



A Guru At Work: NJ Ayuk On The Energy Equation In Post COVID -19 Recovery



**Niger: Democracy
Scales A Hurdle**

**Nigeria: Buhari's
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PAN AFRICAN VISIONS

7614 Green Willow Court, Hyattsville, MD 20785

Tel: **2404292177**,
email: **pav@panafricanvisions.com**,
editor@panafricanvisions.com

Managing Editor

Ajong Mbapndah L

Contributors

Wallace Mawire
Deng Machol
Papisdaff Abdullah
Ajayi Olyinka
Prince Kuripati
Hategeka Moses
Asong Zelifac
Samuel Ouma
Primus Tazanu
Jorge Joaquim
Ishmael Sallieu
Koroma,

Adama Makasuba,
Bah Uzman Unis,
Mohammed M Mupenda,
Pierre Afadhali
Teslim Olawore
Nevson Mpofo
Boris Esono Nwenfor
Amos Fofung
Jean d'Amour Mugabo
Jessica Ahedor

Advertising

Email:
marketing@panafricanvisions.com

Graphic Designer

Atemnkeng Jerry M,
(Young Jerry)
EC designs, Abudhabi - UAE
+971 54 739 2997
atemjerry@outlook.com

Matters Arising From The State of Corruption in Africa

By Ajong Mbapndah L

From the most recent Corruption Perception Index of the German based Transparency International, that Africa did not do so well again.

"With an average score of 32, Sub-Saharan Africa is the lowest performing region on the CPI, showing little improvement from the previous years and underscoring a need for urgent action," the TI report read.

According to the TI Index, countries like Seychelles, Botswana, and Cape Verde are the least corrupt in Africa, while Sudan, Somalia, and South Sudan rank amongst the worst.

While corruption may not be a new phenomenon, its pervasiveness at this point is sucking so much energy from key priorities like the COVID-19 recovery. With all the funds that have circulated around to cushion the effects of COVID -19, it is amazing that some people have spent more time lining their pockets instead of catering to the welfare and needs of the citizenry.

In South Africa, reports of shady deals between government officials and businesses specialized in providing medical equipment and food parcels to the poor tainted the image of a country with one of the highest COVID 19 rates in Africa.

"In the coronavirus pandemic, we thought ... things will be better, but they are still stealing from people who have nothing," unemployed Mamologadi Maponya, 53, told Reuters in Johannesburg's Soweto township.

In Zimbabwe, reports on COVID-19 related corruption were so rampant that President Mnangagwa was forced to axe Health Minister Obadiah Moyo.

In Cameroon billions have been at play for COVID-19 related causes to little effect and accountability. Only one opposition MP Jean Michel Nintcheu has been crying in the wilderness calling for accountability.

The cases are similar across a number of African countries. While the corruption has been rife, the law has been slow to handle culprits and it is a cycle that continues. Such is one

of the paradoxes facing Africa. A continent where a chicken thief is beaten to death by a mob, while officials flaunting ill-gotten wealth are glorified.

Tackling corruption in Africa is a herculean task. When a leader like Buhari whose moral probity was one of the defining factors for his sustained bid to be President finds it hard to stem the tide in Nigeria, then one can imagine the enormity of the challenge. In 2015 when he took office in 2015, one of his first actions was the arrest of former National Security

Adviser Sambo Dasuki. Dasuki, who served under Buhari's predecessor Goodluck Jonathan was accused of granting phantom contracts for procurement of military equipment for circa \$ 2billion. At the time, the security situation was really precarious with Boko Haram literally in control of some parts of the country.

"Had the funds siphoned ... been properly used for the purpose they were meant for, thousands of needless Nigerian deaths would have been avoided," a statement from President Buhari's office read.

Now approaching the sunset of a two-term presidency, it was ironic to hear Buhari's own Security Adviser Babagana Monguno complaining that money made available to their own security chiefs for military procurements had not been properly accounted for. Speaking in a recent BBC Hausa Service Interview, Monguno said billions made available for arm purchases were missing.

"It is a fact that money budgeted for that purpose has been misappropriated and no one can account for it," Monguno a former top military official himself declared. Now that it has happened under his own watch, will President Buhari handle it with the same severity with which he came out swinging against Dasuki? Nigerians are watching.

Over in neighboring Cameroon, there is a whole government in jail for "corruption" related charges, yet corruption continues to thrive in



Ajong Mbapndah L, Managing Editor

broad day light. For all the credit that supporters of President Biya try to give him in the fight against corruption, nothing defeats his efforts more than the reluctance to allow constitutional safeguards against corruption to kick in.

Article 66 of the 1996 Constitution of Cameroon stipulates that "The President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, Members of Government and persons ranking as such, the President and Members of the Bureau of the National Assembly, the President and Members of the Bureau of the Senate, Members of Parliament, Senators, all holders of an effective elective office, Secretaries-General of Ministries and person ranking as such, Directors of the Central Administration, General Managers of public and semi-public enterprises, Judicial and Legal Officers, administrative personnel in charge of the tax base, collection and handling of public funds, all managers of public votes and property, shall declare their assets and property at the beginning and at the end of their tenure of office."

From 1996 when the Constitution went into effect till date, President Biya has not found it necessary to cause the implementation of the clause, yet Cameroon has been ranked the most corrupt country in the world twice, and billions continue to filter through the cracks in a country facing all kinds of imaginable development challenges.

To the folks at Transparency

International, one way of helping the continent to fight corruption is to name and shape the destinations where heavy looters stored their world. We still see Nigeria fighting hard to recover the loot of General Abacha scattered round the world. Perhaps naming the countries and institutions which thrive in keeping questionable funds from the African ruling elite could create a dent in incidents of rampant looting.

Cameroon, Nigeria, South Africa, and Zimbabwe happen

to be amongst the countries that have stories in this issue of PAV magazine. No matter the prism from which the issues are viewed, corruption, occupies a choiced place. Fortunately for all the bad examples comes a ray of hope to remind us that Africa's march forward can only be delayed but not stopped. We see this in the vision and sustain efforts of dynamic people like NJ Ayuk who is leading the African Energy Chamber in helping the energy sector weather the pandemic with concrete and workable solutions to help support and sustain a robust post COVID 19 recovery. In Niger, democracy scored a big win with the peaceful transfer of power from President Issoufou Mahamadou who served two terms to President Bazoum Mohamed. We see progress in the hard work of AfDB President Akinwumi Adesina in leading development efforts across Africa and in the recent election of Ngozi Okonjo Iweala to lead the World Trade Organization.

From things falling apart in Nigeria, to the skewed priorities of the Cameroon parliament while the government plays with fire in its chaotic handling of the Anglophone crisis, to former President Zuma snubbing the corruption probe against him in South Africa, to the African Economic Outlook 2021 and more, the stories in the March issue of PAV dwell on seminal developments across the continent. Happy Reading!!

FOREWORD BY DR. CHE AHN

CATCH & RELEASE — GOD'S — SUPERNATURAL

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



DR. ANDREW M. NKOYOYO

Nigeria: Things Falling Apart

By Richard Mammah



With a leadership style that does not meet aspirations of the moment, more and more Nigerians now see President Buhari as part of the problem and less of a solution.

Nigeria is in a spin at the moment. And the popular interpretation on the streets has to do with people summoning all of the wits they can muster in an existential race against time that has about one simple goal: surviving President Muhammadu Buhari's two more years in office. It is that harrowing.

Nowhere is this more ominous than when it comes to attempting to understand the Fulani herder's crisis. Ordinarily a trade association, the umbrella association of nomadic cattle herders, the Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria, MACBAN has become a ubiquitous cog in the entire dilemma.

A strong backer and defender of the Buhari administration, it had reportedly mobilised its members and even publicly raised funds for the President's re-election almost two years ago.

That and other strong points of association have literally placed the group as untouchable. In a recent open letter, the Governor of the Middle Belt state of Benue, Samuel

Ortom complained very bitterly about the activities of the group lamenting that even when several reports had fingered members of the group as being involved in the mounting crisis of insecurity in his state and beyond for some time now, they have largely been treated with kid gloves.

It is not only Ortom who is complaining about what is being perceived in a lot of Southern Nigeria and the Middle Belt region as the uneven and underwhelming handling of the affairs of state under the Muhammadu Buhari Presidency. From former President Olusegun Obasanjo through Nobel laureate, Professor Wole Soyinka and on to Senate Minority Leader, Eyinnaya Abaribe, the din of unimpressed voices has been loud and long.

In its reactions, the Buhari Presidency has continued to protest that it is doing everything within its power to address the challenges on the way. And even when some would give it the benefit of doubt, a number of the actions and non-actions of the administration tend to provide even more fuel for its critics.

For example, when Ondo State Governor, Rotimi Akeredolu moved to evict illegal herder-squatters who had encroached on the state's grazing reserves that were allegedly being used as a stronghold for criminal activities, the Presidency cautioned the governor that it was not within his remit to do so.

However, the Governor, who is himself a Senior Advocate of Nigeria, and other commentators have since forced a retreat of sorts by the Presidency even as more acts of banditry and kidnapping taking place all across the country has practically forced the same administration to now be pleading almost ceaselessly with sub-national authorities to do more in the area of insecurity curtailment.

Again, strains of discontent have been stirred as regards the recent sanctioning of tough security action against alleged operatives of the Eastern Security Network, ESN militia that is said to be linked to the proscribed Independent People of Biafra, IPOB. The militia had allegedly mobilised to chase

out stranger elements that had established fortresses in farmlands, bushes and forests of the South East, ostensibly engaged in grazing their cattle, but who were now being accused of engaging in uncivil, if not outrightly criminal activities.

At the other end of the spectrum, the administration had stood relatively idly by while the Islamic cleric, Sheikh Gumi moved in and out of bandit enclaves in states like Zamfara and Niger to negotiate the release of child-hostages that had been abducted from their schools, a rising trend that has now led to about half of the states in the North shutting down their educational institutions. Not even the Sheikh's national security gaffe in the course of his forest-trotting when he reportedly told the bandits that it was only Nigerian Christian troops that were attacking and killing them could pull out either the security high command or the Presidency to make a simple rebuttal of the very dangerous claim in an already turbocharged field.

Indeed, so troubling is the crisis in Zamfara that a ban on mining activities and a no-fly zone has now been declared across the state.

Within the circumstance and in the light of the continuing inability of the administration to look beyond its narrow prisms and mobilise cross-cutting national support for a determined push to fairly, evenly and decisively combat the menace as has been suggested by the likes of former Senate President, Bukola Saraki, some of the local community reaction to the insecurity challenge has also begun to take several unnerving dimensions.

On its part, MACBAN is miffed that Cattle herders foraging for pasture in the Southern parts of the country are coming under increasing pressure from local communities and groups who complain that not only do some of the herders casually trample upon their farmlands and assets with impunity, they are also alleged to be

in sync with the increasing bands of bandits and kidnappers that have lately expanded their nefarious activities further afield down south.

As the crisis escalated, farm produce trading groups from the North joined in the fray and began implementing a self-declared food blockade to compel the Southern communities to see reason and allow business and economic operators from the North free room to go about their activities without let or hindrance in the South. The reaction from the South is that there is nothing to back down on and that communities and individuals reserve the right to institute self-defence measures in the face of inadequate security coverage of the nation.

This has come at the cost of rising food prices in the South as well as a lot of the perishable agricultural products from the North getting spoilt on account of their not being evacuated to Southern consumer markets. Indeed, it is quite a troubling time in Nigeria.

A crisis and its perspectives

It was the notable Nigerian writer, Chinua Achebe who wrote and published the not very hopeful and controversially titled book, *There was a country* shortly before his passage. A personal memoir, the book tells a sad tale of Nigeria's decline from being a land of promise, hope and opportunity to one of distrust, tension, crises and poor performance. And somewhat following in the tradition of his earlier 1966 work, *A Man of the People*, which had fictionally foretold the cataclysm that was to befall the country through the introduction of the first military coup only days after the pages rolled off the press, the ensuing events today seem to be clothing Achebe once again in the robes of 'the man who saw tomorrow.'

However, as the debate rages over how best to diffuse the tense situation in the country, one of the very perplexing parts of the challenge is that many do not get the impression that the man on whom the weight of fixing the challenge rests, President



Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria leaders at a press event. The group wields considerable influence within government circles. Photo credit Facebook.

Muhammadu Buhari is fully on top of the issues.

With his scarcely speaking directly to the challenge and also not being seen as fully engaging all the parties in the fray and even beyond, in a most robust and upbeat manner, room has evidently been left for many others with disparate intentions to take the high crest. And it is a situation that troubles many as in the midst of it all, other existential challenges that Nigerians face and which should ordinarily attract greater governmental response, continue to be given scant attention.

One such area of difficulty has to do with soaring inflation rates which some commentators are already beginning to project could get up to the troubling 20 percent mark before the middle of the year. And their forecasts are presently being underscored by the sheer realities of increasing food and transportation costs, utility bills and even a much anticipated fuel price hike.

Laments Thomas Okoro: 'It is a quite difficult time for the ordinary Nigerian at the moment. Rising food costs, electricity bills and fuel prices has really made it very difficult for many to make ends meet. It is

worrisome.'

For the commentator, Tony Ezech, quite drastic action may be needed to begin to right size the nation at this point in time.

'I think we need to do something quite urgent. The country is in a dire shape and the future is not looking too good going by the realities of the moment. Drastic action is needed to turn the corner and it is most important that we find both the pathway and the courage to take those bold steps now.'

What is to be done

Across the span of the country, it is almost a daily tale of fumbblings, tragedies, mis steps and ebbing faith. Many are dispirited. And the chiefest faith-killer is what was ordinarily supposed to be the walkover piece of cake for the President: the security of lives and properties in the nation

Unexpected relief

Strangely, one point of relief at the moment is the prospects of fresh elections even when they are yet some two years away.

Nigeria's constitution insists that an incoming president must poll 25 per cent of votes scored in at least

24 states and the federal capital in addition to a plurality of the total votes cast. With no power bloc, ethnic, religious and geographical, able to get this ordinarily, it pressures horse trading and alliances across board.

Already, the President's party has seemingly kicked off the process with the registration of members. In Nigerian politics at the highest levels where internal democracy is literally absent, control of party membership lists is one step away in controlling party executives at the ward, local government, state and federal levels which in itself is a step away from controlling the nominations process for who gets what ticket to represent the party.

There is another challenge. With the ruling APC showing signs of political intolerance for opposition and given the materialist base of traditional Nigerian politics, all roads are presently leading to the APC, with scores of opposition politicians jumping ship. Of course, many are also perplexed that this is happening at a time when there is widespread angst over the poor performance of the ruling party, but then with no viable elbow room to manoeuvre and with expanding poverty and hunger

in the land, people are just clutching at any straws they can find, no matter how opportunistic.

However, in the midst of it all, the discordant security notes remain the biggest aspect of the challenge. And then you can add to it the expansion of ethno-religious conflicts and the poor management of relations among the disparate people groups that comprise the nation.

Under the pervading atmosphere even what would have come through as small gains such as the nation exiting recession, the near completion



Benue State Governor Samuel Ortom in picture with President Buhari is at odds with the government on the handling of MACBAN.

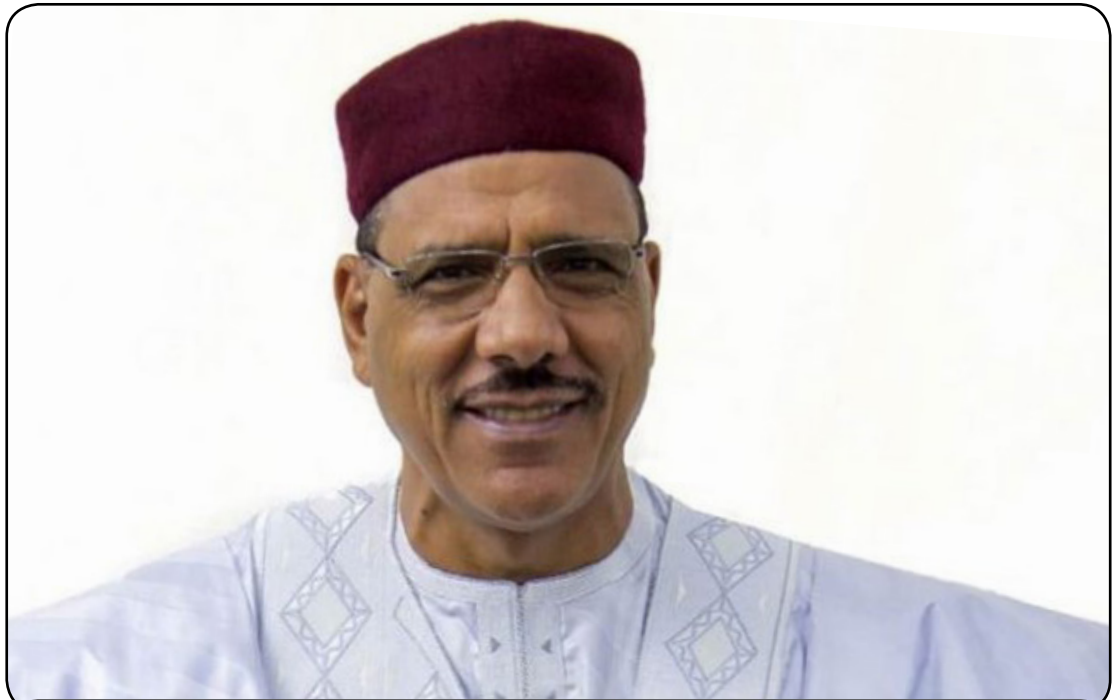
of the Dangote refinery and the good fortune of increased oil prices continue to be hobbled by other contradictions. Nigeria signed up to African Continental Free Trade Area, AfCFTA but it is clearly missing in action largely yet. An insistence on continuing to borrow huge sums for largely uneconomic infrastructure projects is also actually a challenge. It has led to a spike in the debt to GDP ratio and an increase of the foreign debt stock. Quite dire straits you would say.

Niger: A Big Win for Democracy

By Prince Kurupati

One thing that is synonymous with African elections is electoral contestations and electoral violence – this often inhibiting the smooth and democratic transition of power from one leader to another. While this has been a norm for most African countries for quite a longtime, it now seems that some countries are moving away from such development-inhibiting practices. One such country that has embraced smooth and democratic transitions of power is Niger – in its recent elections, Mohamed Bazoum was elected the country's leader for the next five years in the process heralding the country's first transition from one democratically elected leader to another.

A total of 30 presidential aspirants were in the race initially. The two frontrunners however, were Mohamed Bazoum from the ruling Nigerian Party for Democracy and Socialism and former president Mahamane Ousmane who was toppled by a coup in 1996. The first round of the presidential election was held on 27 December 2020. 7, 446, 556 voters were eligible to cast their votes in the election but after the results were counted, no candidate managed to win by an absolute majority. As such, as encapsulated in the Niger Constitution, a second round was set up with the two leading candidates facing each other.



President Bazoum says he will be a loyal servant in working for and tackling all the problems facing Niger.

Speaking after receiving information from the electoral commission that no single candidate had won with an absolute majority, the Constitutional Court said, "The Court receives the request of the President of the Independent National Electoral Commission (Ceni) in the form, validates and proclaims the final results of the first round of the presidential elections of December 27, 2020. The court, therefore, declares Mohamed Bazoum and Mahamane Ousmane candidates in the second

round of the presidential elections." In the second round of the presidential race, the ruling party's candidate Mohamed Bazoum managed to win by an absolute majority garnering 55.75% of the votes cast. His win ushering in Niger's first transition from one democratically elected leader to another. Bazoum replaces Mahamadou Issoufou who served two terms in office. The results of the elections were announced by the country's electoral commission National Independent Electoral

Commission but they are still to be confirmed by the Constitutional Court.

In a Twitter post, posted soon after the results were announced by the electoral commission, Bazoum thanked all those who voted for him and his party and promised to be a loyal servant in working for and tackling all the problems facing Niger. "I am profoundly thankful to the people of Niger for the confidence they have shown by electing me president of the republic... I will be a

loyal servant to it to confront all the problems that our country faces.”

An international observer mission from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) speaking after the announcement of the results said that the vote was held “under free, fair, credible and transparent conditions.”

However, in as much as things went smoothly on Election Day, there were a couple of unfortunate incidents according to the electoral commission president Issaka Souma when eight people were killed in two separate attacks in regions where Islamist militants are active. Of the eight, seven were election workers in the western Tillaberi region near the border with Mali whose vehicle struck a landmine as they headed to the polls.

Speaking on the incident in Tillaberi, Addine Agalass an advisor to Tillaberi’s governor said that at the present moment it’s not yet clear if the incident was related to the election in any way or if it was deliberately targeted towards the electoral commission officials. Niger for years has been battling rising attacks by Islamic extremists and the landmine

may just have been planted by the extremists.

Another of the unfortunate incidents which happened on Election Day was a protest outside Mahamane Ousmane’s campaign headquarters by his supporters who burned tyres and had a standoff with the police. The protest happened soon after a statement was released by Ousmane’s campaign manager alleging widespread fraud including the theft and stuffing of ballot boxes. In a statement, Ousmane’s campaign manager said “We demand the immediate suspension of the publication of these results, which do not in any way take into account the expressed will of the Nigerien people for change.”

The protest by Ousmane’s supporters was however short-lived as protesters were quickly dispersed by the police. When announcing the results, the electoral commission did not issue any comments regarding the allegations of widespread fraud by Ousmane’s campaign manager.



An international observer mission from ECOWAS declared the elections as free, fair and credible.

At the present moment, it’s not yet clear if Ousmane’s campaign team will lodge a formal complaint over the allegations at the Constitutional Court.

As Bazoum is about to start his work as the country’s leader, he faces a myriad of problems. Most notably, Niger has seen a rise in attacks linked to Islamic extremists. Just recently in January, at least 100 people were

killed when the extremists launched an attack on two villages near the border with Mali. In the past few years, thousands of others have been killed while hundreds of thousands have been displaced – this despite the presence of thousands of regional and international troops. Quelling down the extremist attacks is, therefore, the first and most important thing that Nigeriens will be looking Bazoum to prioritize. The task is however, no easy feat as his predecessor realized as the presence of troops alone wasn’t sufficient enough to address the problem.

Another major challenge that Bazoum will be aiming to address is the high rise in numbers of child marriages and teenage pregnancies. A teacher by profession, Bazoum in his election campaign promised to tackle the challenge by elongating the time that girls spend in school. On this front, he promised to build several boarding schools for girls where they would learn undistracted.

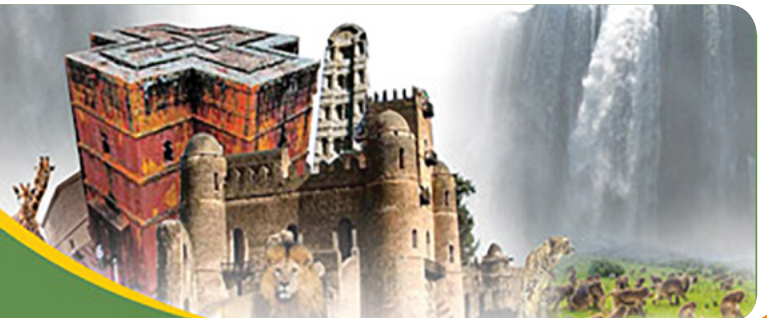


Bazoum replaces Mahamadou Issoufou who served two terms in office.

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NJ Ayuk On Making The Most Of Africa's Energy Potential

By Ajong Mbatndah L

As many were wailing in disbelief at the impact of COVID-19 on African economies, NJ Ayuk was one of those who rolled up his sleeves, put on his thinking cap and took the lead in proffering solutions and charting the way forward.

From robust engagement with OPEC, to a multitude of webinars to key stakeholders, helping governments navigate complex situations and building bridges with partners in Africa and the world, NJ Ayuk, Executive Chairman of the African Energy Chamber spared no efforts in the quest for solutions to sustain and keep the African energy sector ticking.

"Africa's voice must therefore be heard loud and strong as part of the global energy discourse. The Chamber has identified this and therefore has as one of its objectives to federate the different aspirations of Africans in the energy sector and articulate this in a constructive manner that will foster investment in the African energy sector, says NJ Ayuk in an interview with PAV magazine.

Bullish on the way forward, Ayuk believes that Africa must make the most of its energy potential and this starts with getting activity levels across the entire energy value chain in Africa back to pre-COVID-19 levels, says Ayuk. In a show of its seriousness on the way forward, the African Energy Chamber recently published its road to recovery book which provides practical guidance on how African countries can enhance compactivity globally to attract investment.

"The energy sector's challenges, and the trials and tribulations have made the African Energy Chamber's work more important now, more than ever. We are committed to helping Africa's energy sector stakeholders navigate a complex and ever-changing global energy landscape. We will continue our mission to support the



Africa's voice must be heard loud and strong as part of the global energy discourse, says NJ Ayuk.

dynamic private sector and unlock the continent's remarkable energy potential," says Ayuk.

After a tough year, what do African countries need to do to get the energy sector back on the rails so it can continue playing its role in the economic development of the continent?

In order to change the tide and spur a post covid recovery in the energy sector that will also enhance overall economic growth in Africa, African countries must double their efforts to attract investment into their energy

sectors. They must put in place timely and market relevant strategies to deal with external headwinds like the drive to decarbonize globally and evolving demand patterns for energy internally and hydrocarbons globally. They must end restrictive fiscal regimes, inefficient and carbon-intensive production, cut bureaucracy and other difficulties in doing business which are preventing the industry from reaching its full potential.

2020 was a year of unprecedented challenges for Africa's energy sector. The target must be to get activity levels across the entire energy value chain in

Africa back to pre Covid-19 levels and beyond. Companies in the oil and gas sub-sector for example responded by cutting costs and delaying projects, with planned capital expenditure for 2020-2021 dropping from \$90 billion pre-COVID-19, to \$60 billion.

As a leading actor in the Energy sector, may we get your assessment on the response from key power players in the continent like Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea, Angola, and others, what are they getting right and what are there

missing or needs to be improved upon?

The response on the continent has been a mixed bag. A number of African countries were slow in responding to market realities, largely due to bureaucracy and the absence of generally agreed principles on how to deal with the COVID -19 pandemic. Others on the other hand, especially countries with a notable dependence on their oil and gas sectors responded swiftly to minimize disruptions in their countries.

For example, OPEC member Equatorial Guinea moved swiftly in the early months of the pandemic to implement best practice protocols that enabled the industry to operate uninterrupted during the pandemic. The government also suspended and deferred several fees usually borne by companies in the sector, in an attempt to support a reduction of costs in the sector. The result of these measures was that production in EG were kept at the levels projected prior to the pandemic and the sector did not witness mass retrenchment as was the case in several other oil producing countries.

Angola responded in a similar manner, after consulting with major stakeholders in the industry. Special health and safety protocols were adopted for the industry that allowed for undisrupted activity in the oil and gas sector. The government has also been able to maintain the momentum in its ongoing bid-round by facilitating access to seismic data and passing additional legislation that will facilitate exploration and drilling activity. Despite the associated economic crisis, the government has held on to its strategic power infrastructure projects like the completion of the Lauca dam and associated transition infrastructure which will boost power supply in the country significantly. The chamber believes that this project is key to enable the development of industry and the mass creation of jobs in Angola.

In Nigeria, there is a realization, across political lines, that the long-awaited Petroleum Industry Bill must

be passed in order to give clarity and predictability to the industry, both key components that drive investment. The bill was therefore tabled in parliament and it is likely, that it shall be passed and enacted in law in the 3rd quarter of this year. Furthermore, the Nigerian government in response to the growing importance of Gas globally and also for power generation internally is investing significantly to enable gas to power infrastructure in-country. This is a good development for Nigeria and Africa, as we seek to reduce the number of those without access to affordable and reliable power and to promote industry that will provide jobs for Africa's youthful population.

The energy sector's challenges, and the trials and tribulations have made

the African Energy Chamber's work more important now, more than ever. We are committed to helping Africa's energy sector stakeholders navigate a complex and ever-changing global energy landscape. We will continue our mission to support the dynamic private sector and unlock the continent's remarkable energy potential.

What role has the African Energy Chamber played and/or what initiatives have been taken to help the continental wide response and recovery efforts?

The African Energy Chamber is at the forefront of Africa's response to COVID-19, and the associated economic crisis. The Chamber is the

voice of the African energy sector and is leading the industry's response in a number of ways;

Together with OPEC and other stakeholders, the Chamber is working on an initiative to combat energy poverty in Africa, which is increasing even faster in a post covid era.

The Chamber together other partners like the International Association of Geophysical Contractors - IAGC championed the streamlining of permits for the obtention of seismic data in several African countries.

The Chamber emitted several guidelines (AEC Common Sense Agenda) after consultations with industry stakeholders on how best to ensure continuity in the energy sector and increase investment post-



NJ Ayuk says the energy sector's challenges, and the trials and tribulations have made the African Energy Chamber's work more important now than ever.

COVID-19

The AEC is a trusted advisor to key stakeholders in the industry. We engaged with several governments and advised them on ways to increase quality local participation in their energy sectors, in a manner that ensures global competitiveness in a post COVID-19 environment.

The Chamber launched a jobs portal to take opportunities to young Africans

The AEC published its road to recovery book which provides practical guidance on how African countries can enhance compactivity globally to attract investment.

As things stand now, and with everything that has taken place, how much of a factor or key player is Africa in shaping global decisions in the energy sector, how strong is the African voice in articulating and defending its interests?

According to The Africa Energy Chambers 2021 outlook, Africa consumes just over 710 terawatt-hours (TWh) presently. This is expected to triple in the next 3 decades. This represents just 6% of global consumption, and 7% of global production, despite Africa having 17% of the world's total population. Africa also holds over 7% of total proven global oil and gas reserves. However, the continent is significantly underexplored. Recent discovery trends indicate that the continent is well placed to become a key global supplier of LNG, with major recent discoveries in Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania and Senegal/Mauritania.

Africa's voice must therefore be heard loud and strong as part of the global energy discourse. The Chamber has identified this and therefore has as one of its objectives to federate the different aspirations of Africans in the energy sector and articulate this in a constructive manner that will foster investment in the African energy sector.

African stakeholders must federate around initiatives like those of the chamber in order to have the stance taken into account. 'individual



NJ Ayuk at a recent meeting with President Felipe Nyusi of Mozambique. The target must be to get activity levels across the entire energy value chain in Africa back to pre Covid-19 levels and beyond, he says

countries are unlikely to have an impact.

Under your leadership, the African Energy Chamber has sort to broaden its reach in Africa, with representations in Central and West Africa, how is this expansion shaping or moving the agenda of the Chamber forward?

The Chamber and our regional Presidents have done an amazing job with creating awareness about the Chamber and our work in their respective regions and beyond. Our footprints in Angola, East Africa, Mozambique, and Central Africa and their success allow us to keep abreast with the issues facing the energy industry in these regions and find solutions that work in these regions. The chamber will continue to grow regionally as we seek closer cooperation with the energy industry and stakeholders in-country. It is imperative, that the aspirations of every African and other stakeholders in each African country are reflected in what we do at the chamber. I want to take this opportunity to thank the regional teams for all what they do.

In an op-ed last year, you

said now will be a good time for American independent oil and gas producers to consider opportunities in Africa, may we know what Africa stands to gain from more US presence?

I lived, studied and worked in the United States at the start of my career and one thing that has always stood out to me was this: The American sense of optimism and ingenuity that drives American entrepreneurship. In that same light, I think the ingenuity of American oil independents will lead to a win-win situation for both the companies and African countries in which they might operate. Africa's energy sector needs that spirit of entrepreneurship which has led to the creation of tremendous wealth in America. Many of Nigeria's major oil discoveries were made by such companies. In Senegal, AFRICA FORTESA Corporation, headed by US Upstream veteran Roger Beall is already producing and supplying gas to the domestic market. This is a trend that is expected to define the development and industrialization of Africa in the coming decades. Mr Beall founded Fortesa in 1997 and employs over 200 employees in his onshore E&P project in Senegal.

Fortesa is exactly the kind of US company that we seek to attract to Africa. Not only do such companies create good paying jobs for young Africans, but they also provide training, tax revenue and most importantly demonstrate the kind of entrepreneurship that Africans must emulate in order to develop their continent.

The African Energy Chamber recently appointed a US-Africa Committee to serve in its advisory board, how would the committee help in growing and strengthening cooperation and investment between the US and Africa in the energy sector?

The African Energy Chamber appointed the US-Africa Committee to serve on its Advisory Board as a means to support the development of stronger energy cooperation and investment between the United States and Africa. Across the entire energy value chain, the committee aims to facilitate US investment into Africa's energy sector and provide a platform for continuous dialogue between US energy stakeholders and their counterparts in Africa. America has long viewed African energy resources,



Ayuk and a delegation of the African Energy Chamber in a photo with the Governor of Cabo Delgado in Mozambique. The AEC came in with a consignment of emergency assistance for displaced persons.

especially oil and gas as key to its strategic interests. Africa has also cherished this relationship, though perspectives have changed over time due to the changing dynamics of each stakeholders' economies and global demand patterns. The chamber sees the US as a key partner; and with the support of incredibly talented and experienced board members on that committee, commits to ensuring that frequent exchanges between US and African stakeholders lead to more investments in Africa. The committee is chaired by KearneyAfrica Legal Advisors President and former Deputy Assistant Secretary at the US Department of Commerce, Mr Jude Kearney.

To unlock future growth potential in the US-African energy cooperation, we will need to open up to SMEs and entrepreneurs and not be limited only to large and traditional corporations. The need to encourage African investments into the US was also brought to the table as a way to further

support a win-win relationship that would support further capital flows going both ways.

What is your take on the issue of vaccines for COVID 19 and do you this has a role to play in the recovery that you envisaged?

I believe vaccines are the only solution for the world to return to some form of normality, similar to pre-covid -19 times. The pandemic has been devastating to the world economy overall and even more so to Africa in particular. Ending the pandemic rests on the successful delivery of COVID-19 vaccines to every country but the challenge goes beyond just having vaccines available. There is also significant convincing to be done for populations in Africa and globally to have confidence in the vaccine. Our assessment at the chamber, is that most of the developed world will have opened up their economies fully in the fourth

quarter of 2021 in response to the majority of their populations having been vaccinated. Unfortunately, vaccination is likely to be slower in Africa mainly due to lack of access to vaccines. However, a rebound in economic growth in developed nations and china will spur activity in the sector in Africa.

We end with a last word from you on the way forward for Africa as the continent grapples with COVID-19, what gives you hope and what are you are your fears?

Africa's oil and gas industry is facing extraordinary circumstances. An ongoing energy transition and new efforts to decarbonize the world are weighing on oil demand. The shale revolution exacerbated these pressures. And of course, the COVID-19 pandemic has wrought havoc on markets around the world, accelerating and intensifying existing trends. External headwinds are

forcing African petroleum producers and the entire African energy sector to re-examine their strategies. Conventional petroleum resources here must be globally competitive, if the industry is to compete and survive when compared to new frontiers like Guyana and Suriname. Growth has lagged because of conditions above the ground and not below. Restrictive fiscal regimes, inefficient and carbon-intensive production, and difficulties in doing business are preventing the industry from reaching its full potential. These conditions need to improve, if Africa's energy industry is to remain competitive and thrive.

Africa's young generation gives me hope. Studies show that the younger generation is more likely to hold their leaders accountable, a key component to demand and drive change that will propel development.



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D R Congo: New PM, Old Challenges

By Jean-Pierre Afadhali

Following the recent shift of power towards President Felix Tshisekedi's side, the newly appointed Prime Minister Jean-Michel Sama Lukonde and his incoming government will face a daunting task to deal with instability in the volatile East, the Covid-19 pandemic, and a struggling economy among other social and political problems that are hindering the transformation of the mineral rich country.

On 15 February president Tshisekedi named the highly awaited new Prime minister after gaining a new majority in parliament. Mr. Sama Lukonde, 43, was not a well-known political figure but at the time of his appointment he was leading the country's largest mining firm known by its French acronym Gecamine (General Quarries and Mines).

While Sama Lukonde is not a famous political actor in DR Congo, the young premier previously held public position as Minister of Sports and was a member of wealthy businessman and politician Moise Katumbi's platform called 'Ensemble' (Together) before joining the Tshisekedi led platform in 2018.

The new premier who is a trained engineer, attended the University of Lubumbashi in Katanga Province and The Technical Institute in Kolwezi in DR Cong, before joining a South African University in Technical Informatics according to Gecamine's website. The young appointed prime minister started his professional career in South Africa where he worked for Multichoice, one of biggest media companies on the continent.

Now, the premier and his incoming government that has not yet been announced at the time of writing this report, will have to address the security challenges in the East of the country, in the wake of the



Congolese are yearning for concrete change and broad reforms as Prime Minister Jean Michel Sama Lukonde takes office.

high-profile assassination of Italian ambassador Luca Attanasio who was in a WFP convoy. The attack that appeared to be a failed kidnapping raised the global attention on rising insecurity in Eastern DRC, the region where hundreds of rebel groups and armed bandits have been operating for more than 20 years.

Meanwhile, the influential catholic church under the leadership of the Episcopal Conference of the Congo (CENCO) that is known for raising voice on critical public issues has called on the President and the incoming government to bring about concrete changes on various fronts

such as the country political, social situation and economy. Despite enormous natural resources wealth, the country remains poor.

The Episcopal Conference has stressed security issues as a major challenge the central African country is facing for more than two decades. "The security situation in our country, especially in the eastern part, remains deleterious and worsened by the recurring presence of armed groups that the National Army, supported by MONUSCO [UN peace keeping force], is still unable to eradicate" said the CENCO in a recent statement after its meeting.

The murder of the late Italian Ambassador near the town of Goma in North Kivu sparked the debate on the volatile region's situation. Despite the presence of UN force, large deployment of DR Congo 'army the province remains unstable. The incoming government will have to make a difference in its strategies to put an end to armed rebellion and bandits in both North and South Kivu.

The country's fragile economy has been weakened by the global pandemic. In recent years, teachers have several times gone on strike demanding unpaid salaries. Some observers said the

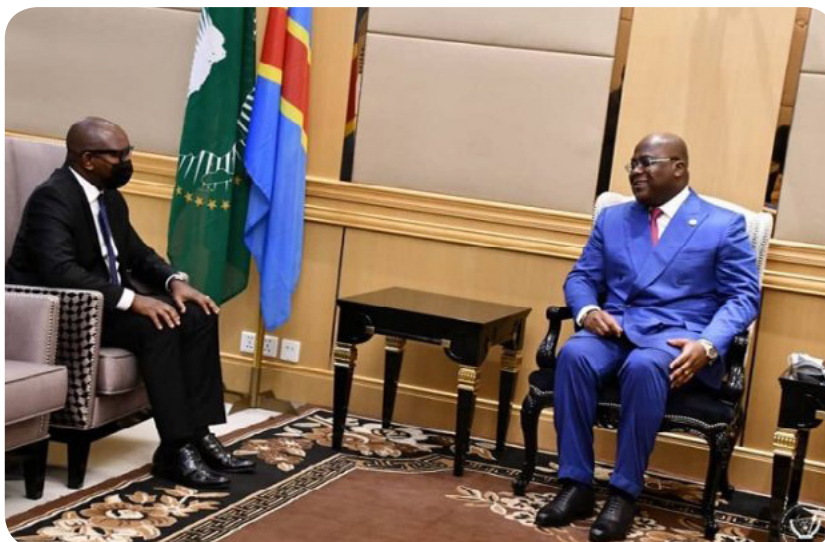
delayed re-opening of schools after they were closed last year to curb the spread of COVID-19 was government tactic to avoid a possible new teachers' strike. Schools and Universities have now re-opened.

"On the economic front, while recognizing the efforts made by government to stabilize the Congolese franc, we are concerned that the situation of the Congolese population is not improving at all on a daily basis." Noted the influential catholic bishops.

Despite mineral wealth, Congolese remain some of the poorest population in the world where the majority live under World Bank's poverty line that is less than one dollar a day. Frequent armed conflicts coupled with corruption and public resources mismanagement have played a big part in the country's high level of poverty.

Investments in public firms and their good corporate government some observers said will boost DR Congo's economy.

Shouldn't the economic recovery plan be accompanied by the recovery of state enterprises by reorganizing their management and strengthening their capital? posed the CENCO.



Jean Michel Sama Lukonde is the second Prime Minister appointed by President Tshisekedi since he took office.

Kenya : BBI Referendum Set For June

By Samuel Ouma

Kenya is a few steps away from a referendum to amend its laws, eleven years since the promulgation of the 2010 Constitution. The Building Bridges Initiative (BBI) Constitutional Amendment Bill borne out of the March 2018 famous handshake between President Kenyatta and his former political arch-rival Raila Odinga proposes several changes in the country's supreme laws.

Some of the proposals include creating the post of Prime Minister and two deputies in a bid to do away with the winner-take it all policy during elections. The constitutional change also aims at ensuring equal distribution of resources across the country, eradicating rampant corruption, and mitigating divisive politics that lead to chaos after every poll. Lives are lost, property devastated, and people get divided along tribal lines.

Other changes are the creation of 70 new electoral constituencies, which will raise the country's legislature to 360 members, numerous measures to support the economy and promote science and technology by the government, and creation of the post of an independent judiciary ombudsman who will investigate and prosecute complaints against judicial officers among other changes.

With the Bill currently in the National Assembly and the Senate for debate, either positive or negative outcome from both Houses will not stop the country from holding the much-awaited plebiscite latest by June 6.

The document received massive support at the county level to pave the way for it to be transmitted to the bicameral Parliament. So far, 43 out of 47 counties have endorsed the Bill, surpassing the 24-county constitutional threshold. On the other hand, three counties rejected



the proposed changes while the remaining one had not debated the Bill by March 3.

BBI's win at the County Assemblies is being perceived as a staggering blow to Deputy President William Ruto and his allies in their quest to block the referendum. The second in command has been rallying Kenyans to reject the Constitutional amendment spearheaded by his boss. He has always described the document as retrogressive, unnecessary, and expensive in a deplorable economy due to the novel coronavirus pandemic.

The Deputy President has been pushing for a multiple-choice referendum or a simultaneous referendum with next year's polls, but his pleas have fallen to deaf ears. He has been touring the entire nation especially, the Mt. Kenya region, President Uhuru Kenyatta's political backyard, condemning the BBI proponents while popularising his presidential bid.

Surprisingly, all seven counties

from the region backed the Bill despite Ruto being surrounded by a section of prominent politicians hailing from the area led by lawmakers Moses Kuria, Gachagua Rigathi, Alice Wahome, and Kimani Ichung'wa, among other leaders. Reports indicate that out of 554 ward representatives from Kenyatta's backyard, only four opposed the changes. Mt. Kenya region is inhabited majorly by the Kikuyu community.

"I said it before, I'll say it again, you can rent a Kikuyu, but you cannot buy a Kikuyu," said Governor Anne Waiguru was quoted by the local media after her County gave the Bill thumbs up.

Former Prime Minister Raila Odinga praised the Members of County Assemblies (MCAs) for throwing their weight behind the Constitutional Amendment Bill. The AU special envoy said the MCAs stood firm despite the propaganda and misinformation peddled around about the document.

"County assemblies have been able

to push back on a year-long campaign of lies, misinformation and undue influence on a document whose centre piece is ensuring prosperity and equitable sharing of the same."

"I thank the members of those county assemblies and our governors who refused to give in to mistrust, cynicism, brinkmanship and fear mongering and passed the Bill resoundingly," Odinga was quoted by the Star.

However, Ruto's allies think differently about the BBI's victory at the County Assemblies. According to them, the exercise was characterized by bribery and intimidation. They believed Kenyans would gang up to vote against the Bill.

"Clearly something is fishy in the manner in which the assemblies are passing the Bill. The presence of governors in the assembly chambers tells you the kind of coercion they are applying on MCAs," MP Caleb Kositany said.

"It was expected that no County Assembly would reject the BBI Bill against the Ksh2 million car grant inducement," Senator Kithure Kindik told the media.

Following the BBI Bill's overwhelming endorsement, Ruto has made a u-turn; he hinted that he would not lead the NO BBI camp despite poking holes in the initiative. During an interview with the local media, he said that Kenyans should be left to make their own decisions on the fate of the document without coercion and bribery. He maintained that the proposals in the document might not offer lasting solutions to challenges facing the country.

"The contract we are writing in BBI is about sharing of power and resources, but the most important contract that we need to write as the people of Kenya is the one on how to create jobs, opportunities and wealth because the challenge in Kenya is not

so much about sharing, but about the few opportunities and jobs,” the Citizen Tv quoted Ruto.

The decision not to be on any side of the referendum team was arrived at after consulting his allies. His die-hards cautioned him against taking his boss head-on.

“It’s unwise to come out openly to face your boss; in fact, it’s us who told him to avoid at all costs, any action, which might be interpreted as confronting his boss,” said

“We raised our reservations, but the ‘deep state’ has refused to listen to us. The DP is not going to join any BBI campaigns, but we are optimistic that it will be shot down by citizens,” reiterated legislator Cornelius Serem.

Ruto’s about-turn means the former Justice Minister and the Narc Kenya party leader Martha Karua is the official de facto leader of the anti-BBI brigade under the



Front line leaders and rivals Deputy President Ruto, President Kenyatta and Opposition leader Raila Odinga all have strong stakes in the referendum.

umbrella of «Linda Katiba» (protect a fraud.

the constitution). Karua has vowed to lead a group of people to demonstrate to ordinary citizens how the report is

«The Bill definitely requires a referendum introducing a prime minister and deputies. Bringing in

ministers from Parliament merges the Legislature and the Executive and that is not what Kenyans went for in 2010» noted.

Cameroon: Numb On Anglophone Crisis, MPs Pick Curious Fight With US Congress After Backlash, Some Jittery MPs Disown Their Deeds

By Andrew Nsoseka



For a parliament that has refused to discuss the crisis in the English speaking regions since it started, the response to American law makers was ridiculed by many Cameroonians.

Some Cameroonian MPs, especially of the English-speaking regions, are still in damage-control mode, after a document they signed on February 22 chastising some members of the US Congress for petitioning President

Biden to halt the deportation of asylum-seeking Cameroonians, surfaced on media space.

The majority of the Cameroonians seeking asylum in the US are running away due to the ongoing Anglophone crisis that has caused many to flee the

country, owing to economic hardship, and wanton killings.

The MPs in their correspondence said they were “appalled by the extremely negative characterisation” of Cameroon by the members of Congress in order to secure a

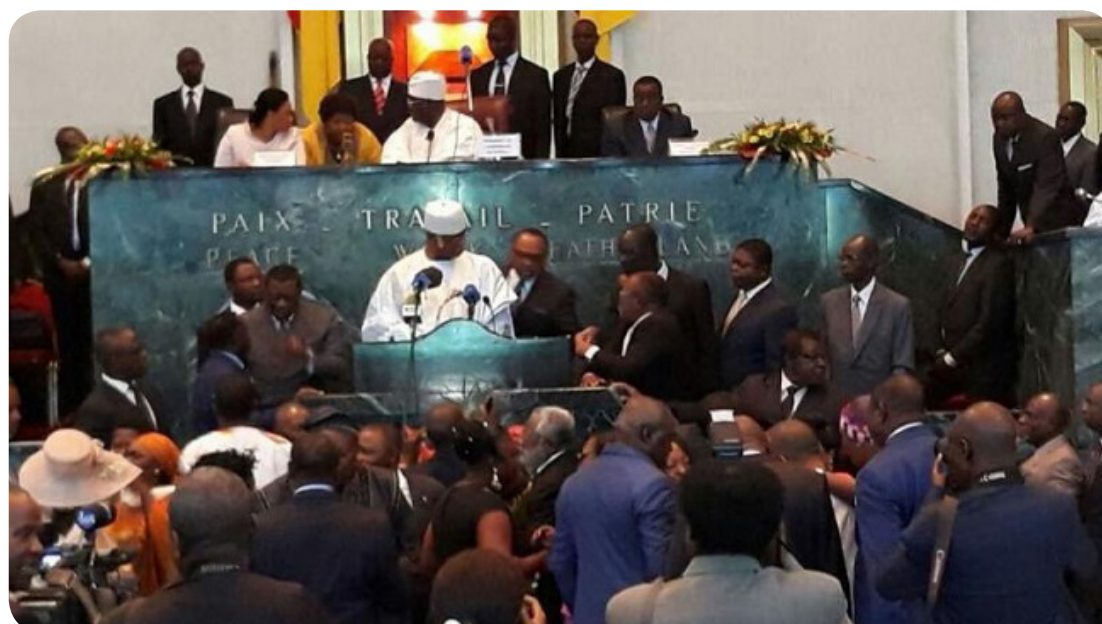
Temporary protected Status, TPS or Deferred Enforced Departure, DED of some Cameroonian asylum seekers who were scheduled to be repatriated back to where they were escaping from. The MPs who unlike many of their peers in concerned

countries around the globe, have never discussed the war that has ravaged the country for over four years and counting, stated that “We reject the views perpetuated by these congressmen on the prevailing situation in Cameroon. We consider these remarks on Cameroon as most unfriendly, derogatory and smacks of an attempt to tarnish our image, respectability in seeking to mislead public opinion, create confusion to justify the securing of TPS and DED status from these group defending the rights of immigrants in the USA.”

The MPs in their correspondence referred to the Congressmen who signed the petition to Biden, as “misguided Congressmen”. “The Cameroon they describe and allude to in their correspondence does not exist and we believe it is a figment of the misinformed views of certain individuals who are determined to cause further destabilization in the whole Central African Region,” they said.

The Members of the US Congress were led by Sen. Chris Van Hollen of Maryland, who had before Biden’s ascension to power, repeatedly called on the Trump administration to halt deportations of Cameroonians who are running away from a humanitarian crisis and are seeking asylum in the USA.

The over 40 members of Congress



MPs from the opposition SDF attempt to block former PM Yang Philemon from making a speech at the National Assembly without a debate on crisis in the English speaking regions in 2017.

asked the Biden administration to halt the deportation of Cameroonians back to a country they described as an unsafe homeland. Lawyers of many deported Cameroonians had decried that the act, saying that the Cameroonians were being placed on death planes, because they were repatriated to face either death or imprisonment.

Many of the asylum-seeking Cameroonians are from the English-speaking minority, whose regions have been ravaged by a war of secession for over four years. Many

who had hoped for a better life in the USA, were shocked and made to face their worst fears, when they were repatriated back to Cameroon where they had fled from. With businesses collapsing, houses and even entire villages reduced to ashes and rubble, many have been left with little or nothing to hope for. Some who had earlier been targeted for anti-government or pro-separatists’ activities have had to escape to neighbouring countries, while some not trusting neighbouring countries, are rather running and seeking refuge in Western countries where they believe that they cannot easily be surrendered to the system they are running away from.

The Members of Congress in their letter to Biden, wrote, “We write to you today, to request that you issue an immediate 18-month designation of either Temporary Protected Status (TPS) or Deferred Enforced Departure (DED) for Cameroon, considering the worsening conditions in the country.

“A humanitarian crisis and civil war characterised by massive internal displacement, war crimes, and shortage of essentials like water, food, healthcare, and housing make safe return impossible and your administration must act quickly to extend protection from deportation to Cameroonian nationals in the United

States. The Trump administration had shamefully mistreated and deported Cameroonian asylum seekers back to danger just this year. We urge you to do much better” The Members of the US Congress wrote.

They furthered that the conflicts in Cameroon, especially the Anglophone crisis as well as the Boko Haram situation in the country had displaced many.

Crisis-mute MPs Chastised for Challenging US Congress Members On Crisis-Picture

Meanwhile, after the Cameroonian Members of Parliament released their correspondence challenging the Members of Congress whom they described as misguided, and accused them of seeking to destabilise the Central African Sub Region, many citizens and critics immediately came out, strongly condemning the MPs who on their own have never held a debate on the crisis. Many took to social media to mock the MPs who signed the communique after a meeting at the PM’s office. Many faulted the MPs for shying away from debating issues threatening the wellbeing of their country, and rather waiting to be instructed to engage and throw punches as their peers in other countries who are seemingly more concerned about the fate and



SDF Deputy Chair Joshua received strong criticisms for signing the letter

wellbeing of Cameroonians, than their so-called representatives.

After the document went viral on social media and became a debate topic in most media spaces, the MPs who had signed the document, especially those of Anglophone extraction were torn between boldly owning up to their deed, or distancing themselves from it. Some of the MPs, contacted to confirm whether they signed the document, either said they could not “confirm or deny” their participation, or begged that it should rather be reported that all attempts

to get to them failed. Some claimed to be unaware of the correspondence carrying their signatures.

One of the MPs who came under strong bashing, was Cameroon’s main opposition political party, SDF’s Vice National Chairman, Hon. Joshua Osih, whose party has almost fallen out of the country’s political sphere because of the crisis that crippled the party’s fief, the Anglophone regions. Hon. Osih was condemned by many, and accused of drifting towards Biya regime’s CPDM hypocrisy.

In a damage control effort, Hon.

Osih sent out a statement, saying that he did not sign the document. His utterances again did not carry weight, as he again said he agrees with the content of the correspondence. He said if those criticising the MPs take time to read the document, they will discover that it is not in support of the repatriation of the asylum seekers.

The MPs are said to have been irked by the fact that the US continues to play host to many activists who are coordinating efforts of the separatists against the Cameroon government.

Many have used the MPs

correspondence to advance the reigning belief that the MPs are seemingly voiceless, and thus will continue to be used as a rubber stamp, by the Biya regime, to advance its agenda, while giving the impression that they are concerned representatives of the people speaking in the interest of their constituents, when in reality, the MPs who came about as a result of controversial election mired by gross irregularities are rather playing to the gallery in the interest of those who placed them in their various posts.

Mozambique: Democracy In Peril As Opposition Loses Leaders

Bj Jorge Joaquim

The opposition in Mozambique is once again in mourning. Daviz Simango, the leader of Mozambique’s second largest opposition party MDM and the mayor of the major port city of Beira, died in February 2021, following the death in 2018 of Afonso Dhakama, the leader of Mozambique’s main opposition party RENAMO. It is the Mozambican democracy in bankruptcy.

Simango, 57, died on 22 February of complications from stroke and diabetes in a private hospital in South Africa, where he had been flown when his condition worsened in Mozambique. He had led the MDM party since its foundation in 2009, as well as Beira City, in his fourth term. In the first term on behalf of the Renamo; in the second, alone after a disagreement with Afonso Dhlakama; the third term and this interrupted fourth term, via his MDM party.

An influential mayor, Simango was popular and known for running an effective municipal government. Trained as an engineer, he supported building a system of flood channels to help the low-lying Indian Ocean port of 500,000 people cope with flooding from annual cyclones. When Cyclone Idai devastated Beira in 2019,



Simango was often out in the streets, helping to establish feeding centers and emergency health clinics.

Simango ran for president of Mozambique in 2009, 2014 and 2019, coming third each time after candidates from the ruling Frelimo party and Renamo. His best result was in 2009, when he won 8.59% of the vote. His party, the MDM, at one point governed four cities — including the biggest city in the north of the country, Nampula, as well as Quelimane, the capital of Zambezia province, and the smaller city of Gurue. By the time of his death, however, Beira was the party’s only electoral possession.

He was the son of one of the

founders of Frelimo, which fought against the Portuguese colonial power. It is said that Uria Simango was extra-judicially executed by Frelimo itself after independence in 1975, allegedly for treason. He was among those dubbed ‘reactionaries’ by the Maputo authorities, along with his wife Celina Simango and other Frelimo dissidents.

Opposition weakened

The death of Daviz Simango means the weakening of the opposition in just under three years. Since the death of Afonso Dhlakama, Renamo has never been the same. Daviz Simango had enough charisma to be a unifying figure for the whole opposition in

the upcoming elections in Mozambique, but that figure does not exist today.

The death of these two influential leaders could affect the outcome of municipal and general elections due to be held in 2023 and 2024, respectively. The elections are looming large in people’s minds. Nobody is sure how they will play out. Renamo and MDM might align with other opposition parties while Frelimo might try to use the MDM leadership transition to undermine its rival, with unknown consequences.

Simango died in a context where the MDM was organising itself to recover its political space. In the 2019 legislative elections, the MDM managed only six seats, compared to 17 achieved in 2014. Simango was organising his team for a strong electoral campaign, using the city of Beira under his management as an example of concrete successful work. But he died suddenly.

With all the uncertainty now hanging over it, and big and potentially divisive decisions pending, some predict MDM could disintegrate and perhaps disappear from the Mozambique political scene, at least as a force to be reckoned with. MDM’s weakness could

also embolden Frelimo hardliners to seek a return to unilateral domination of Mozambique's political landscape.

Like many other African leaders, Simango sidelined likely rivals and thereby failed to put any succession plan in place. He left many other loose ends in MDM's immediate political future. So no one seems to have much idea of who might succeed him. MDM's National Political Commission met on 27 February, hours after Simango's burial, and decided to schedule for the first fortnight of April the meeting of the National Council, which in turn should convene the extraordinary party congress for the election of the new president.

What next for MDM

Now, Simango's death poses a serious problem for the opposition, in general, and the MDM, in particular. The future of the party is uncertain as he was preparing himself to step down from the leadership of the Beira city municipality and not at the party level. Albano Carige took over as mayor of the city of Beira. Carige, former city councillor for construction and urbanisation and a former private secretary to Afonso Dhlakama, then leader of opposition party Renamo, was number three on the MDM list for the Beira municipal assembly in the 2018 local elections. The number two, who would be next in line to take over, is the MDM general secretary, Jose Domingos, but he is not eligible, since he has taken a seat in the Mozambican parliament, the Assembly of



the Republic.

Carige has been with Simango since 2003, when, as a Renamo member, the latter began his first term as mayor of Beira. He is described as Simango's right-hand man and whenever Simango travelled, he left Carige in charge of the party. He knows how the city is run, as well as its management, and he recently promised to continue with Simango's

legacy. Meanwhile, MDM sources told PAN AFRICAN VISIONS that Carige may not run for a second term in the next local elections, since he is more of a technocrat than a politician.

Simango's death will complicate a lot of things because he was, until a certain point, the party in person. The issue of preparing the succession of presidents in opposition parties is not common in Mozambique, and

even less in MDM which was very young. Nobody expected Daviz to leave so soon so it is very likely that the idea of succession in the party presidency was not mature.

Simango had twice tried to run in the presidential elections, but without enough votes to occupy the Presidency of the Republic. However, with his leadership, the MDM managed to break the bipolarisation of Mozambican politics by gaining seats in the Mozambican parliament,

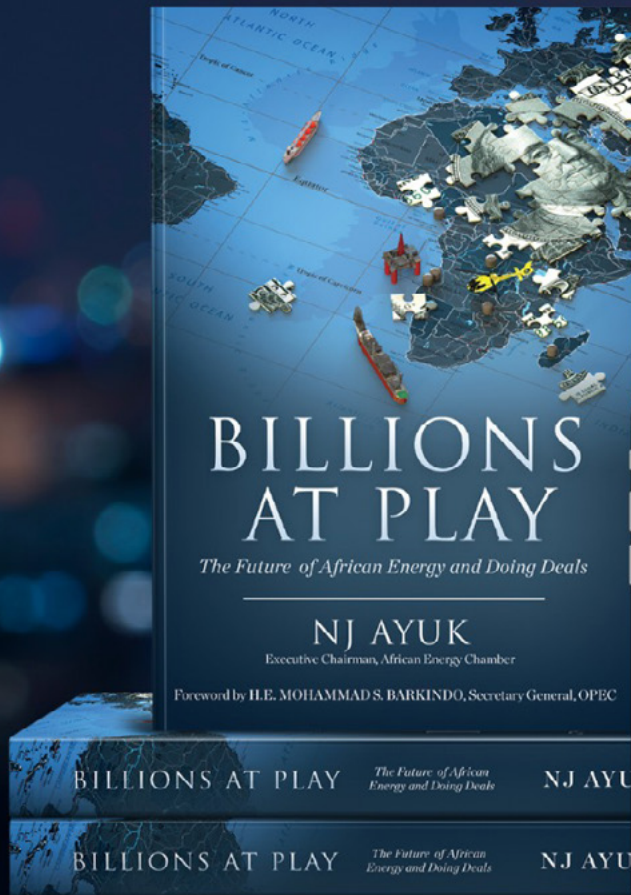
which before was basically composed of members of Renamo and Mozambique's ruling party Frelimo. His death leaves a very big void in Mozambican politics. It is a setback for Mozambique's young democracy considering that the country recently lost Dhlakama. Surely, they are replaceable people but it will take a long time and Frelimo will not be romantic but will rather exploit this opportunity.

Meanwhile, Engineer Daviz Simango was considering leaving the Beira town council, but since the city started being battered by cyclones there was an understanding that he was the right person to continue in that position, unless he was elected President of the Republic. His party is significantly weakened by his death and unlikely able to fully recover – but needs to try and reach consensus quickly on a successor, as it will also compete in municipal elections in October and was expecting significant gains.



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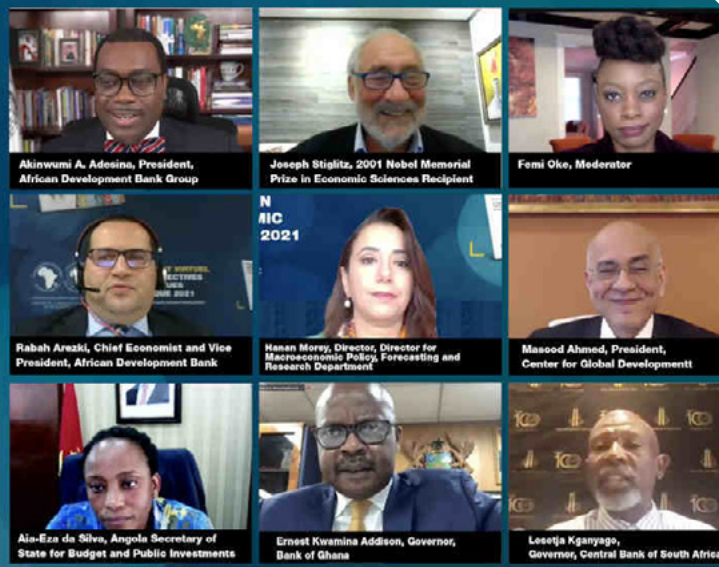
African Economic Outlook 2021: Africa's Growth Prospects Bullish Despite Covid-19 Constraints And Debt Burden

AFRICAN ECONOMIC OUTLOOK 2021

From Debt Resolution to Growth:
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In 2020, government spending across Africa the continent skyrocketed as countries strived to support their populations through the pandemic, says the AfDB.

The economic impact of the pandemic varies across economic characteristics and regions, but the projected recovery is broad-based

the average debt-to-GDP ratio for Africa is expected to climb by 10 to 15 percentage points in the short to medium term

the time for one last debt relief for Africa is now – President Akinwumi A. Adesina

Despite the challenging backdrop of a global pandemic and external economic shocks, Africa is expected to recover from its worst recession in half a century and reach 3.4 percent growth in 2021, the African Development Bank said in its 2021 African Economic Outlook report, launched on Friday.

The outbreak of the novel coronavirus in December 2019 has taken a massive toll on Africa, hitting tourism-dependent economies, oil-exporting economies and other-resource intensive economies the hardest, as well as deepening inequality.

The African Economic Outlook, published annually since 2003, provides headline numbers on Africa's economic performance and

outlook. This year's theme "From Debt Resolution to Growth: The Road Ahead for Africa", highlights the impact of Covid-19 and government debt, offering mitigating measures to governments and policy makers.

The continent-wide projected recovery, following a 2.1% contraction in 2020, does not remove the threat of increasing poverty, the report said. An estimated 39 million Africans could possibly slip into extreme poverty this year, following about 30 million who were pushed into extreme poverty in 2020 as a result of the pandemic. The report finds that populations with lower levels of education, few assets, and working in informal jobs are the most affected and must be protected.

Presenting the report during a virtual launch ceremony, African Development Bank Vice President and Chief Economist Rabah Arezki cautioned that Africa's predicted growth could be subject to major downside risks arising from both external and domestic factors. "The cost of inaction will be large," he warned.

Debt

In 2020, government spending across Africa the continent

skyrocketed as countries strived to support their populations through the pandemic.

This has had a direct negative impact on budgetary balances and debt burdens: the average debt-to-GDP ratio for Africa is expected to climb by 10 to 15 percentage points in the short to medium term, fueled by the surge in government spending and the contraction of fiscal revenues as a result of Covid-19.

This will result in fast-paced debt accumulation in the near to medium term. Although the average debt to-GDP ratio had stabilized around 60 percent of GDP, recent debt restructuring experiences in Africa have been costly and lengthy because information asymmetries, creditor coordination problems, and the use of more complicated debt instruments, the report said.

African Development Bank's Covid response

The African Development Bank reacted swiftly to the Covid-19 pandemic, putting in place a crisis response facility to support countries in mitigating the health and economic effects of the pandemic. The Bank also

launched a \$3 billion Fight COVID-19 social bond on global capital markets, which at the time was the largest U.S. dollar-denominated social bond ever.

However, the fundamentals of Africa's debt burden must be prioritized and not ignored, African Development Bank President Dr. Akinwumi A. Adesina said.

"The Bank made a strategic and forward-looking choice to discuss a topic that could become a key policy concern in the near term," he writes in the report's foreword.

"We need to address Africa's debt and development finance challenges in partnership with the international community. Much larger financial support is needed, and private sector creditors need to be part of the solution. The time for one last debt relief drive for Africa is now."

The report makes important recommendations for a multi-pronged policy approach to addressing the pandemic. These include supporting the health sector with resources for health care systems to cope with the virus and other preventable diseases; monetary and fiscal support to underpin economic recovery; expanding social safety nets and making growth more

equitable; minimizing the long-term implications of the pandemic on human capital accumulation by opening schools and scaling up active labor market policies to retool the labor force for the future of work through digitalization, industrialization, and diversification.

Hannan Morsy, Director of the African Development Bank's Macroeconomic Policy, Forecasting and Research Department, said: "We have a once-in-a-century opportunity at building forward better, more equitable, more sustainable and above all more resilient. Prompt and bold measures are needed to make it happen, the report highlights the required actions."

Earlier, Professor Joseph E. Stiglitz, recipient of the 2001 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences, joined Dr. Adesina for a one-and-one conversation as the event opener. This led into a broader panel discussion to discuss the report.

*Courtesy of AfDB



The fundamentals of Africa's debt burden must be prioritized and not ignored, says AfDB President Dr. Akinwumi A. Adesina.

South Africa: Zuma Thumbs Nose At Anti-Corruption Commission

By Prince Kurupati



Former President Zuma has persistently refused to appear and give testimony before the State Capture Commission. Photo credit DW.

In the past few years, a tussle has been ongoing in South Africa between former president Jacob Zuma and the State Capture Commission as well as the Constitutional Court. The root of the tussle emanating from the fact that the former South African President has persistently refused to appear and give testimony before the State Capture Commission even though he has been invited and summoned on several occasions. What was generally a tussle however seems to be transforming into a full blown conflict as the Constitutional Court supporting the State Capture Commission has threatened Zuma with contempt of court – this following Zuma's latest refusal to appear before the State Capture Commission.

During Zuma's tenure as the president of South Africa, then public prosecutor Thuli Madonsela urged the establishment of a commission

of inquiry into state capture after investigations by the public prosecutor office found 'evidence' of improper conduct between Zuma and the Gupta Family. The investigations by the public prosecutor office found that the relations between Zuma and the Gupta Family were predominantly influenced and working for the private benefit of the Gupta Family. Following the public prosecutor's advice for a commission of inquiry to be set up, Zuma sought measures to nullify the investigation but he wasn't successful. This eventually led him to announce the commission of inquiry into state capture.

In setting up the commission, Zuma stated, "The allegations that the state has been wrestled out of the hands of its real owners, the people of South Africa is of paramount importance and are therefore deserving of finality and certainty." Shortly after setting up the commission, Zuma resigned from the presidency and was replaced by Cyril Ramaphosa.

As part of its operations, the commission of inquiry had to hear various testimonies from various individuals to ascertain if indeed the state had been captured during Zuma's tenure. As Zuma was at the helm, he was regarded as a prime person for testimony by the commission hence the reason he was one of the very first people to be invited to give testimony.

When he was invited, Zuma failed to appear before the commission citing bias, victimhood and unfair targeting by an elite group of the ruling ANC party. The commission would later on invite Zuma on several occasions and he kept on issuing different excuses one after the other including asking the commission chair to recuse himself as he was apparently 'conflicted'. All of the efforts by the commission to invite Zuma failed to bear any fruit and they just gave Zuma more time to make appeal after appeal thereby dodging to give testimony before the commission.

Having failed on several occasions to successfully invite Zuma, the State Capture Commission decided to



Commission Chair Justice Zondo.

take the matter to the Constitutional Court. After hearing the case by the State Capture Commission, the Constitutional Court lambasted the Commission stating that it was treating Jacob Zuma with kid gloves and in the process wasting valuable time and state resources. The Constitutional Court ruled that all commissions in the land are under case law which upholds the validity of the commission in question that is, the State Capture Commission. As such, the State Capture Commission has the power to issue summons as encapsulated in the Commissions Act. Based upon this, Cathleen Powell states that the Constitutional Court basically wasted precious state resources by inviting "Zuma to give evidence instead of issuing a summons to him. It negotiated with his lawyers when he first walked out of the proceedings in July 2019. And it went through an unnecessary process of a hearing on whether to issue summons when it could simply have issued the summons." Through all of these actions, "the commission opened the door to further delaying tactics on his part".

Armed with the newly found knowledge from the Constitutional Court, the State Capture Commission did issue summons asking Zuma to

give testimony from the week starting February 15, 2021. Surprisingly, even after receiving the summons, Zuma through his lawyers, Mabuza Attorneys wrote to the Commission stating he was not going to appear before the Commission Chair Deputy Chief Justice Raymond Zondo citing irregularities. In the letter he wrote to the Commission, Zuma said that his review application asking Justice Zondo to recuse himself is "yet to be determined by the court". He also stated that him appearing before the commission "is irregular and not in line with the Fourth Order of the Constitutional Court judgement of 28 January 2021". Zuma ended his letter stating that his position in regards to the matter "should not be construed to suggest any defiance of a legal process".

Zuma's response to the summons issued against him has been regarded by many legal experts as a gesture of the middle finger he is directing towards both the Constitutional Court as well as the State Capture Commission. Many argue that Zuma is the man who ran the engine room during the time when allegations of state capture were reported hence he is central to the whole inquiry. His refusal to appear before the commission stating one excuse or

the other all of which claiming the presence of a witch hunt is all but a ploy to delay in giving testimony and hopefully frustrating the efforts of the commission.

Though Zuma has showed great defiance during the whole course of the inquiry, the judgement by the Constitutional Court gives the Commission Chair Justice Zondo all the power. As stated in the Constitutional Court judgment, the Commission enjoys the powers of a High Court meaning it can imprison a person who refuses to testify for up to eight days at a time without a criminal conviction. Justice Zondo thus can simply use the stick in forcing Zuma to testify by threatening or even go as far as imprisoning him. That however, can be met with another demonstration of defiance by Zuma as he previously stated after the Constitutional Court ruling that "I (Zuma) do not fear being arrested, I do not fear being found guilty nor do I fear being incarcerated." The conflict between Zuma and the State Capture Commission is definitely in the penultimate stages and a great finale is already taking shape. All that outsiders can do is adopt a watch and see attitude.

Rwanda: MPs At Odds With EU On Rusesabagina

By Jean d'Amour Mbonyinshuti



Terrorism charges have been slammed against Paul Rusesabagina .Photo credit AFP.

The Rwandan Parliament has condemned the European parliament's resolution requesting for the immediate release of terror suspect Paul Rusesabagina citing the inviolability of the principle of judicial independence and separation of powers.

The European parliament had early in February issued a resolution on Rwanda accusing it of illegal arrest, rendition, and incommunicado detention of Rusesabagina among other issues.

The European Parliament resolution urged that Rusesabagina whose European citizenship and is a permanent USA citizen deserved a fair and transparent trial, lawyers of his choosing and access to medical services.

Reacting to the resolution, the members of the Rwandan Parliament slammed the resolution saying it amounted to attempts to influence an ongoing judicial proceeding and called on the European Parliament

to retract its resolution given "The inviolability of the principle of judicial independence and separation of powers" reads part of the resolution,"

The terror suspect Rusesabagina and 20 co-accused are currently on trial on charges stemming from a series of attacks allegedly carried out by their armed groups (FLN) in Southern west Rwanda.

According to the prosecution in Kigali, the attacks were carried out between June and December 2018, during which 9 civilians were killed, several others seriously injured and left with disabilities, and extensive property destroyed.

His case and other co-accused are being tried by the Nyanza based High Court for International and Trans-border Crimes.

Specifically, Rusesabagina who, until his arrest was the president of the Rwandan Movement for Democratic Change (MRCD) faces nice crimes including the formation

of an irregular armed group, membership of a terrorist group, financing terrorism, murder as an act of terrorism, abduction as an act of terrorism, and armed robbery as an act of terrorism.

Rejecting the resolution by the European Parliament, the Rwanda parliamentarians called on the latter to respect the independence of the judiciary and the right to a fair and impartial trial under both Rwanda and international law.

It said that the EU parliament resolution purports to arrive at firm conclusions about facts sub-judice which the European Parliament had no standing to independently investigate and which it had not in fact investigated.

The Rwandan parliament also noted that the European parliament resolution purports to establish facts about a matter before the court whereas this would not be accepted with respect to legal proceedings in any EU member state.

It also condemned the European Parliament's unrealistic and baseless characterization of Rusesabagina's arrest as an enforced disappearance or illegal rendition.

"The Rwandan parliament rejects the European parliament's finding that Paul Rusesabagina's arrest violates Rwanda's obligations under various international legal instruments" reads one of the resolutions in part stressing that Rusesabagina was wanted by Rwanda law enforcement in connection with crimes committed to Rwanda and therefore was under the jurisdiction of Rwanda courts.

The parliamentarians assured their European counterparts that Rusesabagina would receive justice like other suspects extradited from Europe and elsewhere and tried by Rwandan courts.

It said there was no obligation in international law to use extradition when other legal avenues to effect an arrest are available saying it was

a common law enforcement practice around the world.

“The Parliament rejects the European Parliament’s baseless assertion that Paul Rusesabagina will not receive a fair trial in Rwanda and recalls that numerous criminal suspects extradited from Europe and other jurisdictions have received fair trials before Rwandan courts,” it said.

Members of the Rwandan parliament were also chocked by the fact that their counterparts in the European parliament resolution could not denounce Rusesabagina’s outfit attacks but referred to him as a human rights activist.

“This silence constitutes implicit support by the European Parliament for the armed attacks, which may in turn encourage further attacks,” it said refuting the assumption that the European citizenship was an implicit entitlement to impunity from Rwandan and other African courts.



Rwandan MPs assure their European counterparts that Rusesabagina would receive justice like other suspects extradited from Europe and elsewhere and tried by Rwandan courts.

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Mismanagement Scandals Rock Cameroon's Disarmament, Reintegration Centres For Ex-fighters

By Andrew Nsoseka

Of recent, Cameroon's Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration Centres for ex-separatist fighters in the two English-speaking regions have been in the spotlight, not for succeeding to lure more fighters from the bushes to surrender, but rather, for failing to live up to expectation, and thus scaring away even fighters who had surrendered into the Centres.

The woes of the two centres, lodged in Buea, Southwest Region, and Bamenda, for the Northwest region, started almost at the same time the centres were created by a presidential decree, which was criticised for talking about disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of fighters in an active war, without even a call for a ceasefire. When the creation of the Centre was announced, followed by lofty promises to the fighters, especially to those fighting to separate former Southern Cameroons from the rest of Cameroon, many raised fears that the government might not be able to live up to its promises.

The promise to lodge, feed, train, and absorb the ex-fighters into the civil service and state-run corporations, many opined, could even attract non-fighters, especially unemployed youths to rush to the centres, and present themselves as ex-fighters, with hopes of being trained and employed with a steady income by the state at the end. In the early days of the centres, many believed that some government officials simply planted those they wanted to see employed by the state in the centres, and presented them as ex-fighters. However, some well-known fighters were seen at the centres too.

Hardship Strikes Centres

After the centres went operational, while the campaigns for more fighters to surrender continued, the ex-fighters started facing hardship in the centres halfway into 2020. The



Ex Separatist fighters in Buea, Southwest regional capital block road in protest.

hardship, ranging from lack of proper meals, to lack of training programmes for the ex-fighters and also dwindling hopes on promised jobs, caused many ex-fighters to agitate. A couple of the ex-fighters escaped from the centres in their hundreds and could not be accounted for. Many who stayed back soon devised a strategy of aggressive begging in the neighbourhoods and streets as a means of survival. In Buea and Bamenda, the ex-fighter kept knocking on doors in the neighbourhoods, begging for food, money and other things to keep up with their increasing challenges.

Others reportedly got entangled in the drug business in town, as they identified the various spots, and moved around collecting their cuts from the drug dealing points. Their involvement in this activity was reportedly a contributing factor in the May 28 killing of some youths in Buea, at a smoking joint, after they tried to resist paying a cut of their profits to the ex-fighters. Before the killings, the fighters are said to have stormed the area and had the drug dealers and consumers severely beaten. The case in Buea, was similar to that of Bamenda, in the Country's North West region. Some of the ex-

fighters too have been accused of harassing and stealing from locals in the neighbourhoods, all in a bid to make ends meet as the centres had increasingly failed to live up to their expectations and lofty promises.

Embezzlement Off Funds Suspected

Meanwhile, as hardship became rife in the centres forcing the ex-fighters to resort to deviant means to feed and make a living, one of Cameroon's main leading English Language newspapers, The Post, did an investigation, in which it alleged that funds meant to run the centres were rather diverted into private accounts, the National Coordinator of the Centres, Fai Yengo Francis, a retired civil administrator appointed to coordinate the centres rather engaged a propaganda campaign in which media organs were paid to counteract the findings of The Post newspaper.

Fai Yengo claimed over the state broadcaster, CRTV, that all the centres were given FCFA 100 million for upkeep. After the media propaganda campaign, the problems of the centre kept getting worse with more fighters pouring out into the

neighbourhoods, to either beg, or assault their way into getting what they want. After the publication of the report by The Post, one of the Directors of the Centres, Bernard Fonju was fired from his job. The military commander of troops in the war effort in the country's Northwest region, General Valery Nka confirmed that several former ex-fighters could not be accounted for, because they had escaped from the centres.

Fighters Take Refuge In Churches After Failure of Centres

As the hardship in the centres ensued, some fighters who chose neither to beg or resort to crime for survival, decided to rather go to some religious leaders and churches that had played a vital part in convincing them to disarm. The Cameroon Baptist Church, CBC, as well as the Catholic Church and other churches and church leaders were forced to house some of the ex-fighters and look for means of helping them start a new life.

Christian Cardinal Tumi, Archbishop Emeritus of the Douala Archdiocese who was instrumental in convincing several fighters to

disarm, in an interview over the State Broadcaster affirmed that several fighters whom they convinced had escaped from the centres. He said some had even come to meet him in Douala because they could no longer persevere living in hardship in the centres. He said the Catholic Church had received over 400 of the ex-fighters, and since they could not be housed, they had to give each about FCFA 200,000 to use and start a living. He said the Prime Minister, Chief Dr Joseph Dion Ngute, at one moment also had to wade in financially, to help the church support the fighters start a new life out of the failing centres.

Fighters Resort To Protests

When the fighters realised that their hardship had seemingly come to stay, they resorted to strike actions and other public manifestations aimed at drawing the public's attention to their plight, with the hope of forcing the government to attend to them. Even

after the investigation that alleged the murky conditions at the centres, the coordinators rounded up some of the ex-fighters who appeared in video clips, holding bottles of beer and bragging about how they were well-taken care of. The show-off was short-lived as the ex-fighters soon engaged in public manifestations during which they decried the sordid conditions under which they live in the centres. They also demanded the fulfilment of the promises made to them. Some who have been there for a while are demanding to be given the promised jobs and integrated into society.

During the recent protests in the two centres in early and mid-February in the Buea and Bamenda Centres respectively, the government and local officials had to again beg and calm down the ex-fighters. This time around, the ex-fighters in the two centres were each handed some money to dissuade them from engaging in their promised rampage, if the promises made to them were



Ex-Amba fighters, PM's Representative, Nдох Bertha, Southwest regional Governor, Okalia Bilai, Buea DO singing the national anthem at a graduation ceremony in 2020.

not fulfilled.

Though the ex-separatist fighters received the token from the government and piped down (for now), it is still feared that as long as the promises made to them remain unfulfilled, and they keep living under sordid conditions while huge

sums are reportedly disbursed for them, it is only a matter of time before the centres again erupt in protest, and further discourage more fighters who are tired of fighting, from surrendering to live under such conditions.

The "Fallen Hope Of LGBT in GHANA"

By Maxwell Nkansah

Ghana has a mixed record on its treatment of Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons. It Criminalizes "unnatural carnal knowledge" in section 104 (1) (b) of its Criminal Offences Act, which the authorities interpret as "penile penetration of anything other than a virgin." However, the law is a colonial legacy that is rarely, if ever, enforced, and unlike several of its neighbors, Ghana has not taken steps in recent years to stiffen penalties against consensual same-sex conduct or to expressly criminalize sexual relation between women. At least two government agencies, the Ghana Police Force and the Commission on Human Right and Administrative Justice, have reached out to LGBT activists and taken proactive steps, including through providing human right training workshops to help ensure their protection. Nevertheless, LGBT activists are very frequently victims of physical violence and psychological



abuse, extortion and discrimination in many different aspect of daily life, because of their sexual orientation and gender identity.

Since President Akufo-Addo assumed office in January 2017, he has come under tremendous pressure from numerous religious

groups to declare his government's position on homosexuality. The 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana guarantees a range of fundamental human rights and freedoms to all its citizens. Article 17(1) and (2) guarantees equality before the law and prohibits discrimination on

grounds of "gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed or social economic status. The Constitution guarantees respect for human dignity, protection of personal liberty, and the right to privacy for all. Ghana has ratified all the major regional and international human right treaties and accepted the individual complaints procedures under the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Right and the inquiry procedure under the Optional protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against Women.

Inciting Homophobic Violence

On numerous occasions since 2010 and notably from February 2017, Ghanaian officials have argued that the Ghanaian public is not ready, because of the strong religious beliefs, to accept the decriminalization of same-sex conduct or to guarantee equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and

gender identity in the constitution. However, statement being made by some of these some officials feed into public sentiments against homosexuality and protection of the fundamental human right of lesbian and gay people.

LGBTQI, came on a raise in the country when the European Union representative in Ghana made a post of their support to the LGBTQI newly opened office in Accra, Ghana. Ghanaians who can and are on social media set it on a blaze, and it has gotten a lot of people including authorities talking and condemning it in our society. The current situation is worrying and to some Ghanaians, it's better for the presidency to come out and declare its stands on the issues making rounds. Mr. Mosses Foh - Amoaning, a legal practitioner and a sole activist against this LGBTQI stated that, "there are some politicians and other journalists with good standing in our society who are part of this group and unfortunately, they are using them to push their agenda." Though his claims can not be substantiated but many well-meaning Ghanaians have sided with him and have joined his call.

It's an undisputable fact that, the LGBTQI has been with us even before the current president was voted in to office. I remember at a point in time, some single sex senior high schools was find that, some students in these institutions are practicing

this ungodly acts. I would like to take you back memory lane, as this issue is concerned. The former president of the republic, the late His excellency John Evans Fiifi Atta Mills was confronted with the same issue immediately after he was sworn in to office. Some section of the Ghanaian populace mounted some pressure on him to come clear on this issue. He listened to the voice of the masses and came out emphatically to say he is not in support of this and wont support it on any day. He believes in the Ghanaian culture and he was voted in to office to protect it. He was eulogized by many Ghanaians here and abroad.

The current President of the republic, Nana Addo Danquah Akuffo-Addo has not been left out from this hook. He was confronted with the same issue during his first term of office. In an interview with ALJAZEERA, way back 2019, the president said and I quote, "this issue of LGBT is not currently on our table and is not something we are considering fight now but it has been a global issue which bound to happen in Ghana." A lot of Ghanaians couldn't take it lightly and they took the president on. Later, his spoke persons including the Minister of Information came out to explain what the President meant by "its bound to happen."

Fast forward, this issue left us a bit for some of us to have our



peace. Unfortunately, the situation is now stronger than before. they now have well established offices spread across. Some Ghanaians have asked the president to lock down their offices which I think is in order. Some are of the view that, most of their activities are being sponsored by some diplomats inside and outside the country. Not long ago, Ghana Pentecostal and Charismatic Council (GPCC) issued a statement calling on the government to summon all foreign diplomats supporting LGBTQI organization in Ghana (peace FM, summon foreign diplomats supporting LGBTQI in Ghana – GPCC To Govn't.) in their press stamen, they stated that " the actions of the LGBTQI movement is also a complete variance with the laws of the God as spelt out in the Holy bible concerning God's plan of creation and the sanctity of marriage between woman and a man as ordained by God."

Some ministers have joined the call that, the government will put everything in place in order to prevent these people from operating in Ghana. All these shows how wounded most Ghanaians are. Some lawyers including a former legislature of National Democratic Congress (NDC), Honourable Inusah Fuseini has said, its time Ghana recognize the existence of their right. According to him, the gay rights is now a human right issue which we have to recognize. CDD's Mr. H. Kwasi Prempeh said, "I am free to advocate the abolition or

repeal of a certain criminal statute, does my right to such advocacy, which is a form of permissible free speech, become unlawful merely because I have joined together or associated with another person or other persons to pursue that same advocacy and other related issues of mutual interest? Aren't others just as free to brand together in counter – advocacy in support of the status quo?" he asked all these to justify the advocacy of LGBTQI based on human right grounds in Ghana.

Many Ghanaians are not happy about he loud silence of the Civil Society Organizations. Some are of the view that, most their activities are being funded by the LGBTQI group and they can not speak against their pay masters. It's a mere allegation but a lot of Ghanaians are still worried and are calling for reasons behind that silence. A group of one hundred and two Ghanaians feminists have become the last group to add their voice to the growing support for the recognition of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and sexual identities in Ghana. Finally, President of the republic, Nana Addo Danquah Akuffo-Addo has ordered the closure of the office of the LGBTQI. Addressing a church congregation the President made the announcement of not accepting of LGBTQI in the country and never will that happen under his watch as the president of the Republic of Ghana!



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New Director General of WTO: Mission is Possible for Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala

By Sayed Attia*

Today, March 1, 2021, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, a former Nigerian minister of finance and a World Bank veteran will take office as the new director of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Dr. Ngozi is the first of African descent to be appointed to oversee the rules of the world trading system.

Fortunately the key world trade players, China, USA and EU expressed their support for Dr. Ngozi, the issue that sends a positive signal that there some sort of agreement between these parties. According to Reuters, the U.S delegate at WTO, Washington is committed to working closely with Dr. Ngozi and be a "constructive partner". Furthermore, China's delegation pledged "full support" to her and the EU trade commissioner said he looked forward working closely with her. However, Deputy Director-General Alan Wolff heralded the arrival of a new era of WTO leadership but cautioned that "member enthusiasm, optimism and hope need to be translated into



Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala is the first of African descent to be appointed to oversee the rules of the world trading system.

concrete action.", according to Inside, US trade.

Amongst the diversified fields of expertise of Dr. Ngozi is her chairmanship of GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance which is a public-private global health partnership

with the goal of increasing access to immunization in poor countries. This background will imperatively constitute a major factor in the policy of the WTO amid the current challenge of Covid-19 pandemic. According to African Business Magazine, Dr. Ngozi assured to be the only candidate working at the intersection of trade and public health, which she says will enable the trade system to better deliver Vaccines and medical supplies during the Covid-19 pandemic. The facilitation of movement of Vaccine from the manufacturing countries to the needy countries is the top priority at the moment. All WTO member states should collaborate and cooperate in securing the easy movement of Vaccine across the world.

The priorities of the WTO at this critical moment are numerous but they are not insurmountable. These priorities include completion of fisheries subsidies negotiations, starting negotiations on E-commerce to sustain the growth of the digital economy, and facilitate safe, secure and efficient cross-border e-payments and data flows, dispute settlement reform, and health

measures at the time of diseases, such Covid-19 pandemic. As an example of the measures that be discussed in the health measures is to waive some intellectual property rights on COVID-19 medicines and vaccines to speed up their rollout to poor countries which do not have the affordability and access to medical products. Furthermore, there is a dire need to relax intellectual property (IP) rules in a manner that allow immediate scale-up of vaccine production and provision of medical products.

Global trade collapsed last year as border closures and supply disruptions interrupted the international provision of goods, therefore, the recovery requires improving business environment and multilateral cooperation to support the world's economic recovery from COVID-19. At this critical moment, the international trade is in a dire need for more liberalization in this time more than any time before. The outbreak of COVID-19 had negative consequences on the global economy, therefore, recovering the dynamism of international trade is the sole guarantor for mitigating these



Sayed Attia is an International Trade Expert based in Cairo, Egypt.

consequences.

While the stage is being setting for a new era for the WTO and accordingly to the multilateral trading system, the situation now is better than a year before, thanks to the efforts made to manufacture of the Vaccine for Covid-19 pandemic and making it available , although on a limited scale. The global economy and trade will recover once matters back to normal. This recovery, however, is conditioned to what extent the WTO perform its full responsibility in securing ease movement of trade

between member states. The WTO members to benefit from the vast experience of Dr.Ngozi in Gavi, on one hand and the commitments of large producers of Covid-19 Vaccine , such as China, to accelerate overcoming the negative consequences of such a pandemic, on the other hand.

At the end, a strong WTO is vital for the world to recover fully and rapidly from the devastation wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic. WTO faces a great many challenges, therefore working collectively will make the WTO stronger, more agile and better

adapted to the realities of today. The mission of Dr.Ngozi as a new Director General of WTO is difficult but is not impossible as long as there a sincere will of all members to take the organization ahead.

*Sayed Attia is an International Trade Expert based in Cairo, Egypt. This article reflects the writer's own point of view. He has a progressive work experience as international trade practitioner of 24 years. He has a wide experience in trade remedies and trade policy formulation. He has trade negotiations experience

at regional, continental and international levels with a deep conviction of the importance of trade as an engine for inclusive and sustainable development. Having a firm belief that deep industrialization, efficient internal infrastructure and simple, clear, trade facilitation, E-commerce and digitalization are key pillars for trade promotion. MA; MBA, and international trade PhD candidate with a large number of publications in trade, development and industrialization.

Reconstructing The Primary School Curriculum In Africa

By John Nkemnji, Ph.D.*

Indigenous curriculum based on local African resources contributed to the coercion and the development of the people and society. The curriculum ensured the transmittal of culture, skills, and a way of life through oral tradition with storytelling, proverbs, and hands-on apprenticeship. The youth were initiated into society according to age, gender, and interests. Life was simple. Teachers, parents, elders, and the community worked together to educate the youth, and there was little unemployment with no homelessness. With colonization, the curriculum changed to the studying of Eurocentric concepts, and the African mentality changed. French and English have been the predominant languages of instruction in most Sub-Sahara African schools. I will dwell on the primary curriculum (elementary level) and leave the secondary and university studies for later analysis.

Intriguingly, human life and civilization started in Africa, but the continent is now referred to as a graveyard. Early outstanding institutions, the pyramids, spiritual and economic growth, and harmonious living in a natural



Prof John Nkemnji

environment with an abundance of natural resources made Africa the envy of the West. Africans lived to be over 100 years, and were hardly ill, obese, bored, senile, or stressed, despite tough environmental conditions. Africans are not inherently wicked and destructive, so why are some educated citizens destructive and corrupt? The destruction of

social-emotional learning built into an imported curriculum is partly responsible for what exists today in Africa.

Today, most Africans are full of self-hate, greed, selfishness, individualism and distrustful of others. Be benevolent and caring, and others will question why you are caring. Even amongst some friends and families,

there is resentment, jealousy, malice, meanness, distrust, and hatred. That is the everyday reality in Africa after many years of slavery, colonialism, and independence.

The primary school curriculum for nature study used to cover local plants and their uses for food, animal feed, medicine, and wood, but the textbooks now refer to them as deciduous, coniferous, and evergreen plants without applicable context. The Eurocentric curriculum has uprooted the African student from the concrete, and functional application of the content taught and learned to less relevant information. They learn amongst other intriguing fantasies that "Mungo Park discover the Nile," – a river that has been with them all their lives. This type of curriculum prepares students for standardized tests through

rote-memorization of meaningless facts and a learning system that discourages engagement and love for their way of life. The foreign curriculum encourages memorizing numbers and facts that initially prepared citizens to work for the colonial masters as clerks, translators, storekeepers, and catechists and not as constructive, critical thinkers.



File Picture, A primary school in Cameroon.

Eurocentric curriculum achieved its goals and helped some of the African learners rise to international heights. The problem is that they accomplish that personal glory at the expense of the African society's interests and its citizens' development.

In general terms, the African personality today has deviated from its ancestral foundational teachings. Many Africans have adopted an individualistic mentality, and with that comes self-hate, greed, selfishness, and distrust of others. Some governments are corrupt, and those in power cater to their greedy colonial counterparts' needs more than those they serve. Those governments that strive to improve their societies are seen as a threat to the colonial powers and are disestablished through coups, assassination, or war. Africa has carelessly lost nationalists like Lumumba, Nkrumah, Sankara, Tolbert, Ngouabi, Kabila, and others.

The continent is rift with crime, violence, senseless wars, pestilence, and misery. The youth are miseducated, unemployed, and die on numerous dangerous routes trying

to migrate to other continents. The awful state of affairs in the continent has necessitated many studies, sponsored by UNESCO, UNICEF, and many other NGOs. Despite the reforms, not much has improved because of the destroyed foundation at the primary level.

It would be remiss not to acknowledge the benefits that came with the adoption of the Eurocentric curriculum. There has been an increase in the number of schools and high graduation rates. There has been the learning of foreign languages and a rise in globalization. Despite these benefits, there has not been a favorable transformation in the learners' attitude. The problem lies in the destruction of the African child's educational foundation and must be strategically reconstructed starting at the primary school level. This discourse proposes a return to the roots of indigenous knowledge, which is student-centered, focus on proper character formation, cooperative, collaborative, and prepares the students with local resources to cherish and develop themselves and their society. The saying that «the heart of education is the education of

the heart» must be a guide, especially at a primary age when the learners are most impressionable.

A way forward examines the advantages of social-emotional learning, which restores concrete-meaningful knowledge starting at the primary level. The students need to learn self-awareness by understanding their emotions and thoughts and how they influence behavior. Right from primary school, students should learn to identify emotions, self-perception, recognize strengths, and learn about self-confidence and self-efficacy. They should be taught stress-management and self-discipline. These critical human developmental skills were replaced by skills that encourage students to be overly competitive, individualistic, selfish, docile, and subservient to external forces.

African students need the skills to filter distractions, prioritize tasks, set and achieve personal and societal goals, and control impulses. The new indigenous school program for studies will need to be implemented with parents, community elders, and local resources. Despite the

abundance of raw materials in the continent, schools do not prepare graduates to produce goods for society. Some raw materials: timber, gold, oil, coffee, and others are shipped abroad to be processed and sent back for consumption at a tremendous expense.

Despite the problems, some educators who are brought up in the Eurocentric type mentality still advocate that students continue to be prepared to compete at the international level. They prefer that students learn to build skyscrapers like in Europe, build roads with multiple lanes and overpass or high-level road bridges, and other foreign fantasies when the major portion of the environment is

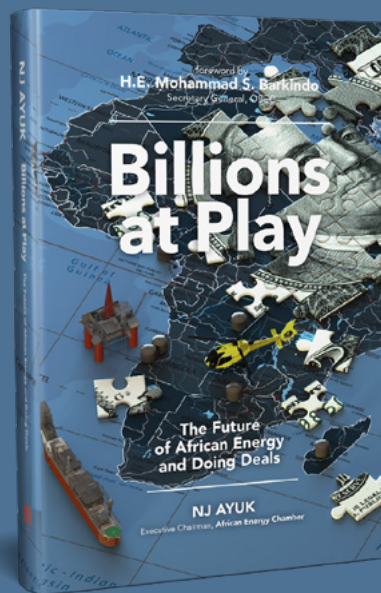
desolate. Africans do not have to try to "catch up in technology" or continue to build on a faulty foundation. I propose a return to student-centered indigenous education, focused on proper character formation and using local resources to solve problems for themselves and society. I propose that those who have gone through Western education should reflect and seek to apply their learning to improve the continent. This commentary is a starting point to expanding a revised mental shift to better students and the continent. The future of Africa lies in the proper education and empowerment of her children.

Dr. John Nkernji is Professor Emeritus, Educational Technology. He is an educational consultant and a proponent of life-long learning. The article summarizes his lectures on Social-Emotional Learning, the Relevance of Education, Education in Africa, and Indigenous Knowledge Systems. The author expresses gratitude to those educators and students who commented on this draft. More comments will be helpful.

Billions at Play

The Future of African Energy and Doing Deals

by NJ AYUK



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The State Of Corruption In Africa

By Ishmael Koroma



Various African countries implemented lockdowns during the greater part of 2020 in the process significantly limiting economic activity and human interaction amongst citizens. However, according to the latest Corruption Perception Index released by Transparency International, one of Africa's problematic vices continued unabated even during a time of limited economic activity. This problematic vice relating to corruption.

In the latest Corruption Perception Index (CPI), the Sub-Saharan Africa region performed dismally coming in last position with an average score of 32. This in the process meaning that the trend from previous years of poor performance on the CPI continues. However, while this is the case, the latest CPI does reveal one critical baseline that is; grand corruption is the most prevalent form in corruption in African countries. During a time of limited activity especially amongst ordinary folks, instances of petty corruption by design automatically reduced but the reduction did not significantly influence Africa's

standing and performance on the Corruption Perception Index. This, in essence, meaning the presence and prevalence of grand corruption which is defined as abuse of high-level power by Transparency International is responsible for Africa's poor performance in the latest CPI index.

Grand corruption in the past year was largely necessitated by the Covid-19 pandemic. In the initial stages, African countries did set aside funds to purchase much-needed personal protective equipment amongst other tools needed by frontline workers. Procuring the personal protective equipment however opened doors for many unscrupulous government agencies and individuals to fleece public funds.

In some countries including Zimbabwe, the need to procure personal protective equipment was regarded as highly critical thus had to be done in the shortest time possible. This, therefore, saw the government do away with the tendering process choosing rather to autocratically select the companies to procure the equipment on behalf of the

government. Unfortunately as was to be later revealed in the Draxgate scandal, the companies chosen were all linked to top government officials who inflated prices for their own benefit thus prejudicing the state of precious funds which could have been channeled elsewhere in the fight against Covid-19.

In other countries like South Africa, the government did choose to follow normal procurement procedures when looking to purchase personal protective equipment. However, the procurement process particularly tendering was so much flawed that companies with strong links to powerful individuals in the country including government officials ended up 'winning' even though there were other better placed companies.

Some countries such as Nigeria reported cases of diversion and hoarding of Covid-19 donations including medications by states. According to a widely circulated report by the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) in Nigeria, it alleged that "some people have reportedly discovered and taken

away Covid-19 palliatives stored in warehouses in several states." The unfortunate however, according to SERAP is that the Covid-19 palliatives are part of donations to the poorest and most vulnerable people in the country.

Such instances of grand corruption, therefore, significantly derailed Africa's fight against Covid-19. While acknowledging that instances of grand corruption were widespread across Sub-Saharan Africa in 2020, Transparency International did lament the weak implementation of anti-corruption frameworks by various countries. Many if not all of the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa do have one form or the other of an anti-corruption framework. However, even though allegations of grand corruption in relation to the procurement of Covid-19 personal protective equipment were reported, many of the accused never appeared before the courts while those that did either were acquitted or their trials continue to drag.

Recognizing that many instances of grand corruption in Africa

often go unpunished, Transparency International states that the fight against corruption will only bear fruit if the anti-corruption frameworks in Sub-Saharan African countries are strengthened – “To reverse the region’s position as the worst performing on the CPI, governments in Sub-Saharan Africa must take decisive action, particularly in those economies already weakened by the ongoing economic recession steaming from Covid-19... Rather than add pledges, countries must enforce numerous existing anti-corruption commitments, including Agenda 2063, the transformative agenda of the African Union for inclusive growth and sustainable development”.

Transparency International also added on stating that the key ingredients for strengthening anti-corruption frameworks are “rooted in good governance, democratic values, gender equality, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law.”

Though major instances of grand

corruption for 2020 in Africa were necessitated by the Covid-19 pandemic, some countries did find themselves embroiled in none-Covid-19 related grand corruption cases -a case in point being Malawi. Late last year, a Malawian citizen working in South Africa as a prophet, Prophet Bushiri together with his wife

was charged for money laundering, theft and fraud by South African courts. Before the court could give its final ruling on the case, the two were given bail to reside at their official residence in South Africa and they obliged. However, the South African courts were taken by surprise a few days later when the two announced

that they had skipped the South African borders and had found safe refuge in their home country, Malawi. Faced with a dilemma over whether to provide their citizen with safe refuge or extradite him back to South Africa for trial, Malawi chose the latter. The Malawian government did sign extradition papers with South Africa but Prophet Bushiri and his wife will have to appear before an extradition hearing which will determine his fate. The Bushiri case is a test for Malawi to determine its commitment to fighting corruption – if Bushiri is extradited, then Malawi will have demonstrated a willingness to fight corruption.

In as much as the worrisome trend continues with regards to Africa’s standing on the CPI, there is something to celebrate as there are some African countries which have managed to score above 50 on the 100-score index. Seychelles leads the chart with a score of 66, Botswana 60 and Cabo Verde 58. Though scoring 36, Cote d’Ivoire is Africa’s significant improver rising by nine points since 2013. The lowest performing countries in the region are Sudan (16), Somalia (12) and South Sudan (12).



Graffiti in Johannesburg for International Anti-Corruption Day 2020 photo credit Saint Nic Media ,Corruption Watch.



Zambia led by President Edgar Lungu did not do so well.

A Window for Africa to the World with Afrikrea.com

By Ajong Mbapndah L

With transactions in excess of \$10 million and operations spread over some 150 countries, Afrikrea.com has emerged as a leading marketplace for things made in Africa. Obsessed with service and operational excellence -founder and CEO Moulaye Taboure is stoically believes that distribution through the web is the key to Africa's future.

After growing up in Mali and working all over the world for companies like PwC or Alstom, Moulaye now dedicates his experience to African culture and has worked hard with a dynamic team to support African designers create storefronts, receive payments from customers globally, and incur lower shipping costs for delivery.

"With Afrikrea, you can really build your business, your way, all over the world," says Moulaye Taboure, a prize-winning African entrepreneur who was among 2019's top ten finalists of the Africa's Business Heroes prize competition.

Could we start the interview with an introduction of Afrikrea.com and what motivated its creation?

Afrikrea.com is the world leading marketplace for all things #MadeOfAfrica, from fashion to food, including also beauty, handicraft or home décor. We launched this marketplace and the services around it as the global infrastructure for African culture.

This is as well to assist the talented craftsman in Africa to serve global markets or support women entrepreneurs in delighting the biggest diaspora in the world.

Going through your profile, we see you worked for some big firms like PricewaterhouseCoopers, IBM, SFR, Alstrom Group etc, may we know the kind of potential you saw in Africa fashion, art, and handicraft to abandon



With Afrikrea, you can really build your business, your way, all over the world, says Moulaye Taboure.

everything to focus on Afrikrea? get paid?

A lot of different things did contribute into spurring me into this choice. First, Afrikrea was the first time I ended up consuming more African products in my everyday life, even compared to when I lived in Africa. Not just because of solidarity or support, but genuinely because I loved the products and the stories behind them. On the other hand, when you see that in most "developed" countries, there is always an African museum or creative activities, showing just how appreciated our culture is!

Can you walk us through a hypothetical scenario on how things work on Afrikrea, how do people get to join, trade and

It's pretty simple: to join you simply go online at www.afrikrea.com/en/create-your-shop. From there, in a few clicks and minutes you will have your shop up and ready to sell. Anyone in the world can order your products. As soon as they do, the funds are visible in your seller's virtual wallet on the platform, and you can use part of it to pay for shipping the products with DHL.

And then, you can choose to be paid instantly or every week, on the payment method of your choice in your country, may it be mobile money, bank account or other means like PayPal.

In about how many countries and what parts of the world do

you have operations in at the moment?

We hosted transactions in a total of 145 countries, have sellers in 105 countries among which 50 of 54 African states. Our team in itself has also a global presence, with members on 4 continents.

How much of a challenge is it for those in Africa to process shipments within the continent and to far off places in Europe, Asia, USA and others?

Before this was definitely an ordeal from the sheer price of a good shipping partner or the lack of transparency and tracking of the cheap ones. But even worse, all solutions were extremely time consuming at multiple levels may it be the back and forth with worried clients or the wait in physical spots for the shipping support.

Now, with our online solution you can ship to the US or Europe for less than 20\$ from any African country with DHL, meaning the best service and tracking. And to top it all off, you can do so effortlessly online, from the comfort of your home or office and they come pick it up and deliver in 3 days max!

Afrikrea was launched in 2013, we are in 2021, may we know the progress met, and can you add some figures to shed more light?

Sure, up to date, we processed 10MC of transactions in all those 145 countries, with currently over 10 tons shipped and half a million visits every month, 2000+ new products every week and 1200+ messages exchanged each day.

You are aware of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement -AfCTA, in what way do you think this could help initiatives like Afrikrea?

This agreement, when it will actually translate into easier and cheaper flow of goods in the continent, will

help foster local African businesses cooperation and consumption of other African products, rather than importing from far away zones.

In details, fear of customs, uncertainty of delays and worries of taxes will all be lifted and with them, the trust in other African countries as providers will grow.

At the level of African governments what more could be done to encourage and help people reap big from opportunities that Afrikrea and others offer?

First, put to actual effects projects like the AfCTA and foster a climate of ease to transact, with state servants actually fostering trust rather than just controlling for income. Second, the African states can and should support entrepreneurs in emerging industries like they do those in their dominant industries (like agriculture or oil), with taxes exemption or specific support programs.

You were a 2019 top ten finalist of the Africa's Business Heroes prize competition, how was that experience like and in what way did it help to further grow your vision or operations of



Moulaye Taboure is a prize-winning African entrepreneur who was among 2019's top ten finalists of the Africa's Business Heroes prize competition.

Afrikrea?

This experience was incredible at so many levels, that every time I think back on it, I feel like the luckiest man alive. Not only because our venture and team finally got the recognition for all the hard work over the years. But also, because in addition to the recognition and the funds received, we were in an amazing group of pairs. Entrepreneurs that in different fields, countries and styles, all shined through their actions, impact and

change! Nothing is more stimulating!!

Or maybe the only thing that came close was to meet our entrepreneur role model for a dedicated time, and learn through exchanging with him, how much we can still do as well as how proud we should be.

How do you see initiatives like the Jack Ma ABH helping to forge a culture of entrepreneurship among young Africans?

This event and prize has the specificities of not only looking at reputation or networks like a lot of other distinctions. It is truly open to all countries, with an extra effort done to welcome Francophone Africa, which I am part of. And when you see that 2 out of 3 winners of my edition were women, this definitely is a yearly reminder that all entrepreneurs can shine, no matter their country, gender or origin.

And by gathering us together, I can testify that more pan-African collaborations will happen just like more African entrepreneurs will aim for the global stage!

We end with a last word from you to the millions of people out there who are not yet aware of your platform can you make a direct pitch on why Afrikrea is the ideal marketplace for them?

Sure, I will make it simple: on Afrikrea anyone can come and start selling online in a few minutes, for no cost and with support all the way. From your shipping to your pricing, we will help you benefit from the biggest online community of creatives and entrepreneurs of African culture.

Finally, on Afrikrea, you can really build your business, your way, all over the world.





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Zimbabwean Journalist Embarks on an Anti-Corruption Drive through Music

By Prince Kurupati

In the early months of last year when many countries were busy looking for ways to fight the novel corona virus pandemic, Zimbabwe was rocked by a corruption scandal. The scandal involved the looting of public funds meant for purchasing personal protective equipment (PPE) for frontline workers as well as other important tools needed by frontline healthcare workers. The scandal was known as the Draxgate scandal and the man who revealed the whole graft scandal is an investigative journalist, Hopewell Chin'ono.

The expose by Hopewell Chin'ono was praised by many ordinary folks. However, not much (if any) praise came from top government offices. The lack of praise from the government seems pretty much surprising as the government in the very least was supposed to be overly concerned with the graft allegations at a time when the country was battling to fight a pandemic. However, though surprising, a bigger surprise would come later on as all of the implicated people in the Draxgate scandal spent significantly few days behind bars than the man who had exposed the whole scandal. Since the expose, Hopewell Chin'ono was arrested thrice on trumped up charge spending several weeks behind bars.

In the time that Chin'ono spent behind bars, he managed to find a new avenue of exposing corruption and conscientising the general public about the looting of funds. This new avenue coming in the form of music. Speaking in an interview with Meera Selva the Deputy Director of the Reuters Institute, Chin'ono stated that "the looting of public funds and the plunder of the nation's resources must be fought everywhere." To fight the looting and plunder of resources, the investigative journalist chose a medium that appeals to many that is music.

Chin'ono says that his decision to adopt an anti-corruption drive



The looting of public funds and the plunder of the national resources must be fought everywhere, says Hopewell. Photo credit The Zimbabwe Mail.

through music is necessitated by the need to embrace creativity and competence. He states that there are three factors which have become an albatross for Zimbabwe as a country. These include corruption the looting of public funds, repression and incompetence. He continues stating that incompetence "is not only specific to one group of people, it cuts across society because it has been a society that has been dragged down with a big stone around its neck for 20 years. So, the opposition needs to be, I would say, creative to come up with campaigns that work." Through music, therefore, Chin'ono has found a creative way of propagating the anti-corruption message amongst the general population.

Chin'ono went on to state that creativity is of critical significance at any time as it has the power to bring about the necessary change. Using the example of his #DemLoot song which has gone viral, Chin'ono stated, "Look at what I did on Sunday. I simply sat behind my computer played an instrumental and sang on top of it, and it's gone viral around the world.

It's been covered by international television stations, it's been covered by the international media and newspapers, and we're talking about it... That's how important competence is when you are trying to deal with these issues." In the same vein, Chin'ono advised the opposition in Zimbabwe to be creative in its fight against ZANU (PF), Zimbabwe's ruling party which has been in power in 1980 when Zimbabwe attained its independence. "I think the opposition in Zimbabwe needs to be creative. They need to go beyond the political caricature that has been put in place by ZANU-PF where people are elected or appointed on basis of patronage, but they are appointed on basis on competence."

The needs to speak via a medium that appeal to a certain target audience is of critical significance when looking to disseminate information and propagate a message to the audience. In his case, Chin'ono says when he wants to relay issues to the young population, he first thinks of social media as most young people are conversant with social

media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter and FaceBook. He states that at one point, he tweeted that young people were unfocussed and many were offended. Some however came to him and asked, "You know what? You need to engage us in a language that we understand." When coming up with his #DemLoot song, Chin'ono says he had this piece of advice in mind. He says the song going viral is a testament that the young people have responded to his message and that he, in turn, has learnt a lesson that old people or middle-aged people "need to learn new skills if we are going to have an impact."

The power of using the right platform in engaging a targeted audience is very important. Looking at political parties in Africa, Chin'ono says the youth are the critical element in an election as they constitute the majority of the voting population. As such to attract more votes, it's imperative that political parties use the right platform in engaging the youth. "If you want to impact their (youth) lives, if you want to influence how they make decisions and interact

with public life, you have to learn the new skills and use the new social media tools that are available. And this applies not only to ruling parties across Africa, but also to the opposition parties. If you look at the Presidential campaign in Uganda, Bobi Wine was able to use social media skills and reached across not only young people in Uganda but across the continent and across the world."

Looking at Zimbabwean youth, Chin'ono states that a huge chunk of them favour dancehall music to other music genres. As such, when he came up with the protest song #DemLoot, he did it as a



Hopewell has been jailed several times for exposing corruption in Zimbabwe. Photo credit Philimon Bulawayo, Reuters.

dancehall tune. "A lot of youths listen to dancehall music. I decided to take the issues of hospitals not working, the roads potholed, jobs not available,

and put them as lyrics and sing about the issues."

Considering the fact that he has visited the jail several times since

he first exposed Covid-19 procurement corruption early last year, many citizens were concerned that further like-minded acts would see him spending even more time behind bars. However, he says he isn't concerned about going back to jail as the fight against corruption is a fight against evil which should be pursued by all means. "I'm not afraid of being arrested anymore. I've gone past that. The first time when I was arrested, that's when I was a bit shaken, but not anymore

because I know that I am fighting against evil. Corruption is evil. Looting is evil. I'm fighting against evil."

Without Flexibility, Nigeria Will Face Difficulties Integrating Large Amounts Of Renewable Energy Into The Grid

By Wale Yusuff*

As the largest economy in Africa, with huge gas reserves and high solar energy potential, Nigeria has all the natural resources necessary to meet the growing demand for electricity. However, the inadequate energy infrastructure still leaves a significant part of the population without power or relying on oil-fired back-up generators. If Nigeria can improve its energy infrastructure and unlock its gas-to-power generation potential, it paves the way to integrating low-cost renewable energy,

bringing electricity and development opportunities to rural villages, driving industrial growth and employment, and increasing prosperity across the country.

There is no doubt that gas has an important role to play in meeting Nigeria's electricity demand, but to achieve this, there is an urgent need to reform the gas and electricity sectors. The poor condition of the gas transmission and distribution system is a major constraint as domestic



Wale Raphael Yusuff, Managing Director, Wärtsilä Marine & Power Services Nigeria Ltd

supply shortages and insufficient pressure severely affect the reliability of the power supply. Poor planning has resulted in stranded generation assets and transmission bottlenecks. Inadequate maintenance of an aging and inefficient infrastructure means that peak generation is well below its full potential. Without structural reforms and integrated energy planning, the ability to meet the growing electricity demand is challenging.

However, advanced power system modelling, which helps to identify the lowest total cost energy solution while considering system constraints, shows that Nigeria is indeed in a position to achieve its ambitious targets by 2030. By developing a balanced thermal portfolio combining baseload gas and flexible gas power generation, the power system will be capable of integrating a high level of renewables and operating efficiently. But significant flexibility needs

to be built into the power grid, to make it capable of responding to daily variations in demand and withstanding the intermittent nature of renewables.

Not all gas fired power plants are the same

Even if from a pure cost perspective, reciprocating gas engine and combined cycle gas turbine technologies offer comparable results, gas engine technology adapts faster to balance the intermittency and unpredictability that characterise addition of renewables into the power

generation mix and thus facilitate their growth and integration into the system. In addition to being robust and versatile to manage the current generation and transmission side disturbances in an efficient manner, there are three important advantages that ICE technology offers for the future; the first is flexibility, the ability to quickly adjust load in response to supply fluctuations from renewables; the second is modularity, gas engine plants can

be sized to requirements, for a city, for manufacturing industries, or for local micro-grids; and the third is low water consumption, which is an important consideration in view of Nigeria's long dry seasons.

To maintain a balanced system, flexible forms of electricity must be available to ramp up output at the same rate that wind or solar output fluctuates. Systems need to respond across different timeframes, from seconds, to minutes. This is not the case for conventional power plants based on combined cycle gas turbine technology which can take several hours to reach operation at full capacity. Even if gas turbines can provide some level of flexibility by being run at partial load, this mode of operation is inefficient, driving up costs and carbon emissions.

On the other hand, flexible gas engine power plants are the perfect ally of renewable energies. Made up of multiple engines which can be fired-up instantaneously, these plants offer a large range in power supply

availability which complements renewable energy without sacrificing efficiency. If a sudden rainstorm, for example, cuts the supply of solar energy and drives up electricity demand as lights are switched on, a number of internal combustion engines can be turned on within minutes to supply the required electric demand. They can be turned off just as quickly when the storm passes.

Expert studies conducted around the world show that flexible power plants based on internal combustion engine technology can unlock the full potential of renewable energy assets in the fleet, generating annual cost savings above 5%, reducing CO2 emissions, as well as reducing overall water consumption. Indeed, flexible power plants consume nearly 50% less water than similarly sized combined cycle gas turbine plants and 75% to 85% less water than a coal or nuclear plant with cooling towers. In a context of global warming and hydric stress, water consumption is a

parameter that cannot be ignored.

For the country to successfully integrate the planned addition of ~3.5 GW of Hydro and ~5.2 GW of solar projects into the grid by 3030 and increase access to affordable and reliable electricity, a balanced power generation mix will be required. Gas is abundant, affordable, and offers a clear solution to meet the growing power demand in Nigeria. But most important is the need for long-term integrated energy planning. By deploying an integrated energy strategy with a focus on flexibility, Nigeria has what it takes to achieve a successful energy transition. Without it, Nigeria's power sector will most likely remain inefficient and unreliable.

*Yusuff Wale is the Managing Director, Wartsila Marine & Power Services Nigeria Ltd. Wartsila is a global leader in smart technologies and complete lifecycle solutions for the marine and energy markets. He is a seasoned professional in Management, Sales, Marketing

and Business Development in the Nigerian Oil and Gas and Power Industry. He started his career as a process engineer in one of the Nigerian Petroleum Oil Refineries. Over the years, he has been actively involved in large transactions of Turbo-Machineries into major FPSO projects in Nigeria as well as Internal combustion engines for both Industrial and Captive Independent Power Plants. He has presented technical papers at both local and international Oil, Gas and Power Conferences. He holds a MSc. and Bachelor of Engineering degrees in Chemical Engineering from the prestigious University of Lagos and Federal University of Technology, Minna, respectively and a miniMBA in Innovation, Growth & Digital Execution techniques for building category king companies, from the Tekedia Institute. He has attended many trainings both in Nigeria and abroad. He is a corporate member, Nigeria Society of Engineers (MNSE).

MOZAMBIQUE vulnerable to climate change with stronger and more frequent cyclones

By Jorge Joaquim

Mozambique is one of the countries that is feeling the impact of climate change, registering an increasing occurrence of severe cyclones, and this year alone it has been hit by three, namely Chalane, Eloise and Guambe. A poor country with a long coastline, Mozambique is especially vulnerable to storms sweeping in from the Indian Ocean.

When Mozambique was hit by Cyclone Dineo in 2017, after a long time without recording this type of event, no one imagined that it was the start of a new series of severe tropical cyclones. Dineo, the first tropical cyclone to hit Mozambique since Cyclone Jokwe in 2008, killed seven people across the country, including a child crushed by a fallen



tree. An estimated 20,000 homes were destroyed and approximately 130,000 people were directly affected, mainly in Inhambane province.

Two years later, 2019, Mozambique was affected by the deadliest Intense Tropical Cyclone Idai. In that year, Pan African Vision made a trip to Beira City, the epicentre of the destruction by idai that affected 1.8 million people, displacing more than 480,000 people and causing the destruction of an area of over 3,000 km². According to official data, 762 people died.

Also in 2019, one month after Idai, Mozambique was affected by Cyclone Kenneth that killed at least 45 people, including a woman who was killed by a falling coconut tree. Additionally, four ships sank off the coast of the town of Palma. On Ibo Island, it was reported that 90% of the homes were destroyed. In Cabo Delgado Province, 2,500 homes were destroyed with multiple schools and hospitals also sustaining damage.

In 2020 no cyclone was recorded, which created space for the reconstruction work to be carried out. But even so, there was a record of a lot



of rain and strong winds. 2021 could not be the same. Three cyclones were recorded in its first two months alone.

The first was Cyclone Chalane in January. Officials stated that Chalane made less damage than expected. However, unfortunately, 7 were killed in Sofala Province and Manica Province provinces, all from drowning in floodwaters. An additional 10 were

injured.

Then came Eloise, the strongest tropical cyclone to impact the country of Mozambique since Cyclone Kenneth in 2019. Due to flooding, cars were submerged in water; walls of some low lying buildings collapsed and swathes of land were flooded in Beira, while the power supply was shut down as Eloise damaged power

lines and uprooted some electricity poles. At least nine people died in the country.

The last cyclone to hit Mozambique in 2021 was Guambe. After making landfall on 12 February as a subtropical low, Guambe's precursor disturbance caused widespread flooding across Mozambique, which destroyed homes and crops, and also displaced 27,000 of people weeks after Cyclone Eloise made landfall near the same location. However, there were no additional reports of damage to human property.



A dangerous future

Mozambique's long coastline, sprawling river delta and changing weather patterns make it susceptible to multiple hazards as the climate changes. Flooding, heat waves, cyclones and drought are all getting more frequent and severe as the Earth gets hotter. The disasters put Mozambique's government and citizens in the unenviable position of responding to an onslaught of climate-driven disasters while also doing their best to prepare for an even more dangerous future.

More than half of the population lives in low lying coastal areas, putting communities and key resources at risk. Increased flooding and drought threaten the agriculture sector, which employs roughly 75%



of Mozambique's workforce. In addition to economic implications, these stressors also increase risks of food insecurity and water-related illness such as cholera.

The impacts of climate change on tropical cyclones, the damage caused in Mozambique has also to do with the vulnerability of people on the ground. People in North America are experiencing Category 5 cyclones quite regularly now, and they don't experience the level of damage that Mozambique is seeing. That is why the authorities started warning people to abandon areas that are prone to flooding. Recent science suggests that the number of severe tropical cyclones will increase with every tenth of a degree in global average temperature rise.

Mozambique ranks third in Africa as the most exposed to weather-related hazards, including cyclones, droughts and floods — the number and intensity of which are likely to increase.

The Global Climate Risk Index 2021 analyses and ranks to what extent countries and regions have been affected by impacts of climate

related extreme weather events (storms, floods, heatwaves etc.). The most recent data available for 2019 and from 2000 to 2019 was taken into account. The countries most affected in 2019 was Mozambique.

According to the Climate Risk Index there are signs showing that the escalating of climate change can no longer be ignored – on any continent or in any region, and that the impacts from extreme-weather events hit the poorest countries hardest, like Mozambique, as these are particularly vulnerable to the damaging effects of a hazard, have a lower coping capacity and may need more time to rebuild and recover.

Mozambique and countries like Haiti, Philippines or Pakistan are hit by climate disasters so often that they do not have time to fully recover before the next one. Rich countries had promised to increase climate aid to developing countries to 82 billion euros a year from 2020, which has not yet been fulfilled. In a report released in mid-January, officials from the United Nations Environment Programme said there is a significant shortfall in global

funding for adaptation measures.

Mozambique to have 'climate risk map' to reduce the impact

A group of Mozambican researchers is drawing up a climate risk map of the cities of Beira and Maputo and plans to study more cities vulnerable to natural disasters. The map is the culmination of a report on climate change that is already underway and should be ready in July. The new map will give physical details about the specific vulnerable area and the type of phenomenon with the greatest potential to cause damage

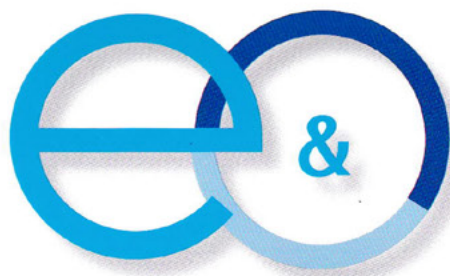
The map would also show the social and environmental impact of climate change in Mozambican cities, to allow decision-makers to design policies that are consistent with the reality on the ground. The researchers involved in the project are part of the Environmental Observatory for Climate Change (ObservA), a non-governmental research entity.

Mozambique is in the midst of the rainy and cyclonic season, which occurs between October and April, with winds coming from the Indian Ocean and flooding originating in the

southern African river basins.

In less than two years, children and families in northern Mozambique have faced a devastating cyclone, flooding, drought, socioeconomic hardship linked to the COVID-19 pandemic and conflict, said UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore. Weather-related disasters and conflict over the past two years have contributed to food insecurity and hunger across the country, where two out of every five children are chronically malnourished and severe acute malnutrition are being detected amongst the displaced population.

Many international organizations working in Mozambique are calling on the international community to scale up its support and help the country to protect those hardest-hit by multiple shocks. As calls for help continue, and with doubts over whether rich countries contributing to climate change will support poor countries, desperate populations continue to feel the impact of cyclones on their lives.



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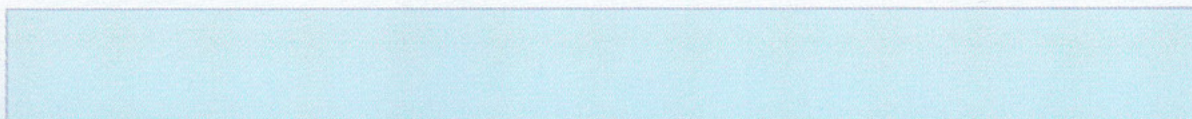
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Zimbabwe Follows Other African Countries, Launches National Data Centre

By Wallace Mawire

Zimbabwe's Ministry of Information Communication Technology, Postal and Courier Services has launched the National Data Centre that is expected to bring a new normal on how data and information is managed in the country, according to ICT Minister, Dr Jenfan Muswere.

It is reported that the launch and operationalization of the National Data Centre is one of the grand strategies in successfully implementing the National ICT Policy and the e-Government Programme.

"It is also a clear demonstration of ensuring that the attainment of the country's Vision 2030 is heavily anchored on the modernization of our economy through the use of ICTs," Dr Muswere said.

He said that the SMART Zimbabwe 2030 initiative is the framework which provides for a Smart Government and consequently for effective e-Government.

He said that the ICT ministry would continue to provide the enabling environment that is necessary for the intensified adoption and utilisation of ICTs within government and across the economy at large to ensure that the country moves in tandem with the new dictates of global economics and governance.

"This is in addition to ensuring that ICTs are diffused to penetrate to all corners of the country, hence bridging the digital divide and promoting rural development. Deployment of ICT infrastructure and equipment also resonates very well with the National Development Strategy 1 (NDS1), as well as the attainment of Vision 2030," he said.

According to the ICT ministry, the National Data Centre is one of the success stories in the implementation of various projects under the e-Government Programme that our Ministry in collaboration with the Office of the President and Cabinet are deploying across the public sector to re-invigorate the performance of



ICT Minister, Dr Jenfan Muswere.

government institutions, systems and processes," Muswere said.

It is reported that the National Data Centre will be used as a central repository for all government information.

This is expected to allow for quick access, exchange and sharing of information by the various users within government.

It is reported to be critical for quick decision making and service delivery. The operationalization of the National Data Centre will offer an opportunity for government to save financial resources as ICT operations will be based on cloud computing.

"This also resonates well with the Whole of Government Approach," Muswere said.

The ministry's goal under the e-Government programme is to attain 100% e-enablement in the provision of basic services by the government.

It is added that the strengthening of the government portal and the ministries' websites will also provide the platform for the citizens and business to access the government information and services that will be

housed in the National Data Centre.

It is added that remarkable achievements have also been made under the second Republic in conformity with the SMART Zimbabwe ICT Strategy and requirements of Vision 2030. These are reported to include development of the backbone infrastructure to connect the country to the outside world, the modernization of the ICT backbone infrastructure, the last mile connectivity to all businesses and households through fixed and mobile telephony as well as data links to allow citizens and business to access government services through the portal.

The mobile penetration rate has in the country is reported to have risen to 87.7% from the 10.4% recorded in 2008.

The Internet penetration rate is also reported to have been consistently growing over the years and currently stands at 59.9% up from the 1.3% recorded in 2008.

Also, community Information Centres, a key infrastructure to provide access to online services to

the local communities, particularly the less privileged members of these communities, have also been deployed throughout the country.

"They will enable citizens to also access government online digital services amongst other things," Muswere said.

Other initiatives include deployment of Pre-Fabricated Modules (PFMS) kiosks across the country, e-Learning initiatives to ensure that students throughout the country have equitable access to educational content, implementation of the telemedicine project to ensure the use of ICTs to facilitate the provision of clinical healthcare using two way communications between physicians and the patients at remote, rural healthcare centres, Safe Cities initiative that uses camera technology to manage and monitor traffic in the cities and deployment of base stations across the country to ensure ubiquitous connectivity throughout the country.

Dr Muswere said that as government they have identified ICTs as one of the pillars and cornerstones

for economic development.

He says that access to ICTs and effective participation in the digital economy is critical in improving the quality of life for all the citizens of Zimbabwe.

"The Community Information Centres initiative therefore, resonates very well with the government's vision that is anchored on leveraging ICTs for sustainable development," he said. At a continental level, it is reported that Data centres are entering new markets including Cameroon, Ethiopia, Senegal, Tanzania and Zambia.

It is added that a trend includes facilities being created as pre-fabricated modules, as smaller self-contained datacenters to be used for network, cloud, wholesale and co-location, suitable for local environments.

MISA Zimbabwe, one of 11 chapters of the Media Institute of Southern Africa, which promotes and

defends media freedom and freedom of expression across the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region said that the launch of the National Data was a critical step towards the fulfilment of some of the objectives under the National Development Strategy.

The organization said that the launch of the National Data Centre is a step in the right direction as it pertains to access and usage of ICTs at the government level, which also

needs to be facilitated for ordinary citizens including those in rural and marginalized communities.

"Such developments, however, do not operate in a vacuum, with the critical factor being that of reshaping and refining the country's approach to human rights. This also includes the role that such facilities can play in either facilitating or restricting the right to privacy and freedom of expression, among other fundamental rights," MISA-Zimbabwe said.

It added that one critical gap in that regard is the absence of an effective data protection and data privacy framework.

"In that regard, there is an urgent need for complementary legislation, policies and guidelines that will guide the acquisition, transfer and storage of data in Zimbabwe. This is particularly crucial in promoting public trust and confidence, and that the centre will not be used for unlawful surveillance," it said.

MISA said that there was an urgent need for complementary legislation, policies and guidelines that will guide the acquisition, transfer and storage of data in Zimbabwe.

MISA Zimbabwe also urged the government to promote transparency and accountability on the nature of data and information that will be in its custody through the National Data Centre.



ICTs are a core part of the 2030 vision of President Mnangagwa.

Former Rwandan Teacher ventures into Cosmetics Business

By Jean d'Amour Mbonyinshuti

Cephas Nshimyumuremyi was busy picking up calls and receiving orders from clients who wanted him to supply cosmetic products he makes when we visited him at his workplace in Musanze district's Northern Province.

In his house, some trophies, and certificates are displayed at the entrance as well as some cosmetic products. His products are called Uburanga products literally translated as "Beauty products."

This is a Rwandan entrepreneur and a former teacher who quit the teaching profession to venture into small business entrepreneurship.

"I grew up with love and passion in sciences and I wanted to be a scientist since when I was in upper primary," He told ChinAfrica Magazine in an interview.

When he completed Ordinary level



Nshimyumuremyi inside one of the store of his products. Photo Jean d'Amour Mbonyinshuti, PAV

in high school, he was lucky enough to be offered further studies in the sciences and studied Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, and Biology as

main courses.

Nshimyumuremyi says that teaching science-related courses inspired him to do more research

on medicinal herbs and to make cosmetics probably because he knew for a fact that the imported cosmetics were also made from herbs mixed

with some other products.

"When I started this venture, my target was not business but research. As a scientist and a teacher, I wanted to carry out research in local herbs me," he says.

"I realized that there were several raw materials (herbs) which were not being processed and yet we imported products that are made from the same herbs," he narrates.

He adds he also wanted to help his students then to practice and do more research on the use of locally available plants and herbs.

To ensure efficiency of the medicine, the scientist applied the additive extracts on different micro bio samples which are supposed to have human skin parasites such as fungi and yeast.

Starting Uburanga products

Nshimyumuremyi started research on medicinal herbs, read books and contacted botanists. His initial findings revealed that some medicinal herbs could kill bacteria and treat skin diseases as well as rendering skin better.

From his research, six medicinal herbs were identified which he initially dried, pounded and mixed with powder to make his first products.

The East African entrepreneur got his first sample in 2011 and Rwanda Standards authorized him to work with a referral laboratory so that his products could be approved.

He worked with Institut Supérieur de Ruhengeri, a higher learning institution where he was a student then.

His first product was Uburanga herbal soap. The name inspired by his belief that it would improve the beauty of its users by healing any skin disorder.

"Months later, I made Uburanga herbal jelly because I know that soaps and jelly are basic needs to promote hygiene. My customers liked both products and testified they improved the way their skins looked like," he says.

So, he put the two products on the market and started mass production to supply to a bigger market. "Later,



Nshimyumuremyi standing in front of awards and trophies he won. Photo Jean d'Amour Mbonyinshuti, PAV

I carried out more research and made Uburanga Vaseline and Uburanga Glycine from Aloe vera, Uburanga liquid soap from Aloe Vera and essential oil from lemon fruit and anti-germs and Uburanga Shampoo from Aloe Vera and essential oil.

He currently has eight products on the market of which five are certified with S mark by the Rwanda Standards Bureau.

Nshimyumuremyi says that he spent a long time conducting deep research since 2014 to produce Uburanga Castor oil from Ricinus communis (locally known as Ikibonobono) whose products are normally imported from China and America.

"These cosmetic products are from a local plant which is actually considered as a weed, we use its grains to make castor oil which helps people with hair loss to regain it thanks to its richness in fatty acids," says Nshimyumuremyi.

Nshimyumuremyi has opened a selling point in Zimbabwe and has correspondences with some investors in the United States and Belgium. He hopes to start supplying products in the two countries soon.

Thanks to his products, Nshimyumuremyi has scooped several awards including continental ones.

He emerged as among Ten Inspirational African Entrepreneurs

and scooped a \$5000 award, the YouthConnect award, the Super Star entrepreneur award, the Youngest Achiever award in 2015 and won the local Harvest day award as well as the First Lady's Imbuto foundation award all with trophies and cash prizes among others.

Shop after shop marketing strategy

In 2015, Nshimyumuremyi started a marketing campaign that he named "Shop after Shop campaign" a countrywide campaign that targeted more retailers.

"It took me almost five years to make sure that I reach retailers and exhibit my products," he says.

He says his products are popular, he has positive feedback from across the country and manages to compete with other regional and overseas products on the market.

From herbal medicine to fruits and vegetables

Nshimyumuremyi says that besides producing cosmetics from locally available medicinal herbs, his recent research findings also revealed that more products could be produced from available fruits and vegetables.

He is now working on some products such as avocado soap, avocado oil, Papaya soap, Papaya oil, Carrot soap and carrot oil among others.

"Some farmers have fruits and vegetables and we all think they are there just for human consumption yet we can get more medicinal and cosmetic products, I want to do something that can benefit farmers as well," he says.

So far, Nshimyumuremyi says he started innovative projects to grow plants that he will use in the future unlike currently when he struggles to get them.

He grows Aloe Vera on four hectares in Gakenke district and Ibibonobono in Kayanza district in Northern and eastern provinces respectively.

"This is an innovative project as we are the only company that grows raw materials that can be used to produce cosmetics and we want to produce more but on a larger scale," he says.

Some achievement

Much as it takes longer for the industry to gain interest, Nshimyumuremyi says he managed to achieve a lot and expects more.

"Having started from scratch my annual turnover is estimated at \$60,000, I have expended my workshop and I bought a car that helps me in transporting products," he boasts.

He also employs 15 permanent employees he pays on a monthly basis.

Uburanga Company has the capacity to produce 10,000 units of

different products on a daily basis.

He also, predicts that 16 products will be on the market by the end of the year 2020.

Plans to establish a training centre

Nshimyumuremyi says he plans to start a training centre on cosmetics in partnership with Workforce Development Authority in Rwanda.

“Cosmetics are an untapped business and I want to invest in it by starting a Technical Vocational Training (TVET) and education centre,” he says adding that plans are at the final stage and the centre will start soon.

“My wish is that in the next five years, I will have trained people not only in Rwanda but but from more countries within the African continent. My plan is to make it an international TVET centre, we are drafting the curriculum,” he adds stressing that 40 products to train young people have been identified so far.



Nshimyumuremyi, inside his store. Photo Jean d'Amour Mbonyinshuti, PAV

“We will not be producing final products but semi products that other companies can buy and develop, we want to feed the African continent with our products,” he notes.

Challenges

Nshimyumuremyi says that among challenges, the company is faced with a lack of packaging materials,

a challenge he shares with other business people.

“We import packaging materials from Kenya and sometimes we run out of stock and lose customers due to shortage of packaging materials,” he laments.

Clients speak out

Jacqueline Mukangarambe, a

mother of four in the city of Kigali says she regularly buys Uburanga products.

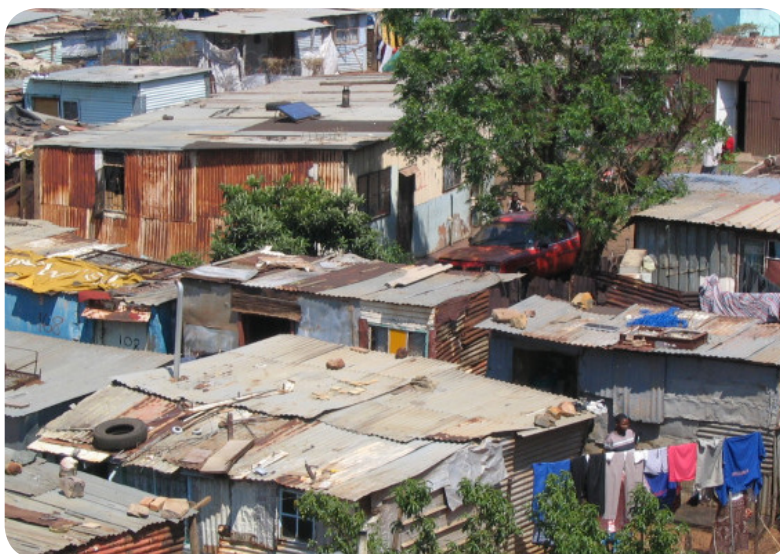
“I no longer use imported cosmetics at home in fact my whole household uses Uburanga cosmetics from the soap to the jelly, the products are pleasant and inexpensive,” she says.

Challenges of Water and Sanitation Rights In Kenya and South Africa

By Wallace Mawire

Despite clear international law on the human rights to water and sanitation, and widespread recognition of these rights, people living in informal settlements (slums) typically lack access to essential services. They pay more per litre for precarious, potentially unsafe water than residents in wealthier areas, and have limited access to toilets, relying on shared latrines, self-dug pits or overflowing chemical latrines, according to a recent research conducted from South Africa and Kenya's urban slums.

It is reported that lack of integrity and corruption contribute to the failure to deliver services, reinforcing existing inequalities in access to water and sanitation, diverting resources from where they are most needed and



reducing the quality and availability of services.

A new paper from the South African Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa (SERI) and the international Water Integrity

Network (WIN) discusses these issues based on research conducted by SERI in Siyanda, Marikana and Ratanang, three informal settlements in South Africa and by partners in Mukuru, an informal settlement in Nairobi,

Kenya.

It is reported that the research shows how an integrity focus can help to achieve human rights obligations and how a human rights focus improves integrity and reduces opportunities for corruption.

It is reported that people living in informal settlements typically self-access poor quality, unreliable water and sanitation services.

It has been revealed that informal settlement residents pay more per litre than high income urban users, for potentially unsafe water and unless they dig pits or use buckets in their yards, almost invariably share what amounts to public latrines, ordinarily situated on the outskirts of unlit settlements.

The failure of national and local authorities to ensure that informal

settlement residents have access to safely managed water and sanitation services and the actions of community members and entrepreneurs to fill the gaps that arise as a result, provide insights into how water integrity can result in better delivery on the human rights to water and sanitation.

It is added that authorities often excuse their failure to provide water and sanitation to residents in informal settlements by citing technical constraints such as a lack of formal planning, safety problems, or a reluctance to expose themselves to legal challenge for investing in privately owned land.

The report says that because these are by no means insurmountable nor even consistently applicable challenges, it is argued that there is more at play and that their reluctance stems from what can ultimately be traced back to stigma and discrimination.

"Informality is typically associated with lawlessness and criminality. Numbers of marginalised ethnic groups, foreign nationals and women-headed households tend to be higher in informal settlements. The lack of formal recognition of informal settlements and their residents, indeed until recently the focus on "eradicating" them, undermines the fulfilment of the state's obligation to deliver services, and it negates the important social and economic role of informal settlements in cities," the report says.

It says that human rights apply to everyone regardless of who they are, what they do or where they live.

In the research, examples from Kenya and South Africa have been used to illustrate that people in informal settlements are unable to enjoy their human rights to water and sanitation, despite countries having recognised these rights in their constitutions and legislation and despite binding international law, covenants and treaties.

It is added that the failure to ensure adequate water and sanitation services demonstrates a failure on the part of the state to respect, protect and fulfil these human rights, as well



as other fundamental rights such as those pertaining to health, housing, dignity and an adequate standard of living.

This failure also represents a violation of the principle of non-discrimination and equality, the reports say.

It is added that the two country stories further reveal significant failures in transparency and participation and demonstrate how difficult it is for residents in informal settlements to hold government and service providers to account.

It is reported that in the Kenyan case, the failure of the state to realise the human right to water and sanitation opened the door for corrupt cartels to hold residents hostage and to compel them to pay excessive amounts for water.

It is said that the corrupt practices are allowed to continue unchecked, despite efforts by residents and advocates highlighting the impact of the cartels' behaviour on access to services. On the other hand, interventions by unserved households to provide their own services is criminalised in many countries.

The report adds that in both

South Africa and in Kenya, people are prevented from providing their own services, often using spurious reasoning, such as that the standard of the services cannot be regulated, that the services are of a poor quality, while ignoring that in the absence of adequate and affordable services, households must find alternative ways of fulfilling their need for water and sanitation.

It says that the two case studies indicate how states fail to make use of all of the tools at their disposal to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights to water and sanitation of people living in informal settlements.

"States often hide behind the concern that the land on which the informal settlement is built is private, too difficult to construct services on, or otherwise inaccessible for basic service provision. It is nonetheless a government obligation to ensure access to basic services and most governments are legally empowered to expropriate land in the public interest, particularly to provide housing and essential services," the reports say.

It is said that however, the cases also show that where people create

their own access to services, access becomes discretionary and renders vulnerable groups such as women, the disabled, children or people without access to social networks or social capital, more vulnerable.

It says that removing the stigma that residents of informal settlements suffer would contribute to the eradication of discriminatory approaches that leave informal settlements out of planning processes.

It adds that within the water sector, corruption and poor integrity divert resources, protect incompetence and create perverse incentives, for example in South Africa towards installing chemical latrines instead of more sustainable solutions.

It is recommended that a framework of water integrity, which promotes human rights and protects non-discrimination and equality, participation, transparency, accountability and anti-corruption would support improved delivery of water and sanitation in informal settlements and would allow such communities to more effectively hold government to account for failure to deliver services.



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UK Slaps Four Security Bosses in Zimbabwe with Sanctions for Human Rights Violations

By Prince Kurupati

At the start of the month of February, the United Kingdom (UK) in its first major foreign policy measures outside the European Union slapped four security bosses in Zimbabwe with sanctions. The UK stated that the sanctions are in relation to gross human rights violations. The sanctions constitute travel bans as well as asset freezes.

By names, the four security bosses who were slapped with the sanctions include Owen Ncube who is the state security minister, Issac Moyo who is the Central Intelligence Organization director general, Godwin Matanga the police commissioner general and Anselem Sanyatwe a former brigadier general commanding the presidential guard.

The decision taken by the Johnson administration epitomizes the frosty relations between the Mnangagwa administration in Zimbabwe and the Johnson administration in the UK. The surprising thing however, is that things were not all bad just a few years back. When Zimbabwean longtime leader Robert Mugabe was deposed by the military, Boris Johnson then UK foreign secretary supported by the military action and backed the Mnangagwa administration. In fact, at one point Boris Johnson did meet one of the leading military men behind the military action, the late Sibusiso Moyo in London on the sidelines of the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in April 2018. Sibusiso Moyo who at the time had left the military transitioning to civilian politics was by the time the Zimbabwean minister of foreign affairs and was working hard to see Zimbabwe reinstated as a member of the Commonwealth.

The cozy relations between Zimbabwe (after the fall of Mugabe) and the UK failed to last long however. The major contributing factor to the deteriorating relationship being Mnangagwa's heavy handedness



State Security Minister Owen Ncube is one of the officials affected by the sanctions.

in dealing with government critics as well as his reluctance to usher in socio-economic and political reforms. Prime examples of the heavy handedness of the Mnangagwa administration in dealing with government critics can be seen with the August 1 2018 incident as well as the January 2019 protests.

At the end of July 2018, Zimbabweans went to cast their votes in a harmonized election. There was a slight delay in announcing the results of the election by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission prompting some opposition supporters to take to the streets – the protesters were convinced that massive rigging was taking place behind closed doors hence the delay in announcing the results. In response to the protests, the Mnangagwa administration released troops into the streets under

the command of Anselem Sanyatwe – some of the troops ended up opening live ammunition on the unarmed protesters resulting in six deaths and leaving several nursing wounds. The limelight around the incident led to the setting up of the Kgalema Mothlante Commission of Inquiry – the commission found that the military had exercised extreme force on the day against unarmed civilians.

A few months after the August 1 2018 incident, protests arose in the Zimbabwean capital, Harare when the Mnangagwa administration okayed a 150% fuel price hike. The fuel price hike prompted many people to take to the streets calling for the government to review the hike and possibly reduce it. The government however, was in no mood to listen to any citizen demands choosing rather to deploy troops into the streets. The

decision led to the death of 17 people while many others were left wounded – this according to the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission.

After the Motlanthe Commission had forwarded its recommendations, many thought that the Zimbabwean government would do everything in its power to follow the recommendations – this probably necessitated by the fact that the government would want to be doing the right thing. Surprisingly though, the Mnangagwa administration failed to adopt and implement any of the recommendations rather choosing to put the inquiry report into the archives. This among many other like-instances such as the failure to address the corruption allegations against top government officials with a heavy hand such as that used when dealing with unarmed civilians led

the UK to believe that the Mnangagwa administration was more or less the same with that of its predecessor hence the need to use the stick rather than the carrot.

At the time the UK slapped the four security bosses with sanctions, the UK Ambassador to Zimbabwe Melanie Robinson tweeted: "It's not sanctions holding Zimbabwe's economy back. Corruption and illicit financial flows rob Zimbabweans of their own resources. The lack of political and economic reforms undermines the chance of debt relief & international investment needed to rebuild Zimbabwe's economy." This essentially proves that any mending of relations between the UK and Zimbabwe would need the Mnangagwa administration to pursue political and economic reforms to the fullest while at the same time adopting 'true' zero tolerance to corruption policy.

Speaking on the sanctions placed against the four security bosses, Daglous Makumbe who is a lecturer in the department of political studies at the University of Western Cape in South Africa said the sanctions are a clear testament from the UK to Zimbabwe that it is not hoodwinked by illusions of reform. "These sanctions are coming as a signal that Zimbabwe no longer has friends in the West because when Mnangagwa came to power they (British) wanted to see if they could re-engage Zimbabwe... These sanctions are a



General Anselem Sanyatwe is a target of the sanctions which include travel bans and asset freezes. Photo Credit theZimbabweNewsLive.

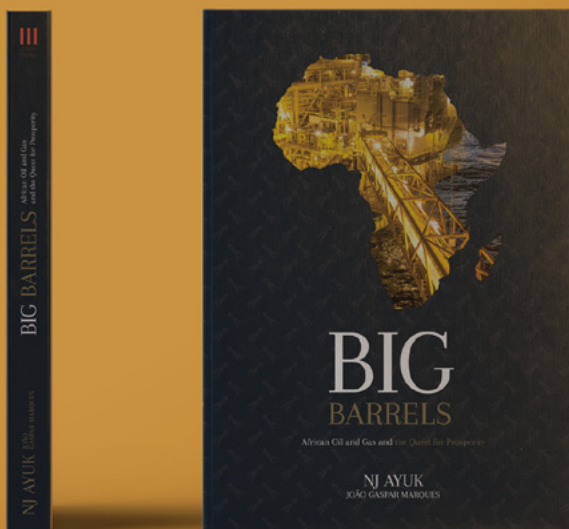
manifestation of what has happened since 2017 - that Mnangagwa has not fulfilled his promises."

Owing to the frosty relations, Makumbe says the best way forward for the Mnangagwa administration now just like the previous Mugabe administration will be to look to the East particularly China as re-engagement with the West seems to have failed totally. "Zimbabwe will turn back to China as usual. It has no option except to be in the hands

of China." However, Makumbe holds the view that the current relationship between Zimbabwe and China is more beneficial to one than the other, specifically, more beneficial to China than Zimbabwe. Concurring with the sentiments echoed by Makumbe is Tawanda Zinyama, an academic at the University of Zimbabwe. Zinyama states that what Zimbabwe need as it looks to the East is a clear strategy, "With China, we need a clear strategy. Our investment strategy regarding

the Chinese has problems - its implementation is haphazard."

Looking at the political relations behind UK and Zimbabwe, it's clear to state that any re-engagement efforts have not come to fruition and may take a long time to do so. Zimbabwe, therefore, needs to once again look to the East but in doing so, it needs as stated by Makumbe and Zinyama to reevaluate the relationship so that it becomes a win-win relationship for both countries. _____



A Stop In Mozambique For The African Energy Chamber

A hectic week in Mozambique for the African Energy Chamber and its Executive Chairman NJ Ayuk. The Delegation held fruitful talks on energy perspectives with President Felipe Nyusi, met with the Governor of Cabo Delgado, had a first hand view of terrorist atrocities, and provided vital relief supplies for displaced persons. PAV shares the trip with you in pictures





Q & A with Malawian Soccer Star Yamikani Chester

By Ajong Mbapndah L

Full of talent, hard working and ambitious, Yamikani Chester believes the world is yet to see the best of him. The international footballer has so far excelled in professional clubs in Eastern Europe and the USA but a move to a league or club of bigger standing should not come as a surprise to anyone. In a Q and A with PAV, Chester sheds light on career so far and ambitions for club football and the Malawian National Team.

May we know how the last season went for you with all the challenges?

Chester: Well, settling into a new team was tough but a task I was up for. The manager that brought me in lost his job and we had a new manager come in which proved challenging, but I overcame that and let my football do the talking. The Covid pandemic hit us all hard but we re-grouped, and I in particular did well and finished as my teams (Las Vegas Lights) top goal scorer.

You are currently in Malawi, may we know your situation with Las Vegas Lights, are you still affiliated with the club?

Chester: I signed a 3-year contract with a Czech club called MFK Vyškov, and was loaned out to



Yamikani Chester is full of ambitions and still has much to offer the world of football

North Carolina FC for a season. The following season I was loaned out to Las Vegas lights FC. A bunch of clubs from the USA, Middle East, Europe and South America were interested in my services but together with my management we believed another season in the USA will prepare me for

the next challenge. But as you know, Covid threw a spanner in the works for the world of football, sports to be precise. I have one year left with MFK Vyškov.

What were some of the activities that kept busy you during the COVID 19 period, how did Chester keep fit?

Chester: Family, friends and the Lord God kept me focused. Being an African player in American professional sports, I knew I had to work twice as hard as compared to my teammates in order to prove my worth and talent, I kept going. I had a set routine every day to keep my mental and physical state in tip top shape.

Prior to Las Vegas, you were with North Carolina FC, is playing in the US league a steppingstone for you or you envisage running the course of your career in the USA?

Chester: I wanted to compete at the highest professional level possible and open the door for more Malawians to follow. My dream is to have a great professional career; be remembered in world football and make my family, friends, and fans proud.

With regards to the league in the USA, how different is it from the Czech league where you starred for MFK Vyškov?

Chester: Funny thing is that since signing in the Czech Republic, I have never played there but from what I have experienced in the USA, the



Malawi just needs the right investments, infrastructure and the rest will follow in nurturing young talent from rough to polished diamonds, says Chester.

professionalism, facilities and personnel are world class. To be honest, the USA has some of the best professional training facilities in the world and it is only a matter of time till the soccer scene here is at the top.

What is the state of football back home in Malawi, what is working and what is not working?

Chester: Malawi has great talent and over the years has produced great players who haven't really transcended beyond the African borders. Our weakness is that football is viewed as a poor man sport in Malawi; the grassroots level is almost non-existent yet this is the most crucial part; the investment in football is low; the infrastructure is poor and players do not have the dietary needs nor the facilities.

A lot of work needs to be done. We have the talent, we just need the right investments, infrastructure and the rest will follow in nurturing young boys and girls talent from rough to polished diamonds. I see no reason why we cannot produce English Premier League or La Liga stars.

Being one of the privileged Malawians playing professional football, do you feel any extra



The momentum from a promising season with Las Vegas lights FC was slowed down by COVID-19. Photo credit twitter.

pressure to be a worthy Ambassador for your country?

Chester: No pressure at all, I live my life and try to do the best I can for me, my family and fans. We only get to live this life once and let us have no regrets but rather aim for the best we can be.

I carry the responsibility on my shoulder to be a role model to others and hope others achieve more than me. The cycle must go on.

Malawi has not had any standout performance yet, the country is often absent from major competitions

like African Nations cup, not even to mention the world cup, what is holding your country back, what will it take for that breakthrough moment to come?

Chester: The poor infrastructure and investment has affected us dearly as a nation. But we have learnt of our weaknesses and surely you will see Malawi, The Flames shining on the international stage soon enough. We have the talent to do so.

Does Chester have any role models who inspired him in his early days, and to thousands of young Malawians

out there who want to emulate your example and success, what advise do you have for them?

Chester: I have so many role models, from Ronaldinho, David Beckham, Paul Scholes, Didier Drogba, to Malawi's Joseph Kamwendo and Esau Kanyenda to name a few.

My advice to all athletes out there is be yourself, work hard, believe in your talent and it will happen for you. Nothing worthwhile comes easy so go out there and put all your energy into that passion and don't lose the moment.

As we wrap this interview, any projections for 2021, what goals and ambitions for your career both at the club level and the Malawi National team?

Chester: To be honest, my management has kept me really motivated and they are working on something for me, so I hope it materializes in the way we envision it. I hope, soon enough, to be playing in a top team in a very good professional league watched by millions around the world. As for the Flames, success is our only option, I hope this will be the year we turn our fortunes around and inspire a whole nation to get behind us.



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