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A Second Term For Faki At The AU: Will He Make or Mar?

By Ajong Mbapndah L

Reactions to the election of Moussa Faki to a second term as Chairman of the African Union Commission have been mixed. For all the lofty achievements listed in his re-election manifesto, his first term had a couple of blemishes which left quite a dent.

From the African Continental Free Trade Agreement, AfCFTA, to the launching of the African Union passport, the AU Peace Fund and the robust continental wide response to COVID 19, the first term of Moussa Faki had quite some positive developments for the continent. Where these enough for him to get a second term? For African leaders, with 51 out of 55 votes, it was a resounding endorsement for Faki. For ordinary and everyday Africans there seems to be a healthy dose of skepticism.

There are many reasons for the dichotomy in perceptions, chief amongst them the image of a club of old leaders who cater first and foremost for their own interest. By fate or design, the AU has done little to shed this image. Though not probably of his making, many people question the fact that Moussa Faki ran unopposed for a second term. To hardline critics, this only mirrors what election in a number of African countries with sit tight leaders look like.

Through out his first term, the AU stayed mute to questionable elections that took place in several countries. From Cameroon, to Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, the AU Chair Faki have been on unequivocal in their support of the incumbents. To pro-democracy activists across the continent, Faki is no friend of theirs and did not deserve a second term.

In the course of his first term as well, the diaspora, a bloc with enormous potential to positively impact development in the continent was highly critical of the dismissal of the AU Ambassador to the USA in October of 2019. Hugely popular with the diaspora and very vocal, Dr Arikana Chimbori gave the AU

a strong presence and conspicuous voice in Washington. While the AUC Chair may have been in his right to replace the Ambassador Arikana, the decision did not go well and the embers of the raucous between the AU and the diaspora are still to completely dissipate.

Free from the shackles of electoral calculations, Moussa Faki has the potential to make the second mandate even more eventful than the first. Touted as a game changer for the continent, it is under

Faki's watch that the AfCFTA has taken off. For all the excitement, people are not lost to the fact that the undoing of the African Union has also been the absence of a political will to follow through on visions. The fear is that let the AfCFTA not turn out to be one those.

Talking about the political will to follow through on lofty goals, many are still waiting for the AU to show more backbone in the implementation of the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons and the Pan African Passport in particular. The plan was to have the passport ready for use by 2020. The AU has not made good on that promise. How will the AfCFTA function well when people cannot move freely across the continent? When people like Aliko Dangote complain, about the hassles of traveling across Africa, then what the ordinary African goes through can be anyone's guess. Getting concrete results on the African passport could bolster the legacy of Faki.

Conflict resolution remains one of the areas where the AU has faced a lot of challenges. In the Central African region where Faki hails from, the Cameroon Anglophone crisis have been raging on for some four years, in the Central African Republic it is chaos, in parts of the Sahel it is the



Ajong Mbapndah L, Managing Editor

mechanisms to attract the creative genius and resourcefulness of a diaspora eager and willing to come on board.

Leading the AU is no easy feat, the issues are complex, the challenges are many and the resources are still scarce. Even those who do not like Faki have to come to terms with the fact that he is at the helm for another four years. If he succeeds, Africa succeeds, and if he fails, Africa fails. Hopefully he succeeds and delivers on the promises he has

French fighting, it is about time the AU gets bullish on conflict resolution.

Expectations will be high from impatient Africans who think the challenges of the times, require more robust leadership. People are waiting to see progress on the continental passport, they are eager to see Africa take charge of its security challenges; they want to see a leadership that prioritizes the interests of everyday Africans and not that of special interests. Mr. Faki may not be a miracle worker to deliver on everything, but there is a minimum he can do to earn the trust, respect and confidence of skeptic Africans.

A joker waiting to be used for the good of the continent is its Diaspora. For all the potential it represents, the Diaspora has been willing to fully contribute in moving the continent forward but the response from the continental body has been discouraging. Is the 6th region label lumped on the diaspora just a cliché? If it is not, Chairman Faki has to engage with the diaspora in a more forceful way for the kind of impactful contributions that can come from them. The diaspora has been a strong part of economic progress and development in Asia and South America, there is no reason at this point why Africa should not work out

made for his second term or at least continue with reforms that could make a difference.

Amongst the numerous partners willing to help in making a difference is the Jack Ma Foundation which is using the African Business Heroes Awards to build a strong network of entrepreneurs across the continent. In its second year now, circa \$2.5 million has been distributed to young entrepreneurs across the continent. From three different countries, in three different regions, two females and one male, with projects ranging from renewable energy, health and micro finances, the top three laureates 2020 edition sum up the challenges and hopes of a continent. This issue of the magazine takes a look at the ABH awards and the ground breaking impact it is having.

This issue of the magazine also takes a look at the changing political dynamics in the D.R.Congo with President Tshisekedi taking the upper hand, prospects for U.S -African ties in the Biden Administration, understanding the crisis in Ethiopia's Tigray Region, the fight against corruption in Sierra Leone, threats to the Gas industry in Mozambique, and more. Happy Reading!!

FOREWORD BY DR. CHE AHN

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Keys to Operating in
GOD'S MIRACLES,
HEALING, and POWER



DR. ANDREW M. NKOYOYO

Moussa Faki Relected Unopposed as Chairperson of the African Union Commission

By Prince Kurupati

The former Chadian Prime Minister Moussa Faki Mahamat was recently reelected as the Chairperson of the African Union Commission. In doing so, Moussa Faki made history as the first person to be reelected as the Chairperson of the AU Commission. Running unopposed, the former Chadian Prime Minister garnered 51 out of 55 votes in a secret ballot to enter into his second final term as the Chairperson of the AU Commission.

The AU Commission elections happened on Saturday 6 February 2021, during the 34th African Union Summit. Owing to the unprecedented corona virus pandemic, the 34th African Union Summit was held virtually with the leaders of all 55 member states as well as their foreign ministers/delegates present.

Moussa Faki's reelection will see him serve as the AU Commission Chairperson for the next four years. Speaking on his triumph on Twitter,



Basking in adulation after his victory .51 out of 55 members supported Mr Faki in his second term bid as AU Chair.

Faki said he was "deeply humbled by the overwhelming and historic vote of confidence by AU Member States by voting 51 out of 55 to extend my mandate at the helm of the AUC Commission for another 4 years."

During the same Summit, elections were also held for other AU Commission positions including the new set of commissioners and that of deputy chairperson. Rwanda's Dr Monique Nsanzabaganwa who is the deputy governor of the National Bank of Rwanda won the deputy chairperson race. In a Twitter post after her triumph, Dr Monique Nsanzabaganwa said, "My very sincere gratitude and appreciation for the trust and honor that the Heads of States and Government of the African Union have bestowed on my country and in my person. I commit to serve with dedication and to the best of my ability under your wise guidance."

For Moussa Faki, Dr Monique Nsanzabaganwa and the new set of AU Commission commissioners, there really is no time to celebrate their victories as they have to come up with long-lasting solutions to the threats facing the entire African continent. They all know very well the devastating impacts that the novel corona virus pandemic has brought about on the continent disrupting lives

and livelihoods. The current second wave of the pandemic which engulfs the continent is leaving behind lots of dead people. In the process, it's also disrupting livelihoods for the survivors thus ushering in double jeopardy. There is of course the threat of an imminent 3rd wave which may as well be more devastating than the 1st and 2nd waves. Faced with all these challenges, Moussa Faki, Dr Monique Nsanzabaganwa have it all to do from the onset.

At the present moment, many countries across the globe are battling to secure Covid-19 vaccines. In the case of Africa however, several reports have indicated that the continent finds itself at the bottom of the ladder of a grossly unequal distribution of Covid-19 vaccines. Malcolm Webb of Al Jazeera states that "Experts estimate that the richest countries will have vaccinated most of their populations at some point later this year, and that the world's poorest countries – many of which are in this continent (Africa) – will not vaccinate the same amount of their population until maybe three years from now or possibly never at all." Faced with such a dim outlook, Moussa Faki and his new team will have to work



Dr Monique Nsanzabaganwa from Rwanda is the new AUC Deputy Chair.

near-miracles to ensure the continent moves at par with other developed nations. The AU Chairperson knows himself the task ahead as he stated that “There is vaccine nationalism on the rise, with other rich countries jumping the queue, some even pre-ordering more than they require,” in an interview before the Summit. Against this background, Moussa Faki as he stated will have to come up with great strategies and initiatives to “correct the glaring inequality in fiscal stimulus measures between advanced economies and the rest of the world.”

It's not just the threat of the corona virus pandemic that Moussa Faki

has to worry about. The continent is still bedeviled by several conflicts which are hindering continental development on the socio-economic as well as political front. Instances of electoral violence are still reported in many countries across the continent while cases of abuse of human rights and Islamist extremism violence is on the rise. The new AU Commission team will therefore, need to find ways to bring these conflicts to an end. The frontrunner for the AU's newly merged political affairs and peace and security department Bankole Adeoye from Nigeria will have the all-important task of coming up with

measures to address the continent's socio and political problems.

At the present moment, there are two socio-political problems which need urgent attention. Up north, the Anglophone Crises in Cameroon is showing no signs of coming to an end in the near future. However, the number of people who are dying, those disposed and those whose livelihoods have been affected by the crises is huge such that an urgent intervention is needed to prevent further damage. Down south, there is a rising security crises in northern Mozambique ushered in by Islamist extremists who are reported to kill mercilessly

villagers in that region. The threat in the Mozambique poses a new threat in a region that constantly reels under electoral violence conflicts.

At the same Summit, the president of the Democratic Republic of Congo Felix Tshisekedi assumed the year-long chairmanship of the African Union. Addressing fellow Heads of State, the DRC president said in his tenure as the AU Chair, he plans to focus on climate change, fighting sexual violence, promoting the African Continental Free Trade Area and accelerating the DRC based Grand Inga Hydropower Project.

Expect More Positives: Moussa Faki Buoyant As He Starts Second Term As AUC Chairperson

By Amos Fofung



Moussa Faki Mahamat - Photo Credit: African Union

As African leaders took time to deliberate on issues affecting the continent during the 34th Summit of the African Union, they spared some time to cast votes to choose the person to lead the African Union Commission for the next four years. The African Union Commission is AU's secretariat which undertakes the day to day activities of the union. As such, it plays an important role

on the continent hence the reason African leaders are so determined to choose right candidates for the job.

Several candidates were in the running for different positions as the position of the AU Commission Chairperson, deputy Chairperson as well as Commissioners all needed to be filled. In the Chairperson race, there was only one candidate in the race that is, the incumbent Moussa

Faki Mahamat. Though involved in a one-man race, Moussa Faki had it all to do as he could only win a second term if he garnered at least two-thirds of the votes cast. Luckily for him, he managed to do that and he won the race in doing so breaking history as he managed to become the first Chairperson of the African Union Commission to be reelected for a second and last term.

Winning comfortably with 51 out of the 55 votes cast, one thing which managed to help Moussa Faki to win his reelection bid were the numerous successes recorded by the AU during his first four years at the helm of the AU Commission. Moussa Faki, the man who was at one point the Prime Minister of Chad stated himself that during his first term, the continent underwent many positives “both

in terms of economic and social development of our Member States, both individually and as a bloc. In view of the achievements made by the AU during the same period, a second look at the outcomes is enlightening for more than one reason.”

When he was elected for the first time, he took charge of a Commission which was under heavy criticism owing to its strong bureaucratic nature. His first task, therefore, was to change the negative perception characterizing the institution. He did this by implementing institutional reforms. Working in unison with Rwandan President Paul Kagame, Moussa Faki oversaw the restructuring of the organization by enhancing the “working methods of the Union with the establishment of a Coordination Summit instead of the Ordinary one of July, the Division of Labour between the Commission and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the financing of the Organization and the implementation of budgetary reforms.”

Just like his predecessor Nkosazana Dhlamini-Zuma from South Africa, Moussa Faki during his term was faced with a myriad of socio-economic and political problems. On this front, he did come up with various initiatives all of which have managed to bear some fruit. On the political front, Faki came up with the ‘Silence the Guns’ initiative, an initiative “geared at recognizing the fact peace and security is a crucial dimension, and that setting it as an objective is an essential condition for the AU’s development goals.” On the socio-economic front, working with leaders from AU member states, the former Chadian Prime Minister fast tracked the establishment of the African Continental Free

Trade Area (AfCFTA) as well as the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, the right of residence and the right of establishment and the introduction of a Pan African Passport in February 2019. To encourage greater cooperation and trade amongst African countries, the African Union during Moussa Faki’s first term launched in January 2018 the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM), an initiative known as «Africa’s Open Skies», which establishes a single unified market through the liberalization of the airspace in Africa. An initiative which according to watchers of the economy will foster economic integration program of the Continent.

As his term was coming to an end, the continent like others worldwide witnessed the arrival of an unwanted guest by the name corona virus. At the helm of the AU, Moussa Faki was faced with the insurmountable task of drafting strategies to mitigate the impacts of the virus both on the lives and livelihoods’ front. Suffice to say, Moussa Faki did a remarkable job as he partnered with Africa CDC to come up with the Continental Response Strategy for COVID-19. Through the Continental Response Strategy for COVID-19, the AU managed to set up the Response Fund, implement effective advocacy for debt cancellation, and set up the Medical supplies Platform initiative.

The successes recorded by the continental body with Faki at the helm have strengthened Faki’s faith and optimism as he looks ahead to his second term. Despite the successes, Faki knows too well the challenges that lie ahead but is buoyant that the African Union will continue to record more successes in the next four years. Age old challenges that have bedeviled

the continent over the years still linger around and Faki faces a huge task of eradicating them. Shrinking of democratic space, corruption, mismanagement, the fragility of States and conflict factors such as electoral violence, unconstitutional changes of government and extension of Presidential term limits are the major problems that Faki is expected to address.

To address the socio-economic and political problems facing the African continent, Faki speaking before his reelection said he will remain dependent on the decisions and policies as determined and adopted by the sovereign organs of the Union. In his capacity however, as the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Faki said he will prioritize the following: finalize the institutional reform and strengthen the leadership of the Commission, enhance administrative and financial accountability, spread the ‘Silence the Guns’ initiative on the whole continent, execute successfully key integration projects, food self-sufficiency, reduce poverty by building resilience through Agriculture and the Blue Economy, protect the environment, operationalize policies in favor of youth and women, stimulate African thought on the obvious determining factors of crises and continue to renew strategic partnerships.

Though not likely of his making, running unopposed is something some Africans questioned .Sarfó Abebrese, author of a petition by the Coalition of Supporters Unions of Africa, said the AU postponed the vote four years ago when there were only three candidates for that seat. At the time, the AU said that was not enough.

“How come, that four years down the line, at this same time, we are having only one candidate, and people are telling us that that is representative enough? If three wasn’t representative enough, how can one be representative enough? How can we go this way when we are preaching democracy throughout all the 55 African countries? When are we telling the people of Africa that we want to go the democratic way, ?” Sarfo questioned

The AU Chair also faced criticism for not doing enough to root out violent extremists in the Lake Chad Basin and across the country.

From the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon to the conflict in Central Africa, the AU has been found wanting in providing leadership for lasting solutions. The continental body has equally done little to shed the image in many minds that it is nothing but a club of leaders who protect their own interests and not those of the people. Using the examples of silence from the AU in the face of electoral short comings in Uganda, Cote d’Ivoire, Guinea and others, critics fault Faki for not doing enough to support or advance democratic causes in Africa.

Still, many are those who think that the success of Moussa Faki as he starts his second term as AUC Chairperson hinges upon establishing, renewing and strengthening strategic partnerships. A second term means that Mr. Faki could be has the opportunity to focus on his legacy in lieu of electoral calculations. There will be little room for excuses if he fails to put the AU on a way higher pedestal than it is today.

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Nigeria: Succession playing Out As Buhari Stutters

By Richard Mammah

28 months to the close of his second term presidency, the Muhammadu Buhari administration in Nigeria continues to wobble through one challenge or the other.

It is like a case of one day one trouble with the local media being daily awash with one piece of bad news or the other. From issues of insecurity to issues related to the yet troubled economy and on to the continuing incidence of corruption, the headlines clearly point to the fact that much more needs to be done. Ironically, security, the economy and tackling corruption were the flagship campaign planks of the Buhari presidency in 2015. And even as it had gone on to clinch a second term, the street verdict largely is that neither the promise of change nor that to take the nation to the next level presently stand a chance of being met.

At sober moments, even administration officials, the President included, concede that much more should be done. But they also become even more passionate when they very energetically situate their prime challenge as arising out of the failings of the previous administration. They equally lambast critics for not giving the administration enough credit for its efforts and initiatives.

However, the critics are not backing down and contend that the administration suffers from a chronic crisis of leadership capacity that is very well traceable to its early beginnings: the vision and capacity challenges that began to manifest when Buhari spent almost a half year in putting together his initial leadership team.

Since then, there have been other points of criticism, including accusations of nepotism and favouritism.

Indeed the crisis has even muddled the succession waters with even leading lights of the ruling All Progressives Congress, APC still at



In the face of so many challenges, Nigerians have not found leadership in President Buhari.

a loss as to what the party would be offering the Nigerian people next.

Despite having massively decapitated the main opposition Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, which lost one of its governors to the ruling party recently, the ruling party is heavily factionalised under the table and there continue to be strong internal infighting over both policy and political direction.

One example of this came to the fore recently when the Presidency and the Ondo State Government, both controlled by the ruling party, were locked in a war of words over how to address the challenge of nomadic herders. While the Ondo State Government insisted that undocumented herders must no longer be permitted to encroach on the state's forest reserves and should therefore be ejected, the Presidency riposted that the sub-national government had no right to so order. Eventually, a truce of sorts was arranged. But the genie had already walked out.

Indeed, things have not been helped by the President's near-total absence on the plain field as he has literally been confined to his Aso Rock fortress for months, with Nigerians only seeing him on television now

and again.

In addition, he would not do live media chats and often reads prepared speeches or is spoken for by one or more of a battery of aides from the ubiquitous Presidency. Asked to explain this distance, presidential aide, Femi Adesina puts it to the President's personal style. He does not just talk much.

Succession blues

In the midst of these, political contenders interested in succeeding President Buhari have begun to make faint moves and noises. At the same time, a number of issues and personalities that are expected to star in the forthcoming contest are already being identified.

The first is the issue of geography. Where would the next President come from? Buhari is a Northern Muslim from the North West. One likely candidate whose name made the rounds earlier in the day as regards the Buhari succession was Kaduna Governor, Nasir El Rufai. But coming from the same demographics as Buhari in a country that is much sold on the notion of power shift is a hurdle. There are also other hurdles that include questions about diversity management and insecurity in his home state.

Buhari's chief opponent in the 2019 polls, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar is like him also a Northern Muslim but hails from the North Eastern State of Adamawa. It is believed that he would be making a pitch for the position once again. But he is having immense challenges convincing even some who voted for him in 2019 as to why power should yet remain in the North. A second snag on Atiku's way is age. He is 74 and the median age is 18.1.

There is also former House of Representatives speaker and incumbent Governor of Sokoto state, Aminu Tambuwal who had been 'frightened' out of the race for the All Progressives Congress presidential ticket by Team Buhari in 2014 and also defeated by Atiku in 2018 in the contest for the PDP ticket. His first challenge this time is also going to be geography. He is a North West Muslim like Buhari at a time when the mood is stridently pro-South.

Another Northern player who gets mentioned sparingly is former INEC boss, Attahiru Jega. A relatively decent political science teacher, Jega is linked to the PRP, one of the smaller political party formations in the country whose main driver and former Governor of Kaduna State,

Balarabe Musa passed on several months back. Given that the PRP clearly does not have the muscle, bite and resource base to prosecute nationwide polls, the thinking is that Jega is being packaged as a back-up card for other more elaborate permutations that are yet to publicly unfold.

From the South South, former President Goodluck Jonathan has been mooted as a possible drafter, and perhaps one on the APC slate this time around. The idea here is that having already served a full term in office and being one that has not really demonstrated any penchant to rock the Northern boat, his return to office would be a short cooling off period in a nation where the tensions of the 1914 amalgamation are not easing off.

Also from the South South zone is the rumoured aspiration of Rivers Governor and current PDP strongman, Nyesom Wike. It is said that he is presently in agreement with Tambuwal to run on a joint ticket, whichever way things go.

If we discount Wike's chances and the Jonathan return hype, we would then be left with the two principal zones that are believed to really be in initial contention for the office in the popular street discourse, namely the South West and the South East.

For the South West APC leadership, the chance to produce a Southern president from the zone was a first factor in their allying with the CPC to take out the PDP. And this arrangement had Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu as poster boy and President-in-Waiting. While Tinubu as leader of the South West APC would ordinarily have been said to indeed be a shoo-in, there are however several hurdles on its path. They include alleged opposition from President Buhari and several of his core associates, his Muslim religious identity as well as questions related to the need to provide sufficient explanation for what Nigerians would call his 'stupendous wealth.' It will be recalled that similar concerns had been raised in the past by opponents of the presumed winner of the



APC Chieftain Ahmed Bola Tinubu is one of those considered as a likely replacement for Buhari when he leaves office.

June 12 1993 polls, Bashorun MKO Abiola and former Vice President Atiku Abubakar. Indeed, in Nigeria's history, not being seen as wealthy, has a way of enhancing the political fortunes and stature of candidates as had been the case with the likes of Tafawa Balewa, Shehu Shagari, Aminu Kano, Balarabe Musa and even the incumbent President. Would Tinubu be Nigeria's Berlusconi?

But that is not all that Tinubu has to contend with as even from within the field of potential South West contenders, several other interests are rooting for either current Vice President Yemi Osinbajo or Ekiti Governor, John Kayode Fayemi. Another name that is called up now and again is that of former Lagos Governor and Works Minister, Babatunde Fashola. And while it may be conceded that Tinubu is heads and shoulders above any of these other potential South West contenders in the arena of cross-cutting regional political reach and sagacity, the lesson from the 1999 polls process in which a less regionally-fancied

Olusegun Obasanjo trounced the very apparent regional choice, Olu Falae, suggests that non-regional actors could sometimes hold the aces.

From the South East PDP, one of the probable candidates is former Anambra Governor, Peter Obi. But he would have to persuade his co-travellers in the political class who had opposed even his emergence as VP candidate in 2019 to drop their opposition. There is also former Secretary to the Government, Anyim Pius Anyim.

On the APC side, likely contenders are clearly keeping their cards to their chests. But outside of the rival parties, there is clearly one contender that may have presently decided to begin to test the waters. He is former CBN Deputy Governor, Kingsley Moghalu who had run in 2019 with very little success. What has he done differently now? And how does he hope to unseat the bigger boys?

But watchers of pan-African political trends say that Nigeria clearly needs to do more in the area of elevating its internal political

practices; and that to play its history-assigned role as a leader in Africa, the most populous nation in the continent needs to have the most robust leadership it can find and afford. And there is seeming consensus that achieving that would involve an even more comprehensive systems reset that would take along ingredients like a wholesale restructuring of the country, fiscal federalism, devolution of power, a new constitution and a popular referendum. Indeed, they say that Nigeria needs more than a towering President, a strongman that everyone looks in his direction to fix the country's many challenges.

Given the long held opposition of President Buhari and his close circle to the need for these changes, what is therefore coming to the fore now is that about the best that the 2023 presidential polls could indeed offer is an opportunity to vote around these issues. And therein is the hope, in that sense, for those who are waiting for a rejuvenated Nigeria that would now help in the crystallization of a renaissance Africa.

The businessman and politician, Sesugh Akume is one of those who expresses this view and he says it is most important that, Nigeria should at this point put on the front burner the imperative of having a consensus on how to build a strong, viable and progressive nation.

'Yes, that is a very important conversation we need to have...For goodness sake, the era of oil will soon come to an end. I don't know we are looking at that at all. There are so many things we are doing wrong that have an impact on us now and in the long term. There are areas like power generation and consumption; I don't think we are looking at that at all at different levels. Not just at the federal, but state, local, senatorial levels; we can be doing many of these things differently, but we are not thinking straight. But I think a time will come when we have to start asking these questions and thinking straight and considering what we need to do because we cannot continue this way. This house is falling on us; maybe someday we will realize it.'



Governor Nyesom Wike is one of those said to be nursing presidential ambitions.

Can New Majority in Parliament allow Tshisekedi to turn DR Congo around ?

By Jean-Pierre Afadhali

The resignation of DR Congo's Prime Minister Sylvester Ilunga Ilunkamba on 29 January gives President Felix Tshisekedi more power to implement his agenda by appointing his loyalists in a new government.

Tshisekedi gained the majority in parliament that helped him to overpower his predecessor's supporters he said were paralyzing the coalition government throughout his first two years in the office.

Lawmakers overwhelmingly passed a vote of no-confidence against Ilunga over poor performance in the climax of a process to minimize former president Joseph Kabila's influence in parliament and government. The move initiated by Tshisekedi started with the impeachment of the pro-Kabila speaker Jeanine Mabunda late last year. The former speaker was accused of conflictual and partisan leadership and alleged lack of transparency in parliament's finance management.

President Tshisekedi announced the end of the coalition between his platform Heading for Change (CACH) and Joseph Kabila's Common Front for Congo (FCC) last December, signaling rising tension within the coalition government that was



Recent political developments now give President Tshisekedi broader powers to run the affairs of D.R.Congo.

dominated by loyalists of Kabila, whose party controlled a majority of seats in the National Assembly. The defunct coalition was formed after controversial elections in 2018 that were followed by the first peaceful power transfer in the mineral-rich country. Kabila's platform had won 60 percent of seats in parliament. The situation pushed the President to govern under a coalition

administration that some observers say did not live up to expectations of many Congolese despite some important political decisions such as freeing political prisoners.

The Premier resigned after opposing the motion of censure he had said it was illegal. In a statement seen by Pan African Visions, Ilunga noted that on 27 January the parliament had passed a motion of

Censure against his government. "As a republican who respects the constitution and the republic's institutions, I acknowledge the competency of the National Assembly that passed the vote of no-confidence against me by 306 lawmakers," he wrote.

The end of the coalition happens as Tshisekedi marks two years at the helm of the Central African nation with a controversial record amid insecurity in the volatile East of the country and the global Covid-19 pandemic. In a recent interview with Radio Okapi- a UN affiliated FM station, the Secretary General of the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS), the President's party, Augustin Kabuya said the party leader and Head of State "suffered humiliation in the last two years". Kabuya added: "When he [president] realized that the interests of our people were being trampled on, he was forced to stop the FCC-CACH machine to look in another direction."

President Tshisekedi is reported to have told the Congolese diaspora in the United Kingdom that he could not



The strong change in political fortunes is further buttressed for Tshisekedi with the Chairmanship of the African Union that he now assumes.

implement his agenda because he was being blocked by Kabila's loyalists. However, the party's Secretary General defended the government's record in the past two years while admitting the CASH-FCC coalition did not transform much one of the biggest countries on the continent.

The controversial record

Tshisekedi has recorded several accomplishments of the Head of State, Kabuya argued, while blaming economic shortcomings on the global pandemic. "Today, the global economy has struggled with Covid-19. All the great nations of the world are in trouble, except in the DRC, where you want the Head of State to invent things that are not possible in the current political context," Kabuya told a journalist in an interview with Radio Okapi.

In place of the old coalition, President Tshisekedi late last year formed a new platform he called "the Sacred Union of the Nation" in parliament as he sought to form a



Modeste Bahati Lukwebo was instrumental in cobbling the new majority coalition for President Tshisekedi.

new majority that would allow him to consolidate power, a goal he appears to have achieved. Many pro-Kabila lawmakers have joined the platform, giving the head of state a majority that allowed him to get rid of Mabunda and paved the way for the subsequent vote of no-confidence against Ilunga.

According to Modeste Bahati Lukwebo, a former minister appointed by the President in early January to gather a new majority and

minimize Kabila's influence in the National Assembly, 391 MPs out of 500 have joined the "Sacred Union of the Nation" giving the president an overwhelming majority. Notable support for Tshisekedi's platform comes from political heavyweights Moise Katumbi, former Governor of Katanga Province, and Jean-Pierre Bemba, a former vice-president. Both were members of the coalition 'Lamuka' (Wake up) that was split

shortly before the 2018 elections. They then became members of opposition after the general elections.

Former Kabila government spokesperson Lambert Mende is among the notable MPs who joined the 'Sacred Union'.

However, former presidential candidate Martin Fayulu, who still claims, with substantial evidence, that he won the 2018 vote, will remain in opposition together with former premier Adolphe Muzito.

A new cabinet that has not yet been appointed at the time of this report has a daunting task to deal with insecurity in Eastern DRC, Covid-19 and the struggling economy. It remains to be seen whether Tshisekedi will succeed in living up to his promises of political stability and economic growth during the final two years of his term in office. The president's envoy has hinted that it will not be an easy task to form a new government after the Premier's resignation.

DRC: Joseph Kabila Has Nothing Else To Offer, It's Time For Tshisekedi- Eloge Mwandwe

By Maniraguha Ferdinand

Twist and turns in the complex political games in the DR Congo have resulted in the emergence of a new coalition which gives President Tshisekedi an upper hand in the power struggle with his predecessor Joseph Kabila.

Kabila's coalition had majority both in government and in parliament and on some occasions, developmental projects were blocked due to disagreements, which stalled pledges Tshisekedi had promised citizens who voted him in 2018.

In the end of 2020, Tshisekedi made some reforms. He made political consultations with other key political parties including those that had joined FCC of Joseph Kabila. In the end, they agreed to form another Coalition named 'Union sacrée' (Sacred Union) aimed at finding a new majority both chambers of parliament.



The cohabitation between President Tshisekedi and his predecessor was making it difficult for his vision to flourish.

Senator Modeste Bahati Lukwebo, a former ally of Joseph Kabila, was named as an informant to identify a new majority coalition in the National Assembly. He presented his report to president Tshisekedi by the end of

January 2021, after lobbying more than 390 lawmakers out of 500 to join Union sacrée, with majority quitting the FCC of Joseph Kabila.

The report came in the same week that President Tshisekedi accepted

the resignation of Prime Minister Sylvestre Ilunga Ilunkamba, two days after parliament voted him out.

Pan African Visions sat for an interview with Eloge Mwandwe, a political analyst, researcher in Rural Economics from Kinshasa and lecturer at the University of Likasi in Kinshasa. Mwandwe is also a member of AFDC (Alliance des forces démocratiques du Congo), the same party as of Lukwebo.

PAV: After the informant presented his report, what is next for DRC?

Mwandwe: A new permanent national assembly's bureau will be put in place, and the president in respect of our Constitution, will appoint a new Prime Minister among the political leaders who form the current new identified majority.

PAV: It is said that Union sacrée aims at weakening the power of former president Kabila, what kind of threat did he pose to the current president?

Mwandwe: The new identified majority has nothing to do with individual, instead, it was formed to improve citizens' life. It is about the country. I first of all do not think that the President Kabila whom I owe respect as former head of state, after eighteen years of power has something else to offer to Congolese. He has done what he could and now, it's time for the current president, Felix Antoine Tshisekedi to implement his vision through the next government.

PAV: Do you think Kabila will not retaliate?

Mwandwe: We are talking about future. Honestly, Congolese people know President Kabila and know his limits as well.

PAV: What incentives did the Informant give to FCC MPs to join Union sacrée?

Mwandwe: He only presented to them as well as other members of parliament from different political organizations, the vision that the President has for the country, which you will agree with me that majority of them decided to support. As I said earlier, it has nothing to do with individual but the country.

PAV: Are you sure that they will stick to the agreement?

Mwandwe: Only God never knows. For members of parliament, I choose to remain optimistic, because the issue at hand concern the future of our country. We have reached a point where we need to decide



After 18 years, Joseph Kabila has nothing new to offer Congolese says Mwandwe.

for a better future on behalf of next generations.

PAV: Are all Congolese behind these reforms of President Tshisekedi?

Mwandwe: Even God in heaven experienced opposition, that is the reason why today we talk of Lucifer. I don't think that the president of the republic is concerned on whether

his vision has total support from Congolese, but I do think he knows that his vision will take the country to the better heights. It will give hope the country has lost a long time ago.

Before elections, we had some people who could not agree with him, but they are the ones who are supporting him today. Some did not want even to mention his name some weeks ago, however they are now

defending his vision. It is a matter of time, it is a matter of political results and improving lives.

PAV: Kabila used to be a powerful figure in the army, do you think the army is behind Tshisekedi now?

Mwandwe: Thank God we can now talk of a republican army, not an individual's army. According to our Constitution, the president of the republic is the only supreme commander of the army. Today, President Tshisekedi is the president of the republic, so, he is the most powerful figure in the army.

PAV: Observers define developments in DRC as worrisome, which could end in violence, what do you think about it?

Mwandwe: It is their opinion, I don't see such things happening in the future. People should understand that the DRC has moved from a country which could not give hope to its citizens, to the country envisioning hope for its citizens. Majority of Congolese are focused on implementing the president of the republic's vision.

PAV: Is there any clear difference from FCC of Kabila and new Sacred Union of Tshisekedi?

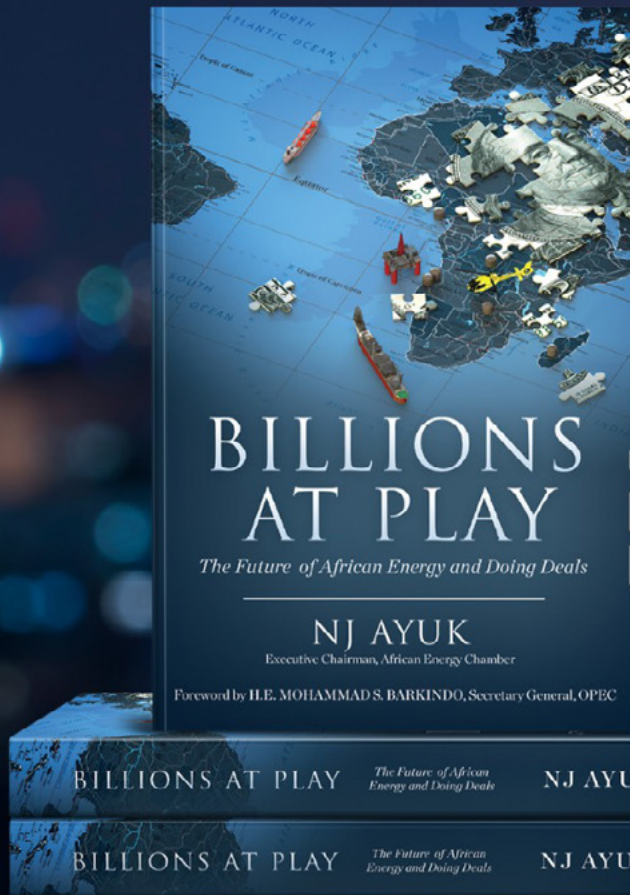
Mwandwe: The difference between FCC and Sacred Union is that the FCC was created to win elections which it failed to achieve (in 2018). On the other hand, Sacred Union was created to bring reforms in different areas, which will improve social and economic lives of the Congolese people.



Mwandwe says that it is time for President Tshisekedi to deliver on what he promised the people.

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Kenya: Ruto's hurdles ahead of 2022 polls

By Samuel Ouma



Deputy President William Ruto is in the fight of his political life. Photo courtesy.

Kenya heads towards critical elections in 2022, and many candidates have already expressed their interests in the country's top seat led by Deputy President William Ruto. With 2022 drawing closer, political realignments and new parties' formation have begun at very high gear.

So far, more than ten candidates have announced their presidential bids, and the number might increase with time. The latest to join the race is Kakamega Governor Wycliffe Oparanya and his Mombasa counterpart Hassan Joho of the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) party headed by the AU envoy Raila Odinga. The duo whose terms as Governor expire next year are deputizing Odinga. Oparanya and Joho seek the ODM ticket in a battle that will pit them against their boss to get a strong candidate to face Ruto.

"I will submit my nomination papers to seek the ODM ticket for the 2022 presidential race," Oparanya told the Star.

The bold decision taken by the two county bosses was preceded by

the ODM's earlier announcement inviting applicants interested in vying for the 2022 presidential election of the party's ticket to submit their applications latest on February 26, 2021. The Elections Board Chairperson Catherine Muyeka Mumma, in an advert on a local daily, said that each candidate must pay a ksh 1 million (approximately 10,000 USD) non-refundable fee. The applicants must also meet the minimum requirements of presidential candidates as set out by the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC).

"Pursuant to the resolution of the party's Central Committee on the need for early preparations towards the 2022 General Elections and guided by The Constitution of Kenya, 2010, The Elections Act, 2011, The Political Parties Act, 2011, The Elections (General) Regulations, 2012, The ODM Constitution and The ODM party National Elections and Nomination Rules, the National Elections Board (NEB) hereby gives notice to party members who are interested in vying for the 2022

presidential elections on the ODM party ticket to declare their interest by submitting their applications to the NEB," read the part of the advert.

Other candidates include former vice presidents Kalonzo Musyoka and Musalia Mudavadi, Governors Alfred Mutua and Kivutha Kibwana, Senators Gideon Moi and Moses Wetangula, Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development Mukhisa Kituyi, and former minister Mwangi Kiunjuri.

Between now and next year, Kenyans are set to witness the birth of new political parties and alliances and party-hopping as leaders try to find out a political vehicle that will drive them to power. Reports from the Registrar of Political Parties' office show that many people are tendering their resignation from one party and move to another.

"We do have an increase in people changing parties. People resign from one party and join another every day. Resignations are all over now, maybe because of the several by-elections that have been scheduled by the

IEBC," said the Registrar of Political Parties Anne Nderitu.

The ruling party's ongoing battles, Jubilee, have seen the formation of a new political outfit, namely the United Democratic Alliance (UDA) associated with the deputy president. Even though the second in command has not personally come out and identify himself with the new party, his allies several times have hinted that the party is the chosen bus that will drive their boss to the presidency. Ruto's allies are somehow correct because the outfit is associated with the Hustler Nation slogan, along with the Wheelbarrow Movement that Ruto has been popularising across the country.

"We formed Jubilee but to our dismay, we are humiliated and derided. We no longer have a say in it. In UDA which is an affiliate to Jubilee, we have a home that can help us ascend to power. There is an option now for us who have a difference of opinion regarding the operations of the Jubilee party. UDA has now gained traction across the country and we shall use it for shelter," reiterated

MP Caleb Kositany.

The United Democratic Alliance (UDA), formerly the Party of Development and Reform (PDR), will be launched soon, followed by the election of officials from the grassroots to the national level, according to the party's chairman Johnson Muthama.

"We have succeeded in changing the name and already have our headquarters. Now we are in Phase Two where we are set to open offices in all the sub-counties and county headquarters. From there, we will elect officials in all our branches to the top leadership. This is the party by the hustlers and for the hustlers and we want them to own and be part of every step and process of the decision-making in the party," said Muthama.

The country's political atmosphere is already tensed as the presidential hopefuls engage in a bitter exchange of words. Recently, Kalonzo and Ruto locked horns over land grabbing claims. Ruto had accused the former of grabbing land belonging to the National Youth Service in Yatta, Machakos County. Kalonzo instead turned guns on the deputy president, accusing him of all manner of ills, and ended up branding him the chief land grabber. Addressing the press in Nairobi on January 19, 2021,



From friends to foes, relations between Deputy President Ruto and President Kenyatta have soured

the former vice president termed Ruto's claims wild and desperate propaganda and challenged him to subject himself to lifestyle audit and investigations.

Prior, Musalia Mudavadi's Amani National Congress Party (ANC) had asked Ruto to resign or face impeachment over his constant attack on the president. Ayub Savula, an ANC deputy party leader, threatened to rally lawmakers to ouster Ruto for allegedly disrespecting President Uhuru Kenyatta. Ruto, allies in

rejoinder, described Mudavadi and his party as confused, asking them to keep off the Jubilee party's affairs.

"Who is supposed to complain? Is it ANC or members of Jubilee? That is a sign of a confused party," said former National Assembly Chief Whip Benjamin Washiali.

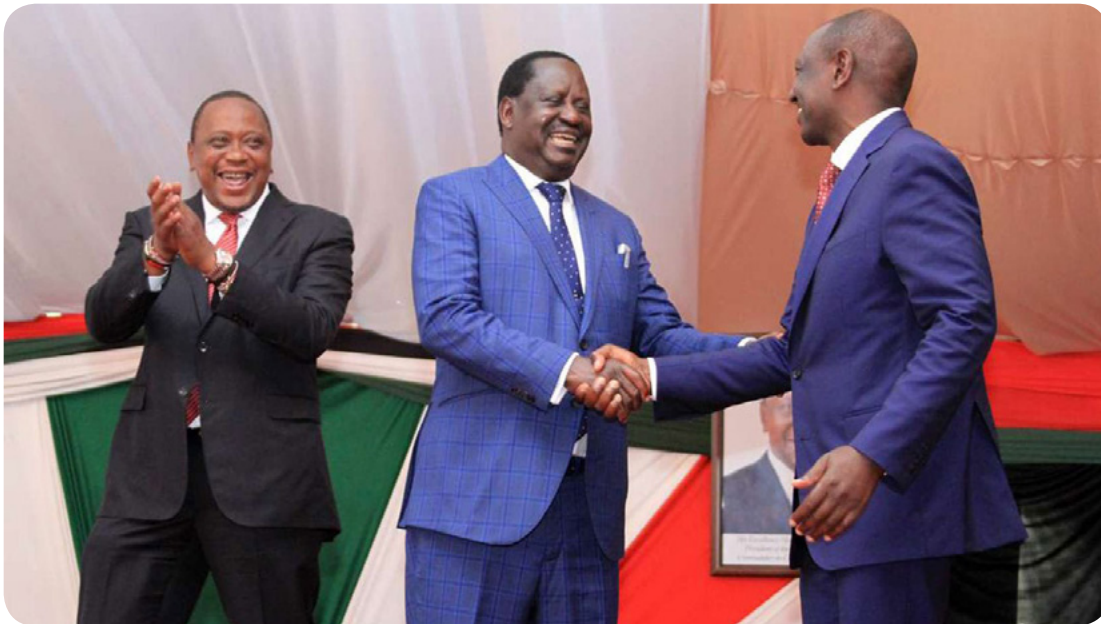
Moreover, Ruto's claims that Raila should take responsibility for the government's failures to meet the development plan due to a famous handshake has put him under fire from the opposition chief.

Raila criticized him over Jubilee's unfulfilled promises labeling him «Mr. Six months.»

«Mr Six months! The youngsters you promised laptops eight years ago are now old enough to see through your lies. The youth you promised eight million jobs in eight yrs can see through the wheelbarrow lie you are now peddling. It has been eight yrs Mr Six months and not three years. No Mr Six months!»

«There are people like «Mr. Six Months Time», In six months time we shall give all children in schools laptops, in six months time we shall give one million jobs to our youth, in six months we shall build 47 modern stadia, in six months we shall build tarmacked roads," said Raila.

President Kenyatta had indicated that he would prefer a person from an ethnic community other than any of the two that have produced the country's past presidents to succeed him. Many leaders welcomed his statement except those in Ruto's camp. Ruto hails from the Kalenjin community, which produced a long-serving head of state in Kenya's political history. The late Daniel Moi served for 24 years before retiring in 2022.



Ruto in a handshake with opposition leader Raila Odinga while President Kenyatta looks on. Both men are frontline candidates to succeed Kenyatta when his second and last mandate ends.

Ethiopia is Waxing Strong In Face of Multiple Challenges-Ambassador Arega

By Ajong Mbapndah L

Ethiopia's envoy to the USA Ambassador Fitsum Arega says that amidst multiple challenges, the country is waxing strong. Speaking in an exclusive zoom interview with PAV, Ambassador Arega says doomsday scenarios painted about his country in some media circles do not reflect the realities on the ground.

Defending the response of Prime Minister Abiy's government to the crisis in Tigray, Ambassador Arega says that no country in the world would have tolerated the provocation and heinous actions of the TPLF. Ambassador Arega laments the humanitarian challenge that the war has brought but is quick to say his government is doing its level best and working in collaboration with international partners to ensure that aid is brought to the people in need and normalcy returns to the region.

On the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, Ambassador Arega said it is a public and not a government project with some five billion dollars fully funded by Ethiopians in the country and the Diaspora in the form of donations and bonds matched by the government. Ambassador Arega said his country has been forthcoming in sharing all progress and developments on the construction of the dam with Sudan and Egypt and any scepticism is

uncalled for. While relations between the USA and Ethiopia may have been ruffled due to bias in favour of Egypt by the previous administration, Ambassador Arega said he is optimistic on prospects of stronger bonds of cooperation with the Biden administration. Despite the challenges posed by COVID-19, Ambassador Arega said his Embassy remains open and he has been working hand in glove with the dynamic Ethiopian diaspora to support recovery efforts

back home. In the interview which also covers the upcoming elections, investment opportunities, and changes in the country since Prime Minister Abiy took office, Ambassador Arega shared reassuring perspectives on his country. Prime Minister Abiy has inspired millions since he came to office and reforms are still ongoing, Ambassador Arega said.

Pan African Visions: May we start with how Ethiopia is doing politically, economically and socially?

Ambassador Arega: Ethiopia has



No country in the world would have tolerated the provocation and heinous actions of the TPLF says Ambassador Arega in defence of the response of Ethiopia to crisis in Tigray.

been doing very well before COVID-19 in terms of economic growth but there were serious concerns on political inclusion. Since the pandemic, Ethiopia is one of the least affected. So far more than 2 million people got tested of which 147,000 tested positive and fortunately 129,000 recovered with some 16,700 active cases. It is however sad that around 2,200 people died.

Due to the international lockdowns, trade disruptions, logistics and tourism challenges, the economy has been affected. Since Ethiopia's economy is predominantly agricultural and the rural areas are less affected, our economic performance is still one of the strongest in Africa; last year, ending June 30, 2020 the GDP growth was 6.1%.

In terms of political stability, for over four years prior to Prime Minister Abiy assumed power there was mounting public pressure for change. As a result Prime Minister Abiy was elected as chairman of the governing party and the Prime Minister. Following his acceptance speech, hope sweep throughout the country, and in the region.

In the first few days the Prime

Minister announced forgiveness, peace and unity as his central pillars for his reforms. As part of the reforms political prisoners were released, politicians and media in exile were invited into the country, state of emergency was lifted, banned media were allowed, judicial and security institutions were declared independent and the healing process was going very well with the exception of some challenges in between and the major road block coming from the TPLF, which led to the November 4, 2020 provocation and act of treason committed on the Northern command of the Federal Army.

Pan African Visions: We will get to the specifics of the conflict in a moment but let's talk about your current functions. You have been Ambassador for a couple of years now, what is the state of ties between Washington and Addis Ababa?

Ambassador Arega: The diplomatic relations have been essentially old, to be exact one hundred and seventeen years, and last year was one of the challenging years due to President Trump's invitation for the three



Since Prime Minister Abiy came to power, he has inspired millions and reforms are still alive, says Ambassador Arega.

countries to negotiate on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. That did not work out the way we all wanted. It was not impartial; unacceptable proposal was coming from Egypt that was also supported by the then U.S. Administration. We all welcomed Washington as an observer, but the Treasury Department went on influencing in favour of Egypt. Except this incident our relation has been in good terms. Now, the relations are getting much better.

Pan African Visions: Last year, the US suspended some aid to your country. Now, with a new administration, what efforts are being made to make sure these measures are lifted?

Ambassador Arega: The new administration is just taking shape. They have not even appointed some members of the administration. We have started contacting the relevant institutions and we are optimistic that things will get better. High-level contacts have been made. We'll be working hard to improve our relations. We are optimistic that the assistance suspended on the basis of Ethiopia's Dam will be released and also trade and investment between the two countries will increase.

Pan African Visions: The main development in the country is the conflict in the Tigray region. What is the situation there at the moment and can you give us a little background as to how things evolved to where they are today?

Ambassador Arega: As a background, when Prime Minister Abiy started sweeping political reform both in terms of widening the political space, welcoming opposition parties as well as party level reforms and when introducing economic reforms with the aim of macroeconomic stability and realigning the focus from public led to private sector led, he faced resistance from the TPLF party, the governing party of the Tigray region which directly and indirectly led the country for 27 years. The resistance grew when the election was postponed due to covid-19 reason, as

per the constitution.

However, PM Abiy tried his best to peacefully resolve the tensions through dialogue, sending elders and community leaders to the Tigray region. In the meantime, ethnically and religiously motivated displacements and killings were observed in different parts of the country. Then on November 4, 2020 Tigray regional forces and some federal army members of Tigrean origin the defected from the federal army launched a coordinated attack on the Northern Command of the Ethiopian Army in many military bases while they were not expecting at all. They then looted the command's military equipment, artillery, detained and killed many in horrific situation. They admitted on their media saying they took thunder like action as pre-emptive attack.

The Ethiopian government had no option but to counter and launch a low enforcement operation. This is unacceptable act that no country on earth tolerates. So, the attack was heinous crime and we believe the international community would understand the situation.

You can compare what happened in the Washington insurrection, but this is more than that. It is a treasonous act. That's how it evolved. During the law-enforcement operation, it took three weeks to control the capital of the Region (Mekelle) and after that, the operation was conducted to capture the fugitives, to bring them to justice.

There were close to 1.6 million people in the safety-net program that needed food aid on a regular basis before the conflict. An additional 900,000 people were added to this and after the conflict it became 2.5 million people. The federal government and the newly established provisional government in the Tigray have been partnering with international agencies to provide



food and medicine to the needy.

When the TPLF forces flee away they dismantled infrastructure like bridges, telecom, power, airports etc so that the government forces won't advance.

Now, the government is tasked with maintaining all these on top of the relief and rehabilitation activities and to date telecom and power has been restored in many cities and villages; airports have been maintained, temporary bridges have been installed so that humanitarian work can continue. There has been misinformation regarding the humanitarian activities, and this is not fair. We believe the truth will prevail.

Pan African Visions: To push back on what you described as negative news, Prime Minister Abiy won the Nobel Peace Prize and opinions have been divided. What did his government do to peacefully resolve this conflict before taking on a full-scale battle?

Ambassador Arega: it is unwise to think a Prime Minister who won a Nobel Peace Prize would not defend its country when an act of treason is committed; this is unacceptable. We can compare this with Washington when Capitol Hill was swamped by some violent demonstrators breaking the building, looting or destroying

document. This was insurrection. As a result, impeachment law was invoked, perpetrators were brought to justice and the process is still continuing. What TPLF has done is more than that.

Pan African Visions: And what is your response to human rights groups and others who think in the course of trying to resolve the crisis there has been a heavy toll on innocent civilians?

Ambassador Arega: First of all, the government has made many attempts to avoid the confrontation, by sending elders, community leaders, etc. When that didn't work after the attack the countering law enforcement operation was conducted with at most care, with calls to surrender in between the operations, to give the TPLF wanted fugitives an opportunity and minimize casualty.

There are human rights groups that escalated estimates of the casualties, refugees to Sudan, internally displaced people, people who need aid. They speculate or report based on unfounded, unconfirmed, unverified or anonymous sources.

The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission investigated Mai-Kadra, where hundreds of people were massacred while the village was under the effective administration of the TPLF. This is crime against humanity.

We are open for investigation and there are also visits going on by various groups.

Pan African Visions: Prime Minister Abiy came to power with a reform-minded agenda. What will you say has changed in Ethiopia under his leadership?

Ambassador Arega: Since he came to power, he inspired millions and reforms are still alive. In terms of political space, now I do not know any opposition that is in exile. This was unthinkable in the past. In terms of the economy, the PM introduced what we call Home-Grown Economic Reform programme which has the agenda of sustaining the economy by way of empowering the private sector.

Improving the macroeconomic imbalances through debt management and restructuring, privatization of state-owned enterprises, including telecom, sugar industries, etc.

The major challenge so far and going forward is the impact of COVID-19 in the economy. When you talk about tourism, import-export, mining, and other industries, unless the ban on international travel is lifted, it will continue to be challenging.

So, we are focusing on agriculture and other resilient sectors. Ethiopian Airlines has been adjusting and is doing its best in COVID-19 related cargo operations. The airline has been instrumental in distributing PPEs to many African countries.

Pan African Visions: With regards to the election that will be coming up later in the year, how equipped and strong are the institutions in Ethiopia to ensure that there will be free, fair, and acceptable to all the parties?

Ambassador Arega: The Ethiopian Election Board, the main body established to conduct election and other institutions with judicial and executive power have gone through reforms and training with the aim of conducting free, fair and acceptable election. The election is scheduled for June 5, 2021 and the preparations

so far as expressed by some members of the opposition parties is encouraging.

Pan African Visions: The construction of the Grand Renaissance Dam has created a lot of tensions with neighbouring countries like Egypt and Sudan. May we know why your country attaches so much importance to the project?

Ambassador Arega: The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is fully financed by Ethiopians, no loan or grant from overseas. About 5 billion US dollars have been raised by Ethiopians at home and in the Diaspora and matched by the government. We have done all the necessary studies and executed accordingly through professional support. We also involved international panel of experts to advise the three countries on their best scenarios. We also shared all required information to Sudan and Egypt.

Ethiopia is willing to negotiate in good faith with the objective of win-win cooperation. We are saying let us negotiate on the basis of the Declaration of Principles signed by the leaders of the three countries in December 2015. Therefore, the negotiation should be on the filling of the dam and the operation. However, Egypt wants to focus on water allocation with the hope to maintain what they call the "historical water rights".

With regards to the water allocation, we have another platform, the Nile Basin Initiative which includes all the countries of the Nile. Ethiopia cannot bring the agenda of Nile Basin Initiative to the tripartite negotiation.

Ethiopia is contributing 86% to the Nile but utilizing close to zero. The Grand Renaissance Dam is not a water-consuming project. It is



Bias from the Trump administration in support of Egypt did not help relations between the USA and Ethiopia says Ambassador Arega.

for generating electric power, for generation the water needs to hit the turbines and flow to downstream countries, Sudan and Egypt.

Ethiopia is more than ready to negotiate in good faith. We believe the best way to reach an agreement is to refer it to the scientific experts of the three countries. The issue is technical, and it is important not to fix technical issues by politicians, which is the case now. What should dictate us is the fact on the ground, the availability of enough water. This was the case last year and our first filling did not harm anyone in the downstream.

Pan African Visions: To American and other investors out there who are curious about Ethiopia, what opportunities are available today and how is the investment climate?

Ambassador Arega: At present, the main challenge to attract investment in any country is COVID-19, though there are some exceptional sectors like ICT where it is even more attractive during this time.

In addition to the ICT sector Ethiopia is promoting privatization of Telecom and other state-owned enterprises, investment in the health sector, mining, infrastructure such as power, and post COVID-19 in many other sectors including manufacturing and agriculture.

We have recently improved our investment law and ease of doing

business by introducing single-window platform for customs clearance, import-export facilitation, etc.

Pan African Visions: As we wrap this interview, maybe we ask you how things are at the Embassy. Is the Embassy open and are the borders of your country open?

Ambassador Arega: Yes, our Embassy has been open throughout COVID-19 practicing the CDC guidelines. We have consulates in Los Angeles and Minnesota. In addition to this, we commenced online services; we have online visa, online power of attorney and passport renewal services. Yes, our borders are open and welcoming people as long as they have a negative COVID-19 test result and practice the guidelines.

We have been also mobilizing virtually the Diaspora Community. We had more than 100 virtual meetings with these groups in 41 states. We have raised useful resources both in kind and in cash through banks, on line platforms like GoFundMe. Some of the Diasporas have been active on trade and investment. They also assisted in the advocacy of the GERD and other issues that concern the US.

The government of Ethiopia has called for the members of the Diaspora to enhance their commitment to contribute more on trade and investment, and counter misinformation.

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Ghana: The "Escapades of Junior Jesus" - Jerry John Rawlings

By Maxwell Nkansah

The name 'junior Jesus' or 'Yesu Ketua' always brings back fond memories of the ex-military leader who was sent by God to liberate Ghanaians from the shackles of military extremism. For some years, Ghanaians were lost in the woods due to military extremism which retarded the progress of the country after the listing of Osagyefo DR. Kwame Nkrumah. Jerry John Rawlings came into salvage the situation by embarking on a mission dubbed «house cleaning exercise» in the military to send a clear message across. As an upcoming broadcast journalist, I didn't get the ample privilege of witnessing the heroics of Flight Jerry John Rawlings as I was born in the late 90s, however numerous stories were spelled out to myself and my siblings to give us a fair idea of who Jerry John Rawlings.

Rawlings; Unlike many other leaders in Ghana's history, subsequently led the country through the difficult years of economic recovery and succeeded in giving back to Ghanaians their lost national heritage and pride during the dark times. He worked his socks off to keep Ghana afloat by sharing the national cake equally due to his character and unwavering determination. Ghana would not have survived the Economic Recovery Programs (ERPs) of the 1980s tailored by the ruling Provision National Defense Council (PNDC).

During his regime, Rawlings saw his leadership role to be that of a «watch dog» for ordinary people and he addressed problems of incompetence, injustice and corruption. He got in on the act so many times, he was always in the thick of events partaking in activities which conscientize Ghanaians about the need for nationalism. In a video I watched on one social media outlet, Mr. Rawlings was carrying cocoa, desisting gutters, donating blood to a pregnant woman who was in dying need of blood transfusion. Even after



his retirement he got down from his car directing traffic on his way from the Volta Region heading towards the nation's capital - Accra. His leadership qualities were second to none. He was an impeccable, selfless and an unselfish leader who laid down.

His life to serve mother Ghana with his last blood and breath. The Two Coups:

The Political system in Ghana after the first coup led by Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings on June 4, 1979 remained fluid at its best. In order to bring back stability, a 15-member Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) was established, and

Rawlings spearheaded the activities of the AFRC, he was appointed as the Chairman and the rest of the decision taken by the AFRC. In 1979 the purported elections would go on as planned on June 17, 1979, to allow the AFRC to complete its task of house cleaning exercise. The new AFRC led by Rungs' tried to flush out corruption which at that time had eaten into the core of the society, especially the «kalabule» system (the «black» or «parallel market») which had affected the cost of living, and which the state suspected to be responsible for the spike and scaling up of commodities and inflation in Ghana. It was indeed a dark time



for Ghana's economy, individuals hoarded tins of milk, cloves of sugar, bars of soap, bags of rice and sold them out to their fellow citizens at exorbitant prices which were unbearable and detrimental to the survival of the ordinary citizen. In fact, the shortages and low production of the past regime were the causes of the setback suffered by Ghanaians. The previous military regimes embezzled and snuggles huge sums of monies from the financial coffers of the country for investment in other countries. Rawlings thought it wise to save Ghanaians from the mess created.

Without a shadow of doubt, Rawlings was an emblem of perseverance, fearlessness, courage and power. He had the heart of lion which posed fear and threat to his detractors. Much of Rawlings' energy were channelled into posiri action in those hectic months, sandwiching his rule with family issues. He conscientized that this was their revolution and it was they who were calling their past rulers to account for their last deeds, and the future of Ghana was in their hands. Rawlings and the AFRC carried out public executions of 3 former heads of state and other senior officers without trial. These actions evoked a sense of awareness amongst Ghanaians that this regime was like any other, and that the new leader's meant business. But those actions were to haunt the Rawlings led administration.

Discipline and Decency:- In the field of discipline and decency, Rawlings left an indelible mark in that sector, he carved a new policy to help instill some form of discipline and decency in the Ghanaian youth. Most young women who were caught dressed half naked on the streets were caught and given strokes of canes to serve as a deterrent to others. This act really served mother Ghana well and instilled discipline, most of the youths were afraid to dress

haphazardly it was known as (« 3y3 Hain,3y3 kanea in the local Alan dialect «). However ,over the years after Rawlings retired from active service ,the public fabric has been torn ,most of the youth now dress haphazardly exposing their sensitive body parts which were sacred ,ladies are the ones caught in this bracket .Because ladies are supposed to keep their bodies sacred .Assuming ,we had a time machine and we travelled back in to time to expiring some of the disciplinary actions taken by Mr. Rawlings if blessed I don't think most of the youth will dress anyhow

Rawlings Sports achievement

Ghana won their last continent title under the leadership of former President Rawlings. Liman's government had decided that Ghana was not going to participate in the 1982 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) in Libya, but when Rawlings staged a coup d'état that toppled the Liman's government they rescinded the earlier decision.

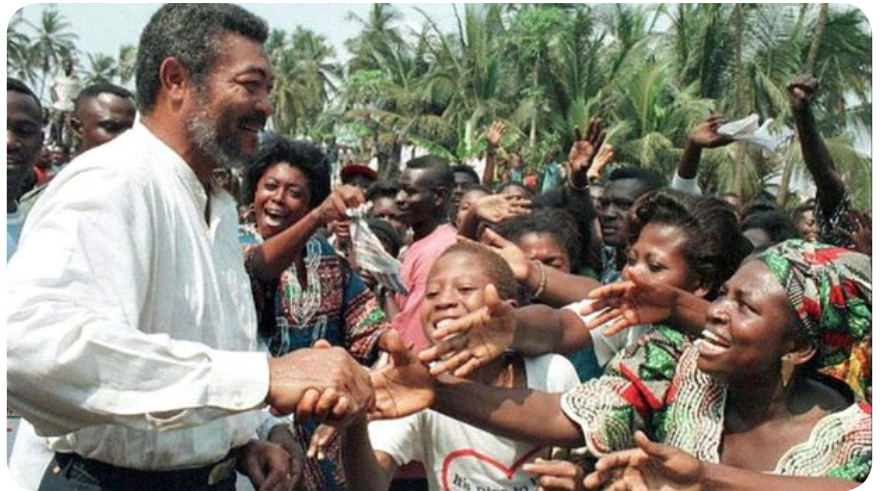
The Black Stars participated in the continent's showpiece and eventually won the tournament. Ghana went on to play Gaddafi's Libya in the final and won 7-6 in a post-game shootout following a 1-1 draw after extra time. The 1999 African Youth Championship was the tenth edition of the continental Under-20 football

competition, held in Ghana. It also served as qualification for the 1999 FIFA World Youth Championship. Ghana successfully hosted the tournament by providing the various training facilities, stadia, hotels, etc. During the tournament, Ghana defeated West African neighbors Nigeria to win the competition.

Ghana thrived well in boxing during the presidency of J.J Rawlings. The West Africans produced many world champions during his tenure.

For instance, he created an enabling environment for boxers to excel at the world stage. Jerry John Rawlings opened his doors to them to share their problems with him. One of his closest sportsmen was Azumah Nelson. During his tenure, Ghana produced more world champions than ever. The likes of Azumah, Nana Yaw Barimah, Ike Quartey, became world boxing champions.

Ghana, who had the youngest team by far in the 1992 Olympic football tournament (18.8 years), were surprise bronze medalists, becoming the first African nation to earn a medal in Olympics football.



They did so in a 1-0 victory over yet another surprise, Australia, finishing the match with their No. 3 goalkeeper, Simon Addo in the nets after Ibrahim Dossey was forced out with an injury. Ghana won on a free-kick goal by Isaac Asare in the 20th minute five minutes after Dossey had saved an Australian penalty. Ghana survived a man disadvantage in the final minutes to take the Olympic soccer bronze medal. Rawlings named a street in Accra after the victorious Starlets team of 1991.

Rawlings is also associated with human right abuses, especially in the military era. The murder of three judges and a retired military officer in 1982 remains a blot on his tenure. Even though some person were found guilty and executed for the heinous crime, many believe they

could not have been possible without the approval of Rawlings and the top echelon on the PNDC. But he is also remembered for the principles, "probity, accountability" which did not quite stay with him to the end because some of his appointees were involved in various acts of corruption. The state filed charge against his wife but later dropped them. Corruption remains the biggest threat to Ghana's growth and stability. And the man who made the strongest statement against corruption, in word and in deed, died at the time the corruption of 1979 pales in significance to the corruption of 2020. Jerry Rawlings conquered a lot. But he could not defeat corruption, which took him from the barracks into the turbulent political arena.



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Sierra Leone: Anti-Corruption Crusade Gathers Steam Under Kaifala

By Ishmael Koroma

Appointed in June 2018 by President Julius Maada Bio to head of the country's Anti-Corruption Commission -ACC, Francis Ben Kaifala has achieved the feat of helping Sierra Leone shed the corruption prone image it had before he took office.

Young, bold, visionary, tenacious, and result oriented, Kaifala who left a flourishing private practice to lead his country's crusade against corruption is yielding dividends with reports from leading international agencies like Afro Barometer, and Transparency International taking note. Last year, the efforts of Kaifala and his team swelled the public coffers with circa 10 billion Leones recuperated from people guilty of pilfering the national purse.

In an exclusive interview with PAV, Kaifala rubbishes claims that the corruption crusade has unfairly targeted officials of the previous administration. We follow the law and the evidence, says Kaifala, citing examples of officials in the current administration who have been persecuted for corruption.

Much work still has to be done to further weed out corruption, but the progress registered since he took office are indicative of the positive results that will continue to follow hard work, Kaifala said as he expressed optimism for the future.

We want to wish you happy new year and thank you very much for granting us this interview. May we start with a review of how last year went for the Anti-Corruption Commission, what worked well and what didn't work well?

Francis Ben Kaifala : It was a great year , we did a lot of work in terms of enforcement, in terms of prosecution , a lot of prevention , we did engage in lots of massive public education and as you can see from the index we , those who usually check our work can



Under the astute leadership of Francis Ben Kaifala, the fight against corruption in Sierra Leone is yielding tangible results.

confirm we did very well and that was the year we scored the highest in the Millennium Challenge Corporation Score card , we moved into 81% , Transparency International as well, we moved by two points , we recovered more money last year , we gave the President, we recovered over 10 Billion Leones in a single year from the corrupt and we gave a cheque of 8 billion Leones to the president . Basically, it was a great for the fight against corruption.

You have been heading of the ACC for two years now, in what shape did you meet the office and the overall state of corruption in Sierra Leone, and what are some of the changes that have taken place under your leadership?

Francis Ben Kaifala : Well corruption was very prevalent at the time I came in , as you know Afro Barometer estimated that in 2015 -2017 that corruption was 70%, the same institution has now measured and says corruption prevalence has dropped by 40% so there is a huge 30%

difference that has been made within this period of time and generally I think there is a lot more awareness of the fight against corruption and in fact when Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law , the PFM Consortium did a survey recently compared to previous years, corruption perception and confidence of the citizens in the ACC to fight corruption was low as 19% now it is as high as 92%, so that is a huge difference. I believe that we are making a difference.

There have been several high-profile cases involving members of the previous administration of President Ernest Koroma, what is your response to critics who say these smacks of a political witch hunt?

Francis Ben Kaifala: Well, I don't know what they mean by witch hunt. I don't understand. We are operating within a toxic political environment and people used this thing to cover up their actions, so a man is given money to build a bridge, the bridge is not there, the money is not in the account and you called him to say where is

the money and he says is witch hunt what does that mean? We are doing our job, and isolating ourselves from these kinds of cynical previews; we accept good criticisms it helps us do our work, some of it is just cynicism and we know the difference but the real name of the game is focus, is to continue what we are doing as long as we are producing the result for the country and that's the most important thing and that's what we are focused on.

There was a situation where former President Koroma was invited by your office, so how has that investigation been and any update?

Francis Ben Kaifala: Yeah, we have taken a statement from him, that investigation is under review now, we have taken all the issues into consideration and we will get back to the public on the details of that investigation.

How independent is the ACC in making decisions on cases it seeks to pursue as opposed to following instructions from President Maada Bio on who should be investigated?

Francis Ben Kaifala: The ACC is very autonomous, I don't believe in independence, independence means we are like a republic on our own. we are not, we are working within the system and we consult, we give reports to the President on behalf of the people of Sierra Leone. We are accountable to parliament, there are many things. so, I don't like to use the word independent, I prefer to use autonomy and we are completely autonomous, that means we can do our day-to-day activities without some body calling and directing us what to do, without the State House telling us who to arrest, to prosecute and telling us what the outcome should be. So, I can tell you we are very autonomous.

In a situation where the present administration officials are found guilty of corruption, some people wonder whether the ACC would take action.

Francis Ben Kaifala : But we are already prosecuting people in the current administration, the director and other staffs in the Ministry of Information who took Commissions of Inquiry money, were prosecuted in this current administration, Dr. Sarah Finda Bendu was head of the Sierra Leone Maritime Administration in this current administration , she is been prosecuted in court , we also entered into settlement with her and we are recovering 500 million Leones from her , she has already paid over 300 million Leones , the investigations we are doing at EDSA is not past administration , the investigations that we have been doing at the Maritime Administration is not past administration , the investigations we are doing at State House, the former State Chief of Protocol who is investigated was not of the former administration. So, I don't know what they mean by the current administration, but I can tell you that we are doing more now with the current administration than any other administration. Of course, we will always ask past officials to account because many were corrupt, and we have recovered billions from them, we have prosecuted many, some are still standing trial, the former vice president is standing trial; it is just part of the work, but really, we do not differentiate between past and present we just do our job, we follow the evidence, we follow what information we have.

Your job is very difficult; may we know some of the challenges that you have faced while running the ACC?

Francis Ben Kaifala : The resources, we don't have resources, the entire office is running on a current expenditure of about 800,000 United State Dollars not even up to a million dollar for the year, we don't have capital expenditure, we cannot buy cars, we cannot buy laptops, we



We follow the law and the evidence, says Kaifala in dismissing claims that the ACC may be on a witch hunt of Officials of the previous administration.

cannot buy anything that is capital in nature. The total allocation to the place is so small even our staff costs we have no room for expansion because the Ministry of Finance is limiting what we can do, so we have logistical constraints .Beyond that, we are also operating within a very difficult political system, very cynical system where sometimes the people for one reason or the other prefer to be against us or in favour of us but we are focused on our work as always but there are many challenges everywhere , we have challenges with the judiciary , it has been difficult for them to impose custodial sentences, but recently we have had some

encouraging signs in that regard with the court of appeal confirming the custodial sentences impose on those who took the Commissions of Inquiry money so we are hopeful that things are going to move in a better trajectory with the judiciary, but generally our prosecutions are very good. We are having a very high rate of conviction we just want the punishment to be much more severe than they have been doing. Generally, it is more about logistics, it is about resources and personnel.

Prior to taking over the job, you were a successful Lawyer, what motivated you to leave



Presenting a check to President Bio. Under the leadership of Kaifala, the ACC has recovered millions of dollars in looted funds.

your private practice to take the ACC job?

Francis Ben Kaifala: To serve my country. Everybody deserves that on your CV, no matter what you do in private service if I was not here, we will not be talking today about the successes we are scoring in the fight against corruption. So, I saw it as an opportunity because as you know I was very active speaking against the injustices and wrongs in the society, corruption in the society and I was given the opportunity by the President to lead that fight, and that is why I am here.

With you background in Law and the experience you have garnered as head of the AAC, what other policy recommendations or framework is needed to strengthen the fight against corruption in Sierra Leone?

Francis Ben Kaifala: I think that more resources need to be allocated to the fight against corruption, we need to have lot more expansion, the entire anti-corruption Commission only has 200 staff. That is not enough to police the entire country when it comes to the fight against corruption. So more needs to be done to strengthened our hand not just in terms of the laws but to make sure that we have the resources to bring more personnel on board and apart from that we have the logistics, the right equipment to deploy, recording devices, televising devices. Those are all things that need to be improve if we are to move things forward.

For 2021, what should Sierra Leonians expect from Francis Ben Kaifala and the ACC and any last word as we wrap up this interview?

Francis Ben Kaifala : 2021, we will continue doing it like never before, continue with massive, massive public education, massive, massive prevention drive, continue with more investigations, continue with more prosecutions and generally continue to launder the image of the country to show that we are ready for business and we are a country of people who are capable of looking after ourselves without stealing from ourselves._____

Mozambique: Terrorists Threaten \$50bn LNG Projects.

By Jorge Joaquim

The terrorist attacks in gas-rich Cabo Delgado province are threatening to disrupt the African country's burgeoning natural-gas developments, including the \$50bn projects led by French energy giant Total, Italian oil major Eni and American multinational oil and gas corporation Exxon Mobil.

Since 5 October 2017, a wave of armed attacks has been targeting the gas-rich Cabo Delgado province in the north of Mozambique, where most of the major gas discoveries have been made in recent years. In July 2020, French oil giant Total signed a \$14.9 billion financing agreement for a gas project called Mozambique LNG, the largest foreign direct investment in Africa to date, with a total post-FID investment of \$20 billion.

The project received direct and covered loans from eight export credit agencies, 19 commercial bank facilities and a \$400 million loan from the African Development Bank. The financing has been agreed despite the terrorists that have killed more than 2,500 people and displaced over 600,000.

The projects were supposed to be following the normal course of its installation, but it was stopped

as the terrorists attacked near the town of Palma -- just 20 km from the site of Mozambique LNG. Due to the situation, since December that Total is reducing its staff from the works on the natural gas megaproject.

The Mozambique LNG Project started with the discovery of a vast quantity of natural gas off the coast of northern Mozambique in 2010, leading to a \$20bn FID in 2019. The plans for the approximately 65 trillion cubic feet of recoverable natural gas include a two-train project with the ability to expand up to 43 million tonnes per annum (MTPA).

Its geographic location positions the project well to meet Atlantic and Asia-Pacific market needs, as well as tap into the growing energy demands of the Middle East and Indian sub-continent. The Mozambique LNG project is intended to begin production in 2024. However, the attacks have raised major questions



over the timelines for such huge undertakings.

On 1 January 2021 a clash between the police and terrorist infiltrators was registered in the resettlement Quitanda, a new town built to house people resettled from the areas of the Afungi Peninsula where Total is building a natural gas liquefaction plant. When the police discovered the terrorist infiltration, they went to the house where the infiltrators were hiding. They were met with shots, and returned fire. In this clash, one terrorist informant was killed and a policeman was injured.

Some of the incursions have been claimed by the 'jihadist' Islamic state group since 2019.

Nyusi and Total CEO discuss security questions

The investors are concerned with the attacks, which have been claimed by the 'jihadist' Islamic state group since 2019. In January 2020, Total Chief Executive Officer Patrick Pouyanné and Mozambican president Filipe Nyusi met to discuss the worsening security situation. They then agreed to further strengthen security around the natural gas venture.

Instability in the area has concerned the Mozambican authorities, since the LNG project is the largest foreign investment in the country ever.

In August 2020, Total had already announced a revision of MoU with the Mozambican government for the operation of a joint security force including the defence and security forces to protect the project. So far, engineering and procurement activities have been taking place, with 2021 being the year for the start of the construction phase of the gas city and industrial zone for the liquefaction of the gas to be brought ashore from the drilling of the sea bottom of the Rovuma basin. However, the fact is that due to the recent attacks Total continues to reduce the number of workers at the project's onshore construction site on the Afungi peninsula.

Last year Patrick Pouyanné has called on European countries to help Mozambique fight the insurgency, warning that Islamic State is creating an enclave in the country. He said



it would be good if the situation is brought back under control, not just for Total's project, but for the stability of the region. He noted that France has a vested interest in the region, as it owns Mayotte, an island between Mozambique and Madagascar.

At the end of January the publication Africa Energy Intelligence wrote that Total is hoping to set up a logistics base in Mayotte to help it develop its Mozambican gas project. The French overseas territory has highlighted its many advantages to Total: it is located 500km from Pemba, the capital of Cabo Delgado; it has a deep-water port; a small naval base in Dzaoudzi; a detachment of the French Foreign Legion; and a fully functioning hospital complex. In the future, Mayotte hopes Total will also base the families of its expatriate workers there – but at the moment workers are being deployed without their families because of the covid-19 pandemic.

However, Mayotte's 1,930m runway at its main airport is too small to accommodate very large aircraft and Total's subcontractors in Mozambique are reluctant to move to the island, although Total has asked them to assess the costs of shifting some operations there. The company views the island as a useful fallback option should the security situation in Cabo Delgado continue to deteriorate. According to AEI, French authorities are in favour of the Mayotte option, which they see as the "patriotic" choice.

However, Total has denied suggestions that it could be moving its base of operations for its natural gas project Mozambique LNG away from Mozambique and onto the Mayotte, in the Indian Ocean. A statement from the company seen by Pan African Visions says that it would continue to base its operations in Pemba. However, it added that the project "is investigating options to carry some offshore support operations in the region to optimize part of its logistical chain and planning including in Mayotte by using existing infrastructures". The company added that it remained focused on delivering local content



goals, including giving \$2.5bn-worth of contracts to Mozambican businesses.

Other LNG projects

As well as Mozambique LNG, the other major LNG projects sanctioned for development in the country are the Rovuma LNG project, led by ExxonMobil, and the Coral South FLNG project, led by ENI. Both form part of the Area 4 development of the Rovuma Basin, Cabo Delgado province, offshore Mozambique.

Exxon has delayed a final decision on its \$30bn Rovuma LNG project until 2022. Eni is Exxon's project partner for Rovuma LNG. The company is developing the 15.2 million mt/year Rovuma LNG facility close to the Total project.

Eni is also operator of a smaller 3.4 million mt/year capacity floating Coral LNG project, the world's first newly-built deepwater floating liquefaction plant, which could begin operations in 2022. The last of 13 topside modules has been lifted and installed aboard Eni's Mozambique-bound Coral-Sul FLNG facility, being built by Samsung Heavy Industries in South Korea. The company informed last year that the lifting of the module marks the end of the onshore-modules fabrication campaign configuring the entire gas treatment and liquefaction plant. According to Eni, the Coral Sul FLNG unit is expected to sail away in

2021.

All these projects will be reality if the security situation is controlled. Mozambique is working with mercenaries and some countries are offering help. One of the last is Nigeria. The country's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Geoffrey Onyeama, visited Mozambique over the end of January and met Prime Minister Carlos Agostinho do Rosário. Mr Onyeama said Nigeria was ready to share its experience of fighting Islamist militants and provide support to Mozambique.

A new cooperation deal between the European Union and Mozambique on the violence in Cabo Delgado should be reached this February, Pan African Visions has learned. The framework will aim to support Mozambique in the fight against terrorism by giving support in humanitarian, development, and security areas. Some observers say that the involvement of other countries and organisations in supporting Mozambique could reflect competition for influence in Africa.

Meanwhile, in general, the terrorists seem to be in retreat as supplies are scarce. Other opinions say that the foreign financiers are no longer paying them. The fact is that the number of attacks reduced.

A former captive, who was held in the village of Manilha, in the district of Mocimboa da Praia, said

that the terrorists had recently met a Tanzanian man, thought to be their leader, Carta de Mocambique reported. The Tanzanian said that the attacks could not continue, because there was no more money. The meeting ended in confusion because the Tanzanian advised the Mozambicans to return to their home communities. The terrorists said they could not do this because they feared for their lives. The former captive claimed that the terrorists could no longer survive at their bases, because with villages deserted, there was no food available to plunder and their families were starving.

A member of the government forces positioned in Palma told Pan African Visions that the silence of terrorists is frightening because they are unpredictable.

While that, an application to build a 2,600km gas pipeline linking the Rovuma Basin in Mozambique and Gauteng in South Africa was submitted to the Mozambican government. If approved the works would start in the next three months, with the first phase, from the Rovuma Basin to Maputo province, to be finished in 2025. The planned investment is around \$6bn, which would come entirely from private investors. If constructed, the African Renaissance Gas Pipeline could be one of the biggest LNG projects in the world.

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Biden and Africa: Time for a concrete agenda

By Richard Mammah

After all of the post-voting drama had ended, the inauguration of Joseph Biden and Kamala Harris as the President and Vice-President respectively of the United States has now been undertaken.

But one discussion that remains unclear is what agenda the new President has for Africa. Or as some would rather put it, what should Africa demand from a Biden presidency?

One way to situate the issue is to trace the genesis of the Biden presidency. With white America largely constituting the primary rump of the Trump base, people of colour became an important factor in the 2020 presidential contest for the Democrats. From the engagements of the Black Lives Matter movement to the unbridled support for the Biden and Harris ticket by former President Barack Obama and on to the landmark efforts of the Georgia Democrat, Stacey Abrams that came in quite handy at the tail end of the contest, it was clear where the bulk of the colour vote would be going.

This was also helped by several policy gaffes of the Trump team including the seeming support for racist groups, the reference to African states as shi...ole countries, the targeted immigration bans and tightening of migration rules that seemingly fitted with the rest of the policy thrust of the Trump-era



Analysts are hoping for more robust ties between the the US and Africa in the Biden Harris Administration.

America First initiative. There was also another factor: as America became more insular and inward-looking, the global arena literally lost the voice of a policeman of sorts that the United States had come to sound as across several decades. With many Africans having left their homelands on account of poor governance, human rights and arbitrary rule challenges, they had also come to see and expect a United States administration that would stand up for those they had left behind back at home when situations tended to become more despotic and indeed get out of control. Trump's almost exclusively minding

America's business was not what they wanted to see continue. They wanted an American government that would continue to do its best in terms of projecting the values of liberalism, democracy, freedom and the rule of law in Africa and the rest of the world. Accordingly, African migrants and African Americans generally responded by supporting the alternative Biden ticket.

The Democratic ticket was also to be further strengthened with the bringing onboard of the 'woman of colour,' Kamala Harris as Vice Presidential nominee. There was also the hope that Biden having served with Obama and given the continuing close dalliance between both men, a Biden victory would bring in some fresh impetus for African and African-American causes and interests in America. And then there is also the historic point about African-Americans being more likely to vote Democratic than Republican. With these, many African migrants and African Americans alike saw the party as their own and rallied massively for it.

The Day After

With Biden and Harris now safely installed in the White House, the debate has opened up as to what the

Biden presidency will be offering Africa at this time.

One of the first calls is on the need to review and assess the African Growth and Opportunity Act, AGOA which was introduced during the George Bush-era. Under the scheme, preferential concessions were granted African-originating products that met basic criteria to enter into the US market.

In more recent years however, the scheme has fallen on thornier paths and in some cases suffered some outright reversals. One of these was the move to impose sanctions on East African nations that had commenced plans to expand their local textiles production over and above continuing to receive second hand clothes from America. When the second hand clothes lobby in the US put pressure on the US administration, it responded by arm-twisting many of the African nations involved to drop their 'import substitution plans and to continue with providing markets for second-hand clothing. When Rwanda insisted on continuing with its local textiles production, it was formally sanctioned. Analysts say that they expect the Biden administration to not only correct this historical injustice but to also take steps to



A file picture of President Buhari of Nigeria with then Vice President Joe Biden.

deepen AGOA and indeed US-Africa trade relations.

And one handy way of driving this may be the agency of the African Continental Free Trade Area, AfCFTA. The ambitious trade arrangement which came into its formal trading activity phase on January 1st is a continent-driven initiative to bolster intra-regional trade and encourage greater collaborative economic activity among the 55 nations of the continent.

Indeed, many analysts agree that strongly supporting AfCFTA may be Biden's best way of identifying with the African heartland. While no one expects him to come over to the continent to run the lives and fortunes of 1.3 billion Africans spread across 55 nations, they contend that it is important that the right levels of support and appreciation is given to efforts and initiatives that would address the greater good of the people of Africa.

'In this we do not find any initiative today to be more important than the African Continental Free Trade Area, AfCFTA. We expect President Biden to fully buy into the scheme and institute supporting action to help AfCFTA succeed and thrive,' a Lagos-based newspaper editorialised.

Some other analysts however say that even as America and other more developed nations and multilateral agencies are being expected to support the AfCFTA process, it is also most important that the continent, African migrants, African Americans and indeed all of the African Diaspora should put their house in order to ensure that the continent does benefit maximally from AfCFTA and indeed from yet ongoing schemes like AGOA. One litmus test would be when AGOA comes up for renewal soon. Would it be able to pass through the mill of securing a renewal at a time like this?

Indeed, it is over points like this that there seems to be a dampener of sorts in the mood of Africans in particular concerning what practically to expect from a Biden presidency at this time despite the fervent support that the Biden slate had gotten from African migrants and African Americans.

Senior Research fellow at the Nigerian Institute for International Affairs, Dr. Joshua Bolarinwa is one analyst who would rather wait and see if indeed Biden would do anything quite dramatic and impactful for Africa. And he explains why he is this minded:

'It may not be too different from what Africa experienced under Obama. As you can see, a lot of his proposed cabinet are those who worked with the Obama/Biden presidency between 2009 and 2016. It may even be more interesting with Nigeria in particular as in all the eight years of Obama/Biden rule back then, Obama did not visit Nigeria at any time though he made visits to Ghana, Senegal, Ethiopia, South Africa, Uganda and Kenya.'

Even before getting on to the deeper issues of diplomatic visits, some commentators say that one of the initial pointers to the fact that continental Africa is not featuring strongly in the Biden thinking range at the moment has to do with the fact that the outstanding stalemate over the World Trade Organisation, WTO presidency, which has seen the confirmation of the popular choice of the Nigerian and African candidate, former Finance Minister, Ngozi Okonjo Iweala, continue to be blocked by America, was not considered as one of the quick win policy reversal steps that the new President would initiate. It becomes even more troubling when it is recalled that the immediate past American administration had also attempted to disrupt the second term bid of the President of the African Development Bank, AfDB on several unsubstantiated grounds that were later to be thrown out by a review panel. If Biden is coming to the table with good intentions for Africa, why is he not disposed even now to promptly clearing the hurdle for Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala to get to work? What exactly does America want of Africa?

Related to this is the need for the Biden presidency to avoid rhetoric and speech patterns and content



A file photo of President Salva Kiir of South Sudan and then US Vice President Joe Biden in Kenya. Photo Sayyid Azim, AP

that are derogatory and demeaning as had featured during the Trump presidency.

Again, it would even be more complimentary if he should take responsibility as leader of the free world for the excesses of that bloc that continue to hurt Africa and commit to continuing to assist in a non-imposing way in the continued resolution of the challenges. This is more so when study after study have pointed to the fact that the debilitating effects of slavery, colonialism and an unequal world trade atmosphere have come to constitute a major stumbling block on the path of the continent's quest for economic rejuvenation and advancement. Yes America did not frontally colonise any state but America was in cahoots with colonizing nations and for years participated in the slave trade that vigorously despoiled the continent.

Also American policy over the years has tended to encourage and sustain dictatorships that have not helped the continent in a definite way, with American security agencies being reportedly implicated in taking out some of the continent's most progressive leaderships under the guise of fighting the spread of communism.

There are also American backed institutions like the International Monetary Fund, IMF and the World Bank that have introduced and insisted on running economic policies that involve 'structural adjustment' conditionalities that have further pauperized the continent.

Overall however, the thinking of many analysts is that the Biden administration should begin from an even-keeled platform of fully and resolutely signalling a commitment to a policy of 'trade not aid' in the manner expounded in part by the Tony Blair Commission for Africa. The idea would be to see and work with Africa as partner in a mutually respectable and responsible global trade arena.

And then there is also not forgetting the issue of the treatment of African Americans and African migrants in America itself. America supported a Marshall Plan to rebuild Germany. It should do same for this constituency too. Indeed, getting a better deal for African-Americans is most desirable. Across some 400 and more years of interaction, the African-American community has seen very excruciating times. It is important that President Biden does more to ensure an improvement in the fortunes of African-Americans during his tenure.

Related to this would be the treatment of more recent African migrants and their proper integration in American society as well as their access to opportunities that are open to other groups within the country. It is also important here that no extra hurdles are put on the path of African migrants and where some already exist, that steps are taken to remove them.

Americans Of African Descent Must Be Considered For Assistant Secretary Of State For Africa

By Melvin Foote*

The four years of the Trump Administration has severely damaged U.S. foreign policy in a variety of ways! The framing of the Trump agenda as “America First”, has meant that the rest of the world, including Africa and the African world in the Caribbean and elsewhere, has suffered greatly! “Black Lives” certainly did not matter much for the Trump Administration here in the U.S. or globally!

U.S. policy towards Africa, has also been severely damaged! Early in his term, President Trump set the tone by completely denigrating African countries as, “xxxx hole countries”, with little or nothing to offer the world. President Trump has waged war and has gutted the U.S. Foreign Policy establishment, including the State Department, the United States Agency for International Development, trade agencies, and other government entities that implement policies and programs in Africa and other regions of the world! Perhaps worst of all is that President Trump removed all Black Ambassadors in Africa, with the exception of three, Ambassador Tulinabo Mushingi in Senegal, Ambassador Natalie Brown in Uganda, and Ambassador Brian Nichols in Zimbabwe. Many African-Americans and other Americans of African descent, who spent their careers in support of foreign policy, retired or were encouraged to leave the system during the Trump administration!

The Constituency for Africa (CFA), a Washington, DC policy advocacy organization, has effectively advocated since the early 90s, for the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs to be an African-American! In 1993 Ambassador George E. Moose was appointed by President Bill Clinton, as the first African-American in history to hold this position! All



Melvin Foote is CEO & President of the Constituency for Africa.

succeeding Assistant Secretaries for Africa were African-Americans, with the one exception of Ambassador Walter Kansteiner, who served as the Assistant Secretary for Africa in the administration of Republican George W. Bush, who appointed General Colin Powell as the Secretary of State, and Condoleezza Rice as the National Security Advisor! The fact that General Powell and Dr. Rice are both Black, certainly left me with very little room to argue!

Other African-Americans who served in the position of Assistant Secretary for African Affairs since Ambassador Moose were:

- Ambassador Susan Rice (Clinton)
- Ambassador Constance Berry Newman (George W. Bush)
- Ambassador Jendayi Frazer (George W. Bush)
- Ambassador Johnnie Carson (Obama)
- Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield (Obama)

President Trump appointed Ambassador Tibor Nagy, as his Assistant Secretary for African Affairs. Ambassador Nagy, who is a Hungarian immigrant, is a pleasant enough guy, and reflected the Trump foreign policy, but really did little in the four years to advance any significant Africa policy agenda.

CFA's President Melvin Foote,

is urging the Biden/Harris Administration to consider an African-American or other Americans of African descent, to fill the position of Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. Said Foote, “It is extremely important that the Biden/Harris Administration consider Black candidates for this critically important position at this point in time. While the challenges domestically in dealing with COVID-19, will certainly occupy the energies of President Biden and Vice President Harris, it is very important that we as a country reach out to the continent, in a way that will rebuild confidence that the U.S. values partnership with Africa and with African people.” Foote further stated, “It was very hard for me these past four years to look at the U.S. Ambassadorial corps in Africa in countries like, Ghana, South Africa, Namibia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, and most others – all with white U.S. Ambassadors! Not only were the Ambassadors white -- and for sure there are plenty of white African experts with tremendous knowledge and deep passion for Africa -- but for the most part, Trump's Ambassador Corps in Africa, were whites folks with little or no knowledge about Africa or the countries they were serving in, and little to contribute in terms of any

serious policy agenda.

While the bench has pretty much been cleared of qualified Black candidates during the Trump administration, still there are a number of Blacks who could and should be at least considered. My short list of possible candidates would include the following:

- Ambassador Michael Battle, who formerly served as the US Ambassador to the African Union;
- Ambassador Rueben Brigety, who is now the Vice-Chancellor for the University of the South, and who formerly served as the U.S. Ambassador to the African Union;
- Ambassador Susan Page, former U.S. Ambassador to South Sudan;
- Ambassador Robin R. Sanders, who formerly served as the U.S. Ambassador in the Republic of the Congo and in Nigeria;
- Ambassador Harry Thomas, who served as Ambassador to Zimbabwe; and,
- Ambassador Jendayi Frazer, who served in the position with distinction in the George W. Bush Administration. Choosing someone like Ambassador Frazer, would also be viewed as an opportunity to reach across the aisle and to show unity and to try and heal our nation, after the brutal 2020 elections.”

Now that the new Secretary of State, Honorable Antony Blinken has been confirmed by the Senate, those of us who follow Africa, will turn our attention to the important job of Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs! “Black Lives do Matter” here!

**Melvin Foote is CEO & President of the Constituency for Africa (CFA). A pioneer in the field of African Affairs, Melvin Foote has over 35 years of experience and has worked in over 30 African countries

Relief for African Muslim-majority nations as Biden Lifts Muslim Travel Ban

By Prince Kurupati

On 20 January, 2021, Joe Biden was inaugurated as the 46th President of the United States of America. Without wasting much time, President Biden quickly started to execute his executive duties starting off with signing 17 executive orders. Amongst the orders was one which reversed the Muslim Travel Ban enacted by his predecessor Donald Trump in his first week in office 2017.

The Muslim Travel Ban blocked citizens from select African and Muslim countries to travel to the United States. When it was initially implemented, the travel ban restricted travel from seven Muslim-majority nations that is, Yemen, Syria, Sudan, Somalia, Libya, Iraq and Iran. In the first few weeks after its implementation, the executive order faced several legal challenges. However, in 2018, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the final version of the ban which now had been altered and had 12 countries on the restricted territories list that is North Korea, Tanzania, Sudan, Kyrgyzstan, Eritrea, Myanmar, Nigeria, Somalia, Yemen, Syria, Libya, Iran and select officials from Venezuela.

In signing the executive order in January 2017, then President Donald Trump said that the move was necessitated by the need to flush out external threats as the relaxed immigration policy at the time allowed anyone including the 'bad guys' to enter. While reversing the order, President Biden said a relaxed immigration policy was of paramount importance to the development of the country. However, he stated that doesn't mean that the reverse of the ban is meant to usher in threats, "Make no mistake, where there are threats to our nation, we will address them."

Soon after the signing of the executive order, the State Department was directed to restart visa processing for individuals from the affected countries. The State Department



Photo Credit: ABC4 Utah

was also urged to develop ways to address the harm caused to those who were prevented from coming to the United States as a result of the ban. According to a proclamation posted to the White House website on Wednesday January 20, 2021, "when visa applicants request entry to the United States, we will apply a rigorous, individualized vetting system. But we will not turn our backs on our values with discriminatory bans on entry into the United States."

Several African leaders and citizens have since hailed the move by President Biden to reverse the executive order banning Muslim citizens from entering into the United States. Sheikh Moueed Othman says the reversal of the ban "will be an opportunity for citizens who can travel to the United States where American universities are of the best in the world, doctors can apply to work in American hospitals, and of course the Trump administration became something of the past, it was not only politically racist to Arabs and Muslims, they were also politically racist to the Mexicans."

Marwa Jumaa, a Sudanese citizen said, "The entry of the Sudanese to the US while using a normal visa,

as non-refugees and with their full rights without struggling like before, is good and will have an effect on the economy of Sudan, and will help the country move forward."

Libyan Parliamentarian Ibrahim Al-Zgad had no kind words describing Donald Trump as a 'mad'. He said the signing of the executive order in the first place is proof of "one of his (Trump) crazy moments." Ibrahim Al-Zgad said the signing of the executive order had nothing to do with deteriorating US – Arab relations as the relations have always been "excellent". Rather, according to him, the signing of the order was "madness" on Trump's part as he acted like a man affected by the "mad cow: disease."

In as much as Libya welcomes the reversal of the executive order, Ibrahim Al-Zgad said Libya has little hope in the Biden administration as he comes from the same Democratic Party which contributed to the crisis in Libya in the past. Under the Obama administration, the Democratic Party 'Okayed' the Libyan Revolution supporting the Muslim Brotherhood whose main objective was to depose longtime leader Muammar Gaddafi. Since the Libyan Revolution, Libya up

to this day is still in chaos. The North African country is currently divided into two rival administrations, each backed by an array of militias and foreign powers. The Western part of the country is controlled by the UN-supported government while the Eastern and Southern part of the country is controlled by military commander Khalifa Hifter.

In the United States, an immigration advocacy organization, the New York Immigration Coalition was created soon after the signing of the executive order in 2017 by Trump. The founders of the advocacy organization were concerned by the treatment of Muslim citizens who were detained upon entry into the United States even though some possessed visas and others even green cards. Over the years, the advocacy organization has been directing dozens of lawyers and translators to help the detained but without much success. The recent move by President Biden to reverse the executive order has brought much relief to the organization. However, though relieved, the co-executive director of New York Immigration Coalition Murad Awawdeh said much more is needed to ensure that no future president can enact such

sweeping restrictions gain.

Murad Awawdeh said his organization is pushing and pressuring Congress to pass the No Ban Act. The organization last year did put pressure on the legislature to pass the No Ban Act – the bill did pass the House in July but stalled in the Senate. However, as the Democrats have now taken control of both chambers, the organization hopes that the bill will pass in both chambers this time around. Once passed, a sitting president would only have power to apply a ban in cases in which the Secretary of State has identified particular circumstances and credible facts that justify exclusion.

MPower Change, a Muslim



*Co-Executive Director of New York Immigration Coalition
Murad Awawdeh says much more is needed to ensure that no future president can enact such sweeping restrictions again.*

grassroots movement is in support of the move to enact the No Ban Act. The executive director of MPower Change, Linda Sarsour says, “The rescinding of the Muslim ban is temporary and it’s based on the philosophy, the ideology of the current president... We need the No Ban Act because we need this to be on the record forever because we do not know what’s going to happen in 2024 or 2028.” The passing of the No Ban Act will not just be great for advocacy organizations but also for African Muslim-dominated nations as it means their citizens won’t be restricted entry into the United States at all times.

Cameroon Anglophone Crisis: A Legacy On The Line For Cardinal Tumi

By Andrew Nsoseka

Many in Cameroon and beyond are increasingly asking how Christian Cardinal Tumi, Archbishop Emeritus of Douala Archdiocese, who at the beginning of the Anglophone crisis was an outspoken sympathiser of the Anglophone problem, has of recent, seemingly evolved to a sympathiser of the government.

Many have suggested that his abduction, or probably negative impacts of the crisis, and separatists’ atrocities, or all of the above may be responsible for the shift in the Cardinal’s recent views, expressed in latest media outings.

Cardinal Tumi, who over the years, has been regarded as Cameroon’s moral voice, was one of the country’s prominent voices articulating the Anglophone problem when it resurfaced in 2016, and morphed into an armed conflict. Like many others, the Cardinal criticised the military option employed to quell down dissenting voices. The Cardinal had also questioned the nature of the political undertakings that led to the reunification of the two Cameroons, urging that there is a need to revisit them.

He has never been reserved when it comes to criticising the political steps



The reputation of Cardinal Tumi as the moral voice of Cameroon is increasingly under question.

that were taken after reunification which are largely blamed for creating the Anglophone Problem in Cameroon. Acts like the tampering with the Federal Constitution and doing away with pillar constitutional provisions that robbed Anglophones of their ability to have an identity and decide their fate as well as partake in the management of their affairs have mainly influenced the Cardinal’s

sympathy for the Anglophone crisis and the actors spearheading it.

At the beginning of the crisis and even when it escalated, Cardinal Tumi remained one of those staunch critics of government’s action. Most of his public outings made government stakeholders uncomfortable as he spared no words in condemning government’s overall attitude and response to the issues raised.

The Cardinal who spearheaded the idea of a third All Anglophone Conference, said after listening to the various interventions of prominent voices in the Anglophone crisis, he discovered that the “leaders were not saying the same thing”. He said he then conceived an idea to hold a general conference of all Anglophones so that they can debate and come out as one front with a

singular demand where in a dialogue forum, they can voice it out as one, to their francophone brothers whom they united with.

Asked at the time by Elie Smith, whether the Cardinal was tele-guided by the Yaounde regime, as many had claimed, the Cardinal responded, "Surely if there is any body to be pushed around in Cameroon, it is not Cardinal Tumi. I have my personal conviction". He had said.

The Cardinal's initiative which was embraced by all prominent religious leaders in Anglophone regions, finally did not hold, due to lack of authorisation from government.

In an Interview with STV's Peter Nsoesie, the Cardinal said the separatist fighters whom has talked with severally, have come to him for blessings, and that he did bless them, and talked to them frankly. He said he told them that he condemns their attitude of killing those who do not share their ideology. "I told them, I disagree on three points, number one, your intolerance; those who disagree with you, you are ready to kill them, that is not the solution to your problem. Secondly, your intolerance with schools. You are now fighting against the future of your brothers and sisters. Who will rule with you? Will you rule alone if you come to power tomorrow? You will be intolerant to the opposition. You can't imagine countries in the world without the opposition. Opposition is useful. And then finally, those who are abroad, they say for those who are in the bushes around the country, they contribute financially for their wellbeing in the forests. If you have money in the forest, what do you do with it? I told one, a relative of mine, a surgeon, to also come home with his wife and children, if he is serious, so that others should contribute money and give him to live and fight in the forest. Since then, he has not telephoned me."

In an interview with CRTV's Joe Chebonkeng, Cardinal Tumi once defended Separatist fighters, stating that "We pray for these boys in the bushes, we pray for the army. Most of the killing is done by the army, it is



Cardinal Tumi with SDF Chairman Ni John Fru Ndi. Moderate Anglophone voices are targets of criticism from separatist forces and the government.

not done by the boys.

'Do you have empirical facts', Joe Chebonkeng asked, "of course, objective studies", the Cardinal responded "and it is still going on. In Kumbo, 400 people have been killed, the Bishop of Kumbo Diocese and his priests have made a study and the majority of those who have been killed, have not been killed by these boys. They do not have the sophisticated arms that the army has, maybe if they had, they would have killed more, but they don't have. The army comes in, maybe a rebel boy has killed a military officer and run away, the army comes in, enter a family and they kill everybody" 'is that true?', Chebonkeng asked, to which the Cardinal responded at the top of his voice, "it is perfectly true, and I am ready to die for it."

The Cardinal who spearheaded the botched All Anglophone General Conference, in an interview with Equinoxe TV, had confessed that a survey conducted by the organisers to sample the preferences of Anglophones in Cameroon regarding the form of state was deliberately tailored to blot out the option of separation. He however stated that the majority of respondents opted for total separation, even when they tried to take away that option. "In our questionnaire to the Anglophones on the form of state, we tried to influence the Anglophone opinion, but we did

not succeed. Therefore, it shows how deep the problem is."

The Cardinal said when they asked respondents about their preferred form of state, they deliberately named just unitary, decentralisation, and federation, and intentionally left out the option of total independence, "69 percent of Anglophones said they wanted absolute separation, that was the word they used, that is to say, secession".

The Cardinal said the respondents in the space provided for other options, opted for absolute separation. He said the report was drafted, and sent to the President, through the Prime Minister.

Expressing a personal view, Cardinal Tumi has repeatedly said in a dialogue, the option of separation should be on the table, and if the separatists convince others that it is the best option, it should be granted, especially as the two factions that make up modern Cameroon were once separated.

Cardinal Tumi's Sympathy For Separatists Dwindles

On Thursday, November 5, 2020, Christian Cardinal Tumi and the Fon of Nso, HRM Sem Mbinglo were abducted in Babessi, as their convoy drove to the Nso palace, where the Fon had escaped earlier on, as a result of the crisis.

In Babessi, the two were abducted

and hours later, the Cardinal was released. Following his release, Cardinal Tumi wrote a book titled, "My Night In Captivity" in which unlike before, he proposed that it would be best for the country, if the military takes over the whole country, including the troubled regions.

The Cardinal opined that in such a situation of military takeover, power is also taken from the separatists, and then the military organises an election in which a leader for the country is chosen, to bring order to the whole country. In some of his media outings, the Cardinal in his shift from a pro-separatists stand, rather suggested that the greater fight should be for the unity of Africa, so that the little fights like creation of new states can be put to rest.

Personally, the Cardinal says he favours Federalism as the best option. In Babessi, while in separatists' custody, the Cardinal told them that he will rather opt for Federalism than secession. Like many Anglophones, the Cardinal might have grown weary of some of the atrocities carried out by separatists, and thus fears a scenario where they take over and build a society where opposing voices are not entertained. However, like any progressive voice, Cardinal Tumi still supports the option that all opinions should be entertained, and whichever the afflicted and concerned persons favour should be adopted.



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Q and A with Dr. Andrew Nkoyoyo On The Power of Miracles

By Ajong Mbapndah L

Miracles are not the exclusive reserve of a select few, says Dr Andrew Nkoyoyo Founder and President of the Kingdom Impact Ministry. In his latest book titled *Catch and Release God's Supernatural: Keys to Operating in God's Miracles, Healing, and Power*, Dr Nkoyoyo demystifies the notion that accessing God's supernatural power is always reserved for those involved in ministry and endowed with unique spiritual gifts. The influential and busy preacher took time off his hectic schedule to field questions from PAV on his ministry, new book, and more.

Dr. Andrew Nkoyoyo, thanks for accepting to answer our questions and we will like to start with an introduction, for those who do not know you, who is Dr Andrew Nkoyoyo?

Dr. Andrew Nkoyoyo is the founder and president of the Kingdom Impact Ministry. He is a revivalist, international speaker, host of the Kingdom Come television program, apostolic/prophetic minister, author, missionary from Uganda, East Africa to the United States of America. Additionally, Andrew is a member of Harvest International Ministry, an apostolic network. After many years of evangelistic, apostolic, and revival work in Africa,

God called him into the mission field of America in mid-1999. Andrew demonstrates a powerful anointing that has brought many people to salvation, healing, deliverance, and enabled them to engage in the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit. He trains, mentors, and equips the body of Christ to walk in the highest realms of God's supernatural power and glory. He has impacted lives face to face in over twenty countries and reaches people daily in over 195 countries through his Kingdom Come broadcast program and streaming media. Andrew has shared miracle healing



The Kingdom Impact Ministry led by Dr Andrew Nkoyoyo reaches audiences in 195 countries daily through its broadcast and streaming media.

and revival stories on Sid Roth's television program *It's Supernatural*. He has also shared the platform with world renown speakers and Christian recording artists such as The Newsboys, For King and Country, Nick Vujicic, Jaci Velasquez, Sidewalk Prophets, Kutless, The Afters, Uncle Reese, and many more.

Andrew is the author of *Working the Works of God*, a book expounding on the keys to supernatural ministry. Together with his team, he carries the message of holiness, healing, transformation and revival to America and the nations.

In his healing schools and in miracle crusade services, conferences, churches, festivals, media outreaches, and revival centers around the world, he ministers the gospel with manifestations of supernatural signs and wonders.

Andrew Nkoyoyo accepted Jesus as his Lord and Savior at age fourteen. His ministry began one year later when he prayed for a blind man, and God instantly healed him in front of the large crowd. At sixteen, Andrew held his first evangelistic gospel

crusade, and by eighteen, he launched out in full-time ministry. Since then, God has been using Andrew in international healing and prophetic ministry. He has conducted gospel crusades and conferences in Africa, Europe, and North America.

Andrew was at the forefront of a prayer and outreach movement that ignited a nationwide transformational revival in his native country of Uganda, Africa. He is touching lives through his prophetic ministry and by demonstrating God's supernatural power. As a result, many are saved, healed, set free, and empowered to reach their God-ordained destiny.

In September of 2014, Jesus appeared to Andrew and commissioned him, saying, "Focus on being My voice. Bring people back to Me. Prepare them for My return, and call My church to awaken to fulfill the great commission." For this reason, Andrew focuses on inspiring and impacting lives in the churches and communities toward a great spiritual revival that has the power to transform society by equipping people to catch and release God's

supernatural love and power daily.

Andrew is married to Mona, and they have four beautiful children and make their home in Montrose, Colorado, in the United States of America.

Could you tell us a little more about the Kingdom Impact Ministry that you run, what is its mission, where is it located and what is its reach?

Our mission is to bring people back to Christ, prepare the Church—the bride of Christ for His soon and eminent return to earth, mobilize and equip the Body of Christ to fulfill the great commission in the power of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of miracles, signs and wonders.

Our ministry is located in Montrose, CO, United States of America

We reach audiences in 195 countries daily through our broadcast and streaming media.

What makes your ministry stand out from the ones that we see all over the world?

What makes our ministry unique from other ministries is the fact that we not only preach and teach the Word of God in power but we are also showing everyday Christians how to operate in God's power to impact their own lives and their world. That's what many people who are part of our ministry tell us.

In addition to leading the ministry, we also understand you are an international speaker, host of the Kingdom Come TV program, and author, how do you juggle all these roles?

So, I don't burn out, I only accept a few speaking engagements each year that are in line with God's vision for our ministry. I also, have created a repeatable schedule for my team and I to follow in accomplishing the various tasks. That way, we have plenty of margin in our time to spend with

God in prayer and His Word, family and ministry. I use time management techniques such as time blocks to organize my everyday work such as writing for an hour from three to four o'clock in the afternoon.

Catch and Release God's Supernatural: Keys to Operating in God's Miracles, Healing, and Power is the title of your latest book, can you shed some light on this for us, what is the message you seek to convey in the book?

In Catch and Release God's Supernatural, I burst the myth that many Christians have that accessing God's supernatural power is always reserved for those involved in ministry and endowed with unique spiritual gifts. After all, a lot has been said about miracles, but unfortunately, not much has been done to support the possibility, this book changes that. The reader will discover that the ability to access and operate in God's supernatural power is something that all believers have and can cultivate, and don't need to possess unique spiritual gift.

Also, Catch and Release God's Supernatural, shows the reader how to activate their faith to operate in the power of God to impact their lives and the lives of others through miracles, healing, deliverance, signs and wonders.

As I shares true stories of miracles I've experienced both personally and in ministry in every chapter, I take the reader by the hand to teach them how they too can operate in the same power. Regardless of their spiritual maturity or call, even if they're a new believer with no prior experience in God's supernatural, God has given them the keys to access heaven. So within the pages, I:

Show the reader how the power of God will make a shift in their life

Reveal the simple yet powerful kingdom keys, secrets, and methods needed to release God's supernatural

Guide them step by step on how to apply each kingdom key in their life

Even before they finish reading the book, their confidence in God's ability to use them will increase, and the wall

of impossibilities will come tumbling down. I invite the reader to simply open the cover, start reading, and then get ready to catch and release the supernatural power of God!

Can you situate the importance of miracles in the world we live in today, and how are they triggered?

The ministry of Jesus was more than eighty percent miracles? Why? Because miracles are proof of God's love, grace, mercy, God's nature, character and power to us.

Also, miracles bring the presence and power of an invisible God and reveal Him in our physical world as we experience healing, signs and wonders.

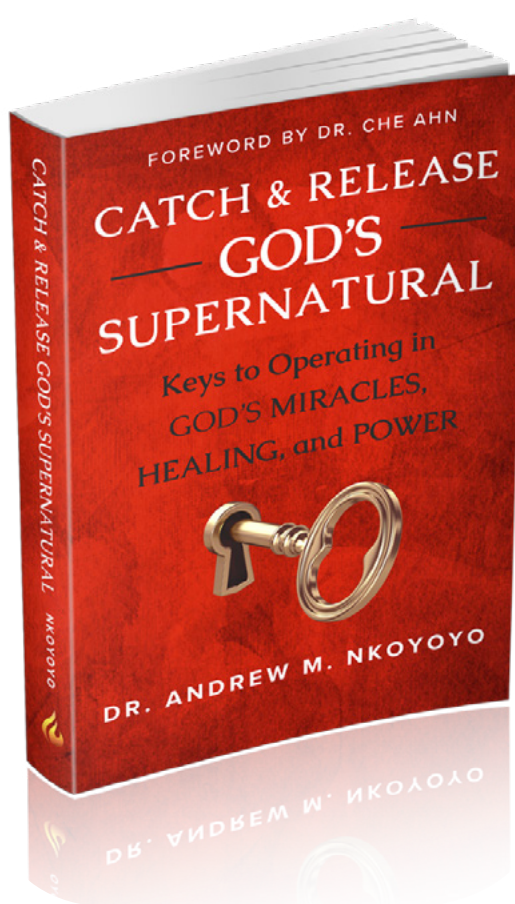
Miracles are also a sign and wonder to those who doubt the power of God or don't believe the gospel of Christ and His deity.

Miracles are triggered when we use one or more of the Biblical keys, methods and steps that are covered extensively in Catch and Release God's Supernatural.

What gives some people the ability to work or invoke miracles and not others?

The Holy Spirit supplies His power or the power of God to every Christian. So, every believer in Christ has the ability to work miracles. The only problem is that most Christians don't know the Biblical keys, methods, steps to take to unlock the miracle-working power in and through their lives. That's why, I wrote Catch and Release God's Supernatural to show them how.

There are many ordinary people out there who cling tightly to what religious leaders tell them, how can they make a distinction between real and fake miracles, we have sometimes read some men of God using different



powers from diverse sources for miracles that will give them fame, how do Christians know who to trust when it comes to miracles?

The Bible tell us to test all spirits. We do that by testing those men and women to make sure that their theology (preaching and teaching) is in line with the Word of God. Are they using nonbiblical ways to get the power or minister that power to their audience? Do they require their parishioners to do certain rituals, drink the so-called holy water or give money to get the anointing? If so, those ministers are out of line with the Bible and not ministering from true Spirit of the living God.

May we get your take on the penchant for African church leaders, even very prominent ones to make prophecies about US elections that sometimes fall flat, one prominent said in 2016 that God had revealed a victory of Hillary Clinton, and this cycle, many are those who went public that God had revealed a Trump victory to them, what do

you make of this?

This is a concern of mine as well, but I would rather deal with this issue separately in a different article in the future if you would like.

Dr Nkoyoyo is familiar with realities in a continent like Africa and the development challenges there, in Ghana, Cameroon, Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya, and many other countries, there has been a boom in churches, with people spending a great deal of time of church, do you think the continue can pray its way to the change and progress it needs?

Though I have invites from the highlighted countries above, I have never traveled there yet. Instead of those you can include Tanzania, South Africa, Botswana.

Prayer is crucial to seeing a spiritual and moral revival but in order to see transformation of society, prayer and has go hand in hand with action out of the church into communities. There's power in power, but prayer alone is not enough. They need to become the answers to their prayers by taking action to impact society. In the book is a story of revival and transformation that will both encourage and also show them how to partner with God through prayer and action.

For those interested in getting the book, where can it be obtained and for those who may read and have questions of a religious or spiritual nature, can they reach out to you?

They can get the book from our website: <https://www.kingdomimpactministry.org/supernaturalGod> or Amazon.com

Can they reach out to you?

Sure. They can contact me at contact@kingdomimpactministry.org

For Prophet Lovy 2021 A Year Of Walking With The Presence Of God

By Ajong Mbapndah L

2021 should be a year of walking in the presence of God and seeking his face continually says Prophet Lovy L. Elias, Pastor & founder of the Revelation Church of Jesus Christ in Los Angeles, California. The declaration made during his crossover service, came from a message received from God, he says.

“God desires us to be in a higher place with Him, so that we can achieve and receive what He has given us to do,” says Prophet Lovy in an interview with PAV. According to the Kenyan born and raised Prophet, the manifestation of God is dependent on the realms we walk. If you walk the realm of the lukewarm, the manifestation of God that you receive will be lukewarm, says Prophet Lovy who also fielded questions on the Revelation Church, COVID 19, and more.

Thanks for accepting to grant this interview Prophet Lovy, to readers out there who do not know you, could we start with an introduction in your own words, who is Prophet Lovy?

I'm a simple man who loves God and desires to live for Him, in every way.

How did you receive the calling, we understand at some point you were into music, can you walk us into the transition and transformation into the Prophet Lovy the world knows today?

God began to speak to me from the age of 6, and anyone who knows something about the prophetic will understand that music is a huge part of it. The journey through music was a conduit of the work God gave me to do today. I already knew I would do music, then begin to minister inside the church and then to the world. Ministry is what God tells you to do; so, being an artist was a part of my early ministry.



God desires us to be in a higher place with Him, so that we can achieve and receive what He has given us to do, says Prophet Lovy.

With regards to the Revelation Church of Jesus Christ that you lead, what is driving philosophy of the church and what is its membership like?

The philosophy of the church is very simple: it is to LOVE God with all your heart, all your mind, all your soul and all your strength and love your neighbor as yourself. By doing so we are able to win the world back to God and forever change lives. Our church body is incredible. We are a family, we are continuously growing, and the most amazing part is our love for the Lord Jesus, the lost and those who suffer.

How did COVID 19 affect the operations of the church and what adjustments did you do to stay connected with your Christians and to keep things

running?

On the contrary, we did greater exploits during this COVID-19 Pandemic than we ever had before. We understand nothing can stop the move of God. Throughout Christian history it is evident that the move of God was impossible to stop. When opposition arose, God would show up and His mighty hand would be displayed through the exploits of His children. Our ministry grew even greater during the break, our online ministry grew even stronger and we were able to buy our first church building, by reason of the Hand of God upon us. What people think is a disadvantage is actually the opposite. What is disadvantageous to others is an advantage for those that believe God.

In your cross over service you declared 2021 a year of walking with the Presence of God and

seeking His face continually, can you shed more light on this?

God spoke to me. He said He desires us to walk not only in a deeper relationship with Him, but also in deeper realms of Him. God is manifested in the realms you walk in. The manifestation of God is dependent on the realms you walk in. If you walk in the realm of “lukewarm” the manifestation of God you have will be lukewarm. As it is written “Draw closer to me and I will draw closer to you” It is imperative to be rooted in God and consistently go deeper. God desires us to be in a higher place with Him, so that we can achieve and receive what He has given us to do.

There are many today who claim all sorts of titles and with bizarre things done in the name of God, with prophecies that are phony, what advise does Prophet Lovy have to enable ordinary people out there distinguish between men and women of God who are real and those that are charlatans?

The reason people are deceived is because they don't have a relationship with the Holy Spirit. The seal of a man or woman of God is the Presence of God with them. It is not in the words they speak. Many people are caught up in the words others say, but it is about the manifestation of Jesus with them. The bible says in the last days, there will be so much deception that if it were possible (key phrase is IF IT WERE POSSIBLE) the very elect would be deceived. According to the bible, it is impossible to deceive the elect. My advice is to not look to what people say, but for you to continually look to your relationship with God.

You recently announced the official opening of the new worship center and headquarters of the Revelation Church on the 7th of February 2021, can Prophet Lovy

share some insights on the new structure and how the launching will look like?

We welcome everyone to visit and experience for yourselves. All I can say is that this is going to be powerful and it will glorify God.

With your church located in California, what ties does Prophet Lovy maintain or have with Kenya, the D. R. Congo, and the rest of Africa?

I was born and raised in Kenya; I will always love Africa and by God's grace I will be there with you all in the times to come.

Prophet Lovy Elias is also a life coach to celebrities and athletes and a businessman, how do you blend these other activities with

your pastoral duties?

They are my pastoral duties. Prophets were advisors to kings and regular citizens. Where God calls you and who God calls you to will always be connected to your calling and mission in the earth. The prophet's duty is to lead you to God for eternal success, and to who all who are called to hear me God will meet them as he has met me.

Any last word to wrap up this interview?

I am grateful to have taken part in this interview, with you. For all those who are reading, the Lord Jesus bless and keep you. Shalom.



What is disadvantageous to others is an advantage for those that believe God, says Prophet Lovy on how his Church has fared during the COVID pandemic.

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Debunking Covid-19 Myths and Facts as Africa Starts Rolling Out Vaccines

By Prince Kurupati

Since early 2020, Covid-19 has been ravaging lives and livelihoods world over. The scourge of the corona virus pandemic pushed many health researchers and scientists to bring their minds together into finding a vaccine that would help in saving lives and livelihoods. In the past months, great inroads have been made and today, there are several vaccines that are ready for distribution.

Moving in tandem with other nations, many African countries have already put in place measures aimed at implementing massive Covid-19 vaccine distribution. However, as African countries are about to start rolling out the vaccines, different theories and conspiracies have been conjured up – some true some false. In this article, we aim at separating myths and facts so that all African citizens know what is true and what is false when it comes to Covid-19 vaccines.

FACT: There's No Microchip or Tracking Device in any Vaccine

Conspiracy talk about the end times (biblical reference) have had many worried that Covid-19 vaccines are here to usher in the start of the end times as all those who take the vaccine will end up having microchips or tracking devices. The conspiracy further gained ground when Bill Gates suggested creating a digital certificate of vaccine records. This however, was quickly shot down with Bill Gates being labeled the top subject of Covid-19 misinformation by media analysis company Zignal Labs and CNBC. Covid-19 vaccines do not come with any microchips or tracking devices.

MYTH: Safety and efficacy of vaccines is questionable owing to the record time it was



Photo Credit: Pharmaceutical Technology

developed

Over the years, the world has experienced many pandemics some of which have been as a result of viruses such as Covid-19. However, in recollections, many people state that it took years upon years for health scientists to come up with effective vaccines. In the case of Covid-19 vaccines however, the whole process seems rushed as it took just months for some vaccines to be developed. In any case, no substantive clinical trials were done to determine the efficacy of the virus. Owing to this, many people believe that the Covid-19 vaccines are questionable when it comes to issues of safety and efficacy.

However, according to health professionals, Covid-19 vaccines are safe for use. Chief Physician Jeremy Cauwels, M.D, says we know more about this virus and vaccine, scientifically, than any other vaccine in history. From both a science and safety standpoint, experts believe this is going to be exceptionally safe. Pfizer has run tests that include more than 44,000 people. An FDA analysis of the vaccine's safety and effectiveness on people aged 16 and older found "no specific safety concerns" that would preclude the vaccine's use.

FACT: A Few Days of Side

Effects after Taking the Vaccine Means Its Working

After taking the vaccine, one will most likely experience one form of discomfort or the other. Some may experience soreness, other fatigue and others inflammation soon after the injection. Nothing to worry really when this happens as this means that your body is building its immune response. People just need to note that different individuals will react differently after taking the vaccine.

MYTH: Covid-19 Vaccine Changes your DNA

Some people believe that authorities are using the Covid-19 vaccine to create databases which they may use in future for all sorts of things including the nefarious. This however, is far from the truth. Covid-19 vaccines do nothing to alter a person's DNA. According to Dr. Cauwels, "This vaccine is a way to code for a protein, just as you would if you get any other infection. Naturally, we're just tricking the body into doing it without getting the infection... This is absolutely as close to anything we could make to what your body would naturally expect."

FACT: Covid-19 Vaccines Will Not Give You Novel Corona

Virus

There is a wide belief among some Africans that the West and the East were not particularly happy with how Africa was spared the worst during the first wave of the corona virus pandemic. As such, they came up with the concept of vaccines to further spread the virus in African countries. This however, is all but a myth as Covid-19 vaccines do not infect one with the novel corona virus.

MYTH: Vaccine Causes Infertility

Depopulation conspiracies have been discussed in the public realm ever since the first cases of Covid-19 were reported. Many argued that Covid-19 was just a plot to usher in a new world order by depopulating the earth. There are still many people who believe that and they think that the vaccines are a way that global leaders have devised to further their depopulation agenda. On this front, conspiracy mongers believe the vaccines cause infertility. However, this conspiracy has been shot down by health professionals stating Covid-19 vaccines do not affect the fertility of humans nor does it have any other long-term effects.

FACT: No one Knows How Durable the Vaccine Is

According to Dr. Cauwels, "The vaccine has only been around for three or four months since it came off the line. Since the virus has been around for just under one year, what we don't know yet is how durable that effect is... Corona virus doesn't change rapidly like some of the other viruses, like influenza, that we redo every year. So we don't anticipate this being a recurrent vaccination. Is there a booster after the initial? Yes, but we're not looking at recurrence right now."



File Photo President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa visits a COVID 19 treatment facility in Johannesburg. Photo Jerome Delay, Reuters.

MYTH: I Was Infected Before So No Need for Me to Take the Vaccine

Growing up, we have been told that once you are infected by a virus, your body develops antibodies that help you fight the virus if it wants to infect you later on. One great example being, of course, chicken pox. While this is the case, Chief Medical Officer of Good Samaritan Society Gregory Johnson, M.D., says “There were participants in the trial (vaccination) who had already had COVID. They were vaccinated. We don’t have the greatest confidence that just getting it will keep you immune. We grew up with chicken pox. That’s not working on this one.” Dr. Cauwels echoed with the sentiments adding “Getting the vaccine is one way we can make sure somebody is walking around knowing they’re immune, rather than thinking they’re immune and could possible get sick again.”

Zimbabwe: A Heavy Toll on Top Government Officials From COVID 19

By Prince Kurupati

On Wednesday 27, January 2021, Zimbabwe laid to rest three top government officials at the National Heroes Acre in Harare – all of whom succumbed to Covid-19. Among the three was Foreign Affairs and International Trade Minister SB Moyo, a former army general famed for announcing the military coup that toppled then President Robert Mugabe in November 2017.

In announcing the passing of Minister SB Moyo, acting Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services Minister Jenfan Muswere said that the former army general had passed at a local hospital. The former army general suffered from a kidney condition but died in a medical facility a few days after testing positive to Covid-19.

SB Moyo became a popular figure both within the confines of the Zimbabwean borders and beyond in November, 2017 when he appeared on state television Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC)



SB announced the coup that toppled President Mugabe. Photo credit, the Herald

announcing that the military had taken control over the country as it wanted to get rid of ‘criminal elements’ surrounding then president Robert Mugabe. SB Moyo’s appearance on state television paved the way for the events that ultimately led to the end of Mugabe’s reign. The man who

succeeded Mugabe elevated SB Moyo from the military to the presidium as he was accorded the special Foreign Affairs and International Trade portfolio.

On the day of his burial, SB Moyo was buried alongside two other top government officials that is, Joel

Biggie Matiza who was the Minister of Transport and Infrastructure Development and former Zimbabwe Prison Service Commissioner-General Paradzai Zimhondi. In the same week that these three passed away, Zimbabwe also lost three other liberation heroes to Covid-19 that is,

Morton Malianga who was the former deputy minister of finance in the 1980s, Dr Ellen Gwaradzimba who was the minister of provincial affairs for Manicaland Province and Cde Mukudzei Midzi who was part of the Dare ReChimurenga, the war council constituted to execute the liberation struggle. Dr Ellen Gwaradzimba and Cde Malianga were accorded national hero status and were buried on Thursday 28, January, 2021. Though not declared a national hero hence not buried at the National Heroes Acre, Cde Midzi was accorded a state-assisted funeral in recognition of his commitment to freeing the country from settler control.

The death of six top government officials in a space of just one week owing to Covid-19 has put a dark cloud on the country. At a time when everyone should be working together to see to it that the pandemic is contained in the soonest possible time to prevent further loss of life, the pandemic has however divided the nation further. On one side is the general population which castigates the government for doing the bare minimum when it comes to containing the pandemic. Many are still angered by the government's response to the Draxgate Scandal which happened earlier on in 2020 when top government officials were implicated in a syndicate that siphoned Covid-19 funds meant to buy personal protective equipment and other medical tools. Some of the implicated officials were given a free pass while others escaped with paltry fines and others were arrested but never convicted.

The government on the other side castigates the public for not taking the pandemic seriously thus endangering their lives. Other officials including the government spokesperson Nick Mangwana view medical doctors as responsible for the spike in infections and fatalities amongst top government officials. In a Twitter rant (later apologized), the government spokesperson accused medical doctors for being 'medical assassins' who possess the keys to determine who lives and who dies. "This is what's



Joel Biggie Matiza Minister of Transport and Infrastructure Development died from COVID related complications.

leading to the unfortunate conspiracy theory that there are certain political players being eliminated in hospitals by political activists hiding behind medical qualifications... political assassins hiding behind medical qualifications."

Zimbabwe is currently under a 30-day lockdown. However, some government critics say the spike in infections and fatalities including that of top government officials is a clear testament that a lockdown on its own is not sufficient to contain the pandemic. The spokesman of the main opposition party Movement of Democratic Change Alliance (MDC-Alliance) Clifford Hlatshwayo said, "Zimbabwe has more than 90 per cent of its population in the informal sector and those in the streets just roaming around... Those are the people who do not have money to go to China. Government is able to get to China to get proper medical things. Our health institutions are in a sorry state. And for years the government has not shown interest in upgrading them and making sure that our health institutions are equipped

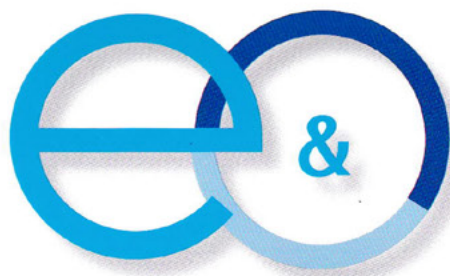
with proper and adequate equipment. Our frontline workers do not have adequate PPEs, drugs, even oxygen."

At the present moment, Zimbabwe hasn't yet started rolling out a mass vaccination program. The country's President Emmerson Mnangagwa said that the government health officials are still deciding which vaccine to acquire. Speaking before a parliamentary committee, the director of epidemiology and disease control in the ministry of health Portia Manangazira said the country's all-weather friends Russia and China "might offer a small donation".

Just as bleak as the situation in Zimbabwe so too is the one in Malawi. On Tuesday 12 January, 2021, Malawi lost four top officials to Covid-19. The four include two cabinet ministers and two other senior political figures. Namely, these are former Local Government Minister Lingson Berekanyama, former Transport Minister Sidik Mia, former Governor of Malawi's central bank Francis Perekamoyo and the Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Information Ernest Kantchentche.

According to sources in Malawi, the officials contracted the virus during the gatherings conducted by the presidium over the festive holiday. On December 21, 2020, all 31 of Malawi's cabinet attended a meeting in the president's Oval Office. The following day, Labour minister Ken Kandodo reported having contracted the virus.

Malawi opened its borders over the festive season and a high number of returnees mostly from South Africa came back home. General consensus points to the fact that the returnees brought with them the new highly contagious South African variant which ultimately led to the spike in cases of both infection and fatalities. President Chakwera has since advised that the nation has "entered the eye of this pandemic's storm." As such, he urged extra caution stating that Malawians have to observe all security protocols – to wear their masks properly at all times and socially distance to help prevent the spread of the corona virus.



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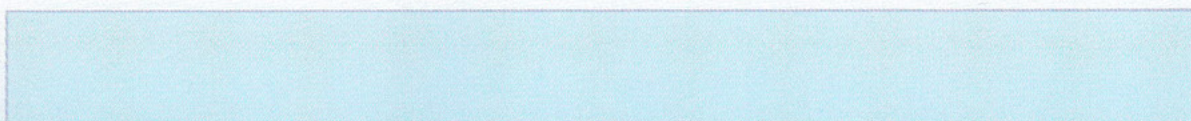
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SPECIAL REPORT: A Lifeline for African Entrepreneurs from the Jack Ma Foundation ABH Awards

By Ajong Mbapndah L

For a continent full of potentials but limited in opportunities, the African Business Heroes -ABH prize competition and show organized by the Africa Netpreneur Prize Initiative (ANPI), the Jack Ma Foundation's flagship philanthropic program in Africa, is proving to be a veritable lifeline for many Africans.

With the aim of identifying, supporting and inspiring the next generation of African entrepreneurs making a difference in their community, the ABH awards have generated tremendous excitement across the continent. From \$1 million in the inaugural edition in 2019, the laureates of the second edition in 2020 shared a total of \$1.5 million in prize money.

Open to entrepreneurs across all sectors and African countries, the ABH has a special focus on those building up their local communities and working to solve the most pressing problems.

From three different countries, in three different regions, two females and one male, with projects ranging from renewable energy, health and micro finances, the top three laureates of the second edition sum up the challenges and hopes of a continent on the move.

PAV revisits the 2020 edition with exclusive interviews of Zahra Baitie Partnerships & Program Manager,

Meet the Top 3 Africa's Business Heroes Finalists for 2020

They Came. They Pitched. They Won.

1st Runner Up
Oluwasoga Oni
 Mdaas Global
 Nigeria 🇳🇮
\$250,000

Grand Prize Winner
Chebet Lesan
 Bright Green Renewable Energy
 Kenya 🇰🇪
\$300,000

2nd Runner Up
Ethel Mupambwa
 Moneymart Finance
 Zimbabwe 🇿🇼
\$150,000

AFRICA'S BUSINESS HEROES

Africa Netpreneur Prize Initiative (ANPI) at the Jack Ma Foundation, winner of the Africa's Business Heroes (ABH) 2020 Awards Chebet Lesan from Kenya, 1st Runner Up from Zimbabwe. Oluwasoga Oni from Nigeria, and Ethel Mupambwa 2nd Runner up

"Africa's Business Heroes" From Kenya, Nigeria And Zimbabwe Awarded In Grand Finale

By Samuel Ouma

Kenyan businesswoman Chebet Lesan bagged the 2020 Africa Business Heroes Awards and carried home US\$300 000. She will also receive mentorship from the Jack Ma Foundation.

Lesan is the founder and CEO of Kenya-based Bright Green Renewable Energy, a company that produces life-saving and eco-friendly fuel bricks.

The second prize was scooped by Nigeria's Oluwasoga Oni, the founder and CEO of MDaaS Global. This firm builds and operates modern, tech-enabled diagnostic centers in clinically underserved communities. Oni was awarded US\$250,000.

Zimbabwean Ethel Mupambwa of Moneymart, a Zimbabwean based microfinance institution, emerged

third, winning the US \$150,000.

The seven other finalists each got a cash prize of \$100,000.

The African Business Heroes competition is a Jack Ma Foundation-led program to identify, support, and inspire African entrepreneurs. The 2020 edition attracted over 22,000 applicants from all 54 African nations. They represented

11 key sectors and industries of the African economy, such as agriculture, fashion, education, healthcare, manufacturing, e-commerce, renewable energy, financial services, food & beverage services, retail, and transportation. According to the foundation, the award, which is in its second year, will run for ten years.

Top Ten Winners

Chebet Lesan, Founder & CEO, Bright Green R. Energy (Kenya) First Place Winner «Revolutionizing Africa's kitchens» - BrightGreen Energy produces life-saving fuel bricks that reduce the cost of cooking for underserved communities across Africa and save forests. The company is led by Chebet Lesan who has a background in Leadership from The University of Cambridge, Product Design from The University of Nairobi, Supply Chain Management from Rutgers School of Business and a Business-Design Fellowship

from Massachusetts Institute of Technology D-lab.

Oluwasoga Oni, CEO & Co-Founder, Mdaas Global (Nigeria) Second Place Winner «Unlocking diagnostics for Africa's next billion» - MDaaS Global builds and operates modern, tech-enabled diagnostic centers in clinically-underserved communities starting in Nigeria to provide a world-class patient experience at highly-affordable prices. The company is led by Oluwasoga Oni, an MIT-trained system engineer

Ethel Mupambwa, Co-Founder and Executive Director, Moneymart (Zimbabwe) Third Place Winner and People's Choice Award Winner «Creating wealth; changing lives» - Moneymart is a Zimbabwean based microfinance institution that offers tailor-made business loans to MSMEs and individuals who live off the power grid to access 2 quality solar-lighting-kits. The company is co-led by Ethel Mupambwa, who has nine years of experience in finance and is a Level 2 Chartered Financial Analyst Candidate.

Abdulai A Dasana, CEO & COO, Amaati Company Limited (Ghana) «We nourish the world» - Amaati is a social enterprise whose mission

is to build sustainable communities through the use of an extinct and neglected crop called Fonio. The company is led by Abdulai A. Dasana, an agricultural technologist with a decade of experience in finance, banking and SMEs, and with a vision to revolutionize the agriculture sector to benefit the most vulnerable.

Aboubakar Karim, CEO & Founder, INVESTIV (Côte d'Ivoire) «Technology and passion for agriculture» - INVESTIV is an Ivorian company whose mission is to help build the future of African agriculture by leveraging innovative technologies to support smallholder farmers throughout Côte d'Ivoire and West Africa. The company is led by Aboubakar Karim, a 25 years old agro-economist.

Axel Emmanuel Gbaou, CEO & Founder, Le Chocolatier Ivorien (Côte d'Ivoire) «Cocoa revolution in progress» - Le Chocolatier Ivorien manufactures and offers Africa-made, handcrafted and quality chocolate, promoting sustainable cultivation techniques and a fairer distribution of income in the cocoa chain through a direct partnership with female growers. The founder Axel, who started his career as a banker and

established the company in his mother's kitchen, holds a degree in International Public Law, and a Master's in Taxation.

Cyrille Nkontchou, Founder & Chairman, Enko Education (Cameroon) «Your launchpad to the best universities» - Enko Education operates the largest single network of private schools in Africa that teaches the International Baccalaureate curriculum to democratize access to quality international education for African youth. The company was founded by Cyrille Nkontchou, an economist by training with extensive experience as a fund manager, a banker and a consultant.

Dr. Emma Naluyima Mugerwa, Founder, MST Junior School (Uganda) «Little seeds, big dreams» - MST Junior School is a Primary School with a unique approach and learning model, aiming to equip the pupils with unique skills that they can then leverage to solve community issues such as food insecurity, waste management and malnutrition. The school was established by Dr. Emma Naluyima, a vet, farmer and educator with a desire to train young people and change their lives through Modern and Purposeful Farming.

Joan Rukundo Nalubega, CEO & Founder, Uganics (Uganda) «Buy a soap - save lives» - Uganics is a social business that manufactures life-saving organic antimalaria soap to address malaria, which kills millions of people every year, and sells around the world at a high profit margin to subsidize sales to poor populations at the same price as regular soap. The company is led by Joan Rukundo Nalubega, a Malaria survivor and a social entrepreneur with a vision to fight Malaria.

Mame Diarra Bousso Gueye, CEO & Founder, Diarrablou (Senegal) «Artisans & algorithms for a conscious lifestyle» - Diarrablou is a Senegalese fashion tech company merging African artisan traditions with technology to empower African artisans and build an ethical and sustainable fashion future centered around ancestral African craftsmanship. The company is led by Diarra Gueye who has experience in finance, mathematics, and design and recently completed her Master's at Stanford University with a focus on creative mathematics.



Abdulai Dasana
AMAATI COMPANY LTD

GHANA



Chebet Lesan
BRIGHTGREEN
RENEWABLE ENERGY

KENYA



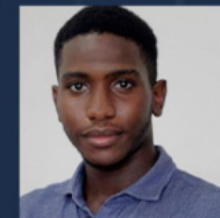
Diarra Bousso
DIARRA BLU

SENEGAL



Cyrille Nkontchou
ENKO EDUCATION

CAMEROON



Aboubakar Karim
INVESTIV

COTE D'IVOIRE



Axel Emmanuel Gbaou
LE CHOCOLATIER IVORIEN

COTE D'IVOIRE



Oluwasoga Oni
MDAAS GLOBAL

NIGERIA



Ethel Mupambwa
MONEYMART FINANCE

ZIMBABWE



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We Hope To Spark A Movement Around Entrepreneurship In Africa-Zahra Baitie

By Ajong Mbapndah L

“Our hope is that in 10 years, we will have identified, spotlighted and supported 100 entrepreneur heroes from Africa whose stories will inspire the continent and beyond,” says Zahra Baitie, Partnerships & Program Manager of Africa Netpreneur Prize Initiative (ANPI) at Jack Ma Foundation.

Discussing the ABH Awards with PAV, Zahra says in two years the sum of \$2.5 million has been disbursed in grant funds to 20 inspiring African entrepreneur heroes from 11 countries.

With plans underway for additional funds on training, to developing a platform to connect the circa 30000 entrepreneurs who have applied to the program with each other as well as with investors, service providers and mentors, the ABH awards are on course to make a profoundly consequential impact on the development and economic landscape in Africa.

“We hope to spark a movement around entrepreneurship in Africa so that an entire ecosystem of stakeholders work hand in hand to create new opportunities together,” says Zahra Baitie

Thanks for accepting to grant this interview, could you start by introducing Jack Ma Foundation and the Africa’s Business Heroes (ABH) Awards for us?

It’s a pleasure – thank you for providing us the opportunity to introduce the Africa’s Business Heroes prize competition. The prize is the Jack Ma Foundation’s flagship program in Africa and was launched in 2018 with the mission to spotlight entrepreneurs from across Africa to showcase their talent and businesses.

Every year, the competition identifies and awards grant funding to 10 entrepreneur heroes. Their stories and pitches are given a global platform



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in the finale, which is televised as the “Africa’s Business Heroes” Show and distributed across Africa via local and pan-African broadcasters such as StarTimes and DSTV and across the globe via YouTube & Youku. We hope this Show can serve as a learning opportunity for aspiring entrepreneurs as they watch our top 10 pitch to legendary business leaders like Strive Masiyiwa and Ibukun Awosika first-hand.

Over the course of 10 years, we will recognize 100 outstanding African entrepreneurs and allocate US\$100 million in grant funding, training programs, and support for the broad African entrepreneurial ecosystem. We are committed to give entrepreneurs across Africa a platform to develop their business ideas and inspire others to pursue entrepreneurship.

The ABH is in its second year now, may we know how much has gone out in prize money since its inception?

To date, we have disbursed \$2.5 million in grant funds to 20 inspiring African entrepreneur heroes from 11 countries.

In our inaugural year, we awarded \$1 million to our Top 10 Heroes. Following the success of our 2019 Grand Finale and ABH Show, we pledged additional funds to the ABH program bringing the total size of our fund to \$100 million and increased the yearly prize pool for the Top 10 from \$1 million to \$1.5 million. Now, the 1st Place Hero wins a \$300,000 grant; the 2nd place Hero wins \$250,000, the third place Hero wins a \$150,000 all other 7 Heroes gain a \$100,000 in grant funds.

In addition, we will be investing additional funds on training for entrepreneurs and developing a platform to connect the ~30,000 entrepreneurs who have applied to our program to each other as well as to investors, service providers and mentors. We hope to spark a movement around entrepreneurship in Africa so that an entire ecosystem

of stakeholders work hand in hand to create new opportunities together.

Can you walk us through what a typical selection process looks like, Africa has 54 countries, and how is the process carried out in a way that it reaches the length and breadth of the continent in a manner that is equitable?

Our judging process is comprised of 4 stages and is deliberately rigorous to ensure both fairness and quality in our assessment process. Round 1 is an online assessment of the written applications, from which we select our Top 50 finalists. In Round 2, our Top 50 finalists undergo in-depth online video call interviews with our judges who then determine our Top 20 finalists. Our Top 20 finalists subsequently undergo a due diligence process by Pricewaterhouse Coopers before proceeding to our Semi-Finale pitches where they pitch a 7-person panel comprised of industry leaders, investors and renowned entrepreneurs. This panel then identifies our Top 10 Heroes who go on to the Grand Finale.

Importantly, at every stage we work with our network of over 150 judges from across the globe and a range of industries to assess applicants with a scoring rubric, which allows for a standardized assessment process. We also ensure that in the earlier stages of the judging process, we match candidates to judges based on industry alignment and geographical relevance to ensure that local contexts are factored into the assessment process.

May we know the judges who made the final selection for this and are they the same each year or the Foundation appoints different members of the panel?

Our Grand Finale judging panel consists of global business legends who provide our finalists insightful

feedback and ask them provoking questions. While the line-up may alternate throughout the years, the panel will always be comprised of renowned business leaders. In our 2020 edition, our Grand Finale judging panel consisted of:

- Strive Masiyiwa – Founder & Chairman of Econet Group
- Madam Ibukun Awosika – Chairwoman of the First Bank of Nigeria Limited & CEO of the Chair Centre group.
- Joe Tsai – Executive Vice Chairman, Alibaba Group
- Lucy Peng – Co-Founder & Partner of Alibaba Group and Executive Chairwoman of Lazada Group

What other follow up is done by the Foundation to support winners of the ABH awards in their entrepreneurial growth?

The ABH journey does not end at the Grand Finale or the moment we hand over the cheques. We work closely with the winners as they continue to grow and find success, and the program continues to run training, education and networking opportunities beyond the finale.

Part of this means hosting regular community check-ins with our finalists to facilitate greater collaboration. As a result of the prize, we've already seen our heroes build partnerships and cooperation with each other across different markets. For example, two heroes from 2019, Kevine Kagrampindu of Uzuri K&Y and Moulaye Taboure of Afrikrea worked together to launch an online store for Uzuri K&Y on Afrikrea, expanding her reach across the globe.

The program also provides learning opportunities via the Alibaba e-founders fellowship course, which several of our Heroes have indicated has been pivotal to their business development. Beyond this, we also look to provide our finalists with a spotlight to ensure their stories are spotlighted and shared with global audiences. Lastly, we also aim to connect our finalists with investors where possible and have already made promising introductions between our finalists and Venture



In two years the sum of \$2.5 million has been disbursed in grant funds to 20 inspiring African entrepreneur heroes from 11 countries, says Zahra.

Capital firms. We look to do more of this in the years to come especially as we develop an online platform to bring different stakeholders together.

The second year of the awards coincided as well with the shock of COVID 19, how did this affect the smooth functioning of the ABH?

The COVID-19 pandemic threw us some challenges but also presented novel opportunities to us. It forced us to go fully digital. For example, we had to pivot from a physical roadshow across a few African countries to a completely online launch.

With this online launch we were able to engage with over 4,000 entrepreneurs from across Africa. We also had to transition from an in-person Semi-Finale and Grand Finale to create online experiences that were rich and dynamic. Our Grand Finale connected 13 locations from around the world. We also created in-country studios and leveraged a custom-built platform on DingTalk to ensure that the experience went beyond your regular online event.

What kind of change does the Jack Ma Foundation hope to see in Africa after ten years that the Netpreneur Prize Initiative (ANPI) is designed for?

Our hope is that in 10 years, we will have identified, spotlighted and supported 100 entrepreneur heroes from Africa - heroes whose stories will inspire the continent and beyond. We hope to create a network of changemakers who can inspire the next generation of African entrepreneurs to make a difference in their local communities and are working to solve the most pressing problems, as well as building a more sustainable and inclusive economy for the future. Ultimately, we hope to see these Heroes working together to create pan-African solutions and digital ecosystems that help Africa to chart a new path and circumvent some of the development challenges it faces.

May we know the kind of feedback the Foundation has received and cooperation it is getting from African countries?

We are encouraged to have received widespread support from across Africa. Firstly, we received applications from all 54 African countries. Secondly, we are very grateful to have received support from various heads of state and governments from across Africa from our inception to now including Ghana, Nigeria, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Senegal, and the Ivory Coast.

For those who read this interview and hear about the ABH for the first time, how can they try their luck, any information available on the third edition?

We welcome African entrepreneurs from all sectors that have businesses that are at least 3 years old and legally registered to try their luck! As one of our Semi-Finale judges said at our 2020 Launch, "fortune favors the bold."

We want to make sure the prize is as inclusive as possible, and applications will be open in English as well as French to African entrepreneurs regardless of sector, age or gender. Aspiring applicants can visit our website: africabusinessheroes.org and our social media accounts: @africa_heroes (Twitter) & @africabusinessheroes (Instagram, Facebook & LinkedIn) for information and to sign up to receive updates.

We will launch our 2021 applications in March, and we'll notify all subscribers to our newsletter and our social media accounts once it opens. In the meantime, I encourage all interested applicants to learn about our past Heroes on our website and social media accounts to gain inspiration.

ABH Helps In Highlighting The Brilliance, Determination & Capabilities of Africans- Chebet Lesan from Kenya, 2020 Winner.

By Ajong Mbapndah L

Our phones didn't stop ringing for about two weeks with congratulatory messages, says Chebet Lesan who won the 2020 ABH awards. The Founder and CEO of BrightGreen Renewable Energy believes that the program ABH program will help to highlight the brilliance the brilliance, determination and capabilities of African people.

"The hard work for us has been consistency, consistency in product development, customer satisfaction, growth and improvement," says Chebet.

"Cooking Energy Poverty is commonly experienced across several African countries, meaning that the opportunity for our growth is very big. Our focus is to increase our market share within the East African Community first, as we build longer term plans to enter the larger African Market," Chebet said on plans going

Chebet Lesan is Founder and CEO of BrightGreen Renewable Energy, could we start this interview with an introduction of the company?

BrightGreen Renewable Energy works to increase access to clean cooking energy to the most vulnerable populations across Africa. We recycle farm waste commonly known as biomass, into energy efficient fuel blocks, suitable for cooking and heating. Our product helps families to cook safer, cheaper and sustainably. We have started our work in Kenya and are looking to expand our impact across this region.

How did you conceive the idea of creating BrightGreen Renewable Energy and what were some of the challenges you faced?

Charcoal and firewood are heavily



The hard work for us has been consistency, consistency in product development, customer satisfaction, growth and improvement, says Chebet Lesan.



For Chebet and her team, the focus is to increase their market share within the East African Community first, and build longer term plans for the larger African Market.

used fuels in many kitchens across the African continent, about 70%. It's a challenge I experienced in my home, and one that I thought did not receive the kind of attention that it deserved. Starting and running BrightGreen has been a labour commitment, focus and determination to solve a problem in my community, and to be a voice to a widespread problem in our continent.

stop ringing for about two weeks with congratulatory messages. As Top 10 Finalists in the competition, we had reached out to our community and asked them to support us to get to the top, and indeed we received great backing! Our community anxiously waited for the results, and when they were announced, they were overjoyed!

You recently emerged as the winner of the Africa's Business Heroes (ABH) 2020 Awards sponsored by the Jack Ma Foundation, with a cash prize \$300,000, how did you receive the news?

We were very excited and humbled at the same time, it was a tough competition!

What was the reaction of your staff, family, and even the Kenyan government to this landmark achievement?

There was so much excitement and encouragement! Our phones didn't

Your company has its base in Kenya, what prospects are there and with what possible timeline to expand to other countries in East Africa and the rest of Africa?

Cooking Energy Poverty is commonly experienced across several African countries, meaning that the opportunity for our growth is very big. Our focus is to increase our market share within the East African Community first, as we build longer term plans to enter the larger African Market.

What words of wisdom, what

tips do you have for those other young people in Kenya and East Africa who look up to you as a model and will like to emulate your success story?

Hard work is an integral part to success. The hard work for us has been in consistency. Consistency in product development, in customer satisfaction, in growth, in improvement etc. We're always

looking around us to see what resources we have that can help us to be better, more impactful and more efficient in the work that we do. As young business, we have focused on building a strong business model, finding the right team to work with and taking care of the customers we have, even as we seek out for new ones. When starting a business, it's absolutely okay to start small, with

the resources you have, and give it time to grow.

We end this interview with an opportunity for you to say a word to the Jack Ma Foundation and to others across Africa and the world with the potential for similar initiatives that could bring out the genius in many young Africans, what message

to them?

We are extremely grateful to the Jack Ma Foundation and the Africa Business Heroes Program, for recognizing the potential and amazing work that many African entrepreneurs are doing in this continent. I believe this program will help to highlight the brilliance, determination and capabilities of the African people.

The ABH Experience Was Both Challenging And Gratifying- Oluwasoga Oni from Nigeria, 1st Runner Up.

By Ajong Mbapndah L

The competition had so many talented entrepreneurs in it and it is a privilege to be one of the Top 3 winners, says Oluwasoga Oni, who emerged as 1st runner up. Describing the experience as both challenging and gratifying, Oluwasoga Oni says he enjoyed interacting with judges at every stage of the competition and intends to keep in touch with many of them.

The CEO & Co-Founder, MDaaS Global says their big vision is to shift African healthcare from sick care to more personalized, continuous, and preventative healthcare for Africa's next billion.

"Being an organization that builds tech enabled diagnostic centers, we are going to use these funds to build at least 3 or four additional diagnostic centers in tier 2 to tier 3 cities in Nigeria. More of these in additional locations will bring high quality diagnostics to the underserved communities," says Oluwasoga Oni on plans for MDaaS Global going forward.

Oluwasoga Oni is CEO & Co-Founder, MDaaS Global could we start this interview with an introduction of MDaaS Global, and the vision that led to its creation?

MDaaS Global builds and operates diagnostic facilities in clinically underserved communities in Nigeria. Our centers provide high quality diagnostic services such as radiology (ultrasound & x ray), pathology and cardiology (ECHO, ECG) and serve as



Our vision is to shift African healthcare from sick care to more personalized, continuous, and preventative healthcare for Africa's next billion, says Oluwasoga Oni.

the centralized diagnostic department for many small and medium sized hospitals and clinics around the communities we operate in. Our vision is providing high quality and affordable healthcare for African's next billion by building critical health infrastructure and services in places that need it the most. We launched our first facility in Ibadan, Nigeria in 2017 and have since expanded to 4 more locations in Lagos, Ilorin, Osogbo and Abuja.

When was it created and what impact has it had on the healthcare sector in Nigeria, any numbers or statistics that you want to share?

We launched originally in 2016 as a medical equipment provider before eventually pivoting to a diagnostic service provider in 2017. Since our pivot and launch in Ibadan, we have served over 33,000 patients across four states. About 70% of our patient population are women and about 55% of women of reproductive age.

How expensive is the technology that you use in running your operations and where has your funding come from?

A lot of technology we used in running our centers are open sourced and/or off the shelf technology platforms. We are also currently using building an internal diagnostic management platform to effectively manage our centers. We raised investment from a variety of sources. In the initial stage, it was mostly family and friends, but we have since raised venture capital for prominent African's VCs such as Consonance Investment Managers Ventures Platform, Future Africa Fund and Flying Doctors Investment Company and as well as international organizations such as Techstars, FINCA Ventures etc.

You operate in a country where power is an issue, what impact has the power crisis had on your operations?

Getting constant power supply from the grid is almost impossible at the moment in Nigeria. As a result, we have had to supplement our grid power with power generators which of course increase our cost of operations. Unfortunately, this is the reality for many Nigerian businesses like ours.

You recently emerged as 1st Runner Up in the 2020 Africa's Business Heroes (ABH) Awards sponsored by the Jack Ma

Foundation, how was this news received by Ohuwasoga Oni?

I was very excited to be one of the winners of the competition out of over 22,000 contestants who applied across the continent. It is quite exhilarating to be one of the top finalists, particularly given how competitive it was. The ABH experience was both challenging and gratifying. The competition had so many talented entrepreneurs in it and it is a privilege to be one of the Top 3 winners. I also really enjoyed interacting with the judges at every single stage of the competition and intend to keep in touch with many of them.

How did you hear about the ABH and was emerging as runner up with \$250,000 cash prize an outcome you envisaged?

The winner of the competition last year (Temie Giwa-Tubosun, Founder & CEO of LifeBank) was Nigerian and also worked in healthcare. It was all over the news when she won. Seeing that made me aware of the competition and of course, Jack Ma is one of the best entrepreneurs in the world and I really wanted a chance to talk and learn from him and I did.

With the hefty cash prize and newfound fame, what is going

to change for Ohuwasoga Oni and the MDaaS Global?

The funds from the competition are being put towards furthering our mission and vision at MDaaS Global which is building more diagnostics facilities in clinically underserved areas across Nigeria. Being an organization that builds tech enabled diagnostic centers, we are going to use these funds to build at least 3 or four additional diagnostic centers in tier 2 to tier 3 cities in Nigeria. More of these in additional locations will bring high quality diagnostics to the underserved communities. We also plan to find more communities that need the kind of diagnostics that we provide. Our big vision at MDaaS is to shift African healthcare from sick care to more personalized, continuous, and preventative healthcare for Africa's next billion. Additionally, the ABH competition came with great learning lessons as well which we will definitely draw from as we continue to reach out across Nigeria.

When you juxtapose the challenges facing Nigeria and Africa with the quality of the business initiatives that were pitched by you and others, what future do you see for the continent?

Just looking at the quantity and

quality of entrepreneurs in this competition, I am very excited about the future of Africa. There are a lot of young people building businesses that are solving important challenges across the length and breadth of the continent, from healthcare to education and youth development. It is inspiring to see, and I should say the sky is the limit, given the ABH competition, which is running a 10-year commitment to inspire, train and support entrepreneurs in Africa, to build inclusive businesses models that can create jobs and economic opportunity for the continent.

Entrepreneurs at all levels should seize this amazing opportunity and consider taking part in the Africa's Business Heroes competition this year and in the future.

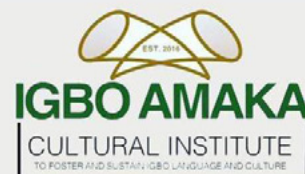
Any word for the Jack Ma Foundation that created and funded this initiative and all those who worked in diverse phases of the 2020 ABH Awards?

The real MVP of the ABH competition was the Jack Ma Foundation Team who moved ahead with this competition despite the pandemic and all of the challenges that came with coordinating the competition across multiple African countries. I (and many other African's

entrepreneurs) are lucky to have such a superstar team dedicated to supporting African entrepreneurship. No proper words can express how grateful myself and my team are for the opportunity to be part of this initiative.

To many in Nigeria and Africa who now see in you a mentor and will like to emulate your success, what message for them, and any tips for future contestants of the ABH Awards?

The key advice I have for other African entrepreneurs is to learn how to own their narrative and tell their own story. I believe that this was key to our success in this competition. Every great idea needs believers and supporters and having a great story about "why it matters" is critical to getting others to believe in the vision and mission of the company. Africa is on the rise, existing and aspiring entrepreneurs across the continent must strive to gain knowledge, educate themselves and keep up with new trends to stay competitive. Research and innovation are key, and when backed up with the right knowledge, skills, and resources it is possible for any entrepreneur to thrive and bring real change to the continent, while inspiring the next generation.



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A Lifetime Experience for Me -2nd Runner Up Ethel Mupambwa from Zimbabwe

By Ajong Mbapndah L

Having grown in a patriarch rural area, the inspiration behind MoneyMart was that I wanted a business which could help women uplift their small projects says Ethel Mupambwa, from Zimbabwe who emerged as the 2nd runner up. It was a lifetime experience for me, and our clients will see change, says Mupambwa.

"Our clients are going to receive an excellent service without delays like they would experience in the past due to constrained cash shortages. MoneyMart is going to be a digital MFI, and the prize money will assist in the development of an AI digital lending software," said Ethel Mupambwa of plans going forward.



It was a lifetime experience, a set legacy for my kids and the upcoming generation in Zimbabwe, says Ethel Mupambwa

Ethel Mupambwa recently emerged 2nd Runner up in the Africa's Business Heroes (ABH) Awards sponsored by the Jack Ma Foundation with cash prize of \$150,000, what was your reaction to this news?

I was thrilled to say the least. I could not believe that seriously, my name is in the Top 3. It was a lifetime experience, a set legacy for my kids and the Zimbabwean upcoming generation.

How did you hear about the ABH and what motivated you to this a shot, your instincts or the conviction that you had the potential of making a winning proposition or pitch?

I found about ABH through emails from Funds For NGOs updates. When I went through the requirements for participation, I got the conviction that I had the winning proposition as I am consciously contributing to specific Sustainable Development Goals.

You are Co-Founder and Executive Director of

MoneyMart, can you shed some light on the company and what pushed you into micro finance?

Having grown in a patriarch rural area, the inspiration behind MoneyMart was that I wanted a business which could help women uplift their small projects- I wanted to help ANY project, no matter how small, even something as small as a tomato-vendor by the road side in her location. I desire to see women everywhere become the Proverbs 31 woman who is empowered to take care of her own family, a woman who "considers a piece of land and buys it herself"- a financially empowered woman. I believe that EVERYONE WINS when women have equal access to economic opportunity. As a young woman growing in Zimbabwe, I have always been challenged to step into the gap to create the future that I want to see because I realized am one of those our nation has been waiting for to change the lives of our societies. MoneyMart is a leading microfinance institution on a mission to transform people's lives by creating sustainable

wealth through the provision of unique, well researched financial solutions.

May we know what impact initiatives like MoneyMart have on the economy in Zimbabwe?

Zimbabwe has been marred by economic strife over the past two decades such that, 84% of the working population is in the informal sector, with 53% of business owners being women. The biggest challenge these businesses face is lack of formal financial services and limited financial knowledge. And to realize our economic growth, there is a need to introduce financing vehicles that can help realize these entrepreneurs grow as they contribute a significant percentage to the GDP and promote decent work. MoneyMart Finance is innovatively making sure that micro-entrepreneurs are being financially included.

In addition, we entered the renewable energy space with a primary objective to distribute quality Solar-Home-Systems (Solar-

Lighting-Kits) on credit to people living off the power grid. MMF plans to distribute over 10,000 units to households and businesses in rural areas and peri-urban areas which are off the power grid.

What are some of the challenges MoneyMart has faced over the years and with regards to 2020, how did COVID 19 affect your activities?

The biggest challenge over the years was ability to raise patient capital for the business in consideration to the hyperinflationary environment we were operating in, more so being a financial institution. The biggest impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic were difficulties in disbursements, collection of reimbursements

and meeting with clients face-to-face, and reorganizing internal systems and flow of work. In addition, the impact also extended to our clients with the country lockdown; many micro-entrepreneurs not being able to report for their day-to-day duties.

In what way could the government in Zimbabwe be more helpful in supporting the kind of services offered by MoneyMart and others?

In my opinion, Zimbabwe has suffered more because of inconsistent policies. I believe if our government continue to be consistent, it could be more helpful especially for the upcoming entrepreneurs as long-term plans could be made and acted upon. However, I also want to applaud the Government for the support it gives to women in the country to the extent of opening a Women's Bank. It shows how much they believe in women entrepreneurs and this gives so much support to services offered by MoneyMart as it thrives to make sure women are financially included.

With \$150,000 in prize money, what is going to change for Ethel Mupambwa and MoneyMart? **Speaking broadly, what role do you think initiatives like the ABH could play in moving Africa forward?**

It is the change that is going to happen to our clients rather. Our clients are going to receive an excellent service without delays like they would experience in the past due to constrained cash shortages. MoneyMart is going to be a digital MFI, and the prize money will assist in the development of an AI digital lending software.

There are many young people in Zimbabwe who now look up to you as a model, what advice do you have for them in challenging times the country is going through economically?

My advice to young people has always been that "Fortune favours the Brave." Be a solution provider to the people around you. Challenging times have vast opportunities that they come with; those challenges need a young generation to solve them. The first step is to just start!

We are doing this interview at a time the African Continental Free Trade Agreement, AfCTA has entered its operational phase, do you share in the optimism it has generated and any opportunities you see in it for MoneyMart?

I share in the optimism AfCTA has



MoneyMart is going to be a digital MFI, and the prize money will assist in the development of an AI digital lending software says, Ethel.

generated. For MoneyMart Finance, it means a broader market in Africa. Its biggest goal for inclusive and sustainable development in Africa is what we all have been waiting for as an upcoming generation.

Young Agri-Entrepreneur Making Waves in Zimbabwe

By Prince Kurupati



Photo Credit: Twitter (@terrymap1)

Zimbabwe prides itself as an agro-based economy. Whenever talk of reviving the Zimbabwean economy pops up, the first port of call to many relates to how agriculture can be reinvigorated for the benefit of the nation. Discussions around value addition and beneficiation are now more of a chorus in the country as many view agriculture as the only viable path to the resuscitation of the Zimbabwean economy. In as much as this is the case, large populations of individuals involved in agricultural discussions are mostly the elderly who spend time in the countryside or at their farms. Whilst agricultural talk in the country is mostly reserved for the elderly one young adult by the name Terence Maphosa has embarked on a drive to change the narrative.

Inspired by Maphosa's entrepreneurial journey thus far, Pan African Visions caught up with the young budding farmer and he had this to say.

On his upbringing and background

Terence Maphosa says that he grew up in rural Mhondoro-Ngezi and is the third child in a family of six. He was brought up by a single parent, her mother. Though disabled, her mother managed to send her to school all the way up to graduate level at the University of Zimbabwe where he graduated with a degree in Political Science in 2016.

On his motivation to become an

At a tender age of just 28, Terence Maphosa has found his calling in agriculture. Maphosa, a Political Science graduate from the University of Zimbabwe specializes in breeding



For Terence Maphosa, honesty, transparency and integrity have pushed his business to success.

entrepreneur

Maphosa says like most other graduates soon after college, he wanted to get employment with a well-paying salary and job security. However, his dream to get the job he desired failed to come to fruition and it is at that point that he started to look for a new avenue – an income generating project that would improve his standard of living and that of his family. Looking at the things in his vicinity coupled by his longstanding desire to venture into farming, Maphosa saw the idle land at his rural home to be the perfect capital base to start off his project. As someone who already kept some indigenous chicken breeds at his home, Maphosa decided to turn the initiative into a profit making adventure. However, instead of focusing only on the indigenous breeds, he saw it fit to transition to the exotic breeds.

On raising startup capital

Like many budding entrepreneurs, raising startup capital was no easy feat for Maphosa. However, in his case he was fortunate enough that soon after completing his university studies, he got employment for a few months and he managed to save some funds. With the funds, he managed to purchase his first batch of chicks. Speaking on

the topic of startup capital, Maphosa urged the government to chip in and help youth entrepreneurs to turn their dreams and ideas into reality.

On the growth of his business

Considering how he started off his business, Maphosa is very much convinced that the business is growing, on the right path and is headed towards bigger success. Maphosa says that 2020 was particularly a good year for him. He says that the things which have propelled his business to success are honesty, transparency and integrity. For customers to have confidence in your business, Maphosa says that honesty and integrity are of paramount importance. He says that he always advises his customers whenever he is not able to deliver and once he is in a position to deliver, he doesn't delay. This makes customers to gain confidence in him – something which is great for business reputation.

On outsiders who have helped the business grow (suppliers, customers, mentors and investors)

Mentor: Maphosa says he doesn't have a mentor. However, he does have some people he looks up to for inspiration for instance Kuda Musasiwa, Nduna Zembe, and

Tanaka 'Seedlings'.

Suppliers: Maphosa says he works with particularly one supplier who he consults frequently each time he has any questions or queries.

Investors: At the present moment, Maphosa says he doesn't have any investor nor has he received any offers for investment.

On the most effective marketing tactic/technique

Social media particularly Twitter has been crucial for Maphosa. He says in the past he has used Twitter to market his breeds and has pulled many customers. The beauty of it all being that the majority of Twitter customers have also helped market his business through word of mouth to their family and friends. He says that whilst Twitter has been particularly effective, FaceBook and WhatsApp are the other social media platforms that he uses to market his business.

On the best business advice he has ever received

"In business you have to thrive to have the best product on the market. Thrive to have the best product on the market and the market will respond."

On the worst business advice he has ever received

After posting a flier on Twitter, one social media user responded saying you can't expect customers to come when you have shown the worst level of mediocrity by posting a poor flier. This proves you are going nowhere. To Maphosa, he says he didn't dislike the criticism but was rather dismayed by the way the criticism was expressed. The way the criticism was handed out was rather discouraging. Though criticism is welcome, Maphosa says it's important to be cognizant of how it's expressed as it can discourage one from continuing with the entrepreneurial adventure.

On creating employment

Maphosa says he has already started creating employment. At the present moment he has five employees.

On the prospect of diversifying and venturing into another field

One day, Maphosa says he sees himself becoming a restaurateur. He is confident that in the future, he will open 'The Prince Machiavelli Restaurant'. Though he might not have a date, he is sure that the restaurant idea will certainly turn into reality. Once opened, the restaurant will focus on serving organic food.

Cameroon Film Industry Gets New Life with Fisherman's Diary

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

There is a popular saying that “a journey of a thousand mile begins with a step”. That is a journey the Cameroonian movie scene has been on for a while and they might just be reaching the top any time soon.

One of the films that have pushed Cameroon to global recognition and indicate to the world that the country is producing world-class movies is the «Fisherman's Diary», multiple award-winning films and arguably the best film in the Cameroon scene for the year 2020.

Last year the Fisherman's Diary was one of the major success stories for the Cameroonian movie industry picking up awards in the country and beyond. At the Golden Movie Awards in Ghana and the African Movie Academy Awards (AMAA) in Nigeria, the Film snapped up 10 awards, adding to awards in Istanbul, Cameroon, and a host of other countries.

Compared to other nations like Niger, known for megamovies under the Nollywood banner, the Cameroonian movie scene is still struggling to get a foothold in the market. Movies are being produced in the country but the rate of consumption cannot be compared to the consumption Cameroonians have on Nigerian movies.

In the 1970s and 1980s, a number of films were produced in Cameroon, including Muna Moto by Jean-Pierre Dikongué, who was awarded the Golden Stallion (The Étalon d'or de Yennenga is the supreme prize) at the Panafrican Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou (FESPACO – festival panafricain de cinéma et de télévision de Ouagadougou) in 1976.

What gets people involved in the consumption of their movies is the establishing of cinemas and the screening of these movies for people to watch. In the 1980s there were several cinemas in Yaounde and Douala, which have subsequently



The Fisherman's Diary continues to soar across the world.

shut down, and movies are instead shown at mobile cinemas.

The Fisherman's Diary has been able to make use of screenings to its advantage. There was a national tour organized and the movie was screened in several regions of the country. That for Limbe/Buea had to be called off at first due to the unfortunate incident in Kumba. That did not stop the producers of the movie as they have been on social media platforms, television channels, radio station and giving out various interviews just to promote the film, as the rewards show for itself.

Kang Quintus Films and its

sponsors did, however, have the chance to screen the movie in Limbe which had been cancelled. All these exposures have exposed the film to many in the country and beyond to know that there is a movie called The Fisherman's Diary. This kind of strategy, in making a movie has seen the film won various awards across various countries, with the high point being selected to participate at the 93rd Oscars.

The Cameroon film industry is gradually bringing itself to the forefront of the African movie industry. With constant film releases, and awards won, both nationally and

internationally, the Cameroonian public should rest assured that they are very close to taking over in due time, and the Fisherman's Diary is setting the pace.

Fisherman's Diary eligible for 93rd Oscars

Amongst the multiple awards and nomination for the film, nothing is as sweet as being able to represent your country at the 93rd Oscars. That is what the film has been able to achieve this year as it was selected to represent Cameroon at the upcoming Oscars.

“OSCARs have announced

the FILMS that are eligible for Nominations!! CAMEROON is represented by The Fisherman's Diary. This is surreal!!" Kang Quintus, the lead actor for the movie posted

«It is a statement that the Cameroonian film industry is doing a lot of work. We have stepped up the game a little bit and it is quite a humble experience that the Fisherman's Diary is the first-ever Cameroonian film to be accepted into the Oscars to represent Cameroon,» Kang Quintus told Pan African Visions in a telephone interview a couple of weeks ago.

«I am very humble and it tells us that whatever we are doing here we are doing the right thing and a lot of work is to be done. I can tell you that this is the beginning of many great films as we are heading to August and we are open to partway for that to be possible.»

The Star behind the Movie, Kang Quintus

Kang Quintus is a multiple award-winning movie actor who has worked with heavyweight actors and actresses in Africa and beyond. He has more than ten awards to his name. He is often referred to by his colleagues as The Method Actor because of his intense and passionate interpretation of his roles.

The Producer/ Executive Producer of the Fisher's Man Diary, Kang Quintus is driven by her dreams and an inspiration to both the young and old. He is a man with fundamental decency, moral authority, unimpeachable integrity, and outstanding judgment, Legideon Newspaper reported.

He believes that to achieve coherence and consensus, there is an absolute need for a positive spirit of engagement and a sense of cohesion - A man who does not throw caution in the wind and does not allow blurring between his career and private life.

The name Kang Quintus to the Cameroon Movie Industry is like a

catalyst that will reinvigorate their resilience. He is a taciturn and soft-spoken character with a caressing baritone.

An insight into The Fisherman's Diary

The movie directed by Enah

Johnscott and produced by Kang Quintus is a storey of a 12-year-old Ekah (Faith Fidel) who got inspired by Malala Yousalzai, the youngest noble prize winner.

She is determined to go to school in a village of fishermen where it is considered as taboo. He drives to

break this adage gets her embroiled with her father Solomon (Kang Quintus) experience with girl child education, critiqsite reported.

The film features other actors such as Ramsey Nouah, Onyama Laura, Neba Godwill, Mayohchu, Daphne Njie and Faith Fidel.



City Of Harare Awaits Proclamation Of Wetland City Accreditation Status To Enhance Sustainable Development

By Wallace Mawire



Harare City Council is intensifying stakeholder collaboration to combat the problem of wetlands invasion and destruction in the urban and peri-urban jurisdictions of the city.

The city has been facing challenges of illegal land developments by land barons on wetlands and is working on mechanisms to stop the unwanted developments and destruction to the environment.

Charles Mabika, City of Harare representative under the Environment Management Unit (EMU) said at a Journalists Sustainability Reporting Workshop held by Lafarge and Practical Action on 27 November 2020 in Harare that some of the measures being implemented by the local authority include introduction of a climate desk at town house to deal with issues of environment, water and climate change including safeguarding of wetlands.

Mabika said that the local authority

is working with other government agencies like the Environmental Management Agency (EMA) on preservation of wetlands and the environment.

In a presentation on sustainable development in Harare, Mabika said that it is the idea that human societies must live and meet their needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. He added that it was now very imperative to strongly focus on the sustainable development model.

“This means taking into account both the imperatives present and those of the future, such as the preservation of the environment and natural resources or social and economic equity,” Mabika said.

He added that although wetlands are crucial for providing important ecosystem services such as food provisions, protecting humans from flooding, providing clean water and storing carbon, they have traditionally

been undervalued, which has resulted in widespread loss and degradation.

Mabika said that this has led to a loss in the services that maintain people’s health and wellbeing and also a loss in biodiversity.

He added that 64% of the world’s wetlands have disappeared since 1900 and 43% in Harare over the past 20 years.

Main threats to urban wetlands outlined by Mabika include draining and infilling for housing or other developments, loss of biodiversity by conversion to open public parks and recreational lakes, solid waste and wastewater pollution, channelization of rivers and streams, hydrological disconnection of the wetlands from watercourses, the use of hard infrastructure solutions rather than green infrastructure, invasive species resulting in the loss of native species.

According to Mabika, when conserved and sustainably used, urban wetlands can provide cities

like Harare with multiple, economic, social and cultural benefits.

“They are prize land, not wasteland and should be integrated into the development and management plans of cities,” Mabika said.

Some of the benefits of urban wetlands outlined by Mabika include water supply, flood regulation, climate moderation, wastewater treatment, habitat for biodiversity, agriculture and aquaculture, tourism, recreation and leisure, education, culture and heritage, research and human wellbeing.

According to Mabika, as a deliberate measure to enhance sustainable development, the City of Harare applied for the Wetland City Accreditation.

He said that the Wetland City Accreditation scheme encourages cities in close proximity to and dependent on wetlands, especially designated Ramsar Convention

wetlands such as Monavale, Manapools, Cleveland Dam, Lake Chivero, Victoria Falls, Chinhoyi Caves and rural Driefontein of international importance to promote the conservation and wise use of urban and peri-urban wetlands, as well as affording sustainable socio-economic benefits for local people.

It is also reported that the initiative also represents a direct link between Sustainable Development Goal 11 to "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable" and SDG6 "Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all".

It is added that 18 cities from seven countries such as in China for example Changde, Changshu, Dongying, Haerbin, Haikou, Yinchuan), France for example Amiens, Courteranges, Pont Audemer, Saint Omer, Hungary for example Lakes



Charles Mabika, City of Harare representative under the Environment Management Unit.

by Tata, Madagascar for example Mitsinjo, South Korea for example Changnyeong, Inje, Jeju, Suncheon, Sri Lanka and Tunisia for example Gharel Melh received the prestigious accreditation.

The city of Harare is aiming to follow suit.

Mabika said that the City of Harare is located in the Upper Manyame Catchment Basin, which is a wetland ecosystem that provides a plethora of essential and valuable services to the residents and rate payers of Harare.

The wetland ecosystem is an extensive single natural ecological system that forms the primary water catchment area for the Upper Manyame Catchment Basin that feed into the major raw water sources for the City of Harare and its environs (i.e. Harava Dam, Seke Dam, Lake Chivero and Lake Manyame) and groundwaters in the catchment.

CHAN 2020: Morocco Defends its Crown, as Cameroon Credited for a Beautiful Organization

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

The 2020 edition of the Africa Nations Championship (CHAN), a competition for locally-based players has come and gone. Morocco has been crowned champions, picking up their second title of the competition.

With everything wrapped up, Pan African Visions takes a look at the competition and major talking points of the competition regarded as a success by many officials.

Impeccable Organization by Cameroon

There had been questions about whether Cameroon will be up to the task to host a major competition. Coupled with the coronavirus pandemic, it raised the question to another level.

From FIFA President Gianni Infantino to CAF President Ahmad Ahmad and Secretary-General Anthony Baffoe to Togo's Coach Claude Le Roy, the beautiful display by Cameroon has been appreciated



Morocco wins 2020 CHAN played in Cameroon for the second time.

and commended. The opening country often seen as «Africa in the opening day though it was not full and closing ceremony showed the miniature». because of COVID-19 restrictions still beautiful country of Cameroon, a «The stadium was beautiful during 25 per cent of the capacity was there



Display to crown off the 6th edition of the CHAN in Cameroon.

(CAF has decided to limit to 25 per cent capacity for the group games while it will rise to 50 per cent for the semi-finals and final), FIFA President Gianni Infantino said.

«It gave it a nice ambience and atmosphere. It is important to show to the world that we can organize such games in Africa to give hope that all the countries all over the world that the year 2021 will hopefully see normality come back including in football,» FIFA President Infantino added.

With Cameroon proving it is up to the task in hosting a major tournament, the next big task comes up in January of 2022. Cameroon is scheduled to host an even bigger competition, Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON). Everything is at stake with this competition.

Flawless performance from the Atlas Lions

It has been dominance from the Atlas Lions of Morocco at the just concluded 2020 CHAN. The team won all but one of its game in the tournament, going on to lift their second title of the competition

(the first country to win it twice consecutively).

At the final played at the Ahmadou Ahidjo Stadium, Soufiane Bouftini and Ayoub El Kaabi ensured that the title was going back to Morocco as they scored the two goals that gave the side the victory against Mali. The victory also saw Lhoussaine Ammouta's Morocco equalled DR Congo as the only two sides to have won the competition twice.

Before reaching the final, the team finished top of Group C with seven points. At the quarter-finals, the team defeated Zambia 3-0 before dismantling Cameroon at the semi-finals 4-0, with Sofiane Rahimi scoring two of the team's goals.

The team was also dangerous in front of goal, scoring the most goals in the competition. Morocco scored a remarkable fifteen goals in the competition and conceded just three.

The country is certainly creating something special and looking to dominate the CHAN competition. They will be very much the favourite again to win in 2023.

Soufiane Rahimi – a jewel for

Morocco

It has been a magnificent tournament for Rahimi in Cameroon. The Raja Casablanca forward who joined the side at the 2018-2019 seasons has had a CHAN to remember.

Added to his highest goalscorer accolade, Soufiane Rahimi was named as the best player of the tournament, capping a beautiful performance of the young player.

Rahimi was silent in his country's first two games but burst to life on matchday three as he scored 2 goals as Morocco defeated Uganda 5-2. Rahimi scored his first goal at the 51mins and scored again at the 80mins.

Against Zambia at the quarter-finals, Rahimi scored his third goal of the competition, scoring at just the 1st minute of the game. That remains the fastest goal at the competition and even previous competitions.

He then followed that up with two goals at the semi-finals against Cameroon at the Limbe Omnisport Stadium. The two goals ensured that Rahimi finished as the highest goal scorer of the competition with five

goals.

Dismissal of Coaches Expected?

Certainly! This is one thing that the African continent is good at – dismissal coaches who do not live up to expectations after a major tournament. Cameroon's Coach and the Coach of the Ugandan Cranes have been seen as the persons to maybe lose their jobs.

«There is an evaluation which is going on, and I always listen to my technical people, even during the appointments, my job is to say yes or no. I am not saying we are going to fire him or not, but the fact is that there is an evaluation ongoing,» FA President Moses Magogo said while appearing on a local TV station in Uganda as quoted by thesportsnation.com

«At the moment, we are taking stock of what he has done since he arrived here and whatever the technical report that will come to us in the next few days; we will come out with a final decision.»

The decision on the way forward of Coach Martin Ndoungou Mpile of Cameroon has also been kept tight. This as the country is still struggling to even get its leagues going after

several months of inactivity.

Coach Ndtoungou Mpile was appointed coach of the Intermediate Lions on October 21, 2020, replacing Yves Clement Arroga, barely months before the start of the competition.

«It is the state of Cameroon that appointed me to this post. I have never deposited my candidature to be the coach of the Intermediate Lions. So if the football authorities in Cameroon judge that I never did my best, they can remove me from my post,» Martin Ndtoungou Mpile said in his post-match press conference in Douala as Guinea beat Cameroon 2-0 to win the third-place at the CHAN.

What's Next?

With the conclusion of the 2020 Total CHAN, the next edition of the competition comes up in two years. Algeria has been programmed to host the seventh edition.

The competition was originally scheduled to be played from 10 July to 1 August 2022, but that has been postponed. CAF announced on 10 September 2020 that the tournament



had been rescheduled to January 2023, following the postponement of the 2020 African Nations Championship to 2021 and the 2021 Africa Cup of Nations to 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Algeria was selected to host this edition in 2018 and four venues in four cities have been selected to

host the competition. Algiers (Stade du 5 Juillet), Oran (Ahmed Zabana Stadium), Constantine (Mohammed Hamlaoui Stadium) and Annaba (19 May Stadium) will host matches.

The qualifying rounds have yet to be made but it is expected that the qualifications for the tournament will begin in 2021 or 2022.

Algeria will be making just its second appearance at the Africa Nations Championship in 2023. The team's previous participation at the competition was back in 2011 when they finished on the fourth position.

CHAN 2020: A Yardstick for Upcoming Major Tournaments

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

When the COVID-19 pandemic broke out in December 2019, there were fears that the CHAN tournament will not hold. Certainly, the tournament was postponed from its April 2020 slot to January 2021.

There were even fears that Cameroon hosting the tournament when it is still witnessing rising COVID cases will not be ideal, and some even called for the tournament to be abandoned.

However, the Africa Nations Championship (CHAN), a competition for locally based footballers has been going on for some eight days now. The tournament is already entering into matchday three, with the conclusion of matchday two taking place on January 23.

The tournament that is being hosted by Cameroon was to take place in 2020 but was postponed to



CHAN 2020 was used to evaluate Cameroon's preparedness for AFCON 2022.

2021 due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The virus has caused untold suffering on clubs around the world and various competitions

organized by CAF, FIFA, and various leagues.

Despite the measures that have been put in place against the virus,

players and staff have fallen prey to the virus. Last time, some five players and the coach of DR Congo tested positive for the virus before their

game.

However, the number of positive cases has been at its minimal with CAF mandated tests giving to the players and staff 48 hours before any game is played.

"I am happy to have witnessed the kick-off of the first international tournament of the year; the first national team games," FIFA President Gianni Infantino said after attending the opening ceremony (Cameroon's 1-0 victory against Zimbabwe) on January 16.

«The stadium was beautiful during the opening day though it was not full because of COVID-19 restrictions still 25 percent of the capacity was there (CAF has decided to limit to 25 per cent capacity for the group games while it will rise to 50 per cent for the semi-finals and final).

«It gave it a nice ambience and atmosphere. It is important to show to the world that we can organize such games in Africa to give hope that all the countries all over the world that the year 2021 will hopefully see normality come back including in football,» FIFA President Infantino added.

A lot has been put in place to ensure that the CHAN tournament goes on smoothly, looking at the major tournaments that have been programmed for this year. So, everything hinges on Cameroon producing a good tournament,

something which the country has been able to do so far.

Return of Fans

When the coronavirus pandemic broke out the beautiful game off football lost its touch as fans were stopped from going to stadia across the world. That has slowly been relaxed with a small number of fans have been allowed to watch games of their teams. England, Spain, Germany as a handful of countries did allow fans in some ways.

In Cameroon, competitive football was abandoned in March last year and fans have had to wait a long time for everything to be cleared. The Elite 1 and 2 football championships in the country have not even started since the season was cancelled. The good news has come from the Regional leagues who were given the mandate from the government to resume activities. This decision has seen fans a handful of fans allowed to watch games at the Regional level.

At the Africa Nations Championship hosted by Cameroon, the ambience was felt with fans allowed to watch the games at the stands, though the quota was limited to 25 per cent capacity for the stadia during the group stages and quarter-finals and 50 per cent for the



Banga Solomon, the hero for the intermediate lions.

semi-finals and final.

With fans attending games, the barriers against the COVID-19 were greatly stepped up. Fans have to be wearing face masks, social distancing in place, and other measures. All these will be greatly stepped up as major international competitions are expected.

In terms of international sporting events this year, fans are going to be thrilled with the EURO 2020, the Tokyo 2020, and Paralympic Games that were all postponed, the Women's Rugby World Cup in New Zealand, and many other events. All these sporting events usually garner a lot of fans from almost every part of the world. These will all have to be scaled back and just a handful of fans are expected to watch the games live.

The use of VAR

The use of the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) system across various countries has been one where sports commentators say it is a bigger problem than savour. The system was introduced to address some of the bad decisions that referees make during games, but its introduction has only created more talks and debates about the use of the system.

The system was introduced for the CHAN at the quarter-finals. It made its debut during the game that pitted Mali against Congo Brazzaville at the Japoma Stadium in Douala. It was called upon on some critical plays during the CHAN. The system was in use for Guinea's game against Rwanda with the goalkeeper of Rwanda shown a red card with the help of the system, a decision many are still questioning. One of Morocco's goals against Zambia is still being debated. The Moroccan player was judged not offside by the VAR system.

The VAR system is expected to be implemented for the EURO 2020 and the Tokyo Olympic Games (football matches). It is also heavily tested at the moment for it to be on an impeccable level ahead of the FIFA Qatar 2022 World Cup.

The 6th edition of the Africa Nations Championship has come and gone, and many positives can be deduced from the competition which sports commentators say will help in the holding of other major international sporting events.



Story 20 Pic 3. Cameroon got high marks across the board for the quality of its stadia.jpg

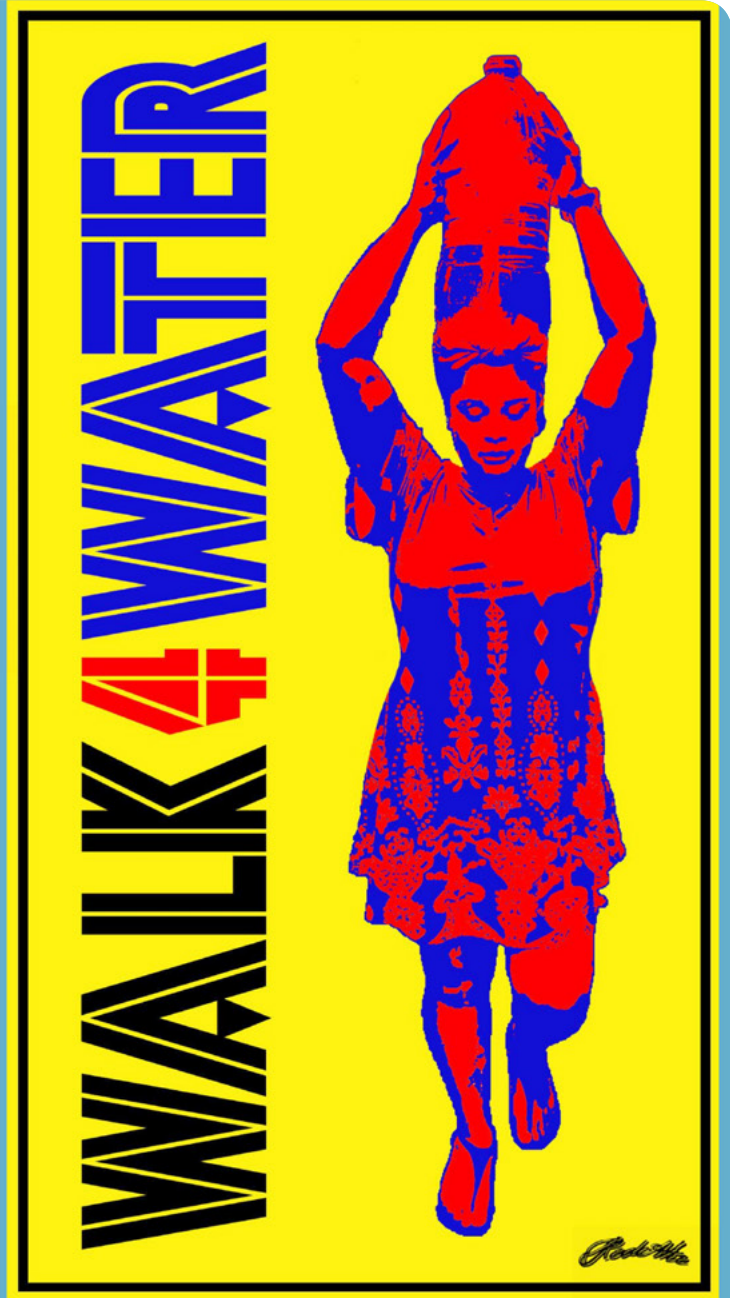
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