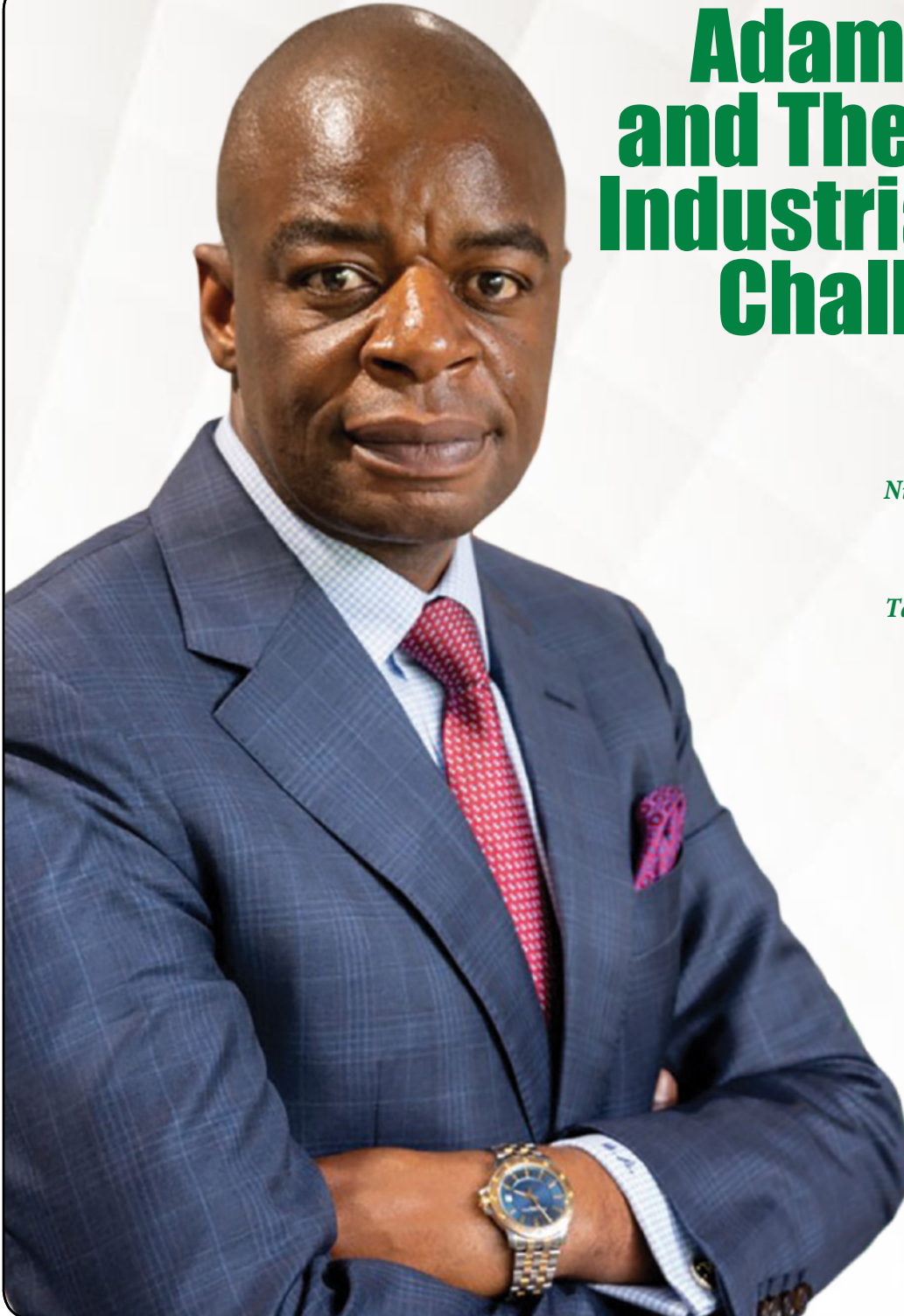




Adam Molai and The African Industrialization Challenge



*Nigeria: A Presidential Destiny for
Bola Tinubu*

*Tanzania: A Significant One Term
For Magufuli*

*Cote d'Ivoire: Gbagbo Survives
The ICC*

*Special Report: An African
Initiative with a Pan African
Focus For The JUA Fund*



*Francis Ngannou: From the
Sand Mines to UFC Champ*

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A Winning Formula for Africa in The Entrepreneurship Challenge

By Ajong Mbapndah L

It was one of the highlights of the historic USA-Africa leaders' Summit that took place in Washington, DC, in August 2014. President Barack Obama sitting on the podium in a conversation with 21-year-old Takunda Chingonzo from Zimbabwe. Selected in the inaugural class of the Young African Leaders Initiative, now known as the Mandela Washington Fellowship, Takunda handled the Q and A with brio, posing poignant questions to President Obama. In the audience were African leaders, business leaders, elite that in his wildest dreams, Takunda might never have met, but here he was sitting on stage in a lively discussion with the President of the USA.

The brilliance of Takunda encapsulated those of his peers in the program selected from over 50 African countries. From the Mandela Washington Fellowship, a whole new generation of young Africans emerged with a stronger vision and believe in their own potential to make a difference. Today, more and more young Africans are excelling with creative genius in all imaginable fields.

Today we have the Tony Elumelu Foundation hard at work to put the creative genius of young Africans to work. Working marvels is the Jack Ma Foundation which is today in the third edition of the African Business Heroes Prize Awards which puts \$1.5 million in the hands of the top winners. Still, in a continent where Almost 60% of its population is under the age of 25, more resources, are needed to make the most of the immense potential of the African Youth.

Entrepreneurship is one of the keys that would unlock the genius of the African youth. Instead of crying of over spilt milk and theorizing as to why young Africans will risk their lives in perilous journeys across the Sahara, hike in overcrowded boats across the Mediterranean Sea, and spend weeks and months in the jungles of South America in quest of greener pastures, more actions are needed to remind Africans that the

grass is not necessarily greener on the other side.

The entrepreneurship challenge is one that has been espoused and embraced whole heartedly by Zimbabwean born Industrialist Adam Molai. To Adam Molai, Africa needs to sit at the global economic table, rather than being on the menu for those who currently sit on the global economic table. With the JUA Fund, Adam Molai, the Chairman of Pacific Cigarette Company, and TRT Investments is matching words with

actions in putting \$2 million at the disposal of dynamic young African entrepreneurs.

Getting a seat at the global economic table is certainly a very tall order, a challenge of enormous proportions but one that is doable with the vision of people like Adam Molai, Tony Elumelu, Jack Ma, and others willing to use the genius of today's youth to chart a new path forward for the continent.

As Africa slowly but steadily gets it right on the entrepreneurship side of the development equation, there are many still many missing pieces of the puzzle beginning with leadership. In 21st century Africa, a leader who feels contented with his country or Africa serving as menu on the global economic table is not worth the trouble. Sadly, there are still so many of them in power. Africans should not be producers of coffee, yet unable to afford to a decent cup of coffee. The continent should not be leaders in the production of cocoa, yet the farmers who toil so hard are unable to afford chocolate at breakfast for their kids. At this age and time, it is an insult to collective intelligence for leaders with porous accomplishments and in their 80s to continue using flawed elections to remain in power. In 2021, it is abhorrent to see the President of the continental leader Nigeria seeking medical treatment in the UK. Same for all other leaders who rush to Europe at the sight of common ailments.



Ajong Mbapndah L, Managing Editor

What these leaders fail to admit or tell their people is that in some of these hospitals they attend abroad, the best staff there are Africans. From care givers, to pharmacists, surgeons, and so on. Forced out for diverse reasons, there are many in the diaspora who are ready and willing to contribute their own quota in the development of the continent if given a chance, a chance that myopic leadership in many African countries is unwilling to exploit for the common good of its people.

As we may have opined in previous editions of PAV Magazine, one of the core lessons that African leaders must take home is the need to take care of infrastructure at home. The billions saved from a year void of health check ups for Presidents and Minister abroad, vacations, conferences without any tangible positive outcome for the continent and other frivolous trips and expenses that go with it could be substantial seed money to start from somewhere in building state of the art hospitals, roads, funding research, and capital for young entrepreneurs.

"We targeted enterprises that are scalable across the Continent and actually address the challenges that are tottering Africa's development, and the selected enterprises all do that," says Adam Molai on the Jua Fund. From Nigeria to Kenya, Madagascar, and Zimbabwe, the winners are from diverse parts of Africa with projects, innovations

and business ideas that can transcend borders.

If the governments cannot provide the capital to help dynamic Africans put their genius to work for the continent, the least that can be expected from them is to create the enabling environment for the brilliant business ideas and ventures to freely flow across borders. Cutting the red tape, curbing the tariffs, easing visa restrictions, and speeding up the African Union passport are among measures that could help

here. If young Africans are thriving in the midst of the challenging environment of the moment, then one can only imagine what will happen in the right environment. To continental titans in the world of business across Africa, helping to mold the next generation of African leaders will be a noble legacy. There are many others out there who can emulate the examples of Adam Molai, Tony Elumelu, and the Jack Ma ABH Heroes Awards.

Talking of leaders, it is not the amount of time spent in power that makes a difference on the lives of people but rather the vision and the political will. That is one of the lessons that many Africans seem to draw from the one term Presidency of John Magufuli in Tanzania. Like him or hate him, the late Tanzanian President jolted many in his country and Africa in a way few leaders have done in recent times. This issue of PAV Magazine visits his legacy.

African Industrialist Adam Molai and the Jua Fund are in focus with a profile of the winners and their visions. The issue also takes a little at what next for former President of Cote d'Ivoire Laurent Gbagbo who was acquitted at the ICC, the presidential ambitions of Ahmed Bola Tinubu in Nigeria, the legacy of Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini in South Africa, the rise of Francis Ngannou from the sand mines of Batie in Cameroon to UFC heavy weight champion, and more.... Happy reading!!

FOREWORD BY DR. CHE AHN

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GOD'S MIRACLES,
HEALING, and POWER



DR. ANDREW M. NKOYOYO

Laurent Gbagbo And The Politics Of International Justice.

By Chief Charles Taku*

The judgment of the Appeals Chamber of the International Criminal Court confirming the acquittal of the former President of Cote D'Ivoire and his former cabinet Minister Charles Goudé brings to public attention, once more, the intensity of the problem facing the Court more than two decades after it was created. The acquittal clarifies the debate which I helped to jumpstart, about the unfair and unwarranted exclusive focus on Africa by the ICC Prosecutor.

From inception, this charge was dismissed with reckless arrogance by persons who miscomprehended the original objectives of the Rome Statute which I strongly support, to be an instrument for settling political scores. Others misconstrued my concerns and criticism for support of perpetrators of atrocity crimes on the continent of Africa. This was inaccurate. I admitted at every opportunity that atrocity crimes are committed in Africa and that the perpetrators must be held accountable. My participation for over two decades in all international courts and tribunals contributing with my peers from all parts of the world, Africa in particular, in the search for international justice and the respect for the international rule of law, attests to my commitment towards accountability for international crimes.

The acquittal of President Laurent Gbagbo and Charles Goudé Ble, present an opportunity once more, for the ICC to bring about the reforms which a majority of the State Parties of the Rome



Former Ivory Coast President Laurent Gbagbo at the International Criminal Court in The Hague, Netherlands January 2019. Photo credit ICC.

State and international justice seekers in Africa and the rest of the world are seeking. Here are the reasons. The ICC intervention in political conflicts which escalated into violence and atrocity crimes in Cote D'Ivoire, Kenya and Libya were perceived to be politically motivated. This criticism was validated by the high-profile public statements made by media frenzied Moreno Ocampo, the Chief Prosecutor of the ICC at the time. He has since he left office,

publicly admitted this fact, at least on the situation in Kenya.

The Gbagbo trial and acquittal on a no-case submission confirmed on appeal, shows that this case should never have been brought to trial in an international criminal court or any other court. This followed the familiar path of the Kenyan cases which were either poorly investigated or should never have been brought to trial. This is one of the reasons why I expressed public concerns about the

ICC intervention and its case selection. Should the ICC Chief Prosecutor intervene in African situations where atrocity crimes are committed? The answer indeed is yes. Why then criticise ICC interventions when they occur to confront impunity in the continent of Africa? The answer is that, the intervention is warranted provided it is not done to satisfy neo-colonial and neo-economic imperialism of super powers from the west and the east and former colonial powers who are still ruling the continent through

proxies and stooges. These are the special interests that are behind many of the conflicts in Africa and who have been influencing ICC case selections in Africa in ways which have failed to comprehensively take the interest of victims into consideration.

The ICC intervention in disputed political conflicts in Africa, provided the opportunity for neo-colonial stooges in power or in search of power, to directly or indirectly manipulate the ICC case selection processes to engineer the removal of their political opponents and through the process, resolve their political problems. Laurent Gbagbo and Charles Goudé Ble were victims of this manipulation, which I called from inception, international political justice. The reason for this political label is that despite public assurances, the authorities of Cote D'Ivoire which took over power without any form of democratic process, after the arrest of President Gbagbo, failed to co-operate with



Mr Laurent Gbagbo and Mr Charles Blé Goudé in Courtroom at the ICC. Their acquittal was hailed across Africa. Photo credit ICC.

the ICC once the Prosecutor evinced an interest to look in their direction. The result is that the ICC intervention in Cote d'Ivoire and the prosecution of President Laurent Gbagbo was victor's justice. It raised the hopes and expectations of victims on the side of victors which with this acquittal have not been realised and victims on the side of President Gbagbo who were abandoned to their fate. In this regard, the Gbagbo ICC prosecution divided Cote D'Ivoire and laid the ground for future conflicts.

Does the acquittal of President Gbagbo mean crimes were not committed in Cote D'Ivoire? The answer is no. Crimes indeed were committed in Cote D'Ivoire and the victims on all sides were entitled to justice. The acquittals establishes that the ICC Prosecutor took the wrong persons to the Hague. This has caused significant injustice not just to the acquitted but all the victims and people of Cote d'Ivoire. The prosecution while it lasted, helped the perpetrators of the atrocity crimes who should have been brought to justice, to strengthen their hold on power, whitewash their crimes, embolden impunity and the tyranny of power. This is a grave injustice done that was done to the people using the ICC prosecution. It had to speculate whether this is what the ICC prosecution bargained for or it fell into a neo-colonial entrapment and realised late while the results



President Alassane Ouattara pictured in the center says Laurent Gbagbo and Charles Ble Goudé are free to return to Ivory Coast after their acquittal at the ICC. Photo courtesy.

began to show, like these acquittals, in Cote D'Ivoire and Kenya? Or it was complicit in the ploy? I am not able to answer with certainty. The results speak for themselves.

Lest we forget, the acquittals are not a setback for the Rome Statute and its founding objectives per se. We do not measure the success rate of a court by acquittals and convictions. An acquittal or conviction are vectors of justice which must be celebrated when justice is done and seen to be done. So, was justice done by the acquittal of President Gbagbo and Charles Goudé Ble? The answer is undisputable in the positive There is an injustice when innocent people are

prosecuted and spend almost a decade of their lives in detention far from home for crimes they did not commit and without compensation. The injustice lies in the perceived selective political profiling of the acquitted President Gbagbo and Charles Goudé Ble and the harm caused using the mechanism of international justice.

This case brings into sharp focus the criticism of the ICC for its exclusive focus on Africa for over two decades of the Rome Statute. The Rome Statute intended the Court it established to represent the face of the universe which it was supposed to serve. The exclusive focus on Africa by the Court has not been compensated by the employment of persons of African origin in the Court or their involvement in the investigations and prosecutions. The citizens of the countries which have opposed ICC interventions outside Africa and in their own backyards have been the ones making decisions on Africa in the Court. This is indeed, unfortunate.

While Fatou Bensouda came with a determination to look beyond Africa,

she is leaving after her 9-year tenure without bringing a single charge against a non-African from other parts of the world or involved in African crimes. The minerals- for-arms merchants, land grabbers, mercenaries, economic predators who are sponsoring to engineering atrocity crimes in Africa, appear to be immune from accountability. Neo-economic imperialists and neo-colonial interests that contributed to bringing Gbagbo to the ICC should be worried because even if Gbagbo does not make a comeback to power, he will greatly influence the political destiny of his country and that of progress forces in Africa for the foreseeable future. The acquittal has elevated his profile to that of a living political legend. The ferocity with which he opposed the lingering ghost of colonialism under Houphouët-Boigny, and his political offspring, will be intensified. Cote d'Ivoire and Africa will honour him as a hero. The progressive youth will be inspired and emboldened to pursue the fight for justice and the political and economic emancipation of a truly independent Africa, thanks to the resilience of Laurent Gbagbo.

* Chief Charles Taku is an International Lawyer and a former President of the International Criminal Court Bar Association- ICCBA



Chief Charles Taku has consistently raised questions about the unfair and unwarranted exclusive focus on Africa by the ICC Prosecutor.



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Significant Development Possible in Just One Presidential Term: Magufuli Legacy Proves that

By Prince Kurupati

John Magufuli is a man who at the time of his death sharply divided opinion. On one hand, there are people who are full of praise of the now deceased Tanzanian leader for being a caring President who ushered in significant development in Tanzania. However, on the other hand, there are those who are convinced that John Magufuli was nothing but an autocrat much like other despotic African leaders – amongst these, those who are a bit lenient describes Magufuli as a benevolent dictator.

What made John Magufuli to sharply divide opinion? The simple answer to this question lies in regards to his works and actions during his first full term as the Tanzanian President. Now, before, we look at the works and actions in fine detail, what this in essence shows that during his first full term in office, Magufuli certainly worked and left some fine imprints. It is these imprints which are now a cause of debate. The mere fact that Magufuli left a lot for folks to debate testifies to the fact that he certainly did many things right



President Magufuli inaugurating a water project. The Tanzanian leader proved that it could be possible to be a highly successful one term President.

something which is a rarity in a continent where coming up with legacies of many gone leaders is a mammoth task owing to the absence of significant developments.

Listening to the arguments forwarded by those who view John Magufuli as a great leader who left behind great developments to his country, they first and foremost cite

his illustrious fight against corruption – a vice which was so dominant in Tanzania before his elevation as the country's president. Nicknamed the 'bulldozer', Magufuli tackled corruption face on by personally touring government offices and public funded projects. Whenever he heard and felt the presence of corruption and ineptitude by public officers, he was quick to sack the culpable officers on the spot. This aspect endeared him with a majority of citizens.

Magufuli early on in his tenure viewed certain governmental practices and then priorities as non-essential and embarked on a drive to ouster them. Some of the practices that Magufuli did away with include cancelling Independence Day celebrations, halting all foreign trips for public servants and making his office and that of the head of civil service the only offices to approve budgets for any foreign trips. Through parliamentary bills, Magufuli increased the royalty rate on gold from 4 to 6 per cent, increased



President John Magufuli launching a railway project in 2018, he was idolized by many across Africa for his development focused leadership style. Photo credit Twitter

the government stake in mining companies without compensation stipulating that 20 per cent of mining company ownership to Tanzanian citizens. These moves were all done to increase the government revenue base with the excess funds being used for developmental projects and others for welfare services. It is in light of this that Tanzania was able to widen a part of a highway at Ubungo that was notorious for gridlocks in the main city of Dar es Salam while at the same time scrapping tuition fees for public secondary schools. Other great achievements realized from the extra revenue funds include the resumption of the national carrier, expansion of the main airport, improvement in public transport and the increase in power generation capacity.

During Magufuli's tenure, tight national security was also enhanced owing to his uncompromising stance to law and order. As a keen student of the bureaucratic school of thought, Magufuli believed that real development was only possible if everyone in society knew what was expected of him/her and if everyone in society followed the laid down rules, regulations and procedures for the realization of set goals. On this front, Magufuli shared the same sentiments with his Kenyan counterpart President Uhuru Kenyatta. Working together in unison, Magufuli and Kenyatta managed to eradicate cross-border crime thus ensuring law and order between Tanzania and Kenya.

The power to unify the country is a skill that any leader must possess. With regards to Magufuli, the former Tanzanian president had unifying powers in abundance. The actions and works that Magufuli did with regards to stamping out



President Magufuli attends the inauguration ceremony of Kijazi Interchange in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, on Feb. 24, 2021. Photo credit Xinhua.

corruption and tightening law and order endeared him with the general folks in the process helping to build cordial relationships between and amongst him and the citizens as well as the citizens amongst themselves. His long term vision and mission for Tanzania did manage to sway several opposition figures and government critics to his side.

The close relationship that existed between the President and the citizens can best be seen after the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic. Magufuli's extreme care for citizens' welfare blinded him from implementing hard measures that would affect the citizens economically such as enforcing strict lockdowns and curfews. Instead, he called upon all Tanzanian citizens to seek redemption from the Lord through prayer while going about their activities like any other days.

By going against science, Magufuli inadvertently exposed his citizens to the inhumanity of deadly diseases but he only did so out of 'love' for his people.

In the international sphere, Magufuli managed to strengthen the ties that exist between Tanzania and China through Tanzania's membership in the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. While strengthening the ties, Magufuli did so wittingly ensuring that parity exists with regards to the benefits gained from the relationship. To demonstrate the strong relations that now exist between Tanzania and China, Tanzania was picked as one of the five countries that Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi visited during his five-nation Africa tour earlier this year in January.

While Magufuli's legacy is certainly

an envy of many, it does have some black taint strains. Writing for DW, Abu-Bakarr Jalloh said that Magufuli hid his tyranny behind a blame game. Abu-Bakarr Jalloh writes that Magufuli demonstrated heavy-handedness in dealing with government critics with several critics being subjected to arbitrary arrests. Media freedoms were also curtailed as outspoken government critics were silenced. However, Abu-Bakarr Jalloh states that Magufuli's tyranny is conveniently hid and tucked away owing to his materialistic achievements. "Africans... focus on the physical achievements of their politicians, like how many new roads and bridges, fancy sports stadiums and massive state buildings are constructed during their time."

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Nigeria: The Man Who Would Be President

By Richard Mammah

Interest in the succession to incumbent President Muhammadu Buhari was raised a notch higher recently when the National Leader of the ruling All Progressives Party, APC, and already touted front-runner in the 2023 presidential process, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, undertook two high profile visits to the north-ward Kano and Kaduna states.

A Yoruba from the South West, Tinubu who has been a two-time governor in Nigeria's commercial nerve centre, Lagos, was presumably now formally reaching out for the handshake across Jebba as part of what pundits believe is part of a wider process of throwing his hat into the ring and definitively signaling that he was prepared and ready to take the reins of office after President Buhari would have completed his second term in office by May 2023.

Given Nigeria's political divisions and demographic make-up, it is apparent that no single political player can all by himself work his way into the most exalted office in the land.

First, the constitution prescribes that any intending office holder at this level must not only be fielded by a contending political party, he must also secure a majority of the votes



Asiwaju Bola Tinubu chaired the 2021 Sarduna Annual Memorial Lecture in Kaduna. Photo courtesy.

from the contest and a minimum of 25 percent of the votes recorded in two thirds of the 36 states in the country and the Federal Capital Territory, FCT. For Buhari who has for many years, commanded a relative cult-like following across large swathes of the North, meeting this electoral criteria was even a challenge until he found better cross-cutting relationships across more segments of the country.

So, for an aspirant like Tinubu, he must ford the triple hurdles of getting a party nomination, a majority of ballots and a quarter of the votes cast in all 36 states and Abuja, the imperative of reaching across Nigeria's divisions cannot be discountenanced if his ambition is to attract the required traction. And underscoring this point is the fact that he had even before now almost practically been spending

large amounts of time in his Abuja lodgings, from where he had been quietly reaching out to more and more of his supporters and foot soldiers in the North.

after his Kaduna/Kano performance in the belief that all is well with his aspiration as far as the North is concerned. One of such expressions of caution is coming from the activist and former Senator representing the Kaduna Central District in the National Assembly, Shehu Sani. He has advised the National Leader of the All Progressives Congress to be generally wary in his dealings with northerners, and especially members of the Northern political class.

Rather than be taken in by platitudes and speeches made at such orchestrated events as his appearances at Arewa House, Kaduna and in Kano, the former Senator is advising the political hopeful to ensure that he gets his own team that would work with him and in the process also afford him better counsel as to the deeper and underlying issues about how well or not he is accepted in the region.

Affirming that at the moment, the majority of the common people in the North do not exactly support Tinubu's presidential ambition, he urged him to take lessons from the experiences

Some of this attention surely helped Tinubu in attracting the fairly enthusiastic audience and crowd showings that were recorded in the course of this recent Northern showing.

But not many think that the Jagaban Borgu should now go to sleep



Keen observers say Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu used his trip to the North to meet voters and power brokers who are normally not on social media. Photo credit twitter.

of the likes of Bashorun Moshood Kashimawo Olawale (MKO) Abiola who finally found out that he could not count on the support of quite critical northerners that he had been relying on.

“Well, the person of Asiwaju is the one I know in the field of struggle. He was one of those in the struggle for the restoration of democracy and also a leading figure in the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) while I was part of the fight for democracy. We worked together for MKO’s project and for the resistance against the annulment.”

Making an allusion to an earlier tweet where he had counselled that Tinubu should get Hausa speakers who are loyal to him to help with proper translations of remarks made by Northerners in the course of his trips, he remarked that this would help get a proper and accurate gauge that he could work with, even as he linked it with the travails of MKO Abiola.

“I know [Tinubu] personally. But what I tweeted is more of a Biblical/Shakespearian allegory or whatever one can use in sending message to someone and what I am trying to say is that as he is allegedly moving towards contesting for the presidency, he should try to know the actual feeling on the ground as far as the North is concerned because I know what Abiola went through.

“Abiola served the North more than any other businessman from the western part of Nigeria. He printed the Quran and shared it to many Muslims. He donated houses and empowered people; he supported academics and religious clerics. Abiola was one of those passionate about the unity of Nigeria because of the solidarity between the South-West and the northern part of Nigeria. But how did he end up? They (northerners) conspired against him and sabotaged him and at the end of the day, he was gone.”

A mine field of booby traps

The deterioration of affairs in the polity at the moment has even made



Bola Tinubu and President Buhari have been known to be strong allies.

political permutations more difficult as there are indeed an ever increasing array of contending matters. One of these is the inconvenient issue of religion. Though it has almost always been a factor, it promises to take a high note of its own in the Tinubu aspiration at some point in the process. This is more so when the same Tinubu had also been a front-line contender for the VP position in 2015 before religion and several other related-intrigue points stopped him.

In the 2023 drive, the religion card is already registering in two ways in preliminary debates of the subject. One, against the backdrop of the ethno-religious tensions in the land at the moment, would the dominant Christian electorate of the South eventually see the Muslim Tinubu as their own candidate without any scruples? And even for the North, what kind of VP choice should Tinubu be considering? A Northern Christian to balance his Southern Muslim card? But should he take that route, would the majority Northern Muslims see such as choice as sufficiently representative of their own ethos? Heads, tails, this is surely going to be one tough nut to crack.

There is also the issue of South West, South East relations and the continuing clamour for a President of South East origin.

Says the political activist and pundit, Tony Akata:

“Tinubu’s major obstacles would

come from the South, that is from within the Yoruba and Igbo blocs. He is also thinking he would get the support of the North but this is quite tricky. If they get, say a Tambuwal to run against him in the North, he would then have even major issues even in the North. We should not forget the experiences of Abiola and even Obasanjo so easily when it comes to having politicians from the South having dealings with the North.”

But there are those who believe that given the state of political and economic failing in which the country is presently enmeshed, and the very parlous security situation countrywide, angling for political office at this time is simply building on quicksand.

“My take is that without the institution of serious restructuring and electoral reforms, we should simply not bother with elections and electoral contests in 2023. It is simply a distraction. Will there be a Nigeria by 2023? At least not in a state for these so called elections to be held. And on the specific candidacy of Bola Tinubu, I am not impressed. He does not have what I believe the next leader of Nigeria should have. So my response to his candidacy straight away is a no-no,” Okiemute Umukoro, a business systems expert remarked.

His view is not dissimilar from that of Allison Etemike, a lawyer and social commentator.

“Tinubu does not have what it takes to hold Nigeria together beyond 2023.

The Nigerian political class know that they have literally boxed the nation into a cul de sac. They are aware. That we are faced with a very onerous task and most herculean challenge. What is needed is a honest, courageous, conscientious, charismatic, even-handed and fair leader. And I am not satisfied that Bola Tinubu is that person.”

The blogger and activist, Sunday Esado is also not enamoured of the Tinubu presidency project and he explains:

“As a patriotic Nigerian, I believe a Tinubu Presidency would further plunge our country into political nepotism and wanton destruction occasioned by embezzlement, malfeasance, financial recklessness and lawlessness. We should just take a look at what is going on in Lagos and imagine the whole country as an extension of Lagos.”

But he also thinks that there are more obstacles and challenges for the dream of the former Mobil Accountant to become Nigeria’s Number One citizen.

“First, Tinubu needs massive support in the north where he has little or no popularity at all. A candidate like Atiku would definitely cash in on this loophole if he emerges the flagbearer for PDP in 2023. This would explain why Tinubu has been deliberate in his drive to win the north over.

Second, I would have suggested Nuhu Ribadu or Governor El-Rufai as potential vice Presidents for him, but I am reminded that the Muslim - Muslim equation was the main reason he had to relinquish his Vice Presidential ambition to Yemi Osinbajo in 2015 in the first place. It is surely going to be interesting and full of twists and turns. But one thing is obvious. Tinubu wants to be President. He has always wanted to be. It was one of the main reasons for the coalition that led to the removal of Jonathan in 2015 and there are flyers and posters in that regard already in some parts of Lagos and elsewhere in the country.”

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South Africa Mourns the Passing of Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini

By Prince Kurupati

March was a sad month for the Zulu nation and South Africans at large following the passing of Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini. King Zwelithini who had served as the Zulu King for close to 50 years was the longest serving Zulu King. The Zulu King commanded huge authority and influence in South African politics owing to his role in South Africa's struggle for independence and subsequently the negotiations which ultimately led to the country's independence. This ultimately leading to his role and other old lineage as well as old practice South African traditions being incorporated into the modern day South African Constitution.

A direct descendant of Cetshwayo who is renowned for fighting against British imperialists in 1879, King Zwelithini continued the work of his forefathers in advancing the interests of the Zulu nation in South Africa. The story of Goodwill Zwelithini did however start from modest beginnings in Nongoma, Kwazulu where he was born. A son of King Cyprian Bhekuzulu Nyangayezizwe kaSolomon and Queen Thomozile Jezangani kaNdawandwe, Goodwill Zwelithini was quickly exposed to politics at a tender age of just 20 when he succeeded his father in 1968. Goodwill Zwelithini's official crowning moment however only came a few years later in 1971 as he went into hiding after receiving death threats soon after succeeding his father.

Presiding over a Zulu nation constituting about 18%-20% of the South African population at any given time, King Zwelithini from his early days as the King of the Zulu was thrust deep into South African politics as



King Zwelithini who ruled for close to 50 years was the longest serving Zulu King. Photo credit WSJ

all those who wanted to get Zulu electoral votes passed through him. It is against this background that during South Africa's liberation struggle King Zwelithini often found himself in between nationalist leaders Nelson Mandela leading the African National Congress and Mangosuthu Buthelezi of the Inkatha Freedom Party.

During the squabbles between Nelson Mandela and Mangosuthu Buthelezi, King Zwelithini did expose his leadership and diplomacy capabilities as he kept the two at bay in

the process enabling the movements led by both to continue waging war against the common enemy they were facing that is, the white imperialists.

King Zwelithini's political influence transcended post independence as the new South African Constitution recognized and enshrined the position of traditional monarchs. Owing to this, King Zwelithini used his position as a traditional leader to advance the interests of the government of the day in executing and implementing various programs and policies. At

the turn of the millennium, South Africa lost thousands of people owing to the HIV/AIDS pandemic – something which was necessitated by then President Thabo Mbeki's HIV denialism. A huge proportion of the people lost during the time were from the Zulu nation. Concerned about the welfare of his people and South Africans at large, King Zwelithini embarked on a program to raise HIV awareness amongst the Zulu nation. Owing to his position as well as the authority and influence he commanded amongst the Zulu, King Zwelithini's HIV awareness drive was very much successful in curbing the spread of HIV/AIDS in South Africa.

The diplomacy skills that King Zwelithini used during the liberation struggle days between Nelson Mandela and Mangosuthu Buthelezi were also expressed post independence. Most notably, when then South African president was facing huge criticism with many calling for his head in 2018, King Zwelithini invited Jacob Zuma to his home. According to numerous close sources to then president Jacob Zuma, King Zwelithini convinced Zuma to step aside from the hot seat amicably and with dignity. After the meeting between Zuma and King Zwelithini which was held during the first week of February 2018, Zuma heeded to the advice and resigned from the presidency a few days later.

Just like his predecessors who solidified their powers through marriage, King Zwelithini also did expand and solidify his authority and influence through marriage. At the time of his death, King Zwelithini had six wives with some of them being of Xhosa



FILE Picture- Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini greets his supporters at The Moses Mabhida Football Stadium in Durban, South Africa, Oct. 7, 2018.

and Swazi nations.

Away from the political spectrum, King Zwelithini also played an instrumental role in selling the idea of KwaZulu Natal as being a prime tourist destination. The Zulu nation located in KwaZulu Natal on South Africa's Indian Ocean Coast has some great sandy beaches and recreational centers that attract thousands of visitors every month. As the leader of the region, King Zwelithini actively portrayed KwaZulu Natal as a prime tourist destination exposing all of its great tourist spots.

The legacy of King Zwelithini is without any taints however. In 2015, some comments made by the King were misconstrued and xenophobic violence ensued. The King however later on disowned the comments stating that they were taken out of context. What the whole incident proved however is the authority and influence he commands such that

anything he spoke out was quickly heeded to without questioning.

Even in death, King Zwelithini showed that he is a true traditionalist. The 72 year old King was buried later at night only by a group of men with no woman allowed at the burial site including her own wives and daughters.

Speaking after the death of King Zwelithini, Cyril Ramaphosa, the South African President said, "It was during the course of his reign that his people, alongside all the people of our country realized their dream of freedom from the injustices of colonialism and apartheid... And it was during his reign that the decades of dispossession and the willful destruction of our knowledge and economic systems, our culture and governance institution came to an end."

Following the death of King Zwelithini, the King's third wife



Queen Mantfombi Dlamini will act as regent of the Zulu nation pending the official emergence of a successor. Photo courtesy.

Queen Mantfombi MaDhlamini Zulu holding the status of 'Great Wife' was appointed regent until a new monarch takes the throne by the Zulu royal family. The decision to choose the next king is going to be taken after a 3-month mourning period. Queen

Mantfombi MaDhlamini Zulu is the sister of Eswatini's King Mswati III and has eight children including five sons. Many believe that the successor will come from one of her five sons the frontrunner being her eldest son Prince Misuzulu.

No More Voter Apathy In Zambia ...as United Nations joins communities' voters education drive

By Peter Kayula

The United Nations (UN) has joined the campaign to end low degrees of voter participation in Zambia and rebuild the electorate's confidence in the electoral process, less than five months before the Southern African country goes to the crucial polls.

The general elections follow a five-year circle and each election time, the Zambia Electoral Commission (ECZ) and a multiple of members of the civil society hold voter education campaigns relevant to and of value to increasing electoral participation.

The hugely influential and important United Nations Agency, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has unexpectedly launched a three-year multi-donor project aligned with the national priorities enshrined in the 7th National Development Plan 2017-2021 (7NDP); the latter, in which the Zambian government pledges to "promote transparency, accountability, citizen participation as well as strengthen governance



Millions of Zambians will vote in August this year in the eagerly awaited 18th time elections since independence in 1964. Picture courtesy of the Commonwealth Secretariat communications division.

institutions".

The project dubbed "Strengthening Democracy" will include providing opportunities for non-state actors to receive grants to undertake activities to increase electoral participation for Women, the Youth and People with Disabilities (PWDs).

These grants will also aim at benefiting other categories of voters

such as Persons in Lawful Custody (PLCs), first time voters and rural or hard-to-reach voters in the context of the 2021 general elections and beyond.

Officials of the United Nations Development Programme Zambia Office did not reply to request for comment.

However, according to information

posted on its website, The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has invited interested civil society Organisations (Non-Governmental or faith-based Organisations) to submit proposals to participate in activities to promote voter education and stakeholder engagement to increase the participation of women youth of and

People with Disabilities (PWDs) in the 2021 general elections in Zambia.

"The United Nations Development Programme has great impact through its mission of the value of the local electoral process," said Nicholas Yates, East Africa based Voters Foundation's Director. "By adopting a fully open voter education infrastructure, the Agency actively values the diversity and wide range of perspectives that people from diverse background bring to their work."

Millions of Zambians will vote in August this year in the eagerly awaited 18th time elections since independence in 1964. The outcome of these elections is likely to be determined by the party with the most convincing message on how to tackle the challenges of economic development, service delivery, foreign debt settlement, corruption, job creation and comprehensive health care service programme implementation.

The ruling Patriotic Front Party led by President Edgar Chagwa Lungu will contest the election against several other parties including the main opposition party the United Nations Development Party (UNDP) led by economist, Hakainde Hichilema the National Democratic Congress (NDC) led by Outspoken Dr Chishimba Kambwili.

Political parties will have to go their way to win the hearts of many

Zambians particularly the first time voters - the generation born after 1994. Young people are seen as a critical constituency as two out of three Zambians are below the age of 35.

The highest concerns for the youth are whether they will find jobs as well as how to combat corruption and improvement in service delivery.

Despite registering significant progress on the economic front over the past 20 years, not all Zambians have benefited from the new political and economic dispensation.

In South Africa, the country uses a system of proportional representation in which the electorate votes for a political party, not individuals. The political party gets a share of seats in parliament in direct proportional to the number of votes won in the election.

Each registered political party submits a list of candidates to the ECZ in advance of the election, and the ECZ determines the number of seats for each party based on the election results.

The President is elected by the new National Assembly from among its



Voter Education campaign. Picture by courtesy of the Electoral Commission of Zambia.

members, usually the leader of the majority ruling party. The candidate resigns from Parliament upon election as president and becomes the head of state and government and commander in chief of the defence force.

However, in Zambia the electorate votes for a political party, not individuals. The political party gets a share of seats in parliament in direct proportional to the number of votes won in the election.

Each registered political party submits a list of candidates to the (ECZ) in advance of the election, and the widely influential ECZ determines the number of seats for each party based on the election results.

The president, usually the leader of the party with the highest votes in an election and members of parliament are together elected by the electorate.

The president upon election becomes the head of state and government and commander in chief of the defence force.

Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Executive Secretary Stergomena Lawrence Tax in his speech during the launch of the SADC election observer Mission (SEOM) in May 2014 just before the crucial South African elections, underscored the importance of a peaceful free, fair and transparent and credible electorate process in elections in Africa.

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Treachery, A Stock In Trade Of Kenyan Politics

By Samuel Ouma

Political betrayal in Kenya is not new; it runs through since the independence in the early 1960s. The seed of political fraud, hoaxes, broken promises, and frustrated ambitions was planted by the first President of the Republic of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta, and has become a norm in modern politics. We have witnessed unstable political marriages that ended in tears, bitterness, and frustrated dreams. Kenyan political analyst Herman Manyora, a lecturer for political science at the University of Nairobi, noted there is no honor among thieves, which is correct.

Following the fight for independence that pitied Kenyans against white colonialists, Oginga Odinga, Kenya's first vice president and the father to African Union envoy Raila Odinga, was offered the presidency by the British colonialists. Still, he refused to take the power mantle and instead demanded the release of his colleague Jomo Kenyatta who was in prison. Along with other nationalist leaders, Kenyatta was convicted for leading a revolution against white settlers and the colonial government.

"If I accept your offer, I will be seen as a traitor to my people. The British cannot elect me leader to my people...Kenyatta is around, just here in Lodwar (Kenya's north-western town). Release him and allow him to lead us; he is already our choice," Odinga was quoted telling Governor Sir Patrick Renison.

Kenyatta was released in 1961 and became the Prime Minister and later the President. He appointed Odinga to be the Minister of Home Affairs and then the vice president. Their political bromance was short-lived, they were involved in severe ideological differences that prompted Odinga to resign, and he formed a left-wing opposition party, Kenya's



First Vice President Jaramogi Oginga Odinga with the first President of Kenya Jomo Kenyatta. Photo courtesy.

People Union (KPU). To rub salt into the wound, Kenyatta banned KPU in 1969 and put some of its members, including Odinga, under government detention.

Kenyatta rested with his ancestors in 1978, and then Vice President Daniel Moi beat all odds to ascend to power with the help of the then Attorney-General Charles Njonjo and Finance Minister Mwai Kibaki. He trounced a cabal around Kenyatta who had vowed to stop him from succeeding his boss. Six years later, Moi sacked Njonjo, who was the Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs. In retort, Njonjo termed President Moi as a «passing cloud» instigating bitter political rivalry.

It did not take long before Moi demoted Kibaki from vice president

to Health Minister, and in 1991 during the multi-party politics, the latter left Moi's bandwagon.

To increase their chances of winning 2002 polls, the Kenya African National Union (KANU) led by the late President Daniel Moi and the National Development Party (NDP) led by Raila Odinga merged in courtesy of commanding huge followers. However, Moi handpicked Uhuru Kenyatta to be his successor, breaking his promise to endorse Raila. As a result, Raila led the mass exodus from KANU and joined hands with other rebels to form the National Rainbow Coalition (Narc).

The Narc coalition endorsed Mwai Kibaki, and they carried out the day, ending KANU's 40 year-rule. In the run-up to elections, Raila conducted

countrywide campaigns to ensure Kibaki, who was in a wheelchair after being involved in an accident, became President.

«The difficult bit was in boarding the plane. We did not have the control. I remember asking for some seats at Kenya Airways and they were not co-operative. Raila, who was with us, said they could not put their President at the back of the plane and must be put in the first-class cabin...he came with about eight young men who carried the stretcher to the front seats on their knees,» Kibaki's doctor Dan Gikonyo told the Kenya Television Network (KTN) in 2018 saying Raila played crucial roles to get Kibaki to a London hospital for medication.

Despite Raila's effort, Kibaki threw their memorandum of understanding

to have him serve only one term and leave for Raila under the bus. He sacked him and his allies in 2005 for opposing the constitutional amendments, run for another term, and rigged him out to remain in the office beyond 2007. The rigged 2007 Presidential elections caused post-elections violence that claimed more than a thousand lives and displaced hundreds of thousands from their homes.

Another betrayal emerged in the process of Kibaki's succession. Facing crimes against humanity at the International Criminal Court (ICC), Uhuru Kenyatta and Uhuru Kenyatta agreed to work together. In their quest for power, they anonymously signed a pact with Musalia Mudavadi to have him go for the top seat, only to renege their promise hours later.

"He (devil) came to me and told me that if we are elected, the West will not give Kenya money; that our tea can't be sold abroad and that Kenyans are not ready for another Kikuyu president, as this will cause more bloodshed. Given that I love peace, then I decided to quit and support Musalia," Uhuru said after he withdrew his support.

Uhuru and Ruto camp floored Odinga in the 2013 presidential elections despite the rigging

allegations. Seeking re-election in 2017, they folded their respective parties, The National Alliance (TNA) and the United Republican Party (URP), to form Jubilee Party. It is the fourth year since their re-elections, and the duo are not sailing in the same boat. Their second and final term has been marred with accusations and counter-accusations from their allies. President Uhuru Kenyatta has broken his promise to rule for ten years and then hand over to his deputy for another ten years. The Head of the State said that his choice would shock people.

Uhuru has accused Ruto of insubordination and challenged him to quit if he is not happy. To show how serious it is, the President purged Ruto allies from key Parliament leadership positions. Feeling unwanted in the Jubilee Party, the second in command staunch supporters formed the United Democratic Alliance (UDA) to strategize 2022 polls. Before the UDA formation, Ruto revealed that Jubilee is not functioning well because it has



The political marriage between Raila Odinga and former President Mwai Kibaki soured over broken pacts. Photo credit Uriel Sinai/Getty Images.

been hijacked by those he referred to as busybodies, conmen, and brokers.

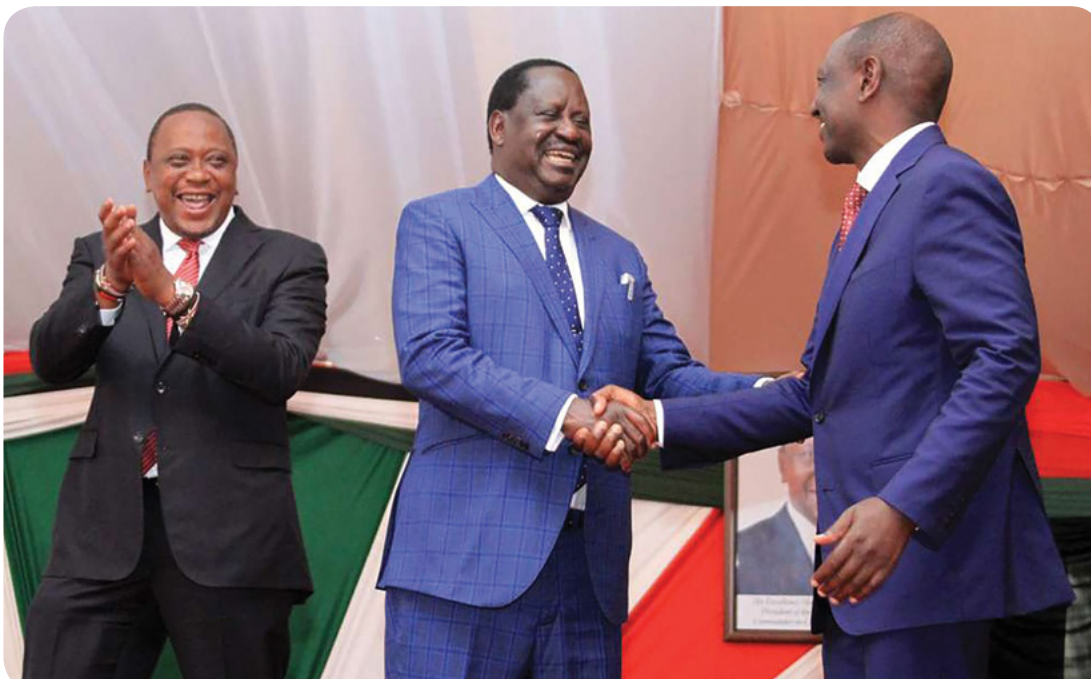
Recently in an interview with the local radio station, Ruto hinted at the possibility of Jumping to UDA as a new political vehicle, blaming some external forces trying to scuttle his presidential bid. He also opened up to teaming together with the former Prime Minister Raila Odinga.

"If it gets to a point where they do not want us to be there in Jubilee, then we must have a different plan. You cannot wait to hit a wall. Going forward, if there is no agreement, and

then we will plan ourselves with UDA. We have built UDA in partnership with Jubilee. It is not us starting afresh. We are just going on with what we already have."

"Some people think I have problems with Raila. I do not. These differences are political. And there are things I agree with Raila. He has agreed on the need to form national parties and he is facing similar issues (in the opposition) I am facing with regional chieftains. And I want to say this: If anybody wants to partner with us to bring up the hustler, we have no problem. We support, we will work together," said Ruto, the local media.

In conclusion, treachery is an indispensable tool in Kenyan politics, and both betrayers and opportunists have been betrayed. Betrayal is expected to continue beyond 2021. Political realignments are going on now, including the formation of One Kenya Alliance, bringing together African National Congress (ANC) party leader Musalia Mudavadi, Kalonzo Musyoka of Wiper, Ford Kenya's Moses Wetangula, and KANU chairman Gideon. It is not the first time we witness such political marriages ahead of the polls. The One Kenya alliance is not better than those that crumbled before accomplishing their purposes. It is a matter of when and Kenyans are watching.



President Uhuru Kenyatta laughs and cheers as opposition leader Raila Odinga and Deputy President William Ruto share a handshake. Photo courtesy.

Special Report : The JUA Fund: An African Initiative with a Pan African Focus

By Ajong Mbapndah L



"When people see Africans investing in our own environment, they feel more confident to invest alongside us. Confidence breeds confidence. And I am nothing if not confident in the future of Africa and in what we can collectively achieve"- Adam Molai

Launched last year by African Industrialist Adam Molai, the JUA (Sunrise in Swahili) Fund recently announced recipients of the \$ 2 million to support entrepreneurs with capital to kickstart or expand their enterprises.

Bryt-Knowledge (Zimbabwe), GrowAgric (Kenya), Jirogasy (Madagascar), Powerstove Energy (Nigeria), Side (Kenya), Whispa Health (Nigeria) and Xetova (Kenya) all agreed to deals with the fund following a week-long "Kickstarter Olympics" during which they pitched their ideas to a high-profile panel of judges.

Molai, who has successfully started several enterprises across Africa and whose TRT Investments had \$125 million of assets under management as of end 2019, says a desire to inspire the Continent's entrepreneurial generation was behind the creation of

the fund.

"Without entrepreneurs, economies cannot grow, and countries cannot advance. But African entrepreneurs unfortunately do not get the support they need to thrive for a myriad of reasons. Yet Africa is full of enterprising people," says Adam Molai.

"Wherever there is adversity, there is opportunity. Africa is rife with adversity, wherever you turn

business prospects are in abundance. Entrepreneurs provide solutions to societal challenges, whilst creating space for the advancement of their communities. I feel that Africa is so much more open, and it is full of so much more opportunity than you would find elsewhere. I want to do everything in my power to ensure that this potential is cultivated and unleashed," says Adam Molai.

With a panel of 17 judges included

seasoned Professor Benedict Oramah, President of the \$20-billion Pan-African African Export-Import Bank; Dr. Amany Asfour, Chairperson of the African Business Council and Chairperson of COMESA Trade Promotions Council; Joel Netey, the first African to be appointed President of the International Advertising Association; Brad Magrath, founder of Zoono, Zambia's leading money transfer platform; Anna Henry Nyimbo, founder of Cartrack Tanzania, Retriever Limited Kenya, Retriever Limited Rwanda and Neoboemi Africa amongst others, the selected entrepreneurs went through a rigorous selection process.

PAV brings you a special report on the Fund with exclusive interviews of Mr Adam Molai and the entrepreneurs selected as recipients of the inaugural JUA Fund.

Meet the Jua Fund 2021 Recipients

Challenging for Africa to Unleash Its Potential Without Industrialization-Adam Molai

By Ajong Mbapndah L

Unless Africa industrializes, it will fail to unleash the latent potential presented by its abundant resources and youthful population, says Adam Molai, African Industrialist, Founder of the JUA Fund, and Chairman of TRT Investments. Speaking in an exclusive interview with PAV, Adam Molai says the youthful population in Africa can either be its greatest asset if well leveraged, or its biggest threat if allowed

to become restive owing to lack of opportunity.

"Africa is in a very poor state in as far as industrialization is concerned. We are still significant importers of finished goods and exporters of raw materials," Molai says of the crusade on Industrialization that he has championed over the years.

"In 2018, Sub-Saharan Africa raw material exports amounted to \$148 billion or 52% of total exports. That is a strong case for industrialization to convert a significant portion of our raw materials into intermediate goods or finished products, creating jobs and increasing the value of our GDP," Adam Molai said.

On the JUA Fund which is his latest initiative to inspire the Continent's entrepreneurial generation, Adam Molai expressed the hope that it will start a movement which will sweep across Africa. Describing the Fund as a ripple considering the enormous needs of the continent, Molai says the desire is to have a culture in the continent where entrepreneurs give back through facilitating the creation of more entrepreneurs.

Generous in detail about the building of his companies, Adam Molai says opportunities for the continent are immense, but leaders will need to develop confidence in the



Unless we industrialize, we will fail to unleash the latent potential presented by our abundant resources and youthful population, says Adam Molai.

ability of African entrepreneurs and stop seeing them as inferior to foreign entrepreneurs.

Could you start by telling us your own interest and journey into entrepreneurship, how did Adam Molai become an industrialist?

So, I am a true-blue entrepreneur; I was never interested in working for anybody else. I have never worked for anybody else.

I often share one of my fondest memories being a 10-year-old selling matches to earn pocket money and thinking - 'I love this!'. This is when the entrepreneurial bug struck.

I embarked on my first entrepreneurial venture when I was just 10 when I sold boxes of in-demand matches for a profit to make pocket money. While at boarding school, I sold food to fellow pupils for spending money.

In my first summer in university in the UK, I joined a network marketing business which was really an entrepreneurial exploit where I would sell frozen food products in Buckinghamshire. I recruited other students to join and work with me raising significant cash that facilitated my move to Canada.

In Canada, I ran the university

consulting service, literally as an entrepreneurial venture, and this, together with other work, helped fund my university studies in Canada. I made so much money that I was able to leave a significant sum which created the Adam Molai Small Business Consulting scholarship where the proceeds from this sum are given as a scholarship annually to a deserving student at my former alma mater.

When I returned to Zimbabwe after completing my studies, I knew I didn't want to work for anybody else.

My first business, whose infrastructure I had started constructing whilst still in university in Canada, was a chicken business of 7,000 broiler chickens. I brought solar equipment with me from Canada, and this facilitated 24-hour feeding of our chickens facilitating faster development of the chickens. There was no power in the area and thus the utilization of solar power with a storage inverter, in 1997, was quite an evolution.

I then re-opened my late father's service station and supermarket, whilst at the same time also creating a stationery shop and copy bureau in my home time. So, within my first year of being back in Zimbabwe from the diaspora I was running four

businesses.

These businesses spanned a significant distance and so my first two years were highly sleep-deficient. I would start my early Monday morning in my hometown, drive to Harare to order supplies for the retail outlets and chemicals for the chicken business; a 150km return journey to my hometown where the stationery business and supermarket were, ensure the goods were priced and then at the closure of the stationery shop after

5pm start the 140km drive to where my service station was. I would then collect the cash takings, use them to buy more grain from the local farmers and maize grinding mills, which we would use to mix with the stock feed, and then drive another 180km to the farm where we were farming chickens. I would monitor the slaughtering, dressing, and packing of the chickens and by 2am start the drive back to my hometown which from the farm was 230km.

I would sleep on this third journey back to my hometown and get back in time to start another day. Without fail, by 7am I would be back at my stationery store where my main office was. This, routine I continued for a full two years.

I then got the opportunity to acquire the largest service station site in my hometown. I quickly converted what was the office and former car show room into the first 24/7 retail shop in Zimbabwe, taking a cue from the 7/11 concept I had been exposed to in Canada.

The move, which drew criticism from my own family and other businesspeople, led me achieve more than double the shop's takings, transforming the retail landscape in Zimbabwe. Sixty percent of the retail sales happened in the hours

when all the other shops were closed. To crown it off, which irresponsibility I didn't understand then, we managed to get a liquor license for this shop and used to be the only 24/7 liquor retailer in the country, which resulted in inordinate sales. Within a year a 60 square metre shop was making more than US\$1 million! That was the first million I made, at the age of 29.

Another transformation I undertook was transforming the chicken retail sector in Zimbabwe. When I grew up working in my father's shop, only whole chickens and in some cases half chickens were generally sold in Zimbabwe. You could buy beef and pork in small and as-you-desired and as-you-could-afford portions, but not chicken. I didn't understand why that was, so I started selling chicken pieces, not just whole chickens. That transformed the chicken retail sector and demand rose beyond our projections.

I also did some dealings in the petroleum sector before turning my attention to the tobacco sector. Zimbabwe experienced significant fuel shortages and I was fortunate to receive permission from Shell, the franchisor, to direct import own fuel. Fuel had always been a controlled product only available from oil companies through the government monopoly. However, when shortages became severe fuel companies and private individuals could direct import. Through an old high school acquaintance, who was importing fuel, I was able to receive multiple tankers a week of direct import fuel. Our site never ran dry, and we were selling over a million litres of fuel a month and still couldn't meet demand. Cars would drive from neighboring towns to fill up as we were receiving fuel non-stop!

I had also, with support of very experienced tobacco skills we had on board, pioneered contract growing of tobacco that transformed the tobacco industry from around 4 500 mainly commercial farmers and opened the



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INSPIRE AFRICA'S
ENTREPRENEURS

So impressive was the quality of the projects from the entrepreneurs that we felt compelled to increase the fund from the original \$1m announced to \$2m, says Adam Molai on the JUA Fund.

way for more than 85 000 local small-scale farmers to enter Zimbabwe's tobacco sector.

In 2002, I co-founded Savanna Tobacco Company, which has now been rebranded as Pacific Cigarette Company, which is acknowledged as one of only two of the world's most significant African-owned cigarette manufacturers. The company enjoys a significant share of the Southern African cigarette market.

Our business interests cut across several industries – including energy, manufacturing, property development, transport and logistics, air transport, financial services and beverage bottling – and at least seven African countries, including the African economic powerhouses of Nigeria, South Africa and Mauritius. However, we are now streamlining our portfolio to focus only upon manufacturing and distribution, property development and sales, and technology.

Our business now has over US\$200 million of assets under control.

In November 2020, we also launched the \$2 million JUA Fund, making it the largest venture capital fund by a private African business individual to empower and support African entrepreneurs.

Today you are Chairman of the Pacific Cigarette Company and the TRT Investments, can you tell us a little more about this companies and how they fit in the vision that you have for

Africa?

TRT Investments manages a diversified sector portfolio and operations in Nigeria, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mozambique and Botswana, and our latest interests have seen a foray into the US and European markets.

The aim is really to play our role in moving Africa from being on the menu to sitting at the global economic table. We believe this will only be achieved through production and productivity. So, we are aiming at driving the industrialization agenda for Africa.

TRT recently acquired, which is the largest non-food contract manufacturing business on the continent. It manufactures many leading multinational household FMCG brands. We aim to replicate this model into East and West Africa to create the largest non-food contract manufacturer in the world.

So, our ambitions are big, and we are committed to creating African institutions, with global recognition.

With the AfFCTA, we aim to leverage this opportunity to ensure localization of production on the Continent where currently there is only 18% inter-Africa trade compared to 80% Inter-Europe trade. So, just by trading more with ourselves as Africans we can grow our economies and create the much-needed employment for our young population.

Our other area of focus is housing. With the significant housing supply

gap on the continent, and the growing population which is urbanizing at a rapid rate, it is imperative that affordable housing is availed to ensure that we help move from the squalid urban living conditions of the past.

Our final area of focus is technology.

Technology offers Africa the opportunity to leapfrog. It facilitates more efficacious and elegant solutions to Africa's myriad challenges.

Pacific was born out of the industrialization agenda and fits into the TRT agenda.

Having always lamented Africa's over-reliance on agriculture for survival, I felt we needed to walk our talk and beneficiate this agricultural produce into finished goods and thus participate at a higher level of the value chain. Zimbabwe's main agricultural export has been tobacco for a long time and therefore we took it upon ourselves to add value to this crop. There is a 15 to 20 times value multiplier from raw tobacco to cigarettes and that is what we have achieved in Pacific. So, the jobs and value which we were exporting in exporting raw tobacco, we are now retaining through producing finished goods. If we look at the \$600 million of raw tobacco produced in Zimbabwe, if all transformed to cigarettes, Zimbabwe would have a \$6-\$12 billion tobacco industry.

For the attention of many out there who see in you a success story, what were some of the big challenges you face in building your companies and how did you successfully navigate them?

Success, to me, is a journey rather than a destination. It is a culmination of many failures and continuing to find different paths where one path has failed. Funding is always a challenge. I remember using \$75,000 of my university entrepreneurial savings to start a small chicken business after university because I couldn't get funding from the banks to augment this capital raise.

The challenge of raising money for my first business or to buy factory equipment, the challenges felt the same, and had the same ultimate impact – no funding – no business. We've mitigated fund raising challenges through performance. When you perform and develop a track record for performing, paying, and meeting your debt covenants, it becomes a bit easier to raise funding.

Another significant challenge faced was the dearth of African entrepreneurs available and willing to offer mentorship to others on their entrepreneurial journey. I failed to find takers, amongst those I approached, as unfortunately many in our society still see other people's success as a threat to their success and attention.

So, the only option available became to be an avid reader, always reading both success and failure books as a way to understand.

You have been on a crusade for industrialization and entrepreneurship in what shape is Africa in now, and why do you think it is imperative for the continent to change course?

Africa is in a very poor state in as far as industrialization is concerned. We are still significant importers of finished goods and exporters of raw materials.

In 2018, Sub-Saharan Africa raw material exports amounted to \$148 billion or 52% of total exports. That is a strong case for industrialization to convert a significant portion of our raw materials into intermediate goods or finished products, creating jobs and increasing the value of our GDP.

China has become the global behemoth owing to industrialization. Thirty years ago, China was where we are today as a continent but has transformed from a developing nation to being at the cusp of being the largest global economy through a deliberate policy of industrialization.

Unless we industrialize, we will



Adam Molai says opportunities for the continent are immense, but leaders will need to develop confidence in the ability of African entrepreneurs and stop seeing them as inferior to foreign entrepreneurs.

fail to unleash the latent potential presented by our abundant resources and youthful population. This youthful population can either be our greatest asset if we leverage it, or our biggest threat if they become restive owing to lack of opportunity.

Late last year you launched the Jua Kickstarter fund to provide entrepreneurs with capital to kickstart or expand their enterprises, may we know what impact you anticipate for Africa for this initiative?

Lao Tzu is famously credited with the saying that "The journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step". The launch and subsequent Jua Olympic week are the start of a movement which I hope will sweep Africa. It is only but a ripple, given the enormous needs on the continent, but we are seeing the impact it is having on encouraging other business leaders to also start looking at how they too can assist entrepreneurs on the continent. Our hope is that this becomes a culture on our continent of entrepreneurs giving back through facilitating the creation of more entrepreneurs, creating a snowball effect. The quality of the finalists as well as the solutions being proffered by the businesses we have decided to invest in give us great confidence that there will be significant impact that will emanate from this initiative.

It was always the intention that the fund would go beyond providing money. Entrepreneurs always need money, that is not in question. But

they don't only need money. They also need mentoring, advice, access to networks, access to markets, people to stress test their ideas, advisors and mentors who can help them see the realities and potential of their businesses.

That is what Jua will provide.

Jirogasy and Bryt-Knowledge will be furthering education one through hardware the other through software, Side and Grow Agric, are disrupting the value chain of goods from farm to table, Powerstove Energy is saving the environment by their cooking stove innovation, Whispa Health is taking care of wellbeing, and Xetova is adding African flair to procurement.

Less than a year after it was launched, the first recipients were announced, may we know how the selection was done and your overall impressions on the applications and the eventual winners?

We had over 700 applicants who were shortlisted to 25 finalists, who met the criteria that their ideas had impact and were scalable.

The 25 finalists participated in the "Kickstarter Olympics", a 5-day pitching session during which they were put through their paces by a high-profile panel of judges.

Eventually, we made offers to 7 recipients who all accepted.

We were immensely impressed by all our finalists, even those to whom offers were not made.

So impressive was the quality of the projects from the entrepreneurs that

we felt compelled to increase the fund from the original \$1m announced to \$2m.

About four of the seven enterprises selected have either female founders or co-founders, what role do you see gender or women playing in the vision that you articulate?

Research is clear that empowering women has more impact on societies and communities than empowering men. I am delighted that the Jua Fund, which is aimed at empowering all entrepreneurs, regardless of gender, has been able to benefit females to the extent that it has.

What metrics and support system does the JUA Fund have in place to monitor the outcomes or progress of recipients?

As I indicated, Jua is not only providing monetary support but non-monetary support in the form of mentoring and advice, introductions to other potential investors and funders. Where applicable, we will sit on the boards.

The phenomenal experience of the JUA judges, who have kindly accepted to offer mentorship and coaching, will serve to really help the entrepreneurs unleash their potential.

Through well-established Key Performance Indicators, designed to facilitate milestone-based release of capital, we hope to see better resource utilization and less of the unintended waste of resources that culminates from non-results-based funding mechanisms.

The Jury had some powerful names in the African corporate world, how challenging was it to get these high profile and busy people to dedicate the required time in the selection process?

It wasn't challenging at all because all the judges share our vision of the importance of entrepreneurship for ensuring that Africa gets to assume its rightful place at the economic

table, and they all wanted to do their bit to pass on the knowledge they have gained as entrepreneurs or in business to these emerging entrepreneurs.

They were so keen that at times we had more judges than we anticipated and needed. We had judges from across the globe, some of whom woke up at 3am daily to listen to the pitches.

As you may be aware, most start-ups / SMMES fail within the first two years, for a myriad of reasons. The judges who participated are aware of the challenges and want to do their bit to reduce this number.

The applicants certainly appreciated it; many commented on how the judges' questions and insight had helped them rethink parts of their business.

What next for the Jua Fund, there are many young entrepreneurs out there who would love to try their hand in the next round, what are the plans going forward?

What's next is just to keep growing and to support more SMMES. We will hopefully have more money to avail in the future and we can structure the non-monetary assistance better as well.

We have learned a lot from this inaugural VC round, and we intend to build on that going forward so that it has much greater impact.

Our hope is that the success of the initial projects will, as we exit, create an even larger pool of funds to support even more entrepreneurs, creating a snowball effect. We have invested \$2 million, if they perform and this spawns \$20 million on exit, as an example, we then invest \$20-million to spawn \$200-million and this multiplier effect is what we seek and what we believe will facilitate our dream of empowering thousands of entrepreneurs.

In terms of recommendations to African governments, what needs to be done by



Adam Molai is hopeful that the JUA Fund will start a movement which will sweep across Africa.

them to create the enabling environment for brilliant ideas and initiatives that millions of Africans have to thrive?

Well, entrepreneurs need the right regulatory environment to grow so all governments need to scrutinize the laws, rules and regulations that they have in place to see whether they help or hinder entrepreneurial activity.

Governments also need to realise that they cannot grow economies and create jobs, that that is the ambit of business and they need to ensure that the business environment is conducive to that. So, the economy and entrepreneurs are not dependent on who is in government, but rather that there is policy certainty and that their markets are open to all. If our governments truly embrace the intentions of the AfCFTA, we will see a significant explosion of economies on the continent.

We also need to relook at our education systems which are largely not suited to nurturing entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial activity.

We also need to encourage local investment. African governments bend over backwards for foreign investors but do not do the same for local investors which means that local investors must deal with an unequal playing field.

What is your take on foreign direct investment and what role do you see the African diaspora playing in the development of the continent?

I think all investment is good.

Africa lags in terms of investment so the more people who want to invest, the better.

But I do think that governments elevate foreign investment above that of local investment and I think that this is to the detriment of the continent. The reality is that if locals show confidence and invest, foreigners will invest alongside them. So what we should be doing is giving local investors the same benefits that we give foreign investors, we should be levelling the playing fields for local investors as they have more impact on the lives of Africans. They not only invest their money on the Continent, but they spend their money on the Continent too. This provides jobs for others and opportunities for other Africans.

I think the diaspora can be used more meaningfully than it is now. We know that remittances contribute \$48-billion or an average 4.17% of Africa's GDP but we should be looking at how to make better use of the resources of Africans in the diaspora.

Instead of saving their money in low-interest bearing accounts, we should look at getting them to invest in local start-ups and enterprises. In that way entrepreneurs have access to money and the diasporans get better returns whilst positively impacting their home countries to develop.

Looking at the realities today, the challenges, and the potential, what are your hopes and fears for Africa's future?

Africa is at a major crossroad. With

a growing young population, if Africa continues to grow at its current rate, it is expected to double to 2.5 billion people; a quarter of the world's population; by 2050. All these people need food, clothing, transport, housing and many other goods and services.

China's growth was driven by a large population, creating significant consumption and ability to grow the economy phenomenally through the goods and services required by such a large population.

We dare not fail to rise to the occasion and create the businesses that will produce and provide all the goods and services that will be required by the continent. We certainly cannot afford to create a market for the rest of the world at our own expense. This is going to require significant unity and coordination across the continent to be realized.


China could easily achieve this growth because it is a unitary state. With 54 states, Africa will need significant regional and continental integration and harmonization to facilitate the remarkable infrastructural projects required to cater for such a huge population which is urbanising significantly.

So, the opportunities for the continent are immense, the challenges will really be from our own belief in ourselves to achieve for ourselves. Our leaders will need to develop confidence in the ability of African entrepreneurs and stop seeing our own entrepreneurs as inferior to foreign entrepreneurs.

Our people will need to also develop an appetite for local goods as opposed to foreign goods and our businesspeople will need to ensure that at all levels, our goods meet the exacting global standards for quality. Changing mindsets is a difficult process, as is establishing regional and continental trust; however, if accomplished, Africa could become the global powerhouse it has the potential to be.

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OUR ENERGY FORUM SPONSORS – THROUGHOUT THE YEARS



Connecting Farmers To Working Capital Through GrowAgric

Founded by Ore Alemede from Nigeria and David Njonjo from Kenya, GrowAgric is a crowd-farming platform that connects farmers to much-needed working capital allowing them to scale and meet market demand while delivering profitability to themselves and their sponsors.

“Our experience in our different countries is a key strength as we are able to explore what has worked or not worked and bring together the best of both worlds to provide a solid offering and add significant values to our farmers, says Co-founder Ore Alemede.

May we start by getting an introduction of your company GrowAgric and how it was conceived?

GrowAgric is a crowd-funding platform that connects farmers to much-needed working capital allowing them to scale and meet market demand while generating profits for themselves and their farm sponsors.

We solve a crucial problem for farmers who have skill, existing demand, and the capacity to scale but lack the working capital required to do so. For these farmers we provide finances and also connect them to buyers with whom we have pre-agreed buying arrangement at a fair market price.

The idea for GrowAgric was conceived by David and me on an incubator programme where we were individually exploring ideas in our areas of passion. Given our background, we both quickly converged on an area of passion, agriculture. The more we talked about it the more we realized how aligned our vision was for transforming the agricultural sector.

You and the co-founder are from separate countries, and others may learn from your experience, how did you two blend the ideas and vision to form the kind of synergy



GrowAgric founders Ore Alemede from Nigeria and David Njonjo from Kenya are opening up fresh opportunities for farmers.

that is bringing success for GrowAgric?

Yes, I am Nigerian, and David is Kenyan, but the key challenges faced by African farmers across the continent are mostly the same – access to finance, absence of a guaranteed market, low prices driven by the high number of middlemen in the value chain, and lack of access to wider market. We could both relate to these problems as David has been a farmer for over 10 years and I discuss these challenges on a daily basis with my parents who are also farmers. This made it natural for us to converge and get really excited about solving these problems.

Our experience in our different countries is a key strength as we are able to explore what has worked or not worked in our respective countries and bring together the best of both worlds to provide a solid offering and add significant values to our farmers.

We decided to start by addressing the financing gap which tends to be the root of the problem. In Africa, a sizeable proportion of the workforce are in agriculture, yet only a small fraction of bank lending goes to

agriculture.

In what part of the continent do you have strong operations and for those interested in your services, how can they access or make use of opportunities offered by GrowAgric?

We are currently based in Kenya and work with farmers in and around Nairobi. However, we have recently started to explore ways to service farmers across the whole of Kenya.

Interested individuals and institutions can view available farm projects on our website <https://growagric.com/>, request a sponsorship contract and get started on sponsoring farm projects. We provide regular updates on farm progress and are happy to organize visits to sponsored farms. We currently have a huge database of farmers in need of financing, and we are more than happy to discuss private sponsorship of large-scale farming projects with interested parties.

Interested farmers who are in need of funding and a market-based safety net should also register on our

website and will be contacted by one of our field officers.

What are some of the challenges that you have faced?

It has been a very interesting journey for us. There are a host of challenges faced by organisations like ours, but a key one is the lack of reliable data to support agricultural lending decisions. We tackle this challenge through partnerships – partnerships with farmer groups, aggregators and various institutions across the value chain. We use data from all of these sources to support lending decisions.

By continuously combining this data with data collected from our own farming projects, we are actively building a strong database that will support credit decisions and deliver value to a wider population of farmers.

GrowAgric was one of the big recipients of the inaugural Jua Fund, how did you receive the news and what does this mean for you going forward?

We were very excited to have been

one of the recipients of the Jua fund. The experience was very invigorating.

In spite of the rigour of the process, one thing that stood out for us was that we were evaluated by a supportive panel of judges who were keen for us to succeed.

The Jua Fund provides us with an opportunity to improve the functionalities of our platform, achieve operational efficiency, strengthen our product offering while improving our farmers network by over 60%. Even more important is the support and advice that Jua team provides which we started to experience from the first day of the Jua Kickstarter Olympics.

How competitive was the application process and what are some of the lessons you learned along the way?

It was a very competitive process, starting out with 700+ applicants and only 25 shortlisted for the final 5 days. The Jua Kickstarter Olympics really did feel like an Olympics and the format meant we had to be very well-prepared from the start as we got less than 24 hours' notice that we had qualified for the next phase of the assessment.

David and I learned so much during the process, we learnt to ask ourselves the tough questions before someone else did. Also, it's not just enough to have a great product or service



Our experience in our different countries is a key strength as we are able to explore what has worked or not worked and bring together the best of both worlds ,says Ore Alemede.

offering but it is equally important to be able to sell the vision to would-be investors.

How important are initiatives like the Jua Fund in helping dynamic young entrepreneurs live their potential?

Initiatives such as the Jua Fund are the future of Africa. It is common

knowledge that it is often very difficult for African entrepreneurs to access the funding they need to launch, grow and scale their businesses. While considerably progress has been made in the last couple of years, much is still to be done as Africa is booming with potential and opportunities.

The Jua Fund is not just a fund, it is also a partnership that provides

coaching and mentoring to investees.

GrowAgric is less than a year old, what other successes can you share with us from the experience so far and where do you see the venture in the next two and in the next five years?

As an early-stage startup, we have experienced so much traction in so little time. We have been able to secure sponsorships and commitment from investors across multiple countries, mainly in Europe and North America but also in Africa. We have successfully completed multiple farming cycles and built a network of farmers going through our onboarding process and who need over \$400,000 in finance.

In spite of all this, we have a long way to go. We want to be recognised as the partner of choice for farmers not just in East Africa but across the Continent. We want to enrich the lives of our farmers, connect them to a wider market to trade, and help them with record-keeping which has a direct impact on financial management and sustenance. We are actively building our record-keeping and financial management tool to deliver on certain aspects of our value proposition to farmers before the end of the year.

We are 'Farmers First', and that drives everything we do now and our hopes and aspiration for the future. —





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A Dependable Supplier of Digital and Solar Solutions in Jirogasy

Founded by Yann Kasay, and based in Madagascar, Jirogasy manufactures, assembles and designs solar home systems and communication systems for solar. In 2019, it invented a solar-powered computer that it is currently improving for a 2nd version.

"This selection is one of the most important milestones achieved for our project. It shows that our project has gained the attention of some of the most influential business personalities in Africa," says Yann Kasay.

What motivated the creation of Jirogasy?

The main reason for the creation of Jirogasy was to prove that we could innovate in Africa and we could manufacture locally without importing all the parts. The growth of the open hardware ecosystem and the "Do It Yourself" movement for the past 10 years had been a source of inspiration. When I saw that some DIY makers like Joseph Prusa started with nothing and could manufacture its 3D printers in Czech Republic to become one of the largest suppliers of 3D printers in the world in 4-5 years, I thought that we could do the same in Africa and in my country, Madagascar.

However, I wanted to have an impact and I thought there were more useful products than 3D printers to produce for my country and Africa. That's why I decided to produce my own solar kits to begin with and later on we invented a solar powered computer that is one of the few solutions that exist which can give full access to a digital desktop in Africa.

What are the advantages solar presents in Madagascar and what potential do see?

Madagascar has about 360 sunny days per year. When looking at this statistic and the fact that 19 million people don't have a reliable access to energy, creating a production



Our short-term plan is to become a supplier of digital and solar solutions in multiple countries, says Jirogasy founder Yann Kasay.

line of solar products and IoT-based solutions to solve problems around the theme of energy access appeared to be the way to go. We wanted to come up with African solutions for African problems since we believe some of the solutions to African structural problems can be solved by locals for the locals.

May we know the progress Jirogasy has made since its creation, how many people are you serving and how profitable has business been for you?

We sold our devices to NGOs in order to have greater impact from day one. The goal was to reach the maximum of beneficiaries from day 1. By the end of 2019, our devices are present in five regions of Madagascar and we have equipped 20 medical clinics and six high schools. We have also provided access to energy and digital to associations aiming to improve education or rehabilitate vulnerable children.

We will now aim our efforts toward larger distribution to offer our products to the consumer and retail markets.

What are some of the major challenges that you have faced and is there anything the government has done to support you or create a better environment for you to operate in?

We started with limited means and tools to produce our first generation of products back in 2018 and we couldn't afford to hire a salesperson since all our money went into the product design and the production of the first batches of our solar kits. It was very challenging to convince our first clients to trust us and to generate the first couple of sales. However, some NGO and associations helped us at first by purchasing our products and we cannot express our thanks enough for the trust they gave us 2 years ago.

Of course, we would like to keep pursuing our goal to make universal access to energy and digital a reality in Madagascar by working on a larger scale with a larger distribution as already mentioned, but also with some help from additional public and private institutions.

We would also be pleased to receive some extra help from the government.

Does Jirogasy have plans to eventually serve other neighboring countries or the intent is to remain just in Madagascar?

One of our goals in 2021 is to open an office in East Africa before the end of the year. We are of course discussing the matter with potential partners and investors. Our ambition remains to create African solutions for African problems and an expansion on the Continent has always been part of the plan.

Jirogasy recently scored a big win with its selection as one of the recipients of the inaugural Jua Fund how was this news received?

This selection is one of the most important milestones achieved for our project. It shows that our project has gained the attention of some of the most influential business personalities in Africa.

I was particularly thrilled to receive feedback and advice from Adam Molai in person among other very important personalities that were part of the judging panel. This kind of interaction with experts, successful entrepreneurs and investors helps build confidence and keeps us pushing toward our goals and global vision.

How did you hear about the Fund and what pushed you to apply?

I heard of it online and thought it was a great idea and a great opportunity for us to challenge our ideas and



vision. I really like the concept and I wish more funds would organize this kind of event. It can boost the African entrepreneurial ecosystem and help to build connections between experienced businesspeople and young entrepreneurs.

With the support you are going

to get from the Jua Fund, what will change for Jirogasy?

We have already started to change the scale of our project - Jirogasy now has 15 fulltime employees in Madagascar. With the help of the Jua Fund, we hope now to double the size of our team before the end of the year, significantly developing our



sales team domestically and hopefully opening a new office in east Africa by the end of the year.

On the future of Jirogasy, what short-, medium- and long-term plans and vision do you have?

Our short-term plan is to become a supplier of digital and solar

solutions in multiple countries while longer term we hope to diversify and offer services that are related to the know-how we are currently building, especially in the field of data gathering and analysis in remote areas which could help a lot of other projects in Africa to have an impact on the development of Africa. —

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Affordable Technology For Quality Education with Bryt-Knowledge

With its current operational base in Zimbabwe, Bryt-Knowledge is a multifaceted online educational platform that connects students with subject matter experts using technology.

"We believe that the future of knowledge-sharing will be online, and we are helping Zimbabwean students (and students in our future growth markets) to gain access to knowledge from top tutors. Most importantly though, we believe that Bryt-Knowledge's key impact will be creating a pan African jobs marketplace where people who are skilled (yet unemployed or under-employed) can be paid to share their knowledge, says founder and CEO, Rumbidzai Sithole



We believe that the future of knowledge sharing will be online, says co founder and CEO, Rumbidzai Sithole.

Rumbidzai Sithole, is founder and CEO Bryt-Knowledge of Zimbabwe, when was your company created and what does it do?

When the pandemic started, we all found it difficult to find high-quality online tutors for our children. While there are numerous online tutoring platforms across the world, we found that across Africa, most tutoring services were in-person and required committing upfront to a set of lessons. In addition, most ed-tech solutions were pre-packaged and not interactive. We set out to build a flexible, easy, on-demand platform for knowledge-sharing.

In countries where the BRYT APP and BRYT Web platform is available, students can request a 1-1 personalized lesson with a tutor on any subject matter, within their own set budget, and a time convenient for them. Tutors are pre-vetted and also get to set their rate in a bidding system.

How affordable are

your services and how have Zimbabweans received it?

Our platforms are a marketplace for tutors, and they bid at will. So, prices can vary across tutors based on the strength of their profile (credentials and ratings) and demand for a particular tutor. We are planning on launching our operations at the end of April and will be able to give an account then of how the market has

received our products.

In what ways do you think your services could change the educational landscape in Zimbabwe?

We believe that the future of knowledge-sharing will be online, and we are helping Zimbabwean students (and students in our future growth markets) to gain access to

knowledge from top tutors. Most importantly though, we believe that Bryt-Knowledge's key impact will be creating a pan African jobs marketplace where people who are skilled (yet unemployed or under-employed) can be paid to share their knowledge. We also envision a situation where knowledge-seekers in any of our target markets will have access to the full range of tutors across countries. We envision a future where Africans will be trading in knowledge, through Bryt.

What are some the challenges that you have had to grapple with putting in trying to grow Bryt-Knowledge?

Similar to other early-stage entrepreneurs, the biggest challenge we faced is in building a team. As a start-up, our budget is lean, but we also need to hire a team that is versatile and highly talented (which is a contradiction as the best talent comes at a high cost). We are however very pleased with the incredibly talented team that we have managed to build.

Bryt-Knowledge was recently selected as one of the recipients of the Jua Fund, how helpful will this be to vision of the company?

Prior to entering the Jua Kickstarter Fund, we had contacted a number of Africa-focused venture capital firms with little luck. Most were US-based, had automated responses that stated that they only consider funding applications from entrepreneurs recommended by individuals within their network. What quickly became apparent is that for most African early-stage entrepreneurs, there is very little chance of raising capital without these networks. The Jua



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Kickstarter gave us a chance to implement our business, an opportunity that we believe we would not have gotten elsewhere.

How challenging was the selection process and what are some of the things you have learned along the way to help with the progress and sustainability of Bryt-Knowledge?

The Kickstarter process was quite challenging, but extremely helpful in helping us hone our business idea and how we communicated about it. In addition to the very detailed application that we submitted, we had to prepare pitch documents for each of the five days of the competition. Each day had a different theme, which allowed us to think critically about each aspect of our business. The highly thoughtful questions from the judges provided key insights into areas that needed our attention. We are also grateful



Jua is a great demonstration of what can happen when African entrepreneurs are given a chance, says Rumbidzai Sithole.

that the Jua team will continue to play a support and advisory role as we launch our operations.

What role do you see entrepreneurship playing in the development of Zimbabwe and Africa?

The co-founders of Bryt-Knowledge all have prior extensive experience in operational roles at pan African (and African owned) businesses. We have all seen the unique impact that African-owned and African-run businesses have not only in terms of generating income but also in

understanding the unique challenges and opportunities that the continent provides. Our ambitions are pan-African so that we can also make our unique contribution.

A word to Mr. Adam Molai who initiated the Jua Fund, what is it you can do to ensure that he feels vindicated in the support and believe he has in Bryt-Knowledge and other similar projects?

We are so grateful to Mr. Molai and the whole Jua team for the support not only to our organisation but to the other companies in our cohort. The high quality of the shortlisted companies and the impact that they aim to make beyond profit is heartening. Jua is a great demonstration of what can happen when African entrepreneurs are given a chance – we believe that this is truly the start of a revolution in African early-stage financing.

Nonjudgmental Access To Sexual & Reproductive Health with Whispa

From Whispa Health Limited in Nigeria comes the mobile app Whispa that provides people with nonjudgmental access to sexual and reproductive health information, products and services.

“In Nigeria, one out of every 5 women has given birth by age 18 and the use of contraceptives remains very low. There were 3.4 million unintended pregnancies and 2.7 million abortions in 2019. Furthermore, although Nigeria has one of the highest rates of new HIV infection in sub-Saharan Africa, rates of HIV testing remain low and many people living with HIV are unaware of their status, our goal is to change the status quo,” says CEO Morenike Fajemisin

What is the Whispa Health mobile app and how was the



Personal and professional experiences with challenges young people face when trying to access sexual and reproductive healthcare led to the conception of Whispa Health mobile app by CEO Morenike Fajemisin

idea conceived?

WHISPA is a mobile application that allows everyone (especially young people) to conveniently access Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) education, information, products and services. Our users can have private (even anonymous) chats with a WHISPA doctor, book appointments for contraceptives, cervical cancer screening or laboratory tests. They can also privately purchase sexual health products like HIV test kits, condoms and we discreetly deliver to their homes/offices.

The idea was conceived by our CEO, Morenike Fajemisin, as a result of her personal and professional experiences with the challenges young people face when trying to access sexual and reproductive healthcare.



Adeboye Fajemisin

May we know how many users that you currently have and the feedback you have received from the public about the app?

We have over 16,000 users

Talking of sexual and reproductive health, what is the situation like in Nigeria?

In Nigeria, one out of every 5 women has given birth by age 18 and the use of contraceptives remains very low. There were 3.4 million unintended pregnancies and 2.7 million abortions in 2019. Furthermore, although Nigeria has one of the highest rates of new HIV infection in sub-Saharan Africa, rates of HIV testing remain low and many people living with HIV are unaware of their status.

These problems are brought about and worsened by our society's cultural and religious biases and the lack of shame-free and confidential access to quality sexual and reproductive health information, products and services for young people (especially those who are unmarried). Our goal is to change this status quo.

What are some of the challenges

you have encountered in the course of trying to grow the App and your company?

We encountered some typical challenges that start-ups face, like raising our initial capital to build our product, hiring good hands and finding a team that was willing to buy into our vision at such an early stage.

As we began to grow, we needed to manage our funding properly in order to give us ample runway until more funding was secured and we are proud of everyone that has started this journey with us.

Your company Whispa Health Limited was recently selected amongst the recipients of the inaugural \$2 million JUA Fund, how was this news received?

Our team was excited and ecstatic and some of them were also on the private zoom call to receive the news along with WHISPA's founders. We wanted them to hear from Adam Molai and the judges and to appreciate the validation of the work we have all put in.

How did you find the application process and what are some the things you learned in the process?

We found JUA's process to be unique and efficient. They were very detailed and thorough and also able to understand that some businesses like ours are just starting while some have many years under their belt.

The best part though was the Olympics. Each day was focused and detailed. As much as we were the one's competing, we also learnt a lot from the judges.

What impact do you see support from the JUA Fund having on your vision and operations?

The JUA Fund is critical to our growth plan and achieving our target of 200,000+ downloads in 12 months. We also expect it to help us with recruitment and retention of key personnel that are needed as we grow and scale our innovation.

Any plans or thoughts about eventually expanding the Whispa Health Mobile App to other parts of Africa?

Certainly. Our vision is to become the number 1 solution provider for Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare in Africa because African countries have similar challenges when it comes to accessing sexual and reproductive healthcare. Therefore, we see Nigeria as our launchpad for WHISPA with goals to expand to neighboring Ghana and then all over Africa.

Based on the experiences you have acquired, what words of advice do you for other aspiring young entrepreneurs out there?

Find a business you have passion for, think of an innovative way to carry it out, then make a plan to do it. Depending on your background and available financial support, it is not going to be easy, but if you want it hard enough, stay on course and do not give up.

Adding Flair To Procurement With Xetova

From Kenya, Xetova, a technology solutions provider is reshaping the procurement ecosystem. Xetova is providing big buyers with solutions to be more efficient, better collaborate with suppliers, deliver more value and be more inclusive of local industry.

“By facilitating this level of real-time data and process collaboration, our tech assists 40% more SMEs in the procurement marketplace to access finance they need to fulfil their purchase orders or contracts,” says founder and CEO Bramuel Mwalo.

Could you start by introducing Xetova and the logic behind its creation?

We believe that the procurement marketplace is the largest trade opportunity provider on the continent. A big challenge to access and reap success from these opportunities, is the access to capital, hence the idea to set up the Xetova marketplace.

What is the value that could be added to business in Kenya if they use your services?

The marketplace is a tool that can be used to enhance their competitive edge. We are not inventing a new transaction instrument for SME financing.

What we have done is provide tools that allow secure data collection, seamless data sharing and processing of relevant insights to enhance the current traditional access to trade finance. By facilitating this level of real-time data and process collaboration, our tech assists 40% more SMEs in the procurement marketplace to access finance they need to fulfil their purchase orders or contracts.

Since its creation what are some of the success stories you have registered and what are the challenges you have faced?



We have tested the marketplace, have gotten very promising results and currently preparing to scale, says founder and CEO Bramuel Mwalo.

We have tested the marketplace, have gotten very promising results and currently preparing to scale.

Banks have shown considerable interest in taking it up to deploy in their already existing ecosystem.

Banks are uniquely placed as they already have buyers and suppliers as clients. ABSA Bank Kenya PLC, National Bank of Kenya and Momentum Credit are our clients. We have run successful pilots and are currently going through the process of scaling the environment they need to better identify and support performing suppliers.

What is the client base like at

the moment for Xetova and any plans to eventually expand it to other parts of East Africa and beyond?

ABSA Bank Kenya PLC, National Bank of Kenya and Momentum Credit are among our clients. And we definitely plan to expand our footprint.

May we get your impressions after the recent selection of Xetova as one of the recipients of the inaugural Jua Fund?

We remain appreciative and encouraged by the deal we have closed with Jua Fund. This was very timely and something we would not easily

have gotten elsewhere especially for our type of company as a fully owned African company from the current VC space.

How are things going to change for Xetova with this selection, what impact will this selection have on your vision and operations?

With what we know so far, the Jua team is likely to bring the resource, network and experience we need to scale across the Continent. We can only look ahead and prepare to fly.

What role do you entrepreneurs like yourself and others playing in the development of Kenya and Africa and how important is it to have more initiatives like the Jua Fund?

Development is simply a bunch of ideas, and resources working together. Entrepreneurs are important in this as either they are good at seeing the opportunities, bringing people together or taking the risk in using their own resources to kickstart something they believe is important. They are important in building the confidence and providing the evidence to stimulate support from government, corporates, and other development actors. Entrepreneurs are the backbone of Africa's development and solution to Africa's most difficult problems.

To young Africans who see in you now an example to follow in their entrepreneurial journey, what words of wisdom or success tips can you share with them?

Entrepreneurship is not a sprint. It is also not a competition, so set your own clock and you have all the time to grow. Take your time to learn as much as you can, seek counsel from those you can access, start from where you are and be kind to yourself. It all works out in the end for those who genuinely follow their path.



The Jua Fund was very timely and something we would not easily have gotten elsewhere especially for our type of company as a fully owned African company from the current VC space, says Bramuel Mwalo.

Billions at Play

The Future of African Energy and Doing Deals

by NJ AYUK



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Ecofriendly Cooking With Powerstove Energy

By Ishmael Koroma

Founded by Okey Esse, Powerstove Energy in Nigeria uses advance technology to deliver a superior smokeless, IoT enabled cookstove that generates electricity.

“What we are doing in Africa has never been done by an African. All the major clean cookstove companies in Africa, from Kenya, Uganda, Lesotho, and Nigeria are not founded by Africans. So, when we started, we knew what the barriers and challenges were, and we were prepared to face that battle head-on,” says Okey Esse.

As of late March, Esse said the company had 111,201 paid orders, 99,822 shipped, and 102,060 users with 98% active monthly users.

“The Jua Fund will help us increase local production capacity to 12,000 units of stove and 100MT Wood Pellets monthly, plus expand to new markets in West and East Africa,” Esse said.

Could you start by telling us about Powerstove Energy and how it was conceived?

I started Powerstove out of personal childhood experience. As a child who grew up in a village without access to electricity till age 16, cooking with firewood was my worse moments (thick smoke, unbearable heat and uncontrollable fires). Unknown to me,



Okey Esse successfully designed and developed Powerstove, a Tier 4 clean cookstove that is smokeless and super efficient.

the incessant coughs we experienced were a result of firewood smoke and that memory haunted me growing up.

So, while growing up, I was overwhelmed by how inefficient cooking and lack of electricity has been the twin problems hindering human and socio-economic development of 4-billion people globally. This discovery coupled with losing my mum, who worked as a village food

vendor to ensure her seven children live and get an education and who died from myocardial ischemia, a heart disease she contracted from inhaling smoke from cooking with firewood, shaped my decision to study Physics at university.

While studying Physics Electronics, I focused on how to build a single affordable product that would solve all the problems associated with

inefficient cooking and lighting with candles, kerosene, charcoal, and firewood.

Today, after long painstakingly efforts, I have successfully designed and developed Powerstove, a Tier 4 clean cookstove that is smokeless and super-efficient.

Can you explain how the technology works and how it could complement or fill the void created by chronic power problems in Nigeria?

Powerstove is based on Top Lit Updraft and thermoelectric technologies. Once the biomass inside the burn chamber is lit, the airflow system injects the right amount of oxygen into the burn chamber to ensure complete combustion of the fuel hence producing flames without smoke. Within three minutes, the temperature will reach 1000 degrees and initiate the conversion of thermal energy into electricity to charge phones and power LED bulbs and light 12 volt appliances.

What has been the response of the public to Powerstove?

Awesome, consumer confidence and trust keeps growing.

Powerstove Energy was founded in 2018, possible for you to shed some light on its progress, how many people do you serve now and how profitable has business been?

We have 111,201 paid orders, 99,822 shipped, 102,060 users with 98% active monthly users.

What are some of the big challenges that you have faced?

Electricity, double taxation, lack of incentives, and problems accessing skilled workforce

May we get your impressions on the selection of Powerstove Energy as one of the recent recipients of the Jua Fund?

We are extremely happy with our selection as well as being a recipient



The Powerstove team says consumer confidence and trust keeps growing steadily

of Jua Fund. The announcement is timely, as we plan to scale our operations beyond Nigeria.

In concrete terms, may we know how the funding will help you in moving Powerstove Energy to the next level?

Jua Fund will help us increase local production capacity to 12,000 units of stove and 100MT Wood Pellets monthly, plus expand to new markets in West and East Africa.

How important do you think initiatives like the Jua Fund could help in supporting the work of dynamic young entrepreneurs like you?

Hardware is hard, that is why fewer entrepreneurs follow this path. Scaling manufacturing is one of the most difficult adventures to undertake in entrepreneurship and that is why initiatives like Jua Fund are very needed in Africa to help young entrepreneurs not lose interest, momentum and steam as they continue to build the next unicorn within the African startup ecosystem.



The Jua Fund will help increase local production capacity and expand to new markets in West and East Africa, says Okey Esse pictured here with Nigerian Vice President Yemi Osinbajo

Going through your profile we see there are a number of other entrepreneurial initiatives that you are involved in, you want to share some with us?

What we are doing in Africa has never been done by an African. All the major clean cookstove companies in Africa, from Kenya, Uganda,

Lesotho and Nigeria are not founded by Africans. So, when we started, we knew what the barriers and challenges were, and we were prepared to face that battle head-on. Today, looking back at what we have achieved within a very short time has encouraged other entrepreneurial initiatives to welcome Powerstove Energy to help us scale our knowledge, network and

market access faster.

How do you juggle your schedule to efficiently manage all these entities that you run?

I have a strong and committed team that works as a family to help each other achieve collective results.

Cameroon: Poorly Constructed Roads Cave As Rainy Season Sets In

By Andrew Nsoseka



Car trapped by by road in Cameroon's Northwest, after first heavy rains.

As the rainy season started this year around mid-March in Cameroon, some poorly constructed roads in the country could not withstand the resulting effects of the rains, as the heavy floods caused by the rains destroyed roads and bridges, leaving travellers in some cases stranded.

One of the affected roads, was the highway linking Cameroon's Northwest region to the West region, and rest of the country. Since the escalation of the Anglophone Crisis, the other road which linked the Northwest to the Southwest became a hostile path, and thus many depended on the only road, Bamenda Babajou highway, which links the region to the rest of the Country. The incident that occurred on the Babadjou - Bamenda Highway in the night of Wednesday,

March 24 breaking Thursday, March 25 left hundreds of passengers stranded on both sides of the road.

The earth road, which is one of the very busy roads in the country is a story mired in fake promises and aborted projects. Way-back in 1991 when President Biya visited the then Northwest Province, now called Northwest region he promised that one of his priorities would be to construct the ring road. He told the population that he was going to personally supervise the construction of the said road. 30 years after, the promised road is still awaited.

Whenever the rainy season comes knocking, travellers who use the stretch go through untold nightmarish travails, as the moody sections of the roads makes it slippery and difficult for vehicles to ply on it

normally. As such, at various sections of the road, travellers have often had to alight from the vehicles, before it can go through, while the travellers trek on foot over the bad patches of the road. In some cases, they alight and then manually push the vehicle through, sometimes, they do this under the raid. Sometime last year, 2020, the road was completely cut off, and road construction equipment had to be deployed to do temporal maintenance before vehicles to go to and from the region. This went on for several weeks.

Still at the beginning of this year's rainy season, the rains also destroyed another road in Cameroon's Northwest region, in Bambili. The incident left two vehicles partially buried in the earth road which collapsed during the early heavy rains.

On 21 October 2016, a Camrail inter-city passenger train travelling from Cameroon's capital, Yaoundé, to its largest city, Douala, derailed in Eséka, Centre Region. The incident was largely blamed on overloading, which was because the road linking

the economic and political capitals of the country had been cut off by rain and water activities. As such many resorted to using the railway, which was the only available option at the time. As such, the trains were overloaded beyond capacity, leading to a devastating accident whose impact is still felt. The incident left 79 persons dead and over 500 others wounded.

Bad Road

One of the problems faced by many Cameroonians, has been the issue of roads. While farmers and other business persons have continually campaigned for roads to be constructed to link their farms and markets, the general population too is still expecting the construction of better city and inter-urban roads that can help reduce the number of accidents that are registered on a daily bases.

Addressing parliament in March, Cameroon's Minister of Transport, Jean Ernest Massena Ngalle Bibehe said 10 percent of the recorded accidents on roads in Cameroon,



Bad road in Cameroon's Northwest region capital partially buries two cars.



Two vehicles partially buried in Bambili, Northwest region of Cameroon, after a heavy rain destroyed the road.

happen as a result of the nature of the roads. 35 percent of the accidents were blamed on over-speeding on the narrow roads, while other causes like drunk-driving, nature of the vehicles, overtaking, non-mastery of driving, and other causes accounted for the registered accident cases on Cameroon's roads.

Poorly Executed Contracts

Poor execution of road contracts, has also greatly influenced the poor nature of the majority of the roads in Cameroon. In several instances, contractors who often 'win' road contracts end up doing shabby works that do not stand the test of time. Several tarred roads, especially in towns start depreciating two years or less, after the contracts have been 'executed' and handed over the government. With the poor execution of road contracts, the roads easily give

way, whenever it rains heavily and floods occur. As such, the government often times, is more engaged in 'fire-fighting' moves when it comes to taking care of its roads.

As the rainy season sets on, it is expected that several of the roads will again be unpassable. Also due to the effects of the fast-changing climate, floods that follow the rain leave some towns and roads submerged, and the poor drainage systems become useless in such scenarios.

Due to such mishaps, which often cut off access to most rural areas known for having neglected roads, a great portion of farm products are destroyed on transit to urban communities where most of the consumers are. This facilitates in retarding the local economy and impoverishing many who depend on farming and the roads to make a living.



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Drone Technology For Blood Delivery Saving Lives In Rwanda

By Jean d'Amour Mbonyinshuti

About four years ago, Rwanda launched the use of drone technology to deliver blood to remotely located hospitals putting an end to struggles health facilities could go through to get blood to needy patients. Also known as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), Rwanda was the first country world over to use the same technology in blood transportation, according to official information.

The technology is operated by Zipline is a US-based robotics company. Currently, the company has two distribution centres one in the Ruhango district in the Southern province and another one in Kayonza district in Eastern Province. Both centers are always ready to receive a message notification on the officials' mobile phones or on computers to fly the zips that deliver blood to remote hospitals. Drone drops the package from the sky and a nurse picks blood packages down from the hospital and rushes immediately to transfuse it to the waiting patients.

Huge impact

Four years since the use of technology, experts in the health sector have uploaded it as "life-saving".

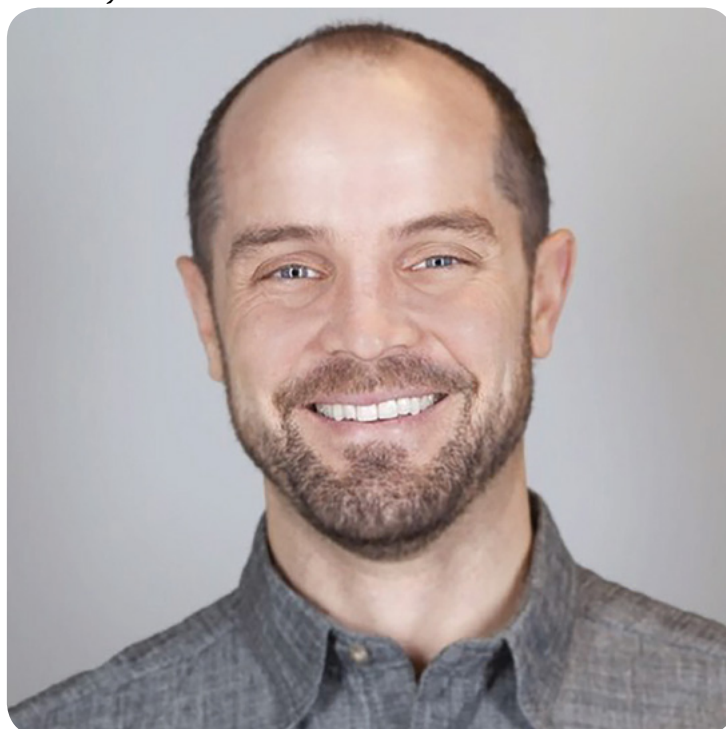
"Zipline makes on-demand instant deliveries of life-saving medicine {blood} to people in need within minutes. Our mission is to provide every human on Earth with instant access to vital medical supplies," Justin Hamilton, Zipline spokesperson in Rwanda said.

He said that currently, Zipline delivers more than 75% of Rwanda's blood supply outside of the capital, Kigali.

"In addition to its impact on lifesaving emergencies, Zipline's just-in-time drone delivery has helped transform the country's medical supply chain," he added.

The drones both take off from and land at Zipline's distribution centers, requiring no additional infrastructure at the clinics they serve.

The drones fly autonomously and can carry 1.8 kilos of cargo, flying up to 90 miles an hour, and have a round



Our mission is to provide every human on Earth with instant access to vital medical supplies, says Justin Hamilton, Zipline spokesperson in Rwanda. Photo credit twitter.

trip range of 100 miles—even in high winds and rain, Hamilton said.

Each Zipline distribution center can

deliver to an area of more than 8,000 square miles serving populations of up to 12 million people.

"Deliveries are made from the sky, with the drone descending to a safe height above the ground and releasing a box of medicine by parachute to a designated spot at the health centers it serves," He noted.

To date, according to Hamilton, instant drone delivery had helped ensure that hospitals always have access to blood products, increasing the use of some blood products by 175% and reducing waste and spoilage to almost zero.

According to Malick Kayumba, spokesperson of the Ministry of Health (MINISANTE) drone technology has improved the way blood is delivered and reduced the time it could take to deliver blood using normal roads.

He said that so far Zipline has done over 20,000 deliveries since 2016 and serves about 54 hospitals countrywide.



Keller Rinaudo, Zipline CEO and President Paul Kagame of Rwanda.

The target, according to Kayumba is to expand the services to Health Centers and serve about 470 Health Facilities by the end of 2020.

"Hospitals now have access to any type of blood products within less than 45 minutes while we used to take about four hours to reach some of the health facilities," he said.

"Drones also helped to reduce stock-outs and reduce waste throughout the system," he noted adding rare and challenging types of blood products can now be accessed anytime a patient needs in emergency cases.

According to Kayumba blood waste throughout the national supply chain was in the process to be eliminated thanks to the use of drone technology.

According to Zipline officials, more than 2 billion people across the world cannot access the medicine they need to survive because of last-mile

transportation challenges and Zipline was built to become the world's first and only national-scale instant drone delivery service, to solve that problem.

Its mission is to provide every human on Earth with instant access to vital medical supplies and serve over 700 million people in countries across Africa, India and the United States. Our goal is over the next five years.

Zipline delivers over 175 critical and life-saving medical products including blood, and both emergency and routine vaccines for BCG, Oral Polio (OPV), DTP-HepB-Hib, Pneumococcal Conjugate, Rotavirus, Measles-rubella (MR).

Others include Measles vaccine, Toxoid Tetanus (TT), Human Papillomavirus (HPV), anti-venom, anti-rabies, antirabies serum, and antitetanus serum.



Malick Kayumba, spokesperson of the Ministry of Health says drone technology has improved the way blood is delivered, Photo credit FB.

Jack Ma Foundation Launches Africa's Business Heroes 2021 Prize Competition

\$1.5 Million In Grants For Ten Change-Making Entrepreneurs

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

The third edition of Africa's Business Heroes (ABH) Prize Competition, the flagship philanthropic program of the Jack Ma Foundation spotlighting and celebrating Africa's entrepreneurs has been launched.

After having two successful editions, the launch of the third annual edition opens up applications to all aspiring participants in 2021.

Entrepreneurs from all 54 African countries, across every sector, age group, and gender are now able to submit their applications, in either French or English, for a chance to compete for a spot among the Top 10 finalists.



I think as this year's competition starts, it really needs resilience, determination and vision, says Jason Pau, the Executive Director (International) at the Jack Ma Foundation.

to present their businesses and share their visions to an esteemed panel of judges, to win a share of the US\$1.5 million grant. The journey to the Finale will include several rounds of rigorous evaluation panels, as well as access to a community of international leaders and innovators, industry experts, investors and accelerators, through several multi-disciplinary boot camps and training sessions, ABH media release read in part.

The mission of the Africa's Business Heroes is to strengthen the African entrepreneur ecosystem by identifying, telling the stories of training and awarding grant-funding to 100 Heroes across Africa over the next ten years.

The central theme of this year's competition, "It's African Time", is a bold call to action for all talented African entrepreneurs who are

challenging stereotypes associated with «African time» through their businesses, to leverage the ABH prize to scale their efforts as well as share

their stories of how they've driven change and solutions.

At the grand finale later this year, ten finalists will take the stage

The launch which took place through the Zoom platform involved Four speakers including Jason Pau, Executive Director (International),

Jack Ma Foundation; Zahra Baitie, Head of Partnership and Programs, Africa's Business Heroes Prize Competition; Anita Erskine, Official Host, Africa's Business Heroes Prize Competition; ABH finalists from 2019 to 2020: Christelle Kwizera, Founder and CEO at Water Access Rwanda and Chebet Lesan, Founder and CEO at BrightGreen Renewable Energy.

In 2020, the ten outstanding finalists – half of whom were female – were selected from over 22,000 applicants across all 54 African nations. They represented eight African countries - Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, Uganda, and Zimbabwe - and various industries including agriculture, fashion, education, healthcare, renewable energy, and financial services, ABH's media release indicated.

"I am proud to have been named the winner of the 2020 Africa's Business Heroes prize. The competition was an incredible journey. 2020 was a challenging year that made us refocus from profitability to survival. I hope my win inspires Africans to believe that we have what it takes to make an impact, no matter where we are. The Prize is helping us scale our

energy solution across East Africa, and we remain focused to change how Africa cooks, one kitchen at a time," said Chebet Lesan, Founder and CEO at BrightGreen Renewable Energy.

"As we open our third annual pitch competition, we want to recognize Africa's extraordinary entrepreneurs, whose business ventures not only are successful and profitable but are generating positive impact on their local communities," said Jason Pau, Executive Director of International, Jack Ma Foundation.

"Despite the incredibly difficult conditions faced by entrepreneurs and small businesses around the world over the past year, Africa's entrepreneurship has been experiencing an incredible upward trajectory, showing the magnitude of its potential and the opportunities yet to be seized. Therefore, Africa's Business Heroes is excited to join forces with our partners to identify, spotlight and support even more passionate, innovative, and determined entrepreneurs across Africa," Jason said.

"Once you are done providing us with the information on who you are as an entrepreneur and your general company, we asked that you deep



The judges will be looking for bold, resilient, and visionary entrepreneurs, says Zahra Baitie, Head of Partnership and Programs at the ABH Prize Competition.

dive and provide us with the key details about your business in the Business Deep Dive section. This is the opportunity to share impacts you are creating, why you are doing it and how you are doing it. We asked the question about your revenue model, financial history, competitiveness of your solution and your team," said Zahra Baitie, the Head of Partnership and Programs at the Africa's Business Heroes Prize Competition.

According to Zahra, the judges will be looking for bold, resilient, and visionary entrepreneurs. They will also be looking for the significant problem in your community and the solution, market traction, financial sustainability, testimonials from references, and teamwork.

About Africa's Business Heroes

Africa's Business Heroes prize competition is the flagship philanthropic initiative spearheaded by the Jack Ma Foundation aimed at supporting and inspiring the next generation of African entrepreneurs across all sectors, who are building a more sustainable and inclusive economy for the future of the continent. Over

ten years, ABH will recognize 100 African entrepreneurs and commit to allocating grant funding, training programs, and support for the development of an entrepreneurial ecosystem. Each year, the ABH prize competition and the show will feature ten finalists as they pitch their business to win a share of \$1.5 million in grant money.

Global leaders Graca Machel, Chair of the Graca Machel Trust Board and Ban Ki-moon, Former UN Secretary-General and Co-chair of the Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens serve on the ABH advisory board. Also, Anita Erskine, UN SDG Advocate and Founder of the STEM Woman Project will continue to serve as the official host of the «Africa's Business Heroes» program. This year, ABH will continue to work with strong Anchor Partners African Leadership Group, Ashesi, Dalberg, Janngo, and RiseUp, and more.

Applications will be open online from March 29 to June 7, 2021, with semi-finalists announced in August, and the top ten finalists for 2021 unveiled in September. For more information about the ABH and how to apply, please visit: africabusinessheroes.org and follow ABH on Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook.

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Two European Universities To Pour Cold Water On Illicit Financial Flows

By Peter Kayula

A research study aimed at deepening awareness and catalyzing regional dialogue towards a defined and long term policy response to challenges posed by Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs) in developing countries gets underway in the next few months, it has been learnt.

Two European universities - The United Nations University World Institute for Development economics (UNU-WIDER) and the Department of Economics at the University of Copenhagen with the support of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) have taken a cautious line.

The institutions are pursuing a research project on detecting and countering illicit Financial Flows following concerns raised for the need to expand the research frontier and provide for the governments of developing countries with policies to fight the illicit activities inherently associated with international transactions, potentially resulting in hiding of wealth by richest households, tax evasion and severe misallocation of resources.

But what is of significance and revolutionary is that the project led by Niels Johannesen and Finn Tarp of the University of Copenhagen supported by Postdoc Kasper Brandt, seeks to address the challenges of illicit financial flows by investigating the magnitude of these flows, the channels through which they flow and policy responses that may improve the current questionable management of the flows in developing countries.

However, a religious studies professor in Europe has questioned the integrity of this approach in the fight against what she called "the age long illicit financial flows activities."

"I think there are still some questions about how the researchers are going to play it out. But on average, this is an overwhelming affirmation of what the two universities can really do." Professor Christina Samuel,



UNCTAD's Economic Development in Africa Report 2020 states that illicit financial flows rob Africa of \$88.6 billion each year. Photo credit Africa Renewal.

wrote in an e-mail response.

But speaking shortly before signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG) on May 30th, 2017 at the COMESA Secretariat, Lusaka, Zambia, then COMESA Secretary General, Sindiso Ngwenya made it clear: "Money laundering is a complex crime that continues to evolve with criminals who are ever designing new and innovative methods of hiding and laundering their illegally gotten money. This continues to be a very big global challenge that has potentially devastating and economic and security consequences."

Illicit Financial Flows constitute a major development challenge for developing countries. While tax revenue relative to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has increased, they remain low compared to high income countries, without adequate revenue to spend, states are limited in providing crucial public services such as education, healthcare and infrastructure.

Secondly, what is of significance is that illicit financial flows are inherently associated with international transactions, potentially resulting in unfair competition for domestic firms

and severe misallocation of resources.

Thirdly, and of profound interest is that hiding of wealth is foremost done by the richest households in developing countries, thereby increasing inequality in society. Fourth, perception about other people evading (complying with) taxes may create a circle of (increased) tax non-compliance.

Sadly, global response is not moving with the speed, intensity and cooperation that this illicit financial flows demand. Institutional and governments policy changes shared across international borders in developing countries which, in some respects, is critical for leaders to make right decisions at the right time until a more certain future comes into view, is needed.

Meanwhile, a researcher in Southern Africa has unexpectedly supported the call to action against Illicit Financial Flows in developing countries, adding that there is need to provide robust scientific evidence to the regional response initiatives.

Although data and some innovations drawn currently could be widely used for Illicit Financial Flows policy development processes, they still require local context and expertise in order to address in a timely and effective manner, the issues arising even as the continent's economic development landscape

evolves.

In a cover letter accompanying the deposition of a project proposal investigating the efficacy of institutional and policy tools in detecting and countering the reality of illicit financial flows (IFFs) in developing countries made public, he flaunted throughout his speech that there is need for reviewing and enhancing, through implementation of interventions, these components of policies that will support the fight against Illicit Financial Flows.

"Other alternatives will be to make inclusive pronouncements that will provide for equitable sharing of risks and benefits as well as framing of policies, laws and regulations, strategies and programmes to formulate respective operational plans," he revealed.

He has explained that some data and innovations drawn currently in the fight against the illicit financial flows although widely applicable globally, require local institutional and policy development context and expertise in order to address in "a timely and effective manner, the issues arising even as the illicit financial flows activities evolve."

Then Zambia's Director General of the Financial Intelligence Centre (FIC) Board, Mary Tshuma, went as far as possible, to talk about the same issue of money laundering.

In her address during the launch of the 2016 Money Laundering/Terrorist Financing Trends Report in Zambia on May 31st, 2017, at the Lusaka's Hotel Inter-Continental said:

"FIC trends report provides information on the most prevalent and predicate offences on emerging and continuing trends, as well as money-laundering methods used by individuals and entities.

The report also highlights developments in the year 2016, including amendments to the Financial

Intelligence Centre Act. Also, we have included recommendations on how to address existing and emerging money laundering and terrorist financing trends. We hope that Government institutions will have interest in our recommendations so that we have an action plan and see how well we can

strengthen our fight against money-laundering and terrorist financing." The United Nations University World Institute for Development economics together with the Department of Economics at the University of Copenhagen are now inviting proposals from qualified

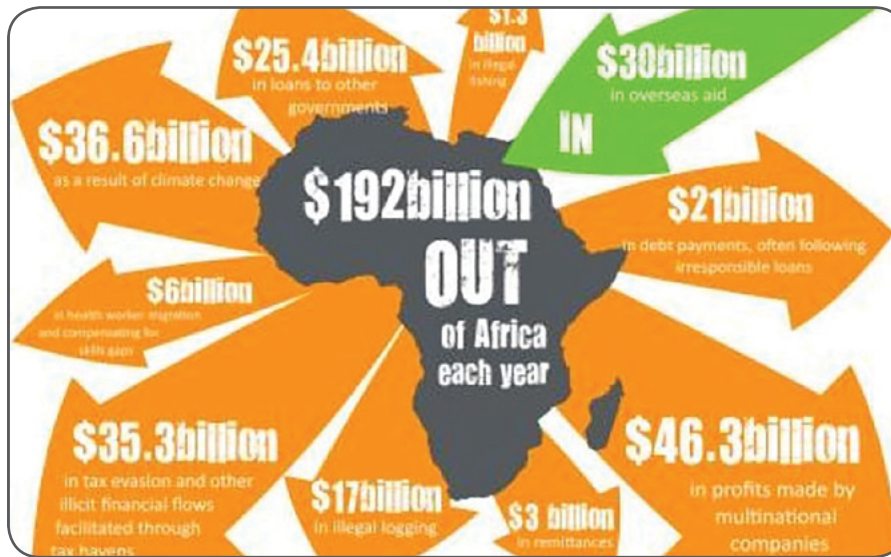
researchers for papers examining the challenges of illicit financial flows in developing countries. The main aim is that these papers will be published in high quality journals and publication in the WIDER working papers series. Illicit Financial Flows activities have the potential to bring the

African Continent entirely on its knees as African states are left having limited opportunities in providing crucial public services such as education, healthcare and infrastructure.

This time I bet...we see developing countries' difficulties as an opportunity for individual states to redefine their fight against the vice. With the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the planned arrival of the Eco currency in 15 ECOWAS countries, Africa will have to equip itself with the tools

that will enable it to better position itself in an international economy turned inside out.

(The writer is a Zambian journalist, author, researcher and PhD Candidate. Email:zajrworkshop@gmail.com/Mobile: +260974927029)



Illicit financial flows is a very big global challenge that has devastating consequences on Africa .Photo courtesy.

Malawi's Education Results Hit A Record Low Activists fear for the worst.

By Joseph Dumbula



Education Minister Agnes NyaLonje insists, the performance came due to the Covid pandemic, cancellation of the first set of examinations and strict anti cheating measures. Photo credit twitter.

Students that sat for the final secondary school national examinations in Malawi have performed the lowest in a decade, statistics that analysts say are a huge cause for worry for the quality of education in the South African nation.

In releasing the Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE), examination body, Maneb said out of 138 thousand students that sat for the examination, only around 57 thousand students reached the pass mark.

The result represents a 41% mark, which the body said is a record low in over ten years.

The examinations were retaken after a massive leakage in November last year.

After the incident, President Lazarus Chakwera ordered that the examinations be re-administered.

This came after the examinations were also stopped in the wake of skyrocketing Covid-19 cases.

However, Education Minister Agnes NyaLonje insists, the performance came due to the Covid pandemic, cancellation of the first set of examinations and strict anti-cheating measures put in place during examinations administration.

Analyst Benedicto Kondowe has however told the local media that the result was anticipated.

«With all the developments to do with the examinations, it was expected that students would underperform. This

is a result that should raise fears about the quality of our standards in the country. There is need to change whatever problems we have» said Kondowe.

On his part, education activist Limbani Nsapato says government had not done enough to prepare students psychologically after the two incidents which were critical on the performance of the students.

“For those sitting exams this year, they need to thoroughly prepare and the teachers should facilitate remedial lessons to catch up on lost time; and the psychological impact of Covid-19» he said.

At the moment, the release of the results have however coincided with an ongoing nationwide stay away by teachers in public

schools.

The teachers have been forcing government to provide them with Covid-19 risk allowances, a demand that government described as exorbitant.

Fears however are rife over a situation in which learners in private schools are attending classes unlike those in public schools.

Out of 64,297 female candidates that sat examinations, 22,270 passed, representing a 34.64 percent pass rate.

In terms of male candidates, 35,023 triumphed out of 74,013 that sat the examinations, representing a 47.32 percent pass rate.



Education activist Limbani Nsapato says government had not done enough to prepare students psychologically after the two incidents which were critical on the performance of the students.

Mozambique: New Media Law Assaults Press Freedom

By Jorge Joaquim



Newspapers in Maputo

Mozambique's government is proposing to replace the country's current Press Law, in force since 1991, with a new Social Communication Law, covering written media, and a new Broadcasting Law covering radio and television broadcasting. Both laws were approved by the government in December 2020. At Parliamentary hearings on proposed new media laws, Media professionals across the sector argued that the legislative proposals would allow the government to

control the press in ways that violate Mozambique's constitution.

If Parliament were to pass the two laws in their current form, Mozambique would become one of the most closed media markets in Africa, DW Portuguese Africa Editor-in-Chief Johannes Beck said in a statement seen by Pan African Visions. «The government will not be able to justify this seriously and by doing so would only reveal that its aim is to obstruct independent reporting as much as possible,» he said.

Mozambican Journalist Fernando Lima said he has «serious doubts» that the proposed media laws are intended to deepen democracy, the fundamental rights of citizens and the formal exercise of journalism. The documents “seem to have been drafted from a police station”, he told parliamentarians in Maputo.

Borges Nhamire, a researcher with the think tank Center for Public Integrity, has no doubt that the government knows this is a step backwards in press freedom, but

it wants full control is part of the executive's desire to control the public's access to information.

«The government's biggest mistake is to continue to look at the press, especially independent ones, as enemies and not as contributors to the strengthening of democracy,» he said. «That is why it creates these mechanisms with the clear objective of interfering in the content to be aired.»

Foreign news shows banned

The proposed Broadcasting Law would prohibit radio and television stations from airing news programmes made by foreign organisations. This means that news and democracy-building programmes made by foreign broadcasters, such as Germany's DW, Voice of America, and France's RFI, will be banned in Mozambique. Foreign broadcasters would also be prohibited from using open signal frequencies, which would make it impossible for broadcasters like the UK's BBC, and Portugal's RTP and RDP, to air programmes in the country.

Johannes Beck

«With the ban on retransmission of political content, Mozambicans would be deprived of many sources of information about events in Mozambique, Africa and the world,» DW's Beck said. «Currently, DW can rebroadcast its journalistic radio and TV content in all five Portuguese-speaking African countries. Only in Mozambique would this no longer be possible,» he added.

The law would also limit foreign media to only two correspondents to cover the whole of Mozambique, a country of around 800,000 sq. km. This would seriously impact the output of foreign news agencies, like DW, which currently has 15 reporters in Mozambique. Such restrictions would of course mean a «dramatic reduction in journalistic activity,» and make reporting on Mozambique, «much poorer,» said Beck. If DW had to cut its staff of 15 reporters down to two, it would make reporting on Mozambique «much poorer,» Beck said, as it would mean a «dramatic reduction in journalistic activity».

Moreover, in the vast majority of countries in



Johannes Beck

Africa, as in the world, there are no limits on the number of foreign media correspondents, he said.

But Emilia Moiane, head of the existing media regulator the Gabinete de Informacao (Gabinfo), told parliamentarians that it is normal for media companies to just have one correspondent in a foreign country.

«In every country ... we know the correspondent in the foreign country, because there's just one. Two at the most,» she said, giving South Africa as an example which, she said, only accepts one foreign correspondent on each media outlet.

«And we [in Mozambique] are saying two because we are also looking at television stations, which have a journalist and have a cameraman.»

If the two laws are passed in their current form, DW will do everything in

its power to continue producing news and reporting as comprehensively as possible, including on Mozambican politics, Beck said.

«We would immediately seek new and innovative avenues so that we can continue to provide our audience in Mozambique with independent information, and if the network of correspondents were indeed cut as severely as threatened, we would produce more and more content on Mozambique from abroad.»

New government-controlled regulator

Among various contentious issues, the draft Social Communication Law would create a new media regulator, managed by the government. Press freedom body Misa-Mozambique, whose head Fernando Gonçalves

testified in parliament, argued that it should be parliament that manages the body instead — saying if it is run by the government it would not be independent.

As an entity responsible for guaranteeing fundamental rights and freedoms, the press regulator should be the exclusive responsibility of parliament, Tomás Vieira Mário, veteran journalist and the president of main state media body, the Conselho Superior de Comunicação Social (CSCS), also told the hearing.

But justice minister Helena Kida told parliamentarians that it should be the government that establishes and manages the new regulator, as Mozambique is run under a presidential and not parliamentary system.

Helena Kida

It «has a lot to do with the system of governance and, at least the system used in our country, is not the parliamentary system» she said. She said that while the discussion was still open, «So it is only in that sense that we think [the regulator] would be appointed by the government,» she added, advancing that the discussion is still open, but that so far she had heard there are no convincing arguments that it should be parliament that establishes the media regulator.

However, a government-controlled regulator would be illegal, said Ernesto Nhanale, executive director of press freedom body Misa; Mozambique's constitution states that the government and the press sector should be independent from each other,

«The news media should carry out their duties free from interference from any external interest or influence that could compromise their independence,» he said.

Venâncio Mondlane,



a parliamentarian for opposition party Renamo, agrees. «The press is considered the fourth power, which means there should be independence from the executive, legislative and judicial powers,» he said.

With the introduction of this law, «basically we are going back to the single party times when there was the Ministry of Information which aimed to control and manipulate the content conveyed by the press,» he added.

Currently, the role of regulator is partially carried by Gabinfo, but it should not be so because this entity is just an office that should advise the government on the sector and not necessarily regulate it.

The new law would also abolish the CSCS, with its limited powers also passing to the new regulator, which would regulate, supervise, monitor and sanction the media, under the new law.

Furthermore, the lack of an independent regulatory body is illegal: Mozambique's constitution states that the government and the press sector should be independent from each other, said Ernesto Nhanale, executive director of press freedom body Misa.

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Licence needed for all journalists

The proposed Social Communication Law would also require all journalists to be licenced by the regulator in order



Helena Kida

to work.

Goncalves said Misa understands that the professional licence is important to protect the profession from potential opportunists who may pose as journalists for their own purposes, but that the licence should not be mandatory to work as a journalist, as reflected in the draft law. It should be «for recognition and not for limitation,» he said.

Journalist Fernando Lima warned parliamentarians that, given the Mozambican reality in which the authorities persecute people who they call opponents, the professional licence could be a mechanism to formally withdraw professional rights from government nuisances.

The licence will be issued and managed by the Professional Licence

Commission, an independent body to be made up of individuals representing different spheres of society, from the judiciary to journalists' own socio-professional organisations and media companies, according to the chairman of the National Union of Journalists, Eduardo Constantino.

The draft decree on the professional license has already been sent to the prime minister's office to be approved by the government, according to Eduardo Constantino. The content of the decree was based in the Journalist Statute and the Journalist Code of Ethics and Deontology, he said.

However, as the licence impacts citizen's fundamental rights, Nhanale said the approval process should be through ordinary law, which requires the approval of Parliament, not via

a government decree. The same position was defended by Lima.

«Troubled context»

The revision of these laws comes in a context in which the Mozambican government is failing to protect the media, and takes no measures against those who threaten and assault journalists, according to MISA. In recent years the organisation said it has reported «serious violations against press freedom,» including the kidnapping and torture of journalists and attacks on media premises, but that the state had taken no action in any of the cases.

Journalist Amade Abubacar who in 2019 was illegally detained by the army while working as a journalist and accused of having conspired against the state. While he has now been released from prison, his trial is still pending.

On 7 April it will be two years since the disappearance in Cabo Delgado of journalist Ibrahimo Mbaruco who, in his last message sent to one of his colleagues, stated that he was «surrounded by soldiers».

Ibraimo Mbaruco

In Maputo, the journalist and executive editor of the weekly newspaper Canal de Moçambique, Matias Guente, has a battery of cases in court.

Heads of independent media outlets continue to be insulted and threatened online. And in 2018, the government passed a decree to levy exorbitant fees on journalists and domestic and foreign media outlets. Heavy pressure forced the executive to reverse the law.

Last month the Mozambican Network of Human Rights Defenders wrote a letter to Nyusi in which they called for his urgent intervention to restore legality and hold accountable those involved in campaigns of incitement to hatred, violence and intolerance in the Mozambican public sphere, mainly against academics, human rights defenders, social activists, journalists, independent media and civil society organisations.



Ibraimo Mbaruco

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Can Logistics And Transport Unlock AFCFTA Transformative Potential?

By Peter Kayula*

The transformative potential of the singular re-investment drive of the monumental African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) will depend on the free flow of goods across borders — which only the logistics sector can help unlock.

Although the free trade agreement, which provides for free movement of business people, joint implementation of inter-regional infrastructure programmes and institutional arrangements that promote cooperation among the regional Economic Communities (RECs), will bring some relief to companies doing business across the continent by slashing border tariffs, the continent's \$130-170 billion infrastructure gap remains a stubborn engagement process to reducing logistics costs.

Another sticking point is that local entrepreneurs and multinationals alike have also long lamented the broken nature of logistics and supply chains across the African continent, once a huge industrial estate.

But of profound interest is that this year's Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport's Africa Forum, to be held in Ghana will spell out the role of the Logistics and Transport industry in the AfCFTA, something which has arguably never been more relevant than now.

International Vice-President (IVP) and Chairman of the Africa Forum, Dr Newton Demba, announced the mandate in the latest edition of the Bulletin of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport that Ghana will host the 2021 major continental event under the umbrella of the CILT Ghana from 12th August – 14th August.

The Africa Forum, which typically brings together all Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport member countries in Africa and



Chairman of the Africa Forum, Dr Newton Demba.

other members across the world, to network and discuss pertinent supply chain, logistics and transport issues affecting the African continent, will be characterized by presentation of papers and discussions by seasoned professionals in the industry and academia on the Free Trade Agreement.

The AfCFTA project, which was earmarked to be launched in June last year but had to be postponed because of the corona virus (COVID 19) pandemic, is the historic agreement that will create the world's largest free trade area since the World Trade Organization (WTO).

It is also premised on the assumption that it will bring Africa to the world stage as one block, one continent and speaking with one voice towards achieving the agenda 2063 goals - the continent's blueprint and masterplan for transforming Africa into a global powerhouse of the future.

However, many Africa trade and investment analysts are warning

that although millions of poor people in Africa stand to benefit from a continental trade initiative that has been hailed to culminate into a huge market for Africa, countries would have to put in place measures to guarantee the protection of Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and infant domestic industries when the agreement is implemented.

They mainstreamed huge reservations that that the Free Trade agreement would expose the Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and infant domestic industries to stiffer competition and as such, there is need to develop the capacity for the private sector to improve on quality and supply chain management.

But with just five months away, members of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport will have to gear up for three days of insightful discussions and business negotiations to shape the future of logistics in Africa sure to benefit an already maturing economic region.

Among the papers to be presented

at the forum include, Overview of the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), The Critical Role of African Ports in the Realization of the AfCFTA, Borderlessness in The Advent of the AfCFTA: The Way Forward.

While topics for panel discussions will navigate on: Governance and Leadership: The Role of Transport and Logistics in the Sustainable Implementation of The AfCFTA.

The other one is, Technology and Telecommunication: The Role of ICT in Enhancing Logistics and Transport Efficiency and Optimization.

Dr Demba also announced that all those delegates who had booked for March 2020, that their funds were well secured and will be credited to them for the 2021 forum, anchored under the theme, "Sustainable Implementation of the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement: The Role of Logistics, Transport and Industry."

He revealed that registration for the event, which will be supported by a corporate exhibition and business sessions is still open and delegates are free to book until two weeks before the event.

The Africa Forum which will also see the launch of the CILT International Business Forum a new platform to promote the ethos of Cross Border business exchange and develop international business opportunities between the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport members, will provide a unique opportunity to promote modern transportation and logistical networks process and organizational innovations such as just in-time approach to supply chain management, in more systematic and coordinated way.

The move represents significant milestone in the steady process of deepening Africa's economic integration. It also compliments similar efforts in other parts of Africa

and underscores determination among key players in the private sector to expand prospects for prosperity.

This move will go a long way in helping achieve Africa Union's continental integration objectives and provide decision makers in Africa with information on how to integrate ethos of Logistics and transport in development discussions and strategies. Specific attention will be placed on exploring how these can be adapted to local economic conditions.

Reliable transportation is absolutely critical for growth and innovation in Africa's agriculture and agribusiness. Sufficient roads, rail, seaports and airports are essential for regional trade, international exports and cross border investments.

Other areas of agriculture such as improved genetic material, better access to capital and best farming practices will produce results only if farmers have a way to get their products to markets and get critical inputs to farms.



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Not to forget the role transportation has played in China's rural development and poverty alleviation, as well as the two cases in African transportation investment. Ghana's

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*The writer is a Zambian journalist, researcher, author and student of

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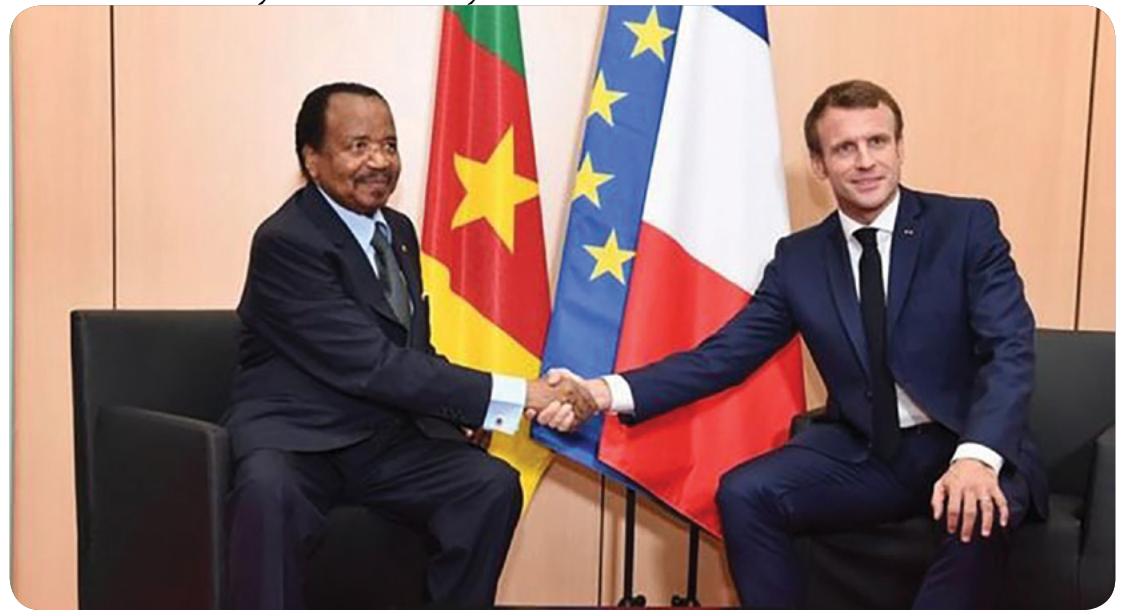
Genocide, Africa and The French Connection

By Rebecca Tinsley *

A new report on the Rwandan genocide finds the Mitterrand government was at fault for its support of the Kigali regime. While the Duclert report, commissioned by President Macron, concludes that France was not complicit in the 1994 slaughter, it renews debate about the former colonial power's role on the continent. The central African nation of Cameroon, a former French and British colony, is now testing whether France's policy has evolved since Rwanda. The Norwegian Refugee Council has called the Anglophone Cameroon conflict the world's most neglected crisis for the second year running.

A bitter anniversary

April 6th marks 27 years since the start of the Rwandan genocide. In the 1990s, as the Duclert report acknowledges, France's aim was to maintain its economic and military position in Africa, even if that meant



Cameroon's President Paul Biya and his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron,

supporting a genocidal regime to counter Anglo-Saxon influence. France supplied weapons and training to the Hutu-dominated armed forces in the early 1990s. Rwanda expert Linda Melvern has

documented how French soldiers lured members of the Tutsi minority out of hiding at Bisesero, leaving 40,000 of them to be slaughtered by the Hutu Interahamwe. Rwandan authorities believe France still

shelters individuals implicated in the genocide, including former First Lady and genocide mastermind, Agathe Kanziga.

In Cameroon, a French-English bilingual country, an armed

“Anglophone conflict” has escalated over the past four years. Although France has deep economic, military and diplomatic interests there, it has held back from pressing Cameroon officials to find political solutions to the political root causes of the conflict.

A Political Problem, Not a Military Solution

English speakers in the former British Southern Cameroons believe that the majority-Francophone government denies them the self-determination they were promised at independence. In 2016, Yaoundé imposed Francophone judges and teachers in the Anglophone regions, eroding their common law system and Anglo-Saxon school curriculum. Anglophone lawyers and teachers protested peacefully, but security forces responded with disproportionate brutality, according to Human Rights Watch and International Crisis Group. The regime’s refusal to acknowledge the legitimacy of moderates’ concerns ignited an extreme separatist movement and a spiral into armed conflict.

Now, impartial human rights groups report that hundreds of villages have been burnt, schools and hospitals attacked and abandoned, humanitarian workers harassed, uncooperative civilians shot or beheaded, and the economy shattered. The UN estimates that 700,000 are internally displaced, and 60,000 are sheltering across the border in Nigeria. Refugee claimants are in France, the UK, the UAE, North America, and more. There are no accurate casualty figures, but local NGOs estimate 5,000 have been killed. Anglophone civilians bear the brunt of the violence.

An estimated 800,000 Tutsi were killed in Rwanda in 1994. Cameroon’s



The Anglophone crisis has led to thousands of persons displaced.

death toll is not to this point, but it rises daily. With no end to the violence in sight, observers believe that only mediated talks can stop the bloodshed.

French influence is essential to push Cameroon to address the Anglophone conflict by attending negotiations, such as the Swiss-led peace talks on offer since 2019. The Vatican has added its voice, offering to help with mediation.

However, in a letter to French MP Jean-Jacques Bridey (dated December 10, 2020), the Quai d’Orsay repeats the Yaoundé regime’s claim that its Major National Dialogue in October 2019 resolved Anglophone grievances. Yet, most separatist leaders avoided the Dialogue, fearing arrest and indefinite detention without trial. Moreover, the root causes of the conflict were not addressed, and the violence has only intensified since the Dialogue concluded.

France has previously justified its stance because Cameroon is helping

fight Boko Haram. Indeed, France has supplied weapons and funding to Cameroon’s military for this purpose. However, research in Foreign Policy shows that Cameroon has redeployed weapons intended to fight Boko Haram to the Anglophone regions, where they are used to commit atrocity crimes against Cameroon’s own citizens.

On January 1, the US Congress adopted a resolution condemning the human rights abuses against Anglophone civilians and calling for sanctions against those implicated in atrocities. The resolution also noted France’s friendship with 88-year-old President Paul Biya. A close friend of the French establishment, Biya has ruled since 1982. Transparency International ranks his regime as one of the most corrupt in the world.

Although President Macron admitted, when pressed at an event last year, that “intolerable human rights abuses are occurring in Cameroon,” France’s economic and diplomatic support persists. Yet, the Quai d’Orsay has the leverage to

persuade Cameroon to talk rather than fight with its Anglophone minority, reforming its broken governance along the way.

French interests are best served by building a peaceful, stable and secure Cameroon, where corruption and systematic human rights violations are a thing of the past. There are daily atrocities in the Anglophone regions, and France knows from the Rwandan genocide that turning a blind eye is futile.

France has earned the admiration of the international community for its counterterrorism activities in the Sahel. Yet, if France is unwilling to act in the Anglophone conflict, it risks its reputation and chance to show leadership.

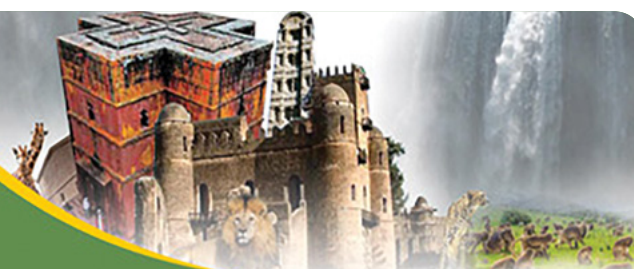
Perhaps President Macron is aware of this quote from the Harry Potter series: “It takes a great deal of bravery to stand up to our enemies, but just as much to stand up to our friends.”

* Rebecca Tinsley is the author of *When the Stars Fall to Earth: A Novel of Africa*

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The Emergence of A Freedom Fighter: Alfred Peter Conteh The Grassroots Voice of Sierra Leone

By Elhaj Malik Shabbaz

Born to a loyal and die-hard supporter of the All Peoples Congress Party in Koinadugu Kabala Township, Alfred Peter Conteh 51, is a member of the All People's Congress Party New Jersey Chapter. He is a practicing Civil Engineer with a Masters Degree. Mr. Conteh like every other die-hard supporters of the APC has served in different capacities of the party in the diaspora wing as Director of Fund Raising and Assistance Secretary General. He has been a strong pillar of the party in the diaspora and have always been contributing immensely to the betterment and development of the party.

Following the unfortunate incident in Makeni that left the rest of the APC party in a feeble state of affairs, no single member was ever ready to take up the party and change the waves of dictatorship and tyranny that is about to befall the party. Noting in one of his expositions as to what led him to singlehandedly take the leadership of the party to court for the second time after the NRM failed their quest to bring sanity and justice in the party, Mr. Conteh asserts thus: «I was in Makeni, I saw what happened. It was a disgrace; we could not complete the convention. At the end of every APC convention, we use to cheer up with the APC song, but this convention or so-called convention never was. It was ridiculous. People left even before thinking of singing the Victory Song. So, in all reality that convention never ended. Nobody came up with the motion to push it because people left discouraged disappointed as if they were wrong. Right there and right then. Since then, I took upon myself to change the narratives of our party been held in cluster cells of one man who thinks he owns this party.»

According to Mr. Conteh, his decision to take the APC Ernest



Alfred Peter Conteh says he is the grassroots voice in Sierra Leone.

Koroma's led executive to court had been a decision he already settled with before leaving the 2017 convention environment. Being a fire branded freedom fighter, he sought for legal advice at the Guma Building where he was told by one of the magistrates that «...Look here, nobody is taking your case and if you do «den go naikanaika you»».* This threatening remarks came as a result of Ernest being the Former President and the Chairman and Leader of the party. He was angry and bittered, seeing how the APC party has become the runnings of a one man's show. He braced himself up and reached out for other likeminded individuals to form the APC Reformation Movement that has come to be known as ARM.

Ready to take the risk and save

the grassroots from the breeding dictatorship orchestrated in Makeni. Mr. Conteh joined forces with the currently defunct National Reformation Movement with the optimism that they both were fighting for the same cause and there is every possibility that change is set to come. Little did he know that there were political sophalies amongst the NRM that turned out to be destructive to the gains made by the reformation struggle. He added that their reformation fight did not ask for a new constitution, but an amendment of certain sections of the constitution that are seen crude to modern day democracy, but there was nothing like having a new constitution. That idea only came from Ernest Koroma who currently asserts himself illegally

as the Chairman and Leader of the Party, even though their term limit had expired long since.

According to Mr. Conteh, he got disappointed by the sellout of the NRM, and decided to take upon himself to finally slam a very rigid injunction against the APC Party as a single plaintiff. Being a strategist and revolutionist, Mr Conteh's primary objective has always been to get the party back to the grassroots where every member is given an equal opportunity regardless of status or title. I believe that our inequities should not be used as shield to prevent other members all in the name of status or title. I am certain that equality paves the way to a better democracy, and that has always been the APC I used to know since childhood. History has it that there had been occasions where poor supporters in the persons of Pa Morlai Sedom and Sylvanus S. Kamara won an election over top ranking politicians of the Party. This I believe can only happen where there is respect for our constitution and justice is served accordingly not what we saw in Makeni.

Coming from the brinks of the NRM sellout and the recalcitrant act of the Party's leadership, Mr. Conteh thought it wise that the only rescue now for the grassroots voices to be heard is through the legal system of Sierra Leone. He filed a lawsuit that is ongoing at the law court. This, according to him, (Mr. Conteh) was not out of malice or hatred for the current leadership. Nor did he do it to make himself popular, but to ensure that justice is served, and the party returns to the grassroot who are the true owners of this enviable party. The one man's show thing continued to render the Party useless in the eyes of the incumbent to the extent of making the Party a breeding ground for «mammy cus» by a certain gutter

commentator named Adebayor. Noting further, the 1995 constitution which was adopted at a time Ernest Koroma was a PDP member and making himself so powerful to mastermind every critical decision in this party which he joined with an already adopted constitution begs the question; « Is Ernest Koroma really the saint he pretends to be?»

Setting the records straight, Mr. Conteh firmly asserts that, his case with the APC leadership is not just any type of a case and that he is not ready for any form of out-of-court settlement that does not reflect the dreams, wishes, and aspirations of the unheard. The APC has been known to be a party where my mother who used to dance with the late Kaiyande Bangura could opt for a position and become victorious regardless of his status or title. We cannot have an executive in the APC party that are powerless yet continue to renew their terms hiding behind a selection clause that was only introduced in our constitution to address emergency situations. As it stands, it is clear that we cannot in anyway come up with anything tangible as long as these people are in charge of the everyday runnings of the party affairs. Our best option for now is to give them the exit door through the Law Court of Sierra Leone. This will usher in an independent interim body that will handle the next delegate convention. One could imagine what it feels like when people with no status can be eligible to take up positions of trust in the party they so love. Should we continue to give peoples position in the party because they are sons and daughters of a former minister or whatever? If yes, then there is no way we can claim this is the grassroots party.

In contrast to the aforesaid, my quest to all of this is simple. I was looking forward to having a clear pathway for the APC. Take into consideration where our Party was, where we have come from and where we are heading now. It is a pity for



An overhaul is needed within the structures of our party, says Alfred Peter Conteh

all of us. We have people with top academic credentials, some with PhD title to their names. Yet they are pretending not to see what is going on because they are selfish to their own conscience. I have been receiving many calls since the court slammed the new injunction. Many are afraid to join the fight just because they are selfish, but they all agreed in principle, that what I am doing is correct and that has given me the courage to even push harder, Mr. Conteh noted. We cannot continue to be misled by people who are mischievous about accepting the truth. One thing that is certain is that we have learnt already from the NRM case that few selfish individuals bail out on us. An out of court settlement this time around is not even my 10th option.

I do believe if we have a political party that is representative of all regardless of status or title, then we have got nothing to lose. Let the sons of the palm wine tappers at Kabala, or Kamagbengbeh, or in Binkolo have an equal right just as the sons and daughters of Yansaneh, Minkailu and Ernest Bai Koroma in the APC. I don't see it difficult why the illegal leadership is still pretending not to know these facts. We have come from a long road, a long way gone. Correcting the wrongs is the only option and weeding out the bad eggs in this party can save us a better democracy as we use to enjoy it. The clear message is that even with their illegality, our executive members are dysfunctional, they cannot save the people. They must first concentrate

on addressing the many skeletons in their cupboards. Till such is addressed, these dysfunctional and illegal executives have got nothing to write home about. The best option is to peacefully step down. It is high time we opted for the best man to be the winner because the people's candidate is the best candidate.

Conclusively, it is important to add that, my intentions are very static and clear. I do know that they had been sending all sort of false messages to our grassroots supporters that I am doing this because I was not given a big position in the last regime. But let it now be clear that it has never crossed my mind, nor have I ever asked, or someone offered me any political position in the past regime. I am a content minded individual that has a stark belief in God. I am only doing this because I am from the grassroots and I will continue to represent them. Let their voice be heard. It is high time we acted fast and push away the idea of who your father is or was? Let equality be the gateway to every affair of the party. So, to win this fight, we have now transformed it from reformation to revolution. It's a revolution train that is set to bring sanity in the APC. At this juncture, I therefore call on every member of the APC to join the fight that could save them and their generations yet unborn. We are all potential winners when given the chance. So, no one man can become superman above all of us. The people have seen the light and I will march them towards it. I do believe that politics is not a game of deceiving people with promises that cannot be fulfilled. That is why, when many people are calling and endorsing my candidature to serve the party, I encourage them to support me to win the case as it is what's important for now. Every other political ambition can come later if we succeed to have an overhaul within the structures of our party. Let the grassroots voices be heard.

Zambian President Promises to Accede to Recommendations from the APRM

By Prince Kurupati



President Lungu said he is cognizant of the fact that Zambia has been found wanting when it comes to marketing its tourism products.

Zambian President Edgar Lungu in his address to the 30th Summit of African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) promised to accede to the recommendations from APRM's Zambia peer-review. APRM is a mutually agreed instrument voluntarily acceded to by AU member states as an African self-monitoring mechanism.

APRM states that its purpose is "to foster the adoption of policies, standards and practices that lead to political stability, high economic growth, sustainable development and accelerated sub-regional and continental economic integration through sharing of experiences and reinforcement of successful and best practice, including identifying deficiencies and assessing the needs for capacity building."

Zambia acceded to the APRM on 22 January 2006 at the AU Summit held in Khartoum, Sudan and was peer-reviewed on 26 January, 2013 with the field mission conducted in Zambia in November, 2019. Leading the field mission in Zambia was Bishop Don Dinis Sengulane. Zambia was peer-

reviewed on "The Contribution of Tourism to the Economy of Zambia."

In its peer review, the APRM managed to conduct a meticulous mission which exposed and highlighted salient issues in the sectors of tourism and the economy in Zambia. First and foremost, the peer review highlighted that there lies great potential in heritage and conservation sites in the northern circuit of Zambia. The peer review went further to state that the potential in this region can equal that of Victoria Falls in the southern circuit of Zambia. Victoria Falls is one of the world's seven natural wonders and attracts thousands of tourists every month.

While acknowledging everything that the peer review stated with regards to the heritage and conservation sites in the northern circuit of Zambia, President Lungu said that contrary to a statement in the review, Zambia's northern circuit is not limited when it comes to product base as there are many wildlife and conservation bases in the region. The world that Zambia needs

to do as stated in the peer review is to properly package the bases and market them for the benefit of local communities as well as the entire country at large.

President Lungu said he is cognizant of the fact that Zambia has been found wanting when it comes to marketing its tourism products something which has, in turn, "overshadowed the numerous tourist attractions in Zambia." Taking cue of the peer review recommendations, President Lungu said that his administration is now working flat out with all relevant stakeholders to "embark on a vigorous strategy of marketing Zambia's tourism products." He said that in spite of the current challenges being faced as a result of the novel corona virus pandemic, his administration will strive to market Zambia as a prime tourist destination both within the continent and beyond.

The field mission came at the opportune moment according to President Lungu. He said that the field mission team came at a time when the country was debating "on

whether to convert part of the Lower Zambezi National Park to allow for mining activities." The field mission team joined in the debate and took time to visit the area physically and concluded that the best possible conclusion to the debate will be to "conduct a detailed feasibility study." As such, the President said his administration will do just this and will follow science in finding a sustainable answer to the debate.

Coming to the mining subject, President Lungu said the country has not been short of blessings as it keeps discovering new copper mines in the north-western province. The President however did acknowledge the peer review findings that the benefits of mining activities in most communities are still to be felt. While acknowledging the facts of the findings, President Lungu said that it should be "understood that the proceeds of such investments usually takes time to trickle down to local communities. Let alone the country at large." Though this is the case, he stated that his government is committed to uplifting communities

and will continue to work to ensure that communities benefit from the resources abundant in their regions.

Amongst the findings of the peer review, it was noted that Zambia may be failing to benefit immensely from mining activities in the country owing to an absence of predictable tax regime which guarantees investments and instills investor confidence. President Lungu did advise however that frequent tax change regime effected by his administration are sometimes necessary as they help in leveling up the field thus ensuring a win-win situation for both the government and the investors.

The President went on to state that local communities may in the near future start to realize the benefits of resources abundant in their regions following the recent discovery of gold in the north-western province. He stated that his administration will draw lessons from “other gold mining African countries on how we (Zambia) can harness this potential for the benefit of our people.”

To conclude, President Lungu said he is very much appreciative of APRM’s targeted review which unearthed best practices both in the tourism and mining sectors. He promised to abide by the recommendations strictly in ensuring that Zambia benefits from its local resources both tourism products and mineral resources.



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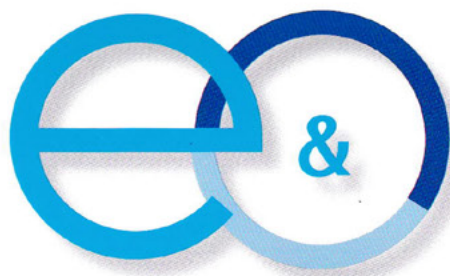
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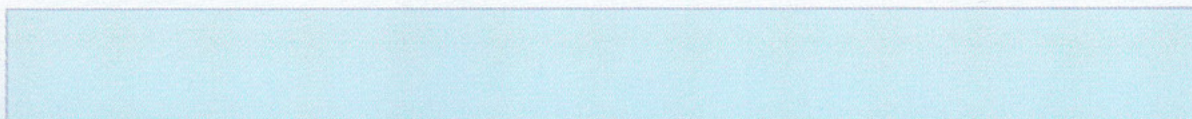
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Francis Ngannou: From the Sand Mines to UFC Heavyweight Champion

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

From the sand mines of Cameroon, to the streets of Paris as a homeless man, to the most powerful heavyweight potentially ever seen in the UFC, Francis the “Predator” Ngannou has been on a journey which could well be seen on a script on the desks of Hollywood producers.

And on March 27, he achieved the dream he had been chasing since making his debut in the Ultimate Fighting Championship, UFC by winning the heavyweight title. The win came after defeating Stipe Miocic in the second round via a devastating knockout.

The victory for Ngannou should, however, not come as a surprise to many looking at the devastating knockouts his previous opponents had to go through. Ngannou headed into this second fight after winning his four previous fights without even removing a sweat.

He defeated Jairzinho Rozenstruik via a KO just 20secs into the first round. He had defeated Junior Dos Santos 1mins 11sec in the first round and Cain Velasquez (20secs into round one) and Curtis Blaydes (45secs in round one).

His devastating knockout of Alistair Overeem at UFC 218 on December 2, 2017, is still being regarded as one of the scariest knockouts in the UFC. The punch from the “Predator” left Overeem on the canvas with the UFC doctors rushing into the octagon before the referee even had the chance to call the fight.

«I don’t know if I can find the vocabulary to express this,» a joyous Ngannou said after the biggest win of his career. «This was a promise that I made to myself when I was young. To achieve this, when no one thought I could, is such a powerful feeling. To prove wrong those who doubted me gives me immense satisfaction,» he commented afterwards.

«When the journey is longer, the reward is always more appreciated.



Ngannou is the first African Heavyweight champion.

I’m sure I would have been happy three years ago, but I think now, I have a different perspective about it, being happy about my improvement.»

A tough upbringing for Ngannou

At 10 years old, Ngannou started working in a sand quarry in Batié because of a lack of funds. As a youngster, he was approached by several gangs in his village to join them.[12] However, Ngannou refused and instead decided to use his father’s negative reputation as a street fighter as motivation to do something positive and pursue boxing.

At the age of 26, he decided to head to Paris, France, to

pursue professional boxing. However upon reaching Europe, he was jailed for two months in Spain for illegally crossing the border. After Ngannou reached Paris, he had no money, no friends, and no place to live.

“When I started, I had nothing. Nothing. I needed everything. But when you start [to earn money], you start collecting things: I want this, I want this, I want that. The purpose is not collecting things, though. The purpose is to do something great. Finish the dream you started,” Ngannou said back then.

“A lot of children now in Cameroon, because of me, they have a dream. They say, ‘I will be a champion in

MMA. I will do boxing like Francis,’ because they saw me when I was young. I didn’t have anything. I didn’t have any opportunity. And today, they see me, and they are dreaming. They are thinking that something is possible. Even when they are so poor, something is possible in life. ... It’s not easy. It’s so hard, but it’s possible.

Second-time lucky for the “Predator”

Francis Ngannou and Stipe Miocic were facing each other for the second time after their first encounter in January 2018. That fight for the title was seen as a one-sided affair as the more experience champion Miocic retained his belt.

Francis Ngannou was the up-and-comer ready to take the division by storm. He might do that one day, but Miocic was there to prove the day hasn’t come yet. Instead, the champ avoided the challenger’s early storm and imposed his will in a unanimous-decision win (50-44, 50-44, and 50-44) at Boston’s TD Garden.

Miocic came out wrestling from the start in the first fight. While Ngannou was flailing at air, Miocic ducked under and looked for single-leg takedowns. They weren’t all successful, but they got the job done. Eventually, he got the challenger down and started his war of attrition.

It only took about one round for Miocic’s plan to take form. From there, Miocic put on a clinic. He swarmed Ngannou with pressure and forced him to fight into the third round for the first time. Miocic got tired toward the end of the bout, but it was as one-sided as a five-round championship clash can be.

Jon Jones, the next contender for Francis Ngannou?

Following the victory, Jon Jones tweeted «let’s go baby» to signal his desire to make his heavyweight debut against the new champ, Ngannou.

Jones vacated his Light heavyweight belt to move to the heavyweight division and for a chance to become a champion in that weight class.

Per a report in The Sun, Jones has said he will not accept an offer of £7.25 million as he demanded 'respectable numbers' for the fight.

Posting on Twitter, Jones said: «I had a brief phone meeting with UFC's lawyer Hunter a few days ago. As of right now I expressed to him that anywhere around eight to \$10 million would be way too low for a fight of this magnitude. That's all that has been discussed so far.»

The new champion Francis Ngannou has said that he will be ready to make his first title defense against Jones in July or August.

«The guy we saw tonight is scarier than the guy we were afraid of yesterday,» UFC president Dana White said of Ngannou during the post-fight press conference. «The guy is a physical freak. He's a problem, he's a scary dude.»

It is still uncertain if UFC President Dan White will be willing to make the fight happen anytime soon. But there is a huge chance that the two juggernauts will meet each other soon.

Africans Dominating the UFC with Three Champions

Like Francis Ngannou, Africa is on



The victory of Ngannou catapulted him to a cult figure across Africa.

the map with two other champions in different weight classes in the UFC. Kamaru Usman is the welterweight champion, while Israel Adesanya is the Middleweight champion.

Having moved to New Zealand at the age of 11, Adesanya's return to Lagos the following month was a joyous occasion as he visited his former primary school and left feeling

spiritually enriched. It had been a long time coming too for Adesanya who had been predicted he was a champion in waiting.

Usman, who became the first African-born champion in UFC history, is yet to return to his home country but wants to bring the UFC to a continent which is continuing to produce incredible champions.

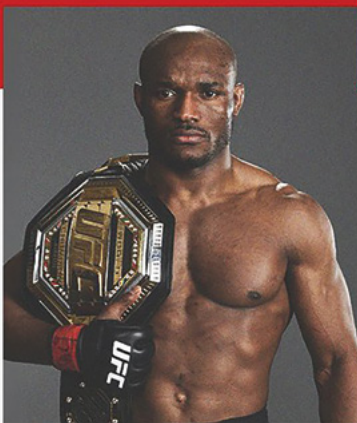
«That's what we all want to do,» Kamaru Usman said. «We all want to be able to go back and touch those people over there and let them know, hey, even though we are over here, we're doing our best to give back and carry our flag to the highest place that we can.»

It is not as if this wave of African dominance was not foreshadowed; Adesanya famously predicted the future of the UFC before becoming the undisputed middleweight world champion against Robert Whittaker at UFC 243.

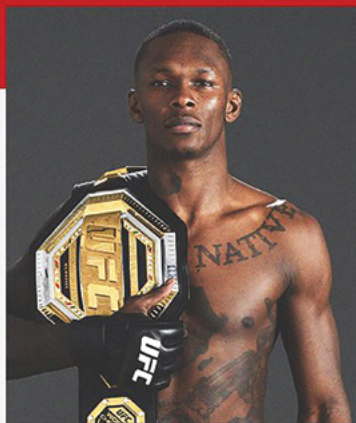
«Every so often there's always a legion of a certain part of the world that starts making a come-up in MMA,» he warned. «I'm telling you, once the Nigerians pull up, once we start to pull up with numbers, it's going to be over for a lot of years in the MMA world.»

Like his other African brother Ngannou has mentioned that it is time for the UFC to stage an event in Africa. He also plans to bring the belt home and display it so that other children can take their inspiration from it that if they put their heart and minds in anything, they can achieve it.

AFRICAN-BORN UFC CHAMPIONS



KAMARU USMAN
UFC WELTERWEIGHT CHAMPION



ISRAEL ADESANYA
UFC MIDDLEWEIGHT CHAMPION



FRANCIS NGANNOU
UFC HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION

There are now three African UFC Champions.

Total AFCON 2021: Egypt, Cameroon, Look to Continue their Dominance

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

23 out of 24 countries have booked their spot at next year's Africa Cup of Nations, AFCON to be staged in Cameroon. The competition was to run this year but due to the coronavirus outbreak it had to be pushed forward to January and February of 2022.

The draw for the competition is expected on June 25, 2021 in Cairo, Egypt. The competition which will be hosted in Cameroon will run from January 9 to February 6, 2022. The date signifies a shift from the last competition that was held in Egypt in June and July, also going back to its original months.

There have been 334 goals scored in 150 matches, for an average of 2.23 goals per match. Algeria; Comoros; Burkina Faso, Cameroon; Cape Verde; Ivory Coast; Egypt; Equatorial Guinea; Ethiopia; Gabon; Gambia; Ghana; Guinea; Guinea Bissau; Malawi; Mali; Mauritania; Morocco; Nigeria; Senegal; Sudan; Tunisia and Zimbabwe are the countries that have booked their sport at the Cameroon finals.

Comoros and the Gambia will be making their first participation at the AFCON finals while Algeria is the defending champions after winning the 2019 edition in Egypt.



Algeria is the defending champion after capturing the title in 2019.

A litmus test for Cameroon on home soil

Cameroon is looking forward to emulate Ghana, Sudan, South Africa, Egypt and Tunisia as host and winners of the competition. South Africa did so in 1996; Tunisia hosted in 2004 and won it while Egypt followed in 2006.

Cameroon has hosted the AFCON competition just once and that came as far back as 1972. During that competition the country managed to finish on the third place. The country is the second-most successful country

in the competition having won it five times, the last being in 2017 when Vincent Aboubakar scored the final goal as Cameroon won Egypt 2-1 in the final.

Cameroon's hopes lies with a crop of senior players and those who are just entering the national team. The country looks to do better than they did in 2019 finishing in the round of 16 as they were beaten 3-2 by Nigeria.

CAF had stripped Cameroon of AFCON 2019 hosting duties after the federation deemed the country's preparations for the tournament as

unfinished, awarding the rights to Egypt instead. Then CAF president Ahmad Ahmad announced that Cameroon had accepted to host the following tournament.

AFCON 2021 matches will take place in six stadiums across five Cameroon cities: Yaounde, Douala, Garoua, Limbe and Bafoussam. Paul Biya Stadium and the Stade Ahmadou Ahidjo in the capital Yaounde, the Japoma Stadium in Douala, the Limbe Stadium, Kouekong Stadium in Bafoussam and the Roumde Adjia Stadium in Garoua have all been chosen as competition venues.

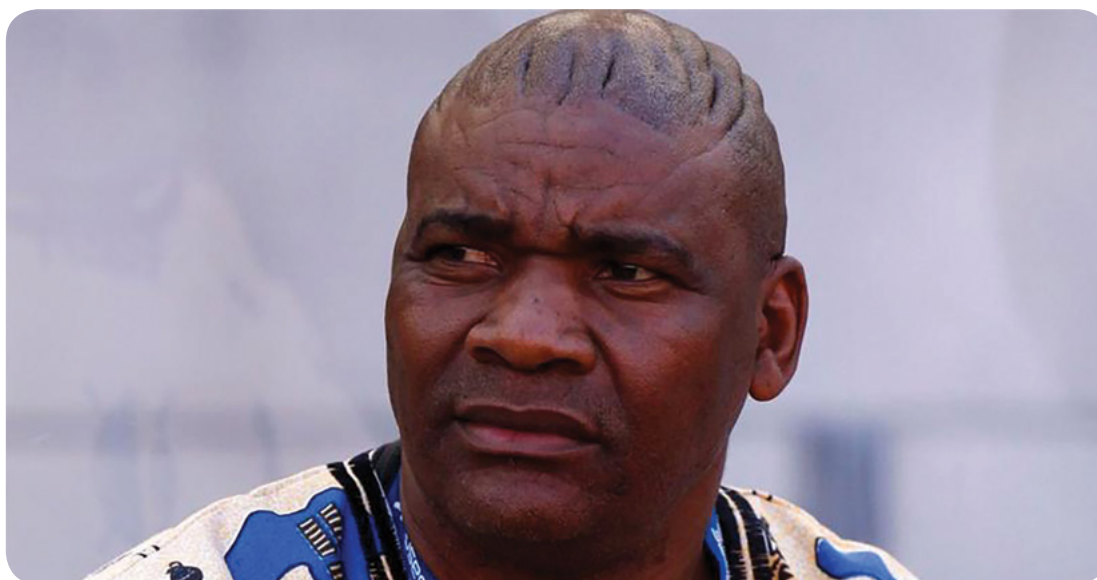
Sierra Leone v Benin's abandoned match to come up in June

The Group L match was called off ahead of kick-off in Freetown on Tuesday, March 30 after five Benin players received news they had tested positive for Covid-19 and would not be allowed to play. Benin questioned the veracity of those tests, and refused to play.

«The Caf Organising Committee for the Africa Cup of Nations has decided to postpone the Afcon 2021 qualification match between



Cameroon has won the AFCON five times with the last being in 2017.



Molefi Ntseki saked by South Africa.

Sierra Leone and Benin to the next Fifa window in June 2021,» a Caf statement said.

«The committee made this decision after reviewing official accounts of the incidents that stopped the match from taking place at the scheduled time.»

Benin only needs to draw the match to be sure of qualification for the Cup of Nations finals in Cameroon in 2022. But if Sierra Leone wins the game, they will qualify at Benin's expense, as by definition they will have a better goal difference.

Coaches fall after disastrous

performances

South Africa, Togo and Mozambique, have all parted ways with their coaches after they all failed to qualify their respect teams for the competition, with more coaches expected to lose their jobs in the coming weeks.

Molefi Ntseki was appointed to lead South Africa in August 2019 with the hope of qualifying for the AFCON. But that is now only a dream for the country has missed out on the opportunity to make its back-to-back appearance after participating in the 2019 Egypt expedition. South Africa was eliminated at the quarter-

finals by Nigeria at the 2019 edition in Egypt.

«Not qualifying has dented our image, our possibilities,» he told BBC Sport Africa. «As passionate South Africans, the expectation was for Bafana Bafana to qualify for Afcon - and maybe to do better than the last time. The disappointment goes to every South African.

«As players, as coaches, we are very much aware of the emotional pain we have caused all South Africans.» «It was a very big setback for us to concede two goals in the first half,» he said. We missed chances. On the day we could not get a goal or see

ourselves getting an equalizer.»

For Claude Le Roy who had coached Ghana, Senegal and guiding Cameroon to win the trophy in 1988, saw his end of his mandate after failing to qualify the country for the AFCON.

The Hawks who finished bottom of their group failed to record a win in all their group matches, including a 2-1 defeat at Home to Kenya in their final game of the qualifiers. Le Roy has been in charge of the Togolese senior Team since 2016, guiding the team to the 2017 Africa Cup of Nations, making a personal Record, 9th appearance in the Tournament.

Previous Champions

Algeria is defending champions after winning the 2019 AFCON final against Senegal, with Baghdad Bounedjah scoring the only goal in a 1-0 victory. Nigeria's Odion Ighalo was top-scorer of the 2019 edition, with Riyad Mahrez and Mane tied in third place with three goals apiece.

Egypt has won the tournament a record seven times, last winning in 2010 after defeating Ghana in the final. Ivory Coast, Nigeria and Zambia are also winners of the competition, the latter two winning the 2013 and 2011 editions respectively.



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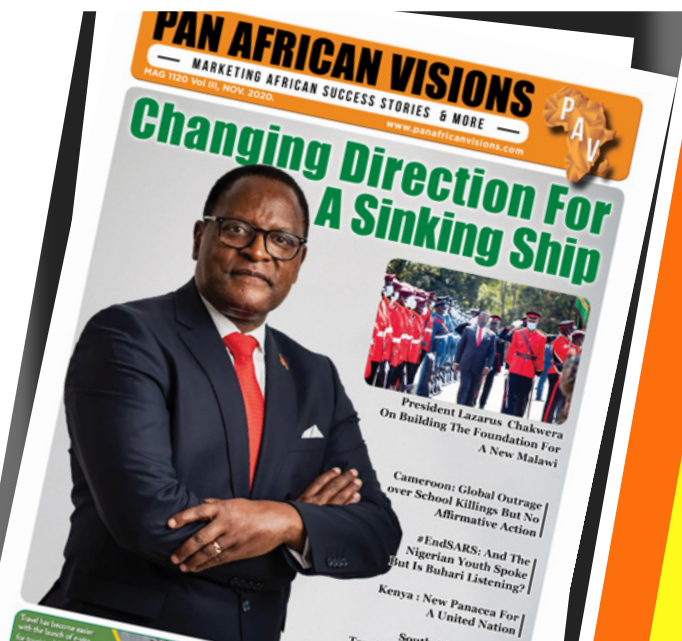
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