



PROPHET IN HIS HOME LAND

A Continent On His Shoulders
As Akinwumi Adesina Heads
For Second Term At AfDB



Madagascar: Speed Bumps
For Covid-Organics'

Namibia: Introspection
Time For SWAPO

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A High Bar For African Leadership From Adesina

By Ajong Mbapndah L

The news that the independent Review Panel set up by the Bureau of Governors of the African Development Bank had exonerated Dr Akinwunmi Adesina of ethical wrongdoings definitely brought relief to many.

For months, a dark cloud had been hovering over the future of the Nigerian born Dr Akinwunmi Adesina who was gliding into a second term as the President of the AfDB after a largely successful first term. A whistleblower alert, and exoneration from two organs of the Bank – the Ethics Committee of the Board, and the Bureau of the Board of Governors failed to satisfy some key partners notably the USA.

A firestorm ensued and tempers flared. The AfDB leadership ultimately caved and the Independent Review Panel was set up. On the panel were Mary Robinson, a former President of the Republic of Ireland, a former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the Chairperson of the Elders, a global body of wise persons concerned with the world's wellbeing; the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Gambia, Mr. Hassan B. Jallow; and Mr. Leonard F. McCarthy, a former Director of Public Prosecutions, a former Director for the Office of Serious Economic Offences, and a former Head of the Directorate of Special Operations of South Africa who served as Vice President of Integrity for the World Bank for nine years.

Allegations against Adesina “were properly considered and dismissed by the Committee,” the Panel said in its findings. While the vindication puts to rest whatever doubts that may have been cast on his integrity, Adesina's competence was never in question. Throughout the storm, Adesina remained unflappable. His competence and results were not lost to the rest of Africa. Perhaps if the trials and tribulations were a test to his popularity, the result was a resounding vote of confidence, -Adesina is a prophet in his homeland.

For a continent with chronic leadership crisis, Dr Akinwunmi Adesina has been like a breath of fresh air. Solidly educated, supremely confident, strong visionary, result oriented, articulate, unbridled passion for Africa and its potentials. Far from damaging him, Adesina has come out as one of the unquestionable winners of the stormy episode that the AfDB just went through. Now that the dust has settled expectations will be high for his second term.

For all the confidence that Africa has in him, from the overwhelming support that he received from the continent, Adesina has the obligation to do even better. In the High Five template, Adesina gets a good grasp of what Africa needs to fully embrace the 21st century. In Light up and power Africa, Feed Africa, Industrialise Africa, Integrate Africa, and Improve the quality of life for the people of Africa which form the pillars of Adesina's vision, there could not be a better articulation of African development priorities.

With a robust response and solid leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic, there is currently no bigger development partner for Africa than the AfDB. The Abidjan based Institution has done marvels in trying to help Africa cushion the impact of the pandemic and more will be expected from them. Beyond making available funds for projects across the continent, perhaps an area that the Bank may consider improving on maybe in monitoring how these funds are used in individual countries.

Most African countries are saddled with enormous debts that will be passed on and paid by generations who had nothing to do with the debts, nor were the debts used to build any better future for them. Indeed, many of the loans incurred



Ajong Mbapndah L, Managing Editor

by many of the African countries are never used for the intended purposes. Loans are incurred for power projects, but none are there to see. Loans are incurred for roads that are either never constructed or abandoned, for schools, for hospitals and so on, loans incurred are never used for the intended purpose. Even with the ongoing ravages of COVID 19, there are countries where the management of grants and loans to combat the pandemic is mired in controversy over mismanagement. Whatever monitoring mechanisms that the AfDB has in place to scrutinize its grants and loans needs to be strengthened so that the African people can truly be the beneficiaries.

As Adesina gets set for a second term, corruption is threatening to unravel whatever goodwill President Buhari has for his home country of Nigeria. You can tell there is something profoundly wrong when the head of the EFCC the corruption watchdog, and the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice trade barbs and inundate the Presidency with memos and counter memos accusing each other of corruption. You can tell all is not well when an Official of the Niger Delta Development Commission faints in Parliament during questioning,

and the a parliamentary leader doing oversight tries frantically to hush a Minister who under pressure revealed that some of the Law makers were among those guilty of perfidy in the troubled commission.

Over in Cameroon, not even the management of Covid 19 funds has been spared the chronic corruption that has contributed in bringing the country to its knees. You know there are problems when there are not only talks of billions of frs cfa lacking in proper accounting, but also rice that was donated by a company as its contribution...In Zimbabwe, in South Africa, we hear complains about the management of Covid 19 funds.

The examples are just a drop in the ocean of management and accountability challenges that Africa faces. By subjecting himself literally to global scrutiny and coming out unscathed, Dr Adesina has set the bar very high. With such probity, there is every reason to see why many Africans are enamored with him. Just as his first five years have gone by fast, the odds are that the next five he has earned will equally go by fast. For the support that Africans as a whole have given him, for the believe that millions have in him, for the inspiration that he is to millions, for the pride he elicits in many across the continent, Adesina has the weight of the continent on his shoulders. Challenging it is, but with enormous capital that Dr Adesina has earned, there is every reason to remain hopeful that he will deliver and leave behind a towering legacy.

In addition to Dr Adesina, this issue of PAV Magazine has stories on issues with the much touted Covid-organics in Madagascar, SWAPO's reality check in Namibia, the continent's travails with covid-19, Africa in the 2020 US Presidential elections and more... Happy Reading.



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The US Government strongly encourages members of the African diaspora to give back to their countries of origin through education and other economic development activities. The US Ambassador to Cameroon, His Excellency Michael Stephen Hoza, (2014 to 2017) said the following about ICT University (at ICT-U's graduation ceremony): "Though the founder of this institute, Professor Victor Mbarika, received his tenure and could've easily stayed in the US as a distinguished professor, he chose to return to Cameroon and give back to the youths like you, here, today, through education. The US Embassy supports critical contributions of the diaspora especially as they pertain to preparing the next future of leaders in Cameroon."

I want to take this opportunity to invite you to have your relatives in Cameroon apply and study at the American University in Cameroon (The ICT University), which I established in 2012. The University is a fully accredited institution of higher learning. Why only focus to send your relatives to the Western World, when they can have the opportunity of a top-class American-standard higher education at 1/10 th of the cost of studying in the US or Europe? We operate several onsite campuses in different African countries, however, our main campus is in Cameroon. Students that choose not to study on campus, can access all our degree programs, from Bachelors to PhD, online. For those of you working in America, Europe or other parts of the world, with heavy workloads, you can apply to our very affordable online programs, which compared to US-based, Europe-based, or other institutions in the developed world is way cheaper. Our degrees are favourably evaluated by foreign agencies, in the US, Europe, Canada, etc. this means your degree will be recognised internationally. Share the information below with your relatives and friends in Cameroon. Feel free to contact our admissions office at +237 6 71 43 00 30 admissions@ictuniversity.edu.cm or use the contact information in the brochure below.

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Vindicated African Development Bank President Gunning For Second Mandate

By Prince Kurupati

African Development Bank (AfDB)'s President, Dr Akinwunmi Adesina, has officially been exonerated of all wrongdoing by an Independent Review Panel. The AfDB President since January had found himself in trouble after a group of disgruntled employees released a whistleblower report alleging gross misconduct on his part.

The Independent Review Panel consisting of three members concurred with the findings of the Ethics Committee, AfDB's own 'investigating' body which had earlier on dismissed all the allegations against Adesina.

In a document dated July 27, the Independent Review Panel concluded that its "findings in respect of all allegations against the president ...were properly considered and dismissed."

Adesina's troubles started in January when a supposed revelation by the whistleblowers was published by a media publication based in France. The expose (exposé ?) outlined sixteen instances in which Adesina was alleged to have acted inappropriately as well as abused his powers. Some of the major allegations were that the AfDB president had used his power to hire the bank's staff using bias, and favoritism.

Also, the expose (exposé ?) said the AfDB president was supposed to give the prize money he received from winning the 2017 World Food Prize and the 2019 Sunhak Peace Prize to the bank as the bank had covered travelling expenses for him and a large entourage that went with him to the Awards ceremonies.

In the expose, the whistleblowers said that the president was accused of "unethical conduct, private gain, an impediment to efficiency, preferential treatment, a major conflict of interest and involvement in political activities."

Adesina on his part, promptly issued a response after the expose



Vindicated by the Independent Review Panel, Dr Akinwunmi Adesina is set to for a well deserved second term as President of the AfDB

was leaked, vehemently denying all allegations leveled against him. In the rebuttal, he said, "I am confident that fair and transparent, and just processes that respect the rules, procedures and governance systems of the bank, and the rule of law, will ultimately prove that I have not violated the Code of Ethics of this extraordinary institution."

At the time, Adesina also said the expose by the whistleblowers was

not a solo thing but rather, a small thing in a larger plot. Though not explicitly stating what he meant, Adesina noted there were greater forces behind the expose than just a group of disgruntled employees acting out as whistleblowers. "The purpose of the complaint is not to report fraud, corruption or other acts of misconduct. Quite the contrary, it has other hidden motives. The idea that other people are acting in concert

with the whistleblowers is not pure speculation," he stated

Soon after Adesina's response to the allegations leveled against him, AfDB's Ethics Committee did open an investigation. After several weeks, the Ethics Committee concluded that President Adesina had done nothing wrong. With almost everyone thinking the report by the Ethics Committee had exonerated Adesina, leaving him to get on with his work at the bank; the US, which is a non-regional member of the Bank, expressed displeasure over the Ethics Committee report. It called for another investigation to be conducted by an independent review panel.

Other non-regional members like Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland petitioned AfDB's Board of Governors joined the US to request an independent investigation into allegations of misconduct against Adesina. In a statement, the US Treasury Secretary, Steven Mnuchin, said "We fear that the wholesale dismissal of all allegations without appropriate investigation will tarnish the reputation of this institution as one that does not uphold high standards of ethics and governance. Therefore, the US cannot support dismissing the allegations at this stage."

The calls by the US for an independent investigation to be opened were opposed by many, especially the Bank's regional members as well as other prominent individuals on the continent.

Nigerian Minister of Finance, Zainab Ahmed, sent a letter to the Chairman of AfDB's Board, advising him to ignore the pressure from the US. In a statement, Ahmed said, "The call for an independent investigation of the President is outside of the laid down rules, procedures, and governance system of the Bank and its articles as it relates to the code of conduct on ethics for the President. As a Bank, we must uphold the rule of law and respect for the governance



Former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo rallied elder statesmen across Africa to speak up in defence of Adesina and the AfDB

systems of the Bank.”

Despite the calls against an independent investigation by several regional members, AfDB's Board of Governors did carve in to US pressure and called for the independent investigation to be opened. The Board agreed on a three-member independent review panel. The panel was led by former President of Ireland, Mary Robinson, former Gambian Attorney, General Hassan Jallow and the World Bank's Integrity Vice-President, Leonard McCarthy.

Reelection blockade thwarted?

At the time when the Board of Governors gave in and called for an independent investigation, many African actors feared that the decision was the last step in derailing Adesina's ambition for reelection as the AfDB President. There was widespread conviction that Adesina's euphemistic 'hidden motive' comments were after all true as the plan was to derail his reelection. The rather surprising conclusion by the Independent Review Panel therefore shocked those with the 'hidden motive' while at the same time elevating Adesina's reelection ambition.

Vindication by both the internal Ethics Committee as well as the external Independent Review Panel therefore gives Adesina a clean slate ahead of August 27 when the next AfDB president is going to be elected.

Before the whistleblower allegations, Adesina was running unopposed for the second term as he had the support of all regional

members. The US and other non-regional members are yet to issue a response to the findings of the Independent Review Panel. Without any objection to the findings by August 27, Adesina will waltz into a second mandate.

Remarkable balance sheet, a work in progress

However, it is important to note that Adesina's main selling point is not the fact that he was exonerated of wrongdoing. But rather, the illustrious and brilliant work that he has done since the first day he came into office. As reported by Kola King from The AfricaPaper, "Adesina has changed the narrative of developmental financing for the continent...the Bank has consolidated its role as the continent's premier development finance institution, a knowledge and research center, and the preeminent voice for Africa development issues."

Kola King adds on that "Adesina has repositioned the Bank to serve Africa's best interest. He has facilitated credit for African governments to build infrastructure, reduce poverty, and develop agriculture. Adesina has also addressed the current health and economic impacts of the corona virus pandemic on the African continent."

In March, the AfDB issued a \$3 billion social bond to help African countries deal with the consequences of the corona virus pandemic. The Bank also has approved a \$10 billion relief package for 2020, of which \$6.9 billion will be financed



I am fully convinced with the responses provided by Dr Adesina to the accusations of the whistleblowers, said Dr Mima Nedelcovych Former U.S. Exec Dir to the AfDB.

by AfDB and the remainder through its concessional lending window. More importantly, the bank's 81 stakeholders have pledged extra funds to more than double its capital of \$208bn (170 bn pounds)."

Just as Adesina is meticulous in how he conducts his duties in a responsible and transparent manner, so too does the institution he leads. Since he assumed the office of the president, the Bank has been ranked fourth out of 47 global development institutions on the Aid Transparency Index by Publish What You Fund. The Index is the only independent measure of aid transparency among the world's major development agencies. The ranking is based on several criteria which include finance and budgets, basic information data, organizational planning, and performance.

With the above in mind, it's crystal clear that Adesina deserves a second term in office. Not just looking at the incredible work that he has done in the past 5 years, Adesina deserves another 5 year term so that he successfully implements all of his High 5s. The High 5s are the commitments made by Adesina in his inaugural speech as AfDB president on September 1, 2015. They include; Light Up and Power Africa, Feed Africa, Industrialize Africa, Integrate Africa and Improve the Quality of Life for the People of Africa.

Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari is confident that Adesina will be re-elected based on his first term achievements. The Nigerian leader

in a statement said, "Nigeria stands solidly behind Akinwunmi Adesina in his re-election bid as the President of the African Development Bank. We will work with all leaders and stakeholders in AfDB to ensure that he is re-elected on the strength of his achievements during his term."

Former Nigerian President, Olusegun Obasanjo, has been a key ally of Adesina from day one. Speaking after the US had successfully forced the Board of Governors to open an independent investigation, Obasanjo had this to say, "there are some attempts, led by some non-regional member countries of the Bank to frustrate his re-election...We should speak against the introduction of alien practices being recommended by some parties given that such recommendation falls outside the laid down procedure, laws, rules and regulations of the Bank. It is also critical that we emphasize the need for the AfDB to remain an Africa-focused development Bank rather than one which serves interests outside Africa."

Whilst the US is yet to show much enthusiasm to Adesina's re-election bid, a former US Executive Director to the AfDB, Dr Mima Nedelcovych, holds a different view. In an exclusive interview with Pan African Visions, Dr Mima Nedelcovych said "If competing with the Chinese in Africa is primordial to the US, then supporting the position of our African fellow shareholders in the AfDB and supporting President Adesina is in our own interests."



Led by President Buhari, Nigeria has been unflinching in its support for Dr Adesina. Photo credit Twitter.

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:

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.

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.

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.

Excellent Rosé for an aperitif and throughout a meal. Try with beef fillet.

Awards:

International Wine Guide Awards (2016) – Great Gold

Gilbert & Gaillard (2016) - Silver

Catavinum World Wine & Spirits Competition (2020) - Great Gold

Gilbert & Gaillard (2020) - Silver

Berlin Wine Trophy (2020) - Gold

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A Continent On His Shoulders: What To Expect From Adesina's Second Term

By Richard Mammah

With great help from calm and patience, African Development Bank President, Dr. Akinwunmi Adesina has crossed the Rubicon and is on his way to commencing his second term in office.

Adesina, formerly Nigeria's Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, had been elected to serve as President of the continent's foremost multilateral development institution in May, 2015.

With a successful first term, it was clear to discerning observers that Adesina would sail smoothly onto a second term. Capping this, the Heads of States of the African Union endorsed him for a second term and his reelection seemed settled. But then 'a group of whistleblowers' showed up to allege that Adesina had been engaged in 'sixteen acts of misconduct.'

In itself the allegations have a history. They had been previously tendered before the Ethics Committee of the Board of the Bank and Bureau of the Board of Governors which duly reviewed but dismissed them.

This time however, it was not just the allegations: it was who was presenting it, namely the powerful United States of America.

How he survived



In his vision and execution of the High 5s for Africa, Dr Adesina has what many see as the right template for development in the continent



Dr. Akinwunmi Adesina was the 2017 World Food Prize Laureate.

For a while, some respondents were in favour of calling Uncle Sam's bluff. But calmer sense prevailed. To satisfy the complainants, an Independent Review Panel made up of former Irish Prime Minister Mary Robinson, Gambia's Chief Justice Hassan Jallow and the World Bank's integrity vice president Leonard McCarthy took a second look. With its clearing Adesina, the matter has now been put to rest. And a solidly performing African star now has a breather to continue to pursue his heart: the unrelenting development of the continent.

One person who is encouraged by the 'closure' is Prof João Bosco Monte, President of the Brazil-African Institute, IBRAF. He told Pan African Visions in a recent interview that he foresees even greater cooperation between an Adesina-led AfDB and IBRAF going forward:

'I am optimistic about the possibility of Adesina being re-elected to the presidency of the African Development Bank, especially when we see Brazil as a country that can work closely with Africa...And I see President Adesina's vision as something that has coincidences with the activities of the Brazil Africa Institute.'

From presidents to statesmen, activists to common people, the word out there is not dissimilar: let Adesina be.

A heart for his people

To be sure, Adesina did not come to the limelight suddenly. As far as 2007, he had clinched the YARA Prize for the African Green Revolution in Oslo and in 2013, had been named Forbes Africa Person of the Year.

Two years into his first term, he was awarded the prestigious World Food Prize and later the Sunhak

Peace Prize for global leadership in agriculture and good governance.

Man with Midas touch

As Agriculture Minister, Adesina led initiatives to end years of distortion in the fertilizer sector by developing and implementing an electronic wallet system, which provided farmers with subsidised inputs, using their mobile phones.

He was also able to attract \$5.6 billion in private sector investments to boost commercial farming, amidst other initiatives promoting youth engagement in agriculture and small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

Accordingly, Nigeria's food production expanded by an additional 21 million metric tonnes and he went on to serve as one of 17 global leaders that spearheaded the Millennium Development Goals initiative of the United Nations.

First term balance sheet

In the first term of Adesina's leadership at the AfDB, the bank has bubbled with a lot of activity and traction and come to attract a much more visible profile. While part of this may be attributed to defter media and public relations management,

at the base however is the fact that Adesina similarly attracted other high-achieving personnel who brought with them the benefit of their own leverage even as he focused on managing such rich pool of talent to achieve set goals; including attracting the required financial resources.

Finding the money

As Vice President of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, Adesina had recognized the need to drive the search for finance to meet continental agricultural and developmental challenges and leveraged over \$4 billion in bank finance commitments that was as one of the largest global efforts in that regard.

Now, he has led AfDB in raising 79 billion dollars on the international market for investment interest in Africa through his Africa Investment Forum sessions in 2018 and 2019. The goal is to leverage some \$300 billion of investments into the continent.

A solid numbers bank

Under Adesina also, a General Capital Increase exercise was undertaken and capitalization of the AfDB moved from \$93 billion to \$208 billion.

Other associated numbers have followed this growth trajectory. The bank's loan income rose from \$563 million in 2015 to \$803 million in 2017, an increase of 42.6 per cent, and net operating income rose from \$492 million in 2015 to \$781 million by the end of 2017. With such good fortune, the AfDB under Adesina was able to make a historic allocation of \$190.35 million from its net income to reserves.

When a sustainable policy pays off

Adesina's focus on ensuring sustainable liquidity at the AfDB has helped the bank maintain its AAA rating by all the four major global rating agencies across four years. This vote of confidence in its financial and risk management strategies, liquidity, shareholder support and corporate governance record, is also a dependable buoy for project financing



Under the leadership of Adesina, the AfDB has provided a robust response to cushion the effects of COVID 19 across Africa. Photo credit Reuters, Siphwe Sibeko

and expansion.

Adesina has also ensured that the bank's money is deployed to fund 'High 5 strategic priorities: Light up and Power Africa; Feed Africa; Industrialise Africa; Integrate Africa; and Improve the quality of life of the people of Africa. Independent studies have confirmed that these areas have multiplier capacities to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa and the Agenda 2063 of the AU.

Money for purpose

This nexus between money and projects is indeed one that Adesina has been most careful about.

Appreciating that Africa would need help to tackle the then developing COVID-19 challenge, Adesina, on March 26, 2020, led the bank to successfully launch a \$3 billion Fight COVID-19 Social Bond on the international capital market. In addition, the bond, which is now listed on the London Stock Exchange, is the largest US dollar denominated social bond in the history of the world and the largest undertaken by AfDB since its establishment in 1964. Member states are already drawing from the \$10 billion Covid-9 response facility.

Going forward: The second term focus

To his credit, Adesina in his first term focused on the High 5 strategic areas. While it is expected that these

would continue to be built on, two other areas of concern now include maintaining a sustained focus on mitigating COVID-19 damage and deepening regional integration initiatives, even more structurally now, through the fledgling African Continental Free Trade Area, AfCFTA.

To ensure that some of his already initiated flagship projects continue apace and are strengthened, Dr. Joshua Bolarinwa of the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs, NIIA think-tank says the thing to do is to build from the known into the future:

'Yes, Adesina has done well in the area of agriculture, particularly providing funds in boosting agriculture for sustainable food security. He should now sustain with serious feedback, the programmes around the funding of agriculture. This will in turn, enhance industrialization in Africa and in the long run generate employment opportunities for the teeming youth population in Africa.'

A second point of potential project funding impact for Bolarinwa has to do with infrastructure and he counsels that Adesina should also not take his eyes off this area which is already captured in the Agenda for Africa. This he says also promises to bring in a buffer of sorts for some of the controversial 'Chinese loans' that are becoming a serious source of debt worry in the continent.

Bolarinwa has more on his shopping list:

'As a way of continuing to help Africa achieve the sustainable development goals (SDGs), Adesina should also focus on programmes for youth development; especially, talent and career development. Similarly, he should initiate programmes to reduce the impact of Climate Change and reduce some of the insecurity that is linked to environmental change as seen in Central and West Africa, and particularly in areas like the Lake Chad Basin, and the Sahel and Savannah regions.'

Finally, Bolarinwa makes a case for the bank's floating of research grants both for institutions and individuals across the continent 'to make our Institutions and researchers more competitive.'

Enduring lesson

Africa watchers say there is however a sense in which the crisis was a wake-up call for a continent that had been seen as poor and aid-dependant. But a deeper look at the statistics would reveal that a lot of the continent's woes are indeed self-inflicted. In natural resource and demographic terms, Africa yet ranks better than many other continents from which it draws and receives aid at the moment. So its problems are elsewhere. So Adesina and indeed all that would build Africa, simply have their work cut out for them. Please wish them luck.

Africa Requires Ethiopia Fill Its Dam

By Lawrence Freeman*

Ethiopia is entering a crucial period for the future of its nation, as we approach the second half of July. Ethiopia must use the forthcoming rainy season (July to September) to begin the partial filling of its Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) being built on Ethiopia's Blue Nile River. When fully completed, the GERD, Africa's largest hydroelectric project is capable of producing over 6,000 megawatts (MW). This is not only a game changer for Ethiopia, but will contribute to transforming the Horn of Africa.

The Blue Nile, which joins the White Nile just north of Khartoum, Sudan, provides 86% of the water that becomes the Nile River. From there, the Nile flows north through the deserts of Sudan and Egypt before emptying into the Mediterranean Sea. Ethiopia has been involved in intense discussions with Sudan and Egypt, downstream from the dam, about the amount of water to be withdrawn from the Blue Nile to begin filling the GERD's 76 billion cubic meter storage/reservoir. Egypt continuously attempts to forestall the filling of the dam, alleging that since it is dependent on the Nile, if the volume of the Nile is reduced, its citizens will suffer irreparable harm. For most of the last century Egypt has received the majority of the Nile River's 84 billion cubic meters (bcm) of water.

Electricity for Development

The GERD, which is 75% finished was entirely funded by the Ethiopian people, is a \$5 billion water infrastructure project initiated in 2011. Its purpose is to provide much needed electricity to power Ethiopia's transition from an agrarian dominated economy to one that encompasses manufacturing and industry. In the years ahead, Ethiopia envisions become a light manufacturing hub for Africa, increasing manufacturing output, and manufacturing jobs by 440%.



Artist drawing of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.

The functioning of the GERD is not an option for this emerging nation of 110 million people, but a categorical necessity.

As a physical economist, who has studied Africa for decades, and knows the key drivers of economic growth, I can tell you that nothing is more vital for the survival of Africa, than the production of electricity. Without abundant and accessible electricity, poverty and disease will not be eliminated. Poverty is the number one enemy of Africa and is the cause of immense suffering for hundreds of millions of Africans.

Approximately 600 million Africans, almost half of the continent's population, are not connected to a central energy grid. The overwhelming majority of them reside in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). More than 65 million Ethiopians, 40-45% of the population, do not have access to electricity. While Ethiopia suffers from one of the lowest per capita levels of electrical energy consumption, Egypt's population of 100 million has 100% access.

When completed, the GERD will

increase Ethiopia's power generation from its current level of 4,500 MW to close to 11,000 MW, which will make it the second largest energy producer in SAA, behind South Africa. Ethiopia has already entered into agreements to export its excess electricity to other nations in East Africa.

Ethiopia's commitment to construct the GERD resonates with the same vision that compelled the nation to build the Addis-Ababa to Djibouti rail line; to expand their economy, eliminate poverty, and provide a meaningful future for their expanding young population.

While Ethiopia is blessed with several water systems, the Blue Nile provides between 70% of its surface water. Ethiopia suffers from water shortages, droughts, and food insecurity due to inadequate infrastructure and under development.

It is true that Egypt has one of the lowest water per capita consumption rates in the world at 570 cubic meters per year, well below the global average of 1,000. Ethiopia's amount is a mere 125 cubic meters per capita, barely

more than 20% of Egypt's level.

However, the Ethiopia government has plainly stated that the intention of the GERD is not to provide water for irrigation or consumption. The motivation and sacrifice of the Ethiopian people in undertaking this mega infrastructure project is to provide electrical power for the purpose of developing their nation. Ethiopia intends on becoming a low-middle income nation. It can no longer allow its people to be without electricity, relegated to burning wood. Improving the lives of their citizens today and future generations is the objective of an operational GERD.

Sovereignty Versus Colonialism

The Blue Nile descends from Lake Tana, deep inside Ethiopia's mountains, traveling through Ethiopia before entering Sudan. The GERD will capture Blue Nile waters about 40 meters before the Sudanese border. Ethiopia intends to fill the dam's reservoir with 14.5 bcm of water over the first two years for testing. The withdrawing of this amount from the Blue Nile's 49 bcm

will not adversely affect downstream nations (Sudan, Egypt). In fact, the GERD will benefit these nations by regulating the flow of the Nile, preventing flooding, reducing silt, and decreasing evaporation.

Ethiopia has the wonderful distinction in Africa of having never been colonized. Unlike my beloved American July 4th, celebrating our independence from the British Empire, Ethiopia has no Independence Day. Instead, Ethiopia celebrates Adwa Day, March 1, 1896, when they defeated the Italian army on the battlefield in northern Ethiopia. Yet Ethiopia is fighting the remnants of British colonialism today in its determination to generate energy to free its people from the bondage of poverty.

Contrary to Egyptian claims, the negotiations between Ethiopia, Egypt, and Sudan are not about water sharing or water allocation. There have been two water allocation agreements regarding the Nile waters, that involved only Egypt and Sudan. Ethiopia was not a signatory nor participants to either accord, yet Egypt asserts historical rights over the Nile River, including Ethiopia's Blue Nile. The most recent such agreement was in 1959, three years after Sudan's independence from Britain, which recodified the 1929 British Imperialist agreement guaranteeing 55 bcm to Nile waters to Egypt and 18.5 bcm to Sudan. At the time of the 1929 Anglo-

Egyptian Treaty, both Egypt and Sudan were colonies of Great Britain as stipulated by the 1899 Anglo-Egyptian Condominium. This treaty also "granted Egypt veto power over construction projects on the Nile or any of its tributaries in an effort to minimize any interference with the flow of water into the Nile."

To maintain geo-political domination and control of trade along the eastern spine of Africa, Britain maintained authority over the Nile waters from Cairo down to Khartoum and beyond into southern Sudan.

Ethiopia, an independent nation was not subject to Britain's edicts and retained sovereignty over the Blue Nile.

Thus, from whence does Egypt's historical claim to dominance of the Nile originate.

In a statement signed by the Reverend Jesse Jackson, sent to the Honorable Congresswoman Karen Bass, Chair of the Black Caucus, dated May 19, 2020, Rev. Jackson reveals that Egypt's "historical rights" over the Nile are derived from the British Queen.

He cites a letter dated May 7, 1929, from Mahmoud Pasha, Chairman of the Egyptian Council of Ministers, to the British requesting affirmation of Egypt's "natural and historical" rights to the waters of the Nile. Lord Lloyd, Britain's High Commissioner in Cairo, responded on behalf of the Queen:



Blue Nile joins White Nile in Khartoum, Sudan.

"I would like to remind your Excellency [Mahmoud Pasha] that her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom has already recognized the natural and historical rights of Egypt to the waters of the Nile. I am entrusted with the responsibility of declaring that Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom considers the observance of these rights as a fundamental principle of the policy of Great Britain."

Rev. Jackson stresses in his letter, that Ethiopia should not be pressured "into signing a neo-colonial agreement will make Egypt a hegemon over the Nile River."

U.S. Gets Involved

In September, Egyptian President Al-Sisi requested U.S. assistance in negotiating the operation of the GERD. President Trump asked Treasury Department to host a series of meetings in Washington DC, beginning in November 2019. Sudan, Ethiopia, and Egypt attended along with a representative of the World Bank, with Treasury Secretary Mnuchin, to act as an impartial observer, not a mediator. Ethiopia compromised by indicating they would extend the filling beyond 3

years, to 5-7 years and increased the amount of water to be released from 35 bcm to 40 bcm in seasons of healthy rain. With the negotiations failing to lead to a resolution, Ethiopia requested to postpone the February 27-28 meeting. The meeting proceeded without Ethiopia. Sudan and Egypt attending, but Egypt alone initialed an agreement prepared without Ethiopia's input, which the Ethiopia Foreign Ministry characterized as "unacceptable and highly partisan."

On February 28, 2020, an official statement from the US Treasury Department praised Egypt's "readiness to sign the agreement," and instructed Ethiopia that "final testing and filling should not take place without an agreement." The next day, Ambassador Shinn (ret), former ambassador to Ethiopia, whose has spent decades in the State Department, questioned whether the U.S. was "putting its thumb on the scale in favor of Egypt."

In a June 22, 2020 bipartisan letter addressed to Ambassador David Hale, Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs, seven former Assistant Secretaries of State for African



President Cyril Ramaphosa, Chair of the African Union convening the teleconference on the GERD.

Affairs, asked the U.S. to embrace neutrality regarding the GERD talks. They wrote:

"The U.S. position at this sensitive juncture will also have long term implications. It will either strengthen or seriously weaken our future relations with Ethiopia. While there is no question that resolution of the Nile issue will require flexibility and compromise on all sides, it is not politically viable for Prime Minister Abiy (or any Ethiopian politician) to indefinitely delay filling the GERD. However, the perception—rightly or wrongly—that the United States has sided with Egypt in the negotiations will limit our ability to support efforts aimed at reaching a settlement."

Discussions Move to Africa

Egypt, not satisfied with the negotiating process, attempted to involve the United Nations in forcing an agreement on Ethiopia that violated its sovereignty over the GERD. On June 29, 2020, Egypt with the support of the U.S. brought the matter to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The UNSC is not the normal forum to settle such matters, but Egyptians were hoping to mobilize international pressure against Ethiopia. The UNSC has instead preferred to have the African Union (AU) resolve the issue of Ethiopia's right to operate the GERD. On the previous Friday, June 26, the Extraordinary African Union Bureau of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government conducted a video-teleconference meeting on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD). Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat noted that more than 90% of the issues between Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan had been resolved.

South African President, Cyril Ramaphosa, in his capacity as the Chairperson of the AU is committed to have "an African led process in the spirit of African solutions to African problems."

In a June 23rd statement, the U.S.



Ethiopian officials have announced an annual investment of one billion dollars over the next decade. Photo Medafricatimes.

Congressional Caucus emphasized the pivotal role of the AU in these tripartite negotiations. They went on to discuss the importance of the GERD for Africa.

The GERD project will have a positive impact on all countries involved and help combat food security and lack of electricity and power, supply more fresh water to more people, and stabilize and grow the economies of the region."

The Conference of Black Mayors, in a June 29th statement, expressed their support for the filling of the GERD

"Today, on behalf of global leaders throughout the African diaspora that hold the office of mayor, the Conference of Black Mayors released the following statement in support of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) and the impact GERD would have on Conference of Black Mayors member cities...

"It is known that Ethiopia generates 86% of the Nile waters but has been unable to use this considerable

natural resource effectively in the past. Now, following more than a decade of impressive economic growth, Ethiopia desires to utilize its naturally endowed resource for its nation's critical growth and development. Countries throughout Africa are in dire need of electric power to enable and sustain their respective nations rise out of poverty. The creation of a sustainable energy source will create a national infrastructure that directly contributes to the wellbeing of citizens our mayors represents through our global mayors' association...

"We strongly support a timely fill of the dam without further delays to avoid the economic impact on Ethiopia and neighboring countries."

Ethiopia is desirous to cooperate with downstream nations, but it will not have its sovereignty violated by having the operation of the GERD jointly managed or contingent on the requirements of water for Egypt's downstream High Aswan Dam.

Ethiopia should and will begin filling the GERD. It would be

irresponsible not to use this year's rainy season to begin filling the reservoir, with the dam already 75% constructed. Ethiopia's leadership will not disappoint the aspirations of the Ethiopian people, who view the GERD as emblematic of their national identity, and a critical vehicle to raise their standard of living and secure a more prosperous future for their posterity.

Ethiopia's use of the word Renaissance in describing its new dam is not metaphorical. When fully functional, the GERD will lead to a rejuvenation of Ethiopia's economy and that of its neighboring nations.

****Lawrence Freeman is a Political-Economic Analyst for Africa, who has been involved in the economic development policy of Africa for 30 years. He is the creator of the blog: lawrencefreeman.africaandtheworld.com***

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Is Kagame Making Enemies By Holding Accountable 'Big Fishes'?

By Maniraguha Ferdinand

2020 has so far not been a good year for most influential men in Kigali, including former allies of President Paul Kagame who were hitherto, hailed every here and there for being the strong men of the country. Some of them are said to have helped him to power 26 years ago.

Cabinet reshuffle is common in Rwanda, but knowing why someone has been removed from government is new. None knew why President Kagame used to be silent on why he has chased somebody from government.

In the beginning of this year, things changed. Some big officials were removed from government and a statement detailing their removal was made public.

Evoid Uwezeyimana, former State Minister in charge of Constitution and other legal affairs was removed from his position, after beating up a female security guard at a mall in Kigali City Center. The incident was under investigation but was dropped after an amicable settlement.

Dr Isaac Munyakazi, former State Minister in charge of Education, was removed from office after getting a bribe of about one thousand



President Kagame is supported by most Rwandans for sanctioning erring Cabinet members and top government officials

dollars, which he got from a school he had promised to favor at National examinations. His case is now in the court of law.

The most recent incident that left many in awe, is the removal of General Nyamvumba Patrick, Minister of Internal Security, who once was army chief of staff. Commonly known as the most feared man of Kigali who took part in a liberation struggle along with President Kagame, General Nyamvumba is facing military prosecution. He was asked to report to the military headquarters

immediately after he was relieved of his duty.

Gasana Emmanuel, former police chief, was also recently removed from office as Governor of Southern Province and is being investigated.

Claver Gatete, Minister of Infrastructure is also being investigated for alleged embezzlement of funds in a tender in which public money was wasted.

Habumuremyi Pierre Damien, former Prime Minister, is currently in prison and facing charges related to breach of trust and issuance of a bounced cheque.

Kagame recently said whoever misused public funds or committed crimes will be held accountable regardless of who he is.

There is fear that Kagame may be making more enemies by exposing the wrong doings of people who used to be his allies.

Dr Frank Habineza, an MP and leader of the Democratic Green Party of Rwanda, told Pan African Visions that there is nothing to fear. He says it now sounds good when someone is removed from office and his mistakes are cited.

"We find it good because it shows that they are being held accountable. However, we want to hear what comes from such investigations

instead of waiting for long to know what the investigation revealed", he said. Dr Habineza also said no one should worry when big men, commonly known as 'big fish' are being held accountable. He considers the dismissals and public shaming as a warning and deterrent to officials who misinterpret what it means to hold public offices.

"It's normal to remove them when they are not delivering or when something goes wrong because of them. It is a warning message to others because none should be using public office for his personal gains," he said.

Dr Buchanan Ismael, political analyst and lecturer at the University of Rwanda told Pan African Visions that there is no mistake in arresting big men when they are suspected of something fishy.

"When they are removed from office, it leaves a vacuum which takes a long time to fill, but you can't sit and watch when things are going wrong," Buchanan said.

In September 2017 after being elected for a third term, President Kagame formed a government of 20 Ministers but by July 2020, twelve of them had been replaced.



General Nyamvumba Patrick is one of the high profile officials dismissed by President Kagame

Namibia: Introspection Time For SWAPO As Regional Elections Loom

By Andreas Thomas

Windhoek – As regional and local elections loom, the governing SWAPO Party has scrambled to cement its stronghold on Namibian politics. The former liberation movement is still haunted by memories of 2019 general elections, after recording its worst ever elections performance.

Corruption-weary Namibians further distressed by high unemployment and other economic and social challenges, punished the ruling party in last year's general elections.

Hage Geingob, party leader and Head of State gained 56.3% of the votes to retain the presidency, in comparison to record 86.7% he received in the 2014 presidential race. The party also took a hit in the National Assembly only managing to garner 63 seats, down from 77 it won in the previous elections.

For the first time, the party lost its two-thirds majority in the National Assembly. With the Regional Council and Local Authority Elections on the horizon, the party leadership has shifted gear to revamp its tainted image.

Close to 200 party cadres from across the country met in Windhoek on July 25, 2020 to take stock of last year's presidential and national assembly election. The three-day meeting accorded the party an opportunity to undertake a sober introspection to identify the possible reasons for the poor showing in the last general elections.

Geingob said in his address at the meeting that the party sought to identify and review the key factors underlining the outcomes of the 2019 election results and analyze their effects on the party's standing as the Party of choice for the Namibian masses.

"In the wake of the elections, as well as the emergence of new role players on the Namibian political landscape,



SWAPO leader Hage Geingob greeting delegates during the postmortem meeting of the party.

it is pertinent that as SWAPO cadres, we enhance our ability to understand each other, our motivations and revisit our core values. This process will assist us to bring our focus back where it belongs, here in SWAPO and on the principles that have made SWAPO a dominant political force," Geingob said.

The party also sought to mend fractured relations among party cadres that have bedeviled the movement since the 2017 elective congress. Party members are still divided between the two main factions that emerged before November 2019 congress.

Team Harambee is said to be aligned to Geingob and Team Swapo to other party heavyweights that included former Prime Minister Nahas Angula and former youth minister, Jerry Ekandjo.

Both Angula and Ekandjo lost the presidency to Geingob, whose faction

is dominating the leadership of the party. Relations were so bad that in February 2018, President Geingob fired Ekandjo as a youth minister and Pendukeni Iivula-Ithana from home affairs. Iivula-Ithana, the former secretary-general of the party and Angula were some of the senior party cadres absent from the meeting.

Geingob and his team won all the top four positions, to include the deputy president, secretary-general and deputy secretary-general.

Commentators speculated that Geingob did not take lightly that Ekandjo chose to challenge him for the party's presidency, while Iivula-Ithana also competed against one of his choices, Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah for the vice-presidency. Geingob wanted to be endorsed as the sole candidate for the party presidency.

He argued that his predecessors, Hifikepunye Pohamba and party

founding president, Sam Nujoma, were never challenged for the party presidency. However, Geingob played down the fissure that the party is not immune to political crises.

"SWAPO is a composition of human beings who share similar values and ideologies. We must understand that like all political parties, we have to factor in the element of human emotions, misunderstandings and differences of opinions. Therefore, disagreements and differences of opinion did not emerge as a result of the so-called Team Harambee or Team SWAPO," said Geingob.

"This meeting challenged us to deal with the recurrent ghost of tribalism and factionalism, which undermines our cohesion as a party, and our ability to focus entirely on service delivery. Some comrades are abandoning solidarity and sacrifice because they look at the SWAPO Party in terms what they should gain



several members. Sacky Shanghala, former justice minister, Bernhard Esau, former fisheries minister and James Hatuikulipi, former Fiscor's chairman are now in custody over their leading role in the scandal.

They were detained late last year after an explosive expose by international media into a bribery scandal in the Namibian fishing industry. This followed after Wikileaks published documents that later become known as Fishrot files in November 2019.

The files revealed how the Icelandic fishing giant, Samherji paid local politicians and business executives to gain access to the country's lucrative horse mackerel fishing quotas. As a result, the company was able to cheaply buy the coveted fishing quotas from Fishcor, mostly horse mackerel.

The Icelandic fishing firm is said to have paid a considerable sum of money to ministers and prominent individuals who went to acquire mansions, commercial farms and luxury vehicles.

Local media has alleged that some delegates to SWAPO 6th elective congress were paid to vote in favour of Team Harambee candidates. "Swapo Party never got money from Fischor," Geingob declared during a June 12, 2020 press briefing at the party's headquarters in Windhoek. "We can give you audited Swapo reports and financial reports and you will not see any money coming from Fishrot. If names of people were mentioned and they are in court proceedings, we are not going to defend, influence and interfere in those proceedings".

We can only win if we field qualified and competent candidates not because they are Team Harambee or Team SWAPO ,says former President Sam Nujoma.

and not what they should give to the party," Geingob said in closing remarks July 27, 2020.

Nujoma on his part said the gathering came at the right time for the party to fully interrogate the current situation in the party. But the nonagenarian statesman who led SWAPO from its inception in 1960 until 2007 has expressed his displeasure at factionalism in the party. He cautioned party members to resolve their differences and win back the hearts and minds of Namibians. He also called on the party to field candidates in the upcoming regional and local government elections based on competencies and not factional alignments.

"We can only win if we field qualified and competent candidates not because they are Team Harambee

or Team SWAPO but because they are qualified, credible and competent in the eyes of SWAPO Party and the eyes of the electorate. Let us not divide ourselves into factions, but let us unite as one SWAPO. I therefore, do not want to hear any more of Team Harambee and Team SWAPO. There is only one SWAPO of Namibia," Nujoma said.

Apart from the worsening economy compounded by the coronavirus crisis, SWAPO also faces challenges from the digitally savvy and uncompromising oppositions that seek to tap into the public discontent, especially the youth.

The Electoral Commission of Namibia has cleared the Affirmative Repositioning (AR) movement to contest in the upcoming elections. The pressure group led by youthful

activists has registered as an association and vowed to field candidates in all 121 regional constituencies and 57 local authorities.

AR has promised to "primarily protect the poor, provide land and housing and transform the Namibian society by bringing about a new economic logic and order underpinned by leftist values. We affirm that we will be taking over the town and constituency governance in our country during the 2020 Regional Councils and Local Authority Elections."

Opposition party's are also expected to play on public anger against SWAPO, which was caught up in the Fishrot corruption scandal. The ruling party has distanced itself from the scandal, which has also implicated

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Could Rwanda-Zambia Relation Be Compromised By Former Rebel FLN Accusations?

-The little known about Rwanda but very important to note

By Mohammed M. Mupenda



President Lungu ,left, chatting with President Paul Kagame of Rwanda during his official visit to Rwanda in February 2018.

The landlocked country is well known for making continental and international headlines ever but there is something few people do not know about it and they should know. Rwanda government could hardly rest when there is a security threat in its territory, province, district, sector, cell and village.

It may decide to spend all its budget to make sure that every citizen is safe, it is a country you can barely oppose while in and rarely survive for months without warning, summons and other forms of making you not cross red line.

This is indeed witnessed in many areas including the recent capture of Mr. Callixite Nsabimana a.k.a Major Sankara. The eloquent outspoken former rebel leader who promoted

himself to the rank of Major could rarely cease to make shaking news on YouTube and British Broadcast Corporation Kinyarwanda version.

When I talk about his eloquence, I mean the way he speaks out with coherent information flow of which you can always be convinced that he would capture the country in a couple of days. This should be credited to the team that chose him to be the spokesperson though it never ended well for him.

It first happened the time he claimed the presence of their soldiers in Nyungwe forest, Southern part of Rwanda. I noted that the country still has people who can dare and not only daring but also taking people's lives and it goes in a name of revolution/ liberation.

In a couple of months, he was arrested in Comoros, African Island by Indian Ocean and extradited to Rwanda, but many dissidents never believed his arrest. In a face to face talk with few living in the United States of America, did i know that they were dissident of Kigali government i could drive the conversation in a different way and the tone would definitely be a bit biased but that was not the case, after all i had been intimated that the former rebel had been flown in a country but yet to be paraded to the press.

One of the dissidents asked that what do you know about Mr. Nsabimana, I replied that I know him as one who can lead psychological war and dare to scare the tiny central African country on YouTube.

"Imagine Kigali government is claiming and deceiving people that it has him in a country,". he said while taking his favorite beer.

"This is absolutely impossible, and it cannot happen," he added.

I almost laughed at him because i knew that he will be paraded on a day i could not indicate since i was not where he was held, the dissidents were hesitant and not pleased about my opinion and not because, they were not only happy but also they were indoctrinated adding his YouTube talk citing how he was moving forward and ready to liberate Rwandans mostly those dissidents for the current regime.

It had also been rumored that the contributions were made and collected to support the noble cause,

and this was among the dissidents across the world.

Few days, the former rebel leader who promoted himself to the rank of Major was paraded to media and accused several charges including the formation of an irregular armed group, complicity in committing terrorist acts, conspiracy and incitement to commit terrorist acts, taking persons hostage, murder, and looting.

Nsabimana reappeared in court on Monday of last week where he pleaded guilty of all charges but said that he was misled by some individuals including Kayumba Nyamwasa, one renegade senior officer of the Rwandan army currently seeking asylum in South Africa.

Speaking before the International and Cross-Border Crimes, a district in Southern Rwanda Nsabimana accused Zambian President Edgar Lungu of allowing them space to operate in his country to overthrow the Rwandan government.

Zambia denied allegations made by a suspected Rwandan terrorist that President Edgar Lungu facilitated the National Liberation Forces (FLN) in its attempts to overthrow the Rwandan government.

Callixte Nsabimana, who was spokesman for the FLN, told a High Court in Rwanda's Nyanza District last week that Lungu had allowed them space to operate and even pledged \$1 million to help topple the Rwandan government.



Nsabimana Callixte ,left, told a court that Zambian President Lungu supported the FLN.

According to Nsabimana, Lungu had already paid a deposit of \$150,000 towards "rebel attacks to remove President Paul Kagame from power". He has also accused Burundi and Uganda of facilitating him and other people to coordinate their activities.

However, a statement from presidential spokesperson Isaac Chipambe on Tuesday categorically refuted the "false" allegations.

"Allegations in the local and international media of the alleged submission made to Rwanda's High Court for International and Cross-border Crimes must be treated with the contempt they deserve," the statement said.

"The governments and peoples of Zambia and Rwanda continue to enjoy strong and fraternal relations founded on mutual respect."

Social media for Rwandan-diaspora, oppositions and Zambians had it. "If the accusation is true, this confirms that there is no permanent friendship/enemy in politics,".

Mr. Nsabimana was a hope of dissidents living outside Rwanda and they never wished him to be arrested.

"The main target is those Rwandese living in Zambia, they want Zambia to create problems for them. RPF is getting old,".

Nsabimana, who was arrested in April 2019, is facing multiple charges including terrorism and treason

following attacks in Rwanda in 2018.

The FLN is a military wing founded by the opposition movement, the Rwandan Movement for Democratic Change (MRCD), which is led by Rwandan dissident Paul Rusesabagina, known for protecting people during 1994's Rwandan genocide as a manager of Hotel des Mille Collines

President Paul Kagame has accused Rwanda's neighbours of interfering in its affairs and sponsoring armed movements against his administration.

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Africa Has Not Been A Priority Region For The Trump Administration-CFA President Mel Foote

By Ajong Mbaṗndah I

Very little has been done by President Trump in articulating and fostering a concise African policy, says Mel Foote, President of the Washington DC, based Constituency for Africa. In addition to not paying a visit to Africa in his first term, the President's utterances and actions have not been helpful in forging stronger ties with Africa, says Mr. Foote, a highly respected veteran of African Affairs in the Washington, DC circuit.

Fielding questions from PAV, Mr. Foote says the upcoming Presidential elections will have profound implications on how the U.S interacts with Africa and the rest of the world.

"Should Trump win re-election, we certainly should not expect anything of significance for Africa, and certainly no new initiatives. On the other hand, should Vice-President Biden win, we can certainly expect a stronger hand of friendship coming from the U.S., although the attention of President Biden will most certainly be on responding to the COVID-19 impact in the U.S," says Mr. Foote.

"While clearly President Trump has not engaged much with African-Americans during these four years, African-Americans have not done well with the Democratic Party either as both sides routinely promise things in exchange for votes, but deliver little," Mel Foote charged.

Still, the CFA leader believes that the African American vote could be decisive in swaying the election either way and for this to happen, their turnout must mirror 2008 levels when President Obama won the elections, Mr. Foote says.

Thanks for accepting to grant this interview, can we start with your assessment of the state of US-African relations?



President Trump really has not had any discernable agenda for Africa, says Mel Foote

Since assuming the Presidency of the United States, President Donald Trump has done very little to advance any significant U.S. – Africa policy agenda. He started off on the wrong foot, by insulting African countries, calling them "shithole countries", and followed this up by putting African countries, including Nigeria on a list to restrict U.S. visas! The first lady Melania Trump visited Africa last year, but did not focus on any real substantive agenda, and there has been little or no follow-up.

What was the Trump agenda for Africa and what impact did it have on the traditional ties that the US has had with Africa?

President Trump really does not have any discernable agenda for Africa. The U.S. is only peripherally involved in major movements on the continent, i.e., the Continental Free Trade Agreement; efforts to respond to climate change on the continent; and efforts to respond to COVID-19. Having said that, the U.S. State Department has been helpful in the peaceful transition to democracy in Sudan. The US played a role in the peaceful elections in the DRC. The

US seems to be on the right side in pressing for democratic reform and leadership change in Cameroon.

President Trump is wrapping up his first term of office with Africa been the only region he has not visited, what message does it send to the seriousness with which the US takes its ties with Africa?

Given all of the challenges the Trump administration is facing as it wraps up its first term, including the global COVID-19 pandemic, no one can expect President Trump to make a trip to Africa any time soon. In fact, for security reasons, the President is not able to travel to Europe, Canada, Asia or anywhere else, until such a time that a vaccine would be available! Most of the Africa-watchers in Washington, would have questioned his motives for making a trip to Africa anyways, given some of his rhetoric, and his abhorrent disregard and treatment of black people in Africa and here in the United States.

Elections are around the corner, what could be at stake for US-Africa relations come

November?

The US Presidential Elections in November will certainly be important for Americans and for the entire world! Should Trump win re-election, we certainly should not expect anything of significance for Africa, and certainly no new initiatives. On the other hand, should Vice-President Biden win, we can certainly expect a stronger hand of friendship coming from the U.S., although the attention of President Biden will most certainly be on responding to the COVID-19 impact in the U.S.; putting Americans back to work; and getting the U.S. economy going again.

What guarding principles or recommendations do you have for African Americans in making their choice of who to vote in November?

African-Americans certainly are in position to determine the outcome of the elections, if we turn out to vote at the level of 2008, when Barack Obama won the election. The Trump re-election team is working hard to make it difficult for Black people to vote, and clearly want to limit the potential! While clearly President Trump has not engaged much with African Americans during these four years -- African Americans have not done well with the Democratic Party either! Both sides routinely promise things in exchange for votes, but deliver little! Unfortunately, we can expect little to achieve for Africa and for African people, regardless of who is elected!

What do you make of the way Africa reacted to the recent murder of George Floyd?

With the advent of social media, the entire world witnessed to murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis, Minnesota police! While thousands

of blacks have been systematically murdered by police across the United States, it has always been covered up, with police claiming that they were defending themselves and had to use lethal force! African immigrants have generally stayed out of the issue of police brutality, but increasingly are being caught up as the police are only seeing them as black people, and not as Ethiopians, Guineans, Nigerians, etc. The George Floyd murder reverberated across the world including across Africa! The African immigrant community also has been caught up in the global protest, and the Black Lives Matter movement.

The emotional responses from Africa during the George Floyd included calls from the Minister of Culture for aggrieved African Americans to come back "home," what is it that African countries could do to build bridges to its diaspora?

Africa and African people are certainly coming to realize the potential of the African Diaspora, for remittances, for trade promotion, for tourism, etc.

Thus, the African Union's launching

of the Diaspora as the "Sixth Region", in 2012! However, much work remains to be done in Africa and here in the Diaspora, to make this Sixth Region a functional reality. The biggest challenge is to how we can develop an "operational concept of unification", that allows African-Americans, African immigrants, Afro-Latinos, Afro-Europeans, etc., to cooperate!

As we speak, the African Union Mission in Washington DC has gone without an Ambassador since October 2019 when Ambassador Arikana was recalled, what do you make of this?

We all applaud the tremendous effort of Ambassador Arikana Chihombori to engage the Diaspora, during her three years as the Permanent Representative to Washington. She was tireless in her approach, and did much to wake the Diaspora up to the possibilities in Africa! On the other hand, Ambassador Chihombori was clearly functioning as a part of the African



An operational concept of unification, that allows African Americans, African immigrants, Afro Latinos, and Afro Europeans, to cooperate is still needed, says Mel Foote pictured here with President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya

Union Commission and operated under their organizational policies and procedures! She served at the pleasure of the AU Chairperson, and like all Ambassadors, was subject to recall for any reason as determined by the Chairperson. The African Union has an "Acting" Representative in place here in Washington, and given the COVID-19 pandemic, the AU is certainly suspending efforts for the time being, to formally fill Ambassadorships around the world! I do expect that the way Ambassador Chihombori departed the position, unfortunately will hurt efforts in the future for the AU to focus on African Diaspora issues and engagement. They will likely focus on bilateral issues with the U.S. government, and with institutions like the World Bank and IMF!

What plans does the Constituency For Africa that you lead have for the 2020 annual Ron Brown African Affairs Series?

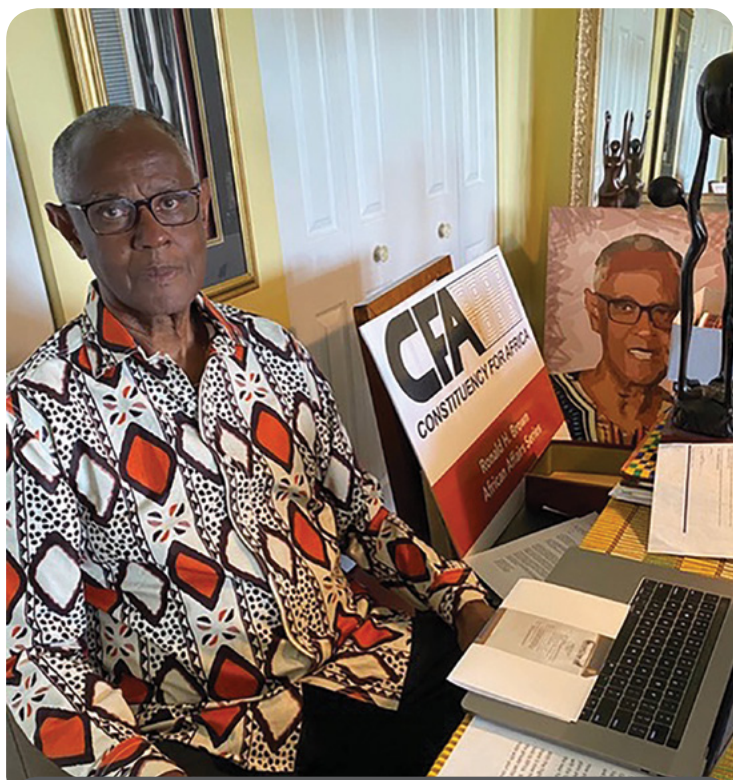
The CFA 2020 Ronald H. Brown African Affairs Series will take place virtually, between September 12 – 19. The theme for the Series this year is, "Advocating for Africa in the Mist of the Pandemic"! While most of the Africa-focused organizations in the U.S. have disappeared, or have severely reduced their programming during the Coronavirus pandemic, CFA has clearly adjusted, and

continues to respond to the call of Africa, albeit with minimum resources. In some respect the programming is even better today in that we have much better access with the use of ZOOM and other information technologies, to reach leaders across Africa, and throughout the Diaspora around the world! We are planning to release the agenda for the 2020 RHB Series next week.

Mel, we like to end with a last question on what is been done by you and other veterans of African advocacy in Washington ,DC, to ensure that there is continuity in the great work you have done for decades?

I am pleased to say that CFA has always prioritized preparing the next generation of leadership to support Africa. I recall my own experience in coming up, how the Black leaders at that time were not attuned to helping me or any of the up and coming folks, to prepare for leadership. One of my bosses told once told me when I went to him about career advice, "You must pull yourself up by your own bootstraps"! In other words, he was not going to do anything to help me to advance my career! I decided then and there that if I am ever in the position, I would take a much different approach to the next generation!

I am extremely proud of my role in



While most of the Africa-focused organizations in the U.S. have disappeared, the CFA under the leadership of Mr Foote continues to respond to the call of Africa.

the formulation of the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), that was launched by President Barack Obama, after he became President. President Obama sent an aide to see me late in 2008, and asked me to offer my thoughts on what approach the President could take in regards to Africa, in that when he arrived in office, the U.S. economy was in total freefall, we were fully engaged in fighting two

wars (Iraq and Afghanistan), and he needed to spend his first year or so in fixing the economy and getting Americans back to work! He also followed George W. Bush in office. President Bush, despite his limited knowledge and interest in Africa, ended up being perhaps the most successful U.S. President in history in relationship to Africa, allocating \$15 billion to respond to the HIV/

AIDS pandemic, and \$5 billion to launch the Millennium Challenge Corporation, which provided new development support for Africa.

President Obama wanted to show Africa that he, as a son of the continent, was indeed very much interested in the affairs of Africa, but he needed to spend his first year or so, fixing the monumental problems

in the U.S. I wrote a paper for the President Obama, and suggested that he not spend his political capital trying to get African old tyrants to do the right thing, but focus his attention on the young, the up and coming generation, and preparing them for leadership! President Obama loved the idea, and went on to structure YALI!

Corruption Is Robbing Nigerians Of Democratic Dividends-Okey Sam Mbonu

By Ajong Mbapndah L

No party that sells primary tickets to the highest bidder deserves to be in power in Nigeria, says Okey Sam Mbonu President of the Nigerian American Council. A seasoned player on African policy circles in the USA, Mbonu says the pervasive corruption culture in Africa's most populous country is making it difficult for the country to meet its development obligations.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with Pan African Visions, Mbonu who mounted a presidential bid in the 2019 elections says a year after the re-election of President Buhari, the lack of a strong vision and rampant corruption are preventing Nigeria from reaping the dividends of democracy.

On the upcoming US elections, Mbonu says the US-Nigerian council is undergoing critical structural reforms with a view to broadening its tent, and playing a more impactful role on US-African ties. While the current Administration has taken a laid-back approach to Africa, Mbonu believes that it is in the interest of the next administration irrespective of party to step up its game in Africa to curb the marauding Chinese presence.

It has been over a year since President Buhari started his second term of office, what assessment do you make of his leadership?

President Buhari's current and final term has been bedeviled by some major problems, including:



The absence of a strong vision and rampant corruption impede Nigeria from reaping the dividends of democracy, says Okey Sam Mbonu.

-Lack of vision, which manifests through the limited delivery of democratic dividends, such as economic growth via a diversified economy.

-Lack of a broad view of national governance issues, because his core inner-circle is of one mindset, thereby robbing the President of the diversity of thought necessary for progress, in a highly diverse country like Nigeria, especially on security and the economy.

-Finally, the President has had to deal with economic uncertainty

occasioned by COVID-19, and the collapse of the Oil Industry. The COVID-19 is nobody's fault, but the collapse of the Oil economy should have been anticipated way before now.

What do make of the way his government has handled the coronavirus pandemic?

Well, Buhari's government has adapted well with existing public health protocols in other countries. However, the COVID-19 has revealed the under-belly of the Nigerian economy, which is that a huge chunk

of the economy, perhaps more than 75% is unregulated and informal. Most Nigerians basically survive by going out on the streets every-day to "hustle". Thus if they don't go out, for a week or two, they may die of hunger. Many people essentially went berserk out of hunger and deprivation, during the state mandated lockdowns.

May we have your take on the suspension and subsequent detention of Ibrahim Magu former Chair of the Economic and Financial Crimes

Commission – EFCC ?

My recent extended exposure to Nigeria showed how corrupt the country really is, especially among the political leadership. We have witnessed former state governors who essentially plundered their states beyond recognition, walk away from jail (maybe temporarily), thus giving everyone a license to plunder.

However, what is so troubling is that an entity like EFCC could also be mired in the very essence of their existence, corruption within a corruption fighting agency.

If the allegations are proven, it erodes the trust of all international partners who depend on the credibility of their crime-fighting partners, to maintain sanity and economic stability via standards rooted in the “rule of law” in the world. A situation where every entity and everyone becomes beholden to corruption, will eventually lead to a chaotic “everyman for themselves” doctrine.

There isn't, and won't be enough police to contain all out corruption in the country, thus ultimately leading to a complete grounding of the country.

What is your take on the National Assembly hearings on the misappropriation of funds in the Niger Delta Development Commission?

The NDDC saga, is another showdown that the problem of Nigeria is really the thieving elites versus the masses. If serious prosecutions do not happen, then the executive branch would have failed to get a grip on the evil of corruption.

It is really sad, because, if you think about the mind-boggling figures involved, you wonder, why public officials need to steal in an unconscionable manner like that. However, if you take a look at the physical appearances of these people, you know they won't live very long. It's obvious from their distended stomachs from excessive consumption of alcohol and the like, organ failures, high-blood-pressure, obesity, heart problems, etc. So what is all the stolen loot for?

Nigerians have now had the



No party that sells its primary tickets to the highest bidder deserves to be in power anywhere ,says Okey Mbonu.

opportunity of comparing leadership and governance from the APC and the PDP which are the dominant parties, which of these two parties has responded more to the expectations of Nigerians?

None. It's the same people going back and forth in different color-painted buses. President Buhari could have done a better job of reining in some excesses, and setting some examples, by signaling intolerance of corruption from his own party members, as well as prosecute members of other parties. However, Buhari still has a chance to set some example before his term is over.

On the other hand, the first of these two parties (APC and PDP), to open up their primaries, without excessive

nomination fees to new-generation candidates, and a corruption-free nomination process, will ultimately prevail in the moral battle for the soul of Nigeria.

No party that sells its primary tickets to the highest bidder deserves to be in power anywhere, because that candidate who “bought” the ticket, does not owe the electorate anything, except to recoup their money, and empower their family to their heart's content. That is why you frequently see a governor who plundered their state and failed to pay salaries walk the streets of Nigeria without outrage.

Do you agree with those who think that a third major force or party will be a healthy development for democracy in

Nigeria?

A third major party is a viable route, but that third party may ultimately have to ally with one of the big two, in order to pull-off a national victory. There are many other intricacies to address, but it is doable.

You did get into the 2019 Presidential race, but dropped out, could you share some of the lessons that you learned from the experience and any plans for 2023?

Yes, my Campaign team calculated that the Labour Party, which is technically the third largest party, with existing structures in all 36 States, was a good vehicle to challenge the status quo. However, it turned out that the Labour Party needed

substantial internal reforms, in order to float a national candidate. We came close to clinching the party's nomination, but met resistance from the party's national leadership who did not see the vision we saw.

The shocking end was that the party actually did not present a presidential candidate after I dropped out, because there was no other candidate of caliber like myself to fly the flag of the party. However, there are a few good people at the party leadership level, and maybe they learned enough lessons to get it right in the future.

As we do this interview, the US is bracing up for elections in November, how is the Nigerian American Council that you lead preparing for this?

Well, we have actually commenced an evolution at the Council, which is now veering off in a new direction, to embrace the entire African Diaspora via a new "National Council for African Diaspora (NCAD)", which you'll be hearing about very soon (August/September 2020). The new NCAD vehicle will encompass the entire African Diaspora, and is poised for more impact in US and Africa in the near future.

May we know what changed negatively or positively for US-African relations in the first term of the Trump Presidency?

While the current US Administration has not placed a lot of strategic interest on Africa at the moment, however, the traditional US institutions and organs like the State Department, continue to perform their traditional roles of engagement with Africa.

However, most of us in the policy-circles expect that the US beyond 2020, regardless of who wins the election, will as matter of necessity engage more with Africa, because to disregard Africa, is to capitulate to the Chinese, who are now having a field day in Africa.

If care is not taken, the Chinese will take charge of strategic sources of African input in the global economy, especially in the area of expendable natural resources.

What is at stake for Africa in



Young and dynamic with a strong vision, Okey Sam Mbonu remains a player to watch in the future of Nigerian politics.

the elections and what are some of the recommendations that should guide the choice of voters especially those of African origin?

Politics is consistently about protecting or preserving one's interests. The African Diaspora should not be guided by emotions, but by a clear strategy of preserving their interests in the US and beyond. Once the community determines what those interests are, then they should invest in candidates or programs, or movements that will protect those interests.

Could we also get a word from you on the reaction of African countries on the murder of George Floyd, when the same

African countries remain silent on flagrant atrocities that take place across the continent daily?

George Floyd opened the eyes of Africans to racism in the US, in ways they never knew existed. It has also forced continental Africans to begin to evaluate how their own police enforce the status quo in their law and order.

Africans within the continent actually need to make greater efforts to cultivate and maintain cordial effective and cooperative relations, with their African-American cousins. African-Americans are the most prominent black Diaspora on the world stage; their struggles should garner strong solidarity across Africa. However, in reality we find that

because of colonial mentality, and a profound lack of enlightenment, many Africans inside the continent, do not see the struggles of African-Americans as their struggle as well.

This is where the continentals who migrated in the past 20, 30, or 40 years effectively come in, as the bridge between the continent of Africa, and the West, especially the US.

About 70% of current African leaders, from Buhari to Biya, etc, do not have a clear understanding of the need to raise the stakes, in the Africa versus the rest of the world dynamics, which could be a win-win situation for all. I believe only newer generation continentals with exposure to Africa, Europe, the America's and even Asia can address the gap.



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Colonial-Era Monuments Have Been 'Falling' Across Africa For Decades

By Amos Fofung

Recent campaigns to pull down racist and colonial era statues in the United States and Europe have gained momentum these past months hitting the airwaves of local and international broadcasters and on every Primetime newscast. In Africa, this started decades ago – as countries started gaining independence from colonial masters.

Monuments of slave traders and colonial rulers have become the focus of protests around the world, driven by historical injustice and racial discrimination. In Africa, it is all about erasing sad memories and parting ways with any colonial-era relics that bring back the suffering and discrimination endured in the hands of white colonialists.

From Cameroon to South Africa, Ghana, Congo, and Kenya among others, Africans are constantly tearing down and defacing colonial-era monuments and replacing them with African heroes.

In 2015, a student-led campaign pressed the University of Cape Town to remove a statue of British colonialist Cecil Rhodes from the school's entrance. The statue had been defaced and covered in excrement by students



Activist Andre Blaise Essama has been jailed several times for his crusade against colonial legacies in Cameroon.

protesting against the colonial leader who supported white minority rule in South Africa and the colonization of other southern African territories and named after him - Northern and Southern Rhodesia, later became independent Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Students celebrated as a crane lifted the statue off its base. Now the statue is covered by a tarpaulin at a local army base.

A statue of Britain's Queen Victoria in Nairobi, Kenya, was knocked down and beheaded in 2015 by unknown individuals. The headless statue was only pulled down in June 2020 a move welcomed by Samuel Obiero, resident of Nairobi who said, "citizens do not want to be reminded of slavery, colonialism and the suffering it brought."

In Congo, a statue honoring colonial

ruler King Leopold II of Belgium was pulled down decades ago. Erected in 1928, it was ordered taken down by then-dictator Mobutu Sese Seko seven years after independence in 1960.

The statue made a return in 2005 with an updated plaque, intended by authorities to serve as a reminder of the horrors of colonial rule. Public outcry was so great that it was taken down a day later.

In December 2018, Mahatma Gandhi statue was removed from the campus of a University in Ghana after protests from students and faculty who argue the Indian independence leader considered Africans "inferior".

The statue unveiled at the university in the Ghanaian capital Accra two years ago was the subject of controversy until it was removed late at night.

Scholars have highlighted evidence in past years showing the revered freedom-fighter, whose theories of civil resistance helped India throw off British colonialism and inspired generations of activists including Martin Luther King Jr, held derogatory views towards native communities in South Africa.



The crusade of Essama to have more monuments of national heroes has attracted a strong following for him.

In Cameroon's seaport town of Douala, Andre Blaise Essama defines himself as an activist aimed at replacing all the colonial monuments in the town with those of national heroes who fought for the independence of the bilingual country.

After launching his campaign in 2015, he gained public attention by beheading the monument of French colonial hero General Philippe Leclerc de Hauteclocque erected during the colonial era in Douala.

Andre Blaise Essama describes himself as an activist who aims to replace all the colonial statues

He flaunted his conquest by sharing on his blog and social media professional photographs of himself posing with the statue's head.

Essama was arrested and sentenced by a Douala-Bonanjo court to three months in prison and fined for "destruction of public property" after he pulled down the French colonial "statue of the unknown soldier" in the city center days after the first "conquest".

He demanded a statue of Ruben Um Nyobé be erected in those spots in honor of the anti-colonialist Cameroonian leader who was slain by the French army.



A statue of Ghandi considered as racist been pulled down in Ghana. Photo credit Emmanuel Dzivenu ,Joy News.

In 2016, Andre Blaise Essama again beheaded the repaired statue of the French general which fetched him six months in jail after refusing an offer to pay for its repair instead of a prison term.

A few months after his release from prison in December 2016, the activist erected a statue of John Ngu Foncha – a pivotal figure in the unification of the British and French Cameroons – at a busy intersection in the city.

He was hailed by his growing

supporters for erecting the statue which did not see the light of day. Unidentified angry-looking policemen pulled the statue down in a few hours and dragged it away.

A year on, the Cameroonian authorities erected an effigy of French videographer Sylvie Blocher at the same spot where Essama's statue of the national hero was pulled down. The new effigy erected was holding a sign with English and French inscriptions that read: "Even If I Do Not Have the Right, I Apologize".

As the residents questioned the reason behind the effigy erection and its message, dissatisfied Andre Blaise Essama pulled the monument down in the presence of spectators including motorists and pedestrians who cheered his action. That earned him another invitation before the judiciary in Cameroon. he has since then vanished from public eye but many believe he remains detained at the Douala New Bell Prison

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Reflections by Renée

"MY FIRST TRIP TO THE MOTHERLAND"

Renée Dugué

The Anticipation...
Eyes wide
Heart open
Wings spread
Feet landed

At First Sight...
Soul weighted
Stomach pained
Tears flowed
Fists clenched

Settling In...
Being welcomed
Hands held
Energy soothed
Spirit imbued

Parting Gift...
Mind opened
Ears pierced
Back strengthened
Soul stirred

Each one,
Reach one,
Teach one,
So much work
To be done



Renée Dugué fetching water in Small Soppo Village, Buea, SW, CR Feb. 2020



Pilanesberg, North West Province, South Africa Sept. 2017

Photo by: Renée Dugué

MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE A SURVIVOR WITH A PURPOSE

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

I shared in the first article that meeting Renée Michelle Dugué, whose French name literally translates as "Reborn Of God From The Land Across The Water," taught me to never again judge a book by its cover. As I interviewed her again after she returned to her home in Houston, Texas, USA, she continued to teach me this lesson from 7000 miles away. At first glance, it was evident, this lady was far from home. I wrote in the first article how she stuck out on Long St. in Small Soppo, Buea like a sore thumb. Also evident though, was how comfortable she was in this strange place. I was so curious to understand how. How was she not afraid to travel to my country during such a volatile time?

Mrs. Renée told me, again calmly in her soft angelic voice, she was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, and grew up when this city was considered the murder capital of the United States. She lived in the 9th Ward, recognized as the city's most dangerous area. Plagued by poverty, governed with neglect, and policed by corruption, this area, called The Desire, was built in 1956 as a part of the Federal government's Public Housing Project. Strategically placed throughout the country less than a decade before the end of segregation, these projects served as beta tests for the systematic development of America's new form of slavery. As the United States prison system was created to replace the plantations, these projects, along with the public school system would serve as breeding grounds for the perfect inmate, ensuring the generation of capital through the penal system for generations. Mrs. Renée believed these were the plans of Willie Lynch's people, but they gravely underestimated the melanated resilience of hers. She described the projects as ground zero for the descendants of the slaves who sacrificed their lives for their seeds. To make it out of The Desire meant you were a survivor. She believes it gave her everything she needs to compete and succeed.

And to do so fearlessly, which is how she was able to travel to Cameroon alone. She explained that she was obedient as God instructed her to make the trip; that she could not be both faithful and fearful.

Mrs. Renée admits it was blind faith that led her to connect with Ruth Besong Abunaw of Investing In People Worldwide. She had no specific plan, only to come to assist. God soon revealed His plans for the partnership. First through Rev. Gabiga Clement of Grace Faith Mission International, who prophesied "I see water, water, gushing water!" upon seeing her in church only two days after arriving in Buea. Within two weeks the need for water in the village was presented to her. The first rehabilitation project was completed in January, and the second was dedicated in May. She was not present due to COVID, which has delayed additional project plans, but she said, "Delayed is not denied." While the world suffers through this pandemic, she continues to faithfully walk in her purpose, as she also literally walks. Her organization, Reborn & Rising's Walk 4 Water Campaign has committed to walking 7000 miles to raise awareness and funds to build Cameroon South West Region's first solar-powered water well to provide clean water to 7000 residents every day. As the pages turn and the story of Renée Michelle Dugué is revealed, who I assumed her to be at first glance has faded. I am inspired as I see her now as a true survivor, saved from The Desire, filled with dreams on a journey with a purpose to serve.

**SHE'S TRULY
REBORN & RISING**



WSRP #1
1/31/20
(L to R)
Renée
Dugué
(R&R),
Rev.
Gabiga
Clement
(GRAFA
M INTL),
Ruth
Besong
Abunaw
(IPW)



Photo by Asong Kalu

Madagascar Overwhelmed By Surging Covid-19 Cases Despite Herbal 'Cure'

By Jean-Pierre Afadhali

Despite the highly publicized covid-19 herbal 'cure' that some received with skepticism, others mainly in Africa backing it, raising hopes in the fight against the deadly virus, Madagascar is being overwhelmed by rising corona virus cases as the Indian ocean island struggles to contain the pandemic.

The controversial cure called 'Covid-organics' raised hopes in some quarters especially in Madagascar that it would help contain the novel corona virus but the international scientific community was skeptical while the World Health Organization warned against using 'cures' that have not been developed in line with proper scientific procedures.

However, President Andry Rajoelina continues to advocate for the herbal cure derived from Artemisia- a plant known for proven anti-malaria properties in the Island and beyond- saying it can treat the deadly virus. The president has also been lashing out at critics of the made-in-Madagascar 'cure' claiming that they are rejecting it because it has been developed by a poor African nation, adding that if the 'herbal cure' was developed by a rich Western nation it would have been endorsed.

Now, the pandemic situation seems to be out of control in the great Island situated on the East coast of the Indian Ocean as some hospitals say they are overwhelmed by covid-19 patients amid rising confirmed cases and insufficient beds. A section of observers believes the surge in corona virus cases is also attributed to the



Madagascar President Andry Rajoelina, launched the Covid Organics with much fanfare. Photo credit Rijasolo AFP.

negligence that followed the launch of the controversial herbal cure. Some people may have ignored preventive measures to fight covid-19.

Recently, hospitals in the capital Antananarivo have warned the public that they were running out of beds. "We are now only accepting severe cases," Andohatapenaka Hospital director Nasolotsiry Raveloson was quoted by AFP news agency.

Other hospital officials told the news agency that they were overwhelmed by covid-19, signaling a weakening health system in the Island that is among the poorest countries in the world, making it difficult to deal with the global pandemic.

Some African countries have imported the made-in-Madagascar cure while others have subjected it to scientific tests and rejected the herbal remedy saying it does not treat the deadly virus that has disrupted the global public health.

A controversy erupted last week when the Ministry of Health sought international help to deal with rising

covid-19 cases in the Indian Ocean Island. In a letter addressed to the country's donors, the minister of health, Ahmad Ahmad, made an urgent appeal to the development agencies to intervene.

"Over the past weeks, the Covid-19 pandemic has evolved in a very critical way in Madagascar with notable flare-ups in certain regions, particularly in Antananarivo," the letter read in part. The ministry of health listed what it termed 'most urgent needs' citing oxygen bottles, 337 ventilators, 2.3 million face masks, 697,000 pairs of gloves and 533,200 medical blouses.

However, the government was not happy with the ministry's move saying it was a "personal initiative" without either consulting the government or president Rajoelina. A local BBC correspondent has told the British broadcaster that Rajoelina continues to promote the controversial herbal cure and saying the situation is under control. Mr. Rajoelina claims that were it not for the Covid-organics, the mortality would have been higher.

While the president appears to be optimistic, the situation on the ground is different. The doctors' Union has backed the ministry of health's appeal for an international assistance to help contain the deadly virus. According to health workers on the frontline, the content of a letter addressed to the country's development partners reflects the real situation in the country.

Speaking at a press conference Jerisoa Ralibera, the president of the Doctors' Union said the appeal for health is indispensable.

"It's more than necessary because we have fought for four months without success. We have requested several times to be given everything necessary needed to fight effectively covid-19. There is lack of equipment and motivation for health workers and it is now confirmed by the ministry's appeal letter for urgent assistance." Ralibera was quoted speaking.

Meanwhile, President Rajoelina has launched a digital platform to record covid-19 data amid rising confirmed cases especially in the capital.

According to data from BBC Africa Corona virus tracker, Madagascar has registered 9,295 total confirmed cases, 3,631 active confirmed cases, 5,579 recoveries and 85 deaths as of 27th July. The island is among the highly affected countries on the continent.

After the viral infections skyrocketed in early July, Madagascar re-imposed the lockdown. The capital Antananarivo is the hardest hit of the Indian Ocean Island.



President Andry Rajoelina donated Covid-Organics to many countries across Africa.



Patients receiving treatment at a hospital in Antananarivo on July 20, 2020. Photo Rijasolo, AFP via Getty Images.



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GBV Cases Rise Exponentially in South Africa During COVID-19 Pandemic

By Prince Kurupati



When South African President Cyril Ramaphosa announced that the country was going into lockdown, many people argued that the lockdown would usher in some challenges for the country. A high number of these however highlighted only economic issues saying the closure of businesses both formal and informal would impoverish the nation as most lived on hand to mouth.

However, it's now evident that the main challenge to be ushered in by the lockdown in South Africa is not impoverishment (albeit acknowledging the fall in standards of living as some have lost their jobs and income) but rather, an exponential rise in cases of gender based violence (GBV). This phenomenon has led many to label GBV as South Africa's 'shadow pandemic'.

The country has been recording GBV cases on a daily basis. South Africa's national strategic plan in ending GBV allows the ministry of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities to work with civil society. Among other things, the civil society

is tasked with recording daily the number of calls made to all helplines (police, GBV command, clinics, Lifeline and local CPF) in relation to GBV reports. The statistics from the civil society recordings since the onset of the national lockdown paint a worrisome picture.

According to the National Education, Health, and Allied Workers' Union (NEHAWU) "the number of gender-based violence (GBV) cases has risen by 500 percent since the start of the Covid-19 lockdown." Of major concern is that in recent weeks, the number of deaths mostly young females has been rising.

The worrisome statistics have forced the President together with the Minister of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities to come up and strongly condemn GBV while at the same time calling upon society to take steps in eradicating this emerging cancer. On 17 June, 2020 during his address to the nation on the country's COVID-19 infections, the further reopening of the economy and the scourge of gender-based violence, President Cyril Ramaphosa

said, "Over the past few weeks no fewer than 21 women and children have been murdered. Their killers thought they could silence them. But we will not forget them and we will speak for them where they cannot."

Afterwards, the President read out all the names of the deceased after which he said, "They are not just statistics. They have names and they had families and friends. This evening, our thoughts and prayers are with them." In the same address, the President said "Several international and domestic studies show clear linkages between alcohol abuse and gender-based violence. Of course, it is not alcohol that rapes or kills a woman or a child. Rather, it is the actions of violent men. But if alcohol intoxication is contributing to these crimes, then it must be addressed with urgency." South Africa banned alcohol in Level 5 and 4 but removed the ban for sometime during Level 3. The country has since reintroduced the ban.

Maite Nkoana-Mashabane who is the Minister of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities said,

"Government acknowledges the crisis with regards to GBV and condemn the current brutal killing of innocent women and children. We want a society where women, children and other vulnerable groups can live freely, without fear of either being abused or killed. We reconfirm our commitment to fighting the scourge of GBV with more vigour."

In the same address, the Minister also called upon society to help the government in addressing the GBV challenge. "As the government, we recognize and acknowledge that we cannot do this alone. This is a societal problem that needs all of us to rally all our efforts and resources collectively and confront this enemy head-on."

Society according to the Minister plays a pivotal role when it comes to ending the scourge. It is the society which witnesses the cases of GBV as they unfold and as such, society must without hesitation report any instances to the police or any other helpline centers. Once society has done its part in reporting such cases, Maite Nkoana-Mashabane said that the government will proceed to do



Government acknowledges the crisis with regards to GBV, says Maite Nkoana Mashabane the Minister of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities.

everything to investigate and bring perpetrators to justice while at the same time affording the survivors the necessary support they need.

To survivors of GBV, the Minister highlighted a number of measures that they need to be cognizant of at all times:

- Have a friend or relative that you can call on should you need help
- Create a code for whoever your safe person is so that they know you are in danger
- Share the code with your children
- You could also share a sign with your neighbours that you will use to indicate to them that you need help
- Have emergency numbers available; i.e. SAPS, local NGO, Call Command Centre
- When you escape, leave at the safest time, e.g. when the abuser is asleep, or make an excuse to go out

is asleep, or make an excuse to go out

- Go to a safe place like a family member's house, a local NGO, SAPS, etc.

Education and Health workers' union NEHAWU in support of government efforts towards the eradication of GBV said "As Nehawu, we believe that the issue of gender-based violence, rape, and femicide is a crisis that is tearing our society apart and affects every community in the country. In this regard, we call on all members of society to join hands in ending violence directed at women and children. Moreover, law enforcement agencies should act decisively against all perpetrators of gender-based violence and work with relevant stakeholders to fight violence in schools and communities...We call on victims not to suffer in silence and report perpetrators to law enforcement agencies. Moreover, we commit ourselves to continue fighting for the interests of workers and pursue the struggle against domestic and gender-based violence."

Covidhero: Zimbabwean Lady Feeds Thousands Of Hungry Children

By Prince Kurupati

Heroes often emerge during tumultuous times. In Zimbabwe, the COVID-19 pandemic has seen one heroine emerging. Her name Samantha Nyasha Muzoroki. With the little that she has, Samantha has been feeding thousands of families mostly children every day since Zimbabwe put in place a national lockdown in the early months of 2020.

In her own words, Samantha says, "Feeding thousands of families in my hometown, Chitungwiza, on the outskirts of Harare, has become my life since the start of the lockdown in Zimbabwe. Seeing smiles on the faces of women and girls is fulfilling."

Samantha says her relief kitchen initiative really started modestly. With the sole aim of giving children a good start to their day, she decided to



Samantha has provided food to people in thousands during the lockdown in Zimbabwe. Photo credit Jekesai Njikizana, AFP, Getty Images.



Children queue for food outside the kitchen of Murozoki in Zimbabwe. Photo CNN.

serve free porridge to the vulnerable in her community. As soon as she started, more and more children began to visit her home each morning for a scoop of her nutritious porridge. In no time, adults also started trickling in. Assessing the situation that most of these people were in, Samantha quickly decided to serve two meals each day, breakfast and supper. For breakfast, she continued serving porridge (and occasionally bread when porridge runs out) and for supper she serves sadza (Zimbabwe's staple food).

As the national lockdown continues dragging for long, the numbers of people who are dependent on her meals continue increasing. In the early days, hundreds were served but now, Samantha's kitchen now serves close to 3000 each day.

At the very first, Samantha says she "started with a 2kg packet of rice and 500g of beans." As the numbers of those in need of a meal increased by each day and as her savings were dwindling, she had to barter her jeans and sneakers with food supplies." Her compassion however has since encouraged the corporate world and

some individuals to chip in and help her with food supplies.

Bread Company Lobels has chipped in on occasions donating bread. Other companies that have made donations include EzuluFoods, Chicken Hut, N. Richards Group, Clean City, Quick Fresh, Health Factor Zimbabwe and Fresh in a Box.

Other individuals have also been inspired by Samantha and they have since launched their own relief kitchens' in their respective communities. In Victoria Falls, some officers in the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare, local municipality officers, members from the business community and other individuals have joined hands to launch the Victoria Falls Children's Feeding Scheme. The Scheme has one aim which is to provide every child with a hot, nutritious meal 5 days a week.

The diplomatic community has also been inspired by the work being done by Samantha. The Chamber of Chinese Enterprises in Zimbabwe made a donation of hand sanitizers and pairs of gloves.

For all those who have chipped in, in helping her with the relief kitchen,

Samantha said she is thankful. "I am thankful for the community of Chitungwiza and the world wide community."

In the early days, Samantha did encounter some challenges as she was shut down by the local council authorities for operating an illegal relief kitchen. However, the differences were ironed out and her relief kitchen is now registered as Kuchengetana Trust. In an interview with a local publication VUKR, Samantha said that she will take her initiative beyond the lockdown when lifted, "Definitely, we are now registered as a trust 'Kuchengetana Trust'. There is no way I could ever turn back on what we have built in the last couple of months. I have dreams so pronounced I am eager to deliver. I plan to make self sustenance the order of the day. I get goose bumps when I think about it. Social development projects and facilitation of them are my main objectives."

With regards to self sustenance, Samantha says she "envision a future where a woman is self-sufficient. I have been talking with some of the women about ideas to help start

income generating projects." She does acknowledge that this is something which requires a lot of resources especially financial resources but is hopeful the desired resources will come.

Samantha is helped by willing volunteers in her relief kitchen. Some prominent individuals including renowned Urban Grooves musician Rockford Josphats aka Roki have helped her serve meals to the thousands who visit her relief kitchen on each day of the week. Some who visit her kitchen in need of a meal often are moved by her work and they end up staying to volunteer. One such person is Anastencia Hove. After visiting the relief kitchen for a meal, Anastencia Hove says she "was moved by her (Samantha) love. It is rare to find people who think about others. So I said as a token of my appreciation for her support, I should volunteer. This lockdown has not spared us at all, so people are suffering. The number of people I see here shows that many are hungry."

Samantha is an immigration lawyer by profession and a business lady.

Billions at Play

The Future of African Energy and Doing Deals

by NJ AYUK



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Tug Of War Between The Government And Church Over Tight Rules On Resumption Of Worship

By Samuel Ouma

The Covid-19 pandemic is the root cause of the ongoing war between the government and the religion in Kenya. Clerics and Imams have called on the government to review the strict measures on phased re-opening of places of worship, but the government have stood its ground, maintaining that the protocols in place will boost the fight against the new virus.

On March 22, the government banned all public gatherings, including congregational worship after the Covid-19 cases in the country tripled from 7 to 25 in a bid to prevent the further spread of the disease. Other gatherings that were affected the order are weddings, funerals, political and sports events. The government argued that places of worships are the weakest link in the fight against the pandemic.

"Let us not forget that Italy began its unfortunate experience through the decision of some people to continue attending gatherings, including religious ones as if nothing had happened. Sunday, Italy lost 784 people within 24 hours. We will not escape a similar fate if we do nothing to address the risk in such gatherings," said the Health Minister Mutahi Kagwe then.

A lot of dramas ensued during the three month period the religious gatherings were outlawed. A number of people were nabbed for holding worship services in contrary to the directive. News of believers caught defying the rules flooded the media, sparking the heated discussion on the freedom of worship in the African nation. Police acting on a tip off from members of the public arrested a number of faithful across the country.

For instance, police apprehended a dozen of Muslim followers who had gathered at Tawfiq Mosque in Kwale County, coastal part of the country to mark the beginning of the Holy month of Ramadhan in April. The 68 children and 94 adults were forced to

self-quarantine for 14 days.

"The suspects were congregating despite the government directive banning social gathering and enforcing social distancing. Our multi-agency security team moved swiftly to the said mosque. We are also sending a warning to all religious leaders to observe the guidelines issued by the ministry of health on Covid-19 control especially on public gatherings and social distancing," Kwale County Commissioner Karuko Ngumo was quoted.

In another scenario, 57 worshippers of Mitume Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) church were arrested in Trans Nzoia, 380km northwest of Nairobi in the same month among many others.

In early June, President Uhuru Kenyatta's administration bowed to the growing pressure to re-open places of worship. Interior Cabinet Secretary Dr. Fred Matiang'i and his health counterpart Mutahi Kagwe appointed an Inter-Faith Council to work out the modalities and protocols of re-opening of the worship centres.

"Pursuant to President Uhuru Kenyatta's directive for the development of protocols that will guide the re-opening of places of worship for in-person congregational gatherings, CS Mutahi Kagwe and I have jointly appointed The Inter Faith Council that will guide this process," announced Dr. Matiang'i.

The team of 16 members handed its report to the two ministers after holding various sessions for about 3 weeks to deliberate on the issue.

On July 6, President Kenyatta announced the phased re-opening of places of worship under strict



The council should revisit the set hours for God to be accorded the respect He commands, says Archbishop Julius Nyerere of Messiaship Church in Mwingi town.

measures to curb the spread of the virus. Only 100 congregants are allowed in per session and each session takes a maximum of 1 hour. The new regulations stated that congregants should be above 13-years old and below 58-years old.

The new orders also barred those with underlying medical conditions from attending services and worshippers must wear proper facemasks at all time and avoid unnecessary contacts. Churches, mosques and temples must have thermal guns and maintain social distancing of 1.5 metres. Moreover,

they must install hand washing/sanitizer facilities; adopt regular fumigation and sanitizing of shared items such as microphones.

The news of re-opening of places of worship was welcomed by a number of people, but they said it is unfair to limit the number of worshippers per service. Others think that the number of congregants should be determined by the sizes of premises.

"A one-hour service is not enough to worship God considering Sunday is the only day we worship as Christians. The council should revisit the set hours for God to be

accorded the respect He commands,” said Archbishop Julius Nyerere of Messiahship Church in Mwingi town, Eastern part of the country.

MP Joash Nyamoko noted, “What surprised me is restricting church services to 100 people. The number of people attending services should be guided by the size of the building.”

Age limit has also been faulted.

“Most preachers are above the age of 58 years. Does it mean they will not conduct service even after the churches reopen?” Asked Archbishop Nyerere.

«We thank the council for their consensus to reopen churches. However, we are not in agreement with the proposal to limit people based on their age,» added Pastor

Alex Maina, the chair of Nakuru Pastors’ Fellowship.

People have been left wondering why the rules apply only to worship centres. However, church leaders have promised to ensure their members adhere to the guidelines to curb the spread of the deadly disease. Over 17,000 people in Kenya have contracted the virus and over 200 deaths have been reported.

“President Kenyatta needs to sit down with a consultative committee and come up with a solution. Those aged over 58 years have not been banned from using public vehicles, visiting restaurants and eateries, markets, funerals and bars among other public places,” said Bishop Kamuri Muya of Talents Church.



Respecting social distancing at a Mosque. Photo WHO Africa.

Cameroon: Citizens Snub Masks As COVID-19 Cases Peak

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

Barely days after the government of Cameroon lifted the lockdown measures aimed at curbing the spread of the coronavirus pandemic, Cameroonians have slowly been neglecting these measures aimed at protecting them from getting or spreading the virus.

On April 13, Cameroon’s Prime Minister, Dr Joseph Dion Ngute put in place seven new measures to curb the spread of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19), among which was the compulsory wearing of masks. As per the guidelines, the wearing of masks in public became mandatory.

Pan African Vision magazine took a trip to Buea, one of the major cities in the country’s South West region. We observed almost everybody who walked the streets had either conventional masks or homemade face coverings.

Data provided online by Wikipedia and The New York Times show coronavirus cases stood below 500 at the time the measures were being implemented.

However, many Cameroonians complained wearing the face masks all the time makes them feel



Cameroonians moving around without a face mask in Buea, South West Region of Cameroon. Photo by Boris Esono PAV.

uncomfortable, and they get the feeling that they do not breathe fresh air. “It is not easy to wear face masks all the time. It is uncomfortable and I even get some bruises with the mask I wear. So, most often I do not wear it,” Luma John, a Buea resident said.

At the entrance of the University of Buea, campus security personnel ensure everybody who goes through

the gates has a mask on. Everyone’s is subjected to a body temperature test.

Buto, this is as far as the measures get in the institutions. Once on campus, most of the students pull the masks down and leave them hanging below their chin in spite of proper usage instructions.

“Normally, we can wear a surgical mask for approximately 3 hours, and

it needs to be changed. However, surgical masks are not for everybody,” Dr Martin Mokake, Director of Buea Regional Hospital told Pan African Vision Magazine.

“Firstly, they are rare to come by and we cannot have that for everybody. What we use in the society are masks that are made up of fabrics, and sometimes people

factually complain that they do not breathe well with those masks, it is a possibility. I will advise that if you are not in a position, in an area where there are many people, or if you are alone, you would not necessarily want to wear a mask," He said.

In an apparent justification of the worried of the masses, he said "There is always a nasty feeling when you put on the masks for long hours; the air you exhale usually comes out with the body temperature and so, it is hot. Without the masks, you do not feel it, but with it, you feel the hot air."

He, nonetheless, stressed the importance of braving the odds that come with wearing masks for long hours. "We need to make a decision here, wear the masks and save lives with its inconveniences or not to wear the masks and be exposed."

Even in some hospitals regarded as high risk areas, the wearing of face masks ends at the gate for some. Many will wear the masks just because it is obligatory for everyone entering the premises, but take them off as soon as they go through the gates.

It has been observed that the flouting of the mask-wearing rule,

cuts across the board- the common man, politicians, and the elite as well. The situation in Buea, reports show, is an accurate representation of what happens in all other regions of the country.

As of August 7, 2020, the number of confirmed cases in the country had skyrocketed to 17,255 persons, with 387 deaths recorded. The numbered of recovered patients stood at 15,320 people.

A money-making venture for security personnel

With the putting in place of measures against the COVID-19 security personnel were charged with the enforcement of these measures. This implementation exercise turned out to be a money-making venture for these security officers.

People found without face masks were asked to pay in some cases 6,000 FCFA. Others who were found in possession of face mask but wearing none, pay a fine of between 2,000 FCFA and 25000 FCFA. Reports abound of security officers arresting people, holding them in custody and requesting bribe money



The wearing of face masks was made compulsory in April.

instead if fines that would go into the state treasury.

At some point, the police harassment, we learned, made Cameroonians, especially in Buea, to frequently wear face coverings. However, the flouting of the rule later on became worse as security forces withdrew from regular street checks.

Sensitization campaigns have continued across the country. In Buea, the Divisional Officer, Abba Abdouraman and his staff continue

to urge people in his jurisdiction to continue adhering to the measures put in place by the government.

"This fight is a never-ending issue as the pandemic is still here. We continue to use various means, so we keep hammering the call to respect the measures put in place. We coordinate with other organizations who want to support, so they reach other areas that may have not been touched," he said.

A Heavy Toll on SADC And COMESA Regional Drivers From COVID-19

By Nevson Mpofu

The advent of COVID-19 seriously affected several transport operations ranging from cross border commercial transport, cross-border public transport sector and domestic transport sector in public and commercial transport. This witnessed loss the of millions of jobs in both SADC and COMESA Region. This has drastically affected transport operators in all the sectors as they are now desperately disposing their fleets for sale at low prices.

Zimbabwe Union of Drivers and Conductors President Fradreck Maguramhinga states- related incidences of breaking down businesses already have been affected and facing diverse challenges like high cost of spares, dilapidated, poor and tattered roads, corruption



Zimbabwe Union of Drivers and Conductors President Fradreck Maguramhinga.

and high customs duty. This he notes has severely led to job losses, loss of gratuities, un-fair dismissals and inflationary problems like in Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique and in South Africa the rand has been going down.

China is the leading bus supplier in Africa especially in the COMESA Region. A nasty situation has risen unexpectedly as a result of corona regulations as buses are no longer plying city to city, towns and rural for example in Zimbabwe as these are the most profit-making routes. These transporters from Zimbabwe had acquired large fleets from China on credit hoping for more business yet corona-virus has forced operators to do business in urban areas only under the country's state-controlled bus company called ZUPCO, [Zimbabwe United Passenger Company]

"The situation is tense as operators are crying foul over the arrangement with Government as no meaningful profits are flowing from the current running business arrangement. They are no longer able to pay their drivers salaries above the poverty-datum line.

"Secondly, there are no-longer able to pay for credits and as well as servicing vehicles taken on credits acquired from China. This has seriously affected business of the day in the transport industry especially in low Gross Domestic Product countries in the two regions.

"The advent of covid-19 saw countries with organised and formalised transport systems not affected as those countries which were not organised and formal. We have seen workers in the Transport industry receiving welfare benefits through the Un-Employment Benefit Funds in countries like South Africa. The Transport operators received grants from their Governments to counter effects of covid-19 and sustain transport daily operations

ZUDAC's Recommendations

The President of the union continues to urge all Governments

in the two regions SADC and COMESA to avail organised funding free from corruption for transport workers and their employers to save jobs and companies for liquidation. This, he adds can only be achieved through governments of the SADC and COMESA working with:

1. Trade Unions with members
2. Transport operators associations
3. Insurance companies and Banks
4. Foreign and Domestic dealers in vehicles and vehicle spares

In the commercial transport many jobs have been lost and at times workers sent on in-definite leave without proper channels being followed as a result of the untimely covid-19. Heavy duty trucks and small trucks which are not under the essential service category were stopped from operating resulting in loss of millions of jobs in both SADC and COMESA Regions.

"This has not spared the Ship and Airline Cargo Industry because ships bring in new buses and trucks creating thousands of employment opportunities in the 2 regions. People employed in clearing and shipping, at airports and sea ports have stopped working this resulting in road drivers who used to transport ship cargo on land as well out of business and employment.

"In line with this covid-19 its now difficult to replace lost passports and renewing expired ones. As a union we thank the Government of Zimbabwe and other SADC and COMESA countries for giving priority to all truck drivers in essential services category to acquire passports. However, there is need to speed up the process. We urge SADC and COMESA Governments to urgently address the issue of delays experienced by truck drivers on acquiring travelling documents as many of them end up



Botswana police escort all trucks entering the country from South Africa. Photo Mqondisi Dube,VOA.

being fired or put on forced leave as they can- not carry out their duties without a passport and work permit.

Xenophobic Threats and Attacks Touches on Foreign Drivers In South Africa ...

COVID-19 has thrown many truck drivers both foreign and domestic out of employment. ZUDAC has received information through its members of fresh threats and attacks on foreign drivers in South Africa.

"Evidence is of Mooi River incident along N3 a highway that leads to Durban from Johannesburg. Several were drivers were attacked, goods stolen, vehicles and some goods burnt beyond recognition. Some unfortunate drivers were killed. This is as a result of a South African Drivers Association, ATDF [African truck drivers federation] strategy to illegally chase away foreign drivers.

"This is because South African drivers are claiming that they are losing jobs to Foreigners. Many of these attacks took place long before and close to the period of covid 19 and during covid19 . Up to now there is still no freedom and peace for foreign truck drivers.

"As a union we strongly castigate any act of violence or any form of

ill-treatment against truck drivers whether foreign or domestic. We urge the South African Government to urgently address the issue without bowing down to political and greed demands since transport and Labour issues are separate from political activism.

" We urge the South African Government to call for an urgent meeting involving all transport unions and associations. This will provide a platform to come up with an amicable solution in South Africa with regards to employment of foreign drivers without any loss of innocent blood, injury to property and loss of essential goods and products." , He concluded .

ZUDAC further on entrenches on not creating xenophobic problems as corona is proving more than enough for all Governments and nations to deal with. SADC and COMESA Ministers of Transport and Labour must assist strongly and listen to issues affecting drivers in foreign lands, not just to enjoy reading newspapers, on-line , social media and viewing this on television .



734 Coffee

734 Coffee is organic Ethiopian coffee sold in ground and whole bean form. The name "734" relates to the geographical coordinates of Gambela, a region in Ethiopia where more than 200,000 South Sudanese citizens have taken refuge.

Coffee from the Gambela region is lauded for its rich flavor - medium bodied with hints of caramel, spice and berries with a smokey chocolate aftertaste. 734 contracts with co-op coffee growers in Gambela who employ South Sudanese refugees providing both a sense of purpose and a steady paycheck. At the core of 734 Coffee is the promise to tell the story of the world refugee crisis and give new hope for economic prosperity for Sudanese refugees. 734 Coffee contributes to the Humanity Helping Sudan Project, the organization leading the fight to move the needle forward on self-sustainability for Sudanese refugees contributing 80% of all profits to refugee education and training projects in Gambela.

The Mission is Personal

Founder of 734 Coffee Manyang Reath Kher's earliest memories are of war. At the young age of 3, Manyang became a refugee of the Sudanese civil war. He is one of The Lost Boys, a group of 20,000 Sudanese boys who were displaced and orphaned. Manyang's father was one of the two and a half million people killed and he was separated from his mother and sister. For 13 years he lived in refugee camps along the Sudanese and Ethiopian border, where homelessness, hunger, fear, and abuse were part of his everyday life. But he was one of the lucky ones, at the age of 17, Manyang was brought to America where he learned English and eventually enrolled in college receiving his degree in May of 2016. He started Humanity Helping Sudan to improve the lives of Sudanese refugees. By launching 734 Coffee, Manyang is bringing his own American dream to life of creating a sustainable enterprise that both employs and empowers our refugee brothers and sisters.

Partner With Us

734 Coffee is seeking local and national distribution opportunities. By supporting 734 Coffee you are not only providing your customers with an exceptional sipping experience, you are taking a stand for those who have lost their homes, but not their hope.

For More Information

Team@hhsproject.org
734coffee.com

Friends In Need, Friends Indeed: Q & A With Dr Rasha Kelej On The Merck Foundation Response To COVID 19 in Africa

By Ajong Mbapndah L

The COVID-19 pandemic may have slowed its agenda, but the Merck Foundation under the leadership of its CEO Rasha Kelej remains a dependable development partner for Africa. From continuous engagement with African first Ladies, to raising awareness and showing appreciation to frontline actors, Dr Rasha Kelej sheds light on the response of the Merck Foundation to Covid 19 in Africa in the following Q &A

With the first ladies that you work with, what initiatives have been embarked on in response to COVID 19?

Merck Foundation has raced to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic in partnership with 18 African First Ladies, Ministries of Health, Information and Education focusing on four main areas: community support, training doctors and community awareness through our “stay at home” media recognition awards and children storybook. To give a brief;

1) **Community donations:** the lockdown imposed in most countries had hit the daily workers and women the most, making it very difficult for them to survive. Therefore, we partnered with the African First Ladies of Liberia, Ghana, DR Congo, Zimbabwe, Niger, Sierra Leone, Malawi (Former) and Burkina Faso to support livelihood of thousands of women and families of casual and daily workers who are most affected by the Coronavirus (COVID -19) lockdown. The relief contribution was also undertaken in Egypt with the aim to support 500 families.

2) **Coronavirus Healthcare Capacity Building:** We strongly believe that building professional healthcare capacity is the right strategy to improve access to quality and equitable healthcare specially during this vicious pandemic, therefore, Merck Foundation will strongly continue their current



Merck Foundation

**Stay Home
keep connected**

To keep Physically and Mentally healthy.

Dr. Rasha Kelej
CEO of Merck Foundation
President of Merck More Than A Mother

capacity advancement programs and will specially focus on building Coronavirus healthcare capacity through providing African and Asian medical postgraduates with one-year online diploma and two-year online Master degree in both Respiratory Medicines and Acute Medicines at one of the UK Universities. This program is in partnership with African First Ladies, Ministers of Health and Academia across the two continents.

As part of our strategy of responding to coronavirus lockdown, we scaled up to more African and Asian medical postgraduates to provide online medical specialization scholarships. We will now focus more on online scholarships which will be for one-

year diploma and two year master degree in several specialties such as: Diabetes, Cardiovascular Preventive Medicines, Endocrinology and Sexual and Reproductive Medicines. We invite Medical Graduates to apply for these courses by email us on submit@merckfoundation.com

3) **Community Awareness:** We also launched ‘Stay at Home’ Media Recognition Awards in partnership with First Ladies of Ghana, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Malawi (Former), Namibia, Niger, Guinea Conakry, Burundi (Former), Central African Republic (C.A.R.), Chad, Zimbabwe, Zambia, The Gambia, Liberia and Congo Brazzaville, Angola, Mali, Mozambique for English, French,

Portuguese and Arabic Speaking African countries. The awards have been also announced for Middle Eastern, Asian countries and in Spanish for Latin American Countries. The theme of the awards is ‘Raising Awareness on how to Stay Safe, Keep Physically and Mentally Healthy during Coronavirus Lockdown with the aim to separate facts from myths and misconceptions’. The winners of the awards will be announced soon.

4) **Community awareness for Children and Youth:** We also launched an inspiring storybook called ‘Making the Right Choice’ in partnership with 18 African First Ladies. The story aims to raise awareness about coronavirus prevention amongst children and

youth as it provides facts about the pandemic and how to stay safe and healthy during the outbreak. It also promotes honesty, hard-work and the ability to make the right choices even during the most challenging times. The story has been released in three languages: English, French and Portuguese.

There is also a song out -My White Army song from a group of 11 artists from 11 African countries in three languages ; for ur first time in Arabic , French and English. on the pandemic, how did you come about this initiative?

I started this song as an idea of creating an inspiring pan African song which aims to thank the doctors and nurses fighting on the front lines of the coronavirus battle, who are risking exposure to the virus so everyone else can stay home and stay healthy.

I strongly believe, it is important for the people on the front line; doctors, nurses and health workers to know how grateful we are. I did not want this to be a one-off thank you, but one that becomes a regular act of gratitude across our communities. I have heard stories of horrible behavior against our health workers, such as, landlords are forcefully evicting them due to paranoia that they might spread COVID -19. It is shocking, illegal and inhuman behavior”.

Through the My White Army song, singers representing Africa are expressing our love, respect and gratitude for doctors, nurses and health workers, the frontliners in the coronavirus battle. It is their messages of support for those braving the outbreak to help others.

This is the first time in Africa and may be in the world that 11 singers from 11 African countries in three languages have participated in one song, to support the medical staff during this difficult time.

The title of the song- ‘My White Army’ simply refers to the team of health workers who wear white uniforms to save and defend us against the coronavirus pandemic

which seem like a battle to the world.

What criteria was used in picking the 11 artists that were used for the song and what is the feedback you have received since the song was released?

The criteria I used was to approach singers from Arabic, English and French speaking countries with a representation from East, West, North and South Africa. Of course, I approached many singers, but I selected the ones who showed passion and great interest and were willing to work under this difficult times and restrictions.

I must say am happy with the team of singers that could come on board, but this is the beginning of series of projects and songs to be done from different countries including Portuguese speaking countries. Singers from all countries will be

contacted and represented in the future to create songs to address different sensitive topics in Africa.

The 6th edition of Merck Africa Asia Luminary took place in Ghana last year , what souvenirs did you take out the forum and with COVID 19, what plans for the next one?

Of course this year we will not be able to conduct the luminary in Zambia in October like it was originally planned due to coronavirus pandemic new regulations. We will conduct our forums online this year and we will postpone the luminary to 2021. Hopefully by then everything will be under control.

You were listed last year amongst the top 100 most influential Africans by New African magazine; how did you

receive this news?

I am very proud to be listed among the 100 Most Influential Africans of 2019. This recognition is very important for me and for Merck foundation as it acknowledges my efforts, my team’s efforts for empowering infertile women and extensively working on eliminating stigma associated with infertility through our historic campaign ‘Merck More Than a Mother’ that aims to empower infertile women through access to information, education and change of mind-sets. I am very passionate about this cause and I love my work and my achievements as an African woman.

Through this movement, we have succeeded to initiate a cultural shift to de-stigmatize infertility at all levels: By improving awareness, training local experts in the fields of fertility care and media, building advocacy





This unsettling period due to the coronavirus scare is difficult for everyone – both physically and mentally. While most countries are under complete lockdown or restricted movement, people do not know how to handle this situation. Social Distancing is our Social Responsibility and the only way to kill Coronavirus, however, it will take a lot of courage and discipline to practice it. Taking good care of your mental and physical health is important during this period. So, we decided to initiate the **Stay at Home”** Media Recognition Awards in order to reward the journalists who are raising awareness in most effective and creative way on how to keep safe and keep physically & mentally healthy during this difficult phase.



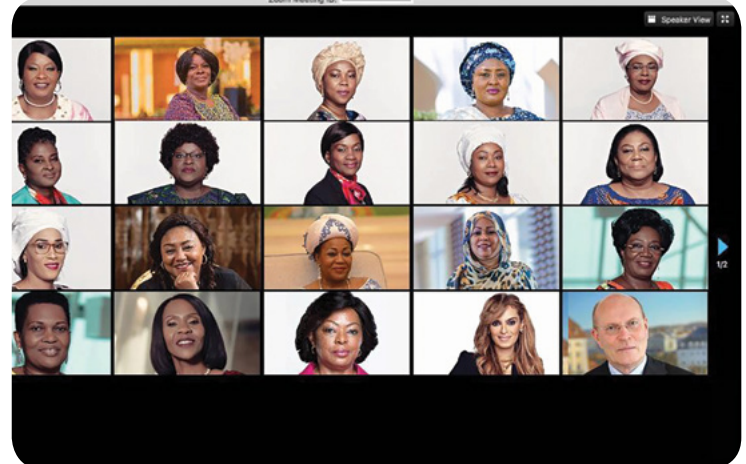
Dr. Rasha Kelej
CEO of Merck Foundation
President of Merck More Than A Mother

in cooperation with 18 African First Ladies who are the ambassadors of this movement, I love to work with them. And also, by supporting childless women in starting their own small businesses. It's all about giving every woman the respect and the help she deserves to live a fulfilling life, with or without a child.

May we have an idea of any other initiatives or projects that the Merck Foundation will be working on in the course of the year?

In addition to the four areas we are focusing on to respond to COVID

19. We will focus online speciality education like as mentioned earlier. And of course all our awards which can be conducted remotely. The full focus will be on our community awareness through our social media channel. I am very proud that we reached 3 m followers on all our channels including my private channels @Rasha Kelej . I am still thanks to all technology platforms , in close contact with all our partners , as our Alumni and new candidates to ensure that Merck foundation is on the right track to realize our vision.



Dr Kelej and the Merck Foundation have partnered with African First Ladies on diverse projects to mitigate the effects of Covid 19.

“My White Army” song

To support doctors and nurses during Coronavirus pandemic



Rozzy. Sierra Leone



A Pass. Uganda



Wezi Zambia



Tom Close Rwanda



Rasha Kelej
CEO of Merck Foundation.
One of the 100 Most Influential Africans

Song Director and Producer
Egypt



Mahmoud Al Laithy Egypt



Salatiel. Cameroon



Cwezi Ghana.

Singer and Song writer



Sunita. The Gambia



Sean K. Namibia



Niki. Nigeria



Kambua. Kenya

The Merck Foundation rallied a group of top African artists to use music in thanking frontline actors and sharing safety tips.

South Sudan Turns 9 But Peace Still Elusive

By Prince Kurupati

Africa's (and the world's) youngest nation, South Sudan recently celebrated its 9th independence anniversary. When the country attained its independence, there were high hopes that Africa had turned a new leaf as peace, stability and development were to prevail in one of the regions that had for so long been torn by unending civil wars.

The hope that Africa had has since been dissipated as 9 years later, South Sudan is highly unstable politically and poses a major security risk to East Africa in particular and the whole continent in general.

South Sudan's Independence

The history of South Sudan dates back to 1956. 1956 is the year that the country of Sudan was originally created. At the time, South Sudan was a part and parcel of Sudan. The territorial boundaries that were enacted by the white colonialists when they created Sudan bundled up people from different cultures and beliefs. This, therefore, from the onset laid out an imperfect foundation for the success and stability of the country. The conflict that prevailed in the country since its creation therefore can be said to have its roots in the territorial boundaries created



by the colonialists.

Over time, the conflict in Sudan transformed into one pitting the northerners and the southerners. The conflict led to the death of thousands and it severely derailed Sudan's development trajectory leading the country to become the most impoverished country on the continent at one point. After a protracted earth-scorched civil war,

in 2005, leaders of the competing parties reached an agreement to end the civil war. The disputing parties, the Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement signed the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

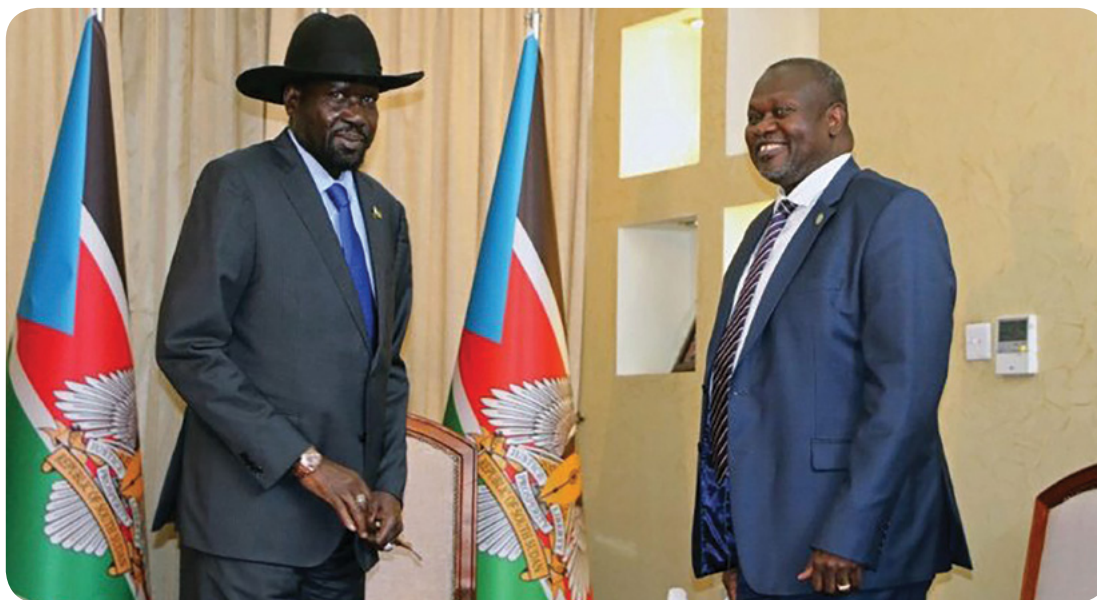
The 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement paved the way for the 2011 referendum in which southerners voted for secession on January 9th,

2011. A few months later on 9th July 2011, South Sudan officially gained its independence and became the world's youngest nation.

The Start of Tensions in the Newly Independent South Sudan

A couple of years after South Sudan had gained its independence, widespread reports of a coup being orchestrated by the first vice-President and former rebel leader Riek Machar against the President Salva Kiir dominated the local headlines.

When South Sudan gained its independence, the US and other nations who backed the independence of South Sudan saw it prudent to have two leaders from the nation's two largest ethnic groups (Nuer and Dinka) to lead the newly independent nation. The idea was, of course, to prevent the mistake done by colonialists in 1956 which bundled up people of different ethnicities leading one group to become dominate over the other. The reports of the attempted coup by Riek Machar were therefore viewed as a plot by Machar to exert supremacy over President



President Kiir and Vice President Machar are saddled with the responsibility of restoring peace to South Sudan.

Kiir. Not surprisingly, the reports angered President Kiir and that led to the intensification of conflicts between the President and his Vice as well as the two ethnic groups, the Nuer and the Dinka.

Violent clashes ever since the reports of the attempted coup have been the order of the day in South Sudan. In August 2018, after efforts by external mediators, President Kiir and Vice-President Machar signed a peace deal to bring the existing tensions and conflict to an end. However, the peace process has done little to end the tensions. In the first five months of 2020 alone, the UN Mission in South Sudan recorded 415 violent incidents!

While the situation on the ground certainly paints the picture that tensions are still high in the country, the President in his independence address painted a different picture saying the 2018 peace deal certainly has paid dividends as the country is on the mend. The President however bemoaned the emergence of new threats to the country's stability in the form of the novel corona virus and inter-communal violence.

"unfortunately our success in ending political violence is now threatened by a different sort of violence; inter-communal conflict

that is ragging in different parts of our country...As a government we will not allow this new threat to reverse our gains. We shall pursue a multi-layered approach to resolve this problem once and for all."

Other Igniters

While the coup reports certainly are at the root of South Sudan's peace and stability problems, over the course of the years, other challenges posing danger to total unification in South Sudan have also popped up. Just as outlined by the President in his independence address, inter-communal violence fueled by the competition for scarce resources mainly land has played a key role in destabilizing South Sudan. With the majority of South Sudanese people relying on agriculture for sustenance, many are in need of land and unfortunately, land is a scarce resource. The competition for this scarce resource has thus been fueling tensions and conflict.

When South Sudan attained its independence as well as when it signed a peace deal in 2018, there were verbal agreements by the leaders that the country should adopt a disarmament program. Unfortunately, nothing substantial as yet has been done on that front. As such, different groups in the country



A towering statue of Dr John Garang the iconic leader of the South Sudan struggle who died before independence.

view purchasing arms as a guarantee for their political future in case the tensions in the future escalate into a full blow conflict. This has thus led many to compete for early access to arms and this competition has thus been fueling tensions.

The way forward – according to the President

In face of the old as well as new threats to South Sudan's peace and stability, President Kiir said his government is looking to "pursue a multi-layered approach" to address the threats. With regards to both the inter-communal violence and the competition for early access to arms,

the President said, "We shall launch a full-scale disarmament of the civil population, an exercise which is already underway in some parts of the country."

With regards to the long standing threats to South Sudan's peace and stability, the President said, "It is critical that we, the parties to the agreement desist from adopting uncompromising positions in the hope that the mediation will eventually back them. We must move away from such attitudes because the peace we seek to consolidate is our own peace as South Sudanese."



South Sudan: Peace Deal Spurs Economic Recovery, but Remains Fragile

By Deng Machol

Juba - South Sudan turns ninth years on July 9, remains one of the world's poorest and most fragile states in the economic growth despite the peace deal.

South Sudan was emerging from the country's five year conflict which broke out in 2013, a two year after her independence from Sudan, killed 380,000 people and uprooted four million people from their homes, before ruined the country's economy.

The civil war was brought to an end by the 2018 revitalized peace deal inked by President Salva Kiir and his deputy Dr. Riek Machar, ex – rebel leader with hopes of resurfacing the country's economy.

The effects of the prolonged conflict continue to affect most of the country's economy and population. Despite the peace deal and vast natural resources and oil wealth, South Sudan's economy remains fragile, and inflation and parallel exchange market premiums continue to hover in the country.

The food crisis, poverty and vulnerability in a fragile environment, conflict and fragility have taken costly toll on the economy and resulted in huge human cost.

South Sudan has said economy is slowly improving mainly due to the peace deal holding with no major ceasefire violations, something that the businesspeople and customers categorically brush aside.

"Nothing has changed in the economic - the prices of basic food items are going up all the time despite the peace deal," said Ahmed, a businessman in Juba. "The clients cannot afford to buy commodities, so we are even making losses because items get expire at the shops."

His sentiment was also echoed by Martha Garang, a client in Juba, who argued that with the peace deal, the country's economy remained pathetic. "Everything is getting extremely worsen, instead of moving forward, we are moving backward – this is too bad," said Garang with



Juba Airport, with the peace deal, people are hopeful that life can become normal again in South Sudan.

frustrated tone.

Country's economist Prof. Abraham Matooc, also Vice Chancellor of Dr. John Garang Memorial University of Science and Technology, ricocheted that there are no economic changes due to slow progress of peace process in the country, plus the unexpected outbreak of corona-virus pandemic.

"There is no changes [in economic] because there are many things that have come up, although the peace was signed the process to implement peace took a long time," said Matooc, adding that also the corona virus that affected the whole world and that has affected the economic, therefore there is lockdown, even the businesses were actually lockdowns and now it's a problem on how to sustain the livelihood of the people."

"In this period, it can't counted that the government is doing something – the government is sitting, think in place on how to move forward with whether plan of economic development in the country but these obstacles had made it difficult so it is another turning point that has affected the government in South Sudan but not only in South Sudan but the whole world," he said.

Early this year South Sudan GDP was projected to grow at 8% by the world economic outlook. This projection assumed that peace returns and government uses the right policy mix and that there is no Covid-19.

"Yes of course it is safe to say that our economy is on the path to recovery because economic fundamentals are headed in the right direction," said official from the central bank, who preferred to remain anonymous.

Both the central bank official, economist Matooc are also optimistic that there could be improvement of economic in the fragile country if the things are moving in right direct.

New policy

"I'm not seeing a new policy put forward by the government but what I know is that the availability of peace in the country is an attractive for our development and for the economy development," said Matooc.

For the economic growth, economist stated that there would be an availability of peace so that the foreign investors would come and invest in the country.

"If you give an opportunity to the investors to come and invest in the

country, then it would encourage what we call foreign direct investment and when they are allowed to come in and they are confident that the peace's prevail, then their investment will be a creation for industries and there will be a good number of industries that can actually create the influences to the youth and the people [who] are able to work in those industries and in that way the economic will be vibrant. If happen that way, then the business sector and the circulation of money in the economic will the make actually the economy to growth," said Matooc.

On the other hand, bank official echoed that when peace returns the investor confidence is restored and the private sector starts to do more business and that creates jobs - this is happening now.

"This expansionary government spending is likely to stimulate economic growth and create jobs. However at the moment the monetary policy is incapable of de-escalating the negative effects of huge government spending on the price level. In fact the current Bank of South Sudan (BSS) policy is expansionary in nature, first to reduce the impacts of covid-19 on the private sector; second it's possible

that the BSS grants overdrafts to ministry of Finance to cover budget shortfalls. This policy mix is likely to lead to further depreciation of local currency,” said anonymous.

Oil drop

South Sudan’s official oil production dropped 20,000 barrels to 170,000 barrels a day as lockdowns to control the Covid – 19 pandemic spreads, delay the moving of production equipment and materials.

South Sudan, which pumped 350,000 barrels a day before war broke out in 2013 and had targeted this year to boost activity through a licensing round, and exploration by private companies and an investment from South Africa.

“We experienced prices that had never been there before and we are running at a loss” along with private operators, said Awow Daniel Chuang, the undersecretary in the Ministry of Petroleum, quoted by Bloomberg website. “We have been affected much more than others because South Sudan, being a new country just emerging from war, has a lot of challenges.

SSP hit low record against US dollar

South Sudanese Pound (SSP) has weakened against the US dollar; in the black market the US dollar trades at 360 SSP (\$100 for 36,000 SSP).

The official rate keeps fluctuating and the central bank declined to mention the official rate. The country’s economists have attributed the fall in value to the covid – 19 pandemic which has affected the foreign exchange and the fall in the global prices of crude oil which is the main source of foreign currency exchanges.

South Sudan had said the fall in value of the country’s currency was caused by the high demand of foreign currency during the pandemic.

“We are importing basic commodities like foodstuff, fuel, building materials, among from the neighbouring countries and this also takes a lot of foreign currency, so all those factors had contributed the SSP to go down because we are not getting enough foreign currency in to our economy,” said Diing John, economic student in Juba.

The observers say the government has to diversify the country’s economy; they need to produce some of the foods locally in the country instead of bringing everything from



South Sudan will be counting on oil production to get the economy back on track.

outsides.

“The central bank needs to be able to accumulate reserves and use it wisely to stabilize the exchange rate whenever necessary - reduce lending to the government. Finance ministry need to increase collection of non-oil revenues by reducing leakages in collection of revenues,” said central bank official. If peace is fully implemented all over South Sudan and Covid-19 ends we would likely see our economy grow, create more jobs, exchange rate and price levels

become stable overtime.”

Most of the businesses has closed down due to slow recovery of the economic growth in the country.

But both the experts, economists, citizens and the business people are hoping that the economy will improve if the prevailing peace ushered well.

The previous report estimates that South Sudan’s economy will grow at 8% during FY2019-20; yet a collapse of the revitalized peace agreement could push it back into recession.

Tightening Lockdown in Zimbabwe: A Case of Restricting Civil Liberties or Just a Desire to Save Lives

By Prince Kurupati

In the past days, the number of positive corona virus cases being recorded in Zimbabwe has been rising exponentially. On average, the country has been recording 100 new cases in the past couple of weeks. This is certainly a major cause of concern for both the government and the general populace.

While both the government and the general populace view the exponential rise of COVID-19 positive cases as worrisome, differences have emerged over how to salvage the situation so as to prevent the worst from occurring.

On one hand, there is the argument by the government that the only way forward to salvage the situation and potentially flatten the

curve is to tighten the lockdown restrictions. On the other hand, there is the call by the general populace as spearheaded by the media and civil society to force the government to be more responsible, proactive and accountable in its handling of the pandemic. The basis of the argument being that by tightening the lockdown regulations, the government simply wants to restrict civil liberties owing to the prevailing precarious security situation.

It’s all about flattening the curve – Government

Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa during his nationwide tours to mining companies around



President Mnangagwa sees the lockdown as an effort to curb the spread of COVID, his critics think he wants to stifle civil liberties



Jacob Ngarivhume is under arrest.

Zimbabwe has bemoaned the exponential increase in the number of positive COVID-19 cases. In response, the President made it clear that his government is looking to tighten the lockdown restrictions with the aim of flattening the curve.

President Mnangagwa's address on 21 July, 2020 to the nation in which he announced tighter lockdown restrictions, therefore, did not come as a surprise. In his address, the President said that only the working population is allowed to move within cities and towns. The non-working population must remain indoors except for the purposes of securing food, water and health services. All gatherings including church gatherings which had previously been allowed but under strict measures were banned with the exception of funerals. Business operating hours were cut from 08:00 am-16:30 pm to 08:00 am-15:00 pm.

Perhaps the most glaring regulation was the enactment of a dusk to dawn curfew. "With effect from tomorrow Wednesday 22 July 2020, all our security services must enforce a dusk-to-dawn curfew set to come into force daily between 1800 hours and 0600 hours."

The tighter lockdown regulations according to the President "are being taken for our (citizens) collective safety. As Zimbabweans, we have to win the war against the COVID-19 pandemic." He said it was prudent to implement such difficult measures so as to curb the spike in local infections. "Another worrisome development is that more and more cases of local transmissions are being reported at places of work. COVID-19 is thus no longer a problem out there, far and beyond our borders, rather it is now here amongst us and in our communities."

Drawing comparison with the neighbouring South Africa, President Mnangagwa said that now is not the time to be complacent. South Africa, Zimbabwe's neighbor to the south has been recording an exponential rise in cases, and now ranks fifth globally in terms of infections. Mnangagwa said the tighter lockdown regulations are justified so as to prevent against going the same route as South Africa.

A case of restricting civil liberties – civil society, private media and the general populace

During the days leading to the President's 21 July address and as it

became more and more apparent that the lockdown restrictions were going to be tightened, civil society, private media and members of the general populace began to raise concerns that the government was looking at tightening the restrictions so as to restrict civil liberties and not to address the spike in COVID-19 cases.

The big question raised by government critics pertains to the issue of striking doctors and nurses. A couple of months back, investigative journalists in the country unearthed a massive scandal dubbed the CovidGate scandal in which government procured personal protective equipment (PPE) at overly inflated prices from a shelf company. Details emerged that the company had links to the First Family and as such, it was being used by the First Family and other linked officials to siphon money from the country.

Soon after the expose, nurses and doctors declared that they were going to undertake industrial action as they were working in the frontline under terrible conditions while others were corruptly benefitting from money meant for frontline workers. Since they embarked on industrial action over two months back, the

government has remained quiet. The big question being asked by the critics is why the government is remaining quiet during a pandemic which requires nurses and doctors to be at the forefront fighting against COVID-19. The government's reluctance to address the concerns of the health workers therefore paints a worrisome picture that it does not care about the health of the nation.

Concerns have also been raised by some saying the time that the country has started recording exponential rises in positive cases is suspicious. Several weeks back at the height of the CovidGate scandal, an opposition leader Jacob Ngarivhume of Transform Zimbabwe announced that his party in collaboration with others will be holding a nationwide protest on July 31. As many people were riled up by the corruption scandal, Jacob Ngarivhume quickly found sympathizers and his call for protests soon became an 'anthem' on social media platforms. It is at that same time that the Ministry of Health began to announce an exponential rise in COVID-19 cases. Government critics therefore argue that the rise in COVID-19 cases is a deliberate ploy by the government to prevent the protests as it under the impression of preventing the spike in positive cases would tighten lockdown restrictions and in turn, make it impossible for the protests to take place.

The recent arrests of Jacob Ngarivhume and journalist Hopewell Chin'ono who exposed the CovidGate scandal thus prove that the concerns of government critics may not be far-fetched. The imposition of the dusk to dawn curfew also partly vindicates the claims of government critics. This is because the protests will be hard to conduct during a curfew. Breaking the curfew will give the security forces legit reasons to clamp down on people as they will be judged to have violated the curfew. Regardless of the opposing views, the neutral view is that local infections are contained while at the same time; civil liberties are to be guaranteed.



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Measures Being Taken by African Countries to Boost Local Tourism in Face of Global Travel Restrictions

By Prince Kurupati

The novel corona virus has no doubt impacted severely on many industries. One such industry is the tourism industry. When it comes to Africa, most countries relied heavily on international tourism with several packages exclusively set for foreigners. Travel restrictions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic as nations put in place lockdowns have negatively affected African tourism leaving many tourism actors in precarious conditions – some of the verge of collapse.

Recognizing the real danger that's facing the African tourism industry, many governments more so from countries that rely on tourism heavily when it comes to forex tax receipts have since started to adopt various initiatives all with the aim of resuscitating the industry. In this article, we are going to take some time to highlight some of these initiatives. The aim, of course, being to help the African tourism industry and all actors involved to stay afloat during these trying times.

Relaxing Travel Restrictions – Case in Point Rwanda

Rwanda is one of the most popular African destinations. In recent times, the Rwandan government has gone on a massive tourism campaign



inviting tourists to visit the country. The vigorous campaign undertaken by the country saw it enter into a partnership with English Premier League giants, Arsenal who displays the 'VISIT RWANDA' catchphrase on their shirt sleeves. From this, it's crystal clear that the major focus of Rwanda relates to international tourism.

Bearing the above in mind and also considering that tourism is a huge contributor to Rwanda's GDP, the country certainly had to come up with recovery measures before much damage had been done. The recovery measure that the Rwandan government decided to put in place was to relax the travel restrictions for

all international travelers. Effective 17 June, 2020, Rwanda announced that it had reopened all tourism activities in the country.

However to ensure that the reopening of the tourism sector does not defeat the successes already recorded in the fight against the spread of COVID-19 in the country, Rwanda did put in place specific measures that all international travelers have to abide by when they intend to visit the country. Most notably, all visitors are required to use charter planes when they want to visit the country. There are no restrictions based on nationality or point of departure. Additionally, all visitors are required to fulfill health

and safety requirements – these relating to the now normal, PCR tests (All visitors travelling by charter flights are expected to test negative for COVID-19 within 72 hours prior to arrival...a second COVID-19 test on arrival and prior to visiting any tourist attraction is conducted) and following social distancing guidelines.

For many, chartering planes is certainly an expensive task hence leading many to self eliminate. To ensure that more and more international tourists do visit the country, the Rwandan government did state that starting 1 August, 2020, international tourists can use commercial flights. However, before they are allowed to go on their expeditions, they are required to present a COVID-19 PCR negative test from a certified laboratory, taken within 72 hours of arriving in the country.

Encourage Domestic Tourism – Case in Point Zimbabwe

Early in May, 2020, the Zimbabwean Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality industry minister Mangaliso Ndlovu said, "We...anticipate a consequent fall in tourism business, with the country set to lose between US\$500 million to US\$1.1 billion in potential tourism revenue in 2020 from the



projected revenue of US\$1.4 billion.” Essentially, the minister said that the country could lose up to 80 per cent of the projected tourism revenue in the worst case scenario – a scenario which is very much possible if the current lockdown remains in place till the end of the year.

Recognizing the precarious condition that the tourism actors in Zimbabwe find themselves in, they have since adopted measures to encourage domestic tourism. The intention of course being to

help themselves stay afloat first and foremost. However, the great thing from the measures that they have adopted is that they now have afforded local Zimbabweans the opportunity to visit local destinations which they have envied for long but failed to visit owing to exorbitant prices.

Measures taken by the local tourism actors were to come up with local tailor made holiday packages for individuals, corporate and families. These packages come with massive discounts some exceeding 300

per cent! Just to highlight this, we take an example of one high profile destination, Victoria Falls’ Matesi Lodge.

The Victoria Falls’ Matesi Lodge is a 5-star lodge which offers a truly out of the world holiday experience for all visitors. Normally, the lodge charges a flat \$1200 per night for bed and breakfast. However, the lodge recently slashed its price for all locals to just \$300. This massive price reduction has certainly enticed many Zimbabweans to experience a

once in a lifetime opportunity at this incredible lodge.

Whilst it’s just a few holiday destinations that have come up with affordable local tailor made holiday packages, the massive uptake by the locals in their packages will certainly encourage all others to join the bandwagon. Once they do, they will gain revenue during these trying times while at the same time allowing locals to explore their country.

'New Era' In Mozambique: Local Gas Project Receives Africa's Biggest Private Investment

By Jorge Joaquim

The consortium led by French oil major Total has already signed all the financing contracts, worth \$14.9 bn for the exploration of liquefied natural gas in Area 1 of Rovuma Basin in northern Mozambique. The project is the country’s first onshore LNG development and the Africa’s Biggest Private Investment.

The Final Investment Decision was taken in June 2019, and the total value of the project is in excess of 20 billion US dollars. This includes offshore and onshore components. The project financing includes direct and covered loans from 8 Export Credit Agencies (ECAs), 19 commercial bank facilities, and a loan from the African Development Bank.

The ECAs participating in the financing include Export Import Bank of the United-States (US-Exim), Japan Bank for International Corporation (JBIC), Nippon Export and Investment Insurance (NEXI), UK Export Finance (UKEF), Servizi Assicurativi del Commercio Estero di Italy (SACE), Export Credit Insurance Corporation of South Africa (ECIC), Atradius Dutch State Business (Atradius), Export-Import Bank of Thailand (EXIM Thailand).

Total, the world’s second-biggest LNG producer, bought out Anadarko as the Mozambique project’s main operator last year after the US company was acquired by rival



Occidental Petroleum.

“The signing of this large-scale project financing, less than one year after Total assumed the role of operator of Mozambique LNG, represents a significant achievement and a major milestone for the project,” declared Jean-Pierre Sbraire, Chief Financial Officer of Total. “It demonstrates the confidence placed by the financial institutions in the long-term future of LNG in Mozambique.”

The Total-led LNG project consists of two LNG factories (“trains”) to be built on the Afungi Peninsula, in Palma district, with a capacity

to produce 13.12 million tonnes of LNG a year. The gas will be pumped to Afungi from the Golfinho/Atum offshore gas fields in Area One.

The Director of the African Development Bank’s Industrial and Commercial Development Department, Abdu Mukhtar, said that “the signing of the financing announces a new area of industrialisation for Mozambique and for the rest of the region. We believe it is fundamental that private investors, interested local parties, the donor community and the Mozambican government should concentrate on

industrial development led by the implementation of the domestic gas projects”.

Total is the operator of Area 1 and has a 26.5% share in the projects. The other members of the consortium are the Japanese company Mitsui (20%), PTTEP of Thailand (8.5%), the three Indian companies ONGC Videsh, Beas Rovuma Energy, and BRPL Ventures (each with 10%), and Mozambique’s own National Hydrocarbon Company, ENH (15%).

\$61 bn in overall gains, Mozambique without plans to

use it

Modelling for the Area 1 project point to overall gains, over its 25-year term, in the order of \$61 bn, and the Mozambican State, through taxes, profit sharing and participation of ENH will have just over 50%, about \$31bn.

There are many uncertainties regarding what the country can gain and do from revenue collection, from employment generation as well as other multiplier elements of the whole process of exploitation of these natural resources, so the Ministry of Economy and Finance has started a work of trying to estimate what would be, in a more honest way, the potential revenues that the country could receive and how to app.

The model, which is still under development, has not considered the implications of the covid-19 pandemic, but it has quite strong assumptions and scenarios that also imply a rather high degree of conservatism, PAV has learned.

The MEF's plan is to use the revenue forecasts to design rules around government spending of revenues, and the design of a Sovereign Wealth Fund to most effectively manage savings.

A source told PAV that It will not be an easy task because the design of fiscal tasks takes into account what the challenges of the country are, as well as the risks associated with large-scale resource exports, such as the Dutch disease, a risk that has very large macro-economic implications, both on the exchange rate side and on the export side of the country.



The SWF, or some kind of alternative stabilisation fund, would include a mechanism to increase savings at times of high prices, and allow the government access to revenue in times of low prices, to allow for smoother management of the economy.

State-owned oil and gas company ENH without money yet for the projects

Whatever, mozambique's state-owned oil and gas company ENH intends to find cheaper financing than it currently has available to it, to fund its participation in the country's largest natural gas project, now under construction. It was a kind of bridge funding from its partners with the proviso that ENH would go to the

marketplace to seek better terms and relieve them of the debt.

Pan African Visions has learned that there is an agreement with the other partners in Area 1 that to finance ENH's 15% stake in the construction phase. But as a company, ENH aims to maximise the return on its investment and, from that perspective, is working with financial advisors in order to find financing alternatives that allow lower costs of the operation.

We learned that financial advice was being provided by France's Société Générale as part of its existing service to Mozambique LNG, as the consortium undertaking the Area 1 megaproject is known.

However, the return of Mozambique to the capital markets will not be easy. Ratings agencies

classify Mozambique as in "selective default". This is because, in 2013 and 2014 the government issued sovereign guarantees, also for about two billion dollars, for loans taken out from European banks by three newly created security-related companies – Ematum (Mozambique Tuna Company), Proindicus and MAM (Mozambique Assets Management).

All three companies are now effectively bankrupt, and the government has defaulted on the loan repayments, arguing that the creditors must agree to a restructuring of the loans. The government guarantees for Ematum, Proindicus and MAM were illegal because they smashed through the ceilings on guarantees laid down in the 2013 and 2014 budget laws, and because they were never discussed in parliament which, under the constitution, is the only body that can authorise such debt.

The extremist attacks near the project

The project, potentially transformative for Mozambique's ailing economy, faced challenges to get funding, including the collapse of oil prices as a benchmark for the LNG market and a growing insurgency in the northern Cabo Delgado province, where the natural gas development is centred.

While the violence probably won't



threaten the viability of nearly \$60 billion in LNG projects planned, it could complicate logistics. A surge in road ambushes could disrupt transport lines. There have also been reports of insurgents posing as members of the security forces and setting up fake checkpoints. Eight employees at a construction contractor used by Total were killed when Islamist militants ambushed a vehicle near the border with Tanzania on 27 June.

Before the gas discoveries and insurgency, the remote coastline was more famous for luxury tropical island resorts, but now, dozens of soldiers clutching AK-47s and grenade launchers watch over roaring bulldozers on the white sand beach that meets a tropical turquoise sea.

They're guarding Africa's biggest investment.

In recent months government forces and mercenaries have battled insurgents for control of key towns. To date there have been no attacks on main gas facilities. More than 1,300 people have been killed since fighting began in late 2017.

Retired Zimbabwean colonel Lionel Dyck has confirmed he is planning to train Mozambican troops to operate in conjunction with helicopter gunships operated by his mercenary operation in Cabo Delgado. In an interview published on Friday by South African website Africa Unauthorised, Dyck said he wants to "start a selection and training programme immediately" for Mozambican soldiers, "so we can get good men into the field and take the



fight back to the enemy from the air and on the ground." Mozambique's defence forces "are unprepared and under-resourced and we have to move fast," Dyck said.

The insurgents appear to be loyal to Islamic State Central Africa Province (ISCAP). They have mounted a raft

of attacks in recent weeks. At the end of June they launched two attacks, on the town of Quissanga where they destroyed the local police station, and the town of Mocimboa da Praia just south of multi-billion dollar gas projects.

Education about Life and Death Enigma

By: John Nkemnji, Ph.D.



Prof John Nkemnji.

The birth of a child brings joy and jubilation to the family and the community. The baby arrives in this world empty-handed before receiving gifts and accumulating material wealth throughout their life. Family and friends lament at the end of life as the deceased leaves all possessions behind, departing as they came, empty-handed. A reflection on the mystery of life and death is written as a result of deep pondering following the many deaths and events that have occurred, and continue to occur in our communities, worldwide – the corona pandemic, the killings of innocent civilians by armed groups, accidents, natural disasters and other forms of senseless death.

Over 136,000 people have died in the USA over the last five months just from COVID-19. A similar number of deaths have occurred from wars and gun-related killings. Death has become so prevalent that some people have lost the reverence for life. Today, you hear about the sale and purchase of human organs for transplantation and other forms of demonic sacrifices and killings practiced by cults and gangs, mutilated or decapitated bodies, drone strikes, and other

gruesome deaths.

You are with a loved one today only to find out tomorrow that they are gone. Where do they go to? Will you ever see them again? Medical science says that death is the irreversible cessation of all vital functions especially as indicated by a permanent stoppage of the heart, respiration, and brain activity. The scriptures say something similar but from a spiritual perspective – the separation of the body from the spirit. Why do human beings die and how can we prepare for death? What happens after death? Is there life after death? These questions cannot be readily answered. God, the creator, alone knows the answers.

As human beings, we know that the inevitable will come when we least expect it. It is, therefore, a good idea to live every day as if it were the last day of our life. One should live life to the fullest so that when the time comes, your friends, family, and the community will honestly miss you for who you were and what you did, said or stood for. I grew up in a kind, generous, and loving family. When Pa and Ma Nkemnji passed, they truly had a well-deserved celebration of life. They knew that life would end

and prepared for that end carefully. They loved one another and stayed in peace with their neighbors. They left a legacy worth emulating as other good people have done.

When one dies, their loved ones are sad and burdened. It is good to leave survivors with little or no problems. "Get life insurance, prepare a will, and live happily with one another." Without careful preparations, conflicts may arise regarding the burial site and what to do with the deceased belongings. With the rampant loss of life today it is advisable to draw up a last will, buy life or death insurance and enjoy the limited time you have with family and friends. Many affordable life/burial insurance plans can be obtained from employment or through groups and associations like SAGI for Cameroonians abroad. Such investments are aimed at helping with financial expenditures. If you have a job and do not have health

and life insurance your family may be in for a big surprise. At the passing of each loved one, we write well-worded reflections and narrations about the good old days. Make sure that through your good living, you help contribute to an honest eulogy. We can electronically document life with our loved ones in audio or video format.

Death is sure to follow birth at a time best known by our Creator. Death is one of the equal opportunity awards on earth. In some cases, a terminal illness, discovered early, is a prelude to death with an opportunity for the end of life preparation. In other cases, death is sudden or accidental, except when one becomes vegetative (due to Alzheimer's or other illness) before passing away. At such a stage, your behavior and personality make you no longer yourself. You are seemingly dead though still breathing. Regardless of when or how death comes, family

and friends are never prepared. When a death occurs, we wail and cry and take time off from our busy schedules, make travel arrangements, and share memories of the good old days.

These are appropriate things to do in times of sorrow but it is also great to share intimate memories of friends and relatives regularly. It would mean a lot for family and friends to get regular notes or phone calls more often, especially today with lots of social media for keeping in touch! Most people own smartphones and have WhatsApp for networking. Only a few countries block social media calls. And how wonderful would it be for us to extend the traditional social values of visiting with friends and relatives occasionally? That could even prolong life.

The problem today is that though we know that life is fleeting and that every person we love will surely take that eternal trip, we are not wise enough to slow down, call,

write, visit, hug, or take memorable photographs more often. We have not yet learned our lesson, and we may not be cherishing each moment as a precious, irreplaceable gift. We are usually working harder and longer but can we slow down? We hear the excuse that "I am too busy" more often than we should. God is a great teacher, and we are the students. Let us learn, reflect, and live peacefully to succeed at the Life and Death Enigma.

Dr. John Nkemnji is Professor Emeritus, Educational Technology. He is an educational consultant and a proponent for life-long learning. Prof. Nkemnji dedicates this contribution to the blessed memory of Pa Nkemnji Achenjang and Ma Agnes Nkemnji. Thank you for the everlasting love that continues with: www.nkemnjiachenjang.org.

The Green Legacy Of Ethiopian Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed Enters Phase Two

By Amos Fofung

Monday July 29, 2019 became known as Green Legacy day in Ethiopia after the government coordinated efforts and planted some 353 million trees in just 12 hours. What followed was a massive tree-planting campaign, that made international news and broke world records. In total, Ethiopia planted over four billion trees in 2019 in what is today termed the first Green Legacy Campaign championed by the Nobel peace prize-winning Premier, Abiy Ahmed Ali.

It was reported that over twenty million citizens took part in the ground-breaking event which according to Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed is an "initiative is critical to Ethiopia's aspirations to build a green and climate-resilient economy."

Returning this year, Ethiopia has announced that it seeks to plant some five billion trees in its second Green Legacy campaign. The reforestation initiative geared at combating environmental degradation, build



Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed planting a *Cordia africana*. Photo, Office of the Prime Minister.

resilience, and transition into a green society has earned Ethiopia the admiration of many conservative and environmental-friendly organization are lined up to support the move.

Girma Eshete, International Council for Research in Agroforestry, ICRAF senior forester says this is an innovative effort by the

Prime Minister to mobilize the people for the campaign, which is contributing to radical forest-landscape transformations and better livelihoods.

"I have never seen such strong leadership commitment in this country," said Eshete. "Such leadership can easily mobilize the

people to carry out environmental protection work that can make a big difference in greening this country."

World Reforestation leader

After losing nearly 97% of its native forest due to a growing population and an increased need for land for food production, Ethiopia committed to restoring 15 million hectares of

deforested land by 2025. An initiative that caught well spearheaded by Abiy Ahmed since becoming Prime Minister in 2018.

Ethiopia has not always had a deforestation crisis. But human activities are largely to be blamed for the country's environmental setbacks. A good example is seen in Humbo, a village about 420 kilometers south-east of Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa where Gelcha Gelana has lived there all his life and has seen the land change greatly during his 67 years.

"Three decades back, the mountains were covered with dense jungle and were home to diversified wild animal species including lions, leopards, hyenas, python, and deer," he said. "The grasses and leaves from the mountain served us with feed for our cattle and the forest's dry fallen branches provided firewood."

But since the 1960s, poverty, hunger, drought, and an increase demand for agricultural space has forced communities to over-use their natural resources. Many trees had been cut down for buildings, firewood, charcoal, and furniture, with little or no regulation. "The forest gradually dwindled and changed into small bushes. Wild animals vanished and the mountains turned barren,"

recalled Gelcha.

The over-exploitation of forest resources in Ethiopia has left less than 3 percent of the country's native forests untouched. The deforestation around Humbo threatened groundwater reserves that provide 65,000 people with potable water and has caused severe erosion. As a result, heavy rain events cause lowland areas to flood and in extreme events, mudslides kill people and livestock and damage crops, roads, bridges, and other infrastructure.

The World Bank has since directed its efforts towards the Regeneration of the Humbo Mountain. The Green Legacy Campaign comes to tackle the reforestation in the country as a whole with Prime Minister Abiy emphasized the importance of continuity and finishing what has been started.

Budgeted to cost the country over 4 billion Birr, (\$117 million) many Ethiopians are ecstatic about the project but they are those who have reservations.

"The new initiative seems appealing from the outset and it is a good opportunity to raise forest coverage of the country, but the cost to plant and take care of the trees should be taken into consideration when the government attempts to make such



a plan a reality," Adefris Worku, an environmentalist based in the capital told Quartz.

Up to 84% of the seedlings planted last year are said to have survived according to the prime minister's office. "We can instill many +ve values in children early on, including an outlook for environmental

preservation, so they form a better r/ship with nature. My family & I call upon all #Ethiopians to plant their #GreenLegacy at the household level, observing #COVID19 prevention measures," PM Abiy said in a tweet.

Between Hushpuppi and Hushpoliticians

By Chido Onumah *

The last one month has witnessed a celebration of crime and corruption in Nigeria, from Ramoni Olorunwa Abbas, aka Ray Hushpuppi, to the Minister of Labour and Employment, Chris Ngige, and the management of the Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund (NSITF), to the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) which the president supervises as Minister of Petroleum Resources, to the Minister of Niger Delta, Godswill Akpabio, and the leadership of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), to the Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), and everything in between.

With each revelation, my mind

would go to Mc Edo Pikin, the talented and creative comedian who has popularized skits that compare absurd topics and situations. I imagined Mc Edo Pikin working on the difference between Hushpuppi and what we shall call Hushpoliticians—the tribe of political and public officers who have mortgaged the estate called Nigeria. He did not do that. But he did not disappoint when he released the "Difference between NDDC and NCDC." Nigeria is a nest of political Hushpuppies—from Dino Melaye, an ally of Hushpuppi, to Ayo Fayose,



Godswill Akpabio, with President Muhammadu Buhari in London, United Kingdom.

Orji Uzor Kalu and Theodore Orji, to Rochas Okorocha, the list is endless.

Abike Dabiri-Erewa, the Director-General and CEO of the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission was right when she said—in response to the Hushpuppi affair—that the actions of Ramoni Olorunwa Abbas do not reflect who we are as a people. If in defence of our national pride we can afford to “deny” Mr. Abbas, I wonder what Abike Dabiri-Erewa makes of the putrid news of corruption by our Hushpoliticians oozing from every national orifice in the last one month. As a friend remarked when I used the term Hushpoliticians in a WhatsApp group recently, “When you think about it, Hushpuppi is better than these politicians. He is stealing other people’s money while our politicians are robbing our patrimony.”

Of course, there is nothing new about the activities of Hushpuppi and his clan, which includes the likes of Obinwanne George Okeke, aka Invictus Obi, and Olalekan Jacob Ponle, aka Woodberry. The rise of Hushpuppi and others like him must be viewed within the context of the new mode of expropriation and accumulation under capitalism. I am sure there are many young people in Nigeria who want to live the Hushpuppi dream; millions who may never have the benefit of education and opportunity to get a job no matter how hard they try; millions who are daily incubating new schemes while mired in the pain created by Hushpoliticians. Those who do not advance to become Hushpuppi will pray their way to becoming sidekicks and thugs of politicians and ultimately grow into Hushpoliticians.

But this piece is not about Hushpuppi—the young man whose ambition was to own a few commercial motorcycles and marry the daughter of a small-town restaurateur—who has managed to build global notoriety and a rap sheet as long as the Sheikh Zayed Road in Dubai, UAE. There will be another opportunity to explore the different dimensions of the Hushpuppi phenomenon. Just to say that Nigerian Hushpoliticians are enablers of Hushpuppi and company;



Chido Onumah.

the Hushpolitician is the father of Hushpuppi.

Stealing from Nigerians has been a favourite pastime of our Hushpoliticians since independence. But it does appear it has been given some veneer of legality in the last two decades. Let us use Mr. Godswill Akpabio, Nigeria’s Minister of Niger Delta, as a case study. Information available on Wikipedia.org notes that Akpabio has held political office since 2002 when he was appointed Commissioner for Petroleum and Natural Resources in Akwa Ibom State. Between 2002 and 2006, he served as a Commissioner in three key ministries: Petroleum and Natural Resources, Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, as well as Lands and Housing. He served as governor of the oil-rich state from 2007 to 2015 and senator from 2015 to 2019 when he was appointed a minister after his “uncommon defection” from the opposition People’s Democratic Party (PDP) to the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC).

Of course, there is nothing progressive about Akpabio and his APC. After leaving office in 2015, Akpabio was the subject of investigation by the Counterterrorism and General Investigation Section of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) over allegations that he misappropriated more than N100bn. The allegations against

Akpabio border on the award of bogus contracts to cronies who used the proceeds to buy several properties in Lagos and Abuja.

Three years ago, Mr. Akpabio and his colleagues in the “Former Governors Club” incurred the wrath of Nigerians when their allowances and other perquisites of office became public. In January 2017, a report in Vanguard newspaper noted that 47 former governors from 21 states in the country, drew as much as N37.4 billion from the public treasury. At the time of the report, there were 21 serving senators receiving pensions from government as ex-governors and deputy governors. There were also ministers receiving pensions as ex-governors.

As they prepared to leave office in May 2015, many of these Hushpoliticians hurriedly signed or amended existing laws to give themselves fantastic lifetime “retirement benefits.” This was the subject of a 2017 essay and later the title of a pamphlet—The Politics of State Robbery in Nigeria—published in 2018. I shall quote extensively from that essay to underscore the depth of the current crisis.

Akpabio stood out in this official sleaze. While leaving office as governor of Akwa Ibom State, he passed the Governors and Deputy Governors Pension Law which entitles a former governor and spouse

in the state up to N100 million a year, and a former deputy governor and spouse up to N30 million, for medical treatment. Of course, this is pocket money for Akpabio because he will be paid that money whether he and his wife receive medical treatment or not. With this allowance, there was no incentive for Akpabio to worry about the health infrastructure in his state if he could rob the state to take care of himself and his family indefinitely.

Akpabio’s law provides that as ex-governor, he and his deputy will receive pensions equivalent to 100% of annual basic salaries of the incumbent governor and deputy (note: 100% of annual basic salaries of the incumbent governor, emphasis mine), one house not below 5-bed maisonette in either Abuja or Akwa Ibom for the former governor and 500% annual basic for the deputy for accommodation. For transportation, he and his deputy will get one car and one utility car every four years. Add to this, a furniture allowance, every four years, that is 300% of annual basic salary. He will receive N5 million and his deputy gets N2.5 million for domestic staff. Akpabio was not done. He will get a car maintenance allowance that is 300% of annual basic salary, entertainment allowance, 100% of annual basic salary, utility: 100% of annual basic salary, and severance gratuity: 300% annual basic salary.

The Lagos State Governor and Deputy Governor Pensions Law of 2007 endorsed by ex-governor Babatunde Fashola, now Minister of Works and Housing, is even more lucrative. It provides that a former governor is entitled to six new vehicles (three cars, two back-up cars and one pilot car) every three years and a house in Lagos and another in Abuja, the country's most expensive housing markets. His deputy gets five vehicles every three years. They and their family members—you only need to invoke the governor's name to qualify as a family member—are entitled to unlimited free medical services. Their pension will be the equivalent of 100% of annual basic salaries of the incumbent governor and deputy. There is a furniture allowance for these former "excellencies" that comes to 300% of their annual basic

salary every two years.

We can go on and on. There is no name for this other than robbery. That it is sanctioned by the state makes it no less grievous than armed robbery. I made these arguments three years ago. Since then, nothing has changed—the situation has gotten worse—except the fact that Akpabio has moved from the PDP to the APC. Of course, state robbery—or what the late Afrobeat legend, Fela Anikulapo-Kuti called Authority Stealing—has no party affiliation. This robbery unites our political elite, no matter their party, religious or ethnic affiliations. Once they are in power, they use the instrumentality of the state to rob their people and the country at will, while using laws to cover their crimes.

This is the scenario currently playing out with the corruption scandal at the NDDC. As Minister of

Niger Delta, Mr. Akpabio has been accused of sundry acts of corruption by a former acting Managing Director of the NDDC, Joi Nunieh. Mr. Akpabio's only defence for now is that Joi Nunieh had been married four times. You would think Mr. Akpabio works at a marriage registry not the Ministry of Niger Delta. Meanwhile, the man who ought to sanction Mr. Akpabio and rein in the banditry at the NDDC led by the fainthearted Prof Kemebradikumo Daniel Pondei has gone AWOL. Of course, this Daniel is not likely to come to judgement.

While we criticize Mr. Akpabio, Prof Pondei, and others for their malfeasance, we should not lose sight of the bigger problem: the issue of restructuring Nigeria, as well as the current leadership void in the country. We also have Mr. Akpabio to thank for his uncommon insight

on why the problem of corruption in the NDDC—and indeed across the country—persists. In an interview with Arise TV, he said the president was not aware of the situation. That is the gut-wrenching reality. We are saddled with an absentee president. No matter how hard Femi Adesina and Garba Shehu, the president's myrmidons, try to spin it, Nigeria is a ship without a captain.

To think we must endure another three years of Buhari's House of Commotion.

Did I hear someone say #RevolutionNow!

*Onumah's latest work, *When is a Nation: Remaking Nigeria at 60* is due October 1, 2020. He can be reached via conumah@hotmail.com or @conumah

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Zimbabwe Registers Progress In Managing Climate Change Impacts

By Wallace Mawire

Zimbabwe has made tremendous progress in the management of climate change impacts and reduction of green-house gas emissions, according to a recent statement which has been released by the Ministry of Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry and shared with various stakeholders.

According to Elisha Moyo, Principal Climate Researcher in the Climate Change Management Department of the ministry, despite the progress made, gaps and opportunities still exist and further work is required to achieve climate resilience, follow a low carbon development pathway and compliance with global and regional environmental obligations such as the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), as well as achievements of the country's developmental aspirations.

Moyo made the remarks in a recent call for input by the ministry for new Green Climate Fund (GCF) readiness activity areas, revised GCF country programme draft and call for information on GCF proposal and concept note development for projects.

Mr Moyo is the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN) National Designated Entity (NDE) and GCF Alternate National Focal Point contact person in the country.

The Green Climate Fund National Designated Authority is calling for input which will shape the country's readiness project and GCF country pipeline.

It is reported that Zimbabwe has been accessing various forms of climate funds including readiness funds from the Green Climate Fund. The country also intends to utilize its readiness quota in a programmatic approach for the next three years.

The responsible ministry says that important capacity gaps remain for the implementation of the country programme and successful



Elisha Moyo, Principal Climate Researcher in the Climate Change Management.

engagement of Zimbabwe with the Green Climate Fund and other climate funds.

It is added that on a yearly basis, the National Designated Authority (NDA) will update the national priorities through a consultative process coupled with a gap analysis for climate change interventions in both mitigation and adaptation. It will then communicate its priorities to the Accredited Entities (AEs) active in the country and share it with stakeholders. The Accredited Entities are the implementing entities that act as a country's programme managers of the fund grants. It is reported that this will enable avoidance of duplication and enhance coordination among actors in the country.

The Country Programme, a five-year strategic document for engagement with the Green Climate Fund (GCF), was developed for the Government of Zimbabwe through funding from the Green Climate Fund Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme.

The country programme provides a springboard for strategic projects of national importance for funding

to the GCF and support the country's economic transformation.

Average annual temperature has increased by more than 1.00C in the past century and evidence points out that climate is a major driving factor for most of Zimbabwe's socio-economic activities, especially in the energy and agriculture sectors, such that Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is closely linked with rainfall patterns.

Climate change hazards exacerbate poverty, food insecurity, malnutrition, water shortages and environmental degradation among other developmental challenges, which threaten to derail the development strides made by the Government of Zimbabwe since independence.

The country's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) clearly articulate the country's ambition to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 33% by 2030, with the energy sector leading in mitigation efforts and agricultural sector leading in adaptation.

The country has also developed the Low Emission Development Strategy (LEDS) to broaden the mitigation

targets across sectors and support the development of projects for funding from the Green Climate Fund.

The Green Climate Fund (GCF) is a global fund created to support the efforts of developing countries to respond to the challenge of climate change. It aims at supporting the implementation of Paris Agreement.

The GCF helps developing countries limit or reduce their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and adapt to climate change. It seeks to promote a paradigm shift to low-emission and climate-resilient development, taking into account the needs of countries that are particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts.

A fundamental principle of the Green Climate Fund is that developing countries have ownership over the results of the projects and programmes financed using GCF resources (Country Ownership Principle). In this sense, each country must set its national priorities and present its strategy for engagement with the fund through a Country Programme. To receive GCF funding, countries are requested to develop so called "Country Programmes" outlining the needs of their country under climate change and how the funding will be used to address these needs, both in terms of mitigation and adaptation.

Cognizant of the urgency to act in addressing the challenge of climate change, in 2013, the Government of Zimbabwe established the Climate Change Management Department as well as several policies and strategies to address climate change.

It is reported that the country's total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions contribute less than 0.05% to global emissions, making it a low emitter (Zimbabwe's Nationally Determined Contributions), yet the country has suffered the brunt of climate change in recent years.

Stephen Tataw: Cameroon's 1990 Italia World Cup Captain Dies

By Boris Esono Nwenfor



Stephen Tataw led Cameroon to be the first African team to qualify for the quarter-finals of the FIFA World Cup in Italy in 1990.

Former Indomitable Lions captain Stephen Etta Tataw, winner of the 1988 AFCON, has died aged 57. The emblematic captain passed on due to a "protracted illness", FECAFOOT reported.

The right-back was most famous for playing every minute as he led the Indomitable Lions to the quarter-finals of the 1990 World Cup in Italy. He led the side to the quarter-finals of the FIFA World Cup eventually being beaten by England 3-2 in extra-time.

They famously defeated Argentina in the opening game of the World Cup. Cameroon also defeated Romania and Colombia during the competition to become the first team to make it to the quarter-finals of the competition.

Since then Senegal in 2002 (their debut performance) and Ghana in 2010 also reached the quarter-finals, but no African team has yet reached

the semi-finals. Ghana was perhaps the unluckiest of the three; in their quarter-final against Uruguay, with the scores level almost at the end of extra-time, a Ghanaian shot was only prevented from entering the goal by a dramatic handball by Uruguayan striker Luis Suarez. Had it gone in there almost certainly wouldn't have been time for any Uruguayan comeback. But Suarez was sent off; Ghana missed the resultant penalty and then also lost the subsequent penalty shoot-out.

His club career saw him play for Cameroonian sides Tonnerre Yaounde and Olympic Mvolye before ending his playing days in Japan with Tosu Futures. He earned 63 caps with the indomitable lions of Cameroon and won the 1988 AFCON in Morocco.

Tataw played for the Cameroon national team between 1986 and

1994 and won the Africa Cup of Nations in 1988, seeing off bitter rivals Nigeria 1-0 in Casablanca. It was the second championship win of that decade.

Tataw was a member of the Fecafoot technical directorate before his death and was among the officials to preside over the draws of 2020 Africa Nations Championship, which was to be held in Cameroon between April 4 and 25, but was cancelled because of the coronavirus pandemic and has since been shifted to January 2021.

Members of Cameroon's football fraternity took to social media to express their sadness at the passing of Tataw, who is regarded as one of the West African nation's greatest footballers.

"It was with sad emotions that I learned the death of former Indomitable Lions Captain Stephen

Tataw today. I keep the memory of a great footballer and a remarkable leader. All my condolences to his family and loved ones," FECAFOOT president Seidou Mbombo Njoya tweeted.

Cameroon coach Rigobert Song, who is also the nation's most capped player, paid tribute to Tataw describing him as an "emblematic captain" who greatly touched his life.

"I had a personal relationship with him. I feel very indebted to him. He was an emblematic captain," Song was quoted saying on the Fecafoot website. "I had the opportunity to know and meet him during the 1994 World Cup and then I was young.

"I was with seniors who played with him in 1990. He greatly touched my life... he was modest and very present in the field of play and when I became captain, I think I had the same spirit.

«He gave reason to spectators to want to watch matches. He was reserved yet very efficient. This is a major loss. When he called me captain, I told him you are the true captain. «Man proposes and God disposes of. May he rest in peace.»

Born in the capital city of Yaounde on March 31, 1963, Tataw's club career began with his hometown side Tonnerre Yaounde before moving to Olympic Mvolye in 1991 and then joining Japanese side Tosu Futures in 1994, playing there until 1996 where he finally called time on his career. He was the first African player to ply his trade in the Far East country.



The 57-year-old was a staff at the Technical Directorate of FECAFOOT at the time of his death.

Cancellation of AWCON 2020: A bitter pill to swallow for some Female Footballers

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

The Confederation of African Football, CAF recently announced that the 2020 edition of its premier women's tournament, which has been held consistently every other year since 1998, would be cancelled as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. The competition was set to run from November 23 to December 20.

CAF's decision to cancel the showpiece was due to the present health pandemic which forced the indefinite postponement of its qualifying series earlier billed for April and June. A host for the competition had not equally been found after Congo pulled out from hosting the competition, something which put this year's competition in doubt.

This decision has been met with rebuttal from some of the game's biggest names who have accused CAF of neglecting women's football. Four-time African woman Player of the Year Asisat Oshoala of Nigeria has hit out at the decision to completely cancel the tournament and accused CAF of dragging the women's game backwards.

In a tweet, she said: «Other



OSHOALA won the CAF Women's Player of the Year for the fourth time in 2019.

competitions POSTPONED but AWCON «CANCELLED» thank you once again for making us realize women's football isn't important to you. Congratulations on dragging us back AGAIN. Adios to all the women National teams in Africa, see y'all in 2022 #PrioritizeWomensFootball #NoExcuse»

Speaking to ESPN Oshoala said: «CAF needs to make sure they

prioritize women's football. The men's tournament was not cancelled. You cannot scrap a continental tournament just like that. I think it is a big slap on our faces to scrap this year's edition.»

«It is not looking good. They have always been struggling to get a host nation for the tournament. You cannot be struggling to get a host nation for the Nations Cup, a

continental tournament that happens every two years. Moving it to 2021 would have been okay. But saying it is going to be cancelled is not. We cannot be at this level in 2020, it's a shame. We need a proper explanation as to why this decision was taken.»

Cameroonian international Nchout Njoya Ajara also hit out at the decision by CAF to cancel the tournament saying three years in a

lifetime is long, Goal reported. "An Africa Women's Cup of Nations is more than a competition," Nchout Ajara, runner up for the 2019 Africa Women's Player of the Year wrote on her Instagram page.

Cameroon finished three times as AWCON runners-up in the past 11 editions and the cancellation of this year's edition has dashed the quest for Ajara and her colleagues to win their first continental crown.

"Whatever, Africa Women's football will fall behind. Africa Women's football does not offer much opportunity to see one's talents. AFCON is a door of opportunity for us. Many of us have emerged with the AWCON. Three years in a lifetime is far. I am sad for my young sisters and African women's football," She said.

Isha Johanssen, chairperson of the CAF Organizing Committee for Women's Football in an audio interview released by CAF pushed back on claims that the confederation does not prioritize women's football.

Johanssen said: "Women's football means a lot to CAF. We take pride not only in the fact that we have women's football in our calendar but also the fact that we are facing these challenges head-on and we are making great strides to change the narrative."



Isha Johansen is the second current female football association President in the world along with Lydia Nsekera of Burundi.

"For the 2020 AWCON, there were circumstances beyond our control which made it difficult for CAF to organize it. All options were explored but to no avail.

"First, the withdrawal of Congo meant that we had to look for new hosts. The bid was reopened and we received bids from Nigeria and Equatorial Guinea. However, both bids lacked the most important document, that document being the letter of support from their respective governments.

"If you can't get a letter of support from your government

to host a tournament, it becomes quite complex and problematic that becomes a problem we cannot organise a competition without the guarantee from the government of the country.

Creation of African Women's Champions League

In the second half of 2021, a tournament perhaps featuring eight of Africa's best female club sides will play in perhaps a single host nation for the right to be the continent's best.

As implied, much has still to be decided - not least of all how the

participants will be determined. "We are still discussing the format but most likely, albeit still to be defined, the first edition of the Women's Champions League will be a final tournament in one host country," said Abdel Bah, CAF interim SG.

"We are still having discussions today about how many teams and how to qualify the teams - we don't know if we will have qualifiers or if we will take the best teams and qualify them directly for this first edition. But for sure, it will be a final tournament."

"It is really good because a competition like that keep teams together and it is more exposure for local players," Oshoala said.

"It will also help to grow and market women's football across the continent. Even if the federations are not being serious the clubs will have something to aspire to because they have to represent their countries, they will take things seriously and support the local teams, just the way the men's clubs do." "For me, I think it is a very good one. I understand that only a few countries have proper leagues. But if you don't start, it can't get better. Even if there are only three or four teams, they should just start first. If you don't start something, you can't improve on it.

"... Nevertheless, I congratulate Africa Football Confederation for the creation of the Africa Women's Champions League. We take RDV to 2020," Nchout Ajara said.



The Indomitable Lionesses of Cameroon have never won the AWCON.



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