



Corporate Africa Perspectives

With Robin Vela

- **Sudan:** The Empire Strikes Back
- **Rwanda:** Paul Kagame For A Fourth Term?
- **Cameroon:** A Turn For The Worse In Anglophone Crisis
- **Cote d'Ivoire:** Renewed Hope As Foes Ouattara and Gbagbo Meet



■ ICT University In Focus

Travel has become easier with the launch of e-visa for tourists. Visit Ethiopia...

Ethiopian



SAA VOTED BEST AIRLINE FOR STAFF SERVICE IN AFRICA AND RETAINS 4-STAR RATING

Thank you for making it all possible



SOUTH AFRICAN AIRWAYS
A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER



CENTURION

Lawyers and Business Advisors

PAN-AFRICAN
PRO-AFRICAN

www.centurionlg.com

C O N T E N T S

3000 Lives And A Ray of Hope from Cote d'Ivoire _____	2	Prof Victor Mbarika On A Tale Of Vision and Success At The ICT University _____	31
Cote d'Ivoire-Renewed Hope As Foes Ouattara and Gbagbo Meet _____	4	Venture Capital Investment Hits New Heights In Africa _____	36
Message to the World -Africa Is Open For Business _____	5	Making SMEs Matter _____	39
Corporate Africa Perspectives With Robin Vela _____	8	COMESA Plans Big On Africa's Agro-Industry _____	41
Namibia-A New Bold Youth Policy _____	13	The Fomunyoh Foundation Donates to IDPs, Schools in Kumba _____	42
Rwanda-Kagame's Fourth Term Temotations _____	16	Russia and China As Geopolitical Rivals and Competitors in Africa _____	45
Nigeria -Another Doctor's Strike _____	17	Rwanda-No Hiding Place For Genocide Fugitives _____	48
Sudan-The Empire Strikes Back _____	18	Kenya-Hunger Rears Its Ugly Face _____	49
Cameroon-Emboldened Separatists More Daring In Military Attacks _____	21	A Celebration of Excellence At ICT University. _____	52
Ghana To Host HQ Of Cocoa Initiative _____	24	Introducing Communication Platforms as a Service (CPaaS) _____	54
Zimbabwe-Questionable Stakes on Kazungula Bridge _____	25	Zambia-Challenging False Prophets _____	56
Former President Olusegun Obasanjo Storms ICT University _____	28	The Rise of Women Rugby in Africa _____	57

PAN AFRICAN VISIONS

7614 Green Willow Court, Hyattsville, MD 20785

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

Managing Editor

Ajong Mbapndah L

Contributors

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

Bah Uzman Unis,
Mohammed M Mupenda,
Pierre Afadhali
Jean d'Amour Mbonyinshuti
Nevson Mpofu
Boris Esono Nwenfor
Amos Fofung
Jean d'Amour Mugabo
Jessica Ahedor

Advertising

Email:
marketing@
panafricanvisions.com

Graphic Designer

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

3000 Lives And A Ray of Hope from Cote d'Ivoire

By Ajong Mbatndah L

“I am happy to see you again,” President Alassane Ouattara told his predecessor and fierce rival Laurent Gbagbo at their meeting on 27 July. In a move that many Ivoirians did not think possible, Ouattara and Gbagbo actually hugged and were all smiles at the meeting.

“What is important for Cote d'Ivoire is peace in our country,” President Ouattara said, while Gbagbo called on the President to release all those who were still in prison as a result of the political standoff between both men in 2011.

With fresh tensions and prospects of another civil war looming especially with the schisms in the alliance that backed Ouattara's rise to power, the return of Gbagbo after some ten years of detention at the International Criminal Court greatly fueled the stakes. Irrespective of who initiated the meeting or the dynamics that played out for it to take place, the bottom line is that it brought Cote d'Ivoire back from the brink.

For President Ouattara the meeting helped in burnishing his democratic credentials in the aftermath of a contentious presidential elections and the scorn from reneging on a promise not to seek a third term. Like him or hate him, the meeting helped in building the credentials of Gbagbo as a statesman—a man without rancour, a man willing to forgive, a man willing to put country first. Above all, the meeting could be considered as a small consolation or down payments of sorts for the pain of over 3000 lives that perished as a result of the bloody political feud between Ouattara and Gbagbo.

“The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure,” Thomas Jefferson said. The blood of those 3000 people and should be a reminder of President Ouattara, and former President Laurent Gbagbo and others to get it right in Cote d'Ivoire. While Gbagbo's

spokesman Justin Katinan Kone cautioned people on making too much of the meeting, many believe that it is right step towards the healing and reconciliation that is needed to help Cote d'Ivoire surge forward with more certainty and confidence.

For the rest of the continent, the Ouattara-Gbagbo détente could serve as a lesson and eye-open on doing politics differently. Rather than waiting for 3000 lives to ravaged, crisis can be nipped in the bud with dialogue. Political differences must not always be resolved with bloody confrontation. In Cameroon, a country that the past hosted refugees from Chad, Central Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, Liberia, and others is today mired in bloody conflict with a separatist movement in the English-speaking part of the country. It is a conflict that would have been handled with genuine dialogue, it is a conflict that would have been handled if President Biya personally invested in it.

At a time of heightened political volatility, President Ouattara took the challenge of meeting with his opponent. In Kenya, President Uhuru Kenyatta and opposition leader Raila Odinga have figured a way out of their vicious political rivalry and the heavy toll it took on human life and property in Kenya. It is sad that after 40 years in power, the biggest legacy that President Biya may bequeath to Cameroon will be a bloodied and divided country. We did not see him meeting in person with opposition leaders or civil society leaders from the aggrieved English speaking regions, we have not seen him doing a public address to dwell specifically on the crisis. Even at the cosmetic dialogue that he called, he neither addressed the opening or closing



Ajong Mbatndah L, Managing Editor

session. The result is that the military solution is showing its limits, and no one knows who exactly is in charge. Yet, this is one crisis that never should have gotten where it is today, with a more vigorous leadership and proactive response to the legitimate concerns of people of the English-speaking regions.

When two brothers fight, a stranger reaps the harvest says an African proverb. While courses maybe worth the supreme price, the deception from leaders should remind us to take a deep breath and ponder well before taking the leap. When we think of the lives lost in Cote d'Ivoire and Ouattara and Gbagbo smiling today, one is tempted to ask again, what was the fight all about? When you see President Uhuru Kenyatta and Opposition leader Raila Odinga working hand in glove today, it is hard not to look back and ask if it was necessary to sacrifice so many lives in electoral violence. The same question can be asked about Cameroon today. A prominent banner at the Founban conference of 1961 that played a prominent role in the merger of the two Cameroons read how nice it is to meet our brothers. Why is it so hard for the leadership to earnestly listen

to the legitimate grievances of one part of the union and hold open and sincere dialogue to chat a better way forward?

For Africa to move forward, the younger generation must be capacitated and given a chance to lead, says Robin Vela, Chairman of the Lonsa Group, a leading investment entity in Africa incorporated in Mauritius. At the helm of a corporate entity whose principals have unrivalled experience and knowledge of working with businesses gained by investing more than USD\$2.5-billion in the continent over the past 17 years, Robin Vela believes that

the Africa of today needs leadership that are in sync with the aspirations of the super talented, tech savvy and ambitious generation of today. For the busy man he is, Robin Vela is passionate about Africa and its potentials and accepted to share perspectives in this issue of PAV magazine.

In the mold of a generation of tech savvy and ambitious Africans working to power the continent forward is Prof Victor Mbarika, Founder and President Board of Trustees, of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) University.

Fresh off a crowd pulling graduation in Yaounde, Cameroon chaired by former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, Prof Mbarika sheds light on higher education in Africa and progress with his vision of setting up ICT Universities across all regions of the continent.

This issue of PAV also has stories on the travails of former President Jacob Zuma in South Africa, prospects of another Presidential run in Rwanda for President Paul Kagame, the deluge of false prophets in Zambia, the surge of venture capital in Africa, the fight for political reforms in Sudan, and more. Happy reading!!



African Energy

Week

SAVE THE
DATE

26-29
OCTOBER
2021

The Waterfront
CAPE TOWN
South Africa



Join us at the first global
ENERGY VILLAGE
at African Energy Week

The four-day conference comprises:

**networking, exhibitions,
one-on-one private meetings,
sponsored breakfasts, lunches,
dinners, beach parties and a
golf tournament.**

Take advantage
of the V&A Waterfront's wide range of
family friendly activities,
shopping and entertainment.

Renewed Hope for Ivoirians as Long Time Foes Ouattara and Gbagbo Meet

By Prince Kurupati

10 years after former Ivorian President Laurent Gbagbo and current President Alassane Ouattara fiercely fought each other in a civil war that claimed over 3,000 lives, the two adversaries met for the first time on 27 July. The meeting between the two was at the behest of the current President Ouattara. Though at best it was just a courtesy meeting between two leaders, the meeting has instilled a new sense of hope, peace and unity amongst Ivoirians who are of the view that any cordial relations between the two can change the developmental trajectory of the country.

Several reports from Cote d'Ivoire allege that Ouattara made first contact with Gbagbo seeking a meeting. Ouattara is alleged to have informed his inner circle first about his intentions via a telephone conversation. Afterwards, Ouattara informed the council of ministers' assembly on 21 July about his intentions. With the ball having been set in motion, Amadou Coulibaly, the Minister of Communication and government spokesman publicly made the announcement that the two leaders would meet.

In making the announcement about the meeting between Ouattara and Gbagbo, Amadou Coulibaly stated



President Ouattara and former President Gbagbo were all smiles at the meeting. Photo credit France 24.

that the two leaders were already in contact, and both had agreed to meet at the Presidential Palace. He went on to state that the meeting would "embody their reconciliation" following the bloody civil war of 10 years ago which torn the country apart and left more than 3,000 people dead.

Many analysts at the time the meeting was announced said Gbagbo warmly welcomed the invitation to the Presidential Palace as he wanted to personally thank the president for giving him free passage to

return to his native country. Gbagbo reportedly is also keen to engage in the reconciliation process. Gbagbo's remarks that he is keen to play a political role in Cote d'Ivoire do prove to some extent his desire to full-heartedly engage in the reconciliation process.

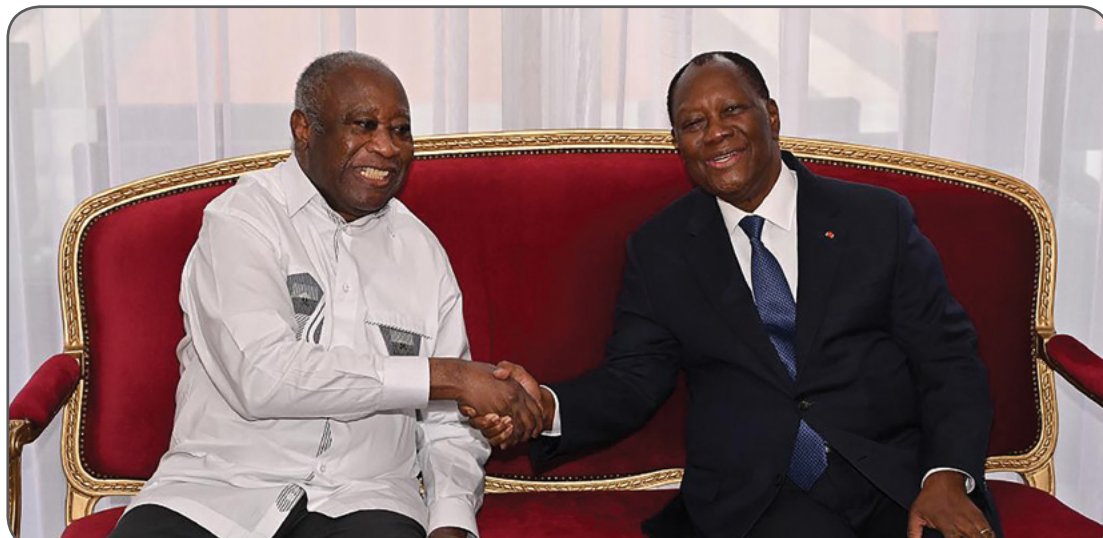
On the day of the meeting on July 27, the two leaders were pictured smiling and holding hands as they posed for photographs upon Gbagbo's arrival at the Presidential Palace, in front of the cameras' Ouattara warmly welcomed his guest stating, "I

am happy to see you". The two would then proceed to enter into a closed doors meeting. The exact details of what was discussed remains a 'secret' to the media but the pronouncements by various close sources to the two just before the meeting paint some picture as to what the agenda was likely.

Justin Katinan Kone Gbagbo's spokesman said before the meeting that the public does not need to "make too much" of it, suggesting that "This is a courtesy visit to his elder." He went on to state that if anything can be achieved out of the meeting besides the strengthening of ties between the two, then that will be a bonus. "If it (meeting) helps to ease the political atmosphere, so much the better," Kone said.

The sentiments echoed by Gbagbo's spokesman Kone were reinforced by Franck Anderson Kouassi who is the spokesman for Gbagbo's Ivorian Popular Front (FPI) party. In a statement, Kouassi said "Laurent Gbagbo is in a spirit of openness, dialogue and reconciliation... Meeting President Ouattara is exactly in line with our way of thinking."

The sentiments echoed by Kone and Kouassi if they are to be believed



The meeting went a long way to diffuse political tensions in the West African country.

as they are on the surface suggest that the meeting between Ouattara and Gbagbo was something to do with the two coming to terms with each other and respecting each other in their respective positions. Nothing more to it. However, even if this is the case, the mere fact that the two met in-person is a great thing for Cote d'Ivoire as it illustrates the determination and

willingness of Ouattara and Gbagbo to transform their relationship from that of adversaries into one of friendship. This ultimately will lead to healing not just for the two but also for their supporters hence in a way unifying the country.

According to political analyst Rodrigue Kone, there is something very important and significant that

can be learnt from the meeting between Ouattara and Gbagbo. Kone stated that the meeting in itself will not exactly immediately extinguish any tensions or differences between the two, but it will allow each man to respect the position of the other, and this is very important for the future of Cote d'Ivoire. Kone said that the meeting "won't wipe out

their huge differences but it takes their relationship further along". To Ouattara, Kone suggested that Gbagbo's acceptance of the invitation to visit the Presidential Palace "sees the meeting as recognition by Gbagbo of Ouattara's legitimacy – something that hasn't been conveyed before in such a visible and official manner."

Message to the World: Africa is Open for Business

By Kester Kenn Klomegah

With the headquarters situated in Accra, the capital city of the Republic of Ghana, the Secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is now attracting a special business focus for both African countries and foreign countries. For foreign countries, it is an opportune time to strengthen bilateral economic cooperation and install joint manufacturing clusters inside Africa.

Some African countries are focusing on combining resources to step up production and distribution of high-quality commodities, as under the designed regulations goods and products can circulate across borders without taxes – one of the conditions under the newly established African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

In that direction, Ghana has witnessed unprecedented number of high-powered foreign visitors. Early August, it hosted a huge business forum during the three-day official visit of President João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço of Angola. That oil-rich country is located on the west coast of Southern Africa. It is the second-largest Portuguese-speaking country in both total area and population (behind Brazil), and is the seventh-largest country in Africa.

According to official documents, President João Lourenço visited at the invitation of President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo. It was a reciprocal visit for President Lourenço, as in August 2019, he first invited President Akufo-Addo. During their meeting at the Jubilee



President João Lourenço and Wamkele Mene of the AfCFTA in Accra, Ghana. Photo courtesy.

House, the seat of the presidency, both leaders expressed the highest desire to strengthen and deepen their bilateral ties between both countries.

The agreement signed allows for a consultative mechanism for Ghana and Angola to interact regularly on areas of mutual interest, particularly in mining and hydrocarbon industry development, agriculture, education, tourism, transportation, and maritime security.

Angola looks to explore Ghana's vast experience in the mining and cocoa sectors, whilst Ghana seeks to benefit from Angola's rich knowledge in the oil and gas sector. The two leaders vowed to jointly fight threats to maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea.

Under the auspices of the Secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the

business forum that brought President João Lourenço to Ghana, was held and aimed at expanding bilateral business relations through promotion of two-way investment and mutually complementary partnerships in the relations between the two countries.

It was additionally focused to drive networking for investment opportunities, attempted at exploring ways to boost trade and to discuss concrete solutions to roadblocks hindering investment and increase two-way exports between Angola and Ghana.

South African Wamkele Keabetswe Mene, the first Secretary-General of the AfCFTA Secretariat elected in February 2020, reiterated during the opening that the AfCFTA was set to effectively harmonize trade in goods and services in addition to improving the business environment by reducing

tariff and non-tariff barriers on the continent.

In addition, the move marks a new trade and investment era for Africa and offers a wide range of possibilities for businesses across various sectors in the member states.

Resultantly, this new dawn of continental integration presented wide-spectrum of opportunities for both Angolan and Ghanaian companies in multiple sectors including agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture, petroleum and hydrocarbon activities, environment, science and technology, and tourism.

«With harmonized trade regulations and better movement of goods and services across the continent, the case for production in Africa for Africa is now a reality, where business operators in the member states can play a significant role,»

Mene told the forum gathering, and added further that by consolidating Africa into one trade area provided great opportunities for entrepreneurs, businesses and consumers across the continent, unlocking trade and manufacturing potentials, enhancing industrialization in Africa.

With wide work experience in diplomacy including previous position as the Chief Director for Africa Economic Relations in South Africa's Department of Trade and Industry and South Africa's lead negotiator in the African Continental Free Trade Agreement, Wamkele Mene made a strong case for investing in Africa.

Compared to previous times, Africa is increasingly and gradually becoming more competitive investment destination for decades to come because of its improving relative risk profiles, demography, and continental integration.

«My message today is very simple: Africa is open for business. The business potential of the continent is tremendous in various sectors, including agriculture, energy, infrastructure, natural resources, and information and communications, offering opportunities for entrepreneurs,» Mene asserted in his speech, and urged the business community to scale up entrepreneurship and turn challenges into springboards.

Alan Kyerematen, Ghana's Minister of Trade and Industry, similarly reiterated that the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), provides a unique platform to guide the continent's industrialization, trade and economic recovery effort.

Angola and Ghana have a lot to gain from working together in



President João Lourenço with President Akufo-Addo The Angolan leader said his visit was hugely successful. Photo courtesy

fields such as agriculture, fisheries, livestock, industry, oil and gas, the petrochemical industry, value addition to their mineral resources, development of energy resources particularly renewable energy, financial technology and the industry.

Africa is shifting from one of the challenges and gaps to one about opportunities and prospects. The continent is now receiving a high level of interest as an investment destination from investors from across the globe. Indeed, it has a new narrative that should inspire the African diaspora to explore opportunities on the continent and invest in the various sectors.

Businesspeople from Ghana, Egypt, Senegal, Nigeria, United Arab Emirates, among other guests, participated in the business forum held at the headquarters of the African Continental Free Trade Area, where the Angolan head of State encouraged investment in Angola.

Later at the Legislative Assembly session, the Speaker of Parliament Rt

Hon Alban S. K. Bagbin, in his welcome speech urged Africa countries to direct their energies towards building stronger institutions and systems, and further argued that globally, countries that have succeeded in this endeavor, tend to discharge their mandates for the benefits of their people. Speaker Bagbin commended President João Lourenço for his dedication in tackling corruption head-on and reducing economic graft in his country.

On his part while addressing the parliamentarians, President João Lourenço commended the Parliament and Speaker Bagbin's leadership, for being able to steer the affairs of the house despite its unique nature. He called for deeper cooperation between the two countries in building a formidable energy sector, parliamentary diplomacy and good governance.

With the inception of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), there is now increased and diversified opportunities to promote

trade and attract foreign direct investment, create businesses and spur entrepreneurship, transfer new knowledge and skills within the entire African market space.

Currently, almost 70 percent of countries that have signed the agreement have deposited their instruments of ratification, which means they have legally accepted the obligation to open their markets, reduce their barriers to trade, reduce barriers to investment and adhere to this single set of rules for trade and investment on the African continent.

The Secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area is an independent organ of the African Union System in charge of the negotiations and implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement. Trading under the African Continental Free Trade Area started in earnest on 1st January 2021, following a five-and-half-year period since negotiations were launched on 15th June 2015.

Travel has become easier
with the launch of e-visa
for tourists. Visit Ethiopia...

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

Ethiopian



LONSA

GROUP OF COMPANIES

Lonsa, a Mauritanian corporate holding entity, is a principal investment entity investing in the energy, industrials, logistics and property sectors in Southern Africa. Lonsa was formed in 2004 and has a track record of concluding complex corporate transactions. Lonsa's principals have unrivalled experience and knowledge of working and delivering value in its chosen businesses gained by investing in excess of 2.5 Billion USD in the continent over the past 17 years. Lonsa operates from offices in Johannesburg, Harare, Ebene and London.



Lonsa controls the following entities:



Infrastructure development



Infrastructure development



Infrastructure development



Logistics



Housing



Renewable Energy

Generational Shift Needed To Power Africa Forward- Lonsa Group Ltd Chair Robin Vela.

By Ajong Mbapndah L

For Africa to move forward, the younger generation must be capacitated and given a chance to lead, says Robin Vela, Chairman of the Lonsa Group, a leading investment entity in Africa incorporated in Mauritius.

To Robin Vela, Africa has an abundance of talent with a generation of globally educated talent leading multinational companies but under appreciated by a generation of leaders in the twilight of their lives. For a generation that is driven by instant news, communication, and technology, the seasoned corporate personality believes that much of the leaderships in Africa are not in sync with the ambitions of many young Africans.

"If the biggest economy in the world can elect a 44-year-old as its Commander-in-Chief, why would a country with 0.02% of the world's GDP think it can only be led by a person of 55 years plus?" Robin Vela questions.

Lonsa's principals have unrivalled experience and knowledge of working with businesses gained by investing more than USD\$2.5-billion in the continent over the past 17 years, says Robin who enjoys global repute. Still, it is in his native Zimbabwe that this reputation was nearly tarnished when he took on the challenge of bringing to life the moribund National Social Security Authority of Zimbabwe, -NSSA.

The whole point of taking the NSSA assignment was love for country and a desire to give back, says Robin who believes his ethical and rigorous management impeded the feeding trough.

With strong forays in the energy sector, Robin Vela maintains strong criticisms of the controversial decision to relocate the African Oil Week from South Africa to Dubai. The move was akin to scoring an own goal and the emergence of the African Oil Week was only a logical response



Robin Vela, Chairman of the Lonsa Group is at the helm of seasoned principals who have invested more than USD \$2.5 billion across Africa in last 17 years

from Africans who felt slighted.

"I believe African Energy Week will continue to get (and has already got) substantial support from many who are similarly offended as me at the exhibition being moved off the Continent," Robin Vela says.

Could we start with an introduction of the Lonsa Group of industries that you lead and in what countries the Group has operations in?

Lonsa Group Limited ("Lonsa") is a principal investment entity investing in businesses that enable infrastructural development; facilitate logistical services; deliver renewable energy; and provide

affordable housing in Africa. It is incorporated in Mauritius.

Lonsa's current investee businesses (and our brands) are:

Infrastructure development

- Everite
- Sky Sands
- Sheet-rite

Logistics

- Robvel

Renewable Energy

- Lonsa Energy

Housing

- Firstmile

Lonsa was established in 2004 and has a track record of concluding complex corporate transactions.

Lonsa's principals have unrivalled experience and knowledge of working with businesses gained by investing more than USD\$2.5-billion in the continent over the past 17 years.

There are only a handful of African Countries, principally in North Africa, where Lonsa's principals have not done business.

With the vast wealth of knowledge and broad experience that you have how would sum up the current business realities and potentials of the continent?

Africa remains the undiscovered continent with a growing, youthful, and urbanizing population giving it huge economic growth potential.

You are one of those whose companies have operations in diverse parts of Africa, how have things worked for you and what challenges have you faced?

Africa is not a homogenous bloc. Each country on the continent has its own nuances and these must always be respected. Lonsa has indeed operated in diverse parts of Africa and in diverse sectors. For instance:

Finance - where we consulted for the World Bank on a refinancing facility for local banks who had short tenure financing for independent power producers in Uganda.

Upstream Oil & Gas activities - Egypt, Nigeria, DRC, Malawi, Tunisia; Housing, Logistics and Power Generation - Zimbabwe, South Africa; Manufacturing and distribution of Building Materials - SADC

From your experience across diverse countries in the continent, what recommendations do you have to make the investment climates more friendly or encourage progressive minded Africans like you to move the continent



For Africa to move forward, the younger generation must be capacitated and given a chance to lead, says Robin Vela.

forward?

In many instances, we are our own worst enemy. We have an arrogance about ourselves and home address forgetting often that CAPITAL is mobile and goes to where it is safest and most welcome.

Africa has an abundance of talent with a generation of globally educated and experienced talent leading many multinational companies. These leaders do not even get a “look in” back home as they do not have liberation war credentials. Absurd indeed!

Africa is led by a generation of leaders in the twilight of their lives but seeking to lead a generation of youth who are more au fait with instant news, instant communication, and the technological generation.

For Africa to move forward, the younger generation must be capacitated and given a chance to lead. If the biggest economy in the world can elect a 44-year-old as its Commander-in-Chief, why would a country with 0.02% of the world's GDP think it can only be led by a person of 55 years plus? This is

primitive at best. The same youth that make up more than 60% of the population are being led by persons they have zero in common with!

Ask yourself – how many of these African leaders know how to work “Tik-Tok”, the go- to app for today's youth?

You had a stint running the National Social Security Authority of Zimbabwe, “NSSA”, in what shape did you meet the entity, in what shape did you leave it?

When I arrived at NSSA, it was an institution with no forward trajectory. It was a US\$1.2-billion fund with investment income of US\$32-million and minimal profits. In three short years, with zero magic but the simple application of investment norms, NSSA's balance sheet was US\$2.3-billion, investment income was US\$190-million and profits were in excess of US\$120 million.

These are facts that are undeniable even from those that wish they could – the Annual Financial Statements do

not lie.

The Annual Financial Statements for NSSA as of 31 December 2014 and compared to that at 31 December 2017 show that NSSA's financial and authoritative position as an activist shareholder had dramatically improved.

Under my watch, NSSA invested in Afrexim notes, the first offshore investment by NSSA as a way of diversifying the NSSA balance sheet from the Zimbabwe macroeconomic concerns. NSSA undertook the merger of two leading players in the insurance market (First Mutual Holdings Limited and Nicos Diamond Limited) to create a formidable player which is today lauded as NSSA's cash cow, though no credit is given to the initiators and executors of the same transaction.

I received the prestigious Megafest Business Leader of the Year award in 2017 for my leadership of NSSA.

That said, holding investee companies and executives to account was not to everyone's liking, as I found at great personal, professional, and reputational cost.

Any regrets on taking the NSSA challenge considering the drama that culminated in your departure and the legal battle that ensued to clear your name?

I am philosophical about my time at NSSA.

I look at my late father, Robin Vela (Senior) who was one of the first black directors of Anglo-American Zimbabwe in the 1980s after Zimbabwe's independence, and I feel his contribution to Zimbabwe was giving the youth a sense that a black man could succeed in previously white-dominated positions.

I felt my contribution to my native Zimbabwe would be to contribute – using the global education and skills I had acquired over some 20 plus years – towards Zimbabwe's economic progress and sustainability.

I was naïve to believe that all Zimbabweans, in particular political leaders, wanted the same thing.

Officially, I was “fired” from my chairmanship role because I was

a “non-resident” of Zimbabwe. This was some three years after my appointment and when the market plaudits were flooding in.

The truth is that I was and remain a straight shooter: I called out the shenanigans and put an end to the feeding trough.

I wanted to resign several times, but I felt a sense of duty to the NSSA senior management team I had just recruited to remain.

I never needed the NSSA position; I did it for the love of country and out of a desire to give back.

It has, however as I have indicated, been enormously costly – not only financially and emotionally, but also in terms of the harm done to my reputation and the opportunities I have lost out on.

Today, some four years after my departure, not one piece of objective evidence has been produced that I acted without the highest degree of integrity. Not one!

The truth is that I was an impediment to the trough and the only way to access it was to have me removed.

But to remove someone who had been applauded by the market had to be justified. So, the reason put forward by the then youthful, inexperienced, newly appointed, and grossly incompetent Zimbabwe Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, Petronella Kagonye, was that I was “non-resident”. The market did not buy this, so she and her cohorts created a false narrative about me being corrupt.

With the coming of the African continental free trade agreement, what opportunities do you see for the continent and any business projects that the Lonsa group has in mind to tap into those opportunities?

The AfCFTA presents both an opportunity but also a risk for Africa.

The opportunity is enabling the continent to feed off each other's best parts to enhance the whole.

That said, Europe tried this and failed; that is why BREXIT is now a reality.

The risk is that because Africa is not homogenous, in jurisdictions with weak institutional structures you will have “rent seeking” that defeats the noble objectives of AFTCA.

The setting up of a distribution centre / labelling a manufacturing concern in Country X, benefiting from AfCFTA concessions, with sales throughout the continent but profits then being transferred to Continent A, where the real owners of the concern are from, will defeat the noble motivation of uplifting the continent.

The key to the success of AfCFTA will be in its ability to be carefully governed.

Robin Vela has considerable experience and stakes in the Energy sector and served at one point as Patron of the African Institute of Petroleum, may we know why you took serious issue with the relocation of the African Oil Week to Dubai?

I started attending Africa Oil Week in the early 2000s as a green-eyed boy whose creator/ founder (Duncan Clarke) took a liking to, simply because of our mutual Zimbabwean links and the mutual connections/networks we shared.

I have the utmost respect for what Duncan had sought to achieve and the opportunities / breaks he gave me as founder of SacOil Holdings Limited, an upstream oil and gas entity which at the time aspired to replicate the success of UK-based Tullow Oil and Afren.

The platform Duncan created was one which sought to showcase, not just African assets and acreage, but also African talent and human resource. I recall being on the same podium with two IOC CEOs and two leading African Ministers of Energy.

My point of contention is largely around what I consider to be a patronizing attitude towards Africans. You can't want to talk about African acreage and resources, but not want to do so on their home patch!

Africa Oil Week became, thanks

to Duncan, the must-attend industry event. It took place in an African destination Cape Town, which is all about aspiration.

One of the characteristics of Africans is that we are aspirational – and you take that away by simple things and gestures.

Indeed, my contention with AOW being moved to Dubai has not lessened, but firmed.

Do you think the launching of the African Energy Week championed by Africans was an appropriate response and does Robin Vela endorse the African Energy Week?

I have known NJ Ayuk, the Executive Chairman at the African Energy Chamber, from my early days attending AOW in Cape Town. I have zero doubt that the move of AOW to Dubai left him with an open door to walk through.

I am not sure NJ would have sought to launch African Energy Week if AOW had not moved to Dubai.

I believe African Energy Week will continue to get (and has already got) substantial support from many who are similarly offended as me at the exhibition being moved off the Continent.

I feel AOW have made a spectacular strategic error – akin to an own goal. All bets are off as to whether they can come back from this.

In short – there was no choice, and it was to be expected that the likes of an Africa Energy Week would emerge. Good luck to them.

A question many will ask is what next after the African Energy Week, what recommendations will you have for the organizers and management of the week going and what other lessons can Africa learn from this?

I see this as a start of an ongoing event, not a once-off.

The only way AOW could claw back the support it has lost is if AEW fails to be a professionally organized, attended and competent conference.

NJ has been attending those held by Duncan Clarke for over a decade.



Africa remains the undiscovered continent with a growing, youthful and urbanizing population giving it huge economic growth potential, says Robin Vela.

He would have picked up the tricks and as such I have no doubt AEW will be a success.

Where AEW could also steal a march would be in making the attendance more affordable and diverse. Historically, the attendance has been predominantly white males and the cost of attendance out of reach for all but well-funded companies.

Beyond job creation and paying taxes to countries you have operations, what else are you doing or thinking of doing to mentor and nurture the next generation of Africans to enjoy your kind of success?

I readily admit that I was born lucky!

I would like the opportunities I have been afforded to be available to many others. I have a “band of brothers” (“BOB”) that, pre-Covid, met up with an agenda to share ideas about how we can do more to capacitate those

around us.

Each of the members of the BOB are professionally successful having reached the pinnacle of their professional careers and led multi-US billion dollar entities; are independently-wealthy and are seeking to give back without seeking credit or praise. Individually we already mentor people from disadvantaged backgrounds just without the spotlight being shown on us. We often say in jest that the work we do, out of the limelight, is between us and our God.

The next generation of African already exists, they are waiting for their time to shine. The biggest challenge is that our current leaders (with war credentials from the 1970s) are adamant they do not want to leave the stage. This is the biggest hinderance to the growth of the Continent.

Through exemplary leadership we give guidance to the next generation.

I believe that people buy into what you do and not what you say. So, I am walking in my own lane and doing what I believe is right in the hope that the next generation of business leaders will also do right where they are.

Africa is endowed with talent and educated individuals but then you ask why do business and strategy fail? I believe it is because of:

- Leaders do not listen/ they believe they know it all (EGO and personality businesses)
- Low energy environment (Lack Purpose)
- Internal Sabotage/ Personal Greed (Changing goal posts)
- Customer Neglect
- Organisation becomes stale and succumbs to the disruption in their industry. (The LP was overtaken by the iPod/ The Videocassette – now there is Netflix and Streaming/ Similarly the Taxi is now overtaken by UBER and the Hotels are being given a run by Airbnb)

Looking at the continent, what makes you hopeful and what makes jittery about the future

if Africa?

I am optimistic about global innovations being led by native Africans (Tesla by Elon Musk; fintech and other offerings is evidence that ideas born out of Africa can go global). Access to capital markets for such entrepreneurs is expanding. The growing youthful population is also key – this is a huge potential market, as sizeable to China, if only they could be made economically active.

Making these youth economically active, calls for bold leadership decisions. Current leaders still believe for them to progress, they must tear at the heart of anything that is not shouting their slogan. This desire for praise-singing, even in the face of evidence of governance and leadership failings, is self-defeating.

Finally, the inability of the voice of the people to be heard and respected will mean the status quo will continue until the current leaders take their leave by the acts of God.

I remain an optimist in Africa and continue to live by the notion that “HOPE is the ability to hear the music of the future, FAITH is the courage to dance to it today!”



You can't want to talk about African acreage and resources, but not want to do so on their home patch, fumes Robin Vela on the relocation of the AOW to Dubai.



African Energy
Week



Welcomes



Register now on
aew2021.com and **secure your seat!**



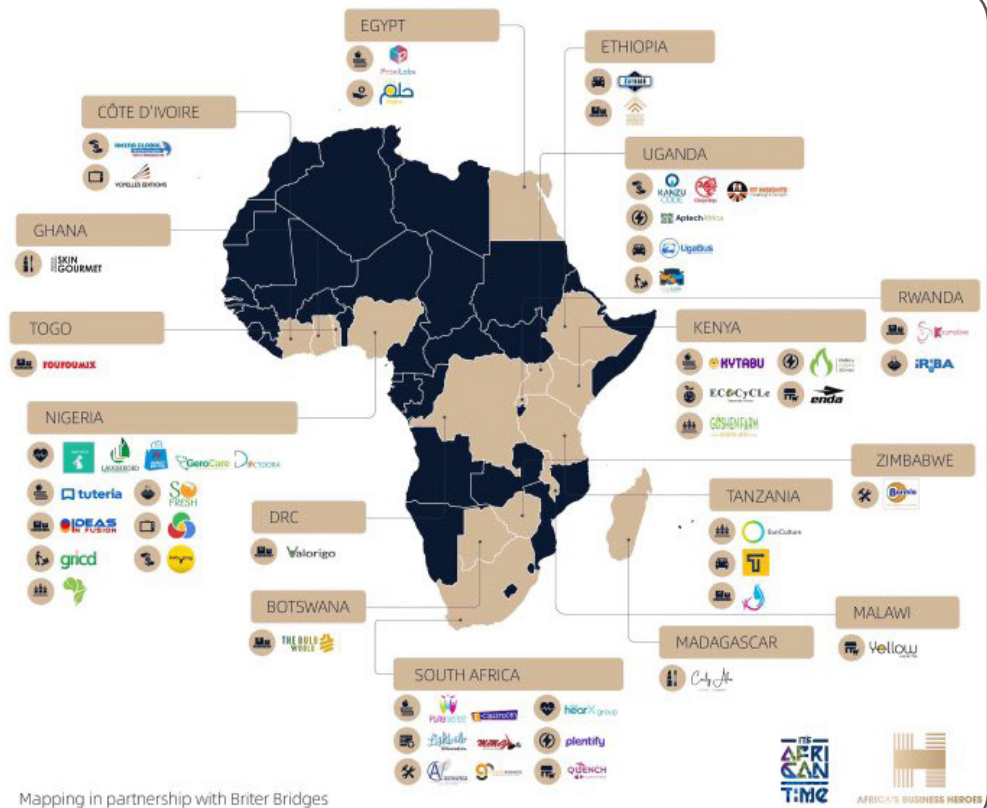


ABH 2021



TOP 50 HEROES

- AGRICULTURE
- BEAUTY & WELLNESS
- CONSTRUCTION
- CONSULTING
- EDUCATION & TRAINING
- ENERGY
- ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
- FINANCIAL SERVICES
- FOOD & BEVERAGES
- HEALTHCARE
- ICT
- LOGISTICS
- MANUFACTURING
- MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT
- RETAIL
- TRANSPORTATION



Namibia Launches New Bold National Youth Initiative

By Andreas Thomas

Windhoek – The Namibian government has taken a bold step to find practical solutions to the myriad of social and economic challenges facing its young people.

The youth unemployment rate is expected to exceed 50% by the end of 2021, with young people including university graduates finding it extremely hard to secure employment, which diminishes their prospects.

With that in mind, the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Culture has launched the new Third National Youth Policy (NYP III) 2020-2030 to empower young Namibians to explore and actualise their full potential to be self-reliant and productive citizens.

The southern African nation has one of the youngest populations in Africa, with over one-third of the population is between the ages of 10 and 24.

The policy was launched under the theme “Mainstreaming Youth Development into the National Agenda” which seeks to incorporate the youth development agenda and participation of the youth in the broader national agenda.

The foundation for the development of NYP III is to address challenges undermining youth development in the country.

While launching the NYP III on July 12, 2021, in Windhoek, Youth, Sport and Culture Minister Agnes Tjongarero said the new initiative echoes the government commitment towards youth empowerment and development.

“The youth cannot continue to be only job seekers but must also become creators of employment and other opportunities, to emancipate themselves from the cycles of poverty.

“The rationale for the development of the policy is to address challenges undermining youth development in Namibia, so the youth can assume



Namibian Minister of Sport, Youth and National Service, Agnes Tjongarero, with the third National Youth policy that was launched recently. Photo courtesy.

their rightful places in building a united, inclusive and prosperous Namibian house.

Upon its completion, we are confident that we will have capacitated, fostered and harnessed the capabilities of the youth, to make meaningful contributions to the realization of relevant sectoral policies and plans,” the minister said.

Minister Tjongarero highlighted that the policy provides for a process of deciding what should be achieved, what should be done to achieve it, how to achieve it efficiently and economically, as well as apportion responsibilities.

“The formulation of this policy was developed within the context of existing sectoral policies, national development plans and legal frameworks, regional, continental and international conventions, treaties and charters to which Namibia is a signatory to,” Tjongarero noted.

The first NYP I was drafted and adopted in 1993 following the formulation of the first National Development Plan as a guide for youth development programmes in Namibia.

The policy was revised in 2006 to produce the second National Youth Policy for the period 2006 - 2011.

The current policy builds on the foundation of preceding policies and the programmatic interventions implemented by the government.

The NYP III has been crafted within the context of existing sectoral policies, national development plans, international policies and charters to which Namibia is a signatory and aligns itself to internationally recognised youth and human development indicators.

These international, continental and national frameworks include the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and beyond, the African Union Agenda 2063, and the African Youth Charter, the Commonwealth Youth Forum Declaration, the SADC Youth Development Framework (2014-2019), Namibia’s Vision 2030, the fifth National Development Plan and the Harambee Prosperity Plan.

Minister Tjongarero has thanked the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for providing support to the government during the formulation of the Third National Youth Policy.

UNFPA Namibia Country Representative Sheila Roseau has described the launching of the youth policy as “a proud moment for the

young people of Namibia for a policy that seeks to ensure that all young people are given priorities and opportunities to reach their full potential.”

While UNFPA applauds the government for mainstreaming youth development into the national agenda, Roseau has reaffirmed “our commitment to intensify evidence-based advocacy, policy engagement, partnership and programme efforts to strengthen international, regional and national commitments to prioritize, invest in, educate, engage and empower young people. And we remain committed to working closely with the Ministry of Sport,

Youth and National Service and its partners.”

This NYP III is anchored on four essential pillars, namely - youth education and skills development; youth health and well-being; youth employment and economic empowerment and youth political and civic participation.

The policy advocates for young people to have access to quality formal and informal education, as well as skills development to improve overall educational outcomes. It further promotes access to youth-friendly health information, education and services and facilitates access to economic empowerment opportunities. In addition, the policy seeks to promote youth participation and representation in civic and political engagements and address contemporary challenges that the youth face in personal and national development arenas.

Daisry Mathias, the presidential advisor on youth matters and enterprise development said the NYP III will act as an umbrella framework to guide the government, as it steps up its work - with and for young people across its four thematic pillars.

Mathias said the policy “seeks

to significantly strengthen the government's capacity to engage young people and benefit from their views, insights and ideas. It seeks to ensure that the government's work on youth matters is pursued in a coordinated, coherent and holistic manner.

The youth development sector is cross-cutting, with multiple stakeholders, all anchored by the custodian ministry. As a first, the policy is accompanied by its attendant implementation plan to achieve an impactful implementation framework."

Minister Tjongarero noted that the 10-year implementation period for the NYP III gives the government ample time to successfully realize its objectives.

And its implementation must be a cross-sectoral policy aimed at effecting positive youth development outcomes, she said.

As part of the implementation of the youth policy, different government offices, ministries and agencies will be expected to report to Cabinet on the progress made, the minister said.

Thus, the youth minister called on various sectors to make a difference in the lives of the Namibian youth, by investing in them to create



Minister Agnes Tjongarero said the new initiative echoes the government commitment towards youth empowerment and development.

opportunities for themselves to be on the steering wheel of their destiny, rather than mere spectators.

A technical committee will be established through which the key offices, ministries, agencies and partners will mainstream and execute their function to ensure that interventions and programmes for youths under their mandate are fulfilled.

For instance, the presidency is going to facilitate dialogue and advice on socio-economic issues facing the Namibian youth. The treasury must ensure sufficient budgetary allocations are made for

the implementation of this policy.

The ministry of higher education is to promote the effectiveness and efficiency of vocational education and training for young people and ensure that vocational training programmes meet the demands of the labour market.

On its part, the ministry of urban and rural development is to create opportunities for young people to access communal and urban land and affordable housing.

The trade and industrialisation ministry is expected to build the capacity of young people to efficiently produce and supply goods and

services and link them with local and international trade promotions.

The ministry of agriculture, water and land reform to support programmes that improve equitable access to water, sanitation and hygiene as well as youth agri-business activities.

In addition, the ministry of labour is mandated to advocate for work-integrated learning like apprenticeship, internships and job attachments to prepare and facilitate the transition of graduates into the labour market.



Rwanda: Paul Kagame For A Fourth Term?

By Maniraguha Ferdinand

Rwanda's early political parties have started to endorse President Paul Kagame for a fourth term in 2024, though personally he has not declared himself.

President Kagame won a third term in 2017, after modifying article of the Constitution that barred him from standing again.

Democratic Union for Rwandan People (UDPR) is the first political party to announce its support for Kagame's reelection in 2024.

UDPR, one of the longest parties in the country has been supporting Kagame's candidacy since 2003 when Rwanda held first presidential elections after the 1994 genocide against the Tutsis.

Pie Nizeyimana, President of UDPR has recently announced that they can't ignore Kagame's achievements for the last 27 years.

"If God grants him good life, and the RPF chooses him as its flag bearer, UDPR will support him more than 100 percent. We have decided on that. He still has vision for us, he is strong. We only want God to protect him", he said

However, Nizeyimana added that you cannot compete someone when you know you will not defeat him,

besides when he is the one who has a clear vision for his country.

Frank Habineza, the President for Democratic Green Party of Rwanda, one of main opposition parties in the country, insisted to run again in 2024 against Kagame.

Habineza ran for presidency in 2017 but he came at third place, where Kagame garnered more than 90 percent of the votes.

"Yes, I intend to campaign again, we are preparing ourselves.

We have a big agenda of what we want to bring Rwandans", Frank Habineza recently told local media.

When asked if his ambition is to become president no matter what, he said "It is not the question of becoming President or not, our vision is to see our party at the helm of this country. It doesn't mean that I am fighting to be present me as a person, but I will not rest until our party wins presidential elections".

Three years to go to the next presidential elections, Kagame has



Kagame waving to RPF supporters during the 2017 Presidential campaigns. Photo courtesy.

not said clearly if he will stand again or if he will step down.

Last May while answering France 24 questions, President Kagame said that choices are from Rwandans.

"Above all, I wish God to grant me good health. About Politics, choices are for Rwandans but I am free to choose as well", he said.

"Maybe Rwandans may say, we still want you, it is important, but I can say 'You know what, I want to do other things'".

When the current seven-year term

ends, President Kagame could seek two more five-year terms according to the constitution.

He is praised for unifying the country after being torn by war and genocide, as well as transforming his country economically.

However, he is accused by dissidents of ruling the country with iron fist, silencing opposition.

Paul Kagame was born in October 1957 in Rwanda's Southern Province. His family fled pre-independence ethnic persecution and violence in 1960, crossing into Uganda where Kagame spent thirty years as a refugee.

Kagame led the Rwandan Patriotic Front's (RPF) four-year struggle to liberate the country from the autocratic and divisive Government of Juvenal Habyarimana. His army defeated the government in July 1994.

Paul Kagame was appointed Vice-President and Minister for Defense in the Government of National Unity on July 19, 1994. On 22 April 2000, He took the oath of office as President of the Republic of Rwanda after being elected by the Transitional National Assembly. He won the first ever democratic elections held in Rwanda in August 2003.



Frank Habineza, the President for Democratic Green Party of Rwanda says he intends to run again in 2024. Photo credit AP.



BRAZIL AFRICA FORUM 2021

**NATURAL RESOURCES:
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**REGISTRATION
IS OPEN**

November 23rd and 24th



forumbrazilafrika.com



**Brazil Africa
Institute**

Nigeria: Another Doctors' Strike That Could Have Been Avoided

By Richard Mammah

Nigerian doctors have gone on strike once again. Or rather they have picked up an earlier strike that they had temporarily rested.

Coordinated by the quite systemically important National Association of Resident Doctors, NARD, the industrial action is biting hard on the system and also coming across as one to set the issues in the healthcare sector in perspective if the right lessons are learnt.

Money issues are part of the fare, but it goes far beyond that. The doctors are not happy. They feel they are getting too little for what they are giving. And they feel the system managers are not considerate and helping matters.

On its part, an exasperated government has pulled the big stick. They are declaring the option of redundancy should the doctors persist in their action. Chris Ngige, the Minister of Labour, who is himself a medical doctor, is on record as having described the entire action as nonsensical. And of course, his professional colleagues are not amused.

On its part, the National Assembly which had brokered the truce of



Wages are part of the reason Doctors went on strike again in Nigeria. Photo courtesy.

sorts to end the first phase of the strike action has returned to the fray. Meetings are going on, but they are slow. And given the seemingly tough and unyielding posture of both parties, it is clear that a lot has to give for a resolution to be achieved.

And it was actually not supposed to be so given the issues in dispute. An end to seeming casualisation. A call for a raising of allowances. A streamlining of payment systems. Better regard for professional worth.

These are ordinarily not difficult things. But part of the challenge has to do with how the bureaucracy responds and is still responding. The doctors say their strike notice for example was only a formality as they were continuing with an earlier suspended process. At the close of the last strike phase, certain agreements were reached. The doctors say implementation have been slow, hesitant and ill-existent. Besides, and for good effect, they are equally

showing evidence that they gave the authorities more than the statutory notice that the law stipulates. To give them a hint that things were indeed getting out of hand and needed redressing. But they were ignored. Until they downed tools.

Another part of the paradox lies with the own at whose desk the buck stops. President Muhammadu Buhari. Ostensibly elected on the basis of a 'change agenda' to right Nigeria's many long-running wrongs that prominently include health sector failings that have precipitated an incredible per capita drain of medical personnel, he is in the UK as we write this, on among other things, medical vacation.

Related to this is the still debilitating COVID-19 pandemic which the doctors are needed to be in full practice to help battle. At the moment, there is even an acknowledged spike in the rates of infection in the country. And the new-fangled Delta variant of the virus is being fingered as the star culprit. Meanwhile also, until a few days ago, there was no formal vaccination against the virus going on anywhere in the country as Africa's largest economy by GDP size had run out of the first batch of donor-contributed vaccines. And with its economic crisis still lingering, buying doses for itself



A medical doctor himself, Chris Ngige, the Minister of Labour infuriated his colleagues by calling the strike nonsensical.

and by itself and on its own terms and schedules is still not considered priority enough.

So, what are Nigerians saying? We spoke with the Lagos-based journalist and commentator, Mr. Tony Opara:

'Govt should have done everything to avoid the strike given that it's about fulfilling an agreement that was reached previously. Why would govt agree to pay certain emoluments and back out from fulfilling same.

Opara also took a swipe at the Labour Minister and indeed the Buhari administration for what he termed their poor handling of the situation.

'It's so unfortunate that Ministers have over the years proven to be men of straw who cannot speak truth to power. It speaks volumes of a President who is seeking medical help abroad while leaving medical

care in Nigeria in shambles. Most government hospitals are closed, and patients asked to go home and die if they cannot afford private medical care. It's so unfortunate. I stand with the National Association of Resident Doctors for their demands are genuine and legitimate, but they may also soon lose public sympathy because Nigerians know that quite a number of doctors also have private clinics hence, they are not losing much in the conflict. They will simply refer the patients to their clinics as alternative healthcare centres even when some of these centres do not have the facilities to offer the required kind of care. All in all, hapless Nigerians are losing,' he lamented.

He was also not done as he then went on to address the challenge of brain drain for a country that needs to retain more and more of its brains

within its own shores:

'Another side to the conflict is that while govt is foot dragging, doctors and other medical personnel in the country are writing exams to emigrate and practice abroad where they are wont to be better paid and where facilities are also available. It has been established that a majority of the African-originating doctors practicing abroad are Nigerian-trained doctors who are paradoxically also being consulted abroad by our Nigerian high and mighty! This is shameful. The President will travel to the United Kingdom to treat an ear infection. He does not trust doctors in Nigeria but trusts his health to a Nigerian doctor in London. Is it not shameful that every year millions are voted for the hospital in the Presidency but one 'cannot find paracetamol at the clinic!' Mrs Aisha Buhari, the first

lady exposed this sometime ago. If you have also noticed, the first lady has literally been keeping away from the government since it has become clear that they are hard of hearing.'

Concluding, Opara calls for a total system overall as a way of fixing the challenge, requesting that citizens brace to ensure that they elect leaders in the country's forthcoming polls that would best address the challenges of the healthcare delivery in the country and indeed those of other sectors.

'The state of affairs is to say the least disheartening. Government knows what to do but they seemingly prefer not to do same which is unfortunate. What the President is letting out by his attitude to this imbroglio is that Nigerian lives do not matter. But my final word will be this: 2023 is near. Nigerians should use their voters' cards wisely.'

The Empire Strikes Back In Sudan

-Two years after the revolution, the Islamist old guard is fighting back

By Rebecca Tinsley*

Sudan's people's revolution is in danger. The former regime's old guard are reasserting themselves, accused of assaulting women who dare to walk the streets of Khartoum; undermining the fragile economy and stirring up ethnic clashes in Darfur. They are leading the struggle between secularists and Islamists, as Sudan faces tensions with Ethiopia due to the war in Tigray and the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.

A transitional government consisting of a joint military and civil council and a civilian-led cabinet took power after vast protests that ended Field Marshall Omer Bashir's dictatorship in 2019. Yet, two years later, the women who were at the hearty of the demonstrations face pre-meditated physical attacks as they claim their space in the new Sudan. Islamists and traditionalists are fighting back against progressive change, defending laws that punish women for seeking education and other opportunities. Meanwhile, a judge sentenced a 21-year-old to Islamist-era cross amputation of a



foot and hand for stealing \$48. The previous regime's 1991 criminal code also allows crucifixion and stoning to death.

A history of violence

Women from the black African ethnic groups in the periphery have been the targets of rape, torture and murder for many years. But it is less usual for women identifying as Arab to face violence. Now, say non-Arab activists, they are tasting the persecution endured by females in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile states.

Video of a recent gang rape in Blue Nile was widely shared on social media as an explicit warning to women across the country not to demand equality. Uniformed men, thought to belong to the Rapid Support Forces – the rebranded Janjaweed militia which killed as many as 400,000 Africans in Darfur – were filmed perpetrating the rape. The video is part of a series of reprisal attacks on women following the signing of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The new Sudan government has not yet ratified CEDAW and is asking for exemptions. Yet, even in its amended form, CEDAW is unacceptable to Islamists and other traditionalists from all ethnic backgrounds who defend and perpetrate violence against women.

The attacks are linked to calls to bring back the old regime's public order laws which punished thousands of women each year for vaguely-defined offenses. Women's rights groups accused Islamists of using the law to deter women and girls from leaving their homes to seek education or work. In 2009 the case of Lubna Hussein gained notoriety when she was convicted of public indecency for wearing trousers, and jailed for six months. Amnesty reports that 40,000 to 50,000 women a year were arrested and whipped under the public order laws.

Sudan's 1991 Family Law effectively legalises marital rape and domestic violence, assigning control of all women and girls to male guardians. According to strictly interpreted



Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok has the daunting task of overseeing reforms in Sudan.

Islamic law, a four-year-old son or male cousin is considered the moral guardian of a grown female relative. The UN says that 88% of women in Sudan have undergone female genital mutilation.

In a recent survey, 34% of Sudanese agree that men are justified in beating wives if they step outside the home without their permission, if they do not obey them, or if they decline to have sexual intercourse. These attitudes are not restricted to the older generation. The public assaults on women have mainly been perpetrated by gangs of young men, cruising the streets in vehicles, spotting women whom they consider to be indecently dressed (in trousers, or without headscarves, hijabs, niqabs, etc) and beating them before driving away. Passing men are reported to offer no help or support to the women, and on occasion they applaud as women are whipped. There have been hundreds of online messages from men expressing approval of the attacks.

Women led a series of peaceful protests in April calling for the abolition of discriminatory laws, and the adoption of international treaties and charters guaranteeing equal legal status. At one demonstration a man drove into the crowd, running over one woman and then physically assaulting several other protesters. Women were key to the 2019

revolution the Islamist regime with a transitional joint military and civil council, and a civilian-led cabinet. There is concern women have once more been sidelined. The Women's Cooperative Association of Khartoum has complained that the Ministry of Industry and Trade will not register a women's cooperative unless they have male members.

The transitional government is under pressure from the old guard on several other fronts. Elements from the previous regime are alleged to be using targeted currency speculation to undermine attempts to rescue the troubled economy. (Sudan's annual inflation rate reached 341% in March this year). Many of Bashir's officials and supporters had financial stakes in government-connected businesses that are now threatened with increased scrutiny.

Old school justice

Civil society groups have highlighted the continuing presence of Bashir-appointed judiciary in Sudan's legal system. In June, Moaz Abdel Majid Ismail, a 21-year-old man was sentenced to traditional "hudud" punishment for stealing goods worth \$48. Hudud is the cross amputation of a hand and a foot. As recently as 2013, three Darfuris were sentenced to be crucified under the 1991 code, and two women were sentenced to

be stoned to death in 2007. This puts the country in breach of international and regional treaties which Sudan has signed.

Women fighting back

In spite of the threats to their safety, women in Sudan are countering the traditionalist narrative. Sudanese diaspora members are also vocal. For instance, a UK-based group of Sudanese women's rights activists, co-convened by Waging Peace, the NGO I founded, came together weekly for 9 weeks to find ways to help for the survivor of the Blue Nile rape and her family.

Fatima Bensouda, retiring prosecutor at the International Criminal Court, recently visited Khartoum, adding impetus to efforts to extradite Ahmed Haroun, the former governor of South Kordofan, indicted for crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Ethnic tensions in the remote western region of Darfur have increased alarmingly, as UNAMID, the UN/African Union peacekeeping force, withdrew. UNAMID sites have been sacked and looted, and there are concerns that armed anti-transitional government groups will step up attacks on civilians. The promised 20,000 Sudanese protection troops have not materialized. The International Organization for Migration estimates

that attacks on non-Arab groups led to 150,000 Darfuris fleeing their homes this year. Internally displaced people at the camps in El Geneina that I visited in 2004 at the height of the genocide still have no incentive to return home. As recently as last month, 20 were killed in El Geneina.

Khalid Omer Yousif, Sudan's Minister of Cabinet Affairs, argues that the revolution "ended the legitimacy of Islamists" and old regime loyalists. But, he concedes, "This is going to be a very long process and it must involve civil society and well as the transitional



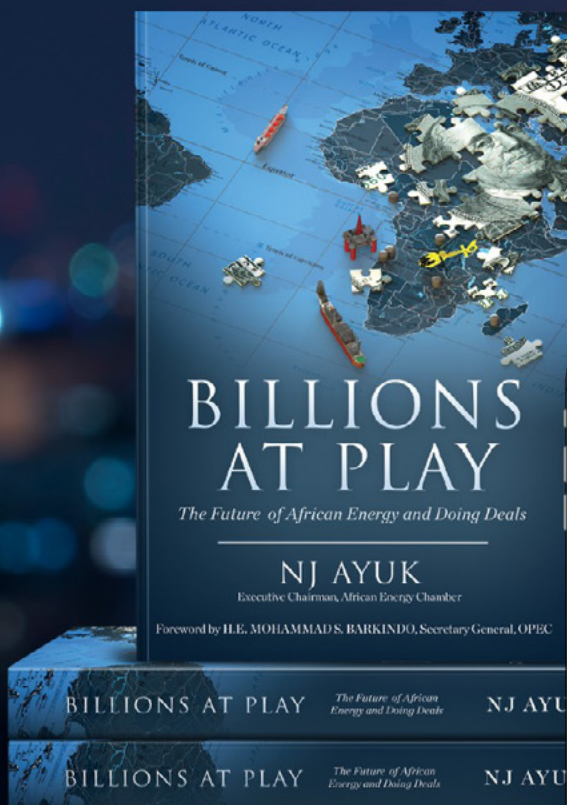
Khalid Omer Yousif, Sudan's Minister of Cabinet Affairs, argues that the revolution ended the legitimacy of Islamists and old regime loyalists.

government." Another advisor to the transitional government, speaking anonymously, says that those benefitting from the previous system will resist change because their wealth, social status and the status of their ethnic group is threatened. He appeals for the international community, and Sudan's new friends like Israel, to use any leverage it can to support the transitional government.

*Rebecca Tinsley's novel about Darfur, *When the Stars Fall to Earth*, is available on Amazon.

Available on amazon

NEW EDITION!



Cameroon: Separatists Emboldened and More Daring In Military Attacks

By Andrew Nsoseka

The increasing use of Improvised Explosive Devices, IEDs, by Ambazonia separatist fighters, as well as the use of planned ambushes against state security forces in the crisis plagued Anglophone regions of Cameroon, has seen government losing troops and equipment in ways they never did before.

When the armed conflict started in 2017, the separatists, mostly armed with local hunting equipment, usually confronted state security forces, head-on. This saw them loosing fighters, thus prompting a need for a change in strategy. With borders closed and the traffic in arms highly controlled, the separatists have employed the use of explosives, which are planted on roads, while they lie in wait, for patrolling state troops. The use of IEDs by separatists is now the new trend, with fighters now engaged in a perceived battle of whose group can land the deadliest blow to the Cameroon military.

In this quest to outdo each other in inflicting pain and losses on the military, the separatists now plant explosives, take a position, usually on high ground, with their cameras set. As the targeted military convoy approaches, the fighters will then engage in giving background commentary, usually about their prey- soldiers, approaching the trap set. When they successfully hit a car in the convoy, they will scream in joy, boasting of how they are 'neutralising' President Biya's soldiers. The propaganda that accompanies such happenings, usually talks of several state soldiers killed, though in most cases, Cameroon's military high command often debunks such, or claim that just a few soldiers were lost.

Bad Roads are Giving Separatists an Advantage

One of the shortcomings of the Biya regime, has been its neglect to develop basic facilities in most parts of the



Military pick-up, damaged by IED in Lebiam, South West Region

country- these includes roads. In areas where state security forces find it most difficult, bad roads have taken a fair share of the blame. With most roads untarred, separatists easily find it easy to plant their explosives, usually in the seeming good part of the road, where they know a car has to meander before it can pass. As such, they easily plant their explosives by digging up the earth road, planting it in and then take positions nearby, to trigger the IED as soon as a vehicle carrying soldiers steps on it. In places with tarred roads, such tactics hardly work. But since most roads of the two Anglophone regions are untarred, the separatist's strategy has largely succeeded.

The use of IEDs by separatists is however, not a new phenomenon. The only difference though, is

that fact that the fighters are increasingly perfecting their skills in the fabrication and use of the local bombs. The self-styled Field Marshal, Oliver Lekea operating in Lebiam, in Cameroon's Southwest region, was one of the first to employ the use of such locally fabricated weapons. Other separatist commanders are said to have sent in their own men to Lebiam to learn. Some ex-separatist fighters also reveal that Oliver Lekea also sent delegations to various separatist camps to teach them how to fabricate such devices. Many who went, learnt and reportedly tried very deadly experiments in order to get better in it. Several fighters have been reported dead in connection with a bomb making procedure gone wrong.

Knowing the cost of confronting soldiers head-on in battles, the use of

IEDs has been the preferred option. The military itself has attested to the casualties it has incurred owing to the use of the locally fabricated explosives, which often ground even the heavy armoured vehicles, while in most cases shattering military pick-ups that are highly used by troops in the regions.

The use of IEDs and the resulting casualties, has prompted Cameroon's Defence Minister, Joseph Beti Assomo, to call and chair several security meetings, on ways to counter it. In one of such moves, an operation like that of Bui Division was launched, with about 300 special soldiers. According to General Nka Valere, Commander of troops fighting separatists in the Northwest region, the mission was to identify and destroy stocks of weapons and also destroy separatists' camps. Even during this operation, several vehicles belonging to the military were hit by such devices, hampering the operation. At the end, the General and his men declared that they killed about seven separatist fighters, including two separatist commanders. Information on the ground said civilians suffered more as blanket punishments were meted on villages, accusing locals of sheltering and protecting the separatists.

After one of his security meetings in mid-May, Defence Minister Assomo acknowledged that in within two weeks (early May) IEDs had directly killed at least 24 soldiers and civilians. The trend has only increased since then. Areas like Lebiam Division, and Bui Division with strong separatist presence, have led in the use of IEDs.

Cameroon's military command has said the use of IEDs by the fighters, is due to their dwindling numbers, claiming that many have been killed, while others have surrendered. Separatist leaders in a counter propaganda move, have debunked the statements, saying that they still have many fighters.

Biafra-Ambazonia Coalition

In early April 2021, the leader of the Ambazonia Governing Council, Cho Ayaba leading one of the major separatist factions in Anglophone Cameroon, and the leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB)- a Nigerian secessionist group Nnamdi Kanu appeared together in a press conference, during which they announced a military alliance.

The leaders stated that they were henceforth, going to collaborate by sharing weapons and personnel, as well as joint trainings in their various bases, to ensure the success of their movements. At the press conference, Ayaba declared. "We have assembled here today in front of our two peoples to declare our intentions to walk together to ensure collective survival from the brutal annexation that have occurred in our home nations.

"The Ambazonia and Biafra Alliance is critical in an area where Nigeria and Cameroon have established two autocracies that have used violence as political tools to suppress our own peoples," he said.

Nigeria Seals Anti-Secessionist Deal With Cameroon To Counter Separatists Movements.

Following alliance between



Defence Minister, Joseph Beti Assomo has held security meetings on ways to counter it the change in separatist tactics inflicting harm on the military

Ambazonia leaders and the Biafran leader in Nigeria, now facing trial in Nigeria, the governments of the two countries also hurriedly came together, to seal their own pact, to ensure that both territories are made uncomfortable for the secessionist movements.

On July 13, President Biya's Special Envoy, Minister Felix Mbayu -Minister Delegate in Charge of

Cooperation with the Commonwealth visited the Nigerian President, Buhari at the Nigerian statehouse. During the meeting, both countries expressed the need to collaborate and stem the rise of the two groups threatening the territorial integrity of the two states. President Biya's envoy, Mbayu, also congratulated the Nigerian president, on the arrest of the Biafran leader, Nnamdi Kano, who signed an alliance

with his Ambazonia counterpart, Ayaba.

In January 2018, Nigerian security operatives arrested Ambazonian <Interim President>, Sisiku Ayuk Tabe, alongside nine of his collaborators in Abuja before deporting them to Cameroon where they are serving life jail terms since August 2019.

A Nigerian court however found the arrests illegal in March 2019 and ordered for their release, but which has not been affected.

The alliance between the two separatist groups, is said to be one of the reasons for the increasing hostilities against the military in Anglophone regions. The leaders say they will use to alliance, to tap from the Nigerian black market which they say is rich in arms.

Unlike before, separatists who use to be hunted into the bushes, now launch offensives and overrun police and gendarmerie posts, as well as military checkpoints. They often seize weapons in such operations. This, alongside the use of IEDs, is causing growing casualties on the side of the military in Cameroon.

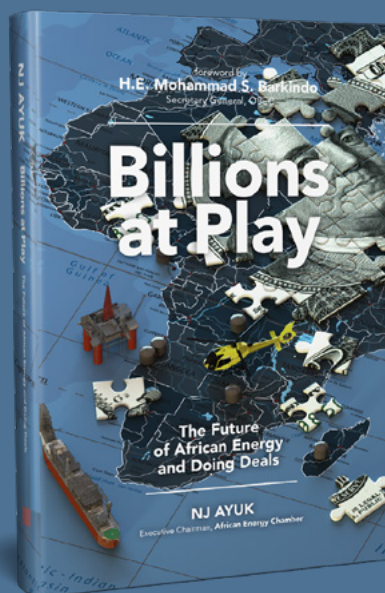


President Buhari receives in audience Mr Felix Mbayu, Minister delegate in charge of Cooperation with the Commonwealth and Special Envoy of President Paul Biya , at State House on 13th July 2021

Billions at Play

The Future of African Energy and Doing Deals

by NJ AYUK



"There is no stone left unturned in Mr. Ayuk's analysis of Africa and OPEC."

MOHAMMAD SANUSI BARKINDO

Secretary General, OPEC.

"Billions tells us the answer lies in the abundant, accessible and affordable natural gas reserves that dot the continent."

JOÃO MARQUES

Energy analyst and Editor

"Ayuk sees opportunity all around him, and he realizes that appropriate development will solve many of the continent's challenges, including power generation."

ANN NORMAN

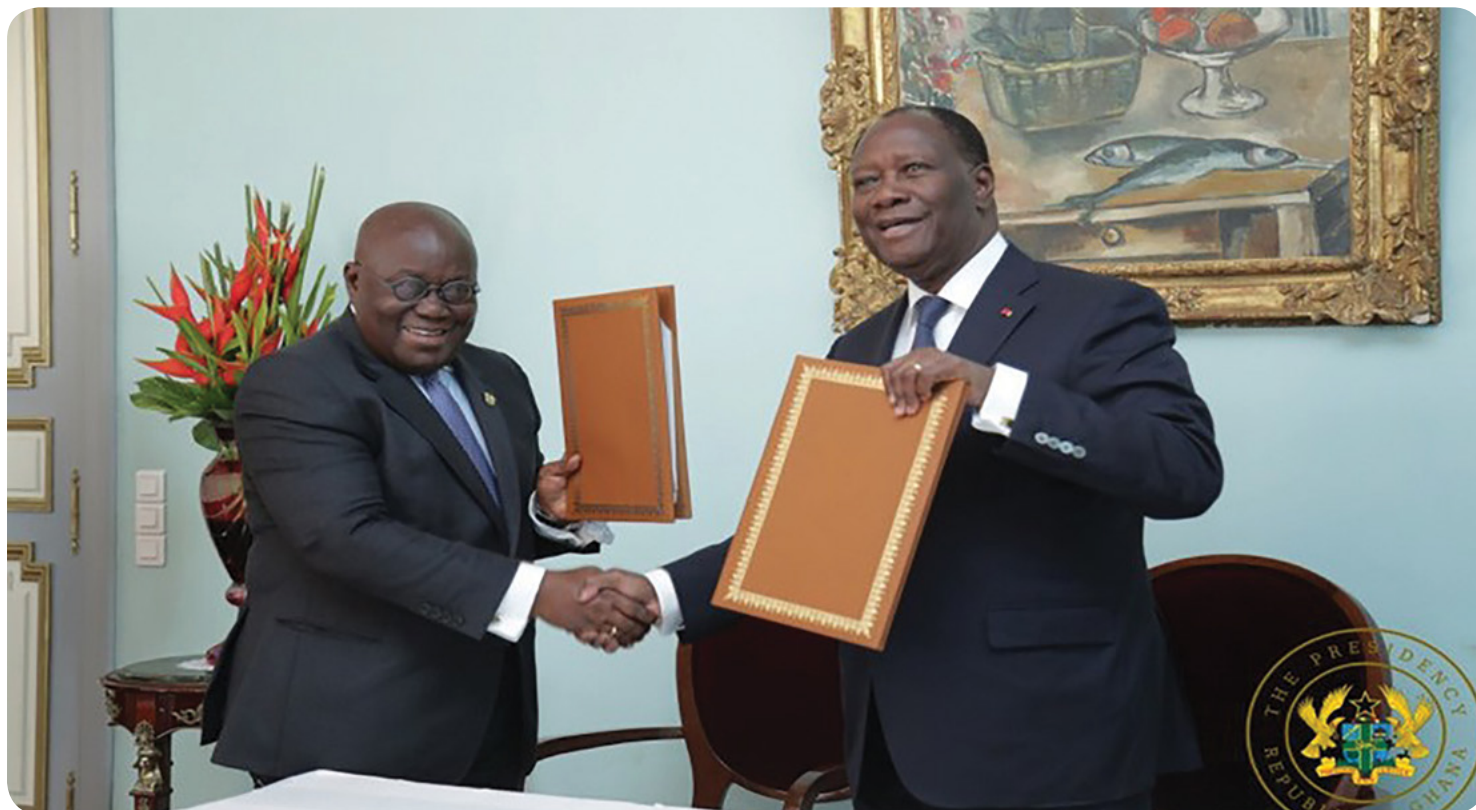
General Manager
for Sub-Saharan Africa,
Pioneer Energy

billionsatplay.com



Ghana Chosen as Headquarters for the Secretariat of Côte d'Ivoire-Ghana Cocoa Initiative

By Kester Kenn Klomegah



President S. Akufo-Addo of Ghana and Ouattara of Côte d'Ivoire lead countries with strong production capacities in the cocoa sector.

After several negotiations, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire have finally signed an agreement to establish a joint Secretariat to be known as the Côte d'Ivoire - Ghana Cocoa Initiative with its headquarters location in Accra, the capital city of Ghana. The agreement sends a strong signal to the international cocoa market that the mutual interests of the cocoa giants are now formalized. Both leading cocoa-producing countries are in West Africa.

Within the framework of the agreement, the Secretariat will oversee planning and execution of multiple functions aim at maximizing cocoa production, processing and consumption as well as exports to foreign markets. It will also implement future agenda.

The Steering Committee is the highest decision-making body of the initiative. It is responsible for formulating rules and regulations,

ensuring the smooth implementation of the charter and functioning of the Secretariat, approve all budgets and work programs of the Initiative, approve the rights and responsibilities of member countries and resolve conflicts among the member countries.

Both countries have settled on the Director of Corporate Affairs for Europe and Africa at Mars Inc, Alex Arnaud Assanavo as the first Executive Secretary of the Côte d'Ivoire - Ghana Cocoa Initiative.

Speaking at the event, the Chief Executive of Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), Joseph Boahen Aidoo explained that the Initiative would be the «mouthpiece of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire in terms of all cocoa matters.»

He said the headquarters agreement was signed in fulfillment of providing a permanent Secretariat «to give effect to the physical

presence of the initiative» as well as to give legitimacy to the existence of the headquarters in Accra, Ghana.

Ghana together with the Ivorian government, through the Initiative, are committed to focus on supporting cocoa farmers with improved incomes, harmonize the interests of the two neighboring West African cocoa producing giants at the international level and are very optimistic to raise the situation in the cocoa sector in both countries.

Officials of two cocoa regulatory bodies, Ghana Cocoa Board and Conseil du Café Cacao are already handling issues relating to the sustainability of cocoa production, research and marketing of cocoa from both countries.

In order to achieve the objectives of the new Initiative, the secretariat and its staff be accorded diplomatic privileges and offered support to ensure the effective operation of the

organization.

Dr Owusu Afriyie Akoto, elected the first Chairman of the Steering Committee of the Ghana-Côte d'Ivoire Cocoa Initiative, described the meeting as historic and important since it sought to ensure the realization of the vision of President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo and President Alassane Ouattara.

With the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) also situated in Accra, it is further expected that interest of foreign investors will be attracted to the country and the West Africa region. According to official reports, Cameroon and Nigeria might also join the Initiative. Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, the two West African neighbors, jointly account for about 70% of the world's cocoa output. Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire are located on the coast in West Africa.

Zimbabwe Misses Out On The New Kazungula Bridge History ...But The Question Is, Just What Really Happened?

By Peter Kayula

The continent of Africa has been on a trajectory of speed growth in trade in the past few years, while intra-Africa trade has been slow due to, among others, low levels of trade facilitation and industrialization.

Many trade analysts and scholars have stated that obstacles to the growth of trade and competitiveness on the African continent were not largely due to the movement of goods, humans or cargo along major highways but the loss of time at the ports, at borders and check points established along the trade corridor.

The Republic of Zambia and the Republic of Botswana owe a measure of their trade growth inspiration to the newly commissioned Kazungula Bridge and One Stop Border Post (OSBP), arguably a potent and inextricable force in the Southern African countries' trade facilitation. It is important therefore to explore the role and significance as well as the historical strain of an influential project that has ushered in a new era of Sub-Saharan trade.

On 10th May 2021, Zambia and Botswana officially commissioned the Kazungula Bridge and One Stop Border Post (OSBP) with mid-2009 construction cost estimates of the Bridge pegged at US\$80 million and US\$32 million for One Stop Border Post (OSBP) components, respectively.

The event was graced by Zambian President Mr Edgar Chagwa Lungu and Botswana President Mokgweetsi Masisi. The guest of honour was Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) president Felix Tshisekedi, who is also Africa Union President. In attendance was also Mozambican President, Filipe Nyusi and Zimbabwean President Dr Emmerson Mnangagwa.

However, this is probably the time to put up a strong case for a project likely to go down in history as a one which was initially mooted by three countries, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana (known as Kazungula - Botswana/Zambia /Zimbabwe



Great benefits are expected from the Kazungula Bridge.

North-South Corridor), after series of meetings exposing the growing issues of sluggish dwell times of about two to seven days at the border because of the use of pontoons which were slow.

The new facilities are expected to improve trade facilitation procedures and reduce transit time of about two hours at the border. Previously, cross-border traffic at Kazungula relied on two pontoons (ferries) but a current traffic volume estimated at about 115 trucks per day (total in both directions) will have to use the Kazungula bridge now.

By and large, however, the fall out of Zimbabwe from the project has opened up an unexpected debate about the Southern African country's possible future role as a spectator rather than an active player in the project.

A lot of people, goods, and vehicles pass through Beit Bridge-Harare-Chirundu Road into Zambia/Democratic Republic of Congo via Chirundu as well as Malawi via the Tete Bridge. Beit Bridge into Zimbabwe to Livingstone and Livingstone/Chirundu and Kariba but all these have been cut off.

It is alleged the idea of the

Kazungula Bridge fell off Former President the late Robert Mugabe 's favour, however emerging evidence suggest that, in 2001, JICA conducted a feasibility study for a Kazungula Bridge; at the time, the bridge was designed to cross Zambia, Botswana, and Zimbabwe, however, difficulties in crossing Zimbabwe territory emerged, and redesign of the bridge as a curved structure traversing only Zambia and Botswana territories was requested.

Unlike many other countries on the continent of Africa, Zambia previous known as a landlocked country has arguably continued to carry out her important work, to every extent possible, to fully realize her potential as a land-linked country through various road-related infrastructure projects such as the Kazungula bridge – a remarkable alternative south- to-north corridor connecting from Cape in the South to Cairo in the North. The bridge already has a railway on it and rails expected in future to transverse between Mosetse-Kazungula in Botswana and Kazungula Livingstone in Zambia.

Other benefits of the new bridge, which comes after the Chirundu

OSBP between Zambia and Zimbabwe recognised to be the first fully functional OSBP on the African continent, include improved border management cooperation with the One Stop Border Post (OSBP) procedure of just stopping on side for clearance procedures. This will also increase traffic throughout and reduce the cost of transport and doing business generally.

One Stop Border Post (OSBP) projects involve the implementation of the border control procedures of the two neighbouring countries in a single joint facility as opposed to separate processing by the two countries in their respective national territories. Benefits include reduced transport costs, resulting in reduced costs for imports and exports, and increased competitiveness.

The Kazungula Bridge will equally promote the cross-border trade, a major feature of the region's economic and social landscape. The African Development Bank estimates such activity to contribute to the incomes of some 43 per cent of the African population, even though such trade is largely informal.

Newly appointed Director of the
PAV - AUG. 2021 - MAG 0821 VOL III



The Kazungula Bridge was inaugurated by Southern African Leaders.

All Africa Alliance, a governance non-governmental Organization (NGO) in East Africa, Henry Fletcher has described the Kazungula Bridge as "Africa's most upcoming tool for improving trade facilitation and tackling impediments to the growth of the African trade" and was hopeful that the two countries and others will have to brace up for a highly innovative trade platform.

Mr Fletcher explained that while All Africa Alliance recognised the importance of this project, other mounting challenges the African countries will have to look out for will be the urgent need to adapt the chain supply mechanism within the highly complicated Southern Africa trade context and the need to create an enabling environment for support of cross channel freight increase.

However, of profound importance is the fact that, just after the official opening, The Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA), the lead border agency at Kazungula, ensured that all the facilities and systems on the

part of the authority were ready to start the operations immediately. The tax authority has even moved its regional customs command centre from Livingstone to Kazungula underscoring the significance of the strong ethos of logistics and transport.

The Kazungula project was divided into three parts namely, the Kazungula Bridge, the One Stop Border Post (OSBP) in Zambia, and lastly the One Stop Border Post in Botswana. The OSBP concept requires that the legal and institutional frameworks are put in place to ensure that facilities and associated processes and procedures that permit goods, humans, cargo and vessels or vehicles to stop at one single point or facility, and do all the clearance procedures to exit one country and enter the other country or state.

Following the successful commissioning of the Chirundu OSBP through the support of cooperating partners, the OSPB concept expanded rapidly with the support of development partners as

one of the major tools in improving trade facilitation.

The OSBP at the Kazungula Bridge has 27 buildings with major ones being the passenger terminal, freight inspection and some scanner buildings. Other facilities include internal roads and security systems.

To create a better tracking, enhanced administrative efficiency and operational effectiveness at the border, the buildings will also house other auxiliary agencies such as the immigration department, ministry of Health, ministry of Agriculture, ministry of Mines, Zambia Compulsory Standards Agency (ZCSA) the Zambia Police, Roads Transport and Safety Agency (RTSA), the Drugs Enforcement Commission (DEC) Zambia Information Communication Technology Agency (ZICTA), Zambia Environmental Management Agency (ZEMA) the Zambia Medicines Regulatory Authority (ZAMRA) among them, most of these agencies are linked to one single window.

Single-window inspection

is the simultaneous (or nearly simultaneous) inspection and control of people, goods, and vehicles of a country's respective authorities and while cross-border data interchange is important, especially between customs administrations, the establishment of single windows within each country will greatly facilitate trade and transport. At present in Southern Africa, there is little data sharing among the many agencies present at the border within each country, other than customs.

For now, or later, Zimbabwe has to get ready to pay much attention to a number of profiles expected to be published soon on the Kazungula Bridge's role on trade facilitation in Southern Africa and as always is the case, the Southern African country may still have to go up to disapprove some of the opinions to be written about her, sharing deep concern on why it is missing on this worthwhile project.



Cameroon: Ex-Nigerian President Dr Olusegun Obasanjo Extols virtues of Humility to ICT University Graduates

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

Former Nigerian President Dr Olusegun Obasanjo has encouraged the 6th graduating batch of the Information Communication Technology (ICT) University Cameroon to be humble and to grab every opportunity that comes their way.

Chief Dr Olusegun Mathew Okikiola Aremu Obasanjo, GCFR, was speaking during the 6th Commencement and graduation ceremony of the ICT University Cameroon that took place Saturday, July 31, 2021, at the Yaounde Conference Centre.

The graduation ceremony was attended by the Minister of State, Minister of Higher Education Prof Fame Ndongo, Prof Nalova Lyonga, Minister of Secondary Education, Professor Jean Emmanuel Pondi, several government Ministers, Ambassadors and the students, some of whom followed online.

In his keynote address titled “The Hidden Processor for Success Beyond ICT Knowledge and Skills” the former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, told the graduating students that “humility comes with



Former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo chaired the graduation ceremony attended by top dignitaries including Cameroon's Higher Education Minister Jacques Fame Ndongo

the lack of arrogance; it comes with wisdom. You need humility towards one another.”

Dr Obasanjo went on to encourage the graduating students to take

advantage of the opportunities that will come their way. To him, the students must be curious to know and mentally prepared. “You have to be deft in smelling opportunities. It

will not come easy but you need to continue searching. I hope to come back and hear that some 50% of the graduating students are gainfully employed or are employing others.”

“You need to remain focus and determined. The ride may be tough but commitment will keep you in it. Whatever you do, you need to put your all into it and not a half-hearted something. Take responsibility and it will be well with you,” Dr Olusegun Obasanjo added.

“Always remember that Cameroon, your communities and the world needs you; you have been prepared for it and delivery is important.”

Dr Olusegun Obasanjo went on to commend Dr Victor Mbarika for his investment in the education of the students. He said: “You are investing in the graduating students and all the other students that are in this institution. You are investing in their development, you are investing in their today for their family, you are investing in the today of this country and its progress and development.”



Dr Olusegun Obasanjo (r) receives a special award from the ICT University from Prof Fame Ndongo, Minister of State, Minister of Higher Education.



Dignitaries pose for photos after the 6th graduation exercise at the ICT University.

President Olusegun Obasanjo told Prof Victor Mbarika.

Speaking during the graduation ceremony, Professor Victor Mbarika, President of the Board of Trustees went on to appreciate the enormous support he has gotten from both the Cameroonian and Nigerian governments.

«Nigerians have been very good to us; they have donated to ICT University 100 hectares of land, three-storey buildings in the state of Kaduna,» Professor Victor Mbarika said. «I want to thank the Nigerian government for their support to ICT University and we are about to launch a campus there within the next one year.»

Professor Victor Mbarika added: «I am a product of free education... Thank you Cameroon government for your free education. I believe in public education and that is why we are committed that all my former institutions will receive a multimedia computer lab on behalf of the George Mbarika Foundation. Every school

I went to in Cameroon will receive a multimedia lab.»

Prof. Jacques Fame Ndong, Minister of State, Minister of Higher Education commended the former Nigerian President on the historic peace accord that was struck between the two countries bringing an end to the Bakassi crisis.

Describing the University as the citadel of education, Prof Fame Ndong said the graduates are now ambassadors of the Cameroonian higher education system and ambassadors of the Cameroon ICT University in Africa and the world.

«There is every indication that you have received a fine education and are now the new gladiators, catalyst and galvanizers of the transformation of your country, Africa and the world. As you take the journey into the professional world, make your presence felt, make your light shine, make your teachers proud and above all make your country and continent proud.»

The event saw some personalities

being given a special award for contribution to peace in Africa and also made a distinguished visiting Professor of the ICT University, something that the distinguished peace advocate takes great pride in it.

«Excellence was the pillar of the training and rewarding excellence was envisaged. They have achieved a high level of performance with at least a 3.5 GPA. They are outstanding and deserved recognition,» Professor Beban Sammy Chumbow, pioneer Vice-Chancellor of the ICT University Cameroon said in respect to the special awards.

Over 300 students from across the African continent received their Bachelor's and Master's degrees in a ceremony that also involves the award of doctorate degrees to some fifteen students.

«My decision to join clubs and other associations at the ICT University helped me developed a broader community as I met new friends with similar interests. Activities on campus helped me build confidence

while developing important leadership and teamwork skills. The ICT University offered me more than a degree. The clubs and activities provided me endless ways to broaden my horizons,» Agbor Austine Abang, Banking and Finance said.

The most remarkable experience I have had with The ICT University is Research. It has been great to be in a university with a huge space for academic research on contemporary business and environmental issues. Research is highly encouraged and supported through research facilities and expert researchers in the field of business,»

Maimo Jovanny, IMBA, BMS Department said.

Other special awards were equally awarded such as to Reverend Jimi Titus who was given the endowed professionalship of the ICT University, Professor Robert Stephen (endowed award of professionalship), and Professor Muhammadou Kah (endowed professorship of the ICT University), amongst others.



THE SONS OF THUNDER

AN AMERICAN ODYSSEY

OKEY SAMUEL MBONGU

BOOK LAUNCH
&
FILM SCREENING

SEPTEMBER
4th, 2021

4:30 PM-
8:00PM

SPECIAL GUESTS
From

Washington DC,
Los Angeles
&
New York

VENUE

Aroma Ultra Lounge
4000 Town Center
Bldv
Bowie, MD

.Red Carpet
.Networking
.Refreshments

.Author Intro/Interview
.Short Film Premiere
.After-Party

ALL RSVP's
Through Eventbrite



AN ELEGANT EVENING

Products of ICT University Are Job Creators Not Job Seekers- Prof Victor Mbarika

By Ajong Mbapndah L

Fresh off another hugely successful graduation ceremony this time in Yaoundé, Cameroon, Prof Victor Mbarika says the ICT University continues to excel in producing job creators and not job seekers. The University Don, Founder and President of the Board of Trustees of the ICT University sees the future with optimism with the focus his Institutions have on quality.

"We have a model to create businesses not to create an additional burden of job seekers in Africa," says Prof Mbarika who is solidly on course to achieving his vision of having ICT Universities in all regions of the continent.

In an exclusive interview with Pan African Visions Prof Mbarika discusses progress at the ICT universities, relations with governments, perspectives on higher education in Africa and more. A major announcement from the Board Chair of the ICT University is the commitment of one million dollars in the next five years to fund business projects of ICT University students.

Pan African Visions: For those who may not be very familiar, could Prof Mbarika start by introducing the ICT University and its guiding philosophy?

Prof Victor Mbarika: The ICT University is purely a US-based curriculum higher education institution that provides quality information and communication technology and managerial human capacity development for individuals located largely in developing nations, although we have students literally from over the world; we have students from the U.S, Europe, Asia. We have as our guiding principle, imparting information technologies in every discipline. In other words, we teach information technologies in all our fields of study. For example, if you are doing marketing at ICT university, you do not just graduate after defining



Prof Victor Mbarika, President of the ICT University Board of Trustees bestows a medal on a graduate.

what is marketing, no, you should be able to graduate after knowing how to build good e-commerce websites and conducting e-business.

Yes, we do have purely degrees in ICTs such as computer science, computer engineering, software engineering but we also have business programs that are heavy in ICTs. We have marketing, management programmes, banking and finance; then we have our public health programmes that are heavy in ICT where we teach telemedicine, electronic health records; ICT in healthcare. Teachers today do not just depend on using a textbook in class and dictating notes in class, but they should be able to use technology to teach. Those are some of the things that make ICT universities different from many universities in Africa and around the world.

Pan African Visions: On the quality of graduates that you send out, how equipped are they to help Africa meet its current development needs?

Prof Victor Mbarika: The ICT university has the premier focus on quality and by God's grace we have had our reputation in producing quality graduates. Now, when I say quality graduate any university can claim that but hardly any of our graduates are without a job. Remember that they create their jobs and some that choose to, they go and work or other organizations. We have been graduating job creators; many of them own companies and other types of businesses and we are very proud of them for doing that. If you go on our website, you will see many testimonies and if you go on our Facebook and you will see many testimonies of what our graduates are doing all over very successfully.

It will please you to know that 90 per cent of PhD holders at Makerere University Business School of computing are graduates from ICT university. The current head of department for computer science of National Open University of Nigeria which is the largest university in Nigeria and one of the

largest universities in the world (has over 450 students) is a graduate at ICT university. ICT University has a reputation for graduating entrepreneurs and those that get jobs to get them in top-notch organizations. We are proud of them.

Pan African Visions: From the seasoned academic and global scholar that you are, what is your overall take on higher education in Africa; any recommendations on how to make it better meet the challenges of our time?

Prof Victor Mbarika: I must say I am proud of the growth in higher education across Africa. I know many people want to criticize anything in Africa; saying how universities in Africa graduate more students than there are jobs. That is true around the world and there is more graduate in America than there are jobs available, and I think it is very unfair when people look at African graduates that these universities in Africa are graduating many students than there



Prof Victor Mbarika says the ICT University continues to excel in producing job creators and not job seekers.

are jobs. That in itself is the problem because they are graduating students to look for jobs. ICT university has taken another route; we graduate students to produce jobs and that is why we have many students who have graduated and have produced companies out of ICT university.

I am excited to announce that I have committed one million dollars in the next five years to fund businesses to come out of ICT university students; so those of you coming to join ICT University will have the opportunity to get funding during your studies to start up a company but of course to get that funding will be extremely competitive. This will not be free money going to students; this will be conducted by ICT university consulting services. So, the students will jointly own the company with ICT university consulting services (the ICT university consulting services will put in the money, mentorship for the students to be able to build it to become a lucrative business).

We have a model to create businesses not to create an additional burden of job seekers in Africa. That is how we are different from other universities. The other universities are still playing their part; it is better to have people with some education

than people with no education. I congratulate my other fellow university leaders all around Africa for the graduate we are producing; we need to keep the quality, but we need to keep creating jobs through creating graduate that is job producers and not only job seekers.

Pan African Visions: The last time we spoke to you, there were plans to have ICT Universities in all regions of the African continent, what progress has been made towards that goal and how are things working so far?

Prof Victor Mbarika: The ICT University has a presence in almost all regions of Africa except Northern Africa. We have a strong presence in East Africa which is Uganda in particular; we have a strong presence in Central Africa (Cameroon, which is fast becoming the headquarters of all our operations in Africa); we have a strong presence in West Africa (Nigeria) and Southern Africa region in Zimbabwe through our

joint-campus operations with Arrupe Jesuit University. The only part that we do not have a clear presence but which we will is Northern Africa, and we have some plans working with Algeria to make that happen.

We are very proud, and we thank God for the growth of ICT University across Africa, and we will keep growing; we will be establishing more campuses even in Francophone countries. Beginning next year, we will be having a campus presence in Congo and Chad and all of that has been arranged., we have a presence

in Guinea Bissau besides having a presence in Nigeria. We will be growing and be sure to keep your magazine updated as we grow in different parts of Africa.

Pan African Visions: How affordable is it for students to get an education in the ICT Universities considering that you try to make them meet international standards in all forms?

Prof Victor Mbarika: Talking about the cost to study at ICT University, there is no way we can compare with the government Universities because the government universities in Cameroon for example you pay just 50 thousand francs a year; that is a great gift from the government. However, ICT University has its role; yes, we are much more expensive than the government institutions because our regular fees for undergraduates is about 900 thousand francs per year. However, with donations and support we have had from people in the USA and donors in other parts of the world, we have given scholarships to all African students that come to our universities. Our undergraduate students now pay about 700 thousand per year but the other part is paid for by our donors that support the university.

Almost every ICT University student has some kind of a partial scholarship because of our funding



Prof Victor Mbarika with Prime Minister Dion Ngute of Cameroon, many African governments find the vision of the ICT University appealing.

from organizations and individual supporters that provide funding through the ICT University Foundation to our students of ICT University. We have been very successful to make the fees very affordable and that is why many students are attracted to come to ICT University. However, to keep the partial scholarship, students must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 over 4 otherwise they lose the partial scholarship.

Pan African Visions: What has been the response of governments in countries where you have ICT Universities, have they been supportive in any way or receptive to the vision you have?

Prof Victor Mbarika: We have been receiving tremendous supports from governments across Africa and in other developing nations across the world. Honestly, I hear many people love to complain about governments in Africa and to me, it is very discouraging. You do not encourage the government by only insulting the government all the time we have to call out good things when they do. We have had tremendous support from the Cameroon government; even with our graduation, we had support from the Head of State President Paul Biya who supported the ICT Conference in 2015 financially. Recently we have had support from the Minister of Higher Education Prof Jacques Fame Ndongo with the donation to the ICT University over a hundred thousand dollars' worth of computers and other related equipment to support learning at ICT University.

Similarly, we have had great support from the government of Nigeria; they have given us three-storey buildings and other buildings to launch the ICT University campus. In addition, they are working to give us about a hundred hectares of land for our university. When we even went to Zimbabwe for our conference, when the late Robert Mugabe was president, they gave us tremendous support for our conference; they provided funding, provided support



Prof Victor Mbarika says the ICT University continues to excel in producing job creators and not job seekers.

for many private companies for a successful conference. The government of Uganda also supported many students who do their PhD at ICT university, and we are proud to say today, about 90 per cent of PhD holders in Makerere University Business school, 90 per cent of PhDs in ICT come from ICT university. We are proud of that record.

ICT university has been getting tremendous government support; we saw this during the graduation where a lot of government Ministers were president. The former Prime Minister was president and the Minister of State, Minister of Higher Education was present to grace the occasion. We are thankful to all governments that have supported us across the continent. We owe it to them and the people of Africa to continue doing much and gaining their confidence, so they are not disappointed in what we do.

Pan African Visions: The ICT university recently organized the 6th graduation ceremony; how did the ceremony go?

Prof Victor Mbarika: The graduation ceremony went on well; I want to start by thanking the government of Cameroon for their support in many ways with the presence of many government ministers thanks to the support of the

Head of State and the ceremony was graced by H.E Olusegun Obasanjo who is the former president of Nigeria and gave the graduating speech. In his speech he emphasis on some things we are already doing and more things we need to do. One of the things he emphasized is for students to be humble, creating their employment and creating businesses and this is the main guiding principle of ICT university. We do not train students to go and get jobs; we train students to create jobs and if they so wish they can go look for jobs.

We came out of the graduation very happy because President Olusegun Obasanjo talked about some of the things we are already doing and encouraged our students to do more and gave some very strong guiding principles of life which the students carried away. We were very excited by his presence.

Pan African Visions: What next for the ICT University, any other major innovations or reforms in view, and what should we expect in the upcoming years?

Prof Victor Mbarika: The future of the ICT University is extremely bright. As you may know, we just started a free summer boot camp to train students with different ICT and business skills; skills such as artificial

intelligence, robotics, and we are beginning to train these students from secondary school. We have a free Bootcamp going on in August to get students on internet of things; new technologies. We do not just train them in theory, we have the equipment funded by ICT University Foundation USA with top-notch equipment for them to practice this summer.

The additional projects involve the building of a medical school that will be largely based on ICT in medicine. We will be having a major telemedicine centre; that one is slated for the North West Region of Cameroon and we want to have a major school on Electronic Agriculture (E-Agriculture) using ICTs to promote great agriculture yields (we will be having that in the South West Region as well as the Eastern Region of Cameroon).

Our goal is to have a presence in all the Regions of Cameroon; the Northern Region of Cameroon does not have many universities and we plan to establish something there; we plan to establish campuses all over the country and like I said earlier in terms of Africa like the Northern Region also. ICT University has big goals and dreams and we do not just talk about it, we demonstrate it like you have seen over the years.



THE
ICT
UNIVERSITY

**INFORMATION &
COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY
UNIVERSITY**

WWW.ICTUNIVERSITY.EDU.CM



**We impart ICTs in all
academic disciplines.**

Why choose us

- We are the lone university that **offers effective online and onsite learning** in Cameroon.
- We are the lone institution that **provides all research materials** for her students through the e-library platform beside the physical library
- We are one of the very few institutions that **continued with effective classes** during the **Coronavirus pandemic** with little or no hitches.
- **New tuition rates And scholarships Available**



SCAN ME

ACCREDITATION/APPROVAL N° 02/0405/N/MINESUP/DDES/ESUP/SAC/EBM 21ST SEPTEMBER 2012
AUTORISATION N° 14/406/MINESUP/SG/DDES OF 4TH JULY 2014

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

General requirements :

Be in possession of

- GCE/A-Level or Baccalauréat (all series) for Bachelor degree studies
- HND, BTS/DUT and equivalent qualifications for one year Top-up Bachelor degree studies
- Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution for Masters Studies
- Master's degree for Ph.D. Studies
- Original copy of the applicant's transcripts in sealed envelopes.

Application submission deadlines

- Fall semester : begins October; application deadline– October
- Spring semester : begins February ; application deadline – February
- Summer semester : begins July ; application deadline – July

YOU CAN APPLY HERE :

www.ictuniversity.org/application-form

FOR MORE INFO CONTACT US – ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

THE ICT-UNIVERSITY CAMPUS – ZOATUPSI YAOUNDE

P.O. BOX526 YAOUNDE CAMEROON

PHONE (WhatsApp & IMO) +237 651 060 049 – +237 678 764 037

Email : admin@ictuniversity.org

Website : www.ictuniversity.edu.cm

Skype : ICTUniversityCameroon

Facebook : ICT University

USA : Baton Rouge, LA 70806

Phone : +1 225 612 4643



SCAN ME



PRESS
PROF. VICTOR MBARIKA
PRÉSIDENT OF ICT
UNIVERSITY WITH PM
DION NGUTE



THE
ICT
UNIVERSITY

**INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION
TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY**

A Tale of resilience and resurgence As Venture Capital Investment Hits New Heights In Africa

By Ajong Mbapndah L

Venture capital investment in Africa soared to record levels in 2020 as global investors demonstrate confidence in key sectors, according to new African Private Equity and Venture Capital Association (AVCA) report.

The report published in July 2021 provides data and analysis on VC deals that took place on the continent between 2014 and 2020, along with information on the profile of investors that participated in VC deals in Africa over the same period.

Despite the global challenges in 2020, investment activity told a story of African resilience and resurgence, says Alexia Alexandropoulou, Research Manager at the AVCA.

In a year when COVID-19 created chaos everywhere, a record number of 319 venture capital deals were recorded, with African start-ups raising US\$1.1bn in total reported deal value, the report highlights.

Buoyed by above-average economic growth on the continent, a favourable macroeconomic outlook, the magnitude of the market and a growing middle class consumer base, the pace of deal-making on the continent has noticeably gained momentum since 2017, says Alexia Alexandropoulou in a Q & A with PAV to discuss the report.

Let us start with the introduction of African Private Equity And Venture Capital Association, What Does the AVCA Do?

Alexia Alexandropoulou : The African Private Equity and Venture Capital Association (AVCA) is the pan-African industry body which promotes and enables private investment in Africa. AVCA plays a significant role as a champion for the continent's Private Equity (PE) and Venture Capital (VC) industries, serving as a conduit for industry stakeholders currently engaged or interested in private investment in Africa.



Despite the global challenges in 2020, investment activity told a story of African resilience and resurgence, says Alexia Alexandropoulou, Research Manager at the AVCA.

AVCA operates across four key verticals: Research, Training, Networking and Advocacy: educating, equipping and connecting members and stakeholders with independent industry research, best practice training programmes, and networking opportunities for knowledge exchange and capacity building. AVCA's member base convenes a diverse range of actors within the private investment space, spanning PE & VC firms, institutional investors, foundations and endowments, pension funds, international development finance institutions and professional service firms.

For those who are not familiar with venture capital, what is it and how does it work?

Alexia Alexandropoulou : Venture capital is an investment practice within private equity featuring short-medium term direct equity or equity-linked investments

limited.

How important is venture capital in the development of Africa today?

Alexia Alexandropoulou : By commercializing innovation, venture capital has a pivotal role to play in Africa's development. In sub-Saharan Africa, invention and innovation are driving the economy and creating innumerable opportunities for economic development, job creation and poverty reduction. Venture capital has the power to accelerate the structural transformation of Africa's economies, which are uniquely and overwhelmingly comprised of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (MSMEs). MSMEs are the vehicle of Africa's economic development, accounting for almost 90% of all companies and nearly 80% of the continent's employment. Venture capital not only provides monetary support to startups, but also technical or managerial expertise to nurture these small businesses in their early stages of development. Venture capital is thus of instrumental importance given the dominance of MSMEs in Africa's economic landscape, supporting Afro-entrepreneurs as they pave the way for Africa to "leapfrog" into modernity.

The AVCA recently published its 2020 VC in Africa report, can you share some of the key findings with us?

Alexia Alexandropoulou : In July 2021 AVCA published the second edition of its Venture Capital in Africa report. The report provides data and analysis on VC deals that took place on the continent between 2014 and 2020, along with information on the profile of investors that participated in VC deals in Africa over the same period. Between 2014 and 2020, 933 VC deals were recorded in Africa with a total reported value of US\$5bn. In 2020 (an undoubtedly challenging

year for private investment globally), the patterns of investment activity told a story of African resilience and resurgence: a record number of 319 VC deals were recorded, with African start-ups raising US\$1.1bn in total reported VC deal value.

The report also highlights the increasing interest of both international and local investors in opportunities emerging in Africa's VC landscape. It's noteworthy that of all the investors that participated in VC deals in Africa from 2014 to 2020, North American based investors represented 39%, followed by European investors at 24% and African investors at 22%. Investors from the Asia-Pacific region, in particular China and Japan, have displayed a keen appetite for African venture capital.

Investors in Africa's VC scene have also shown diversification by type with PE and VC fund managers, direct investors, corporate venture firms accounting for the largest share of investors by type. Global corporations - such as Visa, Yamaha and Shell - have actively supported new entrepreneurial ventures in Africa; a fact that further illustrates the increasing diversification of actors investing and operating in the industry.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, the volume of total reported venture capital deals in Africa in 2020 rose to 319 from 140 in 2019; how is this explained?

Alexia Alexandropoulou : The pace of deal-making on the continent has noticeably gained momentum since 2017. There was a 13% YoY increase in deal volume between 2017 and 2018, and a 23% increase between 2018 and 2019. This surge in deal activity was buoyed by above-average economic growth on the continent, a favourable macroeconomic outlook, the magnitude of the market and a growing middle class consumer base. Given these long-term growth fundamentals remain unchanged despite the momentary economic disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the rise in total VC deals in 2020 represents the continuation of

an existing upward trend since 2017.

The exponential rise in the volume of reported VC deals in 2020 could also be attributed to the relatively long deal-making timelines in Africa's PE & VC ecosystems (discussed further in Question 5). The dramatic surge in deal activity between 2019 and 2020 reflects growing investor interest and appetite for investments in Africa in recent years. This 128% YoY increase is likely the actualisation of a pipeline of investments which were already underway or sourced in 2019, given the continent's strong macroeconomic performance and growth trajectory at the time. Regardless, the volume and value of VC deals reported in Africa in 2020 illustrates the resilience of the industry, the commitment of investors currently active in Africa, and the promise of Africa's growth story.

What are some of the most lucrative sectors for Venture Capitalists?

Alexia Alexandropoulou : AVCA's second VC in Africa report reveals that investors were attracted by investment opportunities across a variety of sectors. However, some sectors presented a higher level of activity with local and international investors demonstrating their confidence and growing appetite for these key industries.

Financials remained the most prominent sector for VC investment, accounting for the largest share of VC deals by both volume (22%) and value (26%) in Africa from 2014 to 2020. Information Technology (18%) and Consumer Discretionary (16%) accounted for the second and third largest share of VC deals by volume within the same timeframe. The continued popularity of the Consumer Discretionary sector is mainly attributed to the rise of online platforms that provide consumer services and the rise of e-commerce platforms, which cumulatively represented 93% of companies that received venture funding within the Consumer Discretionary sector in 2020. Utilities is another sector that has been quite popular among early-

stage deals, with investors being attracted by companies providing alternative power solutions. An example is the US\$12mn Series A investment round in SparkMeter, a developer of off-grid electricity management services and equipment led by Goodwell Investments in partnership with Alitheia Capital in August 2020.

AVCA's VC in Africa report also acknowledges the vital role of technology in driving economic growth in Africa, as 90% of all reported VC investments from 2014 to 2020 were in technology or technology enabled companies operating across a variety of sectors. Within technology, investments in financial technology have consistently attracted a significant proportion of the volume of venture capital funding channelled to the continent. However, technology is also being harnessed outside of the Financials sector. HealthTech, E-Commerce, EdTech, CleanTech and AgriTech are some of the verticals that have exhibited significant growth. Overall, technology has developed into one of the highest-interest emerging sectors for private investment in Africa.

In terms of spread, which parts of the continent or countries were the most attractive for Venture Capitalists?

Alexia Alexandropoulou : There is significant cross-regional variation in the distribution of VC funding across the continent. Southern Africa attracted the highest volume of VC deals (24%) in Africa between 2014 and 2020, followed by East Africa (22%) and West Africa (21%). Multi-region VC deals accounted for the greatest share of VC deals reported in Africa by value at 47%.

In terms of countries, South Africa (21%), Kenya (16%) and Nigeria (15%) accounted for the bulk of VC investments reported in Africa between 2014 and 2020. This trend reflects similar patterns to PE activity on the continent. PE and VC investors have been attracted by the size of these economies and the opportunities that have emerged in these countries.

Egypt is increasingly gaining popularity among investors. The country's share of the total volume of VC deals reported in Africa between 2014-2020 increased to 12% from 9% in 2014-2019, reflecting Egypt's establishment as a significant VC hub on the continent. Egypt's popularity as an investment destination will likely continue to grow, particularly as it was chosen by the largest share of LPs as an attractive country for PE investment in Africa over the next three years in AVCA's 2021 Private Equity Industry Survey.

What are some of the challenges that venture capitalists are faced with across Africa?

Alexia Alexandropoulou : VC fund managers are looking to back strong businesses that fit their investment strategy. Although many businesses may be identified as potential investments, it can be difficult to gauge if they are "investment-ready" businesses that could pass due diligence processes. This concern was amplified with the onset of Covid-19 and associated containment measures in 2020, which constrained on-site visits and abruptly halted due diligence processes. Whilst the isolationist containment measures that inhibited extensive travel across the continent have since reduced significantly or been removed altogether, they have given way to similar constraints arising from the slow vaccine rollout in sub-Saharan Africa. This prolonged disruption to risk assessment and due diligence processes has created additional operational difficulties for investors and fund managers trying to identify new opportunities in Africa's VC landscape. The result is a delay in the capital deployment process, which can have an impact on investor confidence.

Beyond these difficulties in deal sourcing, venture capitalists also contend with prolonged deal-making timelines in Africa compared to developed markets. For example, research surveying fund managers in Kenya found that the average time taken between identifying an

investable opportunity and closing the deal was one year, in some (albeit very rare) cases extending to as long as three years. This protracted timeline can cause challenges for fund managers, given the 10-year average life cycle of a typical VC fund, within which firms are expected to take over a company, restructure it and make a profitable exit. The relative infancy of the deal intermediary and service provider ecosystem in Africa further problematises the situation, where the onus is placed entirely on fund managers for all the work between deal sourcing and portfolio exit. As such, deal execution, which is extended over a longer timeframe in Africa's VC industry, can be a challenge for venture capitalists active on the continent.

For businesses who will be glad to be considered for funding, what words of advice do you have for them?

Alexia Alexandropoulou : AVCA principally convenes Africa-focused investment actors and professionals to champion private investment in Africa but does not in itself make capital allocations or direct investments. Nevertheless, entrepreneurs and businesses seeking funding should

be aware of the following, which represent key metrics VC investors look at when determining the quality and investability of a startup:

The skills and expertise of a startup's management team. This is a crucial determiner of a startup's likelihood to secure venture financing. Given that startups rarely have a significant market share when seeking early-stage financing, VC investors tend to evaluate the organisation's management team and make calculated judgements on the team's ability to execute their business plan. VC investors are more

Venture Capital in Africa

July 2021



AVCA | African Private Equity and Venture Capital Association

likely to back seasoned managers and experienced executives that they perceive as capable of navigating a start-up's fragile early stages of growth.

The need for skilled leadership. VC investors prefer to partner with experienced managers with demonstrable track records, particularly when investing in markets with a high degree of volatility relative to other parts of the world. As such, talent acquisition and proficiency should be a key focus for entrepreneurs and businesses seeking VC funding. The startup team will need to display a thorough knowledge

of and experience with navigating the unique and varied requirements of doing business in their chosen industry.

How do you envisage the future of Venture Capital in Africa?

Alexia Alexandropoulou : The future of venture capital in Africa is bright. From a capital raising point of view, there has been a discernible shift in the investment stage focus of private equity firms on the continent, particularly in the last five years as the momentum of investments in early-stage companies in Africa has grown. Several PE firms that

previously mainly targeted investment opportunities in African MSMEs have started to consider emerging opportunities in the venture capital space as well. Simultaneously, we have also seen African fund managers that traditionally focused on PE investments on the continent shift gears to raise VC funds. An example is AfricInvest, a Tunisian-based private equity fund, which partnered with Cathay Innovation to launch a US\$168 million fund targeting startups in Africa. Avenues for startups to access capital and grow their businesses with affordable and tailored credit are on the rise as venture capital develops into a recognised and definable investment theme in Africa.

The horizon is equally bright from a regulatory and institutional point of view. More African governments are recognising the catalytic role of startups as engines for economic growth and thus championing the goal of nurturing vibrant and supportive local ecosystems. Africa's VC industry is poised for growth in this supportive, dynamic environment.

Despite the relative infancy of the entrepreneurial space in Africa, a culture of entrepreneurship is growing across the continent. From an entrepreneurial point of view, there are yet more reasons for optimism regarding the future of venture capital in Africa. Afro-entrepreneurs are leveraging technology and developing ground-breaking solutions addressing the most pertinent challenges on the continent. As the continent develops "African solutions to African problems", the number of "investment-ready" businesses also grows commensurately, creating more investment opportunities for so-inclined venture capitalists.

Surmounting Big Hurdles For Small and Medium Enterprises In Africa.

By Peter Kayula

A trade and investment virtual conference due in November this year will canvass African Governments to support traditional Small and Medium Enterprises' growth in Africa as the world turns to the continent as the next business frontier.

The conference will also analyse social inclusion strategies to address gender disparity in the Small and Medium Enterprises' landscape and how Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can be harnessed to alleviate market access barriers by small businesses players.

Mubala Nialé, the co-chair of the conference, says in a statement made public, time is now to raise awareness and categorize regional dialogue towards long-term regional response to challenges facing Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Africa, explaining that civil societies should define a compelling and strategic programmatic agenda for state and non- state action on Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) development in Africa.

"To enable inclusive and efficient Small and Medium Enterprises systems, a number of strategies should be implemented to increase the participation of small traders in domestic and export markets and the creation of an enabling environment for competitive production," he said.

Small and Medium Enterprises is a major feature of the region's economic and social landscape. The African Development Bank estimates such activity to contribute to the incomes of some 43 per cent of the African population but the sector has continued to face challenges such as high transactional costs influenced by limited infrastructure, poor access to information along the value chain, access to financing, collateral aspects and investment risks.

Other multiple challenges include low adoption of enhancing technologies, which leads to generally low-level productivity, lack of



alternative financing mechanism such as supplier credit and lack of clear linkages between SMEs policy and other government ministries and department advisory services.

Mr Nialé joins other key actors, academicians, private sector consultants and thought leaders in Africa who have been calling for mutual accountability on leadership and governance as regards to Small and Medium Enterprises support and operations in Africa.

Just seven years ago, Standard Chartered Bank Deputy Group Chief Executive officer, Mikes Rees, announced that an essential 38 billion United States dollars is needed each year in infrastructure investment in Africa alone as the world turns to the continent as the next business frontier.

Rees told local reporters in Zambia, Africa has a new and confident middle class, trade and investment was growing rapidly and leapfrogging old technologies, leading the world innovations such as mobile payments.

According to a report in a local Daily Nation Newspaper published on April 16, 2014, he said sentiments in emerging markets was one of the key topics in finance leaders at various meetings in Washington DC but slower growth in parts of Asia and political discord in some emerging

economies should not be allowed to obscure the strong economic potential of these markets.

Africa offered an extraordinary bright spot on the world economic map, having outperformed global growth for than a decade." We are expecting Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth in sub-Sahara Africa to reach 5.4 per cent (then 2014) this year compared to 1.3 per cent in the Euro zone," Rees said, adding that, "We know we can do business as Africa's economic grow, but we see a massive opportunity for us and other companies to do more than that, helping to create a sustainable economic success."

"In the rush to be part of Africa's growth story, we can't turn a blind eye to these challenges. If Africa is to sustain its rate of growth in the long run, it needs electricity, roads, ports, deeper capital markets, better jobs, more credits for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and the list goes on," he said, according to The Daily Nation.

Rees revealed that at a report the bank commissioned on Africa showed there is massive job creating potential of Africa's Small and Medium Enterprises with over 400 jobs supported for every USD1 million of bank financing, more than double created in other sectors of economic

growth, yet lack of credit is still a major constraint for those companies.

But the start last week of a pre-trade and Investment conference meeting tapped into African state actors' anger that African Governments, stakeholders and financiers, among others, have not done much to help traditional Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) grow and that they should undertake an analysis of the sector's key players' livelihoods to understand how they interact with markets.

Meeting delegates further revealed that even though such trade (SMEs) is largely informal, lengthy and cumbersome production mechanism, policy and lack of interventions, especially now in the light of COVID-19 pandemic, have arguably increased the cost of trade.

But such a move might not be unanimous because, according to Rees, it is clear banks could help African businesses grow and create jobs, and not just by investing in infrastructure but through encouraging clients from other parts of the world to consider investing more in the continent.'

"We can use our local market knowledge, built up over many decades, to help connect Africa to the world supporting trade along multiple corridors," he said.

CHICAGO

Thrice weekly to over 54 Destinations in Africa



Business friendly arrivals and departures to/from Africa

Fly non-stop from Chicago to Addis Ababa on Ethiopian's Ultra-Modern Aircraft and from there, to all major capitals of Africa are just a short hop away. With early afternoon arrivals to the capitals of Africa, Ethiopian offers the most convenient schedules to more cities in Africa than any other carrier.

www.ethiopianairlines.com

Ethiopian
የኢትዮጵያ
THE NEW SPIRIT OF AFRICA

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

COMESA Plans Big On Africa's Agro-Industry

By Peter Kayula



CBC chief executive officer, Ms. Sandra Uwera.

The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA)'s Business Council (CBC) will this year seek funds or technical assistance to undertake a study on the development of a mutual recognition framework for pre-packaged food in Africa's agro-industry.

In an exceptional measure, stakeholders in the industry have also agreed, in collaboration with the Council, to move aggressively to develop a roadmap to be implemented this year that seeks, among other activities, the development of a regional anti-illicit policy and implementation framework to sensitize industry players on the need to establish a track and trace system at national and regional level.

This comes as Africans continue to spend close to US\$40 billion each year on food imports. In particular, about 80 percent of high-value food products consumed on the continent are grown, processed, and packaged outside of Africa. But the economic

opportunities in agriculture are much bigger than many may realize. A recent assessment by World Bank found that by 2030, serving the food demands of Africa's growing middle class alone will create a market worth US\$1 trillion.

According to outputs of a one-day virtual workshop for the COMESA Business Council agro-industry workgroup held on July 14, 2021, addressed by, among others, the President of the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and CBC's chairperson, Mr Guillaume Hugnin, a regional beverages association is also planned as a focal point for strengthening of regional industry coordination, supply chain partnerships, and represent the industry's critical position in engagements with the public sector.

Ideally, the outputs explained that Member States are expected to strengthen national regulations and enforcement mechanism to address key concerns of counterfeit seed trade. On its part, COMESA is expected to

develop a regional regulation on anti-illicit trade with a serious and focused attention on the provision of a cross border framework for engagement and collaborative efforts for tackling counterfeit trade in seed.

Mr Hugnin told participants that the workgroup had maintained strong pursuit of key advocacy issues in support of the industry, reflected in, among other initiatives, the development of a mutual recognition framework and the local sourcing of partnership arrangement, despite the prevailing challenges brought forth by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Continuous collaboration with the public sector and also strengthening Public-Private Dialogue to address the emerging issues in the agriculture sector is crucial," Mr Hugnin said as he called for consolidation of efforts in re-strategizing on how to further the workgroup's agenda.

CBC Chief Executive Officer, Ms. Sandra Uwera highlighted the important role of women as a vital link within the chain of agriculture,

industry, and trade. She said three quarters of the employed women in the COMESA region work in the agriculture sector, which is dominant as it pertains to high value products such as flowers, fresh fruits and vegetables.

"Agriculture is the backbone of the economy in COMESA. It provides livelihoods for about 80 percent of the region's labour force, and accounts for about 65 percent of foreign exchange earnings in the region," said Ms. Uwera.

Several issues were agreed upon which included the need for the CBC to review the regulatory regime for plastic waste management for the COMESA member states. This will help determine the impact of environmental degradation on the businesses.

Participants were drawn from the agriculture sector comprising of dairy farmers, commercial grain farmers, tobacco leaf growers and manufactures from across the region.

Cameroon: The Fomunyoh Foundation Donates to IDPs, Schools in Kumba

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

As part of its Relief and Hope Project, The Fomunyoh Foundation has made available some food and non-food items to internally displaced persons and some educational establishments in Kumba, South West Region of Cameroon.

Some 100 Internally Displaced Persons in this first phase were July 20, in Kumba provided this assistance with items consisted of rice, groundnut oil, soap, and salt to take care of their basic needs.

The conflict that started in 2016 has seen thousands of people who have been killed, maimed, kidnapped and others forced to flee their homes for shelter in neighbouring Nigeria and other parts of the country.

This initiative is spearheaded by Dr Christopher Fomunyoh, Senior Associate and Regional Director for Central Africa Programs at NDI. This is not the first time that Dr Fomunyoh or the Fomunyoh Foundation is carrying out such gestures. In addition to this one in Kumba, some other four donation exercises have been carried out in Buea and Limbe this year.

"The IDPs are coming from the outlets of Meme like Mbonge Road, Mabanda, Kosala and those areas where IDPs are choked up and also around Kasava farms. We did not



TFF donated to Champion Nursery and Primary School.

want to base ourselves to take just one quarter but we decided that we will take from all the quarters and do the same in the upcoming distribution quarters," Metuge Evelyne Epole, Director – The Fomunyoh Foundation Women Empowerment Centre, SWR (Kumba) told Pan African Visions.

"When we give to Kosala, the people in Mbonge road may be aware and maybe thinking we have forgotten about them but we have explained to them that we have selected the first

few names and the process is going to continue."

To Felix Ndum, Moghamo Cultural and Development Association (MOCUDA) General President Kumba and also one of The Fomunyoh Foundation representatives: "We have close to six hundred names with us and I just want to say anyone person who goes without having today should not be disappointed as we still have other phases of the distribution coming up."

The distribution exercise is expected to be done in four phases and at the end of the exercise, some 500 displaced persons are expected to benefit from this relief and hope project. The project will not only consist of aid distribution but the provision of life skill training has also been taking into account.

The gifts from The Fomunyoh Foundation were well-received by the displaced persons who went on to explain the precarious situations they were in due to the crisis and with the deteriorating situations, had to abandon their homes.

"With the situation in Mbalangi we had to hide in the bush and even there we still faced problems so we had to live for Kumba. With the so many mouths we have at home, this donation will go a long way to help us. I want to thank Dr Christopher Fomunyoh for thinking about us," Tita Wenong Paul, an IDP from Kwakwa currently living in Kumba said.

"I am so grateful for the largess that Dr Fomunyoh has given to us. I lack words to express my happiness and, in my way, will like to work with



The Fomunyoh Foundation WEC staff and the displaced persons in Kumba.

Dr Fomunyoh so I can teach brail to the hundreds of visually displaced persons,” Obase Jean Marie said.

TFF extends Largess to educational establishments

Taking into consideration the fact that not just displaced persons need these aids, The Fomunyoh Foundation extended this gesture to some educational establishments like the Ephatha Insitute for the Deaf Primary and Nursery School and Champion Nursery and Primary School Pulletin Quarters.

Like the case of the displaced persons, bags of rice, salt, groundnut were provided to the children. These educational establishments have been harbouring displaced persons for the past years.

To the children, Felix Ndum while appreciating the work done by the teachers despite the fact that their peers have been killed, encouraged the students that: «Dr Fomunyoh will need for you is that you should be serious with your education and that tomorrow will be a better day.”

“This is a surprise for me and it is the first gesture I am receiving since I came up with the centre. I want to thank The Fomunyoh Foundation for this gesture and pray for its founder,” Shengang Richard, Proprietor/ Founder of Champion Nursery and Primary School Pulletin Quarters said indicating that there are about 68 displaced children in the school.

«Where we were we could not bear the problems so we had to leave the



area. We appreciate the Fomunyoh Foundation for the wonderful gesture and that God will replenish the source,» Ituka Dingoke, an IDP mother said.

To the Head Teacher of the Ephatha Insitute for the Deaf, Epie Justine, said “we are very happy and grateful that you thought of us. We are grateful and thank you so much. We will be waiting for you again.”

The Fomunyoh Foundation Women Empowerment Centre Reopens

The Fomunyoh Foundation Women Empowerment Centre (TFF/ WEC) which was suspended for some years due to the spiral of violence in

the Anglophone Regions has been reopened with training envisaged in the weeks ahead.

The centre was opened and went operational in 2017 after the General Assembly in Bamenda where the outcome was for the creation of a women empowerment centre in both Bamenda and Kumba.

“The two centres had to run simultaneously and were charged to take care of internally displaced persons,” Metuge Evelyne Epole, Director – The Fomunyoh Foundation Women Empowerment Centre, SWR (Kumba) told Pan African Visions during the distribution of some food

and non-food items to some internally displaced persons in Kumba on Tuesday, July 20.

“With the crisis, the Centre had to host several displaced persons from the villages and the interiors who had fled violence. The worst part is that when the people came to town, they had nothing to do.”

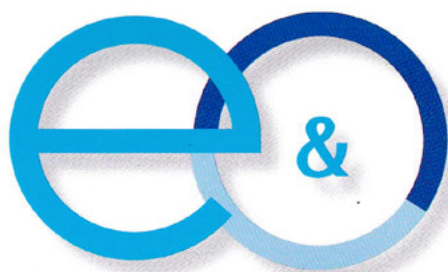
She added: “The centre had over fifty young girls and widows upon going operational. They were trained in hairdressing and tailoring. We carried this project right up to 2018 when the crisis went to an apex where we had to close down temporarily.»

Some additional skills have been added to the training programme like catering, according to the Director. She said: “We hope that by the time you have gone through the training you can earn a living for yourself because where you were before you must have been earning something,” Evelyne Epole added.

«Giving them these vocational training is a lifetime experience which they will always need it. The training will be important not just for themselves but for the family as a whole. We are going to give low-interest loans to a few so they can start their own business; we will help others to have employment connections.»

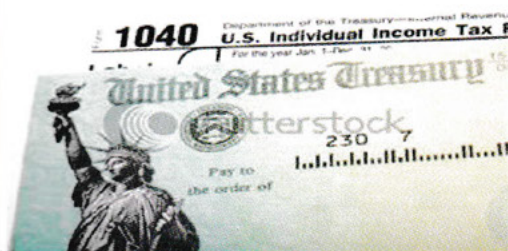


The TFF-WEC aims to train young girls, widows in hairdressing, tailoring and catering.



CONSULTING, LLC

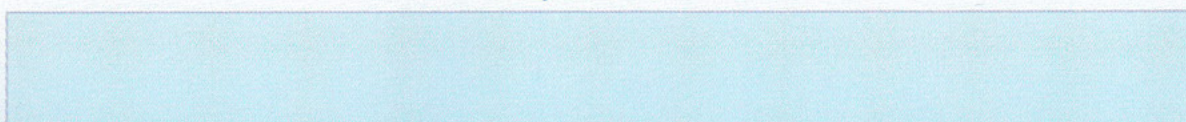
ACCOUNTING • TAXATION • CONSULTING PROFESSIONALS



OBENNY TIKU
Tax Consultant

INCOME TAX RETURN
Prepared For

**THE
PREFERRED
TAX
SERVICE**



7411 Riggs Road, Suite 230 • Hyattsville, MD 20783
Tel: (301) 408-4800 • (240) 476-5057 • Fax: (301) 408-4808
Website: www.eotaxconsultingllc.com • Email: obenny21@hotmail.com

Russia and China: Geopolitical Rivals and Competitors in Africa

By Kester Kenn Klomegah



The growth of neo-colonial tendencies, the current geopolitical developments and the scramble for its resources by external countries in Africa: these are some of the issues researcher and business analyst Lipton Matthews recently discussed with Kester Kenn Klomegah for InDepthNews (IDN). Matthews is associated with Merion West, The Federalist, American Thinker, Intellectual Takeout, Mises Institute, and Imaginative Conservative.

In particular, Matthews gives in-depth views on China's valuable contribution to various economic sectors especially infrastructure development spanning three decades and on the possible implications of Russia-China collaboration in Africa.

Matthews talks also on the positive prospects and significance of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and advises both African leaders and corporate business leaders to collaborate in strengthening trade networks within the continent, take up the emerging challenges and seize the opportunity to build a better Africa. Here are the

interview excerpts:

What do you think of China's and Russia's engagement with Africa in general? What would you say comparatively about these two foreign players in Africa?

Matthews: African experts like Peter Kagwanja and Rahamtalla Mohamed Osman have rubbished the claim that China is colonizing Africa. In general, African leaders perceive China to be the driving force behind modernization in the region. For example, during 2001-2002, China's Foreign Direct Investment in Sub-Saharan Africa increased by 53% yearly, dwarfing American investment that grew by a mere 14%. Moreover, neither were African countries among those at the UN rebuking China for its treatment of the primarily Muslim Uyghur population in 2020.

Nevertheless, reports deriding China's influence in Africa are pervasive in the West, but in reality, Africans are appreciative of China's role in the region. Since the days of the Cold War, developing countries have viewed China as an ally. Therefore,

the ascent of China is perceived favourably by African policymakers because it represents the aspirations of the developing world.

Meanwhile, China has greater legitimacy in Africa considering that it did not possess a colonial empire in the region. Likewise, Russia had an empire in Europe, but not in Africa, so the Russians are positioned to portray themselves as liberators. Furthermore, Russians were never a part of the political West and during the Cold War, they collaborated with Africans against Western hegemony. So, consequently, Africans are likely to embrace Russia as an ally and not construe her interference in the region as an act of imperialism.

Though Russia's investment in Africa is not on the scale of China, it appears that Russian players have identified the region as a source of raw materials and are exploiting the opportunities offered by the continent. Western pundits fail to recognize that Russia and China are harnessing their distinctiveness from the West to acquire political mileage in Africa. The West is losing the battle for dominance in Africa

due to ideological reasons. For instance, Westerners preach classical liberalism, whereas Russia and China champion a statist approach to development. Because the doctrines of these powers are consonant with the left-leaning philosophy of Africa, their actions are less likely to invite contempt.

Do you also think there is an emerging rivalry in geopolitics, consistent confrontation against the United States and Europe (especially France) in Africa and what if China and Russia team up together?

Matthews: There is always rivalry in geopolitics, but the tactics of Russia and China have been misunderstood. Both countries are playing a spoiler role in Western politics. They intend to foment chaos in Western democracies to accelerate tensions, and in the era of social media, they have been able to do so on a grand scale. Unlike the West, Russia and China are led by brilliant strategists. The Russians and Chinese duped Western strategists into thinking that they want to challenge Western

hegemony.

However, they only aim to create spheres of influence that are divorced from Western interference. Russia wants to contain America's presence in Eastern Europe and China envisions creating a Sino-Centric Order in Asia. For Americans and the broader Western community to deter the rise of China and Russia, they must leverage soft power to obtain the favour of developing countries. Developing countries value the non-interference stance of Russia and China, so if Western countries were to affirm a less moralistic foreign policy they could shift the balance of power in their favour.

Compared to America, China and Russia are technological laggards and paper tigers, but they understand the primacy of ideas. Westerners think that they are fighting a geopolitical war, when they are actually competing for ideological supremacy. For example, Russia is popular in Mali, unlike France, because the former can deploy propaganda to present herself as a victim of Western imperialism, even though Russia was an imperial power and today exerts its clout in Eastern Europe.

Another issue is that, in this case, the colonial power was France and not Russia, so the latter can always project legitimacy. Conversely, Russia and China acknowledge that war is not required to undermine the West, because Western countries no longer believe in themselves. Throughout the West, white people are assaulting Western history and since demoralized people are not motivated to fight wars, China and Russia have already won the battle.

Lastly, China and Russia are unwilling to team up in order to defeat the West, since this is not a necessity.

It is obvious that the West is the architect of its demise. Similarly, Russia and China are competing for influence, so it is more feasible for either partner to associate with the West to constrain the potential of her rival. To forestall the rise of her adversaries, West leaders need to employ foreign policy strategists who actually understand ideas and history.

Is it appropriate when we use the term "neo-colonialism" referring to a number of foreign players in Africa? What countries are the neo-colonizers, in your view?

Matthews: First, we need to acknowledge that colonialism is not a new phenomenon and neither is it unique to Europeans. History also documents examples of Europeans colonizing predominantly white territories in Europe. For example, Sweden once had an empire in Europe. However, colonization is an expensive endeavour and the association between economic growth and empire is actually negative, according to the late Paul Bairoch.

In fact, many countries have recorded astounding growth without possessing empires. On the other hand, we must disabuse ourselves of the notion that colonialism is inherently exploitative. Most people would prefer sovereignty to colonial rule, but the truth is that colonial status does not impede economic growth and some colonies in Africa experienced faster growth during the colonial era. We should give greater priority to good governance than national sovereignty. It is better to be under the rule of benevolent colonizers than to be the subject of a dictator.

Additionally, in relation to the issue of neo-colonialism concerns are misplaced. China is in the business of maximizing the potential of Africa's resources, not empire-building. The problem is that governance structures in Africa are weak, so it is easy for China to evade regulations. The perception that China is colonizing Africa is a consequence of Africa's history of defective governance. In actuality, China through its infrastructural projects is presiding over the modernization of Africa, similar to what Europeans and Americans did in the developing world years ago.

However, the difference is that the Chinese are not imposing their standards on Africans. Yet this could be a disadvantage because linking investment to the implementation of higher standards could result in ameliorating governance structures in Africa thereby increasing the region's propensity to attract investment. But African leaders appreciate that Chinese investments are not wedded to reforms. Though overall, China's influence in Africa has been positive.

According to scholars based at John Hopkins University and Boston University, during 2000-2015, China lent \$95.5 billion to Africa and 40 per cent of the loans financed power generation and transmission, and the remaining 30 per cent modernized Africa's dilapidated infrastructure.

Further, despite the narrative that Chinese investments are allotted to extractive sectors, they account for one-third of the total Chinese investment in Africa, according to Dollar et al (2015). The study also notes that China's share of foreign investment is higher in weak governance states, and as a result, Africa is a prime target

since governance is less effective in the region. Therefore, Africa is susceptible to exploitation by China, since several countries failed to improve governance.

Do you think, with the adoption of African Continental Free Trade (AfCFTA), offers a window of hope for attaining economic independence for Africa? What role Russia can play in this or of what significance is it for potential Russian investors?

Matthews: First. The relationship between trade openness and economic growth in Africa is positive. Further, the World Bank estimates that by 2035, this project will rescue 68 million people from poverty and increase gross domestic product by \$450 billion.

By removing barriers to trade in the region, the agreement will create new entrepreneurial activities and spur innovations in technology. The free trade agreement will even be more beneficial if Africa's policymakers ensure that intellectual property is not over-regulated. Innovations can occur without intellectual property laws and society is more likely to benefit when ideas are freely released into the public domain.

In order to aid Africa, Russia should assist Africa in transitioning to a knowledge-based economy by promoting technology transfer agreements. Russians must also invest in more R&D collaborations with their African partners. This agreement will revolutionize Africa's economy and a richer Africa is a positive for Russian investors. If African is properly managed, then the continent should succeed.

Travel has become easier
with the launch of e-visa
for tourists. Visit Ethiopia...

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

Ethiopian





**WE ARE COMMITTED
TO YOUR HEALTH**
OUR SERVICES ARE
RENDERED 24 HOURS A DAY



INFINITY Health Care Services (IHCS) is a home healthcare and staffing agency that is founded by nurses. It is licensed, bonded and insured in the State of Maryland. IHCS accepts clients of most ages. We provide skilled nursing and healthcare services to those with physical or developmental disabilities in the

comfort of their homes, in hospitals, assisted-living facilities or nursing homes. We understand that you want to remain in your familiar environment. At IHCS, we make it our priority to help you remain where you are happiest and comfortable.

OUR SERVICES INCLUDE:

Skilled Nursing Services, Personal Care Services, Home Care Companion

Call Us — 443 982 3052

8611 Lugano Road, Randallstown, MD 21133

www.infinityhcs.com

Rwanda: Why Do Genocide Fugitives Continue Having Safe Haven Abroad?

By Jean d'Amour Mbonyinshuti

Despite more efforts put in by the government of Rwanda to track and arrest the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi fugitives to be either transferred to Rwanda for trial or be tried in the host countries, more countries remain reluctant to help.

According to Jean-Bosco Siboyintore, the head of Genocide Fugitives Tracking Unit (operating under the General Prosecutor's office), countries have been unable to prosecute or hand over the suspects to Rwanda due to lack of political will.

Some other countries do not have laws criminalizing Genocide as a crime against humanity, according to the officials.

Established in 2007, the Genocide Fugitives Tracking Unit (GFTU) has since issued 1,146 indictments and arrest warrants against genocide fugitives hosted in different countries.

Of all the genocide fugitives are still at large, the majority, 408 are in the neighboring The Democratic Republic of the Congo, 277 in Uganda; 63 in Malawi, 15 in Burundi, 52 in Tanzania, 47 in France, 42 in Congo Brazzaville, and 40 are in Belgium, according to the GFTU data.

Siboyintore said that while some countries have started cooperation with Rwanda as regards to arresting genocide fugitives for them to face justice, there is still a long way to go if all the suspects are to be brought to book.

He said those countries like The Netherlands which has recently transferred three Genocide fugitives have shown goodwill to cooperate.

The Netherlands has early last month transferred Venant Rutunga who was a senior employee in the Agriculture and Livestock ministry and is accused of having orchestrated killings of Tutsis had sought refugees inside the institute and its surroundings.

"Before we knew that Rutunga was hiding in the Netherlands, he



has used other tricks elsewhere and those are one of challenges because the genocide suspects continue to find safe haven and sometimes change names," he said saying that the arrestee's arrest warrant had been issued long ago.

He hailed the Netherlands and some other countries for becoming more helpful when it comes to arresting genocide fugitives

The Netherlands has recently deported three other Rwandans who are suspected to have committed the Genocide

"The general picture is that European countries are facilitating, but this comes just in the last few years, before 2015, there was lack of political will which is still there for some countries," Siboyintore noted.

"Some European countries such as Belgium and France have been reluctant to transfer genocide fugitives to Rwanda and yet host a big number of fugitives, according to Siboyintore.

"We keep engaging them in talks, as the prosecution, we have been pushing telling the host countries that there are two options, either to try them or transfer them to be tried in Rwanda," he said.

He noted that countries like France and Belgium opted for the former option and Belgium has so far tried nine people while France has tried three of them.

"Another main challenge in the prosecution is in Africa countries, of 1147 arrested warrants sent to 33 countries, the majority are in Africa as it hosts 967 genocide victims but transferring them has been a challenge," he added.

DR Congo has transferred three and Uganda two and yet they are countries hosting a big number of genocide fugitives.

"All we want is that those countries hosting Genocide fugitives should transfer them so that they get a fair trial or they should try them," he said.

Some of the other challenges, according to Siboyintore are that Genocide fugitives use refugee status and political reasons as a pretext for not being tried for the crimes they are suspected of.

A person should not be granted refugee status though when they are being pursued for international crimes, according to Siboyintore.

Others are people who use the tactic of changing their identity and nationality, which makes tracking the

process so difficult.

Siboyintore said that the counter strategy to this issue is to work with Rwanda's embassies and the diaspora so that whoever knows the suspect who changed names or other details should report that to prosecution.

Main Fugitives arrested so far

In total, about 23 trials have been held abroad in different places such as Belgium, Sweden, France, Canada, Netherlands, Germany, Norway, Finland and Switzerland.

Others came from the United States of America, Netherlands, Uganda, Canada, Denmark, Norway, Germany, Malawi, and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Others Genocide Fugitives were referrals from the former International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and the Mechanism (United Nations International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals).

Most of the notorious criminals are those who are wanted by the Mechanism for the International Criminal Tribunal (MICT), and most of them are on the War Crimes Rewards Program, a US government State Department.

One of the notorious genocide fugitive is Felicien Kabuga who was arrested in France, Protais Mpiranya (suspected to be in South Africa) and Augustin Bizimana who died in refugees.

Kabuga is a notorious former businessman who funded the genocide machine, Mpiranya commanded the infamous presidential guard that was the engine of the Genocide, mainly in Kigali while Bizimana was the defence minister in the genocidal regime.

Others at large that were deferred to Rwanda by the UN tribunal are; Fulgence Kayishema, Pheneas Munyarugarama, Aloys Ndimbati, Charles Sikubwabo, Charles Ryandikayo- whose whereabouts are not known till today. Others like Jean Uwinkindi and Bernard Munyagishari have since been transferred to Rwanda from ICTR and faced the hand of Justice and have been duly tried in Rwanda courts of law.

Following the 1994 Genocide



Genocide suspect Venant Rutunga arrives at Kigali international Airport on July 26 . Photo courtesy.

against the Tutsi that left over one million of innocent lives dead, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) was set up in

November 1994 in Arusha, Tanzania to try genocide cases. In total the tribunal sentenced 61 people up to life imprisonment for their roles in

the massacres. It also acquitted 14 people, while 10 others were referred to national courts.

Kenya: Hunger Rears Its Ugly Face

By Samuel Ouma

Kenya is one of the hungriest countries in the world, a study discovered. The Global Hunger Index 2019 ranked Kenya at position 86 out of 117 countries. The report indicated that the number of Kenyans sleeping on an empty stomach had been steadily rising since 2010.

The researchers looked at four indicators for Kenya, including undernourishment, child wasting, child stunting, and child mortality. They got their data from UN agencies such as the Food and Agriculture Organization, Unicef, United Nations Interagency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME), the World Health Organization, the World Bank, and the Kenya Demographic and Health Survey.

The situation is far from getting better as millions of Kenyans are at risk of life-threatening starvation. In April 2021, the Kenyan government announced that at least 1.4 million people are facing acute hunger. Government Spokesperson Cyrus



Samburu County residents now have a consistent supply of food, thanks to the partnership between USAID, the local government, and the U.N. World Food Program.

Oguna blamed the effects of Covid-19 and prolonged drought in various parts of the country. There is a decrease in income avenues, lost livelihoods, declined purchasing power, and limited access to basic food and services.

Kenya endured substantial and widespread breeding of desert locusts since late 2019, which resulted in the loss of pasture and crops. During the second half of 2020, some parts of the country experienced extreme floods that destroyed crops of unknown value.

Mr. Oguna decried over a shortage of maize amounting to 5.5 million bags. Kenya requires 47 million bags of maize to feed its population but only harvested 41.5 bags in 2020. The shortage of rain was blamed for the deficit.

"The overall food situation in the country is good. However, due to poor performance of the short rains in October to December last year, the national food and nutrition security was marginally compromised. The situation has been compounded further by the Covid-19 pandemic and the desert locust invasion," stated Oguna.

The rise of food insecurity in the Arid and Semi-Arid Land (ASAL) counties in Kenya is now a concern. Deterioration of food security and nutrition is now threatening the lives of people and livestock. The decrease is a result of a dry spell occasioned by a lack of rain. Reports show that in the last two years, many areas have received below-average rains.

The most affected are Arid, and Semi-Arid Land counties are Wajir, Turkana, Samburu, Tana River, Marsabit, Mandera, Isiolo, Garissa, and Baringo. Residents of these areas live in desperate conditions with no food, water, and pasture for their livestock. Women, the elderly, and children are the primary victims, given their limited movement. An increase in livestock diseases and deaths has also been reported due to lack of water and pasture.



Government Spokesperson Government Cyrus Oguna puts the blame on COVID-19 and prolonged draught.

Tension and clashes over limited resources among pastoralists communities are rising. For instance, five people were killed and ten others injured in 2015 after pastoralists from two communities clashed over water in Attan, Isiolo County, northern Kenya.

In March this year, World Vision international said Kenya is one of the six countries in East Africa on the brink of starvation. Other countries are Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda. According to the World Vision East Africa Hunger Emergency Response, at least 108,000 people in East Africa are under catastrophic famine conditions characterized by acute malnutrition, starvation, deprivation, and death. Besides, about 7 million people are one step away from famine, and over 26 million others need urgent help to prevent them from succumbing to a difficult situation.

"The world needs to wake up now. Millions of children are being pushed to the brink of starvation. They are facing a deadly cocktail of conflict, climate change and the crushing aftershocks of COVID-19. I've seen

first-hand the devastating impact of malnutrition in many places we work. It robs children of their childhood, denying them the opportunity to achieve their God-given potential," said Andrew Morley, World Vision International President & CEO.

Kenya has laid down measures to avert the situation: cash transfer programmes, digging of boreholes in pastoralist communities, distribution of food, and drought-resistant crops and fertilizers to farmers. By April, the government had distributed almost Ksh2 billion (\$20 million) to the affected families, with each 101,000 beneficiary households, especially those in the northern part of the country receiving Ksh2,700 (\$27) monthly for food and upkeep.

"The government is committed to ensuring no Kenyan dies due to lack of food. In collaboration with county governments, we have put in place several strategies to avert a humanitarian crisis. For instance, there are plans to distribute water in Turkana, Mandera and Wajir," the government spokesperson added.

Farmers hailing from areas that receive above-average rainfall have

been urged to take advantage of subsidized seeds and fertilizer to produce more food to cushion the country from hunger.

On the other hand, World Vision International is reaching out to the vulnerable people in the East African nations. The report indicates that in 2020 the organization reached over 4.7 million children through its multi-sector interventions in Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Sudan, Somalia, and South Sudan.

"Let me be direct: there is no place or excuse for famine in the 21st century. We have the resources and technology to feed the world. The fact we have reached this point shows there has been a clear and catastrophic moral failure by the international community. A generation of girls and boys needs us to bring hope. Children of the world are looking to us to act," added Andrew Morley.

Kenya has been grappling with drought for decades. In 2017, the menace affected almost 2.7 million people across 23 counties, forcing President Uhuru Kenyatta's government to declare the drought a national disaster.

LUMEN CHRISTI HEALTH CARE INC.

We've built a long standing relationship based on trust

Our Mission here at Lumen Christi Health Care Inc. is to provide all patients in the community with the highest quality of home health services with outstanding compassion, respect and professionalism.



+1 (617) 479 0206

ABOUT US

OUR OBJECTIVES AMONGST OTHERS

- To provide skill nursing, medical case management, therapy visits and home health aide services in the comfort of clients homes.
- To provide educational opportunities within the health care system for employee via an on-going in-service and short term training and participation in professional organizations.
- Create coordinated liaison with physicians, health care and welfare agencies to meet the needs of the patient.
- To provide a conducive work environment for our employees.



OUR MISSION —

We strive to be one of the leading providers of a wide range of quality home health care services, recognized for enduring dedication to provide innovative, professional, and compassionate care to the



MODERN MEDICAL FACILITIES —

- In-home non-medical care
- In-home skilled nursing
- In-home physical therapy
- In-home occupational therapy
- In-home speech therapy
- Private nursing care



OUR SERVICES —

- SKILLED NURSING SERVICES
- THERAPY SERVICES
- HOME HEALTH AIDE
- RESPITE CARE
- PRIVATE DUTY
- HCBBS

Admission to Lumen Christi Health Care Inc. is made under the direction of a physician. Based upon your identified health needs, homebound status and the type of services required, we can provide care directly or through coordination with other organizations. Patients/clients are accepted for care without regard to age, race, color, creed, sex, national origin or handicap(s).

A Celebration Of Excellence At The ICT University.

Andreas Thomas

Former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo led a high-profile guest list at the 6th Commencement and graduation ceremony of the ICT University Cameroon. The ceremony rich in pomp and pageantry was another milestone for an Institution which prides itself in sending out job creators and not seekers. Boris Esono Nwenfor was there for PAV and shares some photos.



Dignitaries pose for a picture after the 6th graduation exercise of the ICT University.



Dignitaries walking to the ceremonial grounds.



Dr Olusegun Obasanjo inaugurates in the ICT University building.



Former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo was received at the ceremonial grounds by Cameroon's Higher Education Minister Prof Jacques Fame Ndongo.



Former President Olusegun Obsanjo (r) receives a special award from the ICT University from Prof Fame Ndongo, Minister of State, Minister of Higher Education.



Guests admiring the plaque of a new building unveiled by President Obasanjo.



Higher Education Prof Jacques Fame Ndongo making a speech.



Prof Victor Mbarika, President of the ICT University Board of Trustees bestows a medal on a graduate.



Prof Victor Mbarika, President of the ICT University Board of Trustees is committed to the vision of implanting the University in all regions of Africa. m /



Renowned Prof Beban Sammy Chumbow featured prominently at the event.



The ceremony was rich in pomp and pageantry .



The ICT University sends out job creators and not job seekers.



The magnificent edifice of the ICT University, in Yaounde Cameroon.



Introducing Communication Platforms as a Service (CPaaS)

Communication Platforms as a Service (CPaaS) is arguably one of the more disruptive innovations to affect the business communications market, providing solutions that significantly depart from the way businesses of any size have operated in the past.

Alchemy is an enterprise-grade self-stacking CPaaS, meaning all our technology is developed and upgraded in house. Our APIs are enterprise-grade and customisable and our network connections are nationwide carrier-grade.

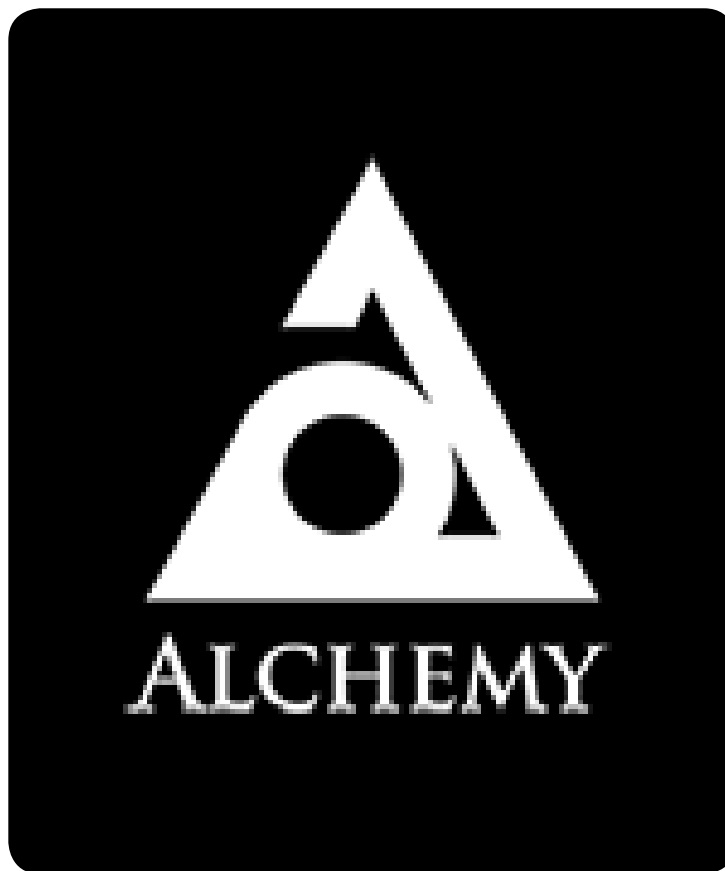
Cloud enables many different platforms/software as a service provider. CPaaS is a Communication Service and the underlying technology of a CPaaS, that works behind the scenes, pulling together devices, application software and digital services, is the application programming interface (API). Simplifying the integration of communication services, meaning SMS, email, voice, push, social, RCS, chatbots, any channel or microservice such as authentication you care to name - into existing back-end systems and apps.

“How does a Communication Platform differ from othertypes of Platforms?”

Technically, CPaaS is a platform and a software (PaaS/SaaS) but neither terms are specific enough. The UCaaS (Unified communication) space provides a one-stop platform already designed for businesses to access phone services, video, call recording and more. However, a CPaaS is more focused on a build-your-own approach, allowing for custom uses for individual communication tools. CCaaS (Contact Center) space also enables multichannel communication via a single cloud-based platform and is about customer communication, again CPaaS is about building customised solutions.

In a nutshell, CPaaS is all of the above!

“Is a Mobile Operator (MNO) a CPaaS?”



Traditional telecom carriers offer telephone services, like analogue voice and messaging, which includes off-net services (across networks). They also offer VoIP services over mobile data, but they are not considered CPaaS providers. Typically, they do not partner with developers or individual businesses as they offer limited or no APIs and cannot offer on-net services across networks. They are increasingly looking to partner with CPaaS Companies to provide value-added services thus increasing revenue through direct connections within their SIP and traditional switch infrastructure. A CPaaS vendor that fosters and supports the development community brings an ecosystem of developers, consultants and system integrators to the telecom service provider.

“Are there different APIs?”

Yes, software and APIs are built using different languages so it is important that APIs are configurable, this enables businesses to progressively connect their

existing systems and add to them, this simplifies any complexity of interconnectivity between multiple channels.

“Are Companies embracing CPaaS? If so, which ones?”

Recent studies show that 92% of leading companies, large and small, are on-boarding this digital transformation, to increase their bottom line and improve their customer services, compared with only 22% for non-leaders. No coincidence, that the Leaders have found a winning formula with CPaaS.

“Does CPaaS fall under my IT department’s remit?”

Companies that are successfully integrating modern communication strategies have created a new role within their IT departments - Chief Digital Officer, someone who works closely with the Chief Information Officer to bring IT operational decisions to life, or they use CPaaS like Alchemy to consult with the Chief Information Officer.

“How much does it cost a Company

to use CPaaS technology?”

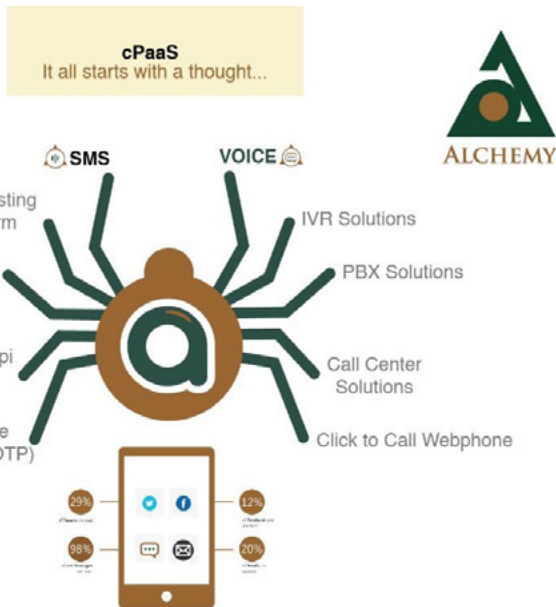
It is simple for companies to embrace Alchemy’s CPaaS strategy with a minimal upfront investment, as connectivity is achieved by utilising the devices available and our pay as you go “operational expenditure” business model, removing the need to purchase hardware.

“Can CPaaS save me money?”

Yes, absolutely. With the ease of deployment, flexibility and cost savings, CPaaS allows companies to embed communications into existing applications and create customised flows

between their CRM, purchasing, billing, marketing, customer service and HR departments, whilst protecting the investments a business has already made in communications infrastructure at the same time as foregoing any new infrastructure investments.

Let us take an example of a Bank embracing communication API technology. The marketing team can build multi-channel integrated campaigns. An email campaign can be followed up with an SMS or phone call and the results can be analysed all from one inbox, saving time and manpower. With automated surveys, follow-up actions can be triggered. The Finance Team can implement two-factor authentication, by texting or emailing a customer a one time, time-sensitive code to verify their identity when logging in from a new device. Transactional SMS can be automated for all bank account activity. Customer Service Teams can automate their current CRM or ticket management system so that agents have up to date customer data before speaking with a customer. Contact Centers are then more user friendly and personal. Equipping customers with the tools to assist themselves with routine issues of balance requests, card activations, or simple technical troubleshooting through SMS, phone and online chat options. Approximately 85% of people who do not reach someone



on the first try will not bother calling back. With Alchemy's VoIP contact centre the calls can be forward to a mobile telephone, answerphone or an automated immediate text message whenever a call goes unanswered. Every phone call is an opportunity, missing even a single call can seriously affect your bottom line! Field Agents are also supported when they can text their progress directly into the system. With CPaaS there's no need for them to have an active internet connection to send information. The HR Team greatly benefits by being able to send company-wide notifications and alerts ranging from birthday messages, surveys for feedback and office changes. IT Teams can save a great deal of time creating custom applications and workflows by using our API's easily deploying CPaaS solutions across the company.

There are literally thousands of ways CPaaS can improve a business's overall communication strategy. Alchemy specialises in working directly to solve communication pain points to help build the best communication and engagement strategy that fits each businesses needs also, ensuring that everyone within the business is on the same page at all times.

VoIP service (Voice over Internet Protocol) that allows for voice calls

to be made and received via the internet is always less expensive than a traditional phone service, not only as it requires no additional hardware, just a device that is connected to the internet, but in the cost of calls. Alchemy's system also integrates videoconferencing capabilities and team meetings or chats.

CPaaS solutions offer businesses a compelling operating expense (OpEx) alternative to costly capital expenditures (CapEx) in the appropriate communications and network infrastructure needed to securely support API-driven voice, video, and messaging services. Also important, cloud-based CPaaS offerings are priced at published per-API call or per-second rates, enabling businesses to pay for the exact amount of services they consume. This is a very compelling value proposition for organisations with varying levels of demand or seasonal

spikes in business. The inherent scalability of cloud architectures also benefits CPaaS, enabling businesses to consume the maximum or minimum of a provider's

API-directed services as required by their application or work process.

To summarise businesses can cut their bills down by even up to 90% which is formidable!

Does Alchemy's CPaaS offer data security?

We take the security of our client's and their client's data very seriously indeed. There is a great deal of suspicion and mistrust associated with the 'cloud' but we all use it to some degree or other, emails, whatsapp and apps on our telephones.

For this interview perhaps it is

more relevant to specify Alchemy's APIs. We do not have access to any data. Information is scrambled during transit to its destination! We do within our consultancy service advise on what we call "communication Health and Safety" which is a very specialised and knowledge based service. It is especially relevant today with Companies moving towards home working and the technical advancements we are embracing today.

This is what CPaaS is all about – bringing secure and reliable omnichannel communications capabilities, scalability, and agility to companies, or any size, with none of the associated headaches and expense. It's perhaps not surprising, then, that revenues from CPaaS are projected to grow to \$5.2 billion (£4.3 billion) in 2023, and 67% of enterprises expect CPaaS to have an impact on their organisation by 2025.

In the future this will open up more opportunities – whether it's improved analytics of the customer experience or creative use of technology, like automatic recognition of a customer's tone of voice to know the best approach to take – All companies can build on a CPaaS platform.

The important thing is ensuring you chose the right CPaaS platform to build on in the first place!



A House Divided, as Zambia grapples with 'false' prophets

By Peter Kayula

With just a few weeks away before the forthcoming Zambia's crucial tripartite elections set for August 12, 2021, prophets have sprung to action in recent weeks carrying hopes for outright victories for their preferred presidential hopefuls and in doing so, the Southern African country has been caught up in subject of prophetic chanting which many analysts feel, the politicians have done little to resolve.

Emerging evidence of local prophets acting thoughtlessly and wildly and taking up their own causes and struggling to have access to campaign money dished around by politicians, as alternative to normal Church mission, has increased in pace and scale.

Theologians are now trying to understand the significance of this upsurge of prophets in the country who have resorted to using various media fora, especially the social media - Facebook accounts - placing the church, all other faiths and religions firmly on the map of local public discourse.

Just last week on Thursday, a Zambian university lecturer based in South Africa Dr Chivula Mainza reacted in a telephone interview telling local reporters, this moment in the country's history compels every citizen to analyse more carefully the severity of spreading different lies about who will win the elections and to speak out more clearly and boldly about the real significance of this prophetic theology.

"The people look to the church, especially in the midst of our present time, for moral guidance. In order to provide this, the church must first make its stand absolutely clear and never tie of explaining and dialoguing about it. It must help people to understand their rights and duties," Dr Mainza said.

Describing the situation as just too critical, Dr Mainza explained that politicians have done little to contain the prophets' conduct and that they



A Preacher at work in Zambia. Unfulfilled prophecies have led to a crisis of confidence. Photo credit Prudence Phiri, GPJ Zambia

have paid a deaf ear to the severity of prophets proclaiming victories across the country for their preferred presidential and parliamentary candidates.

"Nor can it be assumed that all Christians and the faithfuls are fully aware of the fact that their cause is God's cause. Nevertheless, it remains true that the Church is already on the side of the politicians because that is where their financial needs seem to be met quickly. This fact needs to be appropriate and confirmed by the church as a whole.

"Does what is happening in view of the prophets' conduct prove that Christian and religious faith has no real meaning or relevance for our times? Does it show that the Bible can be used for any purpose at all? Such problems would be critical enough for the Church in any circumstances but when we also come to see that the interest in Zambia is just for money and nothing else. The crisis for the church as an institution become much more acute."

Surprisingly, an independent political analyst, Michael Mwanza, in

an email response to a query on the subject agrees with Dr Mainza saying: "the present crisis has highlighted the divisions in the church. We are a divided church precisely because prophets have taken sides with the politicians instead of uniting themselves with God who is always on the side of the oppressed (Ps 103:6). There must be no misunderstanding about the moral duty of all who are oppressed to resist oppression and to struggle for liberation and justice."

Mr Mwanza stressed that as far as the present crisis is concerned, there is only one way forward to church unity and that is for those prophets who find themselves on the other side of the politicians or sitting on the fence to cross over to the other side to be united in faith and action with those who are oppressed.

"Unity and reconciliation within the church itself is only possible around God and Jesus Christ who are to be found on the other side of the poor and oppressed," he said.

But a former Tanzanian diplomat speaking on condition of anonymity has questioned the prophets' motive,

"If this is what the Church must become, if this is what the Church as a whole must have as its project, how then are we to translate it into concrete and effective action?"

"For many in Zambia, the moment of grace and opportunity is missed, and allowed to pass by. The loss for the church, for the gospel and for all the people of Zambia will be immeasurable," the diplomat quipped.

Andrew Yikadzino, a student of theology in Zimbabwe points out a statement posted on his Facebook page that the Church of Jesus Christ is not called to be a bastion of caution and moderation. The church should challenge, inspire and motivate people. It has a message of the Cross that inspires us to make sacrifices for justice and liberation and not to resort to working with politicians for the sake of accessing their money. The Church has a message of hope that challenges us to wake up and to act with hope and confidence.

But civil society activist based in Zambia Morgan Guluma feels, through an email response, that

there is no crisis or Church Division in Zambia at the moment. Prophets have just shown us who they really are by simply participating in the struggle for liberation and for a just society.

"The campaigns mounted by politicians need to be supported and encouraged by the church. Criticism will sometimes be necessary, but encouragement and support will be necessary. In other words, the present crisis challenges the whole Church to move beyond a mere ambulance ministry to a ministry of involvements and participation," Mr Guluma explained.

However, a former Catholic Priest Fr Godfrey Mulenga in an interview argues that the Church must restrict its activities to preaching this message not only in words and

sermons and statements but also through its actions, programmes and divine services.

"The situation is just too critical, although many of us have known it all along, that the Church is divided, but what we must know and I have always said this, is that the church has its own specific activities: Sunday services, communion services, baptism, Sunday school, Funerals and so forth. It also has specific ways of expressing its faith and its commitment, that is in the form of confession of faith." Fr Mulenga hinted.

"All of these activities must be reshaped to be more fully consistent with a prophetic faith related to that God is offering us today. Much of what we do in our Church services has lost its relevance to the poor and the oppressed. Our services and

sacraments have been appropriate to serves the need of the individual for comfort and security."

He explained that churches activities must be reaped to serve the real religious needs of all the people and to further the liberating mission of God and the Church in the world, adding that over and above its regular activities the church would need to have special programmers, projects and campaigns because of the special needs of God's children.

The church must avoid becoming a 'Third force' a force between the oppressor and the oppressed. The church's programme and mission must not duplicate what the people's organisations are already doing and even more seriously, the Church must not confuse the issue by having programs that run counter

to the struggle of those political organisations that truly represent the grievances and demands of the people.

He emphasized that consultation, co-ordination and co-operation will be needed. We all have the same goals even when we differ about the final significance of what we are struggling for.

One chapter in Zambia's political soap opera seems to be heading towards a photo-finish arguably providing evidence of the Southern African country's strength of the democratic institutions, however, the question is, can the Church avoid becoming a 'Third force' in Zambia's political arena?

Rugby Africa Targets Women's Rugby in all Unions - Women's Rugby Advisory Committee President Paulina Lanco

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

The president of the Women's Rugby Advisory Committee Paulina Lanco has said she sees a bright future ahead for Women's Rugby on the African continent as efforts have been redoubled to advance the women's game to about 40 per cent registered players being women by 2025.

"I hope for a genderless sport, one with equal opportunity, equal exposure, equal pay and based on merit," Madam Paulina Lanco told Pan African Visions.

In an exclusive interview, the President who is also a Rugby Africa Exco member detailed the strides made in the advancement of women's rugby on the continent, the challenges and the future of the game in the next ten years.

According to Paulina Lanco, there is also a lack of pathway development and elite competition at the U20 level. «This is currently a priority agenda in which we are lobbying accordingly with the hope of launching a pilot in 2022,» she said.

Pan African Visions: Could we start this interview by getting



Paulina Lanco, President of the Women's Rugby Advisory Committee

an introduction of the Rugby Africa's Women's Advisory Committee (WRAC) that you lead?

Paulina Lanco: In line with our strategic plan at Rugby Africa (RA)

and in noting that women's rugby is a growing and performance-driven sport, and one that aims to attract investments and empower women at all levels and in all structures of the game, women's rugby represents a

key strategic area of growth for RA. In line with this commitment, WRAC was approved by the Rugby Africa (RA) EXCO in August 2020 and I was duly nominated as its founding President.

Our mandate is to take lead in the development of Gender Inclusion and Women's Rugby in the region. To do so I have a 7-member committee and in line with our women strategic plan, we have four (4) subcommittees i.e. Communication and PR, Competition and Finance, Player Welfare and Participation and last but not least, Leadership Training and Conferences.

Pan African Visions: In what shape is women's rugby in the African continent today, and what kind of changes have taken place since you took over leadership of the committee?

Paulina Lanco: Due to the ongoing pandemic, a number of scheduled activities and tournaments were and have been greatly interfered with in the last year. Despite this however, WRAC continues to lead from the front and one of the most notable changes has been the streamlining

of our Women's Rugby leadership (with the formation of WRAC), strengthening the management through the appointment of a Women's Rugby Manager and introducing an enhanced Women's competition program. We also saw the the launch of the Africa Women's Rugby Network, the launch of the regional Unstoppables Campaign in partnership with World Rugby and the eventual appointment of 12 Women's Rugby ambassadors across Africa. Last but not least, virtual training and speaking engagements were launched for both technical teams and women in rugby and we are soon looking to launch the first ever Virtual Training Management Program for women in rugby management.

Pan African Visions: Can we get some more statistics or figures on the growth or state of women's rugby, and in which parts of the continent have you seen progress?

Paulina Lanco: Growth has been steady and in reference to data provided by World Rugby, in 2012 we stood at 47,600; 2018 at 261, 300 and the latest data as at October, 2020 stood at 386,000+.

Our strategic ambition is to have 40% of registered players being women by 2025. We currently stand at 27.2%.

Unfortunately, the October 2020 statistics do not provide a breakdown in order of countries however if the 2018 data is anything to go by, it would appear that the leading African Nations are South Africa with 200,00+ players followed by Kenya, Madagascar and Tunisia. Additionally, and excitingly so, we have seen the emergence of Women's Rugby in countries like Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire in West Africa and we are looking to see more nations in that region rise up!

Pan African Visions: What are some of the big challenges facing your leadership and women's rugby across the continent?

Paulina Lanco: Funding remains a major challenge with the Men's game still receiving a bigger percentage of available funding. In this regard we are working to strengthen our women's product so as to attract more funding.

Lack of enough competitions and exposure: We are working

towards improved, better and more diverse competitions if we are to compete strongly at the world stage. There is also the lack of a pathway development and elite competition at U20 level. This is currently a priority agenda in which we are lobbying accordingly with the hope of launching a pilot in 2022.

There is also a lack of strong domestic women's leagues at member union level. We are in constant discussion with the unions and are looking to support where effort is evident and as we can.

Pan African Visions: May we know the steps being taken to ensure that the game is supported primarily for women?

Paulina Lanco: The most notable commitment and support in this time of the global pandemic has been the big communication and marketing effort largely through the Unstoppable campaign in which 75% of all content posted on Rugby Africa's networks during the first semester of 2021 relates to women's rugby. The primary objective and aim is to be Visible, Viable and Unstoppable! The objective of the campaign is about

changing perceptions, creating an appeal, telling the inspiring stories and encouraging more girls and women to join and stay in rugby.

Additionally, a women specific grant was availed to respective RA member unions in support of Return to Play among other activities.

Pan African Visions: Who are some of the big names in corporate and individual actors that are supporting you in the development and growth of women's rugby in Africa?

Paulina Lanco: Société Générale is an official sponsor of women's rugby. Corporates are interested to support the growth of the women's game and that's why we are trying to create attractive products like a new 15 a side competition, more sevens tournaments in regions, and an U20 girls' competition. World Rugby is definitely pushing and supporting us in this mission and we have great support from the RA President Khaled Babbou and members of EXCO.

Pan African Visions: What are some of the major competitions for women's rugby in Africa today?

Paulina Lanco: Africa Women's Sevens tournament is the top continental tournament to qualify African Representatives for Olympic Games, Commonwealth Games and the 7s Rugby World Cup. The next 7s Rugby World Cup is happening in Cape Town, South Africa in September 2022.

Women's 15s: World Rugby recently announced the launch of a yearly W15 global competition divided into three tiers. This is fantastic news as it creates an aspiration for teams and an incentive for unions to invest more into their women's rugby program. Rugby Africa will build an adequate qualification competition for this event starting in 2022. Right now, and for the first time ever in Africa, we organized through the recently concluded Rugby Africa Cup (RAC) tournaments, a series of test matches across the continent to feature as many women's teams as possible and



Women's Rugby Advisory Committee President Paulina Lanco presents the winner's trophy to Madagascar Captain during the RAC tournament held in Kenya.



evaluate their levels.

We started in Ouagadougou where Burkina Faso and Cameroon played two matches and Cameroon emerged stronger.

We continued in Nairobi with two matches between Kenya and Madagascar, in Kampala with two matches between Uganda and Zimbabwe and had scheduled one in Tunisia with a three team tournament between Tunisia, Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal; however due to Covid-19 the last one was disrupted.

This means a total of 6 matches, which is unprecedented in Women's 15s continental rugby. We were positively impressed by the enthusiastic response from Unions when we launched this initiative and their commitment to get ready and compete despite the difficult times we are in with the pandemic.

Pan African Visions: We understand there is the #AfricaAsOne campaign coming up; could you shed some light on this for us?

Paulina Lanco: This campaign is to embody the strength in our diversity and our ability to communicate through sports despite the language

barrier; It showcases our ability when we are down to reach back, give a hand and rise together as one when the moment calls for it and importantly it is a call for unification, a moment to stand As Africa, As One for we are stronger together!

Pan African Visions: South Africa will participate in the next women's Rugby World Cup in New Zealand in 2022 and Kenya's women are due to compete in rugby sevens at this summer's scheduled Tokyo 2020 Olympics, how significant are these developments to you?

Paulina Lanco: They are great faith builders and milestones for us and I commend both the unions and players concerned. Indeed, they prove that our strategy is on the right path. This is more so, noting that we aim to have at least 4 African teams in the top 30 worldwide, 2 teams competing in the Women's Rugby World Cup and in the World Series.

Pan African Visions: Let us focus a bit on my home country, Cameroon, the country was suspended from Rugby and was eventually brought back,

how will you rate the country's participation so far?

Paulina Lanco: It is good to acknowledge that Cameroon was only reinstated as a full World Rugby member in November, 2020. As such and noting the strong performance by the Indomitable Lionesses of Cameroon Women's 15 A Side team at the RAC in June duly hosted by Burkina Faso, I truly commend their President, Marc Essono for that great outcome and would urge that he builds upon it even as he looks to support their male counterparts who unfortunately fell at the hands of the host.

Pan African Visions: What do you advise Cameroon to do to attract more females and males to the game looking at the limited following Rugby has within the country?

Paulina Lanco: Cameroon has great athletic potential and there is a noted existing and growing passion for Rugby. We also continue to see great media exposure and coverage more so on social media platforms. As such and with the known dedication of their President who is himself a rugby man and with the assured support

of Rugby Africa, it is my belief that Cameroon with further exposure and a vibrant domestic league, will in days to come be a rugby powerhouse in Africa. Of course, you too can help (as you are now) by giving them continued exposure and more so a platform to be seen and heard.

Pan African Visions: Lastly, how do you see the development of Women's rugby on the African continent in the next 10 years?

Paulina Lanco: I hope for a genderless sport, one with equal opportunity, equal exposure, and equal pay and based on merit.

Additionally, our aim and ambition as Rugby Africa is to see women's rugby well established in all our unions, to see each men and boys competition matched with a women and girls' competition. We aim to have more teams and more competitive teams qualify to play in international events such as World Series and Women 15s global competition. We believe we can bridge the gap between Africa and the rest of the world with women's rugby, as the athletic and youth potential on our continent is unparalleled.



A new Gate Way to Africa for you with Pan African Vision

Are you looking for more product or brand awareness?

Are you trying to drive more traffic to your site?

Are you trying to grow your business or network with decision makers?

Do you need cost effective advertisement that will be seen by millions?

If you answered yes to any of the following questions, then you can be saving yourself from a lot of time and money wasted on purchasing advertisement from highly competitive or low quality sites.

At Pan African Visions, we can help your brand and sales explode by advertising to countless readers on our powerful online publication website, with a yearly page visit count in the millions (500k visitors a month, circa, 100k plus weekly Facebook post reach, partnership with major PR agencies capable of distributing your stories across all of Africa and beyond).

We also have our monthly Pan African Visions Magazine to carry adverts, and other corporate information.

We provide the perfect advertisement methods to sell your products and services.

Not only do we have massive reach and comparative advertisement rates, but we can also accommodate many different styles of advertisement methods. From Video ads, corporate profiles, Press releases, etc, we can help you choose the best way to advertise your offer to our rapidly expanding audience.

Our partnership will be your gateway to our loyal following, granting you access to people across Africa and in the diaspora.

For more information on how we can help you increase your brand awareness and sales contact us, for a free consultation.

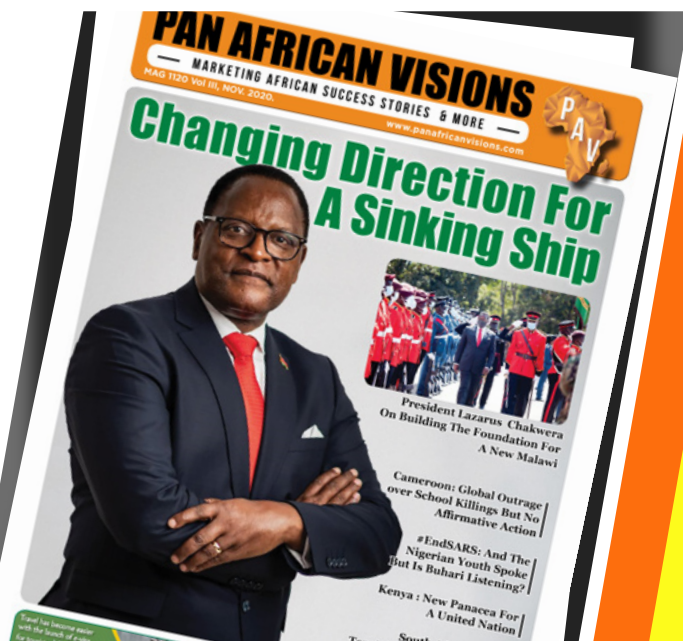
CONTACT US

+ 1 2404292177

marketing@panafricanvisions.com

www.panafricanvisions.com

P.S Email or Call , to receive our special discounted rate.



KANG QUINTUS FILMS
PRESENTS

KANG
QUINTUS

FAITH
FIDEL

RAMSEY
NOUAH

NDAMO
DAMARISE

COSSON
CHINEPOH

ONYAMA
LAURA

NEBA
GODWILL

DAPHNE
NJIE

THE FISHERMAN'S DIARY

A FILM BY ENAH JOHNSCOTT

KANG QUINTUS FILMS PRESENTS AN ENAH JOHNSCOTT FILM "THE FISHERMAN'S DIARY"

KANG QUINTUS, FAITH FIDEL, RAMSEY NOUAH, NDAMO DAMARISE, COSSON CHINEPOH, ONYAMA LAURA, NEBA GODWILL, DAPHNE NJIE

PRODUCTION DESIGNER FOKWA BABILA DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY RENE ETTA MAKE UP SPECIAL EFFECTS CHINONSO SUNSHINE STORY/SCRIPT BY ENAH JOHNSCOTT & BUH MELVIN "BABA PROX" EDITED DIBA BLERK
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR MUSING DERICK T-INAIZ GAFFER RALPH OBI TAMBE EXECUTIVE PRODUCER KANG QUINTUS ART DIRECTOR NKANYA NKWAI PRODUCED BY KANG QUINTUS WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY ENAH JOHNSCOTT



BRING YOUR **A**-GAME IF YOUR **A**-GAME IS AFRICA

Centurion Law Group is a **pan-African corporate law conglomerate**, with a specialised focus on cross-border business and energy law. We are a stand out firm for investors that are starting a new business or looking to expand their footprint across **Africa**.

We provide a full-scope **legal, tax, government relations and management advice for clients and regular advice** on some of the most complex and market-first deals.



CENTURION

Lawyers and Business Advisors

