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## PAN AFRICAN VISIONS

7614 Green Willow Court, Hyattsville, MD 20785

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

**Managing Editor**  
Ajong Mbapndah L

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

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

**Advertising**  
Email:  
**marketing@panafricanvisions.com**

**Graphic Designer**  
Atemnkeng Jerry M,  
(Young Jerry)  
EC designs, Abudhabi - UAE  
+971 54 739 2997  
[atemjerry@outlook.com](mailto:atemjerry@outlook.com)

# A Time For Africa To Rethink Diaspora Postures

By Ajong Mbapndah L

**T**railed by the tale of drama and controversy it has been bedeviled with since the hosting rights were granted, the FIFA World Cup in Qatar is dominating headlines. With the incredible passion it generates, the global attention and the economic allure, the geo-political stakes and more, it is understandable why football as it is called in some parts of the world, and soccer as it is called in others now has stakes way beyond entertainment. For the ongoing world cup in Qatar one of the subtle takeaways is the abundant African talent excelling in other nations across the globe.

In The Game Between Senegal and The Netherlands, It Is Cody Gakpo of Togolese Origin Who Open Scores for The Dutch before a second goal from Davy Klaassen sealed the important win. In the game between the USA and Wales, it was Timothy Weah, the son of current Liberian President George who scored the lone goal in a game that ended in a one all tie. Born in the USA of a Liberian father who remains one of the all-time greats in the game, and a Jamaican mother, Timothy Weah had multiple choices at his disposal. He settled for his country of birth the USA, and his goal and performance was hailed in Liberia. In France it is common knowledge that their standout star Kilian Mbappe, already a world cup winner in his young age has father who is from Cameroon.

Talking of Cameroon, it was poetic justice of sorts that their opening game was a one nil defeat to Switzerland with the lone goal scored by Breel Embollo who was born in Yaoundé, Cameroon and relocated to Switzerland at the age of five. While his teammates celebrated boisterously, Embollo was very subdued in his own celebration-caught between two worlds. In a country where football or soccer is a religion and one of the last things seemingly trying to hold a deeply fragmented country together, Embollo's feat became the lightning rod in renewed criticisms of the seriously flawed immigration system that Cameroon has-one that is repulsive to talents. While Timothy Weah may have freely and willingly picked the colors he will represent, the tales of rejection and frustration that pushed Embollo and

Mbappe to settle for different choices are common knowledge in Cameroon and very nauseating too. As acute as the problem may be in Cameroon, in other parts of Africa, there are similar challenges when it comes to handling the diaspora.

In recognition of the role that its diaspora could play in fostering the development agenda of the continent, the African Union made out of five regions, East, West, North, South, and Central Africa, added a sixth region-The Diaspora. For reasons best known to the African Union, the idea of the sixth region has never benefitted from any serious attention. What we see is loose groups left and right trying to fill this vacuum but with no serious efforts on the part of the continental body to give solid meaning into what is considered as the sixth region, how it should function, or in what way it can concretely contribute to the development of the continent.

With the creation of the African Union Mission in Washington, DC, many thought that the continental body finally meant business in working with the diaspora in changing the fortunes of the continent. At the maiden USA -Africa's leaders' summit in 2014, a new flamboyant office was inaugurated by then AU Chair Dlamini Zuma in a great event that brought together key actors in the diaspora with the surprise presence of iconic Hollywood faces like Lynn Whitfield, and Louis Gossett Jr.

The excitement fizzled once the summit ended until the appointment of Dr Arikana Chimbori to head the Mission. Suddenly there was life, and engagement with the diaspora took on a new meaning. She answered present at events, spoke forcefully on the role of the diaspora, facilitated contacts and more. About three years into her mission, Ambassador Arikana was relieved of her duties in a move that left many dumbfounded. The timing was poor, the reasons were fuzzy, and it just generally did not sit well with a cross section of the diaspora in the USA. So frustrated was the diaspora that a petition to reinstate her was launched on Change.Org and it garnered over 100,000 signatures!! It took the AU over six months to name replacement, but the excitement and energy generated by Arikana has been sourly missing.

Africa toys or plays with the diaspora



Ajong Mbapndah L, Managing Editor

at its own risk. According to World Bank Statistics, remittance inflows to Sub-Saharan Africa soared 14.1 percent to \$49 billion in 2021 following an 8.1 percent decline in the prior year. Recorded inflows to Nigeria, the largest recipient country in the region, gained 11.2 percent, in part due to policies intended to channel inflows through the banking system, the World Bank noted.

Beyond remittances, African stands to benefit from the input of its diaspora considered as the most progressive in some of the most developed countries in the world. The example of sports was highlighted earlier, but from Physicians, to Nurses, Engineers, University Professors, and so on, the African diaspora has excelled. Everyone may have their own reason for this, but one of the most fundamental ones is the opportunities put at their disposal to make their creative genius flourish. It is because of systems that recognize merit, and promote talents. It is the reason why we can see iconic pictures of Two diaspora Nigerians meeting, one Wally Adeyemo as US deputy treasury secretary and the other Kemi Badenoch as UK Trade Secretary. It is the reason why Kelechi Madu, KC, Deputy Premier and Minister of skilled Trades and Professions and Deputy Government House Leader, in Canada sharing photos of a meeting with his former University Professor Yemi Osinbajo, the Vice President of Nigeria.

In the global village that the world has become, that Africa is not showing stronger cognizance of the game changing potentials of its diaspora is mind boggling. In 2019, Ghana's year of return saw an influx of tourists and the diaspora, with a boost of

\$1.9 billion into its economy. There are many who are eager to contribute positively to make things change in their countries of origin. From difficulties in facilitating travels, to refusing dual nationalities, to mounting roadblocks instead of building bridges to facilitate its dynamic diaspora to make valuable contributions, Africa is scoring own goals to devastating effects.

As this piece is being written, African leaders are bracing for a trip to Washington, DC to participate in the USA-Africa's Leaders' Summit. The USA is not only the undisputed leader of the free world, but also home to the most dynamic African diaspora. The African diaspora ranks amongst the most educated immigrant group and is found excelling and making invaluable contributions in all sectors of life-business, medicine, healthcare, engineering, transportation and more. The contribution of the African diaspora is not negligible, and it may not be for nothing we see more of them appointed to Senior Government positions by President Biden like Wally Adeyemo, US Deputy Treasury Secretary, and Dr John Nkengasong Global AIDS Coordinator and Special Representative for Health Diplomacy.

Beyond engagement with the Biden Administration, African Leaders should have the vision, dynamism and humility to engage with their diaspora. They are excelling in sports, academia, business, science, technology, engineering and all those other sectors that the continent needs to beef up to optimize its potential and meet development priorities. The perception of the African diaspora as a threat is deeply flawed and dumb and it is in Africa's interest to embrace and not reject them. When rejected and forced out and they excel in new countries or societies that adopt them, Africa should leak its wounds in silence and not complain. The bible has ample lessons on the rejected stone becoming the corner stone.

In addition to insights on the USA -African Leaders Summit, this issue of PAV shares insights into the growing business empire of Tingo CEO, Dozy Mmobuosi, the bridge building role of Basketball Africa, the political woes of President Chakwera in Malawi, a focus on the Jack Ma Foundation African Business Heroes Prize competition for 2022 and more.... Happy Reading!!



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# Malawi: A Month Of High-Profile Corruption Revelations As Vice President Is Arrested

By Joseph Dumbula

In the past few weeks, Malawi has been faced with unending reports of corruption, with the Vice President Saulos Chilima arrested for allegedly accepting money and other items in exchange for awarding government contracts.

Chilima's arrest has apparently come after former deputy head of the National Oil Company of Malawi (Nocma) acting chief executive officer Helen Buluma accused some public officers of attempting to cut corners in fuel deals

Earlier on, Malawi's Anti-Corruption Bureau arrested Chilima before he was taken to court where he was charged with three counts of corrupt practices by a public officer, among other charges.

The 49-year-old according to the graft bursting body was rewarded for assisting Xaviar Limited and Malachitte FZE, two companies linked to British businessman Zuneth Sattar, to win contracts.

This is after the watchdog has been investigating Sattar and other public officers in Malawi over

alleged plundering of state resources by influencing awarding of contracts through the country's public procurement system, it said.

The ACB arrested Chilima "on allegation that between March 2021 and October 2021, he received advantage in form of money" amounting to \$280,000 and other items "from Zuneth Sattar as a reward", its statement said.

In August, the Financial Times reported that Sattar was under investigation by the United Kingdom's National Crime Agency (NCA) over alleged abuse of Malawi's public procurement system. He had not been charged with any offence and denied wrongdoing, the report said.

But, now Chilima has been granted bail with two of the conditions being that he reports to ACB once every three months and that he must



*Vice President Saulos Chilima is facing corruption charges.*

surrender travel documents.

The visibly calm Chilima outrightly told the media that he would not be making any further comments at this time because the matter is in court.

Earlier this year, President Chakwera had also stripped off Chilima's duty, whose office is supposed to be delegated by the President.

The decision came just after the ACB confirmed it was following a trail of corrupt acts to do with Sattar with Chilima also facing the probe.

In June this year, Chilima had however, said there was need to push for the amendment of the Constitution to remove the presidential immunity to expose any president to investigations.

"This is the time to amend the Constitution of Malawi in order to remove the immunity which Presidents of this country enjoy under section 91(2) of the Constitution so that everyone in Malawi can be prosecuted for criminal wrongdoing. The fight against corruption must be attended by all the integrity that is necessary for its legitimacy. We

believe that where there is suspicion for wrongdoing, law-enforcement agencies must be left to do their job in accordance with the law. And the law must thereafter take its course without fear or favor of anyone," Chilima said.

But, as Malawians are also trying to come to terms with this matter, there is another which is linked to the influence that Secretary to the President and Cabinet allegedly had on fuel supply deals.

Speaking before the Public Appointments Committee of Parliament in Lilongwe, a charged Buluma mentioned Nocma board chairperson and Secretary to the President and Cabinet Colleen Zamba as having pressured her to sign what she believed were dubious fuel supply contracts.

She also claimed that some senior government officials, including Ministry of Energy Principal Secretary Alfonso Chikuni, Department of Immigration and Citizenship Services director general Charles Kalumo and Malawi Energy Regulatory Authority



*Buluma is accused of political influence in fuel supply deals.*



(Mera) head Henry Kachaje played roles she was uncomfortable with in the search for solutions to the fuel crisis that has hit the country.

She also claimed that some fuel brokers, allegedly sent by Zamba, wanted to intercept an already negotiated fuel deal between Malawi Government and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

This was before she mentioned a Nigeria-based broker only addressed as "Chief" and a South Africa-based motivational speaker Evarista Kamwangala as among those who pestered her to sign fuel deals.

However, Buluma said President Lazarus Chakwera had earlier advised her in a face-to-face meeting not to bow down to political pressure and disregard anyone who uses the President's name for personal gain.

Zamba has reportedly not accepted to appear before the same committee to respond to the allegations.

There are now calls from the civil society for Chakwera to fire Zamba. This has however not been done yet.



Zamba (left) is Chakwera's (Right) secretary.

For instance, the Centre for Democracy and Economic Development Initiatives (CDEDI), has urged President Chakwera to exonerate himself from serious allegations levelled against Zamba, by

relieving her from her duties.

"Having heard a one-sided story, Malawians waited with baited breath to hear from Zamba, who was set to appear before the same committee but in a clear case of impunity and

arrogance, she never showed up. Chakwera himself should explain to Malawians not by words but through deeds and actions, by firing the SPC with immediate effect," said CDEDI Executive Director Sylvester Namiwa in a statement.

The parliamentary committee is due to make its recommendations on the matter known as Buluma has now left her role but said the next person to hold the same position should brace for hefty political impact on the matter.

In August last year, the ACB arrested former Energy Minister Newton Kambala, Alliance for Democracy president Enoch Chihana and former Chief Presidential Adviser on Strategy Chris Chaima Banda who are now facing charges of political interference in the award of fuel importation contracts by Nocma.

The three who are currently on bail allegedly tempted to influence Buluma to award contracts to Orxy, Finergy and Trafigura.

## Ghana President Talks and Acts Tough as He Fires Minister

By Prince Kurupati

Facing growing criticism, President Akufo-Addo is finally taking stern action to curb corruption and wayward action from Ghana's top brass. In a statement released on 14 November 2022, the Ghanaian President said that minister of state for finance Charles Adu Boahen had been relieved from his duties with immediate effect owing to his alleged involvement in shady small-scale gold mining deals.

"The President of the Republic, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, has terminated the appointment of the minister of state at the ministry of finance, Mr. Charles Adu Boahen, with immediate effect... After being made aware of the allegations levelled against the minister in the expose "galamsey economy", the President spoke to Mr. Adu Boahen, after which he



President Akufo-Addo has faced criticisms for not acting tough on corruption.

took the decision to terminate his appointment, and also to refer the matter to the Special Prosecutor for further investigations," the statement reads.

Charles Adu Boahen's alleged involvement in the shady deals was exposed by controversial investigative

journalist Anas Aremeyaw Anas. In the expose, it's stated that Charles Adu Boahen took bribes from artisanal miners and granted them the chance to operate unimpeded. Artisanal mining counts for one-third of Ghana's gold production. The Akufo-Addo administration has been

making strides in recent times to formalise the operations of artisanal miners to prevent leakages and smuggling of the precious yellow mineral.

In the expose (documentary) which has since been aired, Charles Adu Boahen impersonates Ghana's vice president Mahamudu Bawumia in a tele-meeting with artisanal miners' representatives (who in actual effect were undercover investigators) and demands a \$200,000 appearance fee for him to meet the artisanal miners 'investors'.

The country's vice president has issued a statement saying that he has no knowledge of what the minister of state for finance he did beforehand nor was he a part of the plan to solicit funds in shady mining deals. In a statement, he said "My attention has been drawn to a video by Anas

Aremeyaw Anas showing the minister of state for finance, Mr Charles Adu Boahen, apparently using my name, inter alia, to peddle influence and collect money from supposed investors... I would like to state that if what the minister is alleged to have said is accurately captured in the video, then his position as a minister of state is untenable... He should be dismissed summarily and investigated."

According to some economic analysts, the move by President Akufo-Addo may be in response to the pressure he is facing owing to the country's poor economic performance rather than a genuine attempt of flushing out graft vices. Just a week before the President fired the minister of state for finance, hundreds of Ghanaians had taken to the streets in the capital city Accra to vent out their frustrations and anger over Akufo-Addo's handling of the country's economic situation.

The deteriorating economic situation has also necessitated the members of parliament to call for the dismissal of the finance minister Ken Ofori-Atta citing gross incompetence.



Charles Adu Boahen was axed on grounds of corrupt practices.

The members of parliament also accuse the minister of finance of enabling, aiding and abating corruption in both the public and private sectors.

"Enough is enough. We have gold, we have oil, we have manganese, we have diamonds. We have everything we need in this country. The only thing that we need is leadership," one of the protesters said as he called for the president to go. The protesters are also against an IMF bailout which the Akufo-Addo administration is

seeking to prop up the economy as they believe a change of leadership is all that's needed.

In recent times, the Ghanaian local currency cedi's value has plummeted by 40 per cent against the dollar. In September, consumer inflation reached a 21-year peak of 37 per cent. The World Bank in its latest report stated that a quarter of the population are surviving on less than \$2.15 per day, a mark way below the global average. Faced with such a situation, it's crystal clear why the pressure is

mounting on President Akufo-Addo hence the need to act.

Boahen's dismissal comes just a couple of months after he was first accused of abusing his political power in August. Private legal practitioner Martin Kpebu in August lambasted the government for replacing Togbe Afebe's Strategic Africa Securities with the Charles Adu Boahen-owned Black Star securities company. At the time, Kpebu argued that Black Star Securities had next to zero market share hence it was puzzling why it was chosen to be a part of the bond acquisition and sale process.

"Black Star Securities had next to zero market share at the time they were made part of this whole bond acquisition and sale process... I am daring the Finance Ministry; they should show us Black Star Security's trading share in 2017. How did they qualify? Adu Boahen was walking here with a very small company in his armpit. The company was next to nothing so they should show. What are the statistics in 2017 at the time they came into office," Kpebu said.

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# A Mission To Transform Africa Through Agriculture For Dozy Mmobuosi

By Ajong Mbapndah L

Africa's agricultural potential is unmatched in the world and yet severely underutilised, says Dozy Mmobuosi CEO of the continent's leading Agri-fintech company Tingo. I believe African farmers can feed the world and simultaneously, stimulate economies and lift the entire continent out of poverty, an issue which has plagued it for too long, says Dozy Mmobuosi as he seeks to replicate the success of Tingo in Nigeria in other African countries and beyond.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with PAV, Dozy Mmobuosi says Tingo is on course to triple its user base in Nigeria with plans firmly afoot for expansion into new markets in Tanzania, Malawi, Chad, and Uganda among many others.

Buoyed by the success of Tingo and other personal live experiences, Dozy Mmobuosi is giving back to the community in a big way with the foundation that bears his name doing ground-breaking work on the health sector and a football tournament involving the traditional four clubs of the NPFL with unprecedented prize money up for grabs.

Though he stays out of partisan politics, Dozy Mmobuosi is however watching the ongoing presidential race closely and believes that for Nigeria to solve its cascade of problems, it needs a leader who can take difficult decisions which may be hard in the short term but produce long-term results.

**For many in the corporate world, the name Dozy Mmobuosi is firmly associated with the Agri-Fintech companies Tingo Mobile Limited, Tingo, Inc. and his investment firm Tingo International Holdings, Inc., could you start with an introduction of these entities for us?**

Dozy Mmobuosi: First of all, thank you for inviting me for this interview



*I believe African farmers can feed the world and simultaneously, stimulate economies and lift the entire continent out of poverty, says Dozy Mmobuosi.*

- it is a great honour to be here. Tingo Mobile has existed in many forms for over two decades. It has been an e-publishing company, a software development company, a mobile phone manufacturing company and even for a bit we were a domain name and server hosting company. As with every business there is no straight-line trajectory, we have continued to adapt and evolve to new markets and opportunities and will continue to do so.

Tingo is an Agri-Fintech company. At its core, the mission of Tingo is to utilise technology to solve problems. Right now, Tingo focuses on providing opportunities for rural farmers all over Nigeria and Ghana, with further expansion planned in the coming months.

Tingo provides them with a marketplace platform that enables the sale of their produce at the best possible price, as well as the ability to carry out other necessary activities such as airtime top-up, bill-pay services, access credit and insurance products and more.

A very important role Tingo plays

in the agricultural sector is to provide micro-finance to rural farmers which enables them to fund their operations. It is very difficult to access finance in our part of the world and Tingo helps bridge that gap. We also partner with governments and other agencies to provide solutions and innovations everywhere we see the need.

**May we know the current geographical spread of Tingo Inc which is now considered by many as Africa's leading Agri-fintech firm?**

Dozy Mmobuosi: Tingo primarily operates in Nigeria, where we currently support over 10 million customers. We have recently signed an agreement with the All-Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN), the umbrella body of the 56 recognised commodities and agricultural associations in Nigeria. This partnership will bring a minimum of 20 million new subscribers to Tingo Mobile, which would more than triple our existing customer base.

We recently launched full operations in Ghana and signed a

significant deal with The Ashanti Investment Trust, which guarantees us at least 2 million new subscribers within three months.

My team and I are actively exploring additional new markets such as Tanzania, Malawi, Chad, and Uganda among many others.

We are also considering a continent-wide expansion targeting at least 19 countries initially and then building on from there.

**What do you make of the agricultural potential in Nigeria and Africa, how are firms like Tingo helping to turn things around?**

Dozy Mmobuosi: Africa's agricultural potential is unmatched in the world and yet severely underutilised. I believe African farmers can feed the world and simultaneously, stimulate economies and lift the entire continent out of poverty, an issue which has plagued it for too long!

Tingo primarily helps by providing a marketplace for farmers to sell their produce quickly and efficiently. Our Nwassa platform is the leading





*My team and I are actively exploring additional new markets such as Tanzania, Malawi, Chad, and Uganda among many others, says Dozy Mmobuosi*

digital agriculture ecosystem on the continent. It empowers rural farmers and agri-businesses by providing them with ready access to markets and buyers for their products. We can ship farm produce from farms across Africa to any part of the world, in both retail and wholesale quantities. This is a huge step in ensuring farmers receive value for their produce and hard work.

Again, Tingo Mobile helps secure financing for many farmers who might have given up on their profession without the proper funding.

We also provide farmers access to buy seed, fertiliser, equipment, and other necessary inputs.

**Earlier in the year, Tingo announced it may embark on moves to raise \$500 million as part of plans to list on the New York Stock Exchange, what progress has been made on this front and what impact has it had on the fortunes of Tingo?**

Dozy Mmobuosi: In business you must explore all opportunities and as such, we delayed the capital raise. We have now moved forward and completed a merger with a Nasdaq listed company MICT, which is

a financial technology business principally focused on the growth and development of a suite of consumer fintech services across Asia. The deal

was recently concluded and at current run rate we will generate more than \$1.0 billion in annualised revenue in 2022. With the new partnerships and markets I previously mentioned, we expect to considerably outperform this in 2023.

We may seek to revisit our capital raise in 2023 to fund our ambitious expansion strategy.

**How challenging has it been for you growing the Tingo brand to what it is today, and any concrete plans to broaden its reach across Africa?**

Dozy Mmobuosi: Our merger is a step in making sure we are a truly global brand. As already mentioned, we have expanded outside of Nigeria and plans are advanced in expanding the company across Africa. We also see opportunities in countries with high rural farming communities and our merger with MICT enables us to explore expanding our operations across Asia, and we plan to take full advantage of that.

**For young people who see you as a role model to emulate, what are sort of advice would you give with them?**

Dozy Mmobuosi: One lesson I that I learned early in my entrepreneurial journey was the need to be patient in decision-making instead of jumping headfirst into every decision. There are times to move and times to be still, knowing the when will take you far. I was a very brash young man and believed I knew everything but that led me to make mistakes which I have learned from. So, I would encourage the youth to work hard and stay humble, be willing to listen and learn from others, build important connections and lastly, be measured in making decisions.

**Could you share insights into the Dozy Mmobuosi Foundation launched recently by you in London with a pledge to commit 10% of your net worth to it?**

Dozy Mmobuosi: I started the Dozy Mmobuosi Foundation to find other ways to fulfil goals I am already trying

**AGRICULTURE TECHNOLOGY**

As demand for food grows with the increasing population so does the opportunity for greater employment in agriculture and the supporting sectors. The more we are able to produce in country rather than importing (Nigeria is Africa's largest consumer and importer of rice) will make food and produce more affordable

"There is increasing recognition from agriculture corporations that solutions are needed for these challenges. In the last five years, agriculture technology has seen a huge growth in investment, with \$6.7b invested over that time and \$1.9b in the last year alone. We aim to support the farmers in Nigeria with the latest technology to allow their farms to generate higher yields and reduce post-harvest losses..."

Dozy Mmobuosi  
Group Chief Executive,  
Tingo International Holdings, Inc.

[www.tingogroup.com](http://www.tingogroup.com)  
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**A partnership signed recently with the All-Farmers Association of Nigeria will bring a minimum of 20 million new subscribers to Tingo Mobile.**



to achieve with my businesses like Tingo Mobile. Goals such as providing opportunities to Africans and creating an environment to help them thrive. The foundation's main areas of focus include Healthcare, Education, Entrepreneurship, and Information Technology Development. We aim to facilitate social empowerment by solving key structural challenges present on this great continent of ours.

The pledge to donate 10% of my net worth is a way to ensure the financial stability of the Foundation. The Foundation does not seek nor accept donations.

***In the course of the year the DM Foundation launched a \$10 million, free mobile prostate cancer screening service in Lagos can you shed some light on this?***

Dozy Mmobuosi: I have spoken about this before, but I almost lost my father to prostate cancer, which was a key driver for my motivation to come up with this mobile cancer screening service. One of the best tools we have against prostate cancer is early detection and that is what we wish to achieve with this initiative. The mobile prostate cancer screening service is proceeding smoothly and efficiently. We have had hundreds of successful early detections and a large number of these have had successful surgeries. This news fills me with pride, but I know there is still much work to be done.

Of course, it will take a while to garner data on what difference it is making in Nigerian society, but we are very proud of the initiative and optimistic it will save many lives.

***Earlier in the year, we also heard of plans to launch the Dozy Mmobuosi Super Cup, which will feature several elite clubs from Africa's top leagues, any progress, or insights you want to share on this?***

Dozy Mmobuosi: Yes, plans are in full swing to hold the inaugural Dozy Mmobuosi Super Cup. The dates



***The impact of the DM Foundation is already been felt in Nigeria with the launch of a \$10 million, free mobile prostate cancer screening service in Lagos.***

are from December 6th to 9th at the Mobalaji Stadium, Onikan in Lagos.

We are providing an unprecedented, N100m prize money for the competition, which involves the traditional four clubs of the NPFL namely Shooting Stars Sports Club, Enugu Rangers, Enyimba and Bendel Insurance.

The top scorer and best player of the tournament will also receive N1m each. As you can see, we plan to make this very memorable!

***You were recently appointed as a member of the Global Advisory Council of the Commonwealth Enterprise & Investment Council (CWEIC), which is the official Commonwealth's business network, what does this mean to you and how do you expect to make a difference?***

Dozy Mmobuosi: I plan to bring my experience in operating business across several countries and continents, honed by two decades of being an entrepreneur at the highest level, to help achieve the main goals of the CWEIC, which is mainly to drive trade and investment.

Particularly, I hope to bring my experience in the Agri-fintech sector

and bring a new perspective to the council. Joining my skills, knowledge, and experience with that of the other great members of the advisory council will surely yield positive results for the organisation.

***The race to replace President Buhari is on in Nigeria, what legacy do you think he is leaving behind for Nigeria, and what is the ideal profile of the next President Nigeria needs from your perspective?***

Dozy Mmobuosi: The world is in a very difficult moment, with multiple countries still reeling from the lasting effects of the Covid pandemic as well as the shocks of the Russian-Ukraine war. Nigeria is no exception. Above all else, Nigeria needs a President who is prepared to make difficult decisions needed to solve the myriad of problems we face.

As a leader, a decision may not be the most popular but still the best course of action. We need a leader who can take difficult decisions which may be hard in the short term, so long as it will produce long-term results. I believe that effective communication to the people of Nigeria is key through this process, as

long as they understand they will be willing to make short term sacrifice for long term gain.

***Of the leading candidates in the race now, is there anyone you are supporting?***

Dozy Mmobuosi: It has been an interesting race, but I keep out of politics.

***A last question on the upcoming USA-African Leaders Summit coming up in Washington, what are some of the issues you think the leaders should address or focus on?***

Dozy Mmobuosi: Africa has many challenges and I sincerely hope our leaders will have fruitful discussions. If I could choose areas for them to focus on, I would say safety and security, climate change and agriculture, which I am clearly passionate about, and also to brainstorm on ideas to build more industries to create value-added products to minimise our dependence on imports.

Those are just a few I can come up with off the top of my head, although I am aware there are many other problems Africa is faced with which require brave solutions.



# The Role of African Export-Import Bank in AU Agenda 2063

By Kestér Kenn Klomegáhw

At the 12th Extraordinary Summit on Industrialization and Economic Diversification and the Extraordinary Session held in Niamey late November, the African Export-Import Bank offered an instrumental report about the pace of economic diversification and industrialization across Africa. It was one, among several review reports, dealing with the present and the future of Africa.

In the first place, the African bank offers strong financial support, engage in external fund-raising campaigns and collaborate with the African Union and the AU members. Beyond that, the bank gives advisory services relating to development of various economic sectors, all these in attempts to improve the conditions, as espoused in the shared «Agenda 2063: the Africa We Want» in Africa.

With several initiatives and programmes, the bank has pursued, with courage and determination, using the necessary high-level platforms within Africa and outside Africa to drum home the necessary funds for development. What is required here for African leaders to exhibit good governance, design and implement the best policies and speak with one voice for realizing the set AU Agenda 2063.

While the bank has done a lot during the past few years, not many African leaders have achieved what were expected. That Afreximbank intervened strongly during the COVID-19 pandemic, disbursing over \$8 billion to central and commercial banks to avert looming trade debt payment defaults and support the procurement of test kits, PPEs and other COVID-19 containment materials.

The Afreximbank supported the first ever pooled procurement by African Union members in



*Under the leadership of its President Dr. Benedict Oramah, Afreximbank has become one of the most credible partners in African development.*

an emergency, when it provided a \$2 billion financing towards the procurement of 220 million doses of Johnson and Johnson vaccines.

And as the Russia-Ukraine crisis rages on, the bank has also stepped up and already disbursed over \$5 billion towards the procurement of food, fertilizer and grains. Beyond that, the bank is closely working with UNECA, the AU and the AfCFTA Secretariat to create a pooled procurement platform called the Africa Trade Exchange (ATEX), that is helping African

countries to procure grains, edible oils and fertilizers at a much reduced cost.

It continues to support the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA). During the five years to 2021, Afreximbank disbursed over \$20 billion in support of intra-African trade and investments and plans to double this to 40 billion US dollars during the 5 years 2022 to 2026.

Afreximbank is helping African economies to manage the exodus

of international banks by financing African owned financial institutions to acquire those banks, helping to build a strong interconnected African financial system. It is re-creating banking systems so that they can serve Africa better. It has also onboarded about 500 of the continent's 600 regulated commercial banks into Afreximbank Trade Finance Facility (AFTRAF) and providing them with Trade Credit Confirmation lines.

The goal is to grant an aggregate of \$8 billion in Trade Confirmation lines to these African banks and ensure that every country on our Continent has at least one bank that has a dedicated credit line to support intra-African trade. Afreximbank sits today at the center of the most extensive messaging network, with connections to almost 500 banks. It has built a web that will form the architecture for an integrated African banking network.

These mentioned above are the bank's efforts to support Africa's economic development prospects defined by the extent of control the continent wields over its financial system, that it is access to and control of capital that defines the future of the continent.

As partners, Afreximbank, the African Union Commission and the AfCFTA Secretariat have launched the commercial operations of the Pan-African Payment and Settlement System (PAPSS). It has now become possible to conduct intra-African trade payments in African national currencies. The bank is proud to be backing settlements under this system with a facility, thanks to the leadership of the African Union and the Commission for their strong support towards this transformative initiative.

Afreximbank is working with



*Wamkele Mene, Secretary General of the AfCFTA Secretariat (left) and Professor Benedict Oramah, President and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Afreximbank (right)*

the AfCFTA Secretariat and Council of Ministers for Trade to establish the AfCFTA Adjustment Fund. The Fund is expected to help countries to adjust in an orderly manner to AfCFTA tariff removals and prepare them to participate in the new trading regime. The Bank was earlier this year appointed the Fund Manager of the \$10 billion Fund, which it is supporting with a \$1 billion facility and a \$10 million grant directed at the Base (Compensation) Fund.

With industrialization, the bank is working with various African governments to develop and expand Industrial Parks (IPs) and Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to deal

with infrastructural constraints to industrialization. These parks are ongoing across ten African countries, including two parks in Malawi and one in Cote d'Ivoire under development. It has also commenced discussions for the creation of industrial parks in DRC, Zambia, Rwanda, Kenya and Botswana.

The first-ever Africa-Caribbean Summit in 2021, Afreximbank has taken steps to accelerate the integration of the two regions. In early September, first-ever Africa-Caribbean Trade and Investment Forum which attracted over 1,000 participants from Africa and the Caribbean.

Since then, about 9 of 14 CARICOM countries have signed a Partnership Agreement, a treaty instrument akin to the Afreximbank Establishment Agreement, thereby opening up the region for the bank interventions. This partnership creates opportunity for Afreximbank to facilitate and promote trade and investment flows between the two regions and attract African investments into the Caribbean and Caribbean investments into Africa.

In that regard, it has conducted successful trade and investment missions to the Caribbean with African corporates and banks to explore opportunities in that

market. Plans are advanced towards opening an Afreximbank office in the Caribbean so that it can support Africa-Caribbean trade and investments better.

With the mandate to forge greater partnerships, the Afreximbank seriously working jointly to push ahead with the pan-African trade and industrialization agenda. These dynamic collective efforts are directed towards the realization of the shared developmental goals with the Agenda 2063. Afreximbank remains alive to that responsibility with African Union.

## How Africa Can Seize The US Opportunity To Improve Its Industries

By Faustine Ngila

The United States finds Africa an emerging critical ally in its quest to maintain a firm grip on the global economy, even as the European Union and China also scramble for a share of the world's most potential market.

But other than economic ties, the Biden administration views Africa from a lens of geopolitics, stressing in a recent presser ahead of the US-Africa Business Summit in Washington that will kick off on Dec. 13 that "the summit is really rooted in the recognition that Africa is a key geopolitical player, one that is shaping our present and will shape our future." Biden has invited 49 African heads of state.

National Security Council Senior Advisor for the U.S.-Africa Leaders' Summit Dana Banks emphasized the belief by the world's biggest economy that Africa will shape the global economy and provide a balancing act in geopolitics.

"With one of the world's fastest-growing populations, largest free trade area, most diverse ecosystems, and one of the largest regional voting groups in the United Nations, African contributions, partnerships, and leadership are essential to meeting this era's defining challenges," Banks



A Summit with big stakes for President Biden and his African counterparts. Photo credit Getty images.

said. "Africa will shape not just the future of African people but of the world."

Ahead of the three-day Washington Summit, Robert Scott, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of African Affairs told the press that on top of the business and trade agenda, there will be discussions on civil society, peace, security, climate change, governance, the creative industry, education, and energy.

"The second day will be dedicated

to the U.S.-Africa Business Forum. And the third day will be the leaders' day, obviously, with President Biden and heads of delegation, heads of state from the continent involved," Scott noted.

During the 14th US-Africa Business Summit held in Marrakech, Morocco in July, Vice President Kamala Harris acknowledged the challenges that the continent still grapples with, promising that the US would work alongside African leaders to "address

these issues, in furtherance of the African Union's Agenda 2063."

Africa is currently facing a myriad of economic hurdles. Some of them, such as the millions of people facing hunger in the Horn of Africa Region, over a million who were displaced by floods in Nigeria where over 600 lives were lost, are due to climate change.

"To this end, since October last year, the United States has pledged more than \$7 billion in humanitarian and food security assistance across



Africa,” Harris said. In July, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) provided \$1.3 billion in additional critical humanitarian and development assistance to help stave off mass starvation and deaths in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia.

But Africa faces more bottlenecks, especially in the financing of its industries. And that is largely seen to be the centre of discussions in Washington. At the Morocco summit, it emerged that despite efforts by the African Development Bank (AfDB) to close the infrastructural financing gap, the continent still requires between \$130 billion and \$170 billion every year to build better infrastructure in the form of regional projects in energy, transport, ICT, and water.

“Public funds will not be sufficient in these challenging times. We have to look for additional capital from development partners, the private sector and institutional investors,” chair of the Africa 50 board and CEO of AfDB Akinwumi Adesina told delegates.

Th UN estimates the health financing deficit in Africa at \$66 billion annually, with only three African governments meeting the Abuja Declaration’s 15% allocation of gross domestic product (GDP) for health.

With the medical equipment

market in the continent is projected to hit \$7 billion by 2027, health industry leaders at the Morocco summit urged US-based drug manufacturers to set up manufacturing plants in Africa so the continent can get a share of Big Pharma’s billions.

But Africa was urged to prepare a conducive environment for this to happen. “Private sector investments into universal health coverage will have the most impact but only when supported by regulatory systems that set ethical frameworks, ensure the quality of products and services, and accelerate access and recognize the value of these products,” said Alain Barry, north and west Africa external affairs director at American multinational pharmaceutical company MSD.

Agricultural enterprises, which are the backbone of food security in sub-Saharan Africa, face a \$74.5 billion funding gap, according to a survey by Scotland-based Commercial Agriculture for Smallholders and Agribusiness (Casa) program.

The World Bank estimates that for Africa to achieve universal connectivity by 2030, an investment

of \$100 billion is required but as of May 2022, only 36% of Africans were connected to the internet compared to a global average of 62.5%.

But Africa should not be looking for foreign aid from the US because several studies have shown that foreign aid has failed to deliver sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction, and the best way would be through attracting foreign investment and exporting more of its own goods.

The President and CEO of the Corporate Council on Africa (CCA) Florizelle Liser noted that “institutional investors contribute

\$100 trillion to global funding” with 45% of it coming from the US. For Africa to get a substantial percentage of this amount to finance its enormous gaps, it means industrial and institutional business streamlining to access the US market and export more.

Under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), for instance, US goods and services trade with South Africa totaled an estimated \$17.8 billion in 2019. Exports were \$8.0 billion; imports were \$9.8 billion. The U.S. goods and services trade deficit with South Africa was \$1.8 billion.

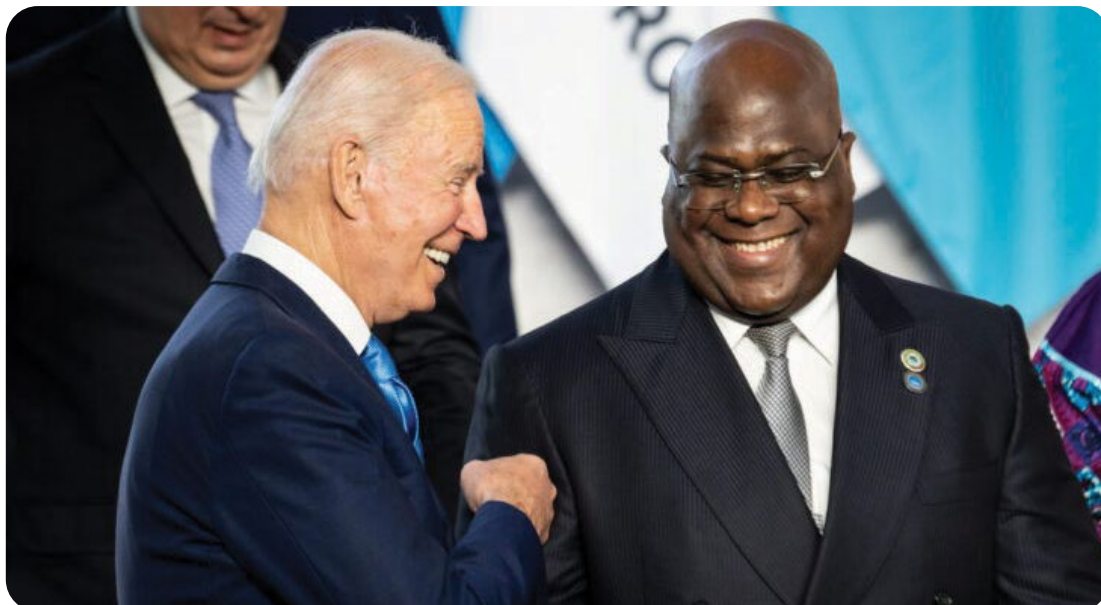
Banking on the huge potential of its AfCFTA project which kicked off this year, Africa is gradually positioning itself as the top global business destination, where the US can access as a single market of over 1.3 billion people.

Amid its challenges, Africa is optimistic that its close ties with the US could help it leapfrog them.

“Since launching Prosper Africa two years ago, the U.S. government has already supported 800 two-way trade and investment deals in 45 countries, worth an estimated \$50 billion dollars,” said Washington-based Millennium Challenge Corporation’s (MCC) Chief Executive Officer, Alice Albright in Morocco. MCC has invested more than \$1 billion in the country.



Senior Advisor for the U.S.-Africa Leaders’ Summit Dana Banks (centre) addresses the press during the US-Africa Business Summit in Marrakech, Morocco on July 21, 2022. Photo Faustine Ngila.



President Joe Biden talks with DR Congo’s President Tshisekedi on the side-lines of the G20 summit in Rome, last year. Photo credit Erin Schaff, Reuters.



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# Bridge Building Role For Basketball Africa League

By Ajong Mbapndah L

**T**alk about sports diplomacy, and the Basketball Africa League will be a strong contender as a success story for its bridge-building role between the USA and Africa. It has been a tale of premium entertainment, revelation of incredible fresh talent, marketing African tourism, and generally promoting the continent to blockbuster audiences who follow up BAL across the globe.

With a dynamic leadership team led by Amadou Gallo Fall, a man with unbridled passion for the game and for Africa, BAL is giving new meaning to what a combination of vision, passion, and resources can do for the continent. Two successful seasons, a surging presence across diverse networks and social media platforms, a very warm reception within the continent, and for Amadou Gallo Fall, BAL is still just getting started and no where close yet to its full potential or fulfilling its vision.

In the midst of his very hectic schedule, Amadou Gallo Fall found time for an interview with PAV to share more insights into the BAL vision, its growing number of side events and initiatives, perspectives on the USA-African Leaders Summit, and the upcoming season three of BAL.

**Could we start this interview with your overall assessment of how Basketball Africa has fared since its creation?**

Amadou Gallo Fall: We have continued to build great momentum from when we launched on May 16, 2021, in Kigali. We launched amid the pandemic in a complete bubble. We brought all the teams in Kigali to a single site, whereas we had planned in 2020 when we announced the creation of the league that we were going to play in seven cities, but the pandemic forced us to look at what best opportunities to play without COVID being a problem. We were able to achieve that and kudos to Rwanda for what they did; at that time Rwanda was the only place



*Under the dynamic leadership of Amadou Gallo Fall, BAL has added another layer to the bonds between Africa and USA.*

which had the conditions to organize the historic launch. The feedback was tremendous from the games broadcast all over the world.

The biggest takeaway is that it was possible to stage a world-class event in Africa; we have the talents and certainly the fan interest and now with the NBA and FIBA coming together to launch the Basketball Africa League, this is something we should be very proud of. We continue to build on that momentum and this year during the second season, we expanded the footprint by going from one site in 2021 to playing in three iconic cities (Dakar, Cairo and Kigali), over three months and playing and expanding to from 26 games in the first season to 38 games last season. The games were equally broadcasted in 214 countries, and we crowned a new champion - US Monastir (Tunisia) with the first champion being Zamalek of Egypt.

Now, we are very busy planning for the third season which we are going to launch in March, and we will be making some announcements very soon, about where we will be playing, the formats and bringing in some innovations. We are very encouraged by what we are seeing and the continuous feedback from all around the world.

**About Season 2 that ended in May, in what areas did you see success, and what are some of the areas that need improvement going forward?**

Amadou Gallo Fall: From a basketball standpoint, we were encouraged by the progress we saw in terms of the quality of the games and the quality of the competition. We had two conferences; the Sahara conference took place in Dakar, last March and the Nile conference

took place in Cairo, Egypt in April. The top four teams from each of the conferences advanced to the playoffs and finals in Kigali in May. Teams came very much engaged and prepared from season one as we were still engaged in a pandemic as it showed with the teams not having that much game experience, but we saw in season two improved rosters because the teams knew what to expect, and they had the desire to compete at the highest level. We had more competitive games and in the rosters, each team (made up of 12) was mandated to have 8 local players because we want to promote African talent and local basketball in our countries. Champions emerging from these countries and heading into the league that creates this product that we all want to see.

We saw in the second season improved play. We launch the Elevate program, where we have the top young talents, and prospects from the NBA Academy Africa program, and we assign one player from the academy to each of the BAL teams and we saw the tremendous contributions from them. It also helped us keep the league young and make sure that the future of the league is assured because we have young talents coming in that are going to inspire the next generation who want to continue to strive in basketball. Yes, they will always dream to go to the NBA, but we want to make sure that they know that they have an opportunity on the continent to grow in the game and then make it professionally.

We have also seen an increased fan engagement, something we were pleased with during the second season, and we have almost 600 million fans engaged with the league across social and digital media platforms. We have continued to see growth in the off-season.

From a business standpoint, we continue to draw world-class partners who are interested in supporting the league because what we are doing is bigger than basketball; we have

many programs we launched during the season. One of the reasons why the NBA is what it is, is that we attract the best in class in all aspects of what drives a successful enterprise. We will continue to make sure we have the best athletes, continue to train coaches to make sure that they are at a world-class level, train referees, officials and at the same time, we want to attract expert communication people, broadcast people, coaches, lawyers and this is why we are confident that this league is going to grow.

*As we head into season three, are you satisfied with the reception that the league has received across the continent?*

Amadou Gallo Fall: Absolutely. We are, but certainly because of the ambitions we have for the league, when I say I am satisfied I want to do that with a caveat. I will say we are encouraged and motivated by the reception we have seen but because of our ambitions, we are not satisfied yet. We will continue to drive and push to make sure that we get this product to the fold and out there.

We are doing this interview in the build-up to the US-Africa Leaders' summit, how has the Basketball Africa league helped to build bridges or improve ties between the USA and Africa?

Amadou Gallo Fall: For us, basketball has been the catalyst; our work on the continent has been on building the capacity and empowering youth. Sports is the greatest tool we can utilize because it speaks their language. Basketball is a youth sport, it speaks their language, and it is the perfect sport where all the other aspects of youth culture; music, fashion and arts converge. We think by engaging with young people, and inspiring young people by empowering them we are going to elevate all our communities; even the way we organize our league, the champions from twelve countries, for now, looking at getting more



*In two years, Amadou Gallo Fall and his team have defied the odds to make BAL a formidable success story.*

countries involved in the event. Just the virtues of sport are being utilized and displayed effectively, bringing different African countries and basketball being quintessentially a US sport that can easily be transported, we see the interest amongst the youth across Africa.

We see the interest amongst the youth from all over Africa. Having this league and interacting with the US basketball communities; the NBA has been doing work on the continent for many years and that is what led to the formation of the Basketball Africa League in partnership with FIBA, the world governing body for the sport.

*We would like to get insights into other initiatives like the Diaspora engagement program in Berlin and Abidjan, how does this fit into the overall vision and mission of the Basketball Africa League?*

Amadou Gallo Fall: It is part of our drive to make sure that we take the Basketball Africa League experience to the world. We think the African Diaspora have continued

to pay attention and has continued to express interest in engaging with the league. The league is going to be an economic growth engine for the continent. If you look at how we organize our games, taking six teams from six countries into one African city; think about the number of people travelling to come and enjoy the game and experience these countries. There are some desires from Africans all around the world to come back home and experience the games. We are here in Abidjan where FIBA is hosting qualifiers for season three. Our program is to showcase the league to the African Diaspora; we will do other events, not just in Berlin, whether it is in Paris, Atlanta, or Sydney, we want to make sure that the experience we are having here on the ground is showcased and exposed to people who want to engage or come back to the continent and there is no better path for them than sports and basketball in particular and in our case the Basketball Africa League.

*On the threes for trees campaign in Rwanda, and now in Angola,*

*what was the logic behind this and how did it go?*

Amadou Gallo Fall: It comes from our commitment to make sure that our league serves our community. We want to be drivers of positive social change. Issues that are threatening the environment across the world are felt strongly in Africa, Africa suffers the most whereas it is the least contributor to the problem. We want to be proactive and continue to do our part and make sure that not just our players in the league, but young people understand that we should not sit and wait for others to come and do it for us; we can take matters into our own hands to start addressing issues in stopping desertification and others.

We had the activity recently in Angola because the way we set up our Threes for Trees campaign is that the teams engage in a competition (3-point shooting); for every three-point basket made, we donate three trees to NGOs active in the space of combating desertification. The team from Angola, Petro de Luanda, made the most three-pointers and that is why we went to Angola. We



sent our teams to go and help plant those trees. In Kigali, at the start of season two, we had an activity where all the teams were involved to help plant trees and seeing how the teams and players were engaged in it for us was encouraging. It just shows what we need to do is raise awareness amongst the youth that climate change is a bad reality, but we can do something to alleviate it. That is the main focus. We have a partner, New Fortress Energy that has jumped on board with us, enabling the tree donation and we are going to continue. We are very excited to continue seeing the interest not only for our teams but for our fans also who are following up on this activity.

**Can you also shed some light on the Basketball Africa League Elevate program, how is this helping the progress and growth of basketball on the continent?**

Amadou Gallo Fall: One of those things we are proud of is that for over a decade and even beyond when we opened the NBA Africa office, we launched Basketball Without Borders in 2003 and through all the different grassroots initiatives, now we have established a complete pathway from grassroots to elite where young players who have a passion for the game, who want to learn the game can do so by participating in the sport. The opportunity we have with the creation of the NBA Academy in 2017, means that elite talents are intentionally invited, providing all the training tools that are needed for elite players to reach their potential. Now we have young players who can engage with the game, through some of the grassroots activities like Jr. NBA or Basketball Without Borders and others, still in partnership with FIBA; if they are exceptionally talented, they are identified and given scholarships to join the NBA Academy to continue the talent development and motivation.

We created the Elevate program



*For Amadou Gallo Fall, the best is still to come from BAL.*

where we take the top athletes of the NBA Academy Africa program to play for BAL teams to continue their talent motivation, a chance for them to play against older and talented players and showcase their talents and accelerate their growth. From grassroots to elite, we have created a link between the BAL and the work that NBA Africa is doing in the academies; the feedback and results we have seen from some of the young talents last year have been encouraging.

The Elevate program is about infusing young talent that are going to keep the league young and fresh legs and young people we are going to hear about in the years to come and someday some of them integrate into the NBA. Since then, a number

of these Elevate players have signed with professional teams or committed to NCCA Division 1 University in the US.

**Beyond the excitement and the thrill of the game, how will you describe or sum up the economic impact of the Basketball Africa League on the continent?**

Amadou Gallo Fall: We talk about the BAL being a catalyst for a robust sports industry; we know how much sports and entertainment contribute to the GDPs of countries around the world but Africa accounts for a small percentage. This is what we intend to change because it starts with encouraging stakeholders both from the public and private sectors to look

to invest in building world-class infrastructures. These arenas we are seeing are starting to pop up; that is where the business is and all kind of development comes up from real estate, on game day you see all the economic activities that take place from transportation, catering and all the jobs created just in that arena. This is the impact we want to see and when we started engaging with President Kagame of Rwanda and noting the opportunities, they went to build an arena in less than a year and today you see that arena is hosting a lot of activities, not just the BAL, but there are concerts taking place there and different conferences, that are driving tourists to visit the country, which is a big goal for the country.

In Senegal, we have a partnership established with an agency to promote tourism. We exchange with these countries about the idea of sports tourism by hosting these major events, you are bringing in people that are going to spend. There is a ripple effect as other infrastructures are going to be built and that is the idea of sports as an economic growth engine. This is the impact we are going to see in Africa. We started in all three countries where we hosted our games last year. We have only scratched the

surface and the League will continue to go to more countries. We have twelve countries participating in the finals but all the countries in the continent have an opportunity to participate through these qualifiers that FIBA is hosting, we are in the finals that is why we are in Abidjan and next week it will be for the East Division Johannesburg, South Africa.

**What are your hopes and fears for the future of the Basketball Africa League?**

Amadou Gallo Fall: The future is extremely bright. We are bullish about the ambitions we have, and we remain confident because of the talent we have on the continent and at all levels. We have a partnership



*A combination of visionary leadership, innovative management, and creative genius have earned respect for BAL across the globe.*

between FIBA and the NBA to drive success to this league. The NBA has expertise in terms of operating and commercializing sports, and we continue to work with FIBA to promote the game holistically. Yes, finding and developing this talent and at the same time working on building the capacity from the administrative standpoint, giving our federations the right tools to identify the right talent, and drive the administration of the game. That is where the opportunity is, and it is super exciting.

*What message do you have for African leaders meeting in Washington DC, and what*

*message do you have for potential partners?*

Amadou Gallo Fall: We want the recognition from the leaders that sport is a very important industry of what we are all looking to build in Africa. If we are going to achieve socioeconomic development, this is an industry that can fast-track that because we have talent in abundance. We just need now to create an enabling environment; they can have laws that are incentives for the private sector or companies to invest in creating safe spaces for young people to engage in sports in general. In promoting basketball, we want to create alliances that are going to allow us to build

basketball courts everywhere. that is where it starts, young people have to have the opportunities to get out there and bounce a ball. We partner with like-minded organizations to come and work with us to be part of the solution. The leaders are seeing what is happening and the impact being created; just two years after we launched the league, we are seeing that it is possible, so, we are going to remain that catalyst and we want to continue inviting people to pay attention and participate. The feedback we get from all around the world is of tremendous interest. I am not saying we are there yet with the league but when it comes to

Basketball, however the presence of African players in the NBA should be a push factor.

*President Amadou, thank you for talking to Pan African Visions and good luck with all the big dreams.*

Amadou Gallo Fall: Thank you. This is what we are saying, everybody can play a role. This league is bigger than basketball; we want the best players in the world to come and play, the best journalists and the best lawyers and more. This is what is exciting!

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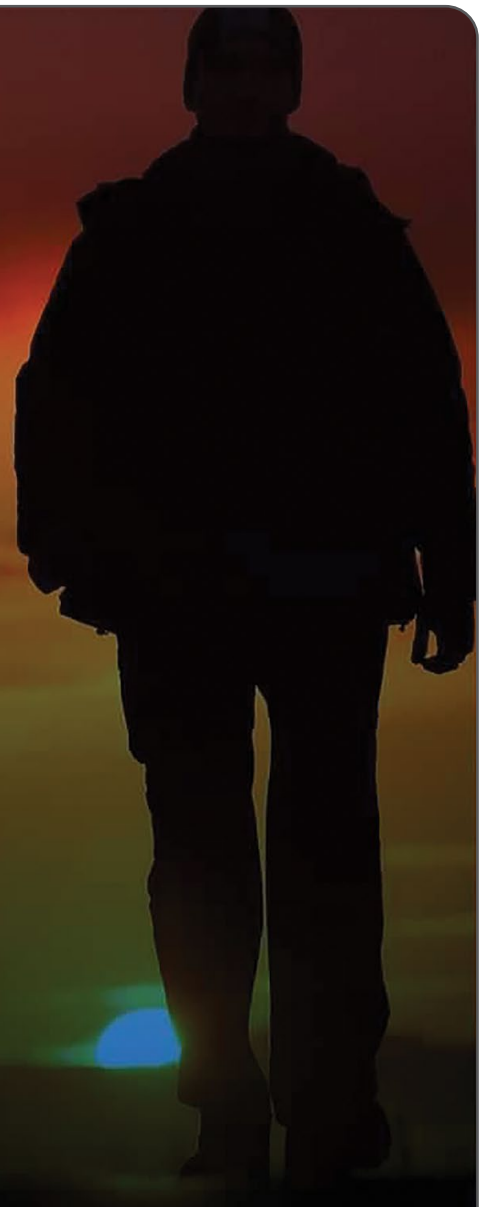
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Pan African Visions MAGAZINE, 7614 Green Willow Court, Hyattsville, MD 20785  
Tel: 240 429 2177, email: pav@panafricanvisions.com, editor@panafricanvisions.com



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# Diaspora Leadership Can Help Ethiopia's Recovery

By Mesfin Tegenu\*

When the war in Northern Ethiopia started in November 2020 I, like many other members of the diaspora, was shocked to see the country fall into conflict at a moment when Ethiopians were enjoying a new democratic focus, economic liberation and a more progressive society. Seeing the violence and destruction in the country of my birth and seeing the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) try to steal back power, I felt I had to do something. By April 2021, with the support of friends from every state in the US, we founded the American Ethiopian Public Affairs Committee (AEPAC).

Having spoken with leaders from many different diaspora groups: Israeli, Nigerian, Haitian etc. it often takes a moment of crisis, be that war, disease, or a natural disaster, to bring a diaspora community together and to speak with one voice. That was certainly the case for the American Ethiopian community.

There has to be a purpose to this unity, and that is advocating for change in US Government policy. We started the journey with full confidence in the ability and strength of United States foreign policy, today I remain perplexed by the misinformation and ignorance I have witnessed in Congress, The White House and the State Department. I am not alone; this is a view shared across African diaspora groups.

AEPAC has worked tirelessly to try and change that. We have met with more than 100 representatives' offices to try and educate on the facts of the conflict, we have done our best to defend Ethiopia against condemnation and sanctions and change the conversation to how the United States can actually support Ethiopia find peace, rather than endlessly try to punish the country. We have had some major successes from stopping two sanctions-focused bills, HR6600 and S3199, from going to a vote, we found Members of Congress to advocate for Ethiopia's



*Mesfin Tegenu is Executive Chairman of the American Ethiopia Public Affairs Committee and CEO of RxPradigm Inc.*

place in AGOA and we met with the Horn of Africa Envoy Ambassador Mike Hammer to encourage him to pressure the TPLF to come to the negotiating table.

Thankfully, on November 2nd, peace was secured between the Government of Ethiopia and the TPLF rebels. The accords signed in Pretoria, South Africa, have delivered what we have all been fighting for. The agreement sees the TPLF

disarm and disband. The Federal Government will return to governing Tigray and an immediate ceasefire will mean it has been safe enough to begin restoring essential services and upscale humanitarian aid to Amhara, Afar and Tigray.

One of the most important aspects of the peace agreement is that it was secured through the leadership of the African Union. There was an African solution to an African challenge. It

is no secret the TPLF wanted the discussions to be led by the United States, but that had no support among the majority of Ethiopians nor the diaspora. The White House and State Department got this conflict wrong, their blind support for the TPLF for the majority of the conflict has lost the trust of many Ethiopian Americans.

The US involvement lacked appreciation for the complexities of the conflict and the country. And the aggressive punitive measures against the government and not the TPLF actually made the situation worse, and probably prolonged the war.

Regardless, Ethiopia has now found peace and there is a need to reset. Reset society in Ethiopia and bring people who have been locked in a brutal war back together. Reset relations between Ethiopia and the United States. And reset AEPAC's approach toward its efforts to unite the diaspora and turn the international conversation on Ethiopia to a more positive place. The Government of Ethiopia has its work cut out trying to achieve these, there are many big issues to overcome from ethnic federalism to the national economic recovery. But all Ethiopians have a part to play, just as we did during the war.

The American Ethiopian community has never been more united. That was demonstrated as the community voted as a block in the US midterm elections. Out of AEPAC's 35 nationally endorsed candidates, 32 were successful. We recognise AEPAC and our partners have a leadership role post-peace agreement to bring the community together, AEPAC already has many members and supporters from all corners of Ethiopia including from directly impact areas of Afar, Amhara and Tigray. We hope to continue to undertake outreach to bring the diaspora closer together to match the peace process work being undertaken in Ethiopia.

The reset of relations between the



*The war has dented the reform and development agenda of Prime Minister Abiy.*



US and Ethiopia I believe started with the new Africa Strategy announced by Secretary Blinken in the summer. The use of the language “U.S.-African partnership” is itself a positive change and a clear departure from the approach taken to date. Seeing African nations as equals is important. There is also a commitment to working more closely with African multilateral organisations, especially the African Union. Some believe this new approach is a reaction to China and Russia’s influence in Africa, others argue the White House and State Department have finally awoken to the importance of the continent to U.S. global priorities, such as the continent’s rapidly growing population, one of the world’s largest trading blocs and its significant natural resources. Motivation doesn’t matter, it is actioning the strategy into real-world scenarios that will tell if there is a real change or if it’s just more talk.

The most promising aspect of the strategy for me was a new commitment to work with America’s African



Deputy PM Demeke in Talks with U.S. Special Envoy Mike Hammer . The US has been a vocal critic of the war.

diaspora. It fulfils a Biden-Harris campaign pledge to “elevate” diaspora engagement. Diaspora communities hold the key to transforming waning US influence in Africa, we can offer in-depth knowledge of our respective ancestral homes, we can help bolster support for the Administration’s

policy positions here and abroad, we can help boost trade and there are no better ambassadors for America’s democratic values than us.

I hope one day soon the US can undertake the foreign policy transformation that is required to be a successful international partner in

2023. Let’s see if that plays out during the Africa summit in Washington DC.

\*Mesfin Tegenu is Executive Chairman of the American Ethiopia Public Affairs Committee and CEO of RxPradigm Inc

## Africa's Creatives And Civil Society Key To The Continent's Democracy

By Faustine Ngila

The US will use the upcoming US-Africa Business Summit to advance the role of Africa’s civil society and creative industry in the development of democracy and peace.

Speaking ahead of the Dec 13-15 summit in Washington, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of African Affairs Robert Scott told reporters that the discussions will take place on the first day of the conference under the African and Diaspora Young Leaders Forum.

“This event will bring together youth leaders, civil society, political actors, creatives, and folks involved in climate and other areas,” Scott said.

There will be a number of breakout



Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of African Affairs Robert Scott.

sessions, but Scott emphasized on African creatives, noting that they play a critical role in the growth of the continent’s economy.

“The creative industry is becoming a more and more important part of GDP on the continent and here in the US. And bringing actors from the

continent together with their counterparts here in the U.S. is a wonderful opportunity to synergize and to get these groups working together and collaborating on music, on fashion, on culture,” he illustrated. Africa’s creative industry is estimated to generate about \$4.2 billion in revenue every year.

Calling it the “megaphone of governance,” Scott highlighted the crucial role of the civil society in a functioning democracy, noting that African voices in the fight against corruption and bad governance will be amplified.

“This event will allow policymakers to come together with members from labour, from civil society, in order to talk about how you strengthen

institutions and reduce corruption, an important support also for the AU's Agenda 2063."

Africa's civil society has been hailed for leading causes that have created peace. A Liberian women's peace movement led by 31-year-old Leymah Gbowee did something extraordinary in July 2003 to force Liberian warlords to sign a peace agreement that ended 10 years of a bloody civil war.

Kenyan activists, Boniface Mwangi, Robert Alai and Okiya Omtatah have boldly called out corrupt leaders and questioned government spending, parliament's desire to raise MP salaries and laws that appeared too draconic, ultimately protecting citizens against anarchy. A surge of political activism among young South Africans is also evident in South Africa, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

The forum will also look at the

linkages between democratic institutions and governance. The US secretaries of State and Defense and administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development will meet African leaders to find ways to enhance peace in the region.

Scott did not specify which peace talks will take centre stage but expect discussions around the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo where the government has been fighting the

M23 rebel group for a couple of weeks now. At least 188,000 have been displaced in North Kivu since Oct. 20, according to the United Nations.

Talks of how the Tigray community will rise again after an armed conflict that lasted from Nov. 3, 2020, to Nov. 2, 2022, leaving 3.5 million people internally displaced in Ethiopia and 60,000 fleeing to Sudan, will be inevitable.

## Africa Wants Peace Not Picking Sides in Ukraine-Russia War - Kagame

By Prince Kurupati

In his address to the G20 Summit in Bali, Indonesia, Rwandan President Paul Kagame said Africa only wants peace and does not want to pick sides in the Ukraine-Russia War. Speaking in his capacity as the chairperson of the African Union Development Agency (Nepad) Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee, President Kagame bemoaned acts by some global powers to pressurise Africa into picking sides.

President Paul Kagame said that Africa is bearing the brunt of the Ukraine-Russia War. He said that it's now well documented how the war has disrupted the global supply chain for oil and other commodities especially wheat something which in turn has made Africa pay more for the products. The ripple effects of this have had devastating effects on the vulnerable. As the cropping season is starting in most parts of Africa, especially central and southern Africa, the Ukraine-Russia war is also posing a serious threat to the continent's food security intentions as the war has disrupted the free flow of fertiliser, a much-needed ingredient in the farming business.

He however praised the recent decision to release a Russian fertiliser cargo that had been detained for months in the port of Rotterdam due to sanctions. The cargo is now in transit to Malawi where the fertiliser will be distributed to those in dire need. Though the consignment



Africa only wants peace and does not want to pick sides in the Ukraine-Russia War, says President Paul Kagame. Photo credit Urugwiro Village.

initially belonged to a Russian, it has since been seized by the World Food Programme (WFP). WFP will distribute the fertiliser free of charge.

Kagame's call for neutrality in the Ukraine-Russia war came just weeks after Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba visited the continent to garner support for his country. Minister Kuleba also wanted to counter Russian propaganda about the war. During his meeting with Senegalese Foreign Minister Aissata Tall Sall, the Ukrainian minister said

"The Senegalese may be surprised if they listen to Russian propaganda... Russia wanted to make believe that (the war is because) Ukraine wants to be a member of NATO. Finland wants to be a member and yet Russia did not attack it".

With regards to Russia's 'claim' that Russia and Ukraine are intertwined countries in terms of their histories, culture and language, Minister Kuleba said that this isn't true. "Russia believes that we are one people. This is not true... The language we speak

is not the same. We have a different culture and a different people".

Ukraine's diplomatic offensive in Africa is a long shot as the country has historically stayed clear from Africa. It's only now that Ukraine is seeing it fit and proper to befriend African countries to increase its voice at global groupings such as the United Nations where decisions against Russia need a clear majority. Since February when Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, a series of votes condemning Russian



aggression have been conducted in the UN but most African countries have chosen to abstain from voting or vote against suspending Russia from the UN Human Rights Council.

Kamissa Camara who is a Sahel expert at USIP and former Malian foreign minister said "Ukraine has never been a player in Africa... (it) does face a steep uphill climb to garner support for a war so removed from African realities or African geopolitical interests". Camara also castigated the main actors in the Ukraine-Russia war for pressuring Africa to take a stance in the war while they take an indifferent route

to African conflicts. "While Africans are being urged to take sides in the Ukraine-Russia war, protracted wars on the African continent – such as the war in Tigray or the war in Eastern Congo – continue to make victims by the million".

Sultan Kakuba who is a political scientist at Uganda's Kyambogo University said that Africa's decision to stay neutral may not necessarily be out of genuine reason to choose peace and neutrality. Rather, it's a plot to keep relations with Russia friendly as they source much of their military equipment from Russia. "Many countries on the African continent

source their military equipment from Russia and may not want to condemn the invasion of Ukraine, while the majority of these countries also belong to the Non-Aligned Movement," Kyambogo said.

Kyambogo however warned that as long as the conflict keeps going, Africa will, unfortunately, end up having to pick sides due to the pressure both conflicting countries are exerting on the continent. In addition, successive UN votes will divide the continent. A time will come when voting and not voting will carry a voice. "Although some countries are taking a position of neutrality, this conflict will eventually

divide Africa into two blocks. One in favour of the invasion of Ukraine, and the other against Russia," Kyambogo said.

Abdirazak Mohammed while speaking to Anadolu Agency echoed the same sentiments saying a time will come when the actions or inactions of Africa at the voting booth will be explained as support for one of the warring parties. Africa will therefore find itself at the crossroads as its neutrality will not be appreciated. In a statement, Mohammed said, "When an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say you're neutral, it will not appreciate your neutrality."

## Cameroon: Long Awaited Limbe Seaport Project Finally Sets Sail

By Andrew Nsoseka

Cameroon's Limbe Seaport project that has been in gestation for several years is finally setting sail after a series of administrative decisions and actions that have paved the way for the project to finally kick off. For several years, a lot of people and groups have complained about the abandonment of the natural deep seaport that for decades prior to today's modern merged Cameroon, had served tremendously as a transport and business hub.

Following the appointment of a transitional administration to pilot the realisation of the Limbe Seaport project, the Douala Port Authority stated that the coming of the transitional administration for the Limbe Port Authority marks the end of Limbe being under the control of the Douala Ports Authority that had before then, managed the affairs of the small shipping and transit business that took place at the Limbe abandoned seaport.

The Douala Port Authority said it will "nevertheless continue to support the new Port," that when realised, will take off pressure from the Douala Seaport that does not only serve Cameroon, but other landlocked neighbours of Cameroon like Chad and the Central African Republic that all depend on it for the import and export of heavy goods that are



transported by sea.

The Director Delegate in charge of the Transitional Administration of the Limbe Ports Authority, Thomas Ndivé Molungu in a recent media outing said works were already in progress on chosen sites, especially where the Seaport Port's offices as well as a warehouse will be constructed at Idenau. The different sites chosen by the Cameroon government to play

host to the Limbe Seaport include the Tiko Wharf, the Bota Wharf in Limbe, Ngeme Port Site, Down Beach, SONARA/Chantier Naval, Isongo at Bakingili and Idenau in the West Coast Sub-division.

After the designation of the various areas to play host to the Seaport project, private owners were notified, and a compensation scheme rolled out. Works on unoccupied or strategic

areas has also started with the putting down of existing property to build or create room for the Seaport that is expected to create jobs for a record over 20,000 citizens.

Mr Ndivé in his recent media outing said the different Port terminals in Tiko, Idenau, Bota shall not serve as feeder ports. He disclosed that these Port terminals shall function based on their different specialisations.

This means, the Idenau, Tiko and the other terminals that are already receiving vessels from other countries today shall continue to do so even after the construction of the entire Port Complex. He however clarified that a modern touch will be given to the port terminals in order to up their capacities and make them capable of handling bigger vessels and shipments.

Unlike most ports around, the Limbe Seaport project that locals and many Cameroonians have clamoured for over the years, has an advantage in that it is naturally deep, and as such, requires little or no work in certain areas when it comes to receiving and anchoring large container ships. Waters along the coast of Limbe, especially where some of these terminals shall be built, have the advantage that they enjoy a sea depth of 15, 17 and above 17 meters deep, this gives it an edge over other seaports in Cameroon like Douala and the Kribi ports that require much additional work when it comes to upping their capacity to be able to receive large container ships. A quick realisation of the delayed project will increase Cameroon's stake as a vital business and transit hub in the Sub region where many landlocked countries can rely on, to export their goods by sea,



*Director Delegate in charge of the Transitional Administration of the Limbe Ports Authority, Thomas Ndivo Molungu.*

as well import things they need from other countries.

In a statement released in relation to the Limbe Port project, GLOTECH Marine, a Logistics and Oil & Gas Support Services company Headquartered in the United Kingdom with operations in the United Kingdom, Cameroon, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea said, "The New Limbe Sea port will serve not only Cameroon to transport minerals, oil and food to and from Cameroon and

other brotherly nations, it will ease the anchoring of petroleum ships for repairs coming from other countries. The Limbe seaport will supplement Cameroon's existing seaport in Douala, which currently handles 90% of maritime transport for Cameroon, Chad and CAR."

Cameroon's Transport Minister, Jean Ernest Massena Ngalle Bibehé in a statement in relation to the project, said feasibility studies were carried out over ten years earlier, estimating

the cost of the project at about FCFA 400 billion. The Transport Minister also revealed that the Limbe Seaport will be specialised in handling heavy products like hydrocarbons because of its proximity with the National Refining Company, SONARA. He further stated that it will also specialise in the handling of agricultural products since the Southwest where the port is found, is home to large banana plantations like the Cameroon Development Corporation, CDC and other enterprises, and is also an important cocoa-producing area.

For over the years, political pressure groups, experts and locals have called on the Cameroon government to make the Limbe Seaport project a reality. This had mostly been met by political promises that were often half-hearted and meant to keep hopes of the people alive. With serious engagements already in place, the Southwest region and Cameroon in general will benefit tremendously from it. This will also take off pressure from the Douala ports that had so far been carrying the burden and was increasingly becoming slow in processing goods transited through it, especially as there was no competition. This brought about a lot of bureaucracy which also gave room for lots of bribery and corruption to foster in the sector.





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RxParadigm  
650 Naamans Rd  
Claymont, DE 19703  
302-524-4179  
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## For The African Continental Free Trade Agreement (Afcfta) To Deliver On Its Promise, We Must Address Concerns Of Entrepreneurs

By Prof Patrick Utomi\*

**The AfCFTA will bring down trade barriers on the continent, harmonise trade regulations in all member states and in so doing create the largest single market in the world.**

**T**he launch this week of the 2022 Africa CEO Trade Survey Report 2022, commissioned by the Pan-African Trade and Investment Committee, was instructive for a number of reasons. The idea that we are now actively seeking the views of our enterprising men and women who provide the goods and services on which we rely is itself worthy of note. In the past, policy makers opted to operate without this context, with predictable results and so we must celebrate all involved for providing this critical angle to the all-important task of supporting businesses, boosting trade and ultimately improving lives and livelihoods on the continent.

The results of the survey themselves paint an interesting picture. It will come as no surprise that African CEOs are slightly apprehensive about the future. Operating in the long shadow of the pandemic, shaken by disruptions in delicate global supply chains, spooked by war and faced with a possible recession, only 50 per cent of CEOs surveyed said they felt confident about the future, a lot less than the 93 per cent who were confident about 2022 when they were asked in 2021. Dependant as we are on the outside world for much of what we consume, it is little wonder that these global crises are literally felt in our kitchens. We cannot carry on like this.

This is why the confidence that CEOs have in the African Continental Free Trade Agreement is so heartening. When fully implemented, the AfCFTA will bring down trade barriers on the continent, harmonise trade regulations in all member states and in so doing create the largest single market in the world. The benefits from this would be incalculable. Our



*Professor Patrick Utomi is Chairperson of the Pan-African Private Sector Trade & Investment Committee (PAFTRAC).*

combined strength will make us an infinitely more attractive destination for investment, encourage value addition and according to the World Bank, raise incomes on the continent by 7 per cent and lift as many as forty million people out of poverty.

This is doable but it means that we have to listen closely to the people who run the businesses, especially the SMES on the continent, address their concerns, anticipate their needs and build an environment that spurs innovation and rewards their hard work. Thankfully, there are important clues in the report that can guide us. What CEOs are telling us is that they need a lot more information – and readily so – about the opportunities of AfCFTA and also about one another. They need facilitation of cross border trade, along with payment systems, that will enable them to take full advantage of trade area. They also need better trade infrastructure and logistics so they can, for example, move their goods from Lusaka to Abidjan as seamlessly as possible. And it goes without saying, they need policymakers across

Africa to move quickly to realise this dream that finally seems tantalisingly within reach, almost six decades after decolonisation.

So those are the things we need to do. First of all, we must recognise the preponderance of micro-small and medium sized enterprise in the continent's commercial landscape. A vast majority of the companies operating in Africa employ less than five hundred people and have less than USD 1 million in annual turnover. This recognition must inform the policies that we make, as we seek to support growth and investment. These companies, often run by women and people, are notoriously starved of capital which handicaps their expansion and compromises their sustainability. We will need to find creative ways to make long term capital to them. We will also have to assist them to achieve quality and standards compliance, improve packaging and gain access to lucrative markets.

Given its nature and objectives, cross-border transactions, payments and ease of movement will be critical

to the AfCFTA. This means we must move quickly to formalise cross-border trade, assuring traders of the safety, security and enforceability of transactions, while also facilitating the free movement of people and disencumbering customs processes. I am encouraged by the launch of the Pan-African Payment and Settlements Systems (PAPSS), a home grown system through which traders can make and receive payments across currency lines. In addition, governments also need to invest in trade-enabling infrastructure, such as roads, ports and warehousing.

Indicated by survey respondents, will be essential to this enterprise. Entrepreneurs are, rightfully, enthusiastic about the AfCFTA and the prospects that it represents. But they will need to be armed with as much information as possible so they can fully participate. A one-stop shop, such as the African Trade Gateway, a digital platform developed in partnership with Africa Export-Import Bank, is exactly the type of innovation that entrepreneurs will need and must be encouraged to harness in their quest for information.

Ultimately, a shared purpose and sense of dedication will be required from all of us for the success of the AfCFTA. After decades of trying, we are now truly on our way to a building a common market, achieving self-reliance and fundamentally transforming the nature of our economies. We can't do this, however, without the entrepreneurs up and down our continent. We must listen to them, work with them and achieve our goals together.

\* Professor Patrick Utomi is Chairperson of the Pan-African Private Sector Trade & Investment Committee (PAFTRAC)





# A JUST TRANSITION

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NJ AYUK

# A Reflection on the Côte d'Ivoire Business Climate: A Firsthand Account by an American Businesswoman and Academic

By Kelley Page Jibrell, PhD, MBA\*

The buzz from the 2014 US-Africa Summit under the President Obama Administration was palpable. The American sector and investors, however, remained largely hesitant to act. While many other nations around the world have benefited from African investment and partnerships, the US position historically has remained laggard, often relying on other Western allies to take the lead. Therefore, the revived US-Africa Summit of 2022, offers an opportunity for more concrete action and greater measurable success.

My exposure to the business talent of Côte d'Ivoire began 20 years ago while in business school. The first major cohort of Ivorian MBA students at Howard University had arrived in the new millennium.

Today, my peers are leaders in the aviation industry, agribusiness, import/export, hospitality, telecom and financial services sectors. Nearly all of my colleagues returned home, or are bi-continental because Côte d'Ivoire is a great place to be for skilled talent, business opportunity and those who enjoy la joie de vivre.

After working in every region across the African continent, my consultancy work in strategy and implementation ultimately led me to Côte d'Ivoire. After several years, my engagement with the people, business sector and wonderful nation as a whole has remained constant and fruitful.

Côte d'Ivoire has a proven history of commodity sector leadership as the recognized primary exporters of cocoa and



Dr Kelley Page Jibrell has been engaged with Cote d'Ivoire in diverse capacities for some 20 years.

cashew. Not to mention refined petroleum products, rubber, cotton, mango and other notable commodities. Today, industry diversification and local processing rule the day.

The priorities are loud and clear for

increasing the value-chain with local production for semi-finished and finished goods in this West African nation. The shift from Côte d'Ivoire exporting raw materials toward processed material is eminent.

This new reality and necessity is a

sentiment and shift across the Africa continent. The ongoing demands and criticisms for more skilled labor opportunities, reduction in carbon footprint, affordable education, sustainable development and national security relies on these shifts.

My professional and ongoing engagement with Côte d'Ivoire has demonstrated a very committed and serious business environment where timeliness, meetings and protocols are well respected. Recently, I had the pleasure of advancing the cashew sector toward standardized processes that would allow for economies-of-scale and US-market entry in compliance with the FDA's Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). Many factory owners and their workforce (which is

80% women) have embraced this vision. An initial few have been able to capitalize on the advancement, while many Ivorian operations await partnership with direct capital, technical expertise or market access.

Currently, Côte d'Ivoire, like much of the world, is experiencing significant inflation largely caused by increases in food products pricing, primarily from unmet local production demand. Fortunately, country and industry-level training and some investments have increased local market product development. The attitude toward self-determination, entrepreneurship, product development and new partnerships is commonplace. The smaller-scale local market producers serve as capacity building for factory owners



Underrepresented US presence with partnerships, investment, subsidiaries and distributors is evident across the geographically diverse country, says Dr Kelley Page Jibrell.



to gain experience for future product export, while enabling the nation to savor the fruits of its own labor.

To similar global effect, Côte d'Ivoire was not immune to the COVID-19 pandemic. Silver linings, however, did arise across this nation of 28+ million. The well-executed pandemic strategy shifted food supply toward its population and even managed to have a 2% GDP growth rate. Additional health centers emerged with consistent information, resources and support. The streamlined eVisa process and other consulate services allowed for the safe continuation of business. Similarly, Côte d'Ivoire has been expanding its diplomatic and economic presence across the US spearheaded by the Ambassador and Embassy of Côte d'Ivoire. For instance the New York consulate in tandem with a proactive economic office, known as the Service Promotion Économique de la Côte d'Ivoire (SPECI) or the Economic Service Promotion for Côte d'Ivoire.

Centralization with government is strong and its decentralized counter-balanced is with well-structured local Chieftaincies. The balance and mutual respect for both institutions, although not perfect, is admirably strong and well appreciated. Côte d'Ivoire is a country which has refined its vision embracing past successes and authentic tradition, while working toward a sustainable model of meaningful development.

The West African Francophone country has leveraged its South-South cooperation by gaining and sharing lessons-learned from other countries of similar climate, demographic, and market conditions. This cooperation with other developing countries such as Brazil, Egypt, South Africa, Morocco and Ghana illustrates the

nation's willingness to expand beyond language and cultural diversity in pursuit of common growth and good. The savviness of Côte d'Ivoire is further evidenced by maintaining, yet refining its longstanding relationship with Europe and extending its presence and partnership with North America, namely the United States.

The thin presence of US businesses and entrepreneurs in Côte d'Ivoire is glaringly obvious. Recently a few Fortune 500 offices have opened doors in chic Abidjan. Although, Côte d'Ivoire is very clear, that similar to the United States, support of the SMEs is the key to real growth, skill development and social cohesion. Côte d'Ivoire has inaugurated impressive Agro-industrial zones, ripe for workforce engagement and local partnerships.

The vision for sustainable development has allowed Ivorians to rally behind common goals which has underpinned its national reconciliation.

Côte d'Ivoire is at last finding her equilibrium between honoring its elders and loyalty of the past, while leaning toward innovation and a generational shift. The generational shift embodies the idea of value-chain, mutually beneficial partnership, industry-level maturity and direct market entry to the US and the West.

Underrepresented US presence with partnerships, investment,



*Côte d'Ivoire is at last finding her equilibrium between honoring its elders and loyalty of the past, while leaning toward innovation and a generational shift, says Kelley Page Jibrell.*

subsidiaries and distributors is evident across the geographically diverse country. While the economic indicators, business talent and opportunity, are impressive, the US business sector wants to know that good business can be done in Côte d'Ivoire. From my direct experience, it can! Other nations, particularly French speaking, watch Côte d'Ivoire

as a model for growth. While each country is unique, the successful entry and mutual gain with Côte d'Ivoire can, and often, yields relationships with other nations seeking a similar trajectory.

\* Dr. Kelley Page Jibrell is an independent global strategist and can be reached at [kelley.jibrell@gmail.com](mailto:kelley.jibrell@gmail.com)

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Tingo's success is built on over a decade of relationship with rural Nigeria. It uses local content to drive its services. The world doesn't need another mobile phone manufacturer or another technology company to meet the needs of Africa's farmers, because Tingo has been doing this over the years in such a manner that any other organisation cannot manage...the phones are simple to operate, cheap to buy and with apps that enable the farmer to access needed information that will enable him or her to save his or her farm without extension workers. These apps are based on local languages or any applicable language.

Tingo has indeed disrupted the way mobile phones are sold and the way technology is accessed. Even the batteries to the phones are made in such a way that the farmer can go for days without charging provided that he or she has not been unduly frivolous with utilising the phone in areas that do not really help the farm. Electricity may be difficult to access in some areas and solar charged phones are options many farmers go for. Nigeria is blessed with abundant sunshine all the year round.

The farmer needs to know why some areas are more flood prone these days, while other areas suffer drought. The farmer can ask these questions and get instant answers that satisfy his interest and suggest how the effects can be mitigated without professorieties. Tingo is the ultimate answer for farmers all over the world, as every farmer's need in every location can be addressed without undue challenges.

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# Mozambique: \$100Bn Windfall Anticipated From The Oil & Gas Industry-But Where Will The Money Go?

*Mozambique still has no plans for how to spend the \$100bn it is expected to receive over the next 25 years thanks to oil and gas exploration by foreign oil and gas giants. The lack of a clear strategy for the use of the revenues puts the corrupt country in a vulnerable situation where the money can be spent without transparency. To avoid abuse of increasing wealth, institutions must be created to control and distribute the wealth from natural resources.*

By Jorge Joaquim

Mozambique is already a producer of Liquefied Natural Gas and the first export took place on November 13. The valuable resource is produced on a floating platform Coral Sul FLNG which was later officially inaugurated on November 23rd by Mozambican President Filipe Nyusi. Following the start of production, the government is preparing to pocket millions of dollars from taxes and more costs from that project. This year, for example, the Mozambican executive expects to collect for the state coffers \$32m in revenue from the new Coral Sul floating platform.

The project is led by Italian oil company Eni and is known as Coral Sul Floating LNG. Gas production and the conversion of that gas into LNG will take place offshore. The facility is designed to produce about 3.4 million tons of LNG per year. Coral FLNG's production is being sold to the British fuel company BP on the basis of a 20-year Gas Sales Contract.

Coral FLNG was the first of Mozambique's projects to achieve a Final Investment Decision and



the first project to export LNG. The first shipment was made by the British Sponsor cargo ship heading to Europe. The Coral Sul project raises expectations for anyone because of the size of its investment, valued at \$8bn, and its value in the international market.

The Government of Mozambique has long praised LNG revenues as

a driver of economic change for Mozambique. LNG has the potential to provide substantial revenues for the government. The outlook for government revenues from FLNG is increasingly important due to external debt challenges and declining donor support.

Overall earnings for the state are expected to reach \$20bn over the next

25 years of the life of the South Coral FLNG project. Added together with other oil and gas exploration projects, Mozambique is expected to cash in on more than \$100bn. So far, the floating project is the only one that is operational. TotalEnergies' \$20bn project, which is among the three largest in the country, was already underway, but was suspended in March 2021 due to terrorists attacks in Cabo Delgado.

While the government is announcing with pomp and circumstance the start of LNG production and export, civil society is frustrated that there is no clear plan on how the billion-dollar revenues will be applied. The transfer of the natural gas revenues to a specific account, as an example of a sovereign Sovereign Wealth Fund, would give guarantees of greater transparency.

What is known so far is that the government will allocate 10% of the tax revenues from the exploitation of natural resources to







the development of the provinces where extraction takes place. The money is to be used exclusively for financing infrastructure projects and development programs that have a multiplier effect on the local economy.

### **Warns against exaggerated gas expectations**

Mozambican President Filipe Nyusi has warned against exaggerated expectations of the revenue that will be generated by liquefied natural gas from the gas fields in the Rovuma Basin, off the coast of the northern province of Cabo Delgado. He said that the revenue expected from LNG between now and 2024 will not even be enough for the full rehabilitation of the main north-south highway.

"This is a problem that must be understood, comrades", said Nyusi. "The gas from the Coral South Floating LNG Project is not even enough to repair the EN1. What we will receive, if we are lucky, is no more than \$30m this year".

Gas revenue in 2023 and 2024 will be higher, but Nyusi put it at no more than \$100m a year. "If we obtain \$100m a year, that will be very good", he said, "but that may not always happen". So, the President urged the Mozambican people not to place all

their hopes in LNG.

**Revenue collection for 2023 is projected at \$5.5bn, but only 0.3% of this will come from LNG industry.**

Nyusi warned that it will be another ten years before really large sums from LNG start flowing into the state's coffers. Nor was it true that the planned Sovereign Wealth Fund would miraculously produce a flood of money for the state budget. The only way forward, Nyusi insisted, was to diversify the Mozambican economy. "If we don't, we shall be killing ourselves in vain here for something which is not as big as we imagine".

Despite these good prospects, it is important that Mozambicans do not consider gas exploration as the only and greatest solution for the project to develop Mozambique. There is a need to increase production and productivity in traditional activities such as agriculture, fishing, tourism and power generation projects, among others. There are many more opportunities in other areas of the economy for revenue generation and with high potential for creating a considerable number of employment opportunities.

### **Opportunity for attracting foreign investment**

The proposal to create the Sovereign Wealth Fund has been sitting in the Mozambican parliament for some time and it has caused many people to be astonished that production and export has started before a transparent mechanism is in place to manage the money that will come from the oil and gas projects. Many Mozambicans have welcomed the start of liquefied natural gas exploration, but demand a transparent management of the revenues for the benefit of the national economy.

Mechanisms for the distribution of wealth are needed in order to avoid mismanagement of resources, and a lack of diversification of the economy based on concentration on the exploitation of raw materials, that is, an economy that reinforces poverty and violence. The Mozambican government should explain the benefits of gas exploitation, since the resulting revenues should serve to improve the standard of living of the population. The government must explain what income the country will earn, not only from gas, but also from the exploitation of other national

resources.

Exacerbated corruption in Mozambique has caused many investors to lose confidence, but the new billion-dollar gas projects could turn things around when the revenues from the deal are well managed. The implementation of the projects will also have a positive impact on economic growth, as well as from the point of view of public accounts and balance of trade.

In summary, these developments raise the bar for confidence and expectations for the future, in the sense that Mozambique can take a significant position as an exporter of LNG in the energy transition phase and improve its economy. The start of gas production confirms the good moment the country is experiencing as a recipient of billionaire foreign investments after a period when few believed in Mozambique, especially investors, multinationals and economic institutions, due to various factors dominated by corruption.

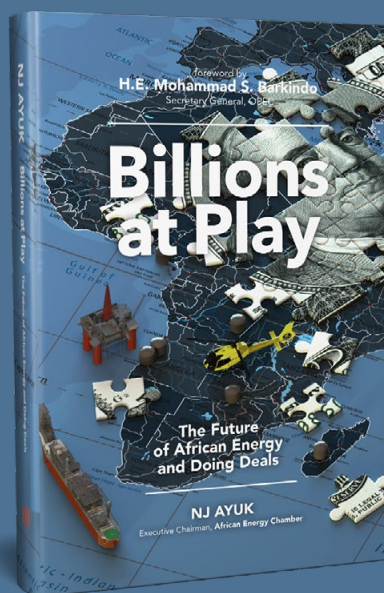
Major consumers of gas worldwide are seeking new supplies to support energy security, and this could be an opportunity for Mozambique given the enormous gas deposits it has.



# Billions at Play

## The Future of African Energy and Doing Deals

by NJ AYUK



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

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# Neuman & Esser Group Ups Stakes In Africa's Fight Against Energy Poverty

By Ajong Mbapndah L



*NEA is committed to the crusade to end energy poverty in the continent, says Sales Director Africa Jiří Rus.*

As Africa continues with its crusade against energy poverty, one of the companies it can count on is the Neuman & Esser Group-NEA. With growing footprints in Nigeria, Angola, Libya, South Africa, and Uganda, the family-owned Group with a global footprint is stepping up operations in Africa.

With its solid understanding of African realities and needs, NEA is firmly committed to helping the continent to change its energy fortunes in a positive way. Each trip to Africa energizes me by optimism and believe that we can improve by just doing and not talking and promising, says Dr. Jiří Rus, Sales Director for Africa at NEA. NEA has great products and a strong local content concept which can be ideal for the current energy needs of Africa, Dr. Jiří says in an exclusive interview with PAV.

**Could you start by introducing the Neuman & Esser Group, its services and products?**

Dr. Jiří Rus: NEUMAN & ESSER (NEA GROUP), founded

1830 in Aachen, Germany is a leading manufacturer of compressor solutions including piston compressors and high-pressure diaphragm compressors of HOFER as well as sealing elements for oscillating and rotating systems by STASSKOL. We offer comprehensive services for NEA brand and 12 OEM legacies. Our solutions serve all major applications in the Oil & Gas markets, Chemicals & Petrochemicals Industries, Food & Beverages, Renewable Energy and H2 Economy including H2 Mobility.

We are a family-owned company with around 1,300 employees having

also works intense on digitalization projects.

To be a family-owned German company means, that we are very much focused on quality and sustainability of our solutions and due to our long history, in everything we do, we have long-term perspectives and partnerships in mind.

**You are the Sales Director for Africa; may we know the nature of your African operations or networks as there stand now, and plans for the future?**

Dr. Jiří Rus: NEA GROUP as

four production sites in Germany as well as two in the USA and 19 companies for sales and system engineering as well as service facilities at 10 strategic locations around the globe. We constantly enlarge our product range like for example incorporating HYTRON as a solution provider in the fields of engineering and system integration for PEM and alkaline electrolyzers as well as natural gas and ethanol reformers. We do have also many years of experiences around biomass. NEA GROUP

mentioned above is traditionally acting quite global. We formed our vision scope into expressions: "Agile. Solution. Experts.". Especially the first part of it – Agile – has the Market Presence and Global Structure inside. Seeing our history, it is also important to understand, that we develop and focus all the time with long term set ups.

I personally also believe that business can be done only with proper understanding of local specifics and demands and this you can do only being present on the market. We have been present in Egypt for already many years with our own branch office in Cairo. We also placed many of our compressor systems around Africa in the past, where I would mention except Egypt also Libya, South Africa and Nigeria mainly. However, those were due to international EPC contracts and not due to our local presence.

As we want to provide to final end-users also professional aftermarket support, we agreed we need to do more. Because of that we formulated our 4 steps strategy plan for Africa. We aim to develop our footprint following selected markets to give us better understanding of the local needs. We have put this strategy in place in November last year and made significant progress since that time. We established NEUMAN & ESSER LIBYA as our JV; we signed agency agreements with our partners in South Africa (Rotamech (Pty) Ltd); Nigeria (Milat Nigeria Limited); Angola (Afori (SU) LDA) and just recently also in Uganda (Beta Projects Limited).

And this is just the beginning, we have our clear strategy to expand further. We would like to cover all possible markets, where we can offer our solutions, and which are interested to use our technology and also appreciate our commitments to local



*HQ of NEA Group in Übach-Palenberg, Germany.*

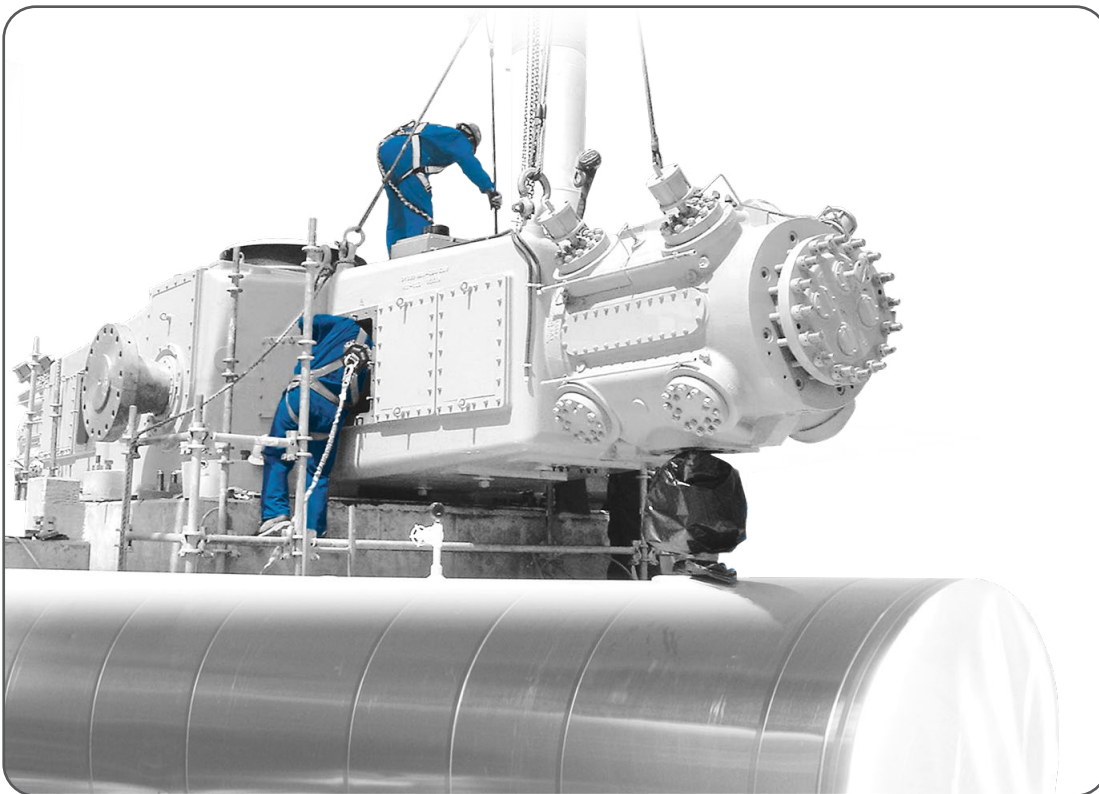


developments. Following our Africa strategy, we would like to develop our business set up in Africa to the size and network as we have in other regions.

*Looking at Africa and its current needs or development priorities, what does the Neuman & Esser Group bring to the table, how will the continent benefit from your services?*

Dr. Jiří Rus: I do see many areas of possible contribution of NEA GROUP into the development needs in Africa. We are active in many business and industry segments as I mentioned in our introduction. Except the business development, important driver for our strategy is the shocking fact, that more than 700 million people in Africa live in energy poverty. Moreover, many countries are raw material exporters, but the final products are imported. Which means that the value added remains abroad. We do see it as not OK. We believe that companies like us should also take the responsibility to help developing local industry around the world and not to concentrate this in only few countries. I believe that this is also aligned with the G7 countries commitment to help less developed markets.

We are coming with an offering of state-of-the-art compressor solutions for (not only) oil & gas segment for example. I know this is not the most trendy and popular segment these days, especially in our European environment. However, development of this segment can bring the change to Africa's standard of living the fastest. Without energy, you cannot start any industry and without industry, you cannot really develop. Moreover, Africa contributes by around 3.5% CO<sub>2</sub> global emissions. This is not fair to limit the continent's development based on priorities of others. NEA GROUP comes with technology for upstream, midstream as well as downstream applications. Our solutions are very efficient and reliable equipped of course by latest digital technologies like monitoring



*Compressor installation.*

and diagnostics and we provide customer tailored solutions to achieve optimal and efficient operation. All our compressors are produced in Germany, where we focus on very high-quality standards.

I believe we can contribute also on development of renewable energy segment. Except traditional compressor solutions that are applied in hydrogen, but also ammonia production, we have our own electrolyzers production too. We can provide not only supply of our modern equipment but can offer a consultancy by our Energy Solutions division. And talking about efficiency of processes, we do also see a great potential with the utilization of flared gas, where we also have a solution for.

And last, but not least, we are coming with a strong Local Content Concept. We are not an international giant company, that could finance a university for example. However, we see a great potential in our possible contribution to Local Content initiatives in Africa. We developed a solid concept for this, where we want to train local people in our training centers to be able to provide local support to our customers. We

also support development of local workshops to enable our partners to make components repair locally. We are almost done with such a service workshop in South Africa with our business partner Rotamech and we have already executed several repair jobs there. Btw, we are planning to make an official opening of it during the first quarter of 2023 inviting customers and business partners to see it by themselves. We are developing the same in Nigeria with our partner Milat Nigeria and there are further plans coming soon for example in Tunisia. We want to have our partners more independent and provide this way local support keeping the high OEM standards. I believe this is for the benefit of both local society as well as customers.

*May we know the nature of your recent trip to Uganda, how was the experience like and what was achieved in moving the NEUMAN & ESSER forward in its vision for Africa?*

Dr. Jiří Rus: It was not the first time I came to Uganda. I like the country as well as people here. In general, I find open and positive minded people and

it energizes me each time quite a lot. I of course did not come just for fun.

Uganda is a very interesting market for us. In terms of political and business environment it is a stable country, which is crucial for us due to our mindset to develop long-term relationships. And of course, business first. The oil & gas segment is developing in Uganda, and we would like to offer our solutions and experiences. We are participating on the tender at Tilenga Field for annulus compressors right now for example. There are also coming soon other projects like the new refinery and petrochemical plant etc. We of course want to propose our solutions for these.

I am impressed, how the government developed a strong and solid local content agenda guided by PAU. We would like to show that this can be met and followed also by manufacturers of such complex products like compressor systems. As Uganda is at the beginning of this path, we see a pity to apply the old-time business pattern of just procuring abroad, installing, operating and when you need any support, you must communicate with

abroad based companies. It is not only more expensive, but it takes time. And time is money – especially in Oil & Gas.

We want to provide the solid after-market support as mentioned already before. However, in case of upstream applications in Tilenga Field for example, we can also create a program with partial assembly or even partial production and procuring of our systems locally in Uganda. Here, unfortunately, I was not very successful last week, as I did not find probably the correct people to talk about it.

However, we finalized our agreement with company Beta Projects Limited, which is going to represent us in Uganda. It is a very strong local partner already active in this segment. What they do on construction side at Tilenga is amazing. I believe that we will be able to address our points much better now with their help. I feel it would be a pity for Uganda to lose such opportunity, as it would be the very first country in Africa, if I am not mistaken, which could have such a program at all. It would not be only about development of people and industry with related know-how transfer, but of course, part of the value added would be generated directly in Uganda.

***We will also like you to shed light on some of the other partnerships with the continent beginning with the partnership between the Neuman & Esser Group and Afori company, what is the expected outcome on this?***

Dr. Jiří Rus: Afori (SU) LDA is our business partner in Angola. I came to Uganda directly from there. It follows the same principle and logic as all our local presence, NEA Africa Footprint if you wish, and the Local Content Concept. We do not have any installation in Angola at the moment. However, the market is very promising. There is an ambitious plan for refinery segment development.



***Jiri Rus (NEA Group) on left; Nelson Mugenyi (MD of Beta Projects) after Agency agreement signature in Kampala, Uganda.***

This will be soon followed I believe also by petrochemical and fertilizers initiatives. We should not forget about existing LNG and its probable extension. All those are segments, where our compressor systems can be applied. And as the same in Uganda or elsewhere, we would like to offer modern and efficient solutions keeping in mind the local content opportunities. When having hopefully success and being awarded for some projects, our business partner Afori will go the same direction as I described in case of South Africa and Rotamech. Just next week, we will start the first 2 weeks training program in Germany for technicians from Rotamech. This is the goal of us in each country.

The NEA GROUP was recently announced as a Gold sponsor of the African Refiners & Distributors Association, may we get more insights into this?

Dr. Jiří Rus: You understand from previous answers, that we are quite active in various segments. Refineries and downstream in general are traditionally our strongest segment with many years of experiences. I met with Mr. Anibor Kragha, Chief Executive of ARDA, back in May this year in Luanda at CAPE VIII conference. I was impressed about his focus and enthusiasm for the refinery segment development across Africa. Therefore, we followed together, and he showed me the

concept of organization. They organize various workgroups. They support their partners as a kind of platform for the exchange of

knowledge and experiences and they are fighting for the support of projects across Africa. I believe that we as NEA GROUP with our many years of experiences can contribute a lot by sharing and showcasing. We are happy to have a chance to meet inside of ARDA group with various companies and people and offer our know-how. Of course, I see that as a great opportunity for a good networking, which is all the time very important in our business.

***What is the ideal profile of projects or countries that the NEA GROUP is looking to expand to in Africa?***

Dr. Jiří Rus: I would not necessarily



***Ilya Asser (MD of NEAC Germany) on left; Alex du Plessis (MD of Rotamech) on right; Rob van Lienen (Area Sales Manager NEAC Germany) in back at internal opening of service workshop in South Africa.***



try to describe the “ideal profile”. We are happy and open to investigate any opportunity from any of the industry segments we are in. We are ready to start small in the market by supporting projects development, but of course the aim is to win such projects and have a chance to implement our Africa strategy steps – means, to develop local field service technicians, local service workshops and become to be recognized as a “locally present international OEM”. This is our goal.

If anyone would know about a project in the country, where we are not present at the moment, please, let us know. We are very flexible in setting up. We want to follow the market needs and not as it was in the past quite often, that we set the

strategy and priority and we rigidly follow that. People should recognize NEA GROUP as a modern, flexible company that is easy to deal with, and that is happy to listen to the market and not to “teach the market”.

*With all these slow but steady steps the NEA GROUP has been making, how satisfied are you with reception you have received and how do you envisage the future?*

Dr. Jiří Rus: I cannot agree with “slow but steady”. We achieved a lot in only one year. We have our branch office in Libya; we have strong business partners in South Africa and Nigeria, where we are busy on finishing local workshops, we will have the first training of people from

there already next week. We have newly also our business partners in Angola and Uganda; we already participate on several projects in the offer bidding phase. This is much more, than we were expecting ourselves to achieve within one year. Yes, there is an intense work behind, a lot of time “on the way”, but it is everything except slow. And all that is possible only due to readiness and openness of markets and people in Africa.

I believe that this speed of development will continue also the next 1-2 years. However, there will have to come a slight modification of our actions soon. We do not want to only enter many markets, we want to come and work on development of relationships, our support and presence. When we come to any

market, we understand it as a kind of our commitment to also work intensely there and not to have only “a pin on the map”.

My friend Mr. NJ Ayuk JD, Executive Chairman at Africa Energy Chamber, has a great slogan: Making Energy Poverty History by 2030. I would be happy to see that we as NEA GROUP will have a chance to contribute to that. I believe we have great products combined with a strong Local Content Concept, which Africa can benefit very much from. We as a company are committed to make that happen and I am happy to be part of this game. As said already: “Each trip to Africa energizes me by optimism and believe that we can improve by just doing and not talking and promising!”

## African Diamond Insights With Dr M'zée Fula Ngege

By Ajong Mbapndah L

Endowed with great reserves in countries like Botswana, South Africa, D.R. Congo, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Guinea and others, Africa should be a power player when it comes to the global diamond industry. This is one of the principal missions of the African Diamond Council-ADC led by Dr M'zée Fula Ngege.

In a Q and A with PAV, Dr M'zée Fula Ngege sheds light on the ADC, and the state and perspectives of the diamond industry in Africa. With the existing sanctions on Russian diamonds, African diamond producing countries are much better positioned to collectively have a more imposing control over the international diamond trade, Dr M'zée Fula Ngege says.



*Dr M'zée Fula Ngege and the ADC have been hard at work to protect the interests of Africa in the Diamond sector.*

*Could you begin by introducing the African Diamond Council for us?*

Dr M'zée Fula Ngege: The African Diamond Council (ADC) is official governing body for African

diamond producing nations, whose leading mission is to cooperatively assemble and unify members into a formidable industry alliance. One of the supplemental undertakings of the ADC is to initiate favorable diamond

policies and strategies that sanction its member states to implement, ascertain and recognize the most profitable means of preserving their individual and common business interests.

The ADC works to pioneer a prevailing culture that is solely intended to ensure sectoral dominance and productivity of each Member State within the global diamond marketplace. At the same time, the governing body provides African diamond producing countries with freedom of choice as well as a broader range of marketing and international selling options that are specifically designed to eliminate negative stigma while securing industry success.

In addition, our vigorous governing body also functions as an international think-tank that is specifically designed to supply favorable solutions as well as serve as the encouraging industry emissary between the public and private sectors.

The governing body also represents and defends each member state as well as works to restore harmony in affairs relating to unfair human rights violations, unjust circumstances,

misleading allegations and hindering contract negotiations.

The ADC develops and implements effective revenue recovery mechanisms that not only restricts unauthorized diamonds deals, but also urges the return of illegally transported and confiscated African rough diamonds back to their countries of origin for legitimate sale/resale.

African Diamond Council has shown a great deal of success when acting as an independent, third-party certifier of supply chain transparency, social responsibility and ecological sustainability, particularly in support of small-scale mining initiatives in African diamond producing countries. The governing body supports small scale miners by certifying and promoting their production, assisting them in getting the highest possible market price and when possible, by securing additional premiums through the African International Diamond Exchange (AIDEX), which is the Council's official selling platform.

The ADC works diligently to increase transparency in the supply chain by promoting best practice standards within the global diamond industry and by partnering with cogent initiatives to increase responsibility in Africa's natural diamond mining industry. Through AIDEX, the Council also conducts field research and implements traceability/blockchain technology to encourage industry modernization and production efficiency.

In the areas of social impact, as well as youth and women's empowerment, the ADC actively works to encourage and enhance formidable capacity building. Huge strides have been and continue to be made in efforts that contribute to the development of the ADC's successful program strategies.

We believe that the very best Ambassadors for African diamonds are the First Ladies within diamond producing countries and the ADC will not rest until mining companies extracting in Africa realize that.

The ADC goes out of its way to globally promote African diamonds



*The ADC is increasingly becoming more active in efforts to monitor commercial dealings, says Dr Mzée Fula Ngege.*

as well as events specifically designed to highlight the gravity and prestige on each and every platform available to us, which also includes press coverage, auctions, beauty pageants, motion pictures, fashion runways and diamond conferences/expositions.

### ***When was the African Diamond Council created and what is the state of its membership?***

Dr Mzée Fula Ngege: The African Diamond Council (ADC) was initially established in 1999 and there are currently 18 African Member States. Our proposed policies are reinforced by the African Diamond Producers Association (ADPA), which is the ADC's advocating intergovernmental derivative. Together, we collectively strive to protect as well as promote excellence and integrity in the African diamond industry. The ADC effectively functions as the African diamond industry's most active and forceful administrative mechanisms that facilitates fair trade between the private and public sector.

The African Diamond Council is

officially represented by each elected head of the country inside African diamond producing countries. The administrative contributions of each Head of State are mutually and best highlighted through their sagacious vision and sectoral awareness.

The ADPA is represented by secondary-level civil servants that have been appointed inside each Member State's corresponding natural/mineral resources and mining/geological ministries.

### ***What potential does the continent have today in terms of diamond capacity and production?***

Dr Mzée Fula Ngege: Natural diamond production is one of the main sources of wealth and employment for African nations namely Botswana, Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Africa and Namibia. With the existing sanctions on Russian diamonds, African diamond producing countries are much better positioned to collectively have a more imposing control over the

international diamond trade. With the arrival of the global pandemic in 2020, Africa's diamond producing nations not only demonstrated considerable success in securing their operating mining concessions, but also moved to increase diamond nation-wide production, while enjoying the freedom to stockpile large inventories of premium rough diamonds, shortly after implementing third/night shifts inside many of the functional diamond concessions.

When we subject West Africa to careful examination within diamond producing countries like Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Liberia and Guinea, it is easy to see that these nations are also blessed with an abundance of diamond potential. The ADC is and has always been fully aware that favorable kimberlite deposits do, in fact, exist inside those countries, although massive deposits of diamonds have not been unearthed.

Unlike the People's Republic of China, which virtually has no mined diamond capacity at all, the natural diamond dominance in



Africa's producing countries must assume responsibility for the long-term welfare and prosperity of its people as well as the communities where the commodity is recurrently being extracted. In essence, the mineral wealth of those countries should certainly be considered as an integral component of the diamond's value proposition, for it realistically confronts the diamond consumer's desire for social significance.

***We have seen Diamonds like other resources serving as a source of conflict instead of meeting development needs, what is the African Diamond Council doing to change the trend?***

Dr M>zée Fula Ngenge: The African Diamond Council (ADC) is both, sensitive and intolerant to armed conflicts. That also goes for any and all diamonds that are mined as a result of human suffering. The ADC works to build lasting relations with other like-minded organizations through plausible dialogue and on occasion, assumes the requested role to act as a professional liaison within our industry's most confining state of affairs.

The ADC makes every effort to prevent and reduce conflict by making constructive recommendations to revamp infected domestic political institutions within each of our Member States. These endeavors typically transpire through the ADC's efforts in the direction of resourceful constitutional design. However, these provocative undertaking prove to be much more challenging in preventing civil war within highly divided African societies.

The ADC has demonstrated and enjoyed unforeseen levels of success through vigorous diplomacy efforts. This concentrated attribute is what imparted a great deal of credence to end civil wars in diamond producing countries such as Sierra Leone in January 2002, Angola in April 2002 and the Democratic Republic of Congo in July 2003.

One unparalleled example of war prevention is the Republic

of Zimbabwe, where the ADC deliberately summoned leaders from the Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front (Zanu PF) and the Movement for Democratic Change - Tsvangirai (MDC-T), the two opposing political parties and encouraged them to work jointly in coming up with specific parameters en route to a peaceful co-existence. The welcoming and acceptance of an effective conflict resolution pact is what convinced the world that affirmative internal transformation in African can successfully occur in the absence of both, bloodshed and extrinsic collusion.

We, at the ADC also encourage non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to coordinate, cooperate and collaborate with our Member States as well as with the private sector to assist in formalizing and improving social and economic conditions, particularly in the artisanal diamond mining sector. The ADC also helps with securing safe working conditions for alluvial miners as well as occasionally assisting them with healthcare expenses. We have more evidence now that our African diamond industry is beginning to understand that dialogue, coming together for great purpose and the human insistence on life over death, is what will actually end and prevent armed conflicts.

***There is also the perception that much of the diamond industry is under the control of foreign firms, and not Africans, is this assessment accurate and are you comfortable with that?***

Dr M>zée Fula Ngenge: This is not only an assumed perception, but also an accurate assessment that is much closer to the disregarded reality than most would ever imagine or realize. If we pause to take a close look within the confines of international industry bodies that exist inside major diamond centers, such as the World Diamond Council (WDC), the World Federation of Diamond Bourses (WFDB), CIBJO - The World Jewellery Confederation, Dubai Multi Commodities Centre (DMCC), International Diamond

Manufacturers Association (IDMA) and New York's Diamond Dealers Club (DDC), it is easy to see that the physiognomy of Africa is neither perceptible, pertinent nor accounted for, at any respectable degree, magnitude or level of global significance.

Woefully, white-collar Africans in the diamond industry are typically civil servants that are fallaciously regarded as exploitable and controllable suppliers of this high priority export. Moreover, blue-collar Africans are often shamefully perceived as felonious smugglers of Africa's most sought-after gemstones. These above-mentioned entities and organizations have yet to become fully conscious of the fact that diversity and inclusion at the executive or global decision-making level is not just an option in 2022 ... it's a MUST to have competent, strong-willed Africans visibly represented at the administrative level of the global diamond trade. Industry organizations and diamond mining companies who do not have competent, battle-tested African representation on their Executive Committees or Board of Directors must undeniably review their current state of affairs. In time, it will be increasingly more difficult for foreign firms to ensure success within the African diamond industry if Africans are not out front leading the way, particularly when African diamonds make up such a significant part of foreign revenue streams. Since their existence, I have witnessed several of these industry bodies temporarily install and enlist expendable, inert and servile Africans to assist in opening governmental or ministerial doors for them without any promise of returning the favor to Africans in countries of those seeking to disdainfully exploit Africa's most precious mineral resources. Nonetheless, many of the Africans who were fortunate to be appointed to an executive level position at a multinational, many of them unexpectedly became masters at voluntarily assuming the role to be overtaken advantage of. The

handful of African groundbreakers that I entered this profession with 40 years ago are nowhere to be found and so many of them ended up failing to sustain, thrive and survive in an industry that irrefutably values the commodity in demand, so much more than the indigenous who are more entitled than any non-African.

The ADC is increasingly becoming more active in efforts to monitor commercial dealings, especially when relating to firms under fire or severe scrutiny. The ADC is now at a stage where it is regularly commended for being Africa's most authoritative industry entity. The ADC does possess the authority to penalize any diamond firm that is directly or indirectly linked to exploitation, illegal export or trading of African diamonds and we do not hesitate to exercise that right.

Finally, the ADC regularly compiles valuable industry data and benefits from an extensive database of fully compliant international jewelers. The ADC also assigns global performance ratings in an effort to provide their clients with "complete and unequivocal assurance" that diamonds originating in African diamond producing countries are responsibly sourced.

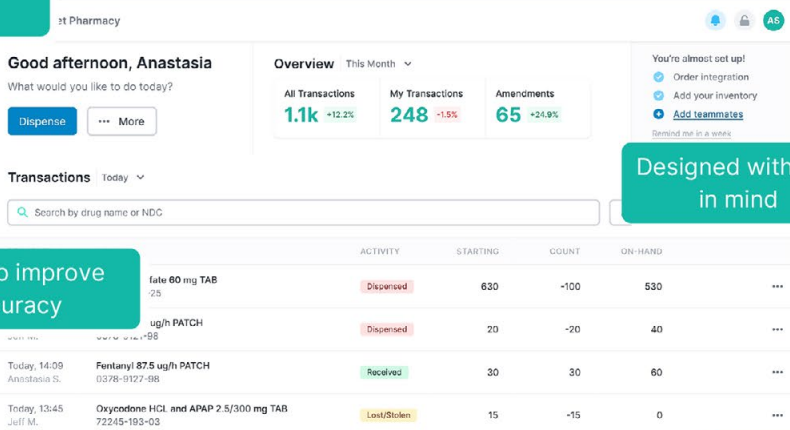
The ADC does have a Trading Watch List, that has not only been established for international jewelers, but also for liable mining companies that have been known to have poor compliance performance and/or human rights violations. These entities on our list have either failed to comply with legal and regulatory requirements, have been accused of mitigating conflicts of interest or have been known for unwisely supporting information barriers.

The ADC is adamant about giving prominence to the leaders of its Member States, mining executives and engineers within the global diamond sector in an effort to underscore their acuity, intellect and decision-making prowess. At the same time, the progress and initiatives that ADC has launched and advocated for in the areas of social impact are ones that we are incredibly proud of.

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# Zimbabwe and Uganda Launch Satellites into Space

By Prince Kurupati

**Z**imbabwe and Uganda recently joined a small group of prestigious African nations that have launched nano-satellites into space. Zimbabwe's Zimsat-1 and Uganda's PearlAfricaSat-1 were launched into space on November 7, 2022.

The nano-satellites from Zimbabwe and Uganda were launched aboard the Northrop Grumman NG-18 Cygnus from the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Commercial Space Launch Facility in Virginia.

The launch is part of the BIRDS-5 joint global project. This is a project spearheaded by the Japan Kyushu Institute of Technology (Kyutech) which sees African students in STEM partner with their Japanese counterparts to design and manufacture nano-satellites. To date, the project has benefited fourteen countries. The two African satellites were launched at the same time as the Japan CubeSat 2U (TAKA) which was designed in part using African equipment and the expertise of African students.

In addition to allowing African students to design and manufacture space technology gadgets and tools, the BIRDS program also is a skills development and skills sharing platform that introduces students from developing countries to satellite development so that they can take the knowledge and help in fostering similar projects in their home countries.

The lead engineer for Uganda's satellite development team Bonny Omara said he was filled with joy as he watched the launch. "I was watching it on TV, together with my Honourable Minister for Science, Technology and Innovation. It was really amazing and we hugged each other! To see my baby take off from the ground headed for the International Space Station – it's really a great feeling of my life," Omara said.

Kwaku Sumah who is the founder of



SpaceHubs Africa said that the launch is massive not just for Uganda and Zimbabwe but the entire continent. Sumah said that the news may not be embraced by most people not because they don't appreciate the work that was done but simply because they aren't aware of the huge benefits that such innovations bring.

"Space technologies are essentially the backbone of the modern economy... You sometimes don't even know that you're using them. But for example, if you're using Google Maps... or even things like Zoom, or broadband communication, that's all powered by satellite services," Sumah said.

Though the Uganda and Zimbabwe nano satellites won't be used for broadband or wireless services, Sumah said they are still of great significance as they have been put in place for purposes of earth observation. Sumah said the satellites have "a multispectral camera, which allows the satellite to essentially take pictures of the Earth". Thanks to the multispectral cameras, the satellites will be able to capture and "perform analysis of water quality, land use cover, and soil fertility" something

which enables environmentalists, farmers and the general citizenry to better make use of the natural resources in their countries.

Nano-satellites have a 24 to 30 months lifespan hence Zimbabwe and Uganda need to continue developing more of such satellites to continue reaping the benefits that they bring. Bonny Omara is convinced that this won't be a problem as they now have knowledge about satellite development.

"A couple of countries have launched their first satellite, or even many, by paying money to other institutions who then give them the satellite... But Uganda is unique in the sense that we participated, we have now got three engineers who are fully grounded in the process of developing satellites," Omara said.

The Ugandan minister for Science, Technology and Innovation Ms Monica Musenero was full of praise for the recent development saying, "As a country, the development of PearlAfricaSat-1 presents opportunities for the development of subsequent satellites locally in Uganda, meaning our engineers and scientists will be providing practical

solutions to the challenges facing the Ugandan citizens as well as boosting the country's internal capacity to develop the space science and technology industry value chain".

In Zimbabwe, the news of the launch was rather received on partisan grounds with those in favour of the ruling party expressing their joy over the development while the opposition and its supporters saw it as an unnecessary expense. The country's Higher and Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development Permanent Secretary Professor Fanuel Tagwira was elated with the news and said it's a welcome development which will bring about positive gains.

"We are getting into that phase of development as a country where we can gather information we can use in agriculture, health and other areas... We will have real-time data instead of waiting for data coming from other people. Zimbabwe is going to be in a very good position to collect its own information which it can use for decision-making," Professor Tagwira said.

# Subtonomy Will Add Value To Africa's Digital Revolution- CEO & Co-Founder Andreas Jörbeck

By Ajong Mbapndah L

Africa is on the brink of a digital revolution that will transform the lives of hundreds of millions of people says Andreas Jörbeck CEO and Co-Founder of Subtonomy. Founded in Sweden in 2012, Subtonomy's ML-driven Network Experience Platform provides unprecedented real-time insight into the experience of customers on any network (2G, 3G, 4G, 5G NSA, 5G SA, broadband, and gigabit fiber).

Its easy-to-use applications utilize this rich data to enable customer support teams to isolate and resolve problems faster; operational teams to prioritize fault fixing and network build according to actual customer needs; business teams to up-sell to both business customers and consumers, and wholesale teams to understand the service they're delivering to clients.

"Countries such as Kenya, Morocco, Senegal and South Africa are expected to reach US levels of internet-driven GDP by 2050, and Africa as a whole already has more smartphones than the US. The creativity, energy and enthusiasm that tech is unleashing in Africa is incredible and game changing. We're excited to play our small part by helping ensure that customers enjoy digital confidence – safe in the knowledge that if they experience a problem their telco will have their back and fix things as rapidly as possible," says Andreas Jörbeck.

Subtonomy recently made its first foray into the African market with a strong showing at AFRICOM in South Africa which ran from the 8th to the 12th of November 2022. The pleasant experiences at AFRICOM makes Andreas Jörbeck to believe strongly that Subtonomy will be apposite addition to the growing African tech industry



*Africa is on the brink of a digital revolution that will transform the lives of hundreds of millions of people, says Andreas Jörbeck.*

## **Could we start with an introduction of Subtonomy and services it offers?**

Andreas Jörbeck: Subtonomy is the leading service assurance provider in the Nordics. Our network experience platform collects data from any type of network (2G, 3G, 4G, 5G, traditional broadband and full fibre) and combines this with business data to create a real-time 3600 view of what customers are actually experiencing on the network. If there's a problem, this data helps call center agents instantly see where the problem lies, helping them solve the problem faster. The same data can be fed to digital self-service and even chatbots, enabling customers to find out what's wrong and resolve most inquiries themselves. This means less queues for customer service, happier customers and more productive, less-stressed support staff.

## **For how long has the company been in business and what is its geographical spread?**

Andreas Jörbeck: Subtonomy is based in Stockholm, Sweden and in 2022 celebrated 10 years of successful operation. Our core markets are the mobile-first countries of Northern

Europe (the Nordics) and we're proud of having a satisfied and loyal customer base. In all the years we've been operating we've never lost a customer. We recently took the decision to expand our offer into the Middle East and Africa (MEA), due to increased inquiries from the region, and we've opened a new sales office to support this expansion. As telcos in MEA roll out new networks and innovate their service offerings, they're looking to learn from other mobile-first markets, such as those in the Nordics.

## **The company was a finalist in the 2022 World Communications Awards for Customer Experience, what is unique or what makes Subtonomy stand out from the services it offers?**

Andreas Jörbeck: Subtonomy was really proud to be shortlisted in the Customer Experience category for the World Communication Awards, which reflects our ongoing, long-term commitment to helping our clients provide premium, cost-effective and efficient support to their customers.

A lot of telcos struggle to provide efficient support because they can't pinpoint what's wrong. Either their support staff are juggling multiple

tools, or data is fragmented, incomplete, inaccurate, out of date or insufficiently granular (meaning they can see how their network is working on a macro level but not individual network experience). This inflates the cost of support, disappoints customers and leads to long queues for assistance.

Our solution enables telcos to see exactly what each and every customer is experiencing, so that problems can be identified and resolved faster. But that's just the start. Not only do we help telcos react more quickly to customer inquiries and complaints,

but they can identify and begin fixing problems even before the customer is aware of them. That's paradigm changing.

The same data that enables support staff to resolve problems faster can also be used to empower digital self-care and even used by other departments - breaking down organisational silos and opening up a whole range of new business dialogues and opportunities.

## **For the first time, Subtonomy came to the African market and with an attendance at the AFRICOM in South Africa from the 8th to the 10th of November 2022, why the interest at this point?**

Andreas Jörbeck: We really enjoyed the AFRICOM show and the invaluable opportunity to talk directly to African telcos who are determined to improve their support operations. They tell us that not only are customer expectations rising in Africa, but they're challenged with scaling support to deal with millions of new customers and need to find ways to increase their efficiency to meet customer expectations and keep costs down.



We've already been through many of the same challenges with our Nordic customers and therefore have the experience to help African telcos take customer support to the next level. There's a great opportunity – a win-win – for us to help boost African telcos performance in this area.

**How was the experience like for you and your team like at Africom?**

Andreas Jorbeck: It was a fantastic experience, and we were incredibly busy. Not only did we have some really valuable conversations, but we were able to share our insights and

learn more about the pressing issues that African telcos are facing today. Each country and telco is at a different stage of development and has different challenges, but one common issue that many are encountering is with their data sources. They have a wide variety of probes, probes that are no longer supported by the vendor, or even a lack of probes. We were able to reassure visitors that we could help them tackle these types of problems because our platform can extract data from any source, meaning it isn't necessary to change their probes (which is an expensive undertaking) but, if and when they do, we can easily accommodate that as well.

**From the experience and the potential that you see in Africa, what difference will the presence of Subtonomy make in the continent?**

Andreas Jorbeck: African telcos need to support customers through a period of rapid technical change, increased service complexity, the transition to smartphones and the roll out of new digital support channels. Not only can Subtonomy help the deliver world-



*The creativity, energy and enthusiasm that tech is unleashing in Africa is incredible and game changing and Subtonomy will be a great plus to services ,says Andreas Jörbeck.*

class digital customer service today, but our platform is flexible enough to insulate them against change. But the best thing about Subtonomy is that all of this can be delivered without having to undertake a costly and disruptive digital transformation project. Our platform can pull data from any existing data source and put it into a single data repository where it is pre-analysed and made instantly available through our easy-to-use applications. This massively reduces costs and disruption and means the telco and its customers can see results far quicker. It also means that even smaller telcos (tier 2, 3 and 4) can afford to overhaul their support infrastructure.

**As you make check out the African market, are you concerned about competition from potential rivals?**

Andreas Jorbeck: Subtonomy sees itself as a non-disruptive solution and everyone's best friend. We add value to what's already there without the need to change probes or swap out billing systems. You can even display our data in existing call center applications if you wish. This

means telcos can squeeze every last bit of value out of their legacy equipment and solutions while still delivering a step-change in customer support. With Subtonomy you don't have to compromise – you can have quality support 24/7, roll out new digital channels, transform the efficiency of customer support and do all of this cost-effectively and non-disruptively. And our scalability means that not only can we help the very biggest group operators in the largest and most mature mobile markets, but we can also help smaller operators in less populous markets who traditionally haven't been able to afford this type of technology.

We think that puts us head and shoulders ahead of any competitors.

**Based on your knowledge of the continent and the potential you see, what parts of the continent will be ideal for the continent to start and if we were talking of a timeline, how soon before Africa starts benefitting from the services of Subtonomy?**

Andreas Jorbeck: Each country and each telco has different problems they are wrestling with. Some are moving from 2G to 3G; others from 3G to 4G. They might need to support customers upgrading from feature phones to smartphones, or they might be experiencing rapid development of their digital economy with businesses going online and the advent of new digital businesses. Whether they're trying to support consumers, small businesses, native digital businesses or large enterprises, we have a range of easy-to-use applications to help them transform their support operations.

One of the reasons for opening our new African sales office though is that we'd already received a number of serious inquiries from all parts of the continent. While it's too soon to make

any announcements just yet, we hope to be able to share more news with you in 2023. So, watch this space!

Overall though we're very pleased with how this expansion is going for us. One of our unique selling points is how fast Subtonomy is to implement. From signing with us to seeing improved results can be a matter of weeks. When your market is moving so fast, you can't afford to wait around for a year or more to see results. With Subtonomy you don't have to.

**What are some of the things that the Swedish government does to boost engagement with Africa and facilitate the expansion of corporate interests like yours?**

Andreas Jorbeck: Subtonomy's expansion into Africa is funded solely by us and is fundamentally commercial. However, as a country, Sweden does provide support to African businesses and organizations. Earlier this year, for example, the Swedish government announced an additional SEK4.67 billion (\$450 million) to support a regional strategy for Africa and boost cross-border co-operation. That's extremely important in an industry such as telecoms, which is all about interconnectedness.

**Any last word as we round up this interview, what makes you hopeful for the future of ties between Subtonomy and Africa?**

Andreas Jorbeck: Africa is on the brink of a digital revolution that will transform the lives of hundreds of millions of people. Countries such as Kenya, Morocco, Senegal and South Africa are expected to reach US levels of internet-driven GDP by 2050, and Africa as a whole already has more smartphones than the US. The creativity, energy and enthusiasm that tech is unleashing in Africa is incredible and game changing. We're excited to play our small part by helping ensure that customers enjoy digital confidence – safe in the knowledge that if they experience a problem their telco will have their back and fix things as rapidly as possible.

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We believe that Africa is the next frontier for global growth and offers more business opportunities for entrepreneurs than any other continent. With resources crisis around the world, Africa has come into limelight given the youngest continent has around 600 million hectares of arable land. It is also important to point out that by the year, 2040 Africa will have a larger workforce than China or India.

The dream of Órama (stemming from the Greek word "Horama" means vision) is to assist investors to build a free-trade Africa so that the continent can regain its influence within global markets.

Mauritius serving as a beacon for the business community, plays a central role to accomplish Órama's vision. Our management company seeks to highlight the importance of the island nation as a springboard for entrepreneurs to invest in Africa. As an internationally respected and reliable financial centre, we trust that Mauritius has all the ingredients to leverage the potential of the African continent.

At its core, Órama believes in an honourable conduct to deliver quality services and ensure the growth of its clients' businesses. The company believes in building sustainable growth models and understands that the foundations for such growth are based on ethics, operational efficiency, confidentiality, risk management and compliance. Our company strongly believe in safeguarding the reputation of Mauritius and thus conducts strict compliance procedure on all its clients and partner companies to ensure their business abides by and operates under the laws of Mauritius.

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### Contact

Address Órama Corporate Services Ltd, 4th floor, Belfort Tower Port Louis MAURITIUS

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# Merck Foundation Closes Five With Renewed Commitment To Health Issues

By Ishmael Sallieu Koroma

This year marked the 5th year anniversary of Merck Foundation and it also coincided with the 10th year journey of their development programme as it held its 9th Edition of the Merck Foundation Africa – Asia Luminary in Dubai.

The foundation started operation in 2017 as the philanthropic arm of Merck KGaA Germany and since then it has championed issues of health capacity, support girl child education and breaking infertility stigma in the world.

During the two days conference held in the Gulf State of the United Arab Emirates, it attracted more than 10 African first ladies from different African countries - Sierra Leone, Ghana, Liberia, Namibia to name a few as Merck Foundation More Than a Mother Ambassadors.

Speaking during the inaugural opening of the 9th Edition of the Merck Foundation Africa – Asia Luminary at the Hilton Hotel in Habtoor, UAE, the Chairman of both the Executive Board of E. Merck and the Merck Foundation Board of Trustees, Prof. Dr. Frank Stangenberg – Kamp pledged the foundation's support to African first ladies for their continued support in fighting and championing health issues, like infertility, diabetes among others thus calling on them to join hands with the foundation to continue their vision.

"Your Excellences, let me take this opportunity to acknowledge your great effort to supporting the health care sector in many ways which in turn boosts our healthcare workers. I am very glad to celebrate the 5th anniversary of the Merck Foundation, and to mark 10 years of our journey of building health care capacity. Up till now, it has been an amazing journey full of success and significant impact of transforming the everyday lives of many people," he said.

Prof. Dr. Frank Stangenberg – Kamp noted that as a foundation



Merck Foundation Leadership with African First Ladies the luminary.

they wouldn't have done the huge milestone over the last five years since the Merck Foundation was created in 2017 without the continued support of the different African First Ladies efforts and dedication of the well-being of their nations, adding the Coronavirus pandemic has highlighted globally of the need to focusing on building and advancing health care capacity, training of health care staffs at all levels.

CEO of Merck Foundation and Chairperson of the Merck Foundation Africa Asia Luminary, Dr. Rasha Kelej thanked the African first ladies for gracing the two days conference which she said was the first face to face gathering of the foundation since their last meeting in Ghana in 2019 owing to the global pandemic in the world.

"I am so honoured and grateful that you have the time, of your busy agenda and to be with us after a long time of travelling restrictions and movement because of the pandemic for three years since the last meeting we had in Ghana in 2019," she said.

CEO Kelej said the foundation has provided 1470 scholarships to

young doctors from 50 countries in 32 critical and underserved specialties which she said has made a huge milestone and a huge foot print in those countries adding those doctors will and ready to contribute to the transformation of patient care landscape in their countries.

"So we are also celebrating ten years together and also 5th anniversary of Merck Foundation. This is an important occasion for me, for all Merck Foundation team and our partners, and our ambassadors. Thank you for being here today, to celebrate the 5th anniversary of Merck Foundation. Happy anniversary Merck Foundation," the CEO of Merck Foundation added.

"Many of them were the first specialties', in reproductive care, oncology, first specialist in diabetes, endocrinology, respiratory care, pediatric care. We are very proud that Merck Foundation has realized the right strategy in both access to quality and affordable solutions in each country in Africa. And of course provided to South Eastern Asian countries and Latin America," CEO Rasha Kelej lamented.

Sierra Leone's first lady Fatima Maada Bio however called for support to be given to women with infertility issues in Africa whilst also urging for an end to stigma towards them adding the issue of infertility is not only a problem to women but also to men.

She thanked Merck Foundation for the scholarship and training opportunities granted to 40 Sierra Leonean doctors in her country to study in different medical fields like palliative care, cancer and oncology adding that this has culminated in her drive in constructing a 500 bed capacity hospital in Sierra Leone.

First lady of Ghana - Madam Rebecca Akufo-Addo thanked Merck Foundation for the immense support to infertility and other medical conditions in her home country adding that through this support, Ghana has received opportunity for specialist training for their medical doctors.

"Ghana's partnership with Merck Foundation was launched in January 2019 and it is one productive partnerships for my office and the Rebecca Foundation," the Ghanaian



First lady added.

During the plenary session on 15th November 2022, the Plenary Session of Merck Foundation Africa Asia Luminary 2022 a high-level panel meeting of Merck Foundation First Ladies Initiative Summit was conducted whilst the following day; five sessions, out of which four important Medical and Scientific Sessions were conducted in parallel, of Diabetes & Hypertension, Oncology, Fertility and Reproductive care and medical capacity building of other specialties such as; respiratory, acute care, emergency pediatric and neonatal care and more.

Merck Foundation Health Media Training session was also conducted on this day for the journalists, to emphasize on the important role that they play to influence our society to create a cultural shift with the aim to Break Infertility Stigma, Support Girl Education, Stop GBV, End Child Marriage, End FGM, and Women



Empowerment at all levels. The training session was attended by over 200 journalists.

The Merck foundation Africa

Asia Luminary gathers more 6000 Healthcare providers, policy makers, academia researchers and health media from sub-Saharan Africa

, more than 70 English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese speaking countries.

## Tanzanian Wins 2022 Africa's Business Heroes Award

By Samuel Ouma

The Africa's Business Heroes Prize 2022, a philanthropic initiative sponsored by the Jack Ma Foundation and Alibaba Philanthropy, was bagged by Tanzanian Elia Timotheo.

The winners were revealed on November 19, 2022, during a hybrid Grand Finale held in Johannesburg, South Africa, and live broadcasted to a global audience.

Timotheo beat more than 21000 applicants to emerge the top winner and took home \$300,000. He is the founder and CEO of the East Africa Fruits Co., a food distributor that leverages data and technology to create efficiencies for farmers and consumers while reducing food waste.

He expressed his gratitude to his team, including his fellow heroes, for the support they accorded him during the entire journey.

"I'd like to thank the ABH team for working with us along the journey,



and my fellow Heroes for being there for me. I especially want to bring this victory back to my team as I would not have been where I am now without them. More significantly, the award

is meant to demonstrate to my fellow Tanzanians that entrepreneurship is the way forward and that food sustainability is attainable for all young Africans if we have the courage

to make things happen," says Elia Timotheo.

Tesh Mbaabu, Co-Founder and CEO of Marketforce Technologies, emerged second and walked away



with \$250,000. At the same time, Egyptian Nadia Gamal El-Din, Founder and CEO of Rahet Bally, came third and bagged \$150,000.

Tesh Mbaabu was also named the winner of the «People's Choice» award, which was introduced this year to encourage audiences to vote online for their favorite Hero among the top ten finalists.

The finalists, other than the top three, each received US\$100,000 in prize funding, and an additional US\$10,000 will be allocated to each of the top ten finalists for the immersive training program(s) and community gathering activities.

«The winners of the 2022 Africa's Business Heroes competition embody the incredible entrepreneurial spirit in the region. The judges recognized them for their leadership, passion, and ability to drive a positive impact across Africa through their businesses. Despite the unprecedented challenges of the past two years, these entrepreneurs have inspired us all with their resilience and unwavering commitment to their businesses and communities,» said Jason Pau, Executive Director of the International Programs Jack Ma Foundation.

The ten finalists of this year's competition were chosen from an initial pool of over 21,000 applications from all 54 African countries after six months of rigorous evaluation by over 300 judges.

They hail from eight African countries, including Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, and Tanzania. Their start-ups have been drawn from various industries, including agriculture, consulting, energy, environmental protection, healthcare, information, communication technology (ICT), and retail.

The other ten finalists were Mr. Flavien Kouatcha Simo, Managing Partner of Save Our Agriculture Sarl (Cameroon), Ms. Amena Elsaie, Co-Founder of Helm Consulting (Egypt), Mr. Amadou Daffe, CEO and Co-Founder of Gebeya Inc. (Ethiopia), Mr. Prince Agbata, Co-Founder and CEO of Coliba Waste Management Services Limited (Ghana), Ms. Francine Munyaneza, Founder of Munyax Eco (Rwanda), Ms. Shona McDonald, Founder and CEO of Shonaquip Social Enterprise (South Africa), Ms. Elmarie Pereira, Chief Operating Officer, Co-Founder, and Chief Executive Officer Terina from Memeza Shout (PTY) Ltd (South Africa).

Grand finale judges said they were impressed by all the finalists and their businesses.

«Congratulations to all the finalists and winners of this year's

ABH competition. Once again, I am privileged to take part in the judging panel and to be able to put a spotlight on the important work being done by trailblazing entrepreneurs on the African continent. We hope to see the businesses of these outstanding entrepreneurs flourish into bigger and better enterprises that will stimulate socio-economic development beyond their local markets,» said Ibukun Awosika, Founder and CEO of The Chair Centre Group.

Victor Williams, CEO of NBA Africa, also congratulated the finalists, saying that entrepreneurship is more than just building a successful business. He noted that it takes true grit and passion to create and seizing opportunities where they don't

always exist.

«These exceptional entrepreneurs are all worthy winners and I'm excited to see how they will continue to drive progress in their respective markets, and across the African continent,» said CEO Williams.

«The ABH competition is an incredible opportunity to see the vigorous entrepreneurship taking place on the African continent. This year's winners are role models of entrepreneurship from the standpoint of changing people's lives and creating opportunities for people to transform society using technology. We believe their contribution will be huge if they can inspire more entrepreneurialism across the continent,» added Joe Tsai, Executive Vice Chairman of Alibaba Group.

The Africa's Business Heroes Prize Competition aims to help foster an inclusive and vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem in Africa. The annual competition, now in its fourth year, shines a spotlight on talented African entrepreneurs working to make a difference in their communities and helping build a more sustainable, inclusive future.

This year's official competition slogan, «It's African Time,» was a bold call to action for talented African entrepreneurs to redefine stereotypes associated with «African time» as creating local impact and building a better, more inclusive future through their businesses.





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# A Record-Breaking Year For The ABH Prize Competition- Zahra Baitie-Boateng

By Ajong Mbapndah L

With a grand finale that reminded people of what has been missed in the two-year hiatus on in physical events because of COVID 19, the 2022 edition of the Jack Ma African Business Heroes (ABH) Prize Competition defied expectations on many counts, says Zahra Baitie-Boateng Partnerships & Program Manager at the ABH Programme.

With the winner and the runner up from Eastern Africa, and third place winner from Egypt, the competition had a record-breaking number of 21000 entries from all the 54 African countries. Women-led enterprises were up 31%. Though the average age of the participants was 35 years, the youngest applicant was 19 years old, and the oldest was 72. The judging pool grew from 241 to over 500 experts from 75 countries representing dozens of industries globally. There was a 300% increase in the number of applications from entrepreneurs in 36 out of 54 African countries.

Entrepreneurship remains the greatest tool to create social impact and touch the lives of millions of Africans in a sustainable way, says Zahra Baitie-Boateng in salute of the success of this year's edition.

## Zahra Baitie-Boateng: How will you sum up this year's ABH prize competition?

Zahra Baitie-Boateng: This year has been thrilling to say the least. The ideas presented were diverse and innovative. We had plenty of new entries from countries that previously had low participation rates. Women-led enterprises were 31%, this is the highest we have ever had since 2019. Although on average the age of the participants was 35 years, we had the youngest applicant apply at 19 years old, and the oldest one was 72 years old. This just goes to show that being a visionary has no time constraint – it is never too early or too late to start.



2022 had the most diverse applicant pool yet with representation from all 54 African countries, says Zahra Baitie-Boateng.

## What were some of the significant differences for this edition compared to other ones?

Zahra Baitie-Boateng: The history of Africa Business Heroes makes each consecutive edition very special. We are constantly using feedback from previous editions to improve the overall experiences of the participants, judges, partners and all stakeholders.

2022 had the most diverse applicant pool yet. We had representation from all 54 African countries with a marked increase in the number of applicants

from North and Central Africa – majorly francophone countries.

The hybrid experience in 2022 was also a first for us. Due to the restrictions imposed by the pandemic we did everything virtually in 2020 and 2021. It was exciting for us to have a mix of physical and virtual experiences this time round.

Additionally, our judging pool grew from 241 to over 500 experts from 75 countries representing dozens of industries globally.

## In terms of numbers, how many people went in for the

## competition and how was the geographical spread like in terms of covering the entire continent?

Zahra Baitie-Boateng: This year we saw increased geographical diversity. We received over 21,000 entries from all 54 countries in Africa. Not only did we continue to meet our goal of Pan-African coverage, but we also improved the representation among the regions. For example, we saw a 20% increase in the number of applications from Central Africa with entrepreneurs from this region accounting for 9% of the total applications received. Southern Africa accounted for 17%, while East Africa and West Africa accounted for 17% and 43% of all applications, respectively.

Additionally, we saw a 26% increase in the number of applications from North Africa compared to last year, with entrepreneurs from this region accounting for 7% of the total applications received.

We saw a 300% increase in the number of applications from entrepreneurs in 36 out of 54 African countries. This was especially for small countries such as Seychelles, Madagascar and Eswatini where we saw increases of over 10x.

The number of applications from 34 countries rose by more than 50%. Countries such as Egypt, Burkina Faso, Malawi and Burundi especially saw a tremendous growth in applications.

## Can you share a breakdown of some of the key or popular sectors that were popular with participants and how these meet the needs of the continent at this time?

Zahra Baitie-Boateng: This year we received diverse entries cutting across various sectors: commerce, technology, social wellness, energy; and they all sought to address specific needs in Africa. The top 3

winners were East Africa Fruits Co, a social enterprise that integrates sellers with buyers of fresh fruits and grain optimizing food security and empowering farmers through use of Agri-tech; in second place was Marketforce which provides a unified digital commerce marketplace to facilitate trade among Africa's informal merchants and leading consumer brands; while number 3 was Rahet Bally, a platform that offers financial, physical, social, emotional & intellectual support, both online & on ground for mothers, including granting them access to trusted doctors so that mothers are equipped to deal with the demands of motherhood.

We also had entries that sought to eradicate energy poverty in Africa through recycling energy as well as sourcing for alternative sources of energy. Energy is an issue of global concern, and it was refreshing to see an Africa centric approach towards solving energy related issues.

This is just a summarized overview of the immense talent and untapped ideas that exist on the continent, and we are eager to bring these ideas into reality through the ABH initiative.

## Any projections for next year's edition of the ABH and any success tips for prospective participants?

Zahra Baitie-Boateng :In 2021, we received just over 12,000 entries. This year we had over 21,000 entries. Following the success of this edition, and the interest it has generated among the entrepreneurship

ecosystem, we are confident that the number of entries will spike upwards considerably in 2023, and we are excited to see what visionaries on the continent have to offer.

We are looking for individuals whose businesses can inspire change within their communities. Their enterprises should at least be three years old and headquartered in their respective countries. We are scouting for visionary entrepreneurs who embody innovation, resilience, growth potential and impact on Africa.

Entrepreneurship is the greatest tool to create social impact and touch the lives of millions of Africans in a sustainable way. I urge young African entrepreneurs to be resilient because what each entrepreneur is doing has the potential to change many lives.

It is important to focus one's business plan on efforts that truly meet people's needs to create prosperity and improve people's lives. For example, bridging the gender gap has become a key concern for most countries.

Many entrepreneurs are building great businesses but do not tell a great story alongside it. Your business should be an extension of yourself. Being able to explain concisely and convincingly what problem you solve, how you are going to solve it, why you will have an impact in the market, why you will win and how big your business can get is very critical in building a globally competitive business.

Finally, network. In the entrepreneurial ecosystem, all players



*With over 21000 submissions this year, we are confident that the number of entries will spike upwards considerably in 2023, says Zahra Baitie-Boateng.*

matter. There is always something to learn from stakeholders, customers, even competition. It is through networking that you also get to learn of other opportunities your business could benefit from: competitions, grants and funding, mentorship.

Therefore, it is important to participate in initiatives where you can meet peers, collaborate, learn and share ideas that can not only make your business better, but can also impact the continent and even the world.



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# ABH Prize Moves MarketForce Forward on Expansion Plans- 2nd Place Winner Tesh Mbaabu (Kenya)

Our goal is to be the ultimate partner for retailers, empowering them to maximize their profits and grow in a digital age by getting better service, and access to new revenue opportunities, says Tesh Mbaabu, who finished second in the 2022 edition of the Jack Ma African Business Heroes Prize Competition. Operational in 5 markets in Africa (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Nigeria), with over 200,000 merchants and 100 consumer brands trading on the platform, Tesh Mbaabu says the ultimate target is to be active in over 10 African countries and serve 1 million active merchants by 2025

*How satisfied are you with the second-place finish at this year's Africa's Business Heroes (ABH) prize competition?*

Tesh Mbaabu: It is very validating to finish second in such a highly competitive prize that featured over 21,000 applications from entrepreneurs across the whole of Africa.

*Can you shed some light on your company or product and what pushed you to start it?*

Tesh Mbaabu: We started MarketForce in 2018 when we realized how inefficient the retail supply chains are with neighbourhood merchants - commonly known as dukas in Kenya - facing a number of challenges while running their shops, including expensive sourcing of inventory and lack of access to working capital. MarketForce is a B2B commerce platform that is digitalizing retail by connecting these merchants to the consumer goods and financial services they need through an app, enabling them to save time and earn more income, while serving last mile communities.

*With the big prize money that comes with your second-place finish, what is going to change*



*It is very validating to finish second in such a highly competitive prize that featured over 21,000 applications from entrepreneurs across the whole of Africa, says Tesh Mbaabu.*

*for the company?*

Tesh Mbaabu: We are excited to extend our impact to more merchants through extending digital training programs to thousands of merchants so they can benefit from digitalizing their ordering and payments, and access financial services. We will also create at least 1,000 new gig-worker jobs over the next year.

*What are some of the defining lessons that you have learnt throughout the ABH competition?*

Tesh Mbaabu: I learnt how important and impactful great story telling is, especially for entrepreneurs who are trying to create a dent on the continent with their work. The competition gave us a platform to do this.



*Our target is to be active in over 10 African countries and serve 1 million active merchants by 2025, says Tesh Mbaabu.*

*For other young people in country and across the continent who like to emulate your success, what message do you have for them, any success tips?*

Tesh Mbaabu: When it comes to entrepreneurship, execution is key. It's the most important thing. This means having a clear vision for your business and taking the necessary steps to make it a reality. It also means being able to adapt and pivot as needed, in order to stay ahead of the competition. The best ideas in the world are useless if they are not executed properly.

*To leaders in your country and the continent as a whole, what is it that needs to be done to bring out the creative genius in more people like you?*

Tesh Mbaabu: Political leaders need to create an enabling environment for startups through being intentional about policy making to spur innovation, and business leaders should not underplay their role as mentors and role models. They should create time to share their stories, successes, and failures in order to inspire aspiring and upcoming entrepreneurs.

*What next for you and your company after this strong finish, any projections for the foreseeable future?*

Tesh Mbaabu: Our goal is to be the ultimate partner for retailers, empowering them to maximize their profits and grow in a digital age by getting better service, and access new revenue opportunities. Today, we are operational in 5 markets in Africa (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Nigeria), with over 200,000 merchants and 100 consumer brands trading on the platform. We target to be active in over 10 African countries and serve 1 million active merchants by 2025.



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# A Vindication of Motherhood In My Third Place Finish- Nadia Gamal El Din, Founder and CEO of Rahet Bally (Egypt)

It was a very long, challenging journey, but I believed that we could make it because we touch millions of mothers' lives, and motherhood is the world's biggest asset, says Nadia Gamal El Din, Founder and CEO of Rahet Bally.

Born in Egypt, Nadia Gamal El Din studied finance at the American University in Cairo, after which she started her professional career as an assistant brand manager at Procter & Gamble. She became a mother at the age of 24 and realized there was a huge market gap when it comes to supporting new moms. Consequently, in 2015 she founded Rahet Bally, an all-inclusive platform to support Egyptian mothers financially, physically, emotionally, and intellectually, both online and in person, on top of Rahet Bally Discount App for Moms, Rahet Bally Mama Fitness Programs, the Cloud by Rahet Bally, and Mumerz.com.

Challenges are there to make us stronger, every round of judging allowed me to scale in the right direction, and the networking was just phenomenal, says Nadia Gamal El Din as she looks to the future with great optimism.

**How satisfied are you with your third-place finish at this year's ABH prize competition?**

Nadia Gamal El Din: I'm very grateful and honored to win the third place at the incredible ABH prize competition. I believe being in the Top 3 showcases our massive impact across Africa and the vitality of our services. It's been an incredible journey, and I've made my country, my team & my family super proud. I'd like to dedicate this incredible win to my son, who is the reason behind my purpose-driven startup.

**From over 21,000 contestants, how confident were you of finishing among the top three?**

Nadia Gamal El Din: It was a very long, challenging journey, but I believed that we could make it



*Challenges are there to make us stronger, every round of judging allowed me to scale in the right direction, says Nadia Gamal El Din.*

because we touch millions of mothers' lives, and motherhood is the world's biggest asset. I hoped the judges would realize the immense need for us across Africa, and thankfully they did.

**What are some of the entrepreneurship skills and lessons that you learned in the course of the Africa's Business Heroes competition?**

Nadia Gamal El Din: There are so many entrepreneurship skills and lessons that I've learned, honestly. I'll name a few. I've learned grit, determination, self-belief, consistency, giving my 100% every day, critical & creative thinking skills, resilience, and that no dream is too big. Challenges are there to make us stronger, every round of judging allowed me to scale in the right direction, and the networking was just phenomenal. I've created so many partnerships that will allow us to scale all across Africa.

**With the prize money when are some of the changes your**

**business or company is going to see?**

Nadia Gamal El Din: The prize money will allow us to build our next big thing; Rahet Bally's superApp - a personalized, empowering gasified experience for mothers covering every stage of motherhood, from conceiving to menopause. We will be able to own our technology, grow our team and scale across Africa.

**What motivated its creation and what are some of its successes you have registered, and challenges faced?**

Nadia Gamal El Din: When I became a mother at the age of 24, I realized there was a huge market gap when it comes to supporting new moms. Even though motherhood is one of the oldest professions, with all these ever-growing online chunks of information, in this fast-paced world, there wasn't a single comprehensive, tailored support system for new moms in Egypt. This was the discontinuous shift moment when I realized change was needed, this is when Rahet Bally was born.

Rahet Bally—which translates to “peace of mind” in Arabic—was born in August 2015, not long after my son. Rahet Bally now has over 50 million women consuming its content every month!

Rahet Bally is an all-inclusive support platform for moms, offering them financial, physical, emotional, social & intellectual support through a wide range of online FemTech services & on-ground services. We are a multi-sided platform offering both B2C and B2B services.

I've faced a lot of challenges, it's very tough to be a female founder in Egypt. Disrupting the social norm, going to meetings while carrying my baby, building a support network, having to bootstrap my business for the past 7 years and thankfully was profitable as of year 2 and defied all odds!

## AWARDS

Rahet Bally has been awarded many prestigious local & international awards over the years, some of which are:

- Rahet Bally's Founder & CEO; Nadia Gamal El Din, has received the African Women Award 2022 in the Mothercare category.
- Rahet Bally's Founder & CEO; Nadia Gamal El Din, has won VC4A Venture Showcase Africa in MENA Region 2022.
- Rahet Bally's Founder & CEO; Nadia Gamal El Din is currently shortlisted at the Top 20 Finalists at African Business Heroes 2022.
- Cartier Women's Initiative Laurette 2020
- Rahet Bally has won the Most impactful women-led business in MENA region 2020 - it was competing against 70,000 Medium Enterprises
- As Seen on Vogue & Cartier
- Rahet Bally's Founder & CEO; Nadia Gamal El Din, is the Face of #SheMeansBusiness for Facebook
- Rahet Bally's Founder & CEO; Nadia Gamal El Din, is the Face of #SheCreates for Facebook

- Facebook Community Accelerator Award Winner 2020
- Rahet Bally's Founder & CEO; Nadia Gamal El Din, is the Top 50 Most Influential Women in Egypt
- Attended by his Excellency the Prime Minister of Egypt
- Rahet Bally's Founder & CEO; Nadia Gamal El Din, has received the Top 3 Inspiring Women in Egypt award by Dove Egypt.

**To those who look up to you for inspiration, what are some of the success tips you can share with them?**

Nadia Gamal El Din: I'd like to share with them the following:

- Always believe in yourself; if you never stop, you never fail
- Build a team with shared core values your team is your first product & most sustainable competitive advantage
- Know that change is the only constant, expect & embrace change, pivot continuously. Agility is very important.
- Keep an eye on competition but always remember, you are your only competitor
- Imposter syndrome is absolutely

normal remind yourself of all the reasons why you deserve to be where you are today

- Have empathy & compassion
- Just do it, even if it isn't perfect, the secret recipe is to always start!

**Any message you would like to share with fellow ABH contestants, judges and the Jack Ma Foundation/the organizers of the ABH prize competition?**

Nadia Gamal El Din: I'd like to thank each and every one of them for being an integral part of my growth journey. Thank you for believing in me, thank you for empowering me, thank you for giving me the recognition, appreciation and support I've always needed.

**In a years' time when we come to interview you, where would your business be from what it is today?**

Nadia Gamal El Din: We will have scaled to serve at least two new African countries, hired our own in-house tech team, launched our super app, raised our seed round and won some new impact-focused awards!



*We will scale to serve at least two new African countries, hire our own in-house tech team, launch our super app, and raise our seed round, says Nadia Gamal El Din on future plans.*

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Fredrik Edwall, EVP Sales & Marketing, Subtonomy

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# Death of a Zambian Student on the Battlefield Opens Pandora's Box on Russian 'Conscription' Methods

By Prince Kurupati

When Africans from academia, politicians and the general citizenry talk about the effects of the Russia-Ukraine war on the continent, often, the talk centres on the disruption of the global supply chain for major commodities such as grain and oil. Well, this is certainly true but one other major effect which recently surfaced pertains to casualties of war.

While most African countries have chosen to remain neutral in the Russia-Ukraine war hence keeping their forces away from the battlefield, the recent death of a Zambian student on the warfront suggests that Africa may be incurring war casualties regardless of its neutrality stance.

In a statement that shocked Zambia and the entire continent at large, The Zambian Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Stanley Kakubo on 14 November said that his ministry and the government “regrets to inform the Nation of the untimely demise of Mr. Lemekhane Nathan Nyirenda, a 23-year-old Zambian Government sponsored student, who was pursuing Nuclear Engineering at the Moscow Engineering Physics Institute (MEPHI) in the Russian Federation.”

The statement went further to state that Mr. Lemekhane Nathan Nyirenda died “at the battlefield of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine”. Minister Kakubo said that after receiving the news of the demise of Mr. Nyirenda, his ministry investigated the matter and became aware that Mr. Nyirenda had passed away on 22 September 2022, almost two months from the date they received the news.



Many questions surround the death of Lemekhane Nathan Nyirenda. Photo courtesy.

Saddened by the news, Minister Kakubo said President Hichilema’s administration has implored the Russian government to explain how Mr. Nyirenda ended up on the battlefield fighting for Russia. Mr. Nyirenda had travelled to Russia to pursue tertiary studies at the Moscow Engineering Physics Institute (MEPHI) where he was studying nuclear engineering. Reports state

that in 2020, Mr. Nyirenda was arrested for reasons yet to be known and was sentenced to 9 years in prison. At the time of his death, Mr. Nyirenda was supposed to be in jail.

The news of the death of Mr. Nyirenda substantiates a report from CNN released in August which states that Russia is conscripting prisoners by offering them a deal for freedom and lesser jail sentences.

“Promises of freedom and riches are made to convicts in cramped jail cells. Frantic phone calls ensue between relatives and inmates weighing the offer. Then prisoners vanish, leaving their loved ones to sift through reports of the wounded arriving in hospitals... This scene is playing out in the convict communities across Russia. With a regular army stretched thin after nearly six months of a disastrously executed and bloody invasion of Ukraine, there’s increasing evidence that the Kremlin is making ugly choices in its ugly war and recruiting Russia’s prisoners to fight,” the CNN report states.

One of the prisoners interviewed on condition of anonymity said that monetary rewards are also on offer to entice as many prisoners as possible. “They will accept murderers, but not rapists, paedophiles, extremists, or terrorists... Amnesty or a pardon in six months is on offer. Somebody talks about 100,000 rubles a month, another 200,000. Everything is different... in my case, if it’s real, then I’m all for it,” the prisoner said. “It can make a real difference for me: be imprisoned for nearly a decade, or get out in six months if you’re lucky. But that’s if you’re lucky. I just want to go home to the children as soon as possible. If this option is possible, then why not?”

Apart from benefitting themselves, Vladimir Osechkin who is the head of Gulagu.net, a prisoner advocacy group said that part of the offer to join the Russian troops on the battlefield is to give a pay-out to the families of prisoners who die on the battlefield. This is seen by some prisoners as a win-win situation as they



Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Stanley K. Kakubo announced the tragic news to Zambians.

receive amnesty if they come back from the war alive or their families receive a lump sum if they die on the battlefields. Osechkin however said at this moment, there is no guarantee that the Putin government will honour the 'agreements' as "there's no real contract".

While most prisoners may view it as a win-win situation, Osechkin warned that they are just being used

as bait and their chances of dying on the warfront are very high. He advised that it's better for them to preserve life inside the cramped jail cells than to expose themselves to death on the battlefield as they are instructed to "go first, and when the Ukrainian army sees them, and they strike. Then Russian soldiers see where the Ukrainians are, and bomb the place".

The underhand conscription

methods by the Russian authorities expose more Africans to becoming casualties of war as some of them may view the promised 'amnesty' as a getaway vehicle from Russia and Russian jail cells.

There has been a disappointing response from the African leaders since the news of Mr. Nyirenda's death broke out as many chose to remain silent. Its South Africa's

President Cyril Ramaphosa who via his spokesperson publicly talked about the issue albeit in a light tone stating, "And it is for this reason that President [Cyril] Ramaphosa has been quite consistent in calling for a dialogue between all parties concerned in resolving this conflict".

## Tales Of Kenyan Domestic Workers' Suffering In Saudi Arabia

By Samuel Ouma

The recent Saudi Arabia 2-1 win against soccer giants Argentina in the ongoing 2022 World Cup in Qatar rekindled painful memories to thousands of Kenyans who have not been impressed with the continuous mistreatment of Kenyan workers in the Gulf State.

After the historic win, a section of Kenyans jokingly posted on Social Media, «Saudi Arabians are not a joke; they beat both Kenyan women and their football opponents.» The posts appeared as jokes, but in reality, most Kenyan women who have worked in the country have ordeals to narrate to their children or grandkids. On the other hand, those who died during their duty in the Middle East may narrate their stories in the next life.

Plights of Kenyan women working in the Gulf State as houseworkers have been highlighted both in Kenyan and international media. The latest scenario is that of a lady identified as Purity Mwanzia, who pleaded with the Kenyan government to repatriate her before she dies.

Ms. Mwanzia, who left the country in June for green pasture, wants to be brought back into the country, citing mistreatment in the hands of her employer. In a communication with his sister, the young lady said she is being forced to work despite not feeling well and being denied food. Her family's efforts to reach out to the agents who took her to the country have not borne any fruit.

«I've been working despite being



Dr. Alfred Mutua, CS Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs with Saudi Officials.

ill. They provide me plain rice twice a day, so I am starving.» read a message from Ms. Mwanzia to her sister.

On November 14, 2022, another story of a Kenyan woman fighting for her life in Saudi Arabia emerged in the media. Reports indicated that Ms. Gloria Wairimu Wachira was locked up in a house by her employer, who won't allow her to return to Kenya.

According to Ms. Wairimu, troubles began when her employer began beating and forcing her to work for

multiple employers for a single salary. Things worsened when he called Kenya, asking to be repatriated, with the employer threatening to blacklist her passport and warning her of dire consequences.

«They promised me vengeance, saying there is no Kenya I will return to. I've gotten out of the freezer several times. I'm not sure where they're going to take me now,» Ms. Wairimu was recorded by the local media.

Prior, photos of a frail girl, Diana Chepkemai, appeared on Twitter, attracting outbursts from Kenyans. The author reported that the lady was stuck in the Gulf state, and his health was declining. The 24-year-old had moved to Saudi Arabia to work to raise funds for her university education, but she landed in the hands of a cruel employer who almost killed her.

The fate of Ms. Wairimu and Mwanzia is still unknown.



Fortunately, with the help of her Saudia Arabia counterpart, the government of Kenya managed to bring her back to the country in four days. She was treated, and she is in stable condition. Chepkemai also resumed her studies with the help of well-wishers.

Ms. Chepkemai, Wairimu, and Mwanzia were just a handful of the Kenyan girls who ended up stranded in Saudi Arabia while looking for better opportunities. There might be many others who are stuck, but their stories are yet to come to the limelight.

The media has chronicled the plight of Kenyans who have suffered mistreatment in the Middle East for years. However, the horror stories have not stopped many from risking their lives for their livelihood.

Many people in the East African country are now jobless due to the high living level, and some are therefore risking applying for employment abroad, despite the horrifying reports about how Saudi Arabia treats girls as soon as they arrive there. Statistics from the Ministry of Labour indicate that as of October 2022, 210000 Kenyans were working in Saudi Arabia.

Reports further show that most Kenyan women working in the Gulf State are subjected to physical, mental, and sexual abuse. They are also denied their wages, forced to work for multiple homes, and deprived of food and rest. Some are also raped and killed. Celina Kazungu, 22, died under a mysterious circumstance in March 2022 while working as a house help in the country.

The family of Celina received information that their daughter was in the ICU on March 10, and their effort to bring her to Kenya for treatment proved futile as they were informed that she could not travel since her condition was not good. However, they were informed seven days later that she was no more. According to unconfirmed sources, she may have



Prince Faisal Bin Farhan Alsoud, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia in Riyadh.

been stabbed and passed away while receiving treatment in one of the Saudi hospitals.

In addition, Maximilla Muhadia, whose body was flown to the country one year ago from the Middle East nation, was reportedly tortured to death. An autopsy examination revealed that she suffered serious head injuries.

«I am her biological mother, but identifying my daughter was difficult. Her eyes, nose, and mouth were severely damaged. I would not have been convinced that she was the one if it hadn't been for a denture gap in her teeth,» said the deceased mother.

Last year, Kenya's National Assembly Committee on Labour and Social Welfare report revealed that 89 domestic workers died in Saudi Arabia between 2019 and 2021.

The archaic Kafala system that ties the legal residency of a migrant worker to their employer for a specific period is bearing blame for Kenyan women's woes in the country. The law requires Saudi Arabian housekeepers to ask their employer permission to change jobs or leave the country. They

can only gain freedom if they pay their «sponsors» a hefty sum calculated as the agency recruitment fee, visa fee, and air ticket, as was done during slavery in the Caribbean.

The government of Kenya is hesitant to outlaw the export of labour to Saudi Arabia for fear of losing billions of funds in the form of remittances. The Gulf is Kenya's third-largest source of diaspora remittances, with payments more than doubling in the last two years. The most recent data from the Central Bank of Kenya shows that Kenya received \$187 million from Kenyans living in Saudi Arabia during the first eight months of 2022.

To address the plight of abused workers, Dr. Alfred Mutua, Cabinet Secretary for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs, met with senior Saudi Vice Minister of Labour Dr. Abdullah Nasser Abuthnain and Ministry of Foreign Affairs counterpart Faisal Bin Farhan Al-Saud in early November.

Following the talks, Dr. Mutua attributed the abuse cases to corrupt recruitment agencies.

«Listening to the Kenyans, agents, Kenya Government officials and

Saudi Government officials, it is clear that the problems facing some of our people start back home due to flawed and corrupt systems. There is massive corruption in the way Kenyans are prepared before they leave to take up domestic work in Saudi Arabia and their follow up when they arrive,» said CS Mutua in a statement.

In an immediate response, the two nations agreed to flush out illegal agencies and blacklist agencies that do not perform as per the law. A Joint Technical Team of Kenyan and Saudi Arabian government officials was also formed to expedite labor issues such as exit visas and the start of work.

The leaders also set up a hotline where Kenyan workers could vent their frustrations and report any instances of abuse. +966500755060 is the phone number.

Such incidents of domestic worker abuse resonate with a report from the International Trade Union Confederation indicating that more than 2.1 million women employed in households in the Gulf are at risk of exploitation.

# The Increasing Role of Competitive Intelligence in Trade Facilitation in Africa

By Alexander Maune\*

As the global economy is in turmoil due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ukrainian war, the creation of the vast African Continental Free Trade Area regional market is a major opportunity to integrate the continent. This integration will help African countries diversify their exports, accelerate growth, and attract foreign direct investment. The global challenges have spared no country with calls for integration growing much louder. Trade amongst regional countries has become the norm. Africa has great market opportunities given her huge population and abundant natural resources.

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) will create the largest free trade area in the world measured by the number of countries participating. This pact connects 55 countries with a combined GDP of USD 3.4 trillion. The pact will boost African exports by USD560 billion and lift 30 million people out of extreme poverty through significant policy reforms and trade facilitation measures. However, without significant investment in CI, the pact will remain a hanging fruit without much benefit to the continent and individual countries. Competitive intelligence (CI) has recently become significant in accelerating trade and enhancing competitiveness. Trade facilitation measures are becoming critical due to their contribution in AfCFTA.

## Competitive Intelligence

The concept of CI is multifaceted and fuzzy. CI is a process or practice that produces and disseminates actionable intelligence by planning, ethnically and legally collecting, processing and analyzing information from and about the internal and



Alexander Maune is a Talmudic scholar, lecturer, researcher, and consultant.

external or competitive environment to help decision-makers in decision-making and to provide a competitive advantage to the enterprise [or country]. Moreover, CI should stimulate creativeness, innovativeness, and willingness to change.

Historical records reveal the important role that intelligence has played in the history of countries. Accordingly, CI evolved from developments in economics, marketing, military theory, information science, and strategic management. Intelligence issues are not alien to Africa. CI in Africa has a long history that can be traced back to the way the ancestors lived although part of this history is not documented as it was passed through oral tradition. Intelligence in Africa dates even back to the construction of great monuments like the Egyptian pyramids, Great Zimbabwe, and the irrigation systems along the Nile River.

The way, for example, Great Zimbabwe was built with three distinct architectural groups known as the hill complex, the valley complex and the great enclosure tells the whole story behind the intelligence of the people who built the monuments. Garlake (2002) claims that Great Zimbabwe became a centre for trading which formed part of a trade network linked to Kilwa and extending as far as China. Africa has also developed its intelligence during and after the wars of liberation as traces of CI in many countries have been linked to the military. Given the history and background of CI especially in Africa, it is of critical importance to explore its role in trade facilitation (TF).

## Trade facilitation

The definition of trade facilitation is a highly debated issue in World Trade Organization (WTO). According to the Kelkar Committee Report, TF revolves around the reduction of all the transaction costs associated with

the enforcement of legislation, regulation, and administration of trade policies. It involves several agencies such as customs, airport authority, port authority, central bank and trade ministry. The main objective is to reduce the cost of doing business for all parties by eliminating unnecessary administrative burdens associated with bringing goods and services across borders.

TF can help countries reduce trade costs and increase their competitiveness. Despite the reduction in tariffs and improvement in market access many countries and regions in Africa are still lacking regional and global integration. This disconnection can have negative consequences for the economic opportunities of private sector businesses, employees, and consumers. In spite of all these efforts, some African countries are finding it difficult to expand trade and take advantage of preferential market access programs.

## The important role of CI in TF in Africa

TF provides important opportunities for Africa through increased benefits from open trade and contributing to economic growth and poverty reduction. Removing trade barriers has contributed to the expansion of global trade in the decade after the conclusion of the trade negotiations of the Uruguay Round in 1994 and the subsequent establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO). There is a broad consensus on the importance of CI in the implementation of TF measures in both developing and developed countries. CI results in significant welfare and competitiveness. CI ensures cost effectiveness in the implementation of TF measures. TF enhances open trade and open markets



although several African countries are finding it difficult to achieve this due to high costs of trading. Realizing this trend, policymakers have started incorporating CI to address trade-discouraging non-tariff barriers. Embracing CI in implementing TF measures has become a key instrument to creating a better trading environment. To strengthen TF, there is a need to invest in CI. TF measures have become a key policy issue. CI has helped in strengthening TF through the provision of intelligence that has helped in streamlining

and simplifying exporting and importing procedures. International trade and globalization have called for CI in providing the much need intelligentsia for policy-makers to strengthen TF in both domestic and international arenas.

Without the much-needed intelligence, it is difficult to implement TF measures. The non-availability of intelligent information has hampered TF the world over. Economic espionage has been at the centre stage in international trade and international relations for some

time with major economies benefiting much through this illegal activity. The coming in of CI in international trade has seen a lot of countries making use of their national intelligence to gather much-needed information to enhance their competitiveness legally. Figure 1 below shows the centrality of CI and TF.

In summary, Africa needs to embrace CI in TF to improve, grow and make the continent competitive in the global market. The continent needs to integrate for it to be a formidable player to reckon with

in the global economy. Africa can leverage on its huge population and its abundant natural resources.

\*Alexander Maune is a Talmudic scholar, lecturer, researcher, and consultant as well as a member of IoDZ. His two most recent books are Start-Ups and Venture Capital: Lessons for developing countries (2019) and Competitive Intelligence as Economic Phenomena (2015). Mailto: [alexandermaune6@gmail.com](mailto:alexandermaune6@gmail.com).

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# FIFA Qatar World Cup: African Representatives Impress, Shatter Records

By Boris Esono Nwenfor & Sonita Ngunyi Nwohtazie

The 2022 FIFA World Cup will go down in the annals of history as Africa's representatives, Senegal, Cameroon, Tunisia, Morocco and Ghana created history for themselves. There were heartbreaks and surreal moments and despite only two going forward to the round of 16, the countries succeeded in creating a moment of history.

Before the 2022 FIFA World Cup, Africa had never before registered more than three group-stage victories in a single World Cup. That record was shattered as the five countries combined for seven wins is quite remarkable.

After collecting seven points from the group stages, Morocco becomes only the fourth African team - after Cameroon (1982), Morocco (1986) and Senegal (2002) - to go through the opening round undefeated, while Morocco and the Teranga Lions of Senegal are the first African sides since Ghana in 2006 to win two matches during the group stage.

There were just five defeats for African sides - the fewest since 1990, and a record for tournaments containing five or more CAF teams -



Teranga Lions of Senegal goes out after reaching the knockout stages.

which fits the narrative of a more open World Cup, with no team preserving a 100% record through the group stage for the first time since 1994.

Despite the seven victories, and even though only South American teams averaged more points per game

than Africa's sides during the group stage, still only two sides progressed to the knockouts -- equalling Africa's record from the 2014 tournament but not breaking new ground.

**Ghana Boss Otto Addo resigns**

## the following elimination

It has been a somewhat bad performance for the Black stars of Ghana at the FIFA Qatar World Cup. For failing to qualify out of the group stage this year, Ghana has now gone twelve (12) years without reaching the round of 16. Ghana has only reached the quarterfinals once and that came back at the 2010 FIFA World Cup, where they were eliminated by the same Uruguay that prevented them again in 2022.

The Black Stars finished bottom of Group H with 3 points, 1 win and 2 losses, scoring five goals and conceding seven. This was better than their last appearance in 2014 where they picked up just 1 draw and lost the two other games as Ghana came out in the group stages.

Addo who had previously hinted he would not stay in the post after the World Cup, confirmed after the match against Uruguay that he intends to stand down to concentrate on his role with Borussia Dortmund as a talent scout.

«I said when I started as an



Aoubakar becomes the first African player to score against Brazil



assistant in October last year, it was clear that I would stop after the World Cup,» Otto Addo said. «At the moment, I and my family see our future in Germany. I like my role at Dortmund, we are very happy there.»

«From the first day, I said if we qualified for the World Cup I would resign no matter what, even if we were world champions. This is a decision for my family.»

## Tunisia brings down defending champions France

Tunisia's victory over France is surely their greatest-ever World Cup win. The North African nation had, at the fifth attempt, registered their first-ever win against France - the reigning world champions - and deservedly so. But it also did not matter one bit in the context of the 2022 World Cup.

Head Coach Jalel Kadri, a former assistant cum manager of the Tunisia side will be proud of his boys having made Tunisia to conceded one goal in their three games at the 2022 World Cup; the joint-fewest by an African team across a full group stage in the tournament, along with Cameroon in 1982 and Morocco in 1986.

Making their sixth appearance at the FIFA World Cup, Kadri had a mountain to climb to bring success to the Carthage eagles. In three games in Qatar, Tunisia picked up 1 win, 1



Atlas Lions of Morocco.

draw and 1 defeat, scoring 1 goal and conceding one with a total of 4 points. However, they still failed to leave the group stages as they have done so in 1978 and 2002.

The 50-year-old seemingly ruled out his chances of stepping down from his post, though, telling the press: «I don't know why you insist that I resign. I have a contract that is based on objectives. «The objective was not fulfilled but we still have some time before making a final decision. It's up to the Tunisian (soccer) federation to decide what happens now.»

«It's mixed feelings because we're happy to beat a team like France. We can be proud and leave with our heads high, but it is a bitter victory,» Kadri added. «It would have been beautiful to beat France and reach the last 16. It is our fault for not doing what we needed to do before. I said nothing is impossible. We have been able to win over the world champions.»

Kadri served as assistant to Mondher Kebaier before taking the reins in January, and he now has a record of seven wins, three draws and three defeats from his 13 games in

charge.

## Indomitable Lions leaves Qatar heads high after overcoming Brazil

While Brazil had already advanced to the next round, the victory on December 2 belonged to Cameroon, who became the first team to beat the five-time champion in the World Cup group stage since Norway did it at the 1998 tournament in France – ending Brazil's unbeaten run of 17 group matches.

The win – which was sealed by a powerful header from Cameroon's Vincent Aboubakar in the 92nd minute from a cross from Jerome Ngom Mbekeli – marks the first time an African nation has beaten the Brazilians at the FIFA World Cup.

This will be a bittersweet moment for the Indomitable Lions who picked up their first win at the FIFA World Cup in twenty (20) years, the last time coming back in 2002. Cameroon hadn't won any of its last nine World Cup matches, with eight losses and a draw – against Ireland in its opening game at the 2002 tournament.

«I didn't even realize that this was such a historic victory,» Cameroon coach Rigobert Song said. «We are one of the African countries that played the most World Cups, and now we've beaten Brazil.»

«There will still be a party back in Cameroon,» Caleb Williams, a



Addo steps down as Black Stars coach to focus on his role as a talent scout for Borussia Dortmund



supporter of the Indomitable Lions, who watched the game at the Lusail Stadium in Qatar said after the game. The 42-year-old added that Cameroon might not have qualified but was happy the team "took out Brazil ... That's huge".

Despite the records, Cameroon still leaves in disappointment, failing to qualify out of the group stages for the last 28 years, the last time they did so came back in 1990. But by the time the next World Cup comes around, Cameroon would have gone 32 years. But the signs look promising and only time will tell if they can finally break that jinx.

## Teranga Lions bows out to Three Lions of Senegal

After a strong staged performance against Qatar without their star player Sadio mane, the Teranga lions recorded a total of three (3) points standing in the third position - sailing through the group stage the team thrashed Ecuador 2 goals to 1 during their last group game with a 70th-minute goal from Kalidou Koulibaly coming from behind to clinch his team spot into the rounds of sixteen with six points.

Senegal and the cartage morocco were the only two African teams to qualify for the knock-out stage, which saw the Teranga Lions of Senegal ousted by the three Lions of England in a 3-0 defeat.

«No excuses for loss just a big difference between sides in the defeat to England because we're playing a very big team and I saw the challenges and physical strength. I just think that we were not as good as we should have been. I am not trying to make excuses but we were missing two or three players which could give



Wahbi Khazri celebrates after scoring the decisive goal against France

us may be something extra» Aliou Cisse coach of Senegal.

Appearing for their third world cup competition the Teranga Lions of Senegal qualified for the 2002 quarter-finals while in 2018 they did not make it through the group stage.

## Morocco, Last Man Standing

Morocco's victory over Belgium was a bigger shock than their triumph over Portuga in 1986, even though the latter was more momentous as it guaranteed they became the first African side to reach the knockout stage.

Never before had African sides pulled off multiple giant killings in the same tournament, with the continent's sides previously beating only four former winners.

In pipping Croatia and Belgium in Group F, Morocco became the second African team, after Nigeria to top a World Cup group twice, having previously achieved the feat in 1986.

The cartage of Morocco is the lone African team left out of the five African representatives. Clashing and defeating Canada 2-1at the Al Thumama stadium in the last group stage game, the team claimed the first position in group F with six points qualifying for the knockout round.

Making her sixth appearance in the world cup, their best performance was in 1986 when they reached the round of 16 and 2022 after two draws and 1 victory. Advancing to the knockout stage for the first time since 1986, the cartage of morocco will face Spain on December 6 to pick her first world cup Quarter-finals ticket.

However, Africa has not had much success in the world cup competition. The last attempt ended in the quarter-finals with Ghana which reached the last eight in 2010.

Despite the criticism of Qatar hosting the tournament due to human rights issues, the FIFA Qatar World Cup continues to leave up

to expectations. Records across the board have been tumbling and will continue to do so as the tournament enters the climax stage.

Kylian Mbappe of France is already on track to smash the goal-scoring record of 2018. He already has five goals and if he scores twice, he will break the 2018 record of 6 goals that Kane got - in 2018, Mbappe got four goals. At the time of this report, 158 goals had been scored across 52 matches, for an average of 2.58 goals per match.

"Today I feel Qatari. Today I feel Arab. Today I feel African. Today I feel gay. Today I feel disabled. Today I feel [like] a migrant worker," Infantino told journalists in Doha.

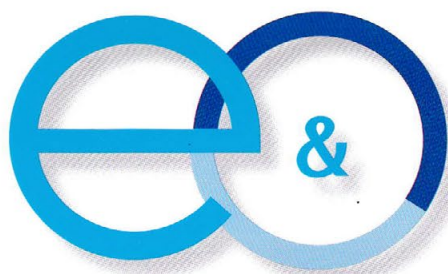
"You can crucify me. I'm here for that. Don't criticize Qatar, don't criticize the players," he said. "Criticize FIFA, criticize me if you want because I'm responsible for everything, but let the people enjoy this World Cup."

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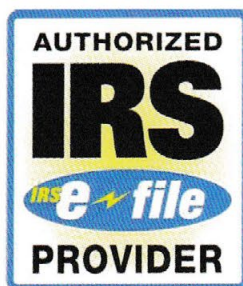
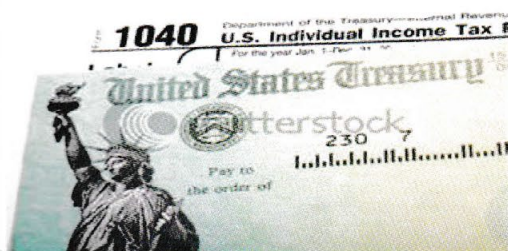
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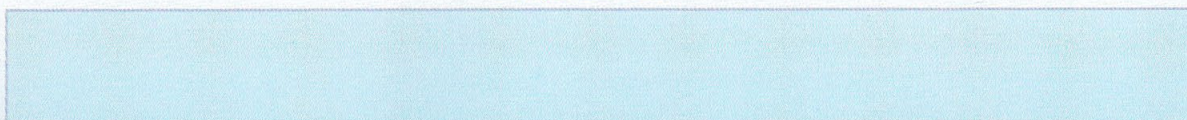
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