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From Cape To Cairo With Hope From The AEW

By Ajong Mbapndah L

From the Just Energy Transition Concert that set the tempo for the 2022 African Energy Week in Cape Town, one could tell that this maybe one for the ages. Beyond the excitement from the thrill of scintillating African tunes, you could tell from conversations that serious things were expected from AEW, and serious things did indeed happen.

A rousing speech from the Executive Chairman of the African Energy Chamber NJ Ayuk, blockbuster energy deals and partnerships inked, key Energy Ministers and players across Africa present, leading energy actors across the globe present, with teeming energy aficionados ready for the Cape to Cairo journey, and it was game on for the African Energy Week 2022.

"We gather today as African energy stakeholders from Cape to Cairo. 600 million are without access to electricity, 900 million without access to clean cooking, we cannot say this industry is done. We are going to be the drivers of the future and shouldn't have to apologize for wanting to drive growth, create jobs, and create opportunities," NJ Ayuk said.

High profile debates, inconvenient truths from leaders like Presidents Museveni of Uganda, and Felipe Nyusi of Mozambique, and the resolve to prioritize African interests in the energy debate heralded a new dawn. In the presence of Dr Benedict Oramah of Afreximbank, one could see another strong signal that Africa meant business in taking ownership of its energy future.

"Energy is a necessity for the development of society, and for Africa, being the least developed continent in the world today, requires more energy. The discussion of energy access and development must therefore continue. so far, Africa has been the most important continent in terms of protecting the environment with current data showing that Africa's emissions are less than 3% of global emissions. For this, Africa should be applauded," President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda said.

For Dr Benedict Oramah, the African Energy Week was the ideal platform for African countries to collectively articulate their position to share with the rest of the world at Cop27.

"We must not pursue decarbonization to the graveyard. Our transition must be sensible and pragmatic. It must address the development gap and the continent's ability to address climate change," Dr Oramah said.

In between multitudes of breakout sessions and side events, it was business deals, it was networking, marketing investment opportunities in diverse countries and regions of the continent. All in an air of great camaraderie, and positive energy.

It feels good to see Africans speaking in one voice, displaying a solid mastery of the issues and stakes, and looking to the future with optimism, said Gabriel Obiang Lima Minister of Mines and Hydrocarbons of Equatorial Guinea.

Energy transition cannot be done without taking into consideration the level of development and exploitation of resources in the continent, Puot Kang Chol, the Petroleum Minister of South Sudan said. Going further, Minister Puot Kang said Africa must not be apologetic as it seeks to make its voice heard.

The energy debate as important as it is, has been fraught with double standards, unfulfilled promises, unrealistic expectations in some cases and a one size fit all approach that will be hard to work in a continent with the kind of needs and priorities Africa has. And the realities in Africa are just so different. It was anecdotic that the African Energy Week was taken place at a time when South Africa, a leader in the continent was using load shedding as a means to mitigate its own energy crisis. If South Africa is experiencing energy crisis, what obtains in way less developed parts of the continent is anyone's guess.

What we witnessed in Cape Town



Ajong Mbapndah L, Managing Editor

is the birth of a movement, said NJ Ayuk. In addition to the dynamic team at the Chamber which answers present on a broad range of energy themed events to advocate for Africa, the movement has the support of dynamic government officials in a growing number of countries. Young, dynamic and visionary, Gabriel Obiang Lima of Equatorial Guinea, Puot Kang Chol of South Sudan, Mathew Opoku Prempeh of Ghana, Bruno Jean Itoua of Congo, and others. Embracing the movement are teeming corporate folks from all over the continent, academics, and many others who think the resources Africa is endowed with should be exploited and put to the service of development.

It remains to be seen how far the movement will go, but from Cape and the AEW, the defining message was drilling has to be on the table, and it has to be a just energy transition, one that does not leave Africa at a losing end.

Talking about hope, the soccer world cup taking place in Qatar is around the corner, and Africa is cheering its flagbearers on. While on paper its flagbearers Cameroon, Ghana, Morocco, Senegal, and Tunisia are no much for most of their group stage opponents, still, there is a reason to hope that Africa will shatter the glass ceiling. Football today is way more than just a sport, and it is important that the African flagbearers

justify their presence in Qatar. For the first time in history, all the flagbearers from Africa will be led by indigenous coaches. This is something many adepts of soccer have advocated for, especially with the substandard and sheer incompetence of some of the foreign coaches that have served in the past.

It is equally hope for the continent as Alibaba recently kicked off another edition of the Netpreneur Training Program for Africa to equip entrepreneurs and business leaders across different sectors with tangible and actionable

steps they can take to advance in the digital economy. Under the aegis of Alibaba Global Initiatives (AGI), the professional training arm of Alibaba Group launched the second class of more than 360 African entrepreneurs for its Alibaba Netpreneur Training program at a virtual opening ceremony with support from the Africa's Business Heroes prize competition,

For Cameroonians born after 6 November 1982, they have known no other President except President Biya. The octogenarian recently clocked 40 years in power, a record for a sitting President who is not a monarch. While in traditional African sense, old age is revered, President Biya is just in no shape to handle the super complex problems bedeviling Cameroon. For a legacy that was already porous, President has not done himself or the country any favors by clinging on the power as the country tethers on the brink.

Complimenting this issue of PAV are stories on the travails of President Chakwera in Malawi who is having a hard time delivering on campaign promises that brought him to power, five years of terrorism in Mozambique, the opposition's big win in Lesotho, acrimony over genetically modified crops in Kenya, and more. Happy reading!!

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THE NEW SPIRIT OF AFRICA
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Nigeria: Chinks In Their Armour

By Richard Mammah

As the February date for the testy presidential polls in Africa's most populous nation, Nigeria inches closer, it is looking more like an elimination exercise than an assuring demonstration of strength for the leading contenders.

Early in November, a townhall meeting was organised for candidates to air their opinions on two of the major challenges in the country: insecurity and the parlous economy. The discussants included Mr Kola Abiola of the Peoples Redemption Party, PRP; Mr Peter Obi of the Labour Party and Dr Rabiul Musa Kwankwanso of the New Nigeria Peoples Party. PDP Presidential candidate, Atiku Abubakar was absent and represented by his Vice-Presidential contender, Gov Ifeanyi Okowa, while the ruling APC and its candidate did not honour the invitation extended to it to participate.

Upset by this, the session was disrupted for several minutes as angry members of the audience, miffed over the absence of the APC candidate and the PDP principal, loudly protested this situation with some urging a postponement of the session until everyone that should be in the room had been fully assembled. But the show went on, nevertheless.

Beyond the furor that was witnessed at the debate, there are also deep dimension chinks in the armour of virtually every of the major contenders in the ongoing contest.

Take for example ruling party contender, Bola Ahmed Tinubu. A two-time former governor of Lagos State, Tinubu is having to defend his record of service in the state with the jury out there divided over how well he had performed within that period. While his supporters literally cast him as 'the builder of modern Lagos,' those not inclined in his direction argue that far too much credit is being given to him in that regard to the extent that it unjustly downplays the many contributions of several generations of leaders to the story of



Casted as a unifier, PDP Candidate Atiku Abubakar is still to rally some key members of the party to his current presidential bid. Photo courtesy

the making of the city-state. Issues of age, health and the baggage from the current administration are also being raised by his opponents with his teams gamely doing everything they can to address as much of them as they could. Some opine that it is as part of the damage control strategies introduced by his handlers that has resulted in a seeming reluctance to engage in cross-party debates and engagements.

For Atiku Abubakar, the former Vice President in the Olusegun Obasanjo presidency and candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, the situation is not markedly different. His supporters cast him as a unifier whose tentacles stretch across the different geo-political divides within

the country and as such that he is in good stead to run the country more inclusively after the quite divisive Buhari era. But this is as far as it goes as his critics fault this presentation, insisting that there have indeed been a number of indications to the effect that Atiku may not exactly be who he is being cast as. Those who hold this view for example continue to hold out for evidence the deepening cracks over the pre-and post-primary management of issues like the zoning of the presidency and the continued stay in office of the party's embattled chairman, Dr Iyorchia Ayu.

Even the latest of the major players, Mr Gregory Peter Obi is not without his own Achilles heel. For example, the recent release of

names of his campaign council was dogged by internal rumblings with a notable wing of his supporters, the youth demographic, taking umbrage at the nomination of former Army Spokesman, John Enenche as a member of the council. Notably, Enenche as Army spokesman had been at the centre of joining issues with the young people who had participated in the October 2020 EndSARS protests to end police brutality in the country. To his credit on this score however, Obi had promptly moved to do something about their objections.

In the instance of the NNPP candidate, Rabiul Musa Kwankwanso, he continues to be projected as a candidate with scant national leverage. While he is notably no pushover in his home Kano State and perhaps neighbouring Jigawa, Kwankwanso however has the better part of three months to yet demonstrate how much pan-Nigerian leverage he can put on the table.

Back to the November townhall meeting and the issues that matter for the average Nigerian, the candidates made their views known on matters raised as best as they could.

For example on the issue of separatist agitations in the country, they generally tended to favour the adoption of a negotiations-based approach as part of a wider fabric of national healing and the proper cementing of real national unity within a diverse polity that the incumbent APC administration has in the view of many, not done enough to dispassionately address. And on the economy, they similarly agreed that the situation was indeed quite dire and would require the introduction of more frontal solutions such as cuts in governmental expenditure and the removal of subsidies on petroleum products.

As is to be expected however, the issue of leading presidential contenders not showing up for debates and engagement sessions organised on a cross-party platform



Ruling APC candidate Bola Tinubu continues to be trailed by allegations of illhealth.



In victory or in defeat, Labour party candidate Peter Obi will be a talking point after the 2023 elections.

has continued to attract even more reactions even after the townhall session.

While the Tinubu campaign has taken a seemingly extreme position,

saying that its decision to stay away was borne out of the fact that it does not want to unwittingly favour

one group of debate and townhall organisers over the other, the Peter

Obi campaign has stated that it would no longer be disposed to participating in campaign events where other contenders fail to show up in person.

This notwithstanding, the campaigns are going on with the parties continuing to jostle for advantage. At the same time, other debate and townhall organisers are putting up plans for their own sessions. But do they have sufficient guarantees that the respective candidates would show up?

In the midst of all of the developments, the commentator, Saheed Akinsanya says that based on the deep structures that are available to them in the ruling APC and the main, formal opposition, the PDP, Tinubu and Atiku remain the candidates to beat.

But Samuel Ekene does not agree, saying that the absence of the

leading contenders in the debates is problematic and worrisome and may have begun to chip away at the willingness of Nigerians to entrust their affairs in their hands.

'The non-appearance of the All Progressives Congress Candidate at the townhall meeting may indicate they believe within themselves that they can get to villa without debates. This is rather unfortunate and should not be encouraged. I believe Nigerians would not let this just pass by and will hazard that some shocks and surprises may be on the way.'

For Nigeria's leading presidential candidates then, it is still a lot of pushing and shoving out there in the field. Hopefully however, out of it all would come the kind of Nigeria that the people and the continent continue to yearn for.

Cameroon: Biya Clocks 40 In Power

... But Economic Hardship, Far-fetched Promises Overshadow Reign

By Andrew Nsoseka

In Paul Biya's 40-year reign in power as President of Cameroon, most Cameroonians have lived their 'high' moments just in promises of what their president says he will do for them. From the New Deal that very much became worse than what it set out to end; to development projects that were truncated or only became dwarfed versions of what was expected, Cameroonians are still waiting for Biya's loudest promise to be realised- at a day he may not be alive - 2035.

Though he has taken credit over the years as the man who brought democracy to Cameroon, a leader who prioritised peaceful approaches to the violent option, a man who brought much freedom of speech and seemingly press, much of this now is in the shadows.

Democracy in Cameroon is still very much outdated and programmed in ways that people are still in want of what to call transparent electoral processes. As such, Cameroon's democracy



Biya assumed office as President on 6 November 1982, after serving seven years as the country's Prime Minister. Photo credit Reuters.

very much seems like fools' gold. In a modern era, the electoral system is still heavily rudimentary, giving his ruling CPDM and handpicked officials the means to have an outcome that is desirable to them. With this, a selected lot gets into parliament and does just the president's bidding. All power in Cameroon, under Biya, like

his predecessor Ahidjo is in one man's hand, the president who barks orders to people who are supposed to be checking his activities.

After crediting himself as the leader of the only stable island of peace in an unstable sub-region, Biya today stands a big chance of watching Cameroon fragment, as he is fighting wars on

several fronts. The deadliest of them, is the Anglophone crisis now in its sixth year since the President prioritised intimidation, brute force and later war as the only ways out of the people's legitimate grievances. The much acclaimed peaceful Cameroon is now far from anything close to peace, and the end is not in sight yet. Biya's Prince of Peace accolade is now in the mud, and he may be robbed of that as he celebrates 40 years on the seat, at a time when many things are going wrong, and overshadowing anything he might have achieved.

With little to show for in the economic domain, the Biya regime had fallen to the seeming peace that the country enjoyed, before the Boko Haram era and its attacks on the Northern parts of the country. This became worse with the coming of the Anglophone crisis, leaving the Biya regime with nothing tangible to show, as a milestone that the country has reached under Biya's over four-decade leadership.

For one thing, Cameroon's economy is struggling. This is evident as the civil service is being viewed and considered the most lucrative since the private sector has been crippled by bad policies and practices that hardly motivate investment. As such, unlike in most countries, citizens rather try to get into Cameroon's civil service, in order to get rich, as opposed to the private sector. This has contributed to the terrible living conditions that most people have been subjected to.

In 2013 when Biya celebrated 31 years in power, the presidency put out a statement, saying, "Within the thirty-one years of being in power, President Paul BIYA has accomplished many political, economic, social and cultural achievements. In the political domain, Cameroon has become a haven of peace and national unity, an undeniable truth. In short, Cameroon, a country of liberty, a model political stability in Africa. Democracy is progressing well..."

Nine years after, the much-flaunted peace is inexistent. Compatriots West of the Mungo are fighting to restore their independence and go their way. When the Anglophone crisis started, the much-trumpeted 'peace beggar' chose violence and six years down the line, the sink into the abyss of anarchy is very speedy, with no end in sight. According to Human Rights Watch, over 4000 civilians have died in the Anglophone Crisis. Hundreds of soldiers and armed fighters have also been killed in the war.

Biya's 2035 Emergence Plan and its Lack of A Tangible Roadmap

With failure in most initiatives launched, the Biya regime is now fully anchored on the much-trumpeted Vision 2035, when the country is expected to advance considerably in all spheres, especially economic development and in stemming hunger.

In selling its Vision 2035, the Biya regime said it was transforming "Cameroon into a work site for economic emergence", that Cameroon will be «a country that creates and distributes wealth fairly; a country that offers equal development opportunities to all; a country with strong and sustainable growth; a

country with enhanced food security, in a word, a country that ensures happiness for all.»

Though huddled with a lot of loud-sounding objectives, Biya's economic development plan simply put, aims at eradicating poverty (taking it down to less than 10%), becoming a middle-income country, becoming a newly industrialised nation and becoming an emerging nation by the year 2035. About 13 years to 2035, there is hardly anything to show for it. Much of what has been envisaged is still lagging far behind. Little is there to show for, as a country on a path towards emergence.

In its recent (October 2022) economic data released on Cameroon, the World Bank said because Cameroon is lagging in its poverty reduction initiatives more Cameroonians fell back into poverty. According to the statistics 8 million Cameroonians are living below the poverty line.

The lack of basic amenities has only made the situation terrible for everyday Cameroonians. In 2022, most Cameroonians still lack potable water in their homes. This has forced many to massively drill home-run boreholes to be able to get water. Most areas in the countries are still enclaved, and most areas are linked by poorly constructed earth roads that are often a nightmare for travellers and transporters. As such, a bulk of food in Cameroon gets destroyed on transit



The crisis in the North West and South West Regions Of Cameroon will remain a defining part of Biya's legacy if unresolved. Photo courtesy.

because of poor farm-to-market roads. Just about 1/10th of Cameroon's roads are tarred. In areas like the Northern part of Cameroon, about 40 percent of food is lost in post-harvest losses. Though there are several reasons to account for this, poor road network accounts for most of it.

Political Freedom

In the political sphere, though there were issues plaguing the electoral system, there was relative freedom in the early years of Biya. Then, political opponents were treated as just opponents, but in recent years, there has been a rise in cases of political opponents arrested and locked up on trumped-up charges that usually carry terrorism-related offences. This has been mostly because of organised

protests. The 2014 anti-terrorism law meant to aid in the fight against Boko Haram has been used by the regime in going after political opponents, especially as it criminalises freedom acts like protests. As such, political opponents like Maurice Kamto and other opposition leaders and even protesters have been victimised by the regime that did not behave in such crude ways in the beginning.

These have only helped to taint Biya's image as a leader who many say has overstayed his welcome at the helm of the country. The errors, especially in recent years may wipe out anything President Biya might have hoped to bequeath to Cameroon and Cameroonians as a legacy. With the country facing possible fragmentation, poverty level going up, diminishing social amenities and his government only performing lip service, there is little to write home about. The corruption he promised to fight with his New Deal seems to have only gotten worse with dozens of his ministers in jail for stealing from state coffers.

At 40 on the seat, the man who had mainly boosted about his ability to maintain peace has little or nothing to brag about as the country is in dire need of peace and even his ministers are constantly at daggers drawn over the management of resources and positioning on who controls what and who takes over after he quits power or power quits him. At 40 years in power, Biya seems just unable to tackle any of the major issues that make life cumbersome for the everyday Cameroonian.



Frank Biya with French President Emmanuel Macron. Neither Frank Biya nor the regime has done much to dispute plans and prospects of Biya the son succeeding Biya the father.

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McDonald

Elia
Timotheo

Tesh
Mbaabu

Francine
Munyaneza

Amadou
Daffe

South Africa Cuts Perks for Ministers

By Prince Kurupati



South Africans think the government of President Ramaphosa should not prioritize only the needs of the wealthy elite. Photo credit EWN.

South African President has once again proved that he is indeed a 'listening' president. This follows his decision to backtrack on an earlier decision to grant more perks to serving ministers. The backtrack comes after a huge public outcry which condemned the ministers' perks as insensitive as they came at a time when the general public is reeling under tough economic conditions.

The news that President Cyril Ramaphosa was heeding the calls by the public to rescind the new ministers' perks was announced by the presidential spokesperson Vincent Magwenya. Magwenya addressed media outlets at the Union Buildings in South Africa's capital saying that the president acknowledged all the views and opinions expressed by the public to the Ministerial Handbook amendments he made recently put in place. After carefully reviewing the whole decision, he saw it fit to rescind the amendments.

"President Ramaphosa has ordered the withdrawal process of the presidential minute on the Executive Member's guide commonly known as the ministerial handbook of 2022.

The withdrawal will give effect to the 2019 version of the guide, pending a review... President Ramaphosa accepts and appreciates the public sentiments on the matter; however, the impression created that the amendments were conducted in secrecy and to avoid public scrutiny is false," Magwenya said.

The President signed the amendments to the ministerial handbook in May this year, but the news only broke out in the past weeks. The amendments allowed ministers and their deputies to receive unlimited free electricity and water. Each minister was allowed to increase the number of aides by four from 11 to 15. The salary caps for the ministerial office aides were increased from R850,000 to R1.15 million.

The costs for the new perks were placed on taxpayer funds. South African publication BusinessTech estimated that "the changes are set to cost taxpayers R87 million a year."

As soon as news outlets announced the new ministerial perks and the associated costs which were all levied on taxpayer funds, the public quickly made their frustrations known. The perks had been announced at a time

when the South African Rand is performing poorly owing to subdued economic activity which has in turn affected the living standards of most South Africans. Knowing that ministers and their deputies earn at least R2 million, the mere fact that they are receiving more perks on top of this just riled up the public hence their 'protests' on social media platforms. There were also calls for organised protests to take place around the country.

In a statement soon after the news broke out about the amendments to the ministerial handbook, the presidency department said, "The public outrage is appreciated considering the current social economic context and difficulties many South Africans face. As a government that listens as well as a president that is attuned to issues and concerns raised by South Africans, the ministerial handbook will be reviewed."

The main opposition political party in South Africa the Democratic Alliance (DA) added its voice to the outrage over the ministerial handbook amendments saying "Perhaps most shocking of all is the

fact that South Africans would not even have known that they are being forced to pay the water and electricity bills of ANC ministers, as well as at least R87 million more every year to employ additional ANC cadres in ministerial offices, were it not for the Das tireless work to hold the ANC accountable... Ramaphosa's apparent effort to accommodate staff members that the ANC can no longer afford to pay by expanding the private offices of ministers and deputy ministers will cost South Africans, who are already struggling under the heavy burden of skyrocketing food, electricity and fuel prices, an astounding R87 million more every year."

Wayne Duvenage who is the CEO of Undoing of Taz Abuse Organisation said that ministers and the ruling elite should not be cushioned from the harsh daily realities that average folks experience daily. He said that ministers should know exactly how the ordinary South African is living. "They (ministers) should be experiencing the same pain as their citizens... if the electricity price goes up by 20 - 30%, they should be feeling that exact same pain."

Despite President Ramaphosa backtracking on implementing the 2022 ministerial handbook amendments, all ministers and deputy ministers are cushioned from experiencing load shedding. This is necessitated by the fact that Cabinet ministers' official residences in Pretoria are on the same grid as the Union Buildings which are exempt from power cuts. Already having the great privilege of having electricity 24/7, the mere fact that the president had seen it fit to exempt them from paying electricity charges infuriated the public. Some who went on social media to vent out their frustrations said it would have been far much better for the public schools and hospitals to be exempted from paying for electricity other than giving more and more benefits to the already wealthy elite.

A Year After The Military Coup, Sudan Is A Mess

By Rebecca Tinsley

One year after Sudan's military coup, there is little optimism among civil society groups calling for a new constitutional settlement. Protests continue to rock the capital, Khartoum, as unarmed civilians demand democracy and justice. Impartial international rights groups report that demonstrations are met with disproportionate force. The military and its proxies are also accused of killing, beating and torturing ethnically Black African citizens in Darfur, South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Khartoum.

Activists say that diplomatic attempts to broker negotiations are faltering because history has taught civil society groups not to trust the military coup leaders to honour their pledges. Bushra Rahama of the Sudan Human Rights and Development Centre says that community-based "resistance committees" feel frustrated.

"Diplomats are looking to the security services and Sudan's legacy political elites for a negotiated solution, but most people know they are discredited and corrupt. Negotiators wanting to involve Arabian Gulf nations in talks are looking to their own energy needs rather than prioritising Sudan's future stability," says Rahama.

Thousands of Khartoum residents regularly risk their lives demonstrating against the coup. Protesters repeatedly stress there can be no long-term peace without justice. As the international community struggles to convene meaningful negotiations, there is concern that the corrupt ideological Islamists who ruled Sudan for thirty years are staging a comeback.

However, in the periphery areas of Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan states there is also fear that the old Khartoum elites minimize the importance of including people



Abdel-Fattah Al-Burhan Abdelrahman Al-Burhan, President of the Transitional Sovereign Council of Sudan, at UN General Assembly's 77th session. Photo credit UN, Cia Pak.

from beyond Khartoum in any future constitutional settlement.

Raga Gibreel from the NGO Green Kordofan says it is notable that demonstrations in Khartoum feature in the media, ignoring the continuing murder and persecution of ethnically Black African Sudanese in the peripheries and in IDP camps. Institutional discrimination and marginalisation are a fact of daily life, says Gibreel.

"Article 43 of the interim constitution gives the president the right to confiscate and allocate land to whomever he wants. This is leading to corruption and armed clashes between ethnic groups over property, with the security services and their proxies attacking local people."

Activists from Darfur contend that the scale of repression at the hands of the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces in the remote west of the country dwarfs the casualties in Khartoum. An estimated four million Sudanese remain IDPs, most of them in Darfur where an additional 400,000 have been made homeless by government-aligned militia since 2021.

Elsadig Debay Manees argues that Sudan has been ruled by the Northern

Arab elites for the last 66 years, dominating the military and political parties. Hence the marginalization of the non-Arab peripheries. Debay points out that people from Darfur were part of the 2018 uprising against Field Marshall Bashir, hoping that the revolution would bring the peripheries a fair share of wealth and power in the New Sudan. "The political parties in Khartoum hijacked the revolution," he says, making a deal with the military to excluding the need for justice and peace from the agenda. He believes the Northern elites perpetuate a view for international consumption that the conflict is between Islamism and secularism, while ignoring the deep-rooted domination of their ethnic group.

The coup leaders have also been criticized for imperilling Sudan's shaky economy further by alienating international financial institutions by drawing closer to Vladimir Putin's Russia. Military leaders allegedly turn a blind eye to gold smuggling to Moscow to bolster Putin's balance of payments. Deeper links with the Kremlin include years during which the controversial Wagner Group of mercenaries have assisted the

Sudanese Armed Forces in crushing peaceful dissent. On October 12th, Sudan abstained in the UN General Assembly vote condemning Russia for invading Ukraine.

According to Emma di Napoli from the NGO Redress, "Sudan's legal system is designed to prevent justice," rather than deliver it to its citizens. She says immunity for leaders has been reinstated by the military.

The international community prioritizes reforming Sudan's wrecked economy, but di Napoli says delivering justice would help those wishing to stamp out corruption, beginning the process of rescuing the economy.

Activists are calling on the UK, the former colonial power, to follow the USA's example and to impose targeted smart sanctions on elements of the military and the old political elite who stand in the way of peace and justice. They want transparency over negotiations, and the inclusion of civil society representatives seen as credible by the people of Sudan. "There will be no peace while the international communities talks only to its old allies," says Rahama.

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Political Violence on the Rise as Zimbabwe Nears National Election

By Prince Kurupati

In 2008, Zimbabwe experienced its worst electoral violence. According to several human rights organisations, hundreds lost their lives, thousands were injured many lost their limbs and others were displaced. It was only after the main opposition leader at that time, the late Morgan Tsvangirai refused to participate in the run-off that the violence calmed down. Though many years have passed, the grim memories of the 2008 electoral violence are still fresh in the hearts and minds of everyone present at that time.

Sad news to all Zimbabweans as they look forward to next year's harmonised elections is that the country's dark episode of electoral violence in 2008 is soon to make a comeback according to Owen 'Mudha' Ncube, a top leader in the ruling party ZANU (PF).

The former Minister of State Security Owen Ncube who is a close ally of President Emmerson Mnangagwa while addressing ZANU (PF) supporters in Mberengwa in his home province of Midlands warned the nation that they can expect 'worse than 2008' political violence. Considering that hundreds of people lost their lives, the warning by Owen Ncube is frighteningly chilling.

In an audio which has gone viral, Owen Ncube promised to wipe out 'sellouts' (a term often referenced to opposition supporters). In the audio, Ncube is heard saying "You have

been told that 2023 will be worse than 2008. We will not just leave you while you are selling out. Even during the liberation struggle, there were sellouts but they were dealt with. Some left their grandchildren... If you sell out, we are going to deal with you in a crude way."

Considering the events that have been taking place in the country in recent weeks, the threats by the former minister of state security certainly aren't hot air. Numerous violent clashes were reported in several districts and wards where by-elections were conducted in the past week. After having observed the by-elections, the election watchdog Election Resource Centre (ERC) had this to say:

"The Election Resource Centre (ERC) notes with concern violence experienced in y election sites as the country gears up for the 2023 Harmonised elections. Political party leaders and followers are urged by the ERC to accept opposing viewpoints and to remember that politics in Zimbabwe is about dissenting opinions. Furthermore, ERC calls on responsible bodies to investigate and prosecute the instigators of violence without fear or favour... With each subsequent election, the pattern and use of violence have intensified. ERC categorically condemns the use of force, coercive measures and physical violence no matter the circumstances. Peaceful elections are possible



Successive elections in Zimbabwe have been marred by violent scenes. Photo credit Harare Post.

and political leaders must publicly condemn the violence and publicly pledge to bring violent supporters to order as a matter of urgency."

Another election watchdog having observed the rising incidents of politically motivated violence during the past by elections called upon the political leaders to urge their supporters to contest ideas. The Zimbabwe Election Support Network in a statement said, "The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) implores political party leaders and their supporters to foster peace ahead of the 2023 harmonised elections. The call comes against the prevailing toxic political environment which has been characterised by a spate of inter-party as well as intra-party violence that occurred in Matobo and Insiza... These violent clashes have a potential to adversely affect the participation in democratic electoral processes of the electorate in particular vulnerable groups."

The tentacles of political violence in Zimbabwe do not just touch party supporters only but extend to other actors' chief among them journalists who seek to cover the violent events and incidents. Already, the country has witnessed brutal attacks on the members of the media covering various political events. The worry is that going into the future towards the 2023 elections, such attacks will only increase.

Tabani Moyo who is the director of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) said that the "situation (attack on journalists) is worsening for journalists... this one (upcoming election) is promising to be even more drastic and dire for the media... We are seeing a dangerous trend of attacks; the numbers show that covering any political story in Zimbabwe induces politically motivated attacks on the press". This year, Tabani Moyo reports that around 30 journalists have been attacked, arrested or harassed.

One of Zimbabwe's top investigative journalists Hopewell Chin'ono who has been arrested multiple times in the recent past said that the attack on journalists is now more brazen unlike during the Robert Mugabe times. "Mnangagwa's regime has openly been violent against journalists. Mugabe tried to hide it. Mnangagwa's regime targets journalists who expose corruption and those who expose misrule and the violence," Chin'ono.

The violence has however not been reserved for the ruling party only as the instigators. In the lead-up to the by election, members of the media were attacked by the security team of the main opposition party the Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) when they attempted to cover a rally the party was conducting in Marondera. The victim Ruvimbo Muchenje suffered some bruises.



A rare picture of President Mnangagwa and opposition challenger Nelson Chamisa. Both men will be frontliners in the elections

Birth Of A Movement From African Energy Week 2022

By Ajong Mbapndah L

Participants from the recent African Energy Week left Cape Town with a renewed sense of hope, purpose, and urgency to seek ways and means to better meet the energy and development needs of the continent through the exploration of more resources. The event which ran from October 18 -21, brought together an unprecedented crowd of energy stakeholders, policymakers, and key power players from the continent and beyond.

"It is my pleasure to welcome you to AEW in Cape Town, in South Africa, in Africa. We gather today as African energy stakeholders from Cape to Cairo. 600 million are without access to electricity, 900 million are without access to clean cooking, we cannot say this industry is done. We are going to be the drivers of the future and shouldn't have to apologise for wanting to drive growth, create jobs and create opportunities. So, welcome to this city. Let us go change Africa, make our voices known and sign deals," said NJ Ayuk, Chairman of the African Energy Chamber.

"Energy poverty is not an academic exercise in Africa, but it is our lived experience," said South African Energy Minister Gwede Mantashe.

"We must turn around this abnormality. Africa must no longer



600 million are without access to electricity, 900 million without access to clean cooking, we cannot say this industry is done, said NJ Ayuk

wait. Changing this abnormality requires a greater level of commitment than ever seen before because Africa's future depends on it," Minister Mantashe said.

Most speakers at the event agreed that climate change is posing a huge threat to the energy industry on the global stage. Hon. Frans Timmermans from the European

Commission currently acting as the Vice President for the European Green Deal said "the climate crisis is our common challenge and a challenge of a lifetime. The window for action is closing fast but it is still open. Many countries in Africa already suffer from the consequences of the climate crisis."

Yemi Adetunji who is the group

executive director downstream of NNPC Ltd acknowledged that indeed climate change is posing serious threats to Africa's energy industry. However, Adetunji went further to state that in efforts to electrify more parts of Africa, the continent should not be restricted to look at smart and green energy generation methods only. Adetunji said that Africa is "responsible for just 4% of emissions" hence it should be granted the freedom to "develop fossil fuels to drive economic prosperity and bring energy to the 600 million people without electricity". On this front, Adetunji said that "international oil companies and other providers of finance can help develop the projects that allow the continent to meet its targets".

The CEO of Kosmos Energy Andrew Inglis concurred with the sentiments expressed by Adetunji, saying Africa certainly has the right to extract its gas resources. "Africa is blessed with enormous gas resources that can be used to alleviate energy poverty and supply the rest of the world with sustainable, affordable



Dr. Benedict Okey Oramah, President and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Afreximbank bagged the African Energy Person of the Year award.

and clean energy. If Africa used its resources, the cumulative emissions would raise its share from a mere 3% to just 3.5%. So, for me, the key question is not whether Africa has the right, it absolutely does, but why it is not being done faster. Developing resources responsibly requires companies and countries to create a shared agenda," Inglis said.

Priscillah Mabelane from Sasol also supported the extraction of resources for the benefit of African citizens saying "energy is a critical enabler of economic growth. Yet, most African countries are still lagging. At Sasol, we believe that Africa must harness its abundant energy resources to address the socioeconomic development of its people. In addition to the challenges of access to energy, Africa faces an uncertain future due to the impacts of climate change," Mabelane said.

"The AEW conference serves as an important platform for African countries to collectively articulate their position to share with the rest of the world at the COP27 event. Through this forum this week, the group of oil and gas producers will come up with a common message for going forward. We must not pursue decarbonization for the graveyard. Our transition must be sensible and pragmatic. It must address the development gap and the continent's ability to address climate change,"

said Dr Benedict Oramah President and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Afreximbank.

For Dr Omar Farouk of the African Petroleum Producers Association APPO, the question of financing was crucial.

"Since the traditional financiers of oil and gas projects in Africa announced their commitment to ending fossil fuel financing in Africa, we have become very worried. Our economists and financial gurus have mostly failed us, and the cost of this failure is easy to face. Capital can be found in many other places, including our own so-called poor countries. It is a matter of prioritizing our expenditure. Africa must begin to take its own destiny into its own hands. We cannot leave over 125 billion barrels of oil and 620 trillion cubic feet of gas stranded," he said.

"We are going to COP27, and I think it should be the starting point for having an African energy action place. This is the time to have an African voice to say what we really want, think, and expect for our populations by using our natural resources, mainly oil and gas," Bruno Jean Itoua Minister of Hydrocarbons for Congo said.



Africa's prosperity depends on solving energy poverty, says South African Energy Minister Gwede Mantashe.

The event, NJ Ayuk said the African Energy Week 2022 was quite successful as deals worth \$32bn were signed. Ayuk said the deals signed help in shaping Africa's socioeconomic growth as we move to the future by significantly increasing the exploration work of energy resources. He also said the deals will go a long way in drastically reducing the continent's energy imports.

"It was amazing; it was Africa coming together with our European, American, Asian, and Middle Eastern partners, it was the oil and gas industry telling the world that we are going to take care of Africa's energy security, we are going to make

energy poverty history... There was a \$600 million deal signed to develop an oil field in Nigeria by Afrexim and Ammie International. Technip Energy together with the Namibian government has put a multimillion-dollar deal. We saw a combined somewhere around 29 to 32 billion dollars in a deal being signed or some being started. That is good and this is my favourite part of the African Energy Week, deals, deals and deals. People are signing deals, creating jobs, opportunities are happening, we just need to get it to work right now and rive up this industry," Ayuk said.

Ayuk also said that the African energy stakeholders and policymakers will go ahead with extracting resources for the benefit of African citizens and will not listen to what the world has to say. In his concluding remarks, Ayuk said, "The message was very clear, we are going to drill for gas, we need to produce gas in Africa to solve our energy poverty problems. There is a sense that this is not the time for Africa to abandon its natural resources on the ground because somebody from Europe or America says so... We are listening to those who say we should produce more gas, but we are also thinking about everyday Africans and how do we get young people into jobs and how do we create opportunities; that was the resounding message."



Time for African voice on what we want, think and expect for our populations by using our natural resources, mainly oil and gas, says Bruno Jean Itoua.



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Africa Needs To Continue Speaking With The Same Voice On Energy-Minister Gabriel Obiang Lima

By Ajong Mbapndah L

His country may be small in size and population, but it is one of the power players when it comes to energy related issues across Africa. In Petroleum Minister Gabriel Obiang Lima, Africa has one of the most articulate voices in articulating continental wide priorities.

At the recent African Energy Week, Minister Obiang Lima said discussing the energy stakes and priorities for Africa must take place within the continent. Visibly impressed with the success of AEW 2022, Minister Obiang Lima said it was heart warming to see many Africans not only exhibiting a thorough mastery of the issues at stake but speaking in unison on the way forward.

"We own the resources. Africa has oil, gas, iron ore and every mineral we have; that is our leverage. The only problem is that we seek a third party to exploit these resources. We need to learn to do it ourselves," Minister Obiang Lima said in response to the questions on the leverage Africa has.

We have come to the end of the African Energy Week 2022, what is the takeaway message for Africa?

Minister Gabriel Obiang Lima: The Minister of Ghana said united we are stronger, divided we are weaker. What I like is that for the first time we are seeing many African Energy personalities speaking with the same voice, understanding the topics and defending the same course and having the same narrative. We need to continue doing this because in the end when we talk about African Energy Week, it is a mix of energy and it is not to come and focus on only one resource; I to talk about oil, gas, nuclear, hydrogen, whatever is the resource that can create energy security it has to be welcome.

For the first time, we are not just doing a good job, we are mastering it. I am very proud to see many



Heart warming to see many Africans not only exhibiting a thorough mastery of the issues at stake but speaking in unison on the way forward, says Minister Gabriel Obiang Lima.

Africans, private institutions, and Ministers talking with clear knowledge of the topic. What we need to do is not just make sure that the Saudis come, the Americans, the Chinese all of them have to be here next year because if we want to talk about energy in Africa, it needs to be talked about it in Africa.

You have been one of the most forceful voices. What leverage does Africa have to ensure that the world considers its opinions?

Minister Gabriel Obiang Lima: We own the resources. Africa has oil, gas, iron ore and every mineral we have;

that is our leverage. The only problem is that we seek a third party to exploit these resources. We need to learn to do it ourselves. Our biggest leverage is that we are the owners of the resources, and we need to learn how to exploit the resources and use it for ourselves.

One of the things I picked up from your interventions is that the absence of collaboration or trade between African countries themselves. What is it that could be done and beginning with your country Equatorial Guinea?

Minister Gabriel Obiang Lima:



Equatorial Guinea's Minister of Mines and Hydrocarbons, Gabriel Obiang Lima, is the President of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF).

That narrative is an old one; that is not the case. There has never been a higher level of collaboration between Ministers and industries in Africa than now. All that collaboration is already happening, and this is why this transformation is revolutionary because for the first time African countries that have never travelled to their neighbours are now collaborating, talking about their development. It is a game changer and even if it is seen as we are not talking, we are talking through various means of communications such as WhatsApp and email groups. There has never been a greater share of information between ministers than what we have now.

With regards to COP 22, are you going to be there?

Minister Gabriel Obiang Lima: It is not Minister Lima will be there; Equatorial Guinea will be there and somebody representing Equatorial Guinea will be there and probably they will say the same things I said. Equatorial Guinea will be on the table and if they chose that I should be the one that is fine; if they choose someone else, I am confident that they will say the same thing that I am saying.

Next year we are going to be here for the African Energy Week 2023, what are the yard sticks we should use to hold you accountable for the progress or no progress?

Minister Gabriel Obiang Lima: How many projects and contracts we sanctioned. We have done the talk and now we need to do the work. We need to start executing projects. Next year people will be tired of me to talk about the same thing. I am not coming to talk but to execute; hopefully I say on as the Minister. What we need to count on next year is to execute, and sign contracts and projects and that will prove if we are doing a good job or not.

A Boon For Investors Who Bank On South Sudan -Petroleum Minister Puot Kang Chol

By Ajong Mbatndah L

Realities in South Sudan today are starkly different from the image of war and conflict that is still engraved in many minds, says Petroleum Minister Puot Kang Chol as he makes a pitch to investors to take a fresh look at Africa's youngest nation.

The peace efforts have yielded great dividends and the leaders are working together to move South Sudan to the next level. Extending an open invitation to investors, Minister Puot Kang Chol said the investment opportunities in his country are enormous and in diverse sectors.

In Cape Town, South Africa, for the African Energy Week, it was a hectic schedule for Minister Puot Kang as he participated in panel discussions, engaged with prospective partners, and a broad range of other events and activities to talk about progress in his country and investment opportunities.

On the energy debate, Minister Puot Kang says transition cannot be done without taking into consideration the level of development and exploitation of resources in the continent. Africa must not be apologetic as it seeks to make its voice heard, said Minister Puot Kang.

What is your general perspective on the African Energy Week 2022 and how does it advance your mission as Minister of Petroleum for South Sudan?

Minister Puot Kang Chol : I must admit that it has been a great week; it has been a week that allowed us to interact with our fellow Africans and with the international community and business community. We had the opportunity to showcase what we have as a country; we had the opportunity to discuss all the investment opportunities that we have in the Republic of South Sudan. It is something amazing for us and I am grateful that South Sudan is part



On the energy debate, Minister Puot Kang says transition cannot be done without taking into consideration the level of development and exploitation of resources in the continent.

of this and at the centre of what is happening.

One of the things I heard you say in Cape Town is that people should not rely on what they see about South Sudan on social media. For those of us who have not been there, can you tell us what is different from what we see on social media?

Minister Puot Kang Chol: First of all, I would like to admit that as a country in 2013 we had gone to war with ourselves. We have committed our own mistakes. In 2018 we realized that we have committed mistakes and therefore it is important for us to come together and signed an agreement which we did. We have signed the revitalized agreement; we have formed a revitalized government of national unity, and the government is there in which I am a part. The objective today is to rebuild and build a country and the images that remain in the mind and hearts of people are the images of 2013-2016.

But we are trying to say hey we committed those mistakes, but we want to move our country forward, come help us build South Sudan. That

is the image we want to print in the minds of our people, the international community. People who have gone to war do not expect things to just end in a second; it is a process but with your presence in the country, with youths getting jobs we will overcome those challenges and that is what we have been calling for. I believe the images today are different and we think it is time for us to move forward we want businesses to come and work with us as we are moving South Sudan to the next level.

Talking about investment opportunities, can you recap the opportunities that are available in South Sudan, and what incentive is your government providing for potential investors who want to come in?

Minister Puot Kang Chol: First of all, let me talk about the opportunities in the oil sector. In the oil sector, we have fourteen blocks of which we have done licenses for five blocks and those blocks are available as long as you stand the test of the requirement that has been set in the laws of the Republic of South Sudan. Those are

the blocks that are available, and we are ready to agree provided you are the right investor, we will be happy to be with you.

The oil infrastructure is another. We need to build refineries so that we can be able to satisfy our local market as well as regional and why not export the others? These are opportunities we have. We also have opportunities in the same area; deposits that we need to build. Another opportunity is to make use of the existing blocks; it is something we are looking forward to. If there are companies with the right technologies, with the right people to come and do the job, we will be more than happy to sit down with them to help us increase our production. Our production is about 170000 but we want it to go in the pre-conflict time of 350 thousand barrels per day.

You come to the mining sector; it is a sector where I think we have the opportunities; we have all the available minerals. What we need are the right investors because currently, the country cannot even export one gram of gold or diamond. We want the right investors to come and invest in the mining sector. We are looking forward to having investors



Africa must not be apologetic as it seeks to make its voice heard, says Minister Puot Kang Chol.

that will be willing to invest in the agricultural sector. We are depending on generators; we want people who are willing as well to come to South Sudan and help us build sustainable power grids so that we don't depend on generators. We want sustainable, affordable energy and that is what we have been talking about. We are looking forward to having investors that are interested to come and invest in the country.

I must admit that we are among the countries that are best known for investment. if you go to the country,

you will be able to go to the Ministry of Investment and they will take you from point A to B and you will be able to see what incentives are there and in what area. There you will choose if you want to go to the agricultural sector, petroleum, mining, and service sector like health and education there are incentives. All we need is people, but the regulatory framework is favourable for investment.

What leverage does Africa have to make sure that the interest of the continent is respected?

Minister Puot Kang Chol: First of all, we must admit that we need each other in Africa, 90 per cent of our oil remains under-exploited. Yes, we all agree that there must be transition; yes, we all agree that it is something that we will take but the process as to how we take it must be fair and just taking into consideration our level of development, our level of exploitation of the resources that we have. The continent's voice must be considered and heard. I don't think we need to be apologetic about it because that is what I have. If you are telling me

to transit, I must have something to transit to. If I have zero, then where am I transiting to? We are saying we will do the transiting journey on our conditions and what we have.

From Cape, the journey goes to Cairo, Egypt, any message on that?

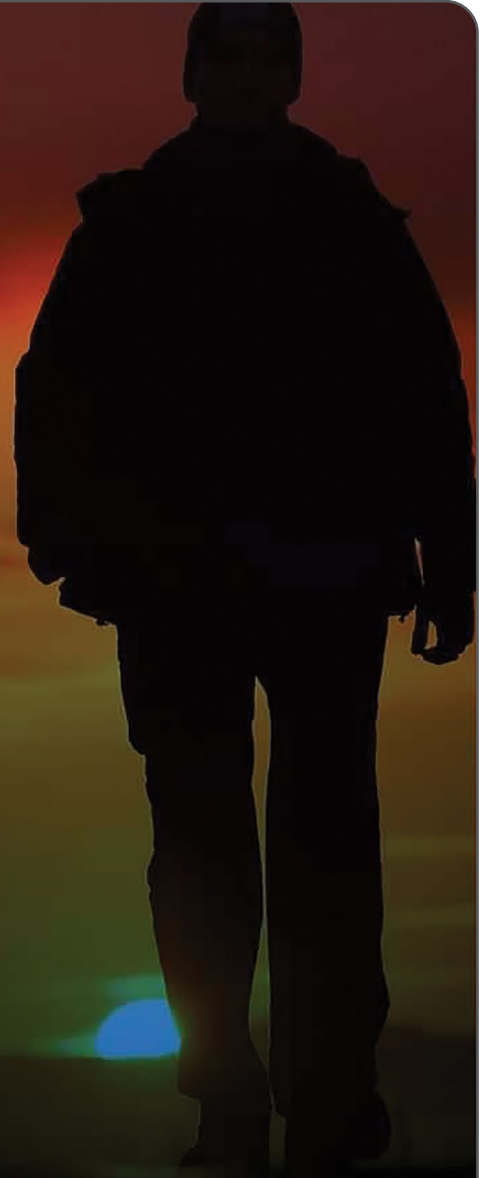
Minister Puot Kang Chol: As Africans, we must remain united, talk with one voice and we must protect the resources that we have on the continent.

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A Trailblazing Role For Namcor In Namibia's Changing Energy Fortunes

By Ajong Mbatndah L

It has been a slow but steady process and after some thirty years, Namibia is finally making its entrance on the oil producing league of Africa. As a sign of the changing fortunes of the Southern African country, Namibia at the recent African Energy Week in Cape Town South Africa, signed a very important MoU with global giants Technip Energies.

Saddled with the responsibility of handling the oil fortunes of Namibia is the National Petroleum Company of Namibia-NAMCOR led by the seasoned professional Immanuel Mulunga. It has taken us 30 years of drilling without success and thirty years after independence we have managed to make these discoveries, we are very excited as a country, Mr. Mulunga told PAV on the sidelines of the African Energy Week.

"The integration of Technip Energies' expertise into Namcor and the Ministry of Mines and Energy will ensure skills transfer that will be vital for the optimization of the recent oil discoveries in Namibia," Mulunga said in the interview which also covered the African Energy Week, Namcor related developments, and a range of energy perspectives concerning his country.

For those who may not know, could we start with an introduction to NAMCOR

Immanuel Mulunga: Namcor is the Namibian national oil company. It is called the Namibian Petroleum Corporation, and we operate both in the upstream and downstream space; we are one hundred per cent government-owned, and we have grown from humble beginnings where we were initially advising the government to regulate the industry. We have grown into a commercial public enterprise, and we first entered



After thirty years of drilling without success, Namibia is very excited with the recent discoveries, says NAMCOR Managing Director Immanuel Mulunga.

the downstream market by importing and distributing petroleum products and marketing them to our customers, and then started to play a bigger role in the upstream side where we started taking up ten per cent equity in all the license blocks in Namibia.

So, the government made a conscious decision to allow Namcor to partake at the equity level in these projects as well. We have started expanding into the downstream side at the rate of seven stations; we currently have eleven substations; by the end of the month, we will have 14 and by this time next year we will have 27 stations. We have been aggressively growing from a low base and by June of next year, we would have grown by ten times in a matter of five years. It has been a good journey so far for Namcor and we want to continue playing our role as a national company.

We are doing this interview on the sidelines of the African Energy Week, AEW, may we get

your general perspective on the event, and how it has been for you and Namcor?

Immanuel Mulunga: This is the second year that this African Energy Week is running; it is a great initiative, and we congratulate the event organizers for coming up with the vision of holding a conference like this. This is very different from the African Oil Week that we have been used because this is very high level; with a lot of deal-making, and opportunities to network with industry players. There is a pan-African flavour to it, and we are happy to participate this year as a platinum sponsor.

On behalf of Namcor, you signed an MoU with Technip Energies today, what does this MoU represent for Namcor?

Immanuel Mulunga: This MoU is very important; we signed this on behalf of the Ministry of Mines and Energy. The purpose is to facilitate; organize and develop cooperation

within various areas. Technip Energies is a world-class company; a world leader in engineering and technology with 60-year history executing some of the largest and most complex engineering and construction projects. We are happy to be linked with Technip Energies. We are welcoming them into Namibia.

The integration of Technip Energies' expertise into Namcor and the Ministry of Mines and Energy will ensure skills transfer that will be vital for the optimization of the recent oil discoveries in Namibia. It covers various areas, and it includes principles of the energy transition, health, safety and environment, process engineering, offshore as well as the development of offshore and oil and gas fields. It is quite wide

encompassing, and we are looking to move to the next level where we can start cooperating in all these areas.

With Namibia in the oil production club, what has changed in the country or what is expected to change?

Immanuel Mulunga: We are fortunate to be accepted into the club of the African Petroleum Producers Organization. These discoveries we have been chasing for the past 30 years. It is exactly 30 years since we drilled our first well offshore after independence. It has taken us 30 years of drilling without success and thirty years after independence we have managed to make these discoveries. We are very excited as a country. We are looking forward to the upcoming operation campaign by both Shell and Total and Namcor is a partner in all these licenses. We are looking forward to Namcor participating and playing a meaningful role in these discoveries and for Namcor to become one of the leading, if not the largest company in

Namibia once we start production.

In other parts of the continent, we have seen oil, and petroleum products serving more as a curse as opposed to a blessing, how is Namibia looking forward to avoiding this trap?

Immanuel Mulunga: Oil discovery does not necessarily translate into positive outcomes for a country. This is just the start; there is still a lot of work that needs to be done to make sure that these oil discoveries do not become a curse, but they become a blessing for Namibia. The advantage we have as Namibia is that we are a bay when it comes to oil and gas production and there is a lot for us to learn from our peers in Africa; there are very good examples of how not to be and there are good examples of how to do. We are keen and eager to learn from our peers whether it is Angola, Nigeria or Congo to make sure that these discoveries play a meaningful role in our economy.

That starts with leadership; it is going to be important that the people that are here now obviously continue to have their feet firmly on the ground and do the best for the country and not become too nationalistic or too greedy and wanting to get too much from the oil companies too soon. It is a journey, and we need to continue having winning solutions because



The integration of Technip Energies expertise will ensure skills transfer that will be vital for the optimization of the recent oil discoveries in Namibia, says Immanuel Mulunga.

it does not mean you have made a discovery and you go automatic to riches. There is still a lot of work that needs to be done; we need to continue working with the oil companies in a partnership and not see them as us versus them but working as a partnership.

How will you rate the support Namcor is receiving from the government of Namibia in fulfilling its mission?

Immanuel Mulunga: There is a lot of support from the government. We

feel the support and we are looking forward to continuous government support for the next three years which is going to be very critical. We are going to do the full development and make final investment decisions. It is going to be very key for the Ministry's office to make sure that it moves with these investment decisions that will be made, to get it off the development phase and ultimately start producing oil by 2027 or 2028 at the latest.

At the moment there is this energy debate between fossil fuels and renewable energy, how is this affecting Namcor as a company and any other development in the pipeline that we should expect after the African Energy Week for you?

Immanuel Mulunga: It is very important to make it clear that from our perspective as Namcor that energy transition is a reality, and we should not fool ourselves to be against the energy transition. We need to protect our planet; if we continue this trend, the planet that we call home will no longer be viable for us to live in. However, we must carry out that transition in an orderly fashion, it needs to be a just transition, it needs to take into account that there are a lot of people in Africa that do not have access to electricity and energy,

clean water. It is unfair for European countries to try and force us into an early transition that is not meant for us.

We need opportunities to take people out of poverty, invest in our economies and then be allowed to get a transition. We need to take our destiny into our own hands as Africans and not rely on Europe and the United States to help us or give us the necessary finance to carry out our projects. As Africans we need to wake up and start doing things as a unified force; we have a big market and that means we need to find solutions to funding for these oil and gas projects. We are encouraged by the developments in Afreximbank; this is very important.

Namcor as a small national oil company has grown as I said earlier from a low base; we are coming from the land of the brave; we are a brave national oil company. While we are waiting for our discoveries to manifest, we decided to go outside Namibia and bid for production assets in Angola. In my seven years at Namcor that is the legacy I want to leave; a company that grows from leaps and bounds and a company that is on an aggressive growth rate. Next year Namcor will look very different but bigger and better.



We are keen and eager to learn from our peers whether it is Angola, Nigeria or Congo to make sure that these discoveries play a meaningful role in our economy, says Immanuel Mulunga.



From South Sudan To Africa -A Continental wide Ambition For Trinity Energy

By Ajong Mbatndah L

For Trinity Energy, the hard work, courage and sustained vision is paying off huge with its imprints growing beyond the shores of South Sudan where the company has its base. A conspicuous presence at the recent African Energy Week, Trinity Energy facilitated one of the events to tout investment potentials in South Sudan.

At the breakfast event animated by South Sudan's Minister of Petroleum Puot Kang Chol, the emphasis was on the great potential South Sudan has when it comes to oil and gas and the need to shirk the jaundiced view People have about South Sudan.

In a conversation with Robert Mdeza, CEO of Trinity Energy, and Ken Mugambi Deputy CEO, the sentiments of the Minister were echoed. South Sudan has turned the curve and is very safe for investment. Trinity Energy is not only aggressively making the best of the investment opportunities in South Sudan, but also calling other investors to join them.

With a vision that is rapidly expanding beyond the shores of South Sudan and East Africa, Trinity maybe destined for continental wide leadership on energy in the years ahead.

Could we start with an overview of how the African Energy Week 2022 has been going for you?

Things have been going well with powerful speeches from the various speakers during the opening ceremony. And then the networking we have had since we started has so far been going on well and they have continued to go well.

This morning Trinity Energy sponsored a breakfast event on promoting investment in South Sudan, may we know the message that you sought to convey with this breakfast event?



We are continuing to expand our operations across South Sudan as a sign that the country has opened up; peace has come, and the environment is good for doing business, says CEO Robert Mdeza

Trinity Energy as you know is a South Sudanese company and our roots are firmly in South Sudan; we have grown over the last ten years doing business in South Sudan and as a company that is indigenous to South Sudan, we feel it was very important to tell other investors that South Sudan is open for business. We were just facilitating for the Ministry of Petroleum and the Ministry of Mines to come and have an engagement with investors who may be interested in doing business in South Sudan and to showcase the opportunities that South Sudan has to offer to any investor.

The Minister did make mention of this issue of perception. As a company that has been in South Sudan for over ten years; how has it been like doing business from independence to the civil war era, and post-civil war era?

Things are stable, new roads are being built and the country has opened up for business. As a

company, we all went through that, but we stayed; we believe in the country, and we firmly continued to do our investment in those difficult days. Since 2018, everything has been stable, and we are expanding. We are continuing to expand our operations across South Sudan as a sign that the country has opened up; peace has come, and the environment is good for doing business. As a company we are taking advantage of this to invest to serve the people better; give them energy solutions for them to advance in their lives.

In terms of the overall contribution to development in South Sudan, how will you situate the role of Trinity Energy?

Before 2018, South Sudan was facing significant energy challenges, especially in the supply of petroleum. The country was characterized by long queues of South Sudanese waiting to access fuel. Post-2018 Trinity Energy in partnership with

the African export and import bank came up with a solution for stabilizing the energy supply in South Sudan. Through support from Afreximbank in collaboration with the government of South Sudan, we are pleased to say we have stabilized the fuel supply in the country; the queues that used to be experienced before are no longer there and the fuel stations that had been closed are now opened and this has created employment opportunities for thousands of South Sudanese through the retail of fuel.

One of the other challenges was price hikes but because of the interventions by Trinity Energy, South Sudan has now experienced a very stable fuel supply; indeed South Sudan is now enjoying the cheapest fuel prices across East Africa. Part of that is because of lower taxes but in principle, Trinity Energy has made great contributions in the area of energy security and energy price stability for South Sudan, and we will continue to create other opportunities and avenues for socioeconomic

empowerment for the people of South Sudan. We have also contributed significantly to initiatives around health, education, agriculture, and food security which are areas we are also passionate about besides energy supply.

In a business atmosphere characterized by intense competition, the Minister talked about opportunities in South Sudan, and here you are encouraging other investors to come into South Sudan. Is Trinity not afraid of competition?

Competition is ultimately helpful for everybody; it puts everybody on their toes which is key for continuous improvement and overall, the main beneficiary of competition is the public whom we are all striving to serve. The more competition that we have on the ground the higher the level of service that will be offered and the people of South Sudan should experience the same quality that they find in a market like here in Cape Town, or Kenya, or Egypt. If we are complicit that we are the big boys, we may lower our standards. We are therefore not afraid of competition; that is not to say we are complicit, but we welcome competition. At the end of the day, we are there as businesspeople to serve the community.

One of the recurrent themes at the AEW has been the encouragement of regional cooperation. How is Trinity trying to leverage that to its advantage?

South Sudan is part of the East African Community as you might be aware, therefore Trinity Energy is looking at not just the South Sudanese market but also the wider East African Community as its market. Fuel supply from South Sudan comes predominantly through Kenya into Uganda and then into South Sudan



Trinity Energy is looking at not just the South Sudanese market but also the wider East African Community as its market, says Deputy CEO Ken Mumaambi

because South Sudan is a landlocked country. It is important therefore to have relations, and collaborations across that value chain so that as we strive to make sure that South Sudan is energy secured, we have relationships across the value chain that helps us to achieve this objective. We are looking at East Africa as an enabler of what we are trying to do in terms of ensuring energy security for South Sudan. Our expansion within East and Central Africa is premised on the fact that South Sudan is not only a member of these regional markets but also it is important for Trinity Energy to have a presence in these markets to ensure the security of supply within South Sudan as a country that heavily relies on its neighbours for its logistics of fuel supply.

How does Trinity Energy give back to the public?

We have established what we call four pillars for our social-economic empowerment of South Sudan. We do not want to just call it Corporate Social Responsibility; it is around empowerment, and it is consistent with what we are doing in the area of energy. The solutions we are providing

within the energy space are geared towards the social and economic empowerment of South Sudanese people. We also, have an opportunity to give back while looking at this from the perspective of building up on what we are already doing in the energy space. In this regard, we are looking at four areas; one is agriculture which is the area of food security. Trinity Energy is part of a bigger group which is Trinity Holdings that is involved in agro-initiatives, including farming and subsequently value addition.

We are also looking at the area of health; providing much-needed supplies and support to the government in the area of health. In 2020 Trinity Energy made a very significant contribution to the government of South Sudan in the area of COVID support, to the tune of six hundred thousand United States dollars. The third pillar is on the environment; we are very conscious as an oil company of our carbon footprint and this is why we are very invested in initiatives to help in addressing the environmental impact of our activities, but also generally help South Sudanese to appreciate the beautiful environment that God

has given them.

The fourth pillar is education. As a young country South Sudan requires a lot of manpower, and home-grown human resources. We are committed to supporting especially skilled young South Sudanese to participate not only in our sector but also across various sectors of the economy. Last year we made significant support to support youths at the University of Juba to undertake their degree programs. This is something we will continue to support as well as focus on other areas of education. All this is under the framework of our commitment to the UN Global Compact. Trinity Energy is the first South Sudanese company to sign up as a member of UN Global Compact and is amongst the very few in East Africa, which shows we are going over and above.

Any big projects in view for Trinity Energy, how do you envisage the future?

Trinity Energy is a fast-growing company; we have been very blessed to have the opportunities we have had in South Sudan, and we continue to see South Sudan as our primary market but also, we are expanding across East, Central and Southern African regions. Within South Sudan, we have several projects and also outside South Sudan. In South Sudan we are continuing our retail expansion; now we have a retail footprint of about 20 retail outlets, but we are committed to growing this to about a hundred in the next four years to enable South Sudanese people to have access to petroleum products to bridge the access gap. Alongside that is expanding our storage capacity. The existing storage may not necessarily serve the needs of a growing country and a growing economy like South Sudan. We are looking at expanding our storage

capacity by adding about 75 million litres of both strategic storage and operational storage.

We are also working on a refinery project. We are looking at investing in a refinery – 50,000 barrels per day and we have made several strides around this. We have just finished studying for the configuration of the refinery and now we are at the stage of financing for the project. We are also expanding our footprint in the area power generation and are currently involved in setting up the first-ever solar plant in South Sudan, in collaboration with the Ministry of Energy. We are a sub-subcontractor to a large Egyptian company but now we are moving to take up operation and maintenance of that power plant. We want to build our capacity to implement such capacities in another town in South Sudan.

The other project is a 6.5-megawatt thermal power plant in Wau, the second biggest city, that we are currently undertaking. We hope to commission it in the next six months or so. Subsequently we intend to scale up this powerplant using solar power, which we have also been discussing with potential investors for this



Sponsored by Trinity Energy, the South Sudan Investor Breakfast hosted during African Energy Week 2022 highlighted opportunities in the country's oil and gas sector.

project and so far received interest from IFC to come in as a financing partner. This is essentially what we have been focusing on, as well as on the upstream side, where we are now involved as a service contractor to operating companies.

So, we are looking at different

opportunities around engineering and drilling services, but also a new area again the Minister has mentioned is the enhanced oil recovery. We are also discussing different partnerships around that area.

Regionally, we are expanding our presence in Kenya. We are also

expanding in DRC, where we have opportunities for bulk petroleum supply, in the country, Congo Brazzaville, and various other markets in East, Central and Western.

While we continue pursuing these opportunities, we must recognize that we cannot do all this on our own. We need partnerships, finance, and skills. This is where we are inviting partners to walk with us on this journey.

When all of these are implemented, you are talking about Trinity becoming a major player, if not the biggest player when it comes to oil and gas in Africa!

Correct. Not only just that, basically, but we also want to grow into an integrated energy company that will evolve with the times beyond our time to serve the people of Africa, starting from our base in South Sudan to the continent. So that is the vision of our founders. And that's the vision of our directors and management and staff that they should be there to serve people into the foreseeable future and beyond. We intend in the future to list the company in the stock exchanges here and elsewhere in Africa, just like any other international company. This is the dream.



Trinity Energy Management intends to list the company in the stock exchanges here and elsewhere in Africa, just like any other international company.



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N J A Y U K

Mauritius Is A Good Base To Expand Into Africa-Orama CEO Keseena Chengadu

By Ajong Mbapndah L



Mauritius is a good base to expand into Africa, says Orama CEO Keseena Chengadu.

Building on the amazing experience it had at the maiden edition of the 2021 African Energy Week, Orama was one of the prominent fixtures at the 2022 edition of the African Energy Week which took place recently in Cape Town, South Africa. The powerful delegation from the Mauritius based company under the dynamic leadership of CEO Keseena Chengadu used the event to tout its growing corporate clout as a company facilitating access to Mauritius, Africa's financial hub and friendliest business destination.

In an interview with PAV, Keseena Chengadu shares her perspectives on the African Energy Week, investment opportunities in Mauritius, the vision of Orama and more.

May we start with an introduction to Orama?

Keseena Chengadu: It is a management company based in Mauritius licensed by the FSC and we deal with the incorporation of companies, trust, and asset management. We have been incorporated for a couple of years now, and we were recently licensed and are fully operational. Last year we were here at African Energy Week, and it was a great opportunity to connect with people. This year it tripled in size, and I think it was a huge success. Orama was there at the AEW, and it was lovely to talk with so many businesspeople; to connect with those who want to do business in Mauritius and those who do not yet know about Mauritius. I am so glad we made it this year with the whole team, they have done an excellent job, and everybody is asking why we don't have an investment in the Mauritius conference; it is something to be discussed and see what opportunities we can do to help the energy sector and to me, Mauritius is a good base to expand into Africa.

Let us talk about the AEW 2022, when you compare last year with this year, what difference did you see, and how important is an event like this to help businesses like Orama?

Keseena Chengadu: The event itself has tripled compared to last year. You can feel that people put a lot of work to make sure this event happened. It has been a good event; bringing different countries together to talk about what is happening in Africa, what is happening in the energy field, and the business structure in the different countries. Yes, Africa needs to do energy transition, but we cannot just change it like that; there is a phase, and we still have 600 million people who do not have electricity. Right now, Europe is struggling with energy, and I hope this is making them understand that this is what our people go through every day in the life. Yes, we want to do a transition, but we cannot do it overnight; we have to go through phases. We are not yet in the area of going completely renewable; maybe they can transit a bit faster than us, but we will do it a bit slower and at the pace that works for Africa.

What makes your country unique, what is so peculiar about Mauritius, and why should it be a favourite place for investment?

Keseena Chengadu: The stability of the country; economic successes, and financial success that they have had over the years. We are a small African country and the government, and the authorities have managed to make something work out of our small nature. We have learned everywhere in the world what they are doing good and what they are doing bad. We are internationally recognized as being a stable country. We had a phase where we ended up on the blacklist. We also have a good banking sector. We make it easy for businesses to take and

bring in money to the country.

Potential investors too can look at real estate. In the last ten years, the property market has skyrocketed. Last year there were nearly two hundred and fifty thousand tourists in the country; this year, there are some two hundred thousand in the first quarter alone. It is a destination where a lot of people want to come and visit, it is a destination where there is a stable economy, and the weather is good.

In terms of businesses that Orama has brought to Mauritius are there any success stories that come to mind?

Keseena Chengadu: We were recently licenced, but we have been working with management companies for a long time. This market is worth billions to Mauritius. Orama is growing significantly, and I think the African Energy Week is going to bring us more I am looking forward to telling you a better figure about that.

As the African Energy Week



Orama is growing significantly, and I think the African Energy Week is going to bring us more business ,says Keseena Chengadu seen here with her Delegation in Cape Town.

2022 comes to an end, what next for Orama?

Keseena Chengadu: We are planning to attend a conference in Angola and reach out to all the people

we have met here and see how we can assist them, and what can benefit them. We will work to ensure that our client's businesses are stable so that they can go reduce energy poverty,

and they can do everything that needs to be done to ensure that all together we are going up.

Accommodating Regulatory Environment Will Be Boon For Business In Africa-CIH's Sifiso Madungandaba

With all the variety of massive projects that have been planned, the problem has been in the implementation, and that implementation is staggered, hindered by bureaucracy, over-regulation, and corruption, says Sifiso Madungandaba Legal Counsel and Business Development Adviser for Community Investments Holdings Ltd. Fielding questions from Cape Town where he participated at the recent African Energy Week, Sifiso Madungandaba says the regulatory environment needs to be structured to be more accommodating businesses and allow the free flow of investment.

Offering his appraisal of the AEW, Sifiso Madungandaba described it as spectacular on all counts. Describing the energy challenges for the continent as enormous, Madungandaba, said all house must be on deck in the quest for solutions. It is only through



It is only through collaboration that we can move our society forward, says Sifiso Madungandaba.

collaboration that we can move our society forward, Madungandaba said.

You are the legal counsel and business development adviser for Community Investment Holdings Limited could you start by giving us an introduction to your company and what you do?

Sifiso Madungandaba: Community Investment Holdings (Pty) Ltd was established at the dawn of South Africa's democracy, with a thorough understanding and focus on the most imperative areas of economic activity. Community Investment Holdings (Pty) Ltd has moved from humble beginnings as a leading empowerment concern which has ensured the meaningful participation of historically disadvantaged persons, into a diversified conglomerate with operations in South Africa, sub-

Saharan Africa and globally.

From the onset, there has always been a deep appreciation of the need for and importance of engaging in a rigorous analysis of the identified economic sector in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the complexities and composition of the value chain within various area of economic activity. Community Investment Holdings (Pty) Ltd is a 100% black-owned conglomerate operating in six vital areas of the economy, namely: Healthcare, ICT, Logistics, Mining, Infrastructure and Power & Energy with some of our ventures including (without limitation) Afrocentric Investment Corporation, Air Liquide, Jasco, Dark Fibre Africa, Schneider Electric, Sereti Coal, Crossroads and M-Tec.

Community Investment Holding (Pty) Ltd aims to continue to explore and expand on various areas of potential collaboration and mutual value creation, as well as assessing the most effective strategy to deploy in order to utilize the collective capabilities within the CIH group to unlock synergies, grow market share and positively contribute to the level of socio-economic development in the country and on the African continent.

Are your operations limited to just South Africa or beyond?

Sifiso Madungandaba: We as Africans should not limit ourselves to those artificial boundaries that were prescribed to our forefathers and persist to this day. Our operations as a diversified conglomerate extend

beyond the borders of South Africa and stretch out to sub-Saharan Africa and globally. We aim to provide value both domestically and across the continent and believe that it is only through collaboration that we can enhance the levels of socio-economic development and diversification of African economies throughout the continent.

What makes Community Investment Holdings Limited stand out from others in the same line of business?

Sifiso Madungandaba: What is unique about our company is evidenced by our longevity; being established in 1995 as an investment firm. It is our discipline, tenacity, and ethical manner of operating the business that has ensured our continued existence for this long period.

It is our appreciation of the fact that hands must wash each other in order to succeed, that rationale has ensured that our various stakeholders and/or potential strategic partners have a well-developed understanding of the regulatory and business environment, as well possessing the requisite technical, managerial and operational capacities to effectively participate in various areas of economic activity.

It is this rationale that has allowed us to form long standing relationships with key strategic partners to ensure that mutual value is created and shared not just between the collaborative entities but also for the society and the communities that we

operate in. This rationale is deeply embedded in our modus operandi and has enabled us to remain attractive to both our domestic and international partners.

What appreciation do you make of the African Energy Week 2022?

Sifiso Madungandaba: Things have been spectacular. It was an extremely insightful and informative experience. The common narrative that I received was the need for urgency and the requirement to take action now. We need to secure our energy resources; energy security is paramount not just for the provision of lights but to truly empower societies. Over 600 million people on the continent do not have access to electricity; over 900 million do not have access to clean cooking technologies. Energy is the key facilitator for socio-economic transformation and will capacitate African nations with the means to move away from being reliant on commodities, from being a low-cost and low-value contributor to building a diversified and industrialized economies so that we can claim the position we hold in this global community that we are part of.

Based on your experiences across Africa, what are some of the common challenges that you have faced and what do you think African governments can do to facilitate the free flow of investment?

Sifiso Madungandaba: The

regulatory environment needs to be more accommodating to businesses; it needs to be structured in a manner that allows for investment and allows for operations to take place. With all the variety of massive projects that have been planned, the problem has been in the implementation, and that implementation is staggered, hindered by bureaucracy, over-regulation, and corruption. If we can operate in a more ethical and principled manner, placing our people and the delivery of services as the primary objective, I think we will be able to move way faster towards our common goal of socio-economic development, industrialization, and the diversification of our economic activities.

What is next for Community Investment Holdings after the African Energy Week, any big projects coming up?

Sifiso Madungandaba: What has been made clear, as evidenced by the experiences of some instances of loadshedding during this week; is that there needs to be a key focus in ensuring that we have the adequate generation capacity; that we have adequate transformation and distribution capacities to facilitate social and economic transformation. As Community Investment Holdings, we hope to play a significant role in contributing to the development of South Africa, the continent and of course the world.



African Petroleum Producers' Organization

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Malawi: President Lazarus Chakwera Facing Public Uproar Over Grave Corruption

By Joseph Dumbula

The leadership of President Lazarus Chakwera is embroiled in fresh calls to step down, amid growing corruption allegedly led by his ministers and inner circles, promoting Malawi's vocal civil rights campaigners to hold a vigil at the State House this month.

The fresh calls come as Malawi has reportedly been duped money amounting to US\$727,000 (K750 million) to a meat company for the procurement of fertilizer meant for under the Affordable Input Program (AIP).

The program aims to reduce poverty and ensure food security at household and national levels by increasing access to improved farm inputs.

It is widely seen a tool of ensuring that rural and low income families are food secure.

What is known until now?

Chakwera has now fired a fourth minister in a space of two years following the axing of Lobin Lowe as Minister of agriculture over Malawi's failed fertilizer purchase.

Lowe was initially relieved of duties as head of a ministerial committee that oversees the program. He has been replaced by lands minister Sam Kawale.

"By powers vested in me I have relieved Minister of Agriculture and his deputy with immediate effect, there are serious problems in the agricultural sector which need to be fixed. I am not here to serve a party, alliance or a Minister, but I am here to serve Malawians," said the President in his part of the address.

London based butchery Barkaat Food Limited was allegedly engaged by government to supply fertilizer.

Later, the Smallholder Farmers Fertilizer Revolving Fund of Malawi (SFFRM) entered into contract with Barkaat, a middleman with a production line with Yara Limited which is a well-known fertilizer



President Lazarus Chakwera has matters to address.

supplier. The contract was for 25,000 metric tonnes and Barkaat demanded an advance payment of US\$727,000 to lock the price.

After getting the payment, Barkaat cancelled the deal saying it could not deliver the fertilizer. Government said in its statement last week that it expects the money to be paid back by the end of this month.

There are also questions over the deal considering that Barkaat, which was given the US\$727,000 by Malawi, has assets worth US\$11,000 only and its business focusses on selling meat and dairy products.

In June this year, the Registrar of Companies in the United Kingdom issued a notice that Barkaat Food Limited was set to be struck off its register and dissolved not less than two months from June.

All the company's property and rights would have been transferred to the Crown and the company would not have been able to pay back money to Malawi Government had the process been completed.

However, on June 30, 2022, the Registrar of Companies in the UK

stopped the process to close down Barkaat Food Limited.

What could the impact be?

Lowe had however said before that the section of parliament that has been pushing for his sacking had personal vendetta with him.

But, the impact comes really quick and fast as Chakwera was elected in 2020 on a promise to fight corruption.

In the past, Chakwera has fired his other three ministers. The ministers were Lands Minister Kezzie Msukwa, who stands accused of profiting off land deals involving a Malawian businessman based in the United Kingdom as well as the then Labour Minister Ken Kandodo, who was accused of siphoning COVID-19 funds. Chakwera also fired Energy Minister Newton Kambala, who is accused of illegally manipulating fuel import deals, a case that is still before the courts.

The leadership has recently come under criticism from the Episcopal Conference of Malawi (ECM) and the Public Affairs Committee (PAC) which comprises church groups that

act as a government watchdog for the situation.

The ECM, which is a grouping of Catholic bishops, has vehemently accused his leadership of failing to fulfill a promise of fighting corruption and enabling prosperity.

This has been issued in a Pastoral letter titled 'A Call to Harken to The Cry of Poor Malawians' in which the bishops say the judgement of many Malawians is that the much-touted promises of change made by Tonse government are far from being realized.

"Even when such challenges as the hurricanes, Covid and the war in Ukraine are factored in, our humble but honest submission is that we have missed out on leadership to seize opportunities, policy direction and intervention critically sought for at such times. The end result seems to be a Malawi worse off than what we were promised and looked forward to in a region where most of our neighboring countries, affected by the same challenges, are registering meaningful human and economic progress," the bishops say.

Government spokesperson Gospel Kazako has however insisted that government is making headways but said that concerns raised by the Bishops will be considered.

But, Leader of opposition, Kondwani Nankhumwa has held no kind words for the leadership: "Elsewhere, heads would have rolled to show seriousness on the matter. But as usual, President Lazarus Chakwera and the responsible Minister are all sleeping and behaving like nothing has happened," said Nankhumwa.

Demonstrations at the State House.

Activist Joshua Chisa Mbele will lead people in a demonstration to take place at the State House in the capital Lilongwe on October 27 demonstrations.

Through the demos, Mbele who leads the Action Against Impunity, a network comprising Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Human Rights Defenders (HRDs), Concerned Citizens, Human Rights and Political Activists, Non- Governmental Organizations, Faith Based Organizations (FBOs), Labour Unions and University Students says they will petition Chakwera that Malawians no longer have confidence in him.

"Instead of walking the talk on the



Lobin Lowe fired for overseeing a messy affordable input program .Photo credit Ministry of Agriculture.

zero-tolerance against corruption and the promise to fix the country, the President has mastered the art of saying one thing in the public and doing exactly the opposite behind the scenes, "read part of a statement that the organizations issued.

In reaction, an eminent good governance expert- Moses Mkandawire has argued that

Chakwera needs to ensure that heads roll in this and many other corruption related cases.

According to Mkandawire, because the AIP program hovers around the Southern African nation food security situation, there is need for the presidency to ensure that no mess at all takes place.

Now, as the writing appears to be on

the wall, President Chakwera's inner circles have been attached to a series of allegations of maladministration, a situation that a wide range of political commentators believe will have a bearing in the next national polls in 2025.

What have been highlights of Chakwera warning shots

In June this year, Chakwera withheld delegated duties for Vice President Saulos Chilima and fired the head of the Malawi police in the wake of recent investigations into an alleged state capture.

The President also suspended Chief of Staff at State Residences, Prince Kapondamgaga, to pave way for investigations, and axed Inspector General of Police, George Kainja.

In September this year, the 65-year-old also assented to the Corrupt Practices (Amendment) Act 2022 and six other bills that were recently passed in the just ended parliamentary sitting.

The amendment of the Act now allows the ACB to prosecute cases without seeking consent from the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP).

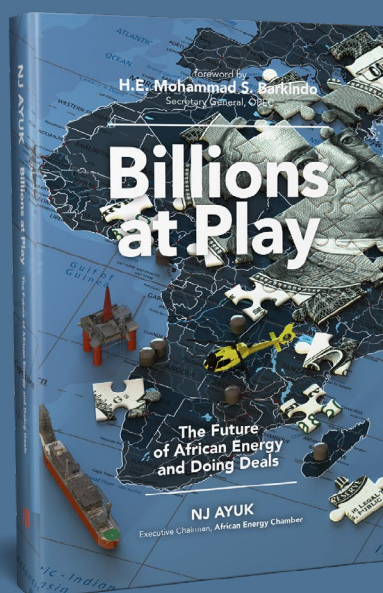


Joshua Chisa Mbele to lead vigils at the State House .Photo Credit Yoneco FM

Billions at Play

The Future of African Energy and Doing Deals

by NJ AYUK



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New Dawn for Lesotho as the Opposition Party Wins the National Election

By Prince Kurupati



A ground breaking victory for Sam Matekane.

Arguably the richest man in the Lesotho, Sam Matekane is now also the most powerful person in the country on the political front. This follows his recent victory in the country's legislative elections.

The rise of Sam Matekane to the highest political office in Lesotho is nothing short of a miracle. Matekane expressed his desire to become Lesotho's next Prime Minister just six months before election day. In the few months before the election, Matekane and his Revolution for Prosperity political party went on a massive and robust campaign countrywide which helped the 64-year-old to win the hearts of many Basotho.

On 7 October 2022, the Lesotho electoral commission announced that Matekane's Revolution for Prosperity had done the unimaginable as it won 56 out of 120 seats in parliament. The seats won by Matekane meant that he narrowly fell short of claiming an outright majority. Nonetheless, he was the undisputed frontrunner and as such, entrusted to form coalitions

with any other party in establishing a new government. Unsurprisingly, the Revolution for Prosperity party chose to form a coalition with fellow opposition parties.

Lesotho is one of the last remaining constitutional monarchs in the world. However, in recent times, anti-monarch protests have been on the rise. The country's youths have largely been at the front in calling for the abolishment of the monarchy. One of the major reasons for dissatisfaction with the monarchy being 'assertions' that the monarchy is being used as a vehicle for funnelling public funds to private use and in the process, spearheading and entrenching institutional corruption.

The All Basotho Convention party which had been in power during the past years strongly believed in the monarchy. The party's support for the monarchy proved to be a major bone of contention between it and the country's youth. The government's inability to address many other issues raised by the young

population including addressing high unemployment levels did not help matters between the two groups hence further alienating the young voters and the All-Basotho Convention.

Owing to the differences between the All Basotho Convention, many of the youths in Lesotho in the lead-up to the legislative election were on the lookout for a party which aligned with most of their views and opinions. The emergence of the Revolution for Prosperity led by a businessman who promised to turn around the country's economic fortunes brought much relief to the youths. Come election day, the youths made their voice known by overwhelmingly voting for the youngest party in the land.

In realigning the country's economic fortunes, businessman Matekane said that he would first focus on cutting government expenditure. He said that the government's resources would be channelled only to prioritised areas and sectors. "One thing for sure of the many things that we are going to do is to downsize the cabinet, and all

our members will declare their assets, including myself," Matekane said.

Soon after his electoral victory, Matekane reinforced his desire to change the country's economic fortunes stating that he would also look to stop all leakages in the financial system by clamping down on corruption. For more efficiency, he also said his new administration which he will form after establishing a coalition will have to use some personal assets as the coffers of the government are dried up. Once the coalition is formed, it will prioritise tackling crime and eradicating corruption within the (first) 100 days in office... We are taking over a bankrupt government and we will be using our personal cars and staying in our homes until things have gone back to normalcy," the new Lesotho Prime Minister said.

Despite his victory, Sam Matekane is cognisant of the fact that he must do a lot of work in restoring hope and trust in national politics. During the 7 October 2022 election, only 38% of the registered voters came out to cast their vote. Others simply chose to stay and home. This was largely necessitated by their lack of trust in politics to bring the much-desired change. Matekane, therefore, has to instil that trust back.

Matekane's electoral victory brings renewed hope to opposition parties in the southern African region that its possible to defeat revolutionary parties. Speaking soon after the announcement of the results, the main opposition leader in Zimbabwe Nelson Chamisa who is the leader of the Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) said "Congratulations to the great people of #Lesotho for choosing the new, choosing hope over familiarity. Malawi did it. Zambia did it. Lesotho has done it. Nigeria will do it. We're next. Zimbabwe we will do it! Young people shall save Africa. Play your part. Bring the change. Serve

and save our Zimbabwe. Get involved. One is more. Your voice matters. Your vote counts."

Mmusi Maimane who is the founder of the One South Africa Movement echoed the same sentiments saying, "There is a wind of democratic change in southern Africa. First, it was Malawi, then it was Zambia, and now a brand-new party in Lesotho has shaken the country. Next year it will be Zimbabwe gaining its second independence. Then in 2024, we the people of SA will remove the African National Congress."



A new dawn for politics in Lesotho. Photo credit VOA.

Five Years Of Terrorism In Mozambique

-Attackers celebrate with more aggressive incursions against foreign investment

It is five years since the first terrorist attack in the gas-rich Cabo Delgado province in northern Mozambique. The first incursion in October 2017 was characterised by assaults on public institutions, a situation that was witnessed for years afterwards, with an increase in civilian casualties. The Mozambican army tries to contain the attacks and is supported by SADC and Rwandan forces. Meanwhile, the terror continues. In October 2022, while five years of terrorism reflection was underway, the rebel group attacked a billion-dollar ruby mine owned by India's GemRock, forcing it and other surrounding mines to close down. Observers say the group's aim was to attract international attention.

By Jorge Joaquim

Terror continues in northern Mozambique, and it is now five years since the first incursion in October 2017. The rebel group with basically unknown motivations and origin is stronger, embarrassing an army made up of Mozambican, SADC and Rwandan forces and even private military companies.

On the morning of 20 October 2022, the terrorist group attacked a ruby mine in the south of Cabo Delgado, in the district of Montepuez, in the community of Namanhumbir. The target was the Gemrock company, where a vehicle was destroyed. There were no human casualties. The local population panicked and abandoned their houses to hide in the bushes.

GemRock is a mining subsidiary of Diacolor International DMCC and its portfolio consists of ruby mining licenses in Mozambique and emerald mining licenses in Colombia



and Ethiopia. Since its presence on the field in Montepuez in 2017, Gemrock has been exploring in both east and west of Gemfields's MRM license, and today has access to over 589 square kilometres of potential

ruby bearing area located within the wedge-shaped Montepuez Complex. Ten days before the attack, Gemrock announced what they called by its successful maiden auction of the finest quality, commercial

Mozambican rough rubies held at Bangkok from October 3-7. The 5-day auction, according to a press statement, witnessed a robust sentiment with buyers expressing great interest in the inventory that

was on offer.

“With over 56 buyers from in and around Asia and Europe, the maiden auction was reflective of good demand for fine-quality rubies from Mozambique,” they said. “In all 442 bids were placed,” they added saying that “buyers requested for larger quantities in the future auctions”.

These exceptional, gem-quality rubies of intense color and saturation were extracted from Montepuez district and the attacks forced GemRock to suspend its all operations, putting in doubts the company plans to have the next auction in First Quarter of 2023.

GemRock's facilities are 12 kilometres from another company, Montepuez Rubi Mining (MRM) of multinational Gemfields, which has announced the evacuation of the area and suspension of activities. The UK government portal has issued an alert in the area dedicated to travel, recommending avoiding the Montepuez area in northern Mozambique.

Gemfields' Montepuez ruby mine produced 83,990 carats of premium rubies in 2021 and has generated over \$800 million in sales since 2014. Other mining companies have been affected by the attacks.

«Pressure against ruby companies and relief from oil companies»

The attacks were previously congested in the northern part of Cabo Delgado, which led many people to seek refuge in the southern area. With these attacks in the south, people are again fleeing to other areas that are considered safer.

Observers say the attack on GemRock, days after its auction, may be part of the attackers' strategy to gain international attention as a way of showing the world that the terrorist group still exists.

The interest of the group in showing such a fact would be linked to the loss of space for action in northern Cabo Delgado, where government forces and their partners seem to have managed to disable many terrorist bases.

«The terrorist group is on the



run permanently in the face of our military response,” Mozambican President Filipe Nyusi said recently. «They are in small groups making sporadic attacks because we have managed to cut off their logistics,” he added saying that the terrorists are hungry and looking for food.

However, the group does not appear weakened. In fact it no longer operates in traditional areas such as Mocimboa da Praia and Palma where there is a strong presence of the Mozambican and foreign army. Sporadic attacks continue in the north of Cabo Delgado and with a tendency to expand to the south of the province.

The new reality, on the one hand, puts pressure on companies that exploit rubies and gold, since they are the most exploited resources in the southern zone and, on the other, relieves the oil and gas exploration companies that have billionaire investments in the northern zone of Cabo Delgado.

Oil giants such as France's Total, Italy's ENI and the US's ExxonMobil have suspended their projects in the north of the province and say they will only resume when there is security. The Mozambican President has told them that security has been restored in northern Mozambique and that they can return with work. However, the oil companies say they want full security for the province.

«Uncertain future»

Although there is partial security environment in the northern area, where gas projects are located, sporadic attacks continue and there is no certainty of plans for further major attacks in the future. Past experience indicates that attackers enter villages when least expected and have sophisticated methods of concealing heavy weaponry.

In the largest ever attack, for example, on the village of Palma in March 2021, terrorist elements were circulating in the village disguised as civilians, but they already knew where the weapons were hidden. They also knew the time and date to attack and had some kind of communication mechanism. When the day came, they went to the hideouts and took out weapons and created terror in that village.

Palma district is where the \$20bn natural gas exploration project led by TotalEnergies is located. It is Total's largest private investment in Africa, and has since been suspended due to insecurity in the region.

This uncertainty of the future may be behind the demand from oil companies who say they will only return to work when at least there is security across Cabo Delgado province. Some attacks are claimed by extremist Islamic State groups.

Recently the combined troops of the Rwandan Security Forces and Mozambique Defence Forces

(FDS) have discovered a stockpile of weapons and ammunition hidden in the forest of Mbau, southeast of Mocimboa da Praia District.

According to a statement, the operation to discover the weapons is a pre-emptive action which denies the enemy the opportunity of returning and re-equipping themselves for further insurgent actions. The arsenal includes hundreds of weapons, rockets, ammunition and cartridges.

In parallel with the deactivation of terrorist bases, many previously captured victims are returning to their communities. A vigilance alert is in place to detect possible terrorists among the people.

Recently President Filipe Nyusi pardoned 24 terrorists, in district of Memba, northern province of Nampula, who surrendered voluntarily in to government authorities in recent days. These are 23 men and one woman, mostly young people, from the districts of Memba, Nacala-Porto and Mogovolas who had left their home towns to join the terrorist groups.

It was found out that the only woman among the terrorists was in charge for logistics, including catering food and other goods. Recently, Nyusi pledged to pardon all terrorists who surrendered voluntarily to the authorities, provided they show repentance for their social reintegration.

Nyusi told the Memba population that the government is aware that some did not join the terrorist groups of their own free will hence the government and the Mozambican people should welcome them with open hands and spirit of forgiveness. He urged the population to remain vigilant and keep an eye on the social reintegration of former terrorists, and accept the return of others who are still trapped in the forests of Cabo Delgado.

The attacks have already caused the death of over 4,000 people,



most of whom civilians. On its last Nations Refugee Agency says that report on Mozambique the United nearly 1 million people have fled their homes over the last five years in Cabo Delgado as a result of violence.

Dependable Partner For Entrepreneurship In Africa With Alibaba

By Ajong Mbapndah L

Alibaba recently kicked off another edition of the Netpreneur Training Program for Africa to equip entrepreneurs and business leaders across different sectors with tangible and actionable steps they can take to advance in the digital economy.

Under the aegis of Alibaba Global Initiatives (AGI), the professional training arm of Alibaba Group launched the second class of more than 360 African entrepreneurs for its Alibaba Netpreneur Training program at a virtual opening ceremony with support from the Africa's Business Heroes prize competition, a philanthropic initiative that aims to support and inspire the next generation of African entrepreneurs.

The training seeks to equip entrepreneurs and business leaders across different sectors with tangible and actionable steps they can take to advance in the digital economy. Its launch comes after the success of the inaugural class, which graduated 70 African participants last October.

Following a rigorous selection process, the final candidates from across the African continent will embark on a series of online classes where they will delve into approaches to harnessing technology to grow their businesses within the local economy.



Alibaba Netpreneur Training

All participants are founders of their respective start-ups from industries such as agriculture, education, information & communication technology (ICT), and trading.

"We are delighted to be able to continue advancing our vision of sharing the positive impact of the digital economy with entrepreneurs and enrolling our second cohort of African participants. With companies taking to online channels to keep their business afloat during the pandemic, digitalization is no longer a foreign concept to consumers and entrepreneurs. We hope this edition of our Alibaba Netpreneur Training will help entrepreneurs in Africa develop long-term, savvy digital

strategies that will open up more opportunities for them," said Dan Liu, Senior Advisor at Alibaba Global Initiatives.

The Alibaba Netpreneur Training program is conducted online in English by certified Alibaba trainers and business leaders who have had experience leading their own digital businesses to success. Participants can deepen their knowledge and understanding of:

- The digital economy in China and the latest trends and practices shaping its development
- The journey of select traditional businesses that have successfully gone through digital

transformation

- The evolution of Alibaba's business, including the role of digital technology in supporting the growth of companies in its ecosystem
- Frameworks and approaches for building a successful and innovative business in today's digital world

Participants who complete the program will receive an e-certificate and will be eligible to join the AGI entrepreneur community. The community comprises a diverse mix of passionate and successful like-minded entrepreneurs, and provides unmatched opportunities to network, collaborate and learn.

Outstanding participants will also have the opportunity to participate in a one-week offline immersion program at Alibaba's headquarters in Hangzhou, China, subject to fulfilling the online course criteria.

The Alibaba Netpreneur Training Program was first introduced in 2019 and has successfully trained close to 1,500 entrepreneurs in Africa, Europe, Latin America as well as South and Southeast Asia since its inception.

In the follow series of interviews PAV shares more insights from management and diverse actors in program.



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Netpreneur Training Can Help Level The Playing Field For SMEs - Dan Liu, Senior Advisor AGI

By promoting a digital mindset among SMEs in Africa and providing them with guidance on how to navigate the digital era, we believe the Netpreneur training can help level the playing field for SMEs here and support them on their path of internationalization and digital transformation, says Dan Liu, Senior Advisor at Alibaba Global Initiatives.

From interactions with African trainees and collaboration with partners like the Africa's Business Heroes prize competition, there is an abundance of passionate SME leaders in Africa who are spearheading different meaningful initiatives to drive positive changes on the continent, says Dan Liu.

Could we stand with an introduction of the Alibaba Global Initiatives and the Alibaba Netpreneur Training program?

Alibaba Global Initiatives (AGI) is a professional training arm of Alibaba Group which seeks to inspire and support entrepreneurs, youth and women globally by sharing the positive impact of the digital economy in promoting inclusive development. Our programs encourage entrepreneurs to share and use digital economy tools to create a positive social impact and to collaborate with each other as well as the public sector to make a larger impact. Entrepreneurs and business leaders trained by AGI have subsequently shared their learnings with other members of their own communities.

The Alibaba Netpreneur Training program is one of our flagship training initiatives, aiming to equip entrepreneurs and business leaders from either traditional or online businesses with tangible and actionable steps they can take to harness digital technology to positively transform their businesses and the local economy. It is conducted in English by certified



Dan Liu, Senior Advisor at Alibaba Global Initiatives.

Alibaba trainers and other experts in the digital field, and each edition focuses on a cohort of participants from the same region. Through the training, participants can deepen their knowledge and understanding of the digital economy in China based on Alibaba's own entrepreneurship journey, and the role of digital technology in supporting the growth of companies. Participants who complete the program are welcome to join the AGI entrepreneur community to continuously network, collaborate and learn with like-minded entrepreneurs.

The Netpreneur program started as offline courses held in Alibaba's headquarter city of Hangzhou, China,

during which participants were able to learn from leaders from Alibaba and participants in Alibaba's digital ecosystem in person, and witness how digital technology could be applied across different business and other day-to-day scenarios. With the impact of the global pandemic, we pivoted to the online approach. While the online format makes it more challenging for us to have deep engagement with our participants, it allows us to cater to a larger number of participants – at a time when the value of digital technology is more widely recognized among businesses compared with the pre-pandemic time.

May we get some insights into

past editions of the training and the highlights of the 2022 edition that was launched recently?

We have introduced the Netpreneur program in Africa, Europe, Latin America as well as South and Southeast Asia since its inception in 2019. So far, our offline and online programs combined have graduated close to 1,900 entrepreneurs from these regions. The first Alibaba Netpreneur Training Africa Program was rolled out in 2021 with 70 participants completing the training.

The second edition of our Netpreneur Africa program, which is happening now, was kicked off on October 11 and will run through to November 10. With strong support from the Africa's Business Heroes prize competition and our local partners in Ethiopia and Rwanda, we enrolled more than 360 African entrepreneurs this time following a rigorous selection process. All participants are founders of their respective start-ups from industries such as agriculture, education, information & communication technology (ICT), and trading.

What criteria is typically used in the selection of candidates for the training?

The Alibaba Netpreneur Training program aims to nurture champions of the digital economy and enable young entrepreneurs, especially those in developing countries, to become catalysts of digital transformation in their home markets. Applications are open to founders, co-founders or business owners of any officially registered company that has been in operation for at least two years. Both digital ventures and traditional companies with a digital aspiration are welcome to enroll for the program.

While we would like to enroll as many entrepreneurs as possible, we have a selection process in place to

shortlist participants and ensure sufficient attention is given to each of them during the training. Applicants are required to fill in a detailed questionnaire during registration, following which we will assess their suitability for the program. Preference is given to mission-driven entrepreneurs who are able to demonstrate a commitment to building a strong business for lasting success and a passion for promoting progress in their home market.

From the applications and the trainings, what are some of the most common sectors applicants show interest in and which ones will you advise aspiring applicants to show interest in?

The major sectors of our program participants vary from market to market, but e-commerce and retail & distribution are among the most common ones generally speaking. Recently, participants from sectors such as local services, logistics and ICT are accounting for a bigger share of our participant base than before. In Africa, the industry mix of our participants is slightly different, with most applicants coming from the agricultural sector.

At AGI, we do not have a preference for participants from particular industries. What is more important is whether the applicants have a mission-driven mindset. We also look for individuals who are able to influence the strategic direction of their respective companies in the long term by leading digital transformation and potentially impact the local community.

In terms of geographical spread as well, could you shed light on that, is it evenly spread across the continent or there are some regions that need some catching up?

Entrepreneurs from over 30 African countries have applied for the Netpreneur program this time and most of them are located in countries in West and East Africa, including Nigeria, Kenya, Ethiopia and South

Africa. In the future, we look forward to welcoming more entrepreneurs from North and East Africa for a more balanced geographical representation.

What impact would you say the initiative and the Training program have had on the continent since inception?

Most of the participants of the Netpreneur program are small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), who are the foundation and driving force of the economy. SMEs contribute significantly to local economic growth, but they often lack access to resources and opportunities for digital development, which makes it difficult for them to compete effectively with bigger players in the global market. SMEs were also the hardest hit segment during the COVID-19 pandemic.

By promoting a digital mindset among SMEs in Africa and providing them with guidance on how to navigate the digital era, we believe the Netpreneur training can help level the playing field for SMEs here and support them on their path of internationalization and digital transformation.

From our interactions with our African trainees and collaboration with partners like the Africa's Business Heroes prize competition, we see that there is an abundance of passionate SME leaders in Africa who are spearheading different meaningful initiatives to drive positive changes on the continent. We look forward to welcoming more aspirational entrepreneurs from African SMEs to help accelerate their growth and play a part in driving the development of the African economy.

In terms of monitoring and follow up, what mechanisms do you have in place to track the progress of your alumni?

The Alibaba Netpreneur Training program aims precisely, in the long term, to create a community of entrepreneurs from all over the world with the same digital vision, encouraging them to share ideas,

skills and competences.

Those who successfully complete the training can gain access to the global alumni community of Alibaba Global Initiatives. This provides our fellows with unmatched opportunities to learn about practical cases from around the world; discuss the problems they encounter on their digital transformation journey; and engage with each other to build a collaborative network. AGI also keeps our fellows abreast of China's digital economy trends and practices by disseminating the latest news and organizing sharing by business leaders or industry watchers who have expertise in digital industries or company management.

May we know some of the serious challenges that are faced in the implementation of the initiative and Training program?

The challenge lies in how to extend our reach to and develop a program that serves the needs of the business community in Africa, which itself is a region with diverse cultures and business landscapes. Luckily, we have support from partners including the Africa's Business Heroes prize competition for the Pan-African region, as well as the Rwanda Development Board and Ethiopia's Ministry of Innovation and Technology (MinT) and Digital Transformation Ethiopia Association (DTEA). Working with these partners, which each has an established network in the local market and local insights, we were able to gain overwhelming support from entrepreneurs across Africa in terms of applications and download tips and advice on how to make the program better for our audience.

As our own community of African alumni continue to grow, we also look forward to acquiring a better understanding of the specific pain points of African entrepreneurs and develop more tailored training to assist in their transition to the digital economy.

What future do you envisage

for entrepreneurship in Africa, for the partnership that the Jack Ma Foundation as whole has with Africa through its charitable initiatives?

We envision that we can organize in-person events in Africa in the future, giving AGI alumni here an opportunity to come together, deepen their relationships, and enrich their learning journey.

With a shared goal of serving the entrepreneur community, AGI and the Africa's Business Heroes prize competition (ABH) have great synergies. For example, we can encourage our trainees to challenge themselves in the ABH competition or equip ABH's entrepreneur community with digital training. We look forward to closer collaborations with ABH to help take our participants' businesses to the next level.

Any last word to the millions of young Africans out there on the merits of entrepreneurship?

Entrepreneurs and digitalization are both foundations of economic development in the current digital age. We are excited to see that a lot of African entrepreneurs already recognize the need and value of digitalization, as demonstrated by the overwhelming support from applicants of our latest Alibaba Netpreneur Training Africa Program.

Yet from our experience, many entrepreneurs struggle to complete the digital transformation process as it involves not just partial deployment of digital technology, but changes in people's mindset and a company's internal processes – starting with identifying your mission and vision. To actually thrive in the digital age requires a winning combination of breaking out of your comfort zone and taking advantage of resources available such as news updates, leadership training and networking opportunities to gain new insights. The good thing is that there are innumerable learning opportunities for entrepreneurs aspiring to thrive in the digital world. We just have to go and grab it.

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	ACTIVITY	STARTING	COUNT	ON-HAND	
fate 60 mg TAB 25	Dispensed	630	-100	530	***
ug/h PATCH 0378-9127-98	Dispensed	20	-20	40	***
Today, 14:09 Anastasia S.	Fentanyl 87.5 ug/h PATCH 0378-9127-98	Received	30	30	60 ***
Today, 13:45 Jeff M.	Oxycodone HCL and APAP 2.5/300 mg TAB 72245-193-03	Lost/Stolen	15	-15	0 ***

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Exciting Times At Moneymart- Ethel Mupambwa, Co-Founder and Executive Director

At the moment MoneyMart Finance (MMF) is doing very well and it is truly living up to the expectations that I had when joined the African business competition back in 2020, says Ethel Mupambwa, Co-Founder and Executive Director.

“Our success has largely been due to my participation in the African Business Heroes Prize competition, the training we received from it, and that we received from the Alibaba Netpreneur Training organized by Alibaba Global Initiatives, because these opportunities have opened so many doors than I could ever have imagined,” says Ethel Mupambwa

May we know how Moneymart is doing at the moment, is it living up to expectations or the vision you had in mind and any figures to back that up?

Ethel Mupambwa: At the moment MoneyMart Finance (MMF) is doing very well and it is truly living up to the expectations that I had when joined the Africa's business competition back in 2020. On pitching during ABH I was looking at turning this business into a digital tech organisation where services can be accessed via USSD or through a MoneyMart Application which we've managed to do. For us the year has been so great and when we compared 2020, 2021 and 2022, the numbers of our 2022 revenue exceeded the full 2021 year in terms of figures.

To elaborate a bit: -

- Our 2021 income grew by 976.8% compared to 2020.
- In the first half of 2022, income grew to a total of \$0.99 million which is 26% increase from the \$268,499.00 attained in the first half of 2021, and 8% over and above the 2021 annual income.
- Overall profit margin year to date rose from 18.9% in 2020 to 37% in 2021. This can be attributed to expansion with more branches



Our success has largely been due to my participation in the Africa's Business Heroes Prize competition, says Ethel Mupambwa.

being opened.

- MMF now has 16 branches across Zimbabwe from the 5 branches in 2020.
- Loan book to date grew to \$1,100,000 from \$76,920 as of 31st December 2020 which is a 1,330% increase.
- The number of our active clients has increased from 1,232 to 5,860 to date.

How much of its success is attributed to the 2020 ABH Prize Competition that you were a second runner up to, and also the AGI's eFounders / Netpreneur Training that you were part of?

Ethel Mupambwa: The success of MoneyMart Finance is heavily due to the win of Africa's Business Heroes (ABH) Prize Competition in 2020. My company was hit hard by the aftereffects of covid-19 just like it was for so many businesses. We therefore needed to rebuild our systems and structures to be able to match the needs of our clients and

existing contracts. We needed to help our clients especially as most of them were home and not earning any revenue during the pandemic times in most part of 2020, and since we deal mostly with women in the formal sector, the ABH prize money really helped us support many of them. As a result, we gained so much trust from our clients and as a result it increased our client base in the long run especially as they knew we are reliable regardless hard economic times. Many people were testifying about the goodness and reliability of MMF and advocating to others to join us. In 2021 we became a big brand name because of all this.

In line with our vision mission and values, the strategic planning made my team and myself to fit in with the new mode of doing business. I therefore conclude that our success has largely been due to my participation in the Africa's Business Heroes Prize competition, the training we received from it, and that we received from the Alibaba Netpreneur Training organized by

Alibaba Global Initiatives, because these opportunities have opened so many doors than I could ever have imagined. I can't thank the entire team at Jack Ma Foundation's ABH initiative, as well as the team running the Alibaba Netpreneur Training enough. May God reward each and every one abundantly.

What are some of the challenges that Moneymart has been facing despite the progress?

Ethel Mupambwa: One of the major challenges that we've been facing is raising funds for the growth of the business and ensuring that we have sufficient capital to sustain all our business activities for instance marketing to ensure continuous growth. Thanks to ABH competition and Alibaba's Netpreneur training which has enlightened us, mentored us, and connected us to wider networks that have enabled us to come up with potential solutions to the challenges we have been facing.

The other major challenge we had before ABH was securing partnerships

with bigger institutions as most of them were asking what value we can bring to them, but from the ABH competition and Alibaba training we are now viewed as a big institution, with great value – something that has reduced this challenge of securing partnerships and we are making steady progress.

In terms of mentorship, what are some of the success tips that can be shared with some of the younger entrepreneurs who want to emulate your example?

Ethel Mupambwa: I always say to young entrepreneurs that fortune knocks at the door of those who are brave and prepared. If you're not brave enough, it will shy away from you, so you need to pull up your sleeves and go out there. Be brave to knock at those big doors and to put your name where big people are putting their names. We all have something we can contribute to humanity. For any business to thrive, it has to be making an impact to society. Always think around challenges people are facing and what you can do as an entrepreneur to solve these challenges. The moment you strike that light which is being switched off in society, everyone will be excited about your innovation and trust that you can win. Look for that dark part in the community and be a source of solutions to it.

My last tip is don't forget to pray. I'm a strong believer in God and I know He has big plans for us if we believe and have enough faith in Him. Whatever you do, pray for God's mercy and guidance. Be patient as you pray and continue to do your honest part. When we put God first, plan, work hard and smart, God will



MoneyMart Finance is doing very well, and it is truly living up to the expectations that I had when joined the African business competition back in 2020, says Ethel Mupambwa

grant us what is meant to be for us.

How is the investment climate like in Zimbabwe today and any recommendations on what the government could do to enable talented youth to thrive?

Ethel Mupambwa: Our investment climate in Zimbabwe today is not yet really favourable as a country, but even amidst the existing economic challenges, Zimbabwe is making progress, getting into regional investments and even consulting

from other countries. Zimbabwe is a highly recommendable country for investments mainly because there are so many opportunities one can reap from here. My recommendation to the government is to invest in the Youth and in youth initiatives especially as they are the future generation and make up over 65% of the population.

Zimbabwean youth are talented and innovative. With dedicated mentorship they can change the country in a very short time. I urge the government to build a youth

hub whereby young people can be trained, mentored, advised and funded. The government should build more capital bases to support young people's innovations just like what you see in some developed countries. The government needs to understand, nurture and support the youth to enable them to realise their dreams especially as they make up majority of the population. I strongly believe that once youth are supported, Zimbabwe will be a better country and will realise accelerated economic development.

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Today, 14:12 by Jeff M.

76045-010-10

Hydromophone Hydrochloride 2 mg/mL INJ SOL

Amended: 50 Dispensed: 500

Starting Count	After Dispensing (Amended)
5,000	4,550
Original Count	Amended Count
500	50
Rx Number	Patient
1568537-09710	Caleb Montrose
Reason	Alibi
Recorded incorrect quantity	Jeff M.
Yesterday, 11:53 by Anastasia S.	Yesterday, 11:53

Recent Activity

for Hydromophone Hydrochloride 2 mg/mL INJ SOL

RECORDED	ACTIVITY	STARTING	COUNT
Today, 15:53 Anastasia S.	Dispensed	630	100
Today, 14:12 Jeff M.	Dispensed	20	20
Tues, 14:09 Anastasia S.	Received	30	30
Jun 2, 13:45 Jeff M.	Lost/Stolen	15	15
May 27, 11:01 Jeff M.	Amended	15	15

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Taking On the Food Security Challenge- Flavien Kouatcha Simo, Managing Partner of Save Our Agriculture

In a continent experiencing galloping demography, if we want to ensure that we continue to feed everyone, we will have to find effective ways to produce more and better, says Flavien Kouatcha Simo as he explains the mission of Save Our Agriculture. The ABH 2022 Top 10 Finalist and participant in 2022 Alibaba Netpreneur Training, says the initiatives by the Jack Ma Foundation and Alibaba Group are an indescribable opportunity for any young African, as they provide practical and concrete knowledge of entrepreneurship, and often as is the case with ABH, funding and valuable exposure that can only be productive for business.

Fabien, Could You Introduce Save Our Agriculture Sarl For Us And What Prompted Its Creation?

Flavien Kouatcha Simo: Save Our Agriculture is a company created with the aim of providing a solution to a problem faced by many small farmers in the rural area, in particular that of the inconsistency between food supply and demand. Indeed, we have designed and patented aquaponic units that allow the use of fish waste as natural fertilizer to grow organic vegetables, with many economic, social and environmental advantages that make it a very current solution at a time when climate change affects the extent of the planet intensively.

What impact do you think structures like Save Our Agriculture Sarl and others are having on the agricultural



Putting innovation at the service of more productive, more sustainable, more responsible agriculture is our mission, says Flavien Kouatcha Simo.

industry in Cameroon?

Flavien Kouatcha Simo: It is not only in Cameroon but in all the countries of the African continent where the observation is practically the same. We live on a continent that is experiencing galloping demography (the population will have doubled in less than 30 years) while expanses of arable land are increasingly rare. Therefore, if we want to ensure that we continue to feed everyone, we will have to find effective ways to produce more and better. This is

where companies like ours come in, with the aim of putting innovation at the service of more productive, more sustainable, more responsible agriculture.

As a top 10 finalist of 2022 Africa's Business Heroes (ABH) Prize Competition, can you share your experiences with ABH, and the important lessons you have so far taken from the competition?

Flavien Kouatcha Simo: This is

not the first competition I have entered as an entrepreneur, but I can say without a doubt that ABH is a competition that takes you from one stage to another. It is not only for the prestige of the competition whose reputation is now talked about in the four corners of the continent. The profiles of the expert judges who intervene from the first phases of selection, quality of their feedbacks or even the fundamental elements for the growth of a company such as PwC's due diligence, have enabled us to learn a lot about ourselves and our company. It changed our relationship with the company, gave us a better idea of the potential for progress. Finally, the best gift we have received from this competition is the network. Whatever expertise you are looking for, it is there. Being part of the same ecosystem as the brilliant entrepreneurs of previous editions is something that cannot be bought.

What are some of the challenges that you have faced in growing Save our Agriculture?

Flavien Kouatcha Simo Our first challenge was human capital. We are in a field that is not yet sufficiently popularized in our environment. So, we had to train ourselves and strengthen the capacities of our employees, mostly online. Secondly, the financial resource, because we initially positioned ourselves in the individual segment which requires a high investment from the outset, whereas we are in an environment with very low purchasing power and no possibility of setting up payment mechanisms supported by banking

institutions.

To the many unemployed out there in Cameroon who neglect Agriculture, what message do you have for them on potentials the sector has to change their lives?

Flavien Kouatcha Simo I would not like to enter into purely commercial speeches because it is true that it has requested effort and sacrifice to find myself here today. But agriculture is the only sector that can effectively recruit in Africa. We must commit ourselves to it with a firmness and a passion that forces fate. Always plan our projects in their greatest aspect, and develop them gradually, being aware that there will be a difference between what we plan to do and the actual result.

You are currently taking part in training on Digital Economy by Alibaba Global Initiatives, what does this mean for you and how do you think the experience will help Save Our Agriculture?

Flavien Kouatcha Simo: Today, we have developed a technically successful, economically profitable and socially useful product, which



We have developed a technically successful, economically profitable and socially useful product, which has proven its replicability potential, says Flavien Kouatcha Simo.

has proven its replicability potential. The training in digital economy that we are taking aims to give us the keys and tools that can accelerate the growth and adoption of our product in our country at first, then in other countries on the African continent.

We've discovered the history of the Alibaba group, how and why all its companies were created, the difficulties the founders went through and the tools they used to get by.

How do you think initiatives

like the ABH and now Alibaba Global Initiatives are changing the entrepreneurial landscape especially for young Africans? Any message you want to send to its organisers and management?

Flavien Kouatcha Simo: If there is one thing that I regret in our society, particularly in French-speaking Africa, it is that many people do not share their experiences. Whether they succeeded or failed, it is useful to talk about what happened, how they handled the situations they went through and what could have changed according to the different parameters that may be at their disposal. Young people are invited to embark on entrepreneurship but without really knowing how to proceed. The initiatives by the Jack Ma Foundation and Alibaba Group are an indescribable opportunity for any young African, as they provide practical and concrete knowledge of entrepreneurship, and often as is the case with ABH, funding and valuable exposure that can only be productive for business.



We must commit ourselves to agriculture with a firmness and a passion that forces fate, says Flavien Kouatcha Simo.

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Believing in an African child's dream is a big investment you can give to any country- Mampho Sotshongaye

Believing in an African child's dream is a big investment you can give to any country, says Mampho Sotshongaye, Founder Golden Rewards 1981cc. The ABH Local connect lead for Southern Africa (from South Africa); ABH 2020 Top 20 finalist and participant in 2022 Alibaba Netpreneur Training says the commitment and willingness of the Jack Ma Foundation and Alibaba Group to help African entrepreneurs has given her and many others the platforms to empower others.

Could we start with an introduction of your company Golden Rewards 1981cc?

Mampho Sotshongaye: Golden Rewards 1981 cc is a Construction Company founded by myself in 2010, we are based in Cape Town, South Africa. The company employs 118 people of which 90% are from disadvantaged communities. We specialize in Road Maintenance and Construction. Even though our primary focus is on maintenance of major national routes, provincial routes and municipal roads, our expertise extends to other Civil Engineering Construction projects. We pride ourselves with high standard construction and maintenance techniques.

What are some of the success stories you can share with us about the country, what difference has it or how successful has it been in fulfilling the vision that led to its creation?

Mampho Sotshongaye: As a young girl from poor rural areas of South Africa I always dreamed of making a positive impact that will benefit everyone and not discriminate people by their gender, colour or religion.



Believing in an African child's dream is a big investment you can give to any country, says Mampho Sotshongaye.

Being recognized in my country and to the world as one of the people who are contributing to job creation and empowerment is very fulfilling.

To name the few our successful and awards

1. Eskom BIC overall winner 2021
2. Africa's Business Heroes 2021 Top 20
3. 2021 BRICS Women Innovation Contest Recognition

4. Africa's Business Heroes Community Connect Lead for South Africa

How useful has the experience you garnered in the 2020 ABH Prize Competition helped in making you and the company attain your goals?

Mampho Sotshongaye: Being part of Africa's Business Heroes has been an amazing journey. I have grown as a person and seeing business goals that

I thought were unreal coming together is mind blowing. I took all the feedback from the competition and made big changes for the benefit of the business.

You are part of the ABH Participants taking part in training on Digital Economy by Alibaba Global Initiatives, what are your expectations, and would this help you in pushing Golden Rewards forward?

Mampho Sotshongaye: Entrepreneurship is a very lonely journey and being part of the programme will afford us opportunity to be better. Entrepreneurs fail because of lack of knowledge, unwilling to take risks, no support and competitive drive. I am hoping to redefine who Golden Rewards is, what we stand for and what makes us stand out from the rest.

What are some of the challenges you have face in building and growing Golden Rewards?

Mampho Sotshongaye: As a woman in an industry that is known as male dominated industry, I have faced many challenges, being rejected and undermined. As an Emerging Contractor we also struggle with access to finance as we need resources to compete in a bigger scale.

Any words of advice or success tips to young South Africans who may want to emulate the success story that you are?

Mampho Sotshongaye: I would suggest aspiring entrepreneurs in my country to listen to how Alibaba was started and the challenges they faced. One person had a dream like all of us and when you believe in it, no one can stop you. Challenges will not go away but your perseverance will attract people will contribute to your dreams.



Golden Rewards 1981cc prides itself with high standard construction and maintenance techniques, says Mampho Sotshongaye.

Nothing comes easy be willing to make sacrifices for your vision.

As for the ABH and Alibaba Global Initiatives, any message you want to share on that and their leadership on the opportunities young Africans are getting from them?

Mampho Sotshongaye : Believing in an African child's dream is a big investment you can give to any country. The commitment and willingness of the Jack Ma Foundation and Alibaba Group to help African entrepreneurs has given many of us platforms to empower others. May their leadership continue to grow in strength, as we also continue to impact more people in our communities by giving back.



Being recognized in my country and to the world as one of the people who are contributing to job creation and empowerment is very fulfilling, says Mampho Sotshongaye.

New Horizons In View With Netpreneur Training- Violet Amoabeng, Founder and CEO, Skin Gourmet

Violet Amoabeng, Founder and CEO, Skin Gourmet – ABH 2021 Top 10 finalist (from Ghana) and a participant in 2022 Alibaba Netpreneur Training, says the timing is crucial especially with the world still suffering from the aftereffects of the COVID -19 pandemic.

“Ghana especially is also suffering from a serious economic slump and therefore access to the worldwide market has never been more important than now to ensure our growth and survival,” Violet Amoabeng says.

You are one of the ABH Participants Taking Part in Training on Digital Economy by Alibaba Global Initiatives what does this mean for you and how would it impact the fortunes of Skin Gourmet?

Violet Amoabeng: At Skin Gourmet, we make raw handmade skincare sourced from the wild of Ghana and it is so pure you can eat it. Dealing with a product and not a service based in Ghana it is extremely important for us to reach the global marketplace. The Alibaba Global Initiatives program teaches and equips us on how to make



Access to the worldwide market has never been more important than now to ensure our growth and survival, says Violet Amoabeng .

going beyond your home market possible with digital channels. The timing is crucial especially when the world is still suffering from the aftereffects of COVID-19.

Ghana especially is also suffering from a serious economic slump and therefore access to the worldwide market has never been more important than now to ensure our growth and survival. This translates not only into sales and revenue for Skin Gourmet but also into the preservation and promotion of economic growth and the creation of decent jobs in Ghana and Africa (UN Sustainable development Goals No. 8).

The last time we spoke with you in 2021, you were a top ten finalist of the ABH Prize Competition, what are some of the significant changes that have taken place with your general perspective to entrepreneurship and to Skin Gourmet?

Violet Amoabeng: Since the last time I was interviewed I am even more empowered in my quest to build a successful business and even more aware of the impact of Skin Gourmet and its survival has on Ghana as a

nation. It is even more clear to me that this is beyond me. I always knew that entrepreneurship was about the creation of value, but the definition of value is even further deepened. The Alibaba Global Initiatives program re-enforces the fact that the best way for a business to overcome economic hurdles is through tying its interest with the interests of the community. Even though our business belongs to individuals its impact far outreaches any one individual. Business is the vehicle to economic growth and the answer to world hunger, poverty and growing beyond aid. As such, in these difficult times, it is necessary we step up to the plate and we define resilience so that what we learn and take advantage of the opportunities presented by the times. This means paying attention and using the tools such as data, artificial intelligence and analysing the marketplace to understand where we fit when it comes to adding value to the life of the consumer.

The fairy tale story line about Violet Awo Amoabeng is that she started skin Gourmet with GHS 145 (US \$ 45.00) and it is now distributed in over 17 different countries, how much of this success is as a result of your own business acumen, and how much



The Alibaba Global Initiatives program teaches and equips us on how to make going beyond your home market possible with digital channels, says Violet Amoabeng.

credit goes to diverse trainings and experience with the ABH and others?

Violet Amoabeng: Interesting question – let's put it this way: I am not a businessperson. I created this business to make an impact on the lives of those we impacted. ALL THE CREDIT goes to those who helped our business, all those who believed in our vision and in our dreams. All the credit goes to those who understood the drive and decided to help us understand what that meant and through their experience and success taught us, invested in us, and trained us and even when times were tough, they helped us hold our organization together. All the credit goes to our mentors,

organizations and individuals who have believed in us.

What are some of the significant challenges you have faced?

Violet Amoabeng: When it comes to challenges, I would have to say the hardest one to overcome was my own mindset and perspective. Understanding that there is a solution for everything, and every challenge is just an opportunity disguised as an insurmountable obstacle.

I would love to blame external factors, but I think the hardest to overcome are the internal ones that dwell in my own mind.

How is the business climate like in Ghana and beyond Ghana, what are

some of the African countries you have found it easy for your business to thrive in?

Violet Amoabeng: The business climate in Ghana is very difficult and I would say that for Africa in general. I have not found it easy to do business anywhere in Africa. But by God's grace, we have a lot of help; for example – the Alibaba Global Initiatives program and of course AFRICA'S BUSINESS HEROES!

For other young Ghanaians and Africans who see in you a role model, what are some of the success tips that you can share with them?

Violet Amoabeng: I think I have only one TIP:

When you feel like giving up, when it seems impossible – remember there is nothing that is impossible. Shift your angle of approach, ask for help, seek insight and different perspectives. You may lose many battles but don't give up on the war. Change the strategy to win the war and learn and appreciate all your losses so you learn and grow from them. No matter how hard it is (and it is harder than you can ever imagine!) keep trying, keep getting back up and get friends who understand your journey, so they help you along the way. Where there is a willingness – there is a way. You just need to find it.



From modest beginnings, Skin Gourmet is now distributed in some 17 countries.



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A Movement On Course From The African Energy Week

A fun filled concert to welcome delegates to the event, an opening session with a crowd that the spacious venue was unable to contain, the participation of two Presidents, over a dozen government Ministers, the presence of power players from the four corners of the globe, fiery speeches, block buster deals and more—summed up the African Energy Week 2022 in Cape Town. PAV shares some of the photos from the event which lived up to its billing as the continent's premier energy event.









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Zimbabwe Emerging As Leading Wheat Producer in Southern Africa

By Kestér Kenn Klomegâh

Located in the southern part of Africa, Zimbabwe is emerging as a leading wheat producer in the region. While many African countries are vulnerable to the impact of Russia-Ukraine crisis, uncertain when wheat will be delivered from the ports of Russia and Ukraine, Zimbabwe has intensified efforts in redirecting and mobilizing resources for cultivating wheat and other agricultural produce for the population - an import substitution measure that has won praise these few months.

Large parts of Zimbabwe are covered by forests with abundant wildlife, but the local farmers are utilizing the savanna lands combined with the subtropical climate for grains production in efforts to overcome food supply problems caused by the war in Ukraine. Zimbabwe will now boast of its biggest wheat harvest in history.

Like other African countries, Zimbabwe has for decades relied on imports to offset low local production. After Russia's invasion of Ukraine resulted in global shortages and price hikes, the country wanted to ensure «self-sufficiency at all costs,» Deputy Agriculture Minister Vangelis Haritatos told The Associated Press in October.

The country expects to harvest 380,000 tons of wheat, «which is 20,000 more than we require as a country,» Haritatos said. That is up from about 300,000 tons produced last year. «We are most likely to get the highest tonnage since 1962, when wheat was first introduced to Zimbabwe. A lot of countries are facing shortages, but the opposite is happening in Zimbabwe,» Haritatos said.

While other hunger-stricken African countries are struggling with reduced wheat imports due to the war in Ukraine, Zimbabwe is looking at using its anticipated surplus of the grain to build «a small strategic



Farmers displaying a harvest at a farm in Bindura, Zimbabwe. Photo credit AP.

reserve» for the first time in its history, agriculture minister Anxious Masuka told journalists earlier in October. This would cushion Zimbabwe against future shocks.

Masuka said Zimbabwe plans to bump up wheat production to about 420,000 tons next season, giving the country room to keep building its strategic reserve and become an exporter of the grain. Wheat is Zimbabwe's most important strategic crop after corn.

African countries - which imported 44% of their wheat from Russia and Ukraine between 2018 and 2020, according to U.N. figures - were hit hard by the global shortages and price hikes of grains as a result of the war. The African Development Bank has reported a 45% increase in wheat prices on the continent.

African nations were at the center of Western efforts to reopen Ukraine's ports as the United States and allies accused Russia of starving the world by denying exports from Ukraine, a key global grain exporter. African leaders also visited Russia to

meet with Putin over the issue.

Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa in April described the war in Ukraine as a «wake-up call» for countries to grow their own food. The answer in Zimbabwe has been to empower local farmers, said Haritatos, the Deputy Agriculture Minister.

That included roping in hundreds of small-scale, rural farmers to start growing a crop that was traditionally reserved for large-scale commercial farmers, improving water supply infrastructure and distributing fertilizers to small-scale farmers as well as increasing private-sector participation. The crop was introduced for the first time to areas and farmers who had never grown wheat before.

Winter corn production has given way to wheat in many areas, with Zimbabwe banking on corn reserves to meet demand for the staple food. Land used for growing wheat increased from 66,000 hectares (163,089 acres) in 2021 to 75,000 hectares this year and will grow to

100,000 hectares next season.

«A lot of countries discount small-scale farmers because they are so small that individually they cannot effect much change,» Haritatos said. «But we organized them into clusters and convinced them that it was possible. The quality of most of their crops is premium.» He said the war in Ukraine had made Zimbabwe «realize that we shouldn't rely on other countries for food that we can grow on our own.»

In a widely acknowledgement the Russia-Ukraine crisis has shattered global economy. It has created instability especially in terms of soaring food prices and consequently leaves indelible impacts on Africa. One fundamental effect is that economic gains recorded previously are being eroded by the Covid-19 and Russia-Ukraine crisis in Africa.

With this rising uncertainty, at least, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki; President of Guinea-Bissau and Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States

(ECOWAS), Umaro Sissoco Embalo, and BRICS member and South African President, Cyril Ramaphosa attempted to hold diplomatic talks with President Vladimir Putin.

More than half of the African continent remains indifferent and consistently complain of the effects of the crisis in the light of mounting tension among the population. The common message, in this challenging and critical moment, relates adopting dialogue to end the crisis. It further relates, within the international law, respect for territorial sovereignty.

Significant to note that during business conference held at the Atlantic Council's Africa Center on April 22, African Development Bank Group President Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, speaking as a guest of the Washington, DC, US-based think tank, called for import

substitution policies and support for increasing domestic production.

Adesina said Africa must rapidly expand its production to meet food security challenges. «The African Development Bank is already active

in mitigating the effects of a food crisis and ready to provide African countries with the resources needed to raise local food production and procure fertilizer. My basic principle is that Africa should not be begging.

We must solve our own challenges ourselves without depending on others.»

With the advice given by the chief of the African Development Bank, now Zimbabwe is emerging and leading in its biggest harvest of wheat without a begging bowl, has adopted an import substitution measure that would save the national coffers and cut import expenditure.

The country is very rich in mineral resources and is the largest trading partner of South Africa on the continent of Africa. As a member of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), Zimbabwe is a landlocked country located in Southeast Africa, and shares borders with South Africa, Botswana, Zambia and Mozambique.



Deputy Agriculture Minister Vangelis Haritatos

Lifting Of Ban On GMO Crops In Kenya Attracts Opposition

By Samuel Ouma

The Kenyan government is receiving criticism over the reversal of a ban on genetically modified crops, famously known as GMOs.

In a cabinet meeting on October 3, 2022, President William Ruto's administration lifted the ban that had been in place for ten years. The decision was reached in accordance with the Task Force to Review Matters Relating to Genetically Modified Foods and Food Safety's recommendation and in compliance with the Kenya Biosafety Authority's

guidelines on all applicable international treaties, including the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (CPB).

«In accordance with the recommendation of the Task Force to

Review Matters Relating to Genetically Modified Foods and Food Safety, and in fidelity with the guidelines of the National Biosafety Authority on all applicable international treaties including the Cartagena Protocol

on Biosafety (CPB), Cabinet vacated its earlier decision of November 8, 2012, prohibiting the open cultivation of genetically modified crops and the importation of food crops and animal feeds produced through

biotechnology innovations; effectively lifting the ban on Genetically Modified Crops. By dint of the executive action, open cultivation and importation of White (GMO) Maize is now authorized,» reads the statement from the cabinet's office.

Kenya said the ban is a response to the ongoing drought that has caused acute food shortages for both people and animals. The drought was occasioned by the failure of rains for four consecutive seasons, imposing at least four million people to famine.

Farmers will now be able to plant and import biotechnology-derived food crops, and animal feeds as a result of the decision.

However, the move has attracted opposition from activists, agricultural lobby groups, and politicians over



President William Ruto's administration lifted the ban that had been in place for ten years.

the safety of GM foods. Several civil society groups led by the Biodiversity and Biosafety Association of Kenya and the Consumer Grassroots Association have protested the decision, noting the public was not consulted.

They also raised concerns over the socio-economic effects of GMO food and crops, the lack of capacity of the National Biosafety Authority to regulate GMOs, safety concerns and consumer preferences, and public deception and misinformation.

«The Cabinet disregarded the fundamental precautionary principle and acted in utter contempt of the interests of farmers, food consumers, and the overall public,» said Eustace Kiarii, CEO of Kenya Organic Agriculture Network.

They demand that the ban be reinstated, and that the government hold an inclusive, participatory process, protect indigenous seeds and provide assistance to farmers, review biosafety policy and regulatory framework, make all economic and technological agreements public, and launch public awareness campaigns across the country.

Consequently, they are advocating for transparency in economic partnership and technology transfer agreements and rolling out of public awareness campaigns to inform the public about the pros and cons associated with GM foods. They threatened to go to court should the government fail to address their concerns.

«The solutions will include putting in place safeguards to protect millions of producers and consumers who do not embrace the technology. Knee-jerk reactions to structural food system challenges will not work,» said Anne Marina, Coordinator at the Biodiversity and Biosafety Association of Kenya.

The opposition leader Raila Odinga also criticized the attempt to use GMO food to lessen ravaging drought,



We believe introducing them into Kenya in the current state of international uncertainty is to use Kenyans as guinea pigs, says Raila Odinga. Photo credit Ondari Ogega, Nation Media Group.

saying the introduction of GMOs is tantamount to using Kenyans as test subjects.

Odinga wants the government to explain to Kenyans the rationale behind the rush to reverse the 2012 directive that stopped the importation and open cultivation of GO's due to concerns about the health risks of GMO foods and insufficient studies on their effects on small-scale farmers and the local food markets.

«We believe introducing them into Kenya in the current state of international uncertainty is to use Kenyans as guinea pigs, which we shall not allow. Even the poor and the hungry ought to have their rights and dignity protected,» reiterated Odinga.

The ODM party leader questioned the lifting of the GMO restriction in Kenya, even though they remain illegal in scientifically sophisticated countries like France, Germany, Austria, Greece, Hungary, and the Netherlands.

«They are banned in many scientifically advanced economies like France, Germany, Austria,

Greece, Hungary, the Netherlands, Latvia, Lithuania, and Luxembourg. Bulgaria, Poland, Denmark, Malta, Slovenia, Italy, and Croatia. Why Kenya?» asked the former Prime Minister.

The AU special envoy claims that the only way to save Kenyans from the severe drought is to have a clear plan for increasing water access to improve irrigation in the erratic climate, improving infrastructure to make it easier to access markets, improving agricultural extension assistance programs, and encouraging special interest groups like children, women, and people with disabilities to work in agriculture.

Odinga's sentiments were echoed by the former Kenyan vice president Kalonzo Musyoka. The Wiper Party boss stated that GMO food will present problems when exporting Kenyan agricultural output to neighboring nations because the majority do not support the production of GMO foods. He advised the government to reconsider its stance on the issue, claiming that while GMO goods will

lessen food shortages in the country, citizens will suffer adverse health repercussions in the long term.

«When the President was Minister for Agriculture, he vehemently opposed GMOs as I am... I'm calling on William to reconsider lifting the ban for the sake of this country,» Kalonzo said.

Many African governments have banned genetically modified agriculture due to worries about the possible harm it could cause to smallholder farms, existing crops, the environment, and people's long-term health.

Kenya will now be the 11th country in Africa growing GM crops beside South Africa, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Sudan, Mozambique, Niger, Ghana, Rwanda, Zambia, and Nigeria. The East African nation banned GMO foods in 2012 following a study by French scientist Gilles-Eric Seralini that linked genetically modified foods to cancer, which led to bans on importing and cultivating GM organisms in several countries.



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Worst Famine in 50 Years Plunges Somalia into a Humanitarian Crisis

By Prince Kurupati

Some of the most 'iconic' humanitarian photos that have been taken come from Somalia. Photos of malnourished children suffering from kwashiorkor dominated most humanitarian sections of media platforms for long. However, in the past years, it seemed that things were moving in a different and positive direction in the country. That hope however is quickly dissipating by the day as Somalia is set to experience its worst famine in half a century.

The situation in Somalia is already dire according to the United Nations. Just to illustrate how dire the situation is, the UN states that every minute, a child is admitted for medical treatment for malnutrition in Somalia. The UN estimates that 7.8 million people which is roughly half of the country's population are affected by drought and at least 213,000 are at risk of famine.

James Elder who is the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) spokesman said that "Things are bad and every sign indicates that they are going to get worse... Without greater action and investment, we are facing the death of children on a scale not seen in half a century." In August alone, Elder reports that 44,000 children were admitted to hospitals for severe acute malnutrition. He said these statistics mean that a child is being admitted per minute. As children suffering from malnutrition are 11 times likelier to die from other diseases including measles and diarrhoea, the risk of high fatalities in the country is very high.

Elder advised the world that it would be wrong if they use recent droughts in Somalia as forecasters for the looming famine. "When people speak of the crisis facing Somalia today, it has become common for frightful comparisons to be made with the famine of 2011, when 260,000 people died... However, everything I am hearing on the ground – from nutritionists to pastoralists – is that



The situation in Somalia is already dire according to the United Nations. Photo credit Washington Post.

things today look worse. In 2011, after three failed rains, the affected population was half of what it is now, and the overall conditions – rain and harvest – were on the mend... Today, it's been four failed rains, the forecast for the fifth rains is looking pretty grim, and the affected population is twice the size of 2011."

The UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is already busy gathering contributions to be channelled towards the alleviation of famine in Somalia. At the start of the year, OCHA had projected to source \$1.46 billion which would help 5.5 million Somalis but it has since revised the figures and is now looking to gather \$2.26 billion which will help 7.6 million people. A spokesman for OCHA said they are already disbursing the funds to help the citizens as "famine is projected in Baidoa and Burhakaba districts in Bay Region between this month and December if humanitarian assistance does not reach people most in need".

Many aid agencies though hoping that a famine declaration won't be made, indications on the ground

are not positive. According to the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS-NET) a famine declaration is made under the following extreme conditions: when a full third of a region's children are severely malnourished, a fifth of the population has no access at all to food and there are two hunger-related deaths per 10,000 people each day.

Though the situation is severely dire, aid agencies are concerned that the looming famine hasn't been publicised, something which may hinder the pooling of resources on a global stage. Time Magazine states that over 70% of U.S. citizens are not aware of the humanitarian crisis in Somalia even if the U.S. has given over \$700 million in aid to Somalia. Gayle Smith who is the CEO of One.org and former U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) during the Obama administration said, "This seems to be an invisible famine... it's been on the horizon, it's happening. There's been plenty of warning from the Somalia authorities, from NGOs from others. I think there's some awareness, but it has not triggered

the kind of international response that one would expect and is in fact needed."

Concern has also been raised that challenges being experienced by other countries as necessitated by the Covid pandemic, and the Ukraine-Russia war among others pose grave danger to the survival of most people in Somalia. This is necessitated by the fact that some governments and aid agencies won't be able to source the much-needed resources. According to Gayle Smith, a case in point is that of the U.K. which drastically reduced its aid budget. This, therefore, means that Somalia may not receive enough aid to address the crisis.

Daniel Maxwell who is the Henry J. Leir Professor in Food Security at the Friedman School of Nutrition at Tufts University and also a member of the Famine Review Committee for Somalia said that the Ukraine-Russia war by disrupting the global supply chain has eroded the purchasing power of most currencies meaning the aid that Somalia receives "doesn't go as far as it did in the past".

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Africa makes history in the fight against sleeping sickness

By Joseph Ndung'u*

This spring, three African countries recognized a major milestone: Benin, Rwanda, and Uganda have each been validated by the World Health Organization (WHO) for eliminating at least one form of sleeping sickness as a public health problem. This brings the world a significant step closer to meeting the WHO target of global elimination of this disease by 2030.

These extraordinary accomplishments have been years in the making, reflecting decades of national and international collaborative effort and planning. At the heart of this success story is diagnostic testing, without which disease elimination and surveillance would be impossible.

Sleeping sickness—also known as human African trypanosomiasis (HAT)—has been a scourge of sub-Saharan Africa for thousands of years. Caused by a parasite transmitted by the tsetse fly, no symptoms are apparent at first. Yet following infection, the parasite gradually burrows deep into all the body organs, and eventually the central nervous system, causing poor coordination, confusion, and loss of sleep. HAT is almost always fatal without treatment. Even with a life-saving intervention, debilitating injuries may endure.

Given the progression of the disease, early detection and initiation of treatment is essential to save lives and prevent transmission. But it's easy to miss HAT in its early stages. The gambiense form of the disease is initially asymptomatic, while the rhodesiense form presents signs that are easily mistaken for malaria. Tracking new cases at the population level is also arduous. Many of the communities most vulnerable to this parasite live in rural, remote regions. These hard-to-reach locations often lack resources, infrastructure, and trained laboratory technicians, making it difficult for people to access a reliable diagnosis.

In addition, the gradual elimination of HAT has made monitoring this disease even more difficult. As confirmed cases decrease, knowing



Professor Joseph Ndung'u is Executive Director of FIND in Kenya.

where to spot the newest infections becomes increasingly challenging. Yet only through rigorous testing and disease surveillance can we control outbreaks and sustain elimination.

In collaboration with the global health community, Benin, Rwanda, and Uganda have risen to meet the challenge. Adapted, innovative diagnostic tools and strategies, supplemented with efforts to reduce the tsetse fly population, have been central in driving effective interventions.

HAT diagnosis is a challenging, multi-step process. Individuals suspected of being infected first require a blood test to detect antibodies against the parasite. Then, microscopy confirms infection by demonstrating the presence of the parasite in body fluids. In some cases, a cerebrospinal fluid test is also required to determine whether the parasite has advanced into the central nervous system. Only after these assessments to confirm diagnosis can treatment begin.

New tools—particularly the development of rapid diagnostic tests (RDTs) for the gambiense form of the disease—have radically simplified the first stage of diagnosis and made it more accessible to communities living in the most remote places. For example, joint development efforts by FIND, the global alliance for diagnostics,

the Institute of Tropical Medicine, Antwerp, and international partners saw two blood tests launched in 2012 and 2013. These rapid tests—one manufactured by Standard Diagnostics and the other by Coris BioConcept—were the first new screening tests developed in decades (and have since been optimized further).

Both tests can now detect telltale disease antibodies in just 15 minutes without requiring special laboratory equipment, training, or a power source. Their portability and ease of use helps decentralize the diagnostic process. As a result, primary healthcare workers in remote regions are empowered to rapidly identify suspected cases and refer them for confirmatory testing, so that people can receive life-saving treatment.

Countries can leverage these new tools to better monitor and track this disease, mapping cases as they emerge. Such efforts enable national control programmes to then take swift and targeted public health measures, such as deciding where to send treatment and supplies and when to take measures to control tsetse fly populations.

Being able to tailor a nation's testing strategy is imperative to ensure an appropriate public health response. For example, in Uganda, confirmed cases of the gambiense form of HAT

have fallen precipitously in the past two decades, from 311 reported cases in 2005 to just 2 in 2017, and no case has been reported since June 2020. As disease prevalence decreases, the strategy must shift from mainly conducting what are called "active screening" to expanding "passive screening". Whereas active screening requires mobile teams of health workers to go into communities and test anyone at risk, passive screening involves testing potentially infected individuals when they come to primary care facilities. This integrated method of screening is more cost effective than the active approach and it ensures sustainable surveillance for HAT well into the future. Even after elimination, vigilance through passive screening is essential to prevent disease resurgence. In Uganda, FIND has helped expand passive screening by introducing HAT RDTs in 51 strategically located health facilities in the country, and upgrading a dozen of them to confirm disease by microscopy. This effort has helped more Ugandans receive screening and diagnosis close to their homes and it has helped ensure that fewer cases go undetected and untreated to finally reach elimination.

The success of these efforts is also a testament to local, regional, and international collaboration. In 2012, more than 7,000 new cases of HAT were identified worldwide. That figure fell to fewer than 800 in 2019 and continues to decline. Progress has been possible because of the cooperation between international agencies, donors, NGOs, research institutions, industry, and—crucially—national and community-led efforts within these countries. The global health community can hope that soon, other countries will follow the lead of the nations that have eliminated at least one form of HAT. Congratulations to Benin, Rwanda, and Uganda on this historic public health victory.

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FIFA Qatar World Cup: Can an African Team break the jinx of reaching the Semifinal?

By Boris Esono Nwenfor



Senegal is the standout African Team of the moment and carries great hope.

At the 1990 FIFA World Cup, Cameroon set a benchmark and became the first African team to reach the Quarterfinal of the global showpiece event. Since then, Senegal in 2002 and Ghana most recently in 2010 have reached this point without going further.

That of 2010 can be regarded as an unfortunate event as Ghana would have reached the semifinal if not for a spectacular handball by Luiz Suarez to prevent the ball from entering the net and a subsequent penalty miss by Asamoah Gyan compounded the misery for the Africans.

Africa's World Cup outings have been littered with scandal, mostly about unpaid wages, that has led to opprobrium and derailed focus. «The politics are too closely involved in the football,» former DR Congo international Gabriel Zakuani told Al Jazeera.

«With African countries, it plays such a big part, especially for the local players who depend on those bonuses. If that doesn't happen, the focus shifts away from football. So that's something that should be taken care of before you get to the World

Cup or a major tournament.»

All hope is not lost

The FIFA World Cup in Qatar will begin from Sunday, November 20 to Sunday, December 18. The African champions will evolve in group A. Senegal will face hosts Qatar, the Netherlands and Ecuador. In Group D, Tunisia will be playing against defending champions, France and Denmark plus Australia.

In Group F, Morocco faces a battle against Canada, Belgium and Croatia. The Indomitable Lions of Cameroon will face record-holder Brazil in Group G as well as Switzerland and Serbia.

According to 1994 African Footballer of the Year Emmanuel Amunke, Senegal and Morocco represent the continent's best chance of success in the Middle East. «The five teams have been tested enough in recent friendlies and they know they must first come out of the group before thinking of a semi-final ticket,» Amunke said.

«One step at a time will do. The tournament in Qatar is a great opportunity for African teams to fix what happened in Russia when no

team progressed into the second round.»

«I think there's always a wildcard at the World Cups,» Gabriel Zakuani, a retired Congolese footballer said. «I fancy Senegal to get to the semi-finals. A lot of people may look at me like I'm crazy but for me, Senegal is the team that can shock everyone this time around. «The five African teams will be out there to compete. I don't think they'll be there to make up the numbers. There's a lot of promise and talent.»

African stars to look out for

If African teams are to do superbly at the world cup, they will be counting on some of their stars to shine brightest as they are doing for their various clubs. Africa has produced a wide range of stars in the past who have gone on to shine at the World Cup from Didier Drogba to Samuel Eto'o.

The present generation, however, sees the light shining on Sadio Mane (Senegal), Vincent Aboubakar (Cameroon) and a host of others. Sadio Mane (Bayern Munich) recently won the AFCON championship, making this one of the best football

moments. Although Senegal has no shortage of famous players, Sadio Mane is their shining star. He has won numerous club championships and helped the Lions of Teranga go to the CAF Africa Cup of Nations final in 2019.

«We have a chance today because we have many young talented players. we indeed know players like Sadio Mane who has made a name out there as one of the best African players,». Samuel Eto'o Cameroon FA boss said in an interview with africanews. «If we take a look at the Cameroonian team, it is well composed of good players too like Aboubakar Vincent.»

Most famously referred to as 'Cameroon's goalscoring powerhouse,' Vincent Aboubakar, since making his international debut for Cameroon in May 2010, Aboubakar has amassed more than 80 caps. He played for Cameroon in the Africa Cup of Nations in 2015, 2017 and 2021 in addition to the FIFA World Cups in 2010 and 2014. Aboubakar was crowned the top goal scorer at the Africa Cup of Nations in 2021.

Ghana's very best Thomas Partey

is a midfielder for both the Ghanaian national team and Premier League team Arsenal. Partey is arguably his club's and country's most important player. However, his recent injury history makes him somewhat untrustworthy. If the two-time Ghana Player of the Year can stay healthy, the Black Stars will be able to play to their full potential in the upcoming World Cup.

Who are the five African nationals taking their teams to Qatar?

For the first time in the continent's history, the teams involved in this year's FIFA World Cup in Qatar will be coached by nationals. The Confederation of African Football (CAF) described the move as a "massive step for the growth of African coaches, who have now borne the courage to take over at the highest level." So, who are the coaches heading to Qatar?

Aliou Cisse – Senegal

Former Senegalese football player Aliou Cisse has been coaching Senegal's football team since 2015. Earlier this year, he succeeded in leading the Lions of Teranga to their first-ever Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) title.

In July, the 46-year-old Cisse was awarded coach of the year at the CAF



African stars to watch out for at the FIFA Qatar World Cup.

Awards, which took place in Rabat, Morocco. He is seen as one of the most experienced of all the African coaches heading into the tournament. His vast experience will be vital if Senegal is to reach the Semifinal for the first time.

Rigobert Song – Cameroon

A former captain of the Indomitable Lions, Rigobert Song, who is also a former professional football player, was appointed as Cameroon's head coach in February 2022.

Renowned for his defensive skills during his playing career, Song holds the record of the most-capped player in the history of Cameroon's national team with a total of 137 appearances. The first Cameroonian to sail the

team to the World Cup was the late Léonard Nseke, leading the team to qualify for the 1994 World Cup in the United States.

Song's Cameroon qualified for Qatar after overturning a 1-0 first-leg defeat at the hands of Algeria to win 2-1 in the corresponding fixture in Algiers and qualify on the away goals rule. Karl Toko Ekambi scored the vital goal in added time to take the Lions to Qatar. The qualification for the World Cup proved to be the result he needed to silence the doubters who had already queried the decision to hire him.

Maniang as he is often referred to will be hoping to guide the Indomitable Lions out of the group stages of the World for the first time

in 28 years.

Walid Regragui – Morocco

Born in Corbeil-Essonnes in France, Walid Regragui began his career as a professional football player with several French clubs, including Toulouse, Ajaccio, Dijon, and Grenoble. The 46-year-old began his coaching career in 2012, as an assistant coach with Morocco's national team.

Weeks before he was named the Atlas Lions' new head coach, Regragui announced his departure from Morocco's Wydad Athletic Club, which he

coached for one season.

Otto Addo – Ghana

As another former international footballer, Otto Addo was named head coach of Ghana's football team shortly after the Black Stars' elimination from the AFCON in the group stages.

Born in Germany in 1975, Addo also works as a talent coach for the German professional club Borussia Dortmund. Being one of the youngest coaches in the bunch, Addo has a lot to prove that he can withstand the pressure of a global showpiece event. But the pressure of taking Ghana to the World Cup isn't worrying him and has all the best players to help him accomplish his mission.

Jalel Kadri – Tunisia

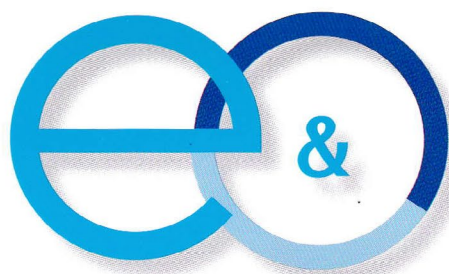
Jalel Kadri was appointed as Tunisia's head coach in January 2022, days after the Carthage Eagles were eliminated from the AFCON quarter-final against Burkina Faso.

Kadri has since succeeded in rebuilding the Tunisian team following the AFCON disappointment, leading the Carthage Eagles to qualify for the Qatar World Cup for the sixth time in their history.

The eyes and ears of the continent will be on Qatar from November to see whether the African teams can break that jinx of a semifinal spot. It won't be easy; Senegal, Cameroon, Morocco, Tunisia and Ghana will have to dig deep and earn that right to become Africa's first team in the semifinals.

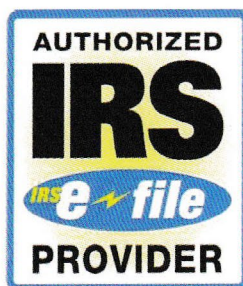
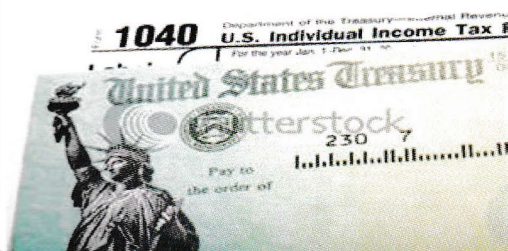


A historic moment for Africa as all the coaches are nationals.



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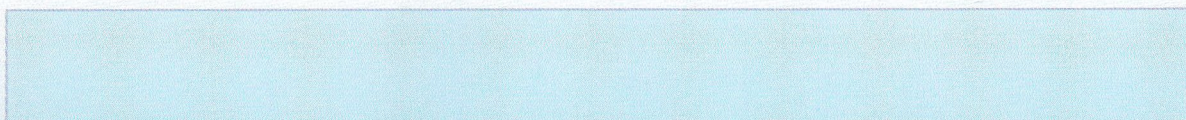
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