaccine as soon as possible. With media outlets focusing on reporting the number of deaths as statistics, we often forget that behind those statistics are human stories, tragedies of unimaginable consequences to the societies and families left behind.

Our focus today is on the African society. The corona virus death toll in Africa has already surpassed the 2 000 mark and of those that have died are some influential citizens who have left their mark on the continent. This article therefore seeks to remember these influential Africans who have succumbed to the corona virus.

Manu Dibango (Cameroon)

Manu Dibango's family in a Facebook post announced that celebrated African singer and saxophonist Manu Dibango had succumbed to corona virus on 24 March 2020. "It is with deep sadness that we announce to you the loss of



Arguably the best cultural Ambassador from Africa on the global stage, Cameroonian born Manu Dibango was one of the earliest high profile victims of COVID-19

Manu Dibango, our Papy Groove, who passed away on 24th March 2020, at 86 years old, due to Covid-19."

Dibango was born in 1933 in the Cameroonian city of Doula. A music enthusiast from an early age, Dibango hones his music skills each time he

attended church services. Dibango released his planetary hit 'Soul Makossa' in 1972 which catapulted him to global stardom.

During his later years, Dibango served as the pioneer chairman of the Cameroon Music Corporation. In 2004, he was appointed UNESCO Artist for Peace.

Dibango once made headlines when he sued Michael Jackson and Rihanna in 2009 for unlawfully adopting some of his lyrics. The matter was eventually settled out of court.

Mahmud Jibril (Libya)

Mahmud Jibril was the successor to deposed Libyan leader Muammar Gadhafi. Jibril succumbed to the virus on April 5 in an Egyptian hospital.

Mahmud Jibril served as the head of the interim government in March 2011, a few weeks after the outbreak of the Arab Spring uprising in Libya.

According to Khaled al-Mrimi, the secretary of the Alliance of National Forces, Jibril's party, Jibril suffered a heart attack on March 21 and was rushed to an Egyptian hospital. However, as he was recovering from

the heart attack, he tested positive for corona virus. Jibril unfortunately failed to recover from the virus and died on April 5.

Nur Hassan Hussein (Somalia)

Nur Hassan Hussein served as the Somali Prime Minister between November 2007 and February 2009. Before that, Hassan Hussein served in various capacities in the Somali government and at one time, he was the attorney general during the tenure of President Siad Barre who was overthrown in 1991.

Nur Hassan Hussein passed away in London having tested positive for corona virus.

The current Somali Prime Minister posted the following on Twitter after his death, "We extend our most profound condolences to the Somali people, friends and bereaved family of Somalia's former Prime Minister, HE Nur Hassan Hussein who passed away in London, UK."

Mallam Abba Kyari (Nigeria)

The Chief of Staff in the office of Muhammadou Buhari Mallam Abba Kyari was Nigeria's first popular



The Chief of Staff in the office of Muhammadou Buhari Mallam Abba Kyari was the first popular figure in Nigeria to pass away from COVID 19.

figure to succumb from the corona virus. The Presidency confirmed the demise of Abba Kyari in a post saying "The Presidency regrets to announce the passage of the Chief of Staff to the President, Mallam Abba Kyari. The deceased had tested positive to the ravaging Covid-19, and had been receiving treatment. But he died Friday, April 17, 2020."

Kyari was a top aide of the Nigerian President and some including Matthew Page, an associate fellow with the Africa Programme at Chatham House labeled him as the "lynchpin" of the Buhari government. During his time in hospital, a Reuters report stated that his illness' could have ramifications for the running of the country. "Kyari has a history of medical complications, including diabetes, and is the gatekeeper to the president. Many who wish to deal with Buhari must go through Kyari, including Nigeria's top politicians and business owners."

In his capacity as Chief of Staff, Kyari was responsible for managing the President's schedule and correspondence, and any other duties that may be assigned by the President.

Pape Diouf (Senegal)

The first corona virus death in Senegal was that of celebrated journalist and sports administrator Pape Diouf. From 2005 to 2009, Pape Diouf served as the President of French soccer club Marseille. Pape Diouf's connections with French football authorities served as a stepping stone for many young Senegalese football players who made the switch from Africa to Europe and as such was widely revered in his home country.

Diouf passed on in his home country having tested positive for corona virus.

Speaking after his death,



Known as the King of Soukous, the demise of Congolese star Aurlus Mabele left millions of fans in tears.

Senegal President Macky Sall said he had followed Diouf's health closely after he was admitted for treatment. "I pay tribute to the medical staff at Fann Hospital who spared no effort to save him."

Zororo Makamba (Zimbabwe)

Zimbabwe's first corona virus death was also that of a popular figure in broadcaster Zororo Makamba. Son to businessman and ZANU (PF) politician, James Makamba, Zororo Makamba passed on a few days after his arrival from New York.

Makamba was a well known broadcaster in Zimbabwe who had launched his own media house. Zororo launched his career at local radio station ZiFM stereo where he hosted current affairs programmes. Afterwards, he made the transition to television where he launched his current affairs programme – "Tonight with Zororo" which aired on MNet's Zambezi Magic.

After his death, the Ministry of Health and Child Care via a Twitter post said that Zororo was the second person to test positive in Zimbabwe

and the first casualty. He had underlying medical conditions which made him more vulnerable to complications arising from the virus.

Aurlus Mabele (Congo-Brazzaville)

Aurlus Mabele was widely known as the King of Soukous in Congo. Soukous is high tempo dance music enjoyed across the African continent. Aurlus Mabele born Aurelian Miatsonama was born in Congo-Brazzaville but moved to Paris during his teen years.

Mav Cacharel, Aurlus Mabele's long time friend was the first person to announce

the news of his death in a Facebook post saying, "Good evening everyone, I have sad news to announce the death of my famous friend, brother and collaborator Aurlus Mabele, which happened this Thursday, March 19, 2020 at 14 pm, in the Paris region, from the follow-up of (a) corona virus (case)."

Jacques Joaquim Yhombi-Opango (Congo-Brazzaville)

From April 1977 up until February 1979, Jacques Joaquim Yhombi-Opango served as the President of the Republic of Congo. Yhombi-Opango was deposed by current president Denis Sassou Nguesso and spent several years in prison until the country introduced multi-party democracy in 1991. From 1992 to 1997, he served as Prime Minister under the government of Pascal Lissouba. When civil war broke out in 1977, he went into exile in France. He only returned to his mother country some 10 years later.

Jacques Joaquim Yhombi-Opango succumbed to the corona virus at the age of 81 in a Paris Hospital. His family said that he had underlying health conditions before contracting the virus.



A larger than life figure in the world of football, Pape Diouf had a profound impact on the careers of some of the most talented Africans in Europe.



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African elections and democracy will either be strengthened or crushed as nations fight coronavirus pandemic, NDI's Dr. Christopher Fomunyoh warns

By Amos Fofung

Dr. Christopher Fomunyoh, Senior Associate and Regional Director for Central and West Africa at the National Democratic Institute, NDI has warned that African nations will either come out of the coronavirus pandemic with stronger or frail democracies.

The internationally recognized expert in mediating election-related conflict who has organized and advised international election observation missions to Benin, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone says the various measures adopted to combat the spread of the virus across the continent risk having devastating effects on its elections and democracy.

This, he added is coupled with the fact that 2020 is a very crucial year for the African continent as it celebrates three decades of great strides and advances in its democracy, with several countries schedule to organize presidential and/or legislative elections.

He issued the warning during a live chat on the social media



African nations will either come out of the coronavirus pandemic with stronger or frail democracies, says Dr Christopher Fomunyoh

platform of the Chatham House Africa Programme, also known as the Royal Institute of International Affairs, - a not-for-profit and non-governmental UK organization whose mission is to analyze and promote the understanding of major international issues and current affairs.

Citing examples such as Sudan

which is recovering from a 30-year war with prospects of transiting into a democracy and Guinea Bissau were a new pathway to democratic government and political stability is been charted after the organizing of a successful election, Dr. Christopher Fomunyoh cautioned that the strides and democratic achievements recorded across the continent might be put to jeopardy as stringent measures are implemented to fight the coronavirus pandemic.

He pointed to the fact that Presidential and legislative term limits are fixed on constitutions with specific election periods, most of which are scheduled across Africa in 2020.

Regrettably, he added, most constitutions across the continent were not drawn with a pandemic outbreak in mind. Thus, little or no provision on

how to organize elections or safeguard excess that could impede a country's democracy during such times.

Dr. Christopher Fomunyoh said elections are very significant because they do test the strength of the other pillars of democratic governance and bring to the fore principles of democracy in a country - such as the principle of role of power which is put to the test. He expressed fears that in combating the pandemic, African states that were once stable and enjoying democratic progress risk sliding back.

"As if the devastating effects of coronavirus is not enough, the African continent will face multiple political storms. The second half of this year is going to reserve a number of surprises for us...that we will need to collectively come together to strengthen the prioritization of the political issues that are likely to hit us...I dare to say we will face multiple political storms in the course of this year," he warned stating that COVID-19 complicates things further with most African countries



Former President Nicephore Soglo of Benin Republic, former President Goodluck Jonathan of Nigeria, Prime Minister Kassouy of Guinea and Dr Chris Fomunyoh .Guinea has elections coming up.

already dealing with issues related to governance, and transparency.

In the streamed discussion which featured a question and answers session from participants across Africa, Dr. Christopher said unless four principles are adopted including; inclusive decision-making process, working towards consensus across party lines by bringing in opposing voices and broadening the scope of stakeholders to be consulted before a decision is arrived at, bringing voters into the process, and transparently from government officials, democracy in most states risk shrinking.

He projected that for the rest of 2020 and rolling into 2021, some African states will be turned into authoritarian opportunist regimes, a situation where leaders will want to use the cover of coronavirus pandemic as an excuse to shrink political space even further and to tilt elections to favor either themselves or



Supporters of the ruling CNDD-FDD party in Burundi attend a campaign rally in Gitega province on 27 April. The country went ahead with scheduled elections on 20 May. Photo Reuters.

their political surrogate and parties.

Subverting democratic principles and democratic resilience are two factors which he stated will be used by authoritarian regimes to consolidate power and influence.

The second trend which he

categorizes as more hopeful is that of democratic resilience which presents a scenario where political leaders, civil society leaders, the media, and all progressive forces are seen across Africa working together to ensure that all emerging democracies come

out of the crisis stronger.

"Countries that follow the four principles will strive and come out of this crisis with their democracies strengthened," Dr. Fomunyoh who has also designed and supervised country-specific democracy support programs with civic organizations, political parties, and legislative bodies emphasized.

In a call to action, he urged the population to work with African leaders who have their interest at heart and to chart a positive way forward for their respective democracies.

"I urged each and every one of us to work as hard as we can to support the counties and the leaders that want to do the right thing this way when next we reconvene, it will be to celebrate the success of democratic resilience across the continent," he said.

The Work that's Being done by the Corporate World in the Fight against COVID-19 in Africa

By Prince Kurupati

The corona virus pandemic has been wrecking havoc in all corners of the world. However, at the present moment, some parts of Asia, Europe and North America have been affected the most with millions infected and thousands having already succumbed to the virus.

The massive numbers of deaths that are being recorded in Europe and North America have left many people wondering what would be the case if the virus somehow manages to spread with the same intensity in Africa. Africa unlike its counterparts in Asia, Europe and America faces numerous challenges which may exacerbate the spread of the virus and in turn, the number of deaths.

First and foremost, it's no secret that Africa's healthcare system is broken and cannot handle the numbers that are being recorded on Europe and America. For many years now, African leaders have neglected



We are committed to help in any way that we can,says Rémy Ejel, CEO of Nestlé Central and West Africa Ltd.

upgrading the healthcare facilities in their countries choosing instead to take foreign jaunts whenever they are in need of medical attention. Moreover, Africa has a population of 1.3 billion people most of which live in high density slums where any form

of social/physical distancing is almost impossible – if the virus does find its way to these areas; it will spread quickly and possibly claim the lives of entire villages.

Africa's economy which is largely informal does not help matters also

as most of the people will be forced to disregard social distancing measures in a bid to provide for their families. Moreover, a high number of people especially those in Sub-Saharan Africa have serious health issues – such as HIV, tuberculosis and acute malnutrition which make them more vulnerable to other diseases. All these factors make Africa the next corona virus epicenter if appropriate measures are not adopted now.

Fortunately for Africa though, there are a number of corporate who have taken it upon themselves to help Africa fight the corona virus before more lives are lost. This article will share with the readers the work that's being done by various corporations on the African continent in the fight against COVID-19.

Nestle

Nestle, one of the leading food brands in Africa said that it will help the continent fight COVID-19

with \$3.4 million. Some of the funds will come in the form of food and beverage donations to 170,000 families, corresponding to 850,000 people across the Central and West African region. Some of the countries that will benefit include Angola, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Gabon, Mali, Niger and Nigeria.

Other funds will come in the form of masks and personal protective equipment which will help to keep frontline health workers safe. Nestle said that it's going to donate medical equipment to hospitals in Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana and Senegal.

Remy Ejel, the Chief Executive Officer of Nestle Central and West Africa said that the company "has been in Central and West Africa for more than 60 years. We live and operate in these communities across the region, so we are committed to help in any way that we can."

Remy Ejel said that its helping hand is not only directed to the customers but also to its employees, suppliers, distributors and retailers. "Our number one priority is to ensure that our employees, contractors and partners remain healthy and safe. As such, Nestle has implemented enhanced hygiene protocols and additional safety measures for its entire staff, including the frontline staff working at its ten factories, its distribution centers and its sales offices. For its employees who are working from home, Nestle is providing computers and internet access. It is also using a variety of digital communication platforms to keep them constantly connected. PPE has also been provided to suppliers, distributors and retailers, including those in open markets."

In these difficult times, Remy Ejel had kind words for the company's brave employees, suppliers, distributors and retailers saying "We are so grateful for their efforts and their determination to keep supplying our communities with food and beverages despite the challenges."

Apart from its own consignment of



Dr. Gabre Madhin , Founder of BlueMoon and Ethiopian Commodities Exchange is running a campaign to manufacture and distribute 500, 000 masks in Ethiopia.

donations, Nestle also partnered with the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). Together Nestle and the IFRC will contribute close to USD 420,000 to strengthen Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) activities in Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana and Senegal.

National Business Compact

In Kenya, corporations that work in the hygiene business have come together under the banner of the National Business Compact with the sole aim of accelerating local action and supporting the government efforts in countering the corona virus pandemic. The corporations that are part of the National Business Compact include Red Cross, Rotary, Beiersdorf, Jonathan Jackson Foundation, Kenya Association of Manufacturers, Kenya Private Sector Alliance, Public Relations Society of Kenya, AMREF, Association of Practitioners in Advertising, as well as the SDG Partnership Platform.

The National Business Compact has singled out hand hygiene as the key to preventing the spread of corona virus. As such, the main soap manufacturers are synergizing and putting their resources into a unified platform of communication. They in turn use the expertise of the

advertising companies to remind consumers that preventative actions are a matter of life and death.

In addition to information dissemination, the National Business Compact is building facilities in informal settlements to improve access to water. The engagement will continue beyond COVID-19 seeks to ensure that every settlement in Kenya has access to clean water and hand washing facilities.

Recognizing that there is a need to keep the economy running even in terms of distress, the National Business Compact has decided to restructure the country's value chain decentralizing it from official channels in main towns and cities and opening up multiple entry points so as to change the relationship that exists between businesses and citizens. At the same time, the National Business Compact is prioritizing the identification of local products which may benefit from the value chain restructuring exercise.

Network Operators in Togo

In Togo, mobile network operators which include Moov and Togo Cellulaire have collaborated with the government and several financial institutions to use digital infrastructure for cash transfers. The Togo government did acknowledge

that its economy is largely informal and by restricting citizens to remain indoors for a long period of time, they face the danger of dying owing to hunger rather than COVID-19. As such, the government came up with the solution to avail cash transfers to vulnerable families through the Novissi program. Novissi means solidarity in the local dialect.

As reported by the World Economic Forum, the government of Togo said that "We know that our communities willingly come together in times of joy and sorrow by pooling their resources. In taking that ethos to the national level, through collaborating with the private sector and appealing to shared humanity – we have

a foundation for true stakeholder capitalism."

AI4DEV Initiative

Recognizing the need for collaboration and coordination between governments and the private sector as integral in fighting COVID-19, UNDP launched a Regional Bureau for Africa's Partnership initiative, the African Influencers for Development (AI4DEV). The founding members of AI4DEV include the Afreximbank, MTN, Equity Bank, Sahara Energy, Africa Finance Corporation, AfroChampions Initiative, BlueMoon and Ethiopian Exchange.

The purpose of AI4DEV according to the founding members is to find context specific solutions for Africa. The initiative seeks to pool resources amongst its members particularly in issues of procurement, governance, financing, communications, and technology in a bid to fight COVID-19 from a unified front. Already, AI4DEV has started to source for personal protective equipment which is distributed to African countries in desperate need of the equipment. The next task for AI4DEV is to ensure that there is a steady and constant local supply of much needed personal protective equipment and food through local production.

Apart from their efforts as

constituent members of AI4DEV, several AI4DEV founding members in their own capacities have already established their COVID-19 initiatives. Afreximbank announced a \$3 billion facility which seeks to help member countries weather the socio-economic and health impacts of COVID-19.

BlueMoon and Ethiopian Commodities Exchange has also launched an initiative meant at manufacturing and distributing masks as well as other low cost medical materials needed in the fight against COVID-19. Dr. Gabre-Madhin the founder of BlueMoon and Ethiopian Commodities Exchange said "We are currently running a campaign to manufacture and distribute 500,000 masks in Ethiopia in the coming weeks. Our network of small and medium enterprises is fast tracking 3D printing prototypes of low cost materials, such as, 3D printed face shields and ventilator valves."

Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL)

The World Bank and SEforALL recently launched an initiative with several energy companies on the continent. The initiative seeks to power up the African continent to ensure that healthcare facilities are powered up at all times. For health facilities that are off-grid, SEforALL is sourcing for modular solar with battery energy storage systems that can be deployed quickly to remote health clinics. At the same time, SEforALL is ensuring that countries on the continent are powered up so as to enable communications and IT services that connect people while maintaining social distancing.

Telkom and Samsung

Contact tracing has been identified as one of the most important steps in preventing the spread of COVID-19. In South Africa, telecommunications



The Aliko Dangote Foundation has several partnerships in place to fight COVID 19 across Nigeria.

giant Telkom has partnered with Samsung in developing indigenous contact tracing apps. The applications use Bluetooth and location technology to track infected people and notify those who were in close proximity to them during the past 15 days.

Samsung's role is to donate handsets that will be distributed in the provinces that have been hit hard by the virus. Already, Samsung has donated 1500 handsets. Telkom's role will be to connect the FreeMe packages on the handsets before distribution. The collaboration between Telkom and Samsung will help in easing the burden of tracking and tracing cases around South Africa.

Telkom will work with the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) for creating a database that fetches information from a person's phone to gain insights about their past movements and whereabouts.

Ecobank

Pan African banking group, Ecobank flexed its muscles when it unveiled a \$3 million package to help in the fight against COVID-19. In a statement, the financial services group said that "With our knowledge of Africa, and to complement various government efforts, we provided

support in form of cash, healthcare equipment and supplies, strong and sustained awareness campaigns while also using our digital platform to provide cash to some vulnerable members of our societies, among others."

Ecobank stated that it knows the importance of creating awareness in communities and empowering communities to protect themselves and their families against the pandemic hence the reason why it unveiled the \$3 million package.

Ecobank has operations in 33 African countries which include Nigeria, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cape Verde, Togo, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Burundi and Zimbabwe.

Aliko Dangote Foundation

In Nigeria, the Aliko Dangote Foundation has contracted 54Gene, a molecular diagnostics company specializing in research and diagnostics to set up a 400 test/day capacity laboratory in Kano State. 54Gene which is accredited by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) already has testing labs set up in Lagos and in Ogun States. The lab is set to increase its capacity to 1000 tests/day in just one week after its launch.

Dangote who is Africa's richest man

said that this new investment in support of increasing nation-wide testing comes in addition to earlier support availed through the Private Sector Coalition Against COVID-19 (CACOVID). CACOVID is a partnership between the Aliko Dangote Foundation and the Access Bank Group established at the end of March, 2020.

In a statement when the CACOVID platform was launched, Dangote said that "CACOVID is already setting up a 310 bed isolation centre at Sani Abacha stadium in Kano. We are extending that capacity by another 150 beds at the Abubakar Imam

Urology Centre in Kano, which is being converted into an isolation centre now. These two centers will be operational pending the final validation by the Infection Prevention and Control Team, which we expect will be completed in the coming days."

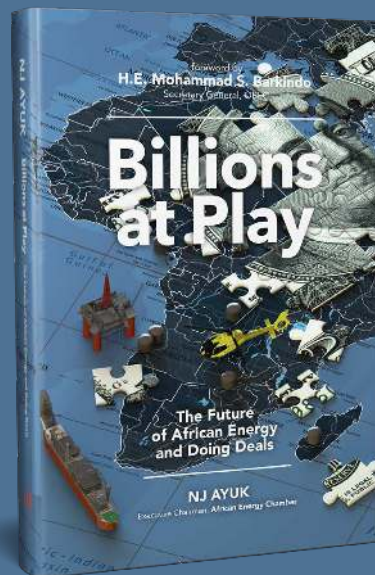
The Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of the Aliko Dangote Foundation speaking at the launch of CACOVID weighed in saying "ADF will immediately handover to the Kano RRT (Rapid Response Teams), 10 ambulances (4 that are immediately available and 6 to come over the next two weeks), two vehicles and PPEs to support the transportation of patients from different parts of the state." In addition, the Chief Executive Officer said the Aliko Dangote Foundation will support "training and incentives for Covid-19 health workers. We will provide hazard incentives and protections for the healthcare and lab workers who are working on the Covid-19 response."

The efforts that are being done by the corporate world in Africa towards the fight against COVID-19 are indeed welcome. They will not only help the continent to contain the virus but they will also help in laying the foundation for a fast recovery post COVID-19.

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We are at war with covid-19, a war we must win for our existence as a race depends on it - Dr. Nkengasong Africa CDC Director points out

By Amos Fofung

Join Us for an Educational Series: COVID-19 in AFRICA & AFRICANS in DIASPORA (AiD) UNITED against COVID-19

COVID-19 in AFRICA

Featuring:
Dr John Nkengasong
Director of the Africa CDC



with global health and diaspora leaders including from Harvard, John Hopkins, Drew, ICTU & African diaspora organizations

DATE: MAY 5, 2020

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Learn about:

- The current COVID-19 situation in Africa and the response to this pandemic described as an existential threat to Africa
- Africans in Diaspora (AiD) uniting against COVID-19



The African Center for Disease Control has reiterated the need to win the battle against the coronavirus pandemic which has ravaged the world, crumbling economies as it traveled from Asia. Via a web conference, Africa CDC and its partners highlighted the effects of the respiratory virus on the continent and how to mobilize resources from the diaspora to help Africa.

Analyzing the response from the continent since the first case was reported in Egypt on February 14, 2020, the Africa CDC lauded the prompt response from African states

to the outbreak of the novel coronavirus in the continent which they say has greatly reduced the impact of the outbreak in the continent. Africa is predicted by experts to be the next epicenter of the virus that started last year in Wuhan, China.

The health webinar which sought

to assets coronavirus impact on the African continent and how the diaspora can effectively assist the continent was attended among others by representatives from the Constituency for Africa, allAfrica.com, Harvard University, foreign investment network and the US Chair of congressional black Caucus who doubles as chair of the House of Representatives Subcommittee on Africa Global Health among others.

Karen Bass, Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, and Chair of the House of Representative's Subcommittee on Africa Global Health emphasized on the importance of the world coming together to work on stamping out the coronavirus as was the case with Ebola, urging that there is a need to stay focused on science and let science guide the response.

Presenting quantitative data on the impact in Africa, the least hit habited

continent, Dr. John Nkengasong Director of Africa Centers for Disease Control did not mince words when he stated that "globally we are at war with covid-19". A war he goes ahead to emphasized that "we must win to survive as a race".

Reviewing the situation of covid-19 on the continent with over forty-four thousand cases, and one thousand eight hundred deaths, the health expert highlighted that the Northern part of the continent is leading in the number of cases followed by the Western part of the continent.

He revealed that the continent of 1.2 billion people is witnessing an increase in the number of infections and healthcare workers in Africa as seen around the world are the most affected with over 614 testing positive.

While analyzing case fatality rate in Africa vis-a-vis global statistics, the Africa CDC director stated that most African countries are not facing

devastating effects as seen elsewhere in the world probably thanks to the very aggressive measures taken by leaders across the continent once the cases started arriving the countries.

Assessing the impact of lockdowns that were promptly enforced by almost all African countries, Dr. Nkengasong stated that lockdowns have positively benefited Africa. A case in point was South Africa which went into the lockdown with 709 cases with a 31% growth increase daily and within 21 days, the number decreased to 5% demonstrating the significant benefit of the lockdown.

He did not fail to express concern over the fact that most countries were hastily lifting lockdown measures. The happy expression escaped his face as he warned that such countries might witness a spike in infections. To prevent this, he announced that the Africa CDC was giving them health guidelines on how to limit the virus as

more people step outside.

With 29 Clinical trials for treatment ongoing across the continent, Dr. Nkengasong who has been at the forefront of coronavirus response in the continent stated that response was prompt with leaders in Africa who reacted fast after the continent registered its first case in Egypt by organizing an emergency meeting with all Ministers of Health and the leadership of WHO in Addis Ababa.

During the meeting, Africa as a whole agreed to share resources, data, and information and went the extra mile to set up a task force for Africa's response to the virus.

He added that the African Union Covid-19 fund established by heads of states to coordinate response and support each other proves the continent's determination to mitigate the effects of the pandemic.

On measures taken by African CDC, Dr. Nkengasong during the webinar said, "once we knew that we were at risk, we trained technics



Globally we are at war with covid-19 says Dr. John Nkengasong Director of Africa Centers for Disease Control.

to conduct surveillance and airport training, trained countries on risk communication, clinical care, and management, used 3 weeks to train and armed health experts on

surveillance and how to test patients and medical response among others."

What needs to be done

From his wealth of experience in dealing with health crisis, Dr. Nkengasong recommended that in the next weeks if there is an effective implementation of preventive measures is relaxed, the continent risk having over 3.8 million cases but added that should the continent continue to fight the virus as it has been doing, then in the next three months just about 700 people might be infected.

On a financial level, he explained that it will cost the continent some \$1.7 billion if there is an outbreak with 3.8 million cases to take care of patients and health workers in the next 100 days as he made his case for governments to reinforce measures to prevent more infection across the continent.

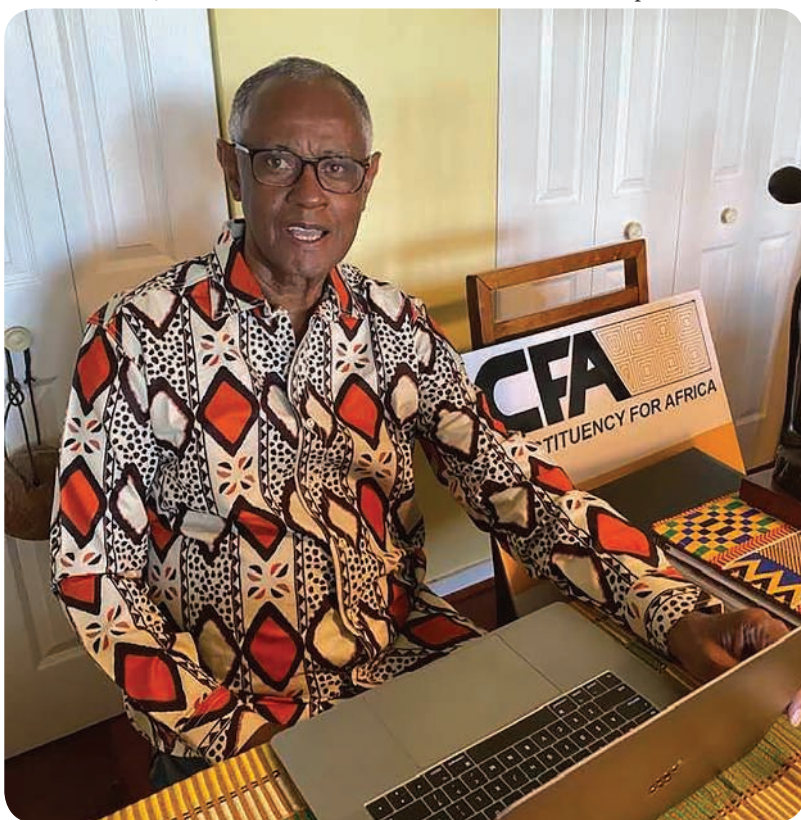
With over eight hundred and forty thousand

tests done so far, the Africa CDC announced that they have launched a partnership to increase the number of testing by one million in the next four weeks, ten million in four months, and 20 million by the end of the year.

"What needs to be done now is to scale up tracing, testing and isolation—deploy community and healthcare workers—expand clinical care of covid-19 patients—prevent healthcare workers—protect existing programs for endemic diseases such as TB, malaria, HIV..." he added as he warned that coronavirus presents serious health, humanitarian and national security threat for the continent.

A war which according to him must be won in order to survive as a continent given the fragile nature of the healthcare system in Africa.

Moderated by Mel Foote of the Constituency of Africa, the event was the fruit of a partnership between the Constituency for Africa and Harvard University. Panelists included NBA legend Dikembe Mutombo, who discussed Diaspora engagement options. The final speaker on the program was Dr. Julius Garvey, who is the son of the legendary Panafricanist, Marcus Garvey



The discussions were moderated by Mel Foote of the Constituency For Africa.

Cameroon: Was Barrister Balla's Dismissal from UB Politically Motivated?

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

Human Rights Lawyer, Barrister Nkongho Felix Agbor «Balla» has been dismissed as an instructor in the University of Buea, something which observers noted as gross human rights violation and suppression. The lawyer was accused of setting an examination question during the first semester that talked about the Anglophone crisis.

Critics of the government have noted that his dismissal was politically motivated and shows how the government has a grip on the affairs of the institution. His dismissal they say is uncalled for when another lecturer in the University of Yaounde, SOA had set a similar question on the Anglophone crisis but he has not been reprimanded or dismissed as the case with Barrister Balla.

The disciplinary board sat May 6 and handed down his dismissal after long deliberation. The Disciplinary Panel resolved that the question violates Article 40 and 42 (paragraph 1) of decree no. 93/027 of 19 January 1993, modified and completed by



Felix Agbor Balla Human rights defender addressing participants during the International Nelson Mandela-Day in Yaounde.

decree no. 2005/342 of 10 September 2005, to define provisions common to all university institutions.

«The contract of Mr Felix Agbor Nkongho recruited as an instructor in the Department of English Law through Decision No. 2015/0514/UB/ACA/TTSD/TSS of 02 June 2015

is hereby terminated with immediate effect,” read part of the termination letter, signed by the Vice-Chancellor of UB, Professor Ngomo Horace Manga.

Barrister Balla did not appear during the deliberation. He had earlier written a letter to the

institution titled, “Memorandum of Appearance under Protest,” accusing the said institution of not following laid down rules and regulations.

The Ministerial Circular of 2017, supra, states that: “The disciplinary procedure of a teacher being essentially contradictory, the suspect must be summoned in writing, at least five (05) days before the holding of the Council.”

Such a decision was, however, not followed by the University of Buea who notified Barrister Agbor Balla barely 24 hours to the hearing. “What time will the suspect have to prepare against the very “serious allegations” against him” He questioned.

After receiving the letter of termination of contract Barrister Agbor Nkongho said that he was already discussing with his lawyers the possibility of dragging UB to court.

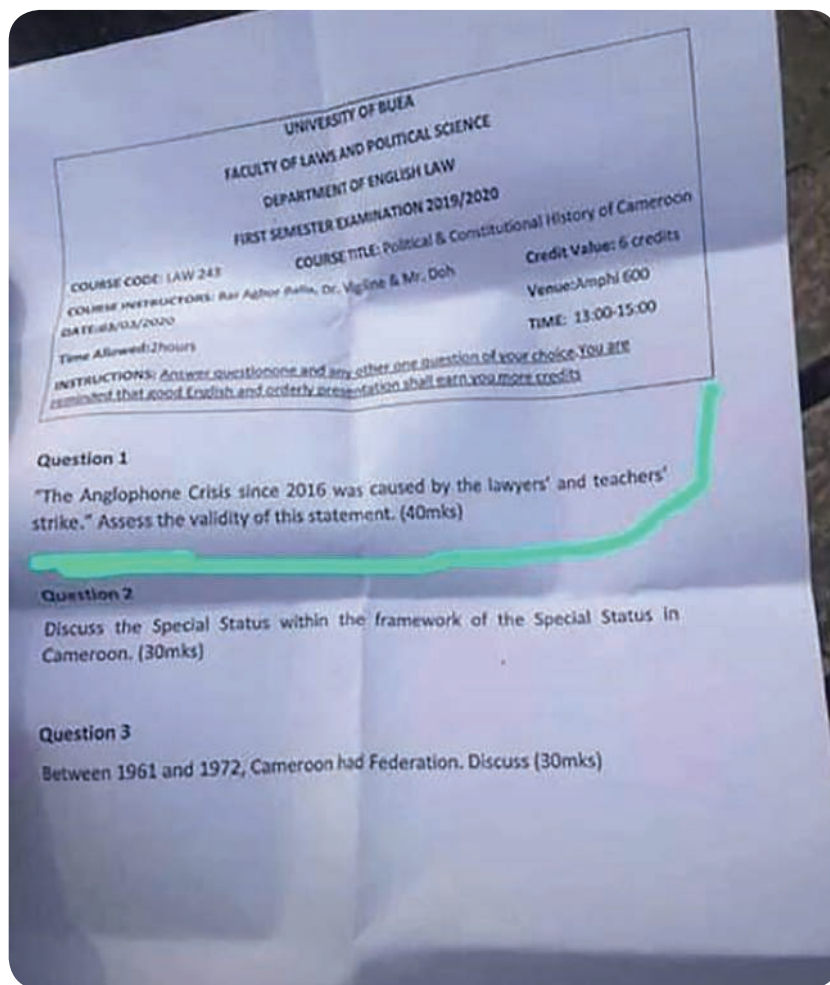
“We shall end in the court. I prefer that (the university) should also win me there...I am already discussing it with my lawyers”, he said confidently, and would not comment further.



Barrister Balla was hired by UB as an instructor in 2015 for a period of two years.

Bone of contention

The Minister of State, Minister of



The said question on the Anglophone crisis that got Barrister Balla dismissed from the University of Buea.

Higher Education, Prof Jacques Fame Ndongo, suspended Barrister Felix Agbor Balla Nkongho for posing a question on the current sociopolitical crisis in an official examination.

The Chancellor of Academic Orders in a letter addressed to Prof Ngomo Horace Manga, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Buea, on April 20, 2020, ordered the suspension of Barrister Agbor Balla, a lecturer of constitutional law in the department of law.

The rights activist is said to have breached professional obligations when he set an exam question on the Anglophone Crisis in a first-semester level one course titled «Political and Constitutional History of Cameroon». The question read: “The Anglophone crisis since 2016 was caused by lawyers’ and teachers’ strikes. Assess the validity of this statement (40 marks).”

Disrespect of legal provisions

In the letter sent to the University of Buea, human rights lawyer detailed the legal provisions that were disrespected by the institution.

... «It is incumbent primarily to the Registrar, on the occasion of a disciplinary council before which a teacher must appear, to investigate the matter. In this wise, he must obligatorily hear the suspect based on a report [...].»

At the end of the investigation, a circumstantial report is transmitted to the President of the Disciplinary Council, to provoke the holding of the Disciplinary Council, through a convocation sent to the members of the Council presiding the day, time and the place of the session.

The suspect, in this case, was never invited for any such prior investigation.

Barrister Balla added: “The aforementioned letter inviting me to a “Disciplinary Hearing” does not mention what sanctions I may incur.

«The teacher implicated can defend himself or be assisted by a defender of his choice but the summons fails to appraise the suspect of this fact.»

«His contract ended in 2019... but again the University is in breach of the due procedure here,» a source familiar with the issue told this reporter.

«In contract law, if a contract expires both parties are supposed to notify each other if at all they do not intend to prolong the contract. Silence on the part of both parties is considered that contract continues especially if the two parties continue to act as though they were in a contract. This has what

has been happening in the University of Buea because Balla continued to give lectures, and the University continued to pay him in January, February, March, and April, so they cannot claim that his contract had ended on the 31st of December whereas he continued to teach and even when ahead to set exam and UB continued to pay him before the Minister stepped in.»

FAKLA decries Gov’t Intrusion in UB Management

Barristers Benjamin Enow Agbor and Nji Aben Valentine, respectively President and Secretary-General of FAKLA (Fako Lawyers Association, a body which Barrister Balla was once President) in a press release May 12, 2020, said the reason advanced for the termination of Agbor Balla’s contract is untenable as no factual breaches have been raised.

“FAKLA considers it anathema that in a University, the sphere of knowledge should be limited by the nature of questions asked in an examination. Neither does it condone the politicization of the University.

“FAKLA weeps for the University of Buea that even though it was created to operate as an Anglo-Saxon University – one of whose cardinal characteristics should be its autonomy and independence, the administration of the University now allows itself to be manipulated by politicians and political considerations.»

FAKLA further notes that at the time learned Barrister Nkongho Felix Agbor Balla was indicted for setting the said question in the University of Buea in 2020, the same and similar questions were set by other lecturers in the University of Yaoundé II – Soa.

One such question read: “The Anglophone problem in Cameroon in its new developments since 2016, is it nationalism or ethnicity? Discuss.”

Fako Lawyers observe that the lecturer who set the above question has not been sanctioned and indeed should not be sanctioned because there is no travesty in both questions.

They, however, submit that: «The circumstances preceding this spectacle and the speed with which the events unfolded on social media, leaves no one in doubt that the allegations and subsequent dismissal of Barrister Nkongho Felix Agbor Balla were not only politically motivated but he was discriminatorily targeted and slain. We, therefore, view the dismissal of Barrister Nkongho Felix Agbor Balla as political victimization and an infringement of his human rights.

It should be recalled that Barrister Agbor Nkongho was President of the now-banned Cameroon Anglophone Civil Society Consortium (CACSC), which coordinated civil disobedience and peaceful anti-government protests in 2016 and early 2017 as a way of forcing the Cameroon government grant and protect the rights of minority English-speaking Cameroonians, who have complained of gross marginalization for decades.



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Zimbabwe: Economy on the Brink

By Prince Kurupati

On the second of January, a day after New Year celebrations, Susan a single mother of three young children woke up at 3.00 am. Susan is part of the millions of Zimbabweans who are not employed. In a bid to provide for her family, she sells second hand clothes that she imports from neighboring Mozambique at a local flea market in the capital city Harare.

Before she leaves her house, she prepares porridge for her young kids and leaves a few Bond notes (Zimbabwe's local currency) to the eldest daughter Shamiso. Without asking any questions Shamiso takes the money and places it under a wooden candle holder that is beside her sleeping mattress. Shamiso knows that the money is meant for vegetables to be prepared as relish for their lunch.

Shamiso and her siblings have to wait until sunset to know if they will eat at night as supper as well as the next day's food comes from Susan's day earnings. For years, this has been the routine for Susan as well as millions of other Zimbabwean citizens whose survival depends on hand to mouth hustles. Unfortunately for Susan and the millions like her, a ravaging corona virus pandemic has changed her life for the worst. She can no longer sell her stuff in the CBD owing to the nationwide lockdown imposed by the government. The lockdown has forced Susan to sell her stuff at her home but the unfortunate thing is many people in her settlement are in the same predicament hence sales have been next to zero. This has made life virtually impossible for Susan and her three kids.

The same economic difficulties that are facing Susan at the micro level in Zimbabwe are also the same challenges that are facing the government at the macro level. Tax receipts have significantly reduced owing to business closures as well as the scaling down of operations. This has severely affected the already



Many Zimbabweans are experiencing tough times.

ailing economy leaving it on the verge of collapse. Zimbabwe's Finance Minister Mthuli Ncube relayed this in a heartfelt letter to the international financial institutions in Washington.

The letter which has since been made public across various social media platforms depicts the usually upbeat Ncube painting a rather gloom and grim picture of the current Zimbabwean economy. Using explicit terms, Ncube states that "Zimbabwe's economy could contract by 15-20% during 2020 – with very serious social consequences. Already 8.5 million Zimbabweans are food insecure."

The letter which is a first public acknowledgment by Ncube that all is not well in the Zimbabwean economy

paints a sobering atmosphere. Ncube stated that the situation combined with the negative effects of COVID-19 is so bad that it now poses a great danger to state and regional security in Southern Africa. "The global pandemic will take a heavy toll on the health sector, with many lives being lost and raise poverty to levels not seen in recent times, including worsening food security. A domestic collapse also would have potentially adverse regional effects, where spillovers are significant."

Zimbabwe needs no introduction to security threats emanating from adverse economic conditions. As recent as January 2019, the country slid into lawlessness when thousands

of citizens went into the streets to protest against massive fuel price hikes. A repeat of such a scenario may bear huge consequences this time around owing to the cost of property damage, potential loss of life as well as the spread of COVID-19.

Some sources said that the security threat emanating from the country's ailing economy was so bad that it forced the government to delay imposing a lockdown as there were fears that some elements bent on effecting regime change would exploit the conditions to move against the president and his key allies.

Writing after receiving Ncube's letter, Africa Confidential said the region was already worried about the security situation in Zimbabwe and Cyril Ramaphosa's call to the Western states and the IFIs to lift the targeted sanctions against the Zimbabwean government during an African Union teleconference on April 28 may have been influenced by the deteriorating security situation.

Without mincing words, Ncube also said that the government takes "responsibility for the recent policy missteps during the late 2019" which played a key role in necessitating the exponential increases of the inflation rate. This is a first time that Ncube in particular and the government in general has 'publicly' accepted the blame for the ailing economy. Several analysts said that this is a commendable step as it shows that the government does not believe its propaganda that poor economic performance is solely as a result of the targeted sanctions imposed on certain individuals and institutions in the country.

In the letter addressed to David Malpass the President of the World Bank, Kristalina Georgieva the managing director of the International Monetary Fund and Akinwumi Adesina the President of the African Development Bank, Ncube said that he seeks support to rescheduling or cancellation of all Zimbabwe's foreign



The government takes responsibility for the recent policy shortcomings says Finance Minister Mthuli Ncube.

bilateral debt arrears and help in clearing all its multilateral arrears. Ncube also requested for \$200 million for unplanned spending to fight the corona virus pandemic.

In the unfortunate event that the IFIs fail to grant him his wishes, the Zimbabwean government would be forced to return to printing money. He did acknowledge that such a move would obviously risk a return to hyperinflation and the crash of the local currency.

In the fortunate event that the IFIs grant him his wishes, Ncube promised a time bound programme of economic, political and governance reforms. Ncube said the reforms would include introducing a market determined exchange rate, limiting the fiscal costs of the financing of agriculture, ensuring transparency and resolving all the related governance issues.

IFIs took time to issue their response but it seems they finally did so when the World Bank promised to avail \$7 million to Zimbabwe to be



President Mnangagwa in meeting with Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa. The South African leader has publicly called for international sanctions against Zimbabwe to be lifted.

used in the fight against the corona virus pandemic. The support will come from the lender's trust funds and partners because Zimbabwe isn't current on its debt-service obligations with the institution therefore cannot access funds through the lender's

regular financing channels.

While the support is indeed a welcome development, the \$7 million is still a far cry away from the \$200 million that Ncube requested solely for the purposes of meeting unplanned COVID-19 spending

expenses. This therefore cements the notion that IFIs view the challenges in Zimbabwe as a political not an economic crisis hence without seeing any credible change on that front, they will keep doing their watch and see approach.

COVID-19 Drives The Implementation Of Technology In K-12 Schools

By: John Nkemnji, Ph.D.

COVID-19 has forced the implementation of technology and virtual-learning in schools. It has also encouraged parents to work closely with teachers to support student learning. Life for teachers, students, and parents may never be the same. COVID-19 led to the suspension of classes, the closing of facilities, and converting schools from face-to-face instruction to virtual teaching and learning. Compared to other institutions like transportation, communication, medicine, and entertainment, schools lagged behind when it came to adopting technology. The main mode of content delivery in schools has been to lecture students what they need to memorize for various tests – weekly, unit, or quarterly. These tests were mostly “paper-and-pencil multiple-choice type” and measured rote memorization (knowledge) or



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.

recall.

In the updated version of Bloom's government

taxonomy of learning hierarchy, knowledge is the most basic skill as it is the easiest to teach and test. Other skills on the hierarchy, in ascending order, include: Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation. Essential skills like critical thinking, clear communication, and application are more advanced stages of the learning continuum. Proper use of technology in schools fosters the acquisition of important daily life skills. Once officials began to

understand how deadly COVID-19 could be and how the illness is transmitted, mandated online teaching became instituted to comply with social distancing.

Many schools in the USA as well as in Africa were ill-prepared for genuine change in the implementation of virtual teaching. In some schools, the use of Chromebooks and tablets was not common. The jump in price by “Microsoft and laptops” drove K-12 schools to adopt the less expensive “G-Suite and Chromebooks.” G Suite for Education comes with free Google tools and services. The suite has similar tools to MS Office – Google Docs for word processing, Gmail for communication, Google Slides for presentation, and Google Classroom for content management. These tools are web-based and reside in the Cloud on Google Drive. Google Classroom simplifies creating, distributing,

collecting, and grading assignments electronically without the use of paper and pen.

Over the last three months, teachers have been doing their best to help students learn with the help of parents working with students in their homes despite different technology skills and connectivity capabilities. The bulk of the school activities are pushed to students and their parents. The situation reminds us of the African saying that “It takes a village to raise a child,” given the current collaboration in education between government, public health, parents, teachers, and students. The Federal Government has not provided national policies for social distancing. Every state is left to design its own policies. A shout out to teachers who in a short time, recalibrated their instruction. They are working tirelessly to stay connected to students and provide instruction. Teachers are among the heroes emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the last three months, I have consulted and worked with some teachers in the Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD). One of the teachers I worked with, learned and introduced the educational app, Flipgrid, in a creative way and students were able to use Flipgrid to create and post digital videos to the class grid. They collaborate virtually by watching and commenting on their peer videos. They learned the content collaboratively and assessed each-other with beautiful, inciteful comments.

Ideally, teaching with technology would have been part and parcel of the school system where administrators, teachers, and students are adequately trained and equipped in the use of 21st-century learning with technology. In special instances, to satisfy this mandate, a specialized teacher is trained and charged with helping other teachers on technology matters. Some K-12 schools and classrooms have transformed into digital learning environments despite the many advantages of such a transformation. The hope is that this pandemic is an eye-opener and



School children at Imperial Primary School in Eastridge, Mitchell's Plain ,Cape Town, South Africa.Photo credit Henry Trotter.

what is hastily launched (alternative teaching with technology) will not perish but flourish when classes return to normal.

An administration's role in alternative delivery starts with a clear vision in the district-wide implementation of technology, with professional development time, funds, and support for the tools and infrastructure for connectivity and accessibility. Some administrators are requiring teachers to assign schoolwork to students with the expectation that parents will help the students complete the assignments. Teachers are asked to make calls to the students and parents to find out how they are coping with “stay-at-home studies”. Some teachers assign YouTube videos or Google Classroom videos for students to watch. Other teachers organized teleconferences with students. The fact that students are not in school with their classmates can be socially and emotionally difficult. Some stress is to be expected for the rest of the Spring school term. Teachers and parents must practice ongoing empathy, caring, humility, and respect for the young ones whose lives are disrupted by the pandemic. Parents are expected to ensure a balance between the students' screen time and the rest of their daily

schedule.

Some teachers are forced to use low-end technology or no technology at all since about 40 million homes in the USA lack broadband access. If developed countries like the United States are struggling with issues of virtual learning in the wake of this pandemic, one cannot even begin to imagine the challenges that the developing (African) nations are experiencing as they try to implement virtual teaching and learning. As the coronavirus crisis forces schools to grapple with the challenges of virtual learning, many schools are getting creative with traditional forms of instruction that don't require a fast internet connection or expensive digital devices. The hope is that schools in Africa will follow suit. In a virtual learning environment, TV and radio can be used to disseminate instruction in places with no access or poor internet connectivity.

In today's digital world, technology is an integral part of the students' daily lives. Today's students, at various levels, use assorted gadgets (tablets, cell phones, gaming consoles, iPods, MP3 players, digital cameras) as tools to make their lives easier, and strengthen their social networks.

As an educator, and especially as an educational technologist, I stand in

solidarity with educators struggling to fulfill their duties to the youths in these difficult times. May is Teacher Appreciation Month. My wish is that after an abrupt plunge into the beauty of “alternative delivery with technology” educators with the lead and support from administrators will continue the effective transition into the daily use of appropriate technology to instruct, communicate, solve problems, access, manage, integrate, evaluate, and create information. This in turn will improve learning in all subject areas and lead to lifelong learning and valuable skills for the 21st-century graduate.

COVID-19 has forced the implementation of technology and virtual-learning. Teachers who do not adopt and adapt to educational technology may become obsolete in the post coronavirus school. Challenges breed opportunities. Opportunities abound for every educator to meet future teaching challenges. Best wishes.

Dr. John Nkemnji is Professor Emeritus, Educational Technology. He is an educational consultant and a proponent for life-long learning. Prof. Nkemnji is a parent of young students currently immersed in virtual learning and he is a board member on a number of corporations.



Energy & Natural Resource Security, Inc.

From the Desk of Keith T. Paige,
Chief Technology Officer
Energy & Natural Resource Security, Inc.
13 April 2020 @ 0830 U.S. Eastern Time

To the Owners, Operators, Investors, and Insurers of Critical Energy Infrastructures and Natural Resource Assets:

STAY VIGILANT re: CYBERSECURITY REQUIREMENTS

As Energy and Natural Resource asset stakeholders are entering into a critical period in reviewing the cybersecurity posture of their facilities, ENRS recommends immediate attention to assessing security for Industrial Control Systems (ICS). Traditionally, ICS were isolated systems to control and manage industrial assets, machinery and systems. However, that is changing as we enter the age of Fourth Industrial Revolution or the Industry 4.0 era. The convergence of Operational Technology (OT) and Information Technology (IT) impacts the security of ICS and supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) systems. As the air gap is removed, these systems are exposed to an expanding threat landscape and are targets for hackers involved in terrorism, cyber warfare, and espionage. Vulnerabilities that come embedded into the ICS components have much more exposure to known and unknown cyber threats.

As detailed in Kaspersky's "Threat landscape of industrial automation systems H2 2018", **20%** of vulnerable ICS devices are being impacted by critical security issues. **Over half of the 415 vulnerabilities found in industrial control systems (ICS) were assigned CVSS v.3.0 base scores over 7, which are designated to security issues that are considered high or critical risk levels.** This fact demands that Energy and Natural Resource asset stakeholders remain keenly vigilant of their IT/OP environments.

The **ENRS** team is standing by to support your cybersecurity needs during this time of unprecedented uncertainty. Our mission is to ensure Energy and Natural Resource asset owners, operators, investors, and insurers achieve Resiliency and maintain Continuity of Ops by mitigating Risk throughout their asset's operational life cycle via the implementation of "best-in-class" physical, cyber, and technical security solutions. **ENRS** will assure the safety and security of your *Critical Energy Infrastructure and Natural Resource Assets*, giving you the decision-space required to plan and execute your plan for financial recovery during this time of extreme duress.

Ever Vigilant,

Keith T. Paige

Keith T. Paige

Islamist Jihadist Threat to Southern Africa

By Prince Kurupati

Southern Africa has had its own fair share of wars, civil wars and violent disturbances but at no point has those unfortunate events been of terrorist nature. However, that seems to be changing bit by bit as reports of ambushes, beheadings and torture are on the increase in the Cabo Delgado region in Mozambique.

The first reports of the presence of Islam extremists in Mozambique was reported some couple of years back. Often, when reports of the atrocities committed by Islam extremists are reported, many people will have lost their lives or injured. Unfortunately for Mozambique, the first reports of the atrocities committed by Islam extremists involved just a handful of people sometimes just a couple or even one. While the families of the victims certainly felt the pain caused by the extremists, the low numbers of the victims made the media to turn a blind eye to the atrocities choosing instead to focus on the extremists in other parts of the world who were causing damage on a much larger scale. As the media turned its blind eye on Cabo Delgado, so too did southern Africa and surprisingly Mozambique itself.

However, as the world focused on the extremist problems in the Middle East as well as East, Central and West Africa, the Islam extremists in Mozambique were slowly but surely expanding and consolidating their territory in Cabo Delgado. The end result is that a problem which could have been exterminated without expending many resources just a couple of years back now pose a major threat to the region.

Peter Fabricicius of the Institute for Security Studies writes that many people in Mozambique's northernmost Cabo Delgado province did not enjoy their festive season in 2019 as the litany of atrocities perpetrated by Islamist Jihadists in the region steadily started to increase



during that time. He went on to state that the evidence of the gruesome photographs of bodies beheaded and those mutilated with machetes were largely circulated on social media platforms with very few reaching the mainstream media outside of Mozambique.

The Institute of Security Studies states that there have been 350 such incidents since October 2017 when the first suspected cases of insurgency by a local jihadist group which calls itself Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jammah (ASWJ) were reported. Some of the attacks have been so daring as they were aimed on police and military bases. Since the first suspected cases, intelligence sources in Mozambique claim that there have been over 600 casualties with many more suffering injuries and left internally displaced.

Despite the huge number of atrocities committed by ASWJ, the surprising thing is that no Mozambique insurgency has made it onto the agenda of SADC's Organ on Politics, Defense and Security, the regional body mandated to deal with such regional threats.

The Mozambique government for long periods since the first cases of the insurgency were reported

presented the atrocities as mere criminality. Many security analysts believe that the lackluster approach by the Mozambique government to the atrocities is the main reason why the Southern African Development Community (SADC) remained complacent.

Some security analysts however are of the view that the Mozambique government was left with no choice but to classify the cases of insurgency as mere criminality owing to the fact that the ASWJ has never at any point accepted responsibility for the atrocities. This leaves the Mozambique government in a catch 22 situation as placing the responsibility of the atrocities on ASWJ may be taken as an act of 'war' by the group owing to unsubstantiated allegations while remaining quiet will make the government privy to civilian deaths. This is further exacerbated by the fact that the Mozambique government has completely restricted access to the conflict zone for researchers and journalists thereby raising suspicions that it may be hiding something.

There have been reports that the Cabo Delgado coastline which serves as a major conduit for smuggling drugs and contraband may be

serving both the ASWJ and corrupt government officials hence a full blown war on the ASWJ may not only be detrimental to the jihadists but to the government itself.

While ASWJ has refused to claim credit for any of the insurgency atrocities in Cabo Delgado, the Islamic State Central Africa Province (ISCAP) has also claimed responsibility for some attacks. Security analysts have however dismissed the Islamic State claims saying that most of those came after the fall of the Islamic State caliphates in Syria and Iraq hence claiming the Mozambique atrocities may simply be a case of saving face and boosting its public stature.

While the Mozambican government still takes a lackluster approach to the jihadist threat, evidence suggests that there is a need to be worried about the Islamist threat in Mozambique as the atrocities are slowly gaining momentum. Failure to address the challenge right now may prove to be the region's undoing in the near future when the threat becomes more pronounced. This is particular true considering that there was a recent

discovery of vast gas reserves in the Rovuma Basin which makes Cabo Delgado an interesting proposition not just for ASWJ but also the Islamic State as well as ISCAP.

The Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa in the past week chartered a plane to Chimoio, Mozambique to meet with his Mozambican counterpart Felipe Nyusi. Several reports after the meeting said the two met to discuss measures on how to stop the Islamist insurgency while others stated that the Zimbabwean government had already deployed troops to help the Mozambique government thwart the efforts of the ASWJ. Zimbabwe's minister of Defense and War Veterans Oppah Muchinguri however issued a statement saying the government had not deployed troops to Mozambique.

In a statement, Minister Muchinguri said "The Ministry of Defense and War Veterans Affairs would like to inform the public that it is not true that the Zimbabwe

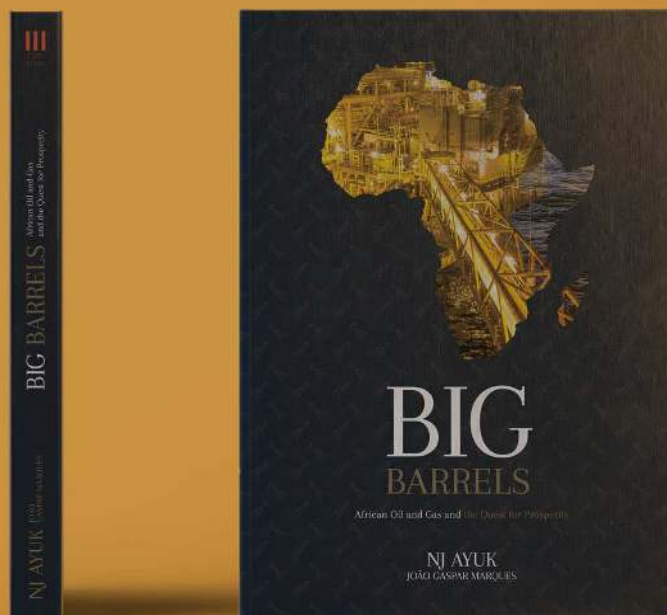


Leaders from SADC have pledged to work together in fighting the extremist threats.

Defense Forces has deployed troops in Mozambique to fight some armed elements destabilizing that country. The deployment allegations are

not only outright falsehoods but malicious hence the fake news should be dismissed with the contempt it deserves. Whenever the ZDF is

deployed, the population is always informed in accordance with the dictates of the country's Constitution."



A Dismal Response from Leaders to Abuse of Africans In China

By Mohammed M. Mupenda *

As COVID-19 wreaks havoc on lives, health care systems, and economies around the globe, the way some countries are handling it makes some of us sick. During this crisis, all sorts of veiled racism as well as other kinds of bigotry and greed have surged.

Whenever I could scroll down videos and pictures taken from Guangzhou, nothing I could see besides Africans crying, being beaten, harassed, and thrown out of their apartment. All in the names of curbing the pandemic.

The soft-power push hasn't gone smoothly. Parts of the continent's civil society are still seething after these videos circulated on social media last month showing discrimination against Africans in the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou. They have been forcibly tested, barred from restaurants and even evicted from homes, causing public outrage back home. The heavy-handed measures to tackle a cluster of coronavirus cases in Guangzhou, which has a significant population of African traders and



Africans targeted in Guangzhou because of COVID 19. Photo credit courtesy.

students, fed an underlying distrust and risked undoing the gains of mask diplomacy.

Beijing can still take advantage and obtain what matters to China: political allies in the United Nations, where Africa accounts for more than

a quarter of member states, and clout that in turn influences its relations with great powers.

China and Africa countries have been best friends and exchanged a lot economically, socially, and education wise, but one would wonder how

things turned against Africans in the business southern city. Surprisingly with shocks, African leaders went silent about it.

The most affected were Kenyans and Nigerians including some Ugandans who appeared in the video being stopped to attend the market while other nationals and Chinese were getting in freely, the pictures and videos were shared in many social network indicating the maltreatment.

A footage shared on facebook showing Ugandans bared by Chinese Security Guards from entering in the supermarket while chinese would happily walk in and out freely, and Africans had their say: «What took them there in the first place? They even speak Chinese! China is overcrowded and over exhausted. They have eaten everything in that land and they are running away from it. That communist country has 1.4 billions people sitting on 9.5 million km sq. Africa has 1.3 billions people sitting on more than 30 million km square rich, fertile and unexploited land. Even Chinese Education is not worth it, let them find their way out and go back home,» Deng Elijah advised!.

So you could wonder why the



Foreign Affairs Minister Geoffrey Onyeama met Chinese Ambassador Zhou Pingjian to complain about the mistreatment of Nigerians in Guangzhou.

continent with fertile land and other resources keeps being harassed by a country which does not have resources as Africa.

«Our leaders fear Chinese, if an African did this now in Africa you will be like sitting on the fire, they are all silent by money,». Peter commented on video.

Where is human right in China? UN should do something about it if this communist country a member of the international community, noted Peter Kueleth Ruach.

What happens next will center on debt. China's government, banks and contractors extended more than \$150 billion to Africa's governments and state-owned enterprises between 2010 and 2018, according to the

China Africa Research Initiative at Johns Hopkins University.

Angola alone accounted for almost a third of that, CARI's Deborah Brautigam wrote recently.

I am pointing finger at the leaders on the Continent. For examples, if the leaders in African think vertically in creating jobs so that each and every citizens are employed, there wouldn't be black people in China right now. What prompted those poor African to go to china was to seek for jobs. Now, we have seen all humiliation. Sadly, none of the Africans leaders condemns this act. This tells us that China will have big say over the Continent by using the money. This is sad and frustrating as the heads of state as their citizens are

being humiliated by the Government of China, said Peter Koulang.

China forgives plenty of African loans, though usually small amounts. Relief is generally accompanied by more credit. It prefers to renegotiate, and will probably do so here.

China has plenty to gain from lending a hand to its friends battling the coronavirus in Africa. Contrary to some perceptions, that won't mean opportunistic grabs in oil, copper or arable land. The biggest prize for Beijing is political capital.

Take Zambia, currently battling Western miners and struggling with debt. The government may want a quick debt-for-equity fix, but it's unclear Beijing would be so keen.

China is Africa's largest trading

partner and creditor, and Beijing moved swiftly to provide aid as the virus spread. It delivered tests, protective equipment and ventilators, assisted by the foundation of Alibaba Group Holding Ltd. co-founder Jack Ma. More remarkably, China endorsed a temporary freeze on debt payments agreed upon by the Group of 20 economies — unusual for a country that tends to prefer bilateral efforts.

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.

Survey: Outdated farming methods stifle farming in Kenya

By Aghan Daniel and Absalom Mulama *

Outdated irrigation methods, limited access to accurate sources of information and product marketing continue to hamper farming in Kenya, a new survey has revealed.

Besides, says the study, farmers are concerned that farm labour and reducing farm space combine to lead to a lower production quality than expected.

According to the Executive Secretary of the Seed Trade Association of Kenya, Mr Duncan Onduu, the report presents the findings from a recent study, Survey Report of the 2019 STAK Congress, Expo and Mazao Forum, Farmers Session, No.2/2020. A total of 148 farmers participated in the survey from all over the country. Farmers from Embu, Machakos, Kiambu, Muranga and Taita Taveta counties participated in the study.

«This report is intended to guide seed companies and other seed stakeholders in strategizing their reach to farmers while addressing important concerns of farmers in Kenya,» he said.

The farmers indicated that hard



economic times have forced them to use outdated irrigation methods such as watering cans, furrowing and sprinklers as opposed to the efficient drip irrigation. With drip irrigation farmers can save water and reduce the need to physically walk around the farm with a watering can. This

type of irrigation also solves two potential concerns for the senior farmers; it reduces the physical effort and saves water.

Given that smallholder farmers interviewed preferred interpersonal interaction from the seed suppliers especially the stockists, they risked

getting inaccurate and misleading information as they relied on a single source. This basically means that farmers still ignore other sources of information such as the internet and relevant mobile apps which understandably, the small holder farmers may have no access to.



On the reducing land space used for farming in the rural area, the farmers lay blame on the rising rate of rural to urban migration by the energetic youth, combined with the poor farm produce yields. This has forced land owners are increasingly deciding to convert their lands for other uses which might attract more profits. Land owners might decide to put up houses, for example, assuming that when built in a stacking order, houses may take up less space and produce more reliable income.

This is a confirmation that agricultural land in Kenya is shrinking as many landowners convert it for other non-agricultural use.

"In order for Kenya to achieve food security and nutrition goals, there is need to have conversations around this crucial matter. Subsequently, introduction of better innovations and technologies that use less land but provide for higher productivity per unit area should be top of mind

among our creative innovators, researchers and development partners," says a section of the report.

Finding a stable market, according to the farmers is the solution to factors stifling marketing of their produce, preferably away from these five counties would motivate the farmers to put more effort into the farming practice. If the farmers can find alternative methods to market their product rather than using brokers only, then they could reach new markets.

In that case, agribusiness firms, seed companies and other farming stakeholders could be more actively involved in the end product marketing and distribution. By facilitating demand, these stakeholders would create a more busy market and make the farmers buy more seed, thus killing two birds with one stone. The more the concerns surrounding farming in these counties, the more unmotivated farmers become and

convert their lands to other uses.

Once the market is established it will be easier to convince the farmers to invest their efforts in the rest of the concerns such as investing in better irrigation techniques, meet the cost of labour and tools to access information. This may be the untapped opportunity for seed companies and agribusiness entrepreneurs, as they will also be contributing to the food security goal by supporting production and supply of food crops.

Older farmers interviewed (over 55 years) claim that the challenge with farm labour such as digging, irrigation, weeding and harvesting takes a toll on their bodies due to age related ailments. Yet the young people charge highly for their services, rates they cannot afford and still break even. They said that a young labourer would require Ksh 300 (USD3) per day a cost they cannot afford sustainably. The senior farmers are

then forced to reduce their farmland to a manageable portion and put the rest of the land to a different use.

In any case, the younger residents seem to be uninterested in farming, preferring to move to the urban areas, says the report released on May 13, 2020.

The survey ends by saying that, among other things, messaging of agricultural information ought to be very crisp and not verbose. It notes that use of radio is still preferred among farmers and the seed trade association vows to continue using radio to disseminate information on innovations, seed industry innovations and agricultural marketing.

*Aghan Daniel (daghan@afsta.org) is the Communication Officer at African Seed Trade Association, and Absalom Mulama (mulama.berny@gmail.com) is a freelance journalist based in Nairobi, Kenya

Cameroon Football: PWD Bamenda Claims 1st Title in 58 Years after League Season is cancelled

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

The Cameroon Football Federation on Tuesday, May 12, 2020, decided to end the 2019/2020 football season in the country, crowning PWD as elite one champions, Astres of Douala as League two winners, and Louves Minproff as winners of the women's league. No team will be relegated from the various leagues, while the Cameroon cup and the various amateur leagues will not take place.

Speaking over the national broadcaster CRTV, Seidou Mbombo Njoya, President of Cameroon Football Federation, FECAFOOT said "we took a decision that does not frustrate any team. No team will be relegated, league one will be played with 20 clubs next season. So we took a decision that guarantees certain Sporting equity".

The league one championship had six matchdays left, while league two and women's league were left with three match days each. Seidou Mbombo Njoya added that the decision to end the season abruptly come thorough analysis of the current situation, by all parties involved. "If we had to continue with the league, it means we have to screen all the players and teams, and we don't have the means to do that," He said.

To Bambot Valentine, Sports Editor



In 28 games played PWD won 13 games, drew 8 and lost 7 games boasting 47 points

for CBS Radio Buea, PWD deserved being crowned champions but there are several things that FECAFOOT did not touch concerning the cancellation of the football season. "I think Seidou Mbombo Njoya and his tea have done a great job in making sure that we have a proper end to the season. But my major worry is what becomes of the regional and divisional league clubs who had been playing games

before the league being halted. They had hopes of reaching the Elite two football championship next season, said Bambot Valentine."

"PWD deserved the title this year, looking at their performances in the league. They have done everything possible to finish the league as champions even boasting of the top goal scorer. It is a good idea following the other African leagues that have been cancelled but another big worry is that we are going to have 20 teams participating next season in Elite 1 and just 12 in Elite 2. It means the Ligue One will be more cumbersome than Ligue Two."

"This is something that the fans of PWD have been waiting for a very long time," Kehdinga Fabris, Sports Editor at Mediafrigue Radio Buea said. «Since the club was created they have never been crowned champions. It is good news for them and it is now time for the officials to use this opportunity to make sure that when the team represents Cameroon at the continental level they will put up a

good fight.»

«The question now on everyone's lip is where will PWD play their matches at the continental level? Will they use the Young Sports Stadium at Mile 6 Nkwen which is not even up to standards," He questioned.

The coronavirus pandemic has affected the number of clubs participating in next year's Elite One Championship. In the next football season will see the participation of 20 clubs, upwards from an 18 club competition. The idea of increasing the number of clubs in both Elite One and Two football championships was met with huge resistance from club officials and authorities.

During the era of General Pierre Semengue as President of the Cameroon Professional League (LFPC), he had proposed the number of clubs to be increased in Cameroon's Elite One football championship from 18 to 20, and in the Elite Two, he had proposed increasing it from 15 to 18 clubs. "With the coronavirus now, everyone can best understand that



Nchindo John Bosco displays his fitness in a pre-match warm up.

what the Seidou led regime has done is for the good of football,” Kehdinga Fabris added.

“The bottom line is that the South West Region will continue to wait for a representative in the Elite Two for a foreseeable future. In 2017, when Victoria United qualified to represent the region, Barrister Dieudonne Happi led normalization committee cancelled the regional championship,” Kehdinga Fabris, Sports Editor at Mediafrique Radio Buea said while adding that, “But this one is somehow logical to understand that the health of the stakeholders is at stake. We hope that FECAFOOT will look into the plights of regional clubs.”

“My reaction is that of satisfaction, the fulfilment of a job well done. For those who know the club, we are one that was almost relegated last year and having realized such feat is a big shock for us. The best we have ever had is being runners up in 1977 and 1979 Cameroon cup finals so I think it is a big thing not only for the club but for the people of Bamenda and the entire Anglophone people,” Pascal Abunde, President of PWD Bamenda said.

“It is a very big honour for us becoming the second English club to win the title since Tiko United did so in 2009. There is indeed a lot of Euphoria now but there is a lot that lies ahead. We are a very humble club but we think that is as a result of hard work, dedication, and sacrifice that we are where we are today.”

Pascal Abunde added: “Next year will be the second time we are taking part in a CAF organized competition, and the first time we are participating in the CAF Champions league. We know the challenges are enormous and the task is huge but we think we can be able to mobilize enough resources to move ahead. The mission of this club has been to make PWD a household manner. We want to be a club that plays football on a very sustainable basis; we want to be a club that wins titles on the continental level and also participate in CAF competitions.”

PWD Players React to winning



A historic first in the midst of huge challenges for PWD Club President Pascal Abunde.

their Club's first title

PWD's central midfielder Ade Mienolf Chi - «FECAFOOT's decision was not a surprise to me. When I heard the news I was amazed but it was not surprising. We deserve the trophy because we created fear in our opponents. The remaining games we were left with, we had an advantage because of the more away games. Some teams played an advanced match already.”

“58 years is nothing because the team itself is something bigger than the number of years. It's a team of the whole region, a team where people find love, a team where people go to free their minds when games are on. The most important thing is for the people of the region to celebrate being winners of the championship.”

Ndeh Collins, PWD Bamenda defensive midfielder - “Well my feelings can't be composed into words.

I am very happy not only because I am the champion of Cameroon, but because I did it with the club of my hometown. This is a club that I have always supported and admired from Childhood. This club is the pride of the Anglophone man. It is the first major success since the creation of this club.

“Being part of this fairytale story is unforgettable. In the future I will have to tell my kids and friends I was a part of this memorable ride.” Ndeh added.

“The Champions League wouldn't be any different; we went into this season as underdogs and will accept that status in the champion's league but aim to leave a lasting impression on the continental scene. We have a talented squad and a good administrative and technical staff we will work and concentrate to get the results”.

Leon Boyomo wins 2020 Golden boot

Leon Boyomo of PWD won the 2019-2020 Cameroon Elite One championship golden boots after scoring 11 goals for newly-crowned champions PWD of Bamenda.

It is the first time in the career of the 28-year-old former Cotonsport of Garoua forward wins this prize following a spectacular season. Boyomo becomes the first PWD of Bamenda player to claim the prize despite missing 7 seven of his club's games due to his stay with the intermediate Lions of Cameroon.

Boyomo takes the top scorer crown from Kamilou Daouda who scored the same number of goals last season. Alphonse Kevin Assiga finished behind him with 10 goals. It is the second consecutive season that the lead scorer in the Cameroon league one championship halts at 11 goals.

Stats on PWD's illustrious season

Here are some top statistics provided by Kick442.com about the club and its actors during what has turned out to be a historic 2019-2020 season.

PWD of Bamenda becomes the first Northwest club and the second club from the English extraction of Cameroon to win the Cameroon Elite One championship following the path created by Tiko United in 2009.

PWD won 14, registered a draw in 8 and lost just 6 of their 28 games throughout the season.

Goalkeeper Zame Rodrique of PWD kept 7 consecutive clean sheets in the season and 10 overall. He holds the record of consecutive clean sheets for the season as only Anye Derick Fru of Panthère Nde went 7 games with conceding.

PWD joins a list of very few clubs to win the league in their second season in the topflight. Tiko United in 2009, UMS of Loum in 2016 and Eding Sport de la Lekie in 2018 all won the title in their second season in the topflight championship.



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