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CONTENTS

Editorial-Inconvenient Truths From Pope Francis _____	2	Africa’s Scorecard From Davos _____	29
Cameroon- Biya’s Anglophone Quargmire _____	4	Ukraine’s Zelensky Turns To Africa _____	30
Mozambique- A Mixture Of Defence and Business For Rwanda _____	7	Insight Into Ethiopian Airlines N.America _____	33
South Africa -Mandela SADR Storm _____	10	Cameroon-Foretia Foundation Set Sights On Job Development _____	35
D.R.Congo-Gruesome Tales From War Victims _____	11	Sierra Leone -Remembering the Peace Bridge _____	38
Impact And Legacy Of Gabriel Obiang Lima _____	14	Photo News-A Master Stroke In London For The AEC _____	41
Zambia-In Memory Of President Kaunda _____	18	Where is all the Water Going _____	45
Tanzania- Samia Reopens Political Space _____	19	Nigeria-A Commitment To Healthy Families From Rotary _____	46
AEC Goes Offensive In London _____	22	A Contraception Boone In Sub Sahara Africa _____	48
The Starlink Internet Revolution _____	25	Kenya Doping Paints Bad Picture On Kenyan Athletes _____	49
Kenya- The Cattle Rustling Menace _____	26		

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Inconvenient Truths From Pope Francis

By Ajong Mbadndah L

The warmth with which Africans typically receive high profile guests was in frenzy mood earlier this month with a six-day trip from Pope Francis. Huge crowds, festive atmosphere, colorful masses and more gave fresh hope to the faithful in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and South Sudan. Beyond the fanfare, there were uplifting messages from Pope to soothe the pains of people suffering from past afflictions and bearing the brunt of ongoing conflicts.

In the words of Pope Francis, the trip represented two dreams- to visit the Congolese people, custodians of an immense country, the green heart of Africa: together with Amazonia, they are the two lungs of the world. A land rich in resources and bloodied by a war that never ends, because there is always someone to fan the flames. And to visit the South Sudanese people, in a pilgrimage of peace together with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, and the Moderator General of the Church of Scotland, Iain Greenshields: we went together to bear witness that it is possible, and a duty, to collaborate in diversity, especially if one shares faith in Jesus Christ, the Pope said.

"The Congo is like a diamond, for her nature, her resources, and especially for her people; but this diamond has become a source of contention, of violence, and paradoxically of the impoverishment of the people. It is a dynamic that is also found in other African regions, and which applies in general to the continent: a continent that has been colonized, exploited, plundered. In the face of all this I said two words. The first is negative: "Enough!" Stop exploiting Africa!," Pope Francis said.

In South Sudan where he was accompanied by leaders of two Churches historically present in that land: the Anglican Communion and the Church of Scotland, Pope Francis called on the leaders eschew corruption and arms trafficking and embrace dialogue. Pope Francis who had taken the extraordinary step of hosting feuding South Sudanese leaders in 2019 for a spiritual retreat lamented on the slow pace of the peace process.

"Many so-called "civilized" countries

offer aid to South Sudan, and this aid consists of weapons, weapons, weapons, to foment war," Pope Francis charged, harping on the need for the peace option to be prioritize so that development can follow suit.

While he may command a cult following and the Church is firmly implanted across the continent, many will admit that often times the Catholic Church has been more of a problem than a solution. There is no way you can talk of the colonial legacy of Africa without adding the Catholic Church in the mix.

Political leaders across the continent who normally use the opportunity of such papal visits to score political points are often the first to indulge in all sorts of atrocious conduct to the detriment of their own people. Since the 90s, the D.R. Congo, a predominantly Catholic country has not known lasting peace. A country about the size of Western Europe, the super vast natural resources of the DRC have failed to serve the development needs of its people.

According to World Bank Reports in 2021, the DRC was listed among the five poorest countries in the world with nearly 64 % of Congolese, close to 60 million people, living on less than \$3 daily.

Compound such miserly realities with the wars, the displacement, the decades of multiple frustrations on all counts, and it will be easy to understand why the presence and message of Pope Francis resonated with people grasping for hope. For this to be more than soothing balm, Pope Francis and the Catholic Church need to go beyond speeches and prayer and continue to harp with a stronger voice, more consistency ,and more firmness in engaging key global actors. The Pope has the moral authority, the Church gives him a solid platform to articulate issues on behalf of people of the DRC and Sudan with key internal and external actors.

More importantly though, it is Africans that must take ownership of their own problems, take leadership in the quest for solutions , and shape the kind of destiny and future that meets their needs and expectations. You cannot help but ask the



Ajong Mbadndah L, Managing Editor

questions sometimes -what are the fights all about, for what purpose and for whose interest?

These questions should be asked in the DRC, in South Sudan, in Cameroon, in Mozambique, and other countries facing conflicts at the moment. As the African proverb aptly puts it, when two brothers fight to death, it is a stranger that reaps or inherits the harvest.

It is paradoxical that for country like South Sudan that spent decades fighting for independence, it should take intervention from the Pope for common sense to prevail on the belligerent parties. Is it not abdication of duty when instead of been your brother's keeper, none of the current and past leaders in Africa, and continental wide bodies like the AU are able to bring feuding parties in Cameroon to seat on the table and iron out their issues?

Such abdication of duty is what continues to bring in or cause foreign actors to come in. In Cameroon, after the abortive attempts from the Swiss at mediation, it is the Canadians that have taken over in trying to resolve a crisis that has been raging since 2017. The conflict between the government of Cameroon and separatists from the minority English speaking regions of the country has displaced close to a million people, kept over 600,000 children out of school, killed thousands, and according to UN figures about 2.2 million needing some form of support.

The conflict prone side of the equation can make many forget other important challenges that the continent faces. One of this is the energy section where of the over a billion people in the continent , over 600 million do not have access to electricity according to credible experts. Africa therefore has huge stakes on the ongoing energy debate. Fortunately for the continent, it is one of the sectors where a dynamic generation of young Africans has been articulating a clear eyed vision on African priorities .

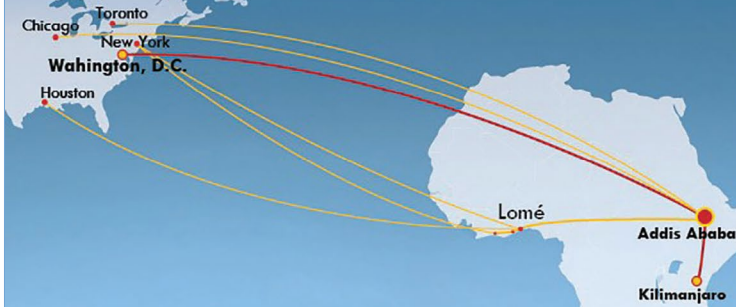
As Minister of Mines and Hydrocarbons of Equatorial Guinea for over ten years, Gabriel

Mbaga Obiang Lima was one of the most articulate African voices on the energy scene. Despite the small size and population of his country, his hard work and leadership made the oil rich central African nation a force to reckon with in Africa and globally. With the key leadership roles for Minister Gabriel Obiang Lima and Equatorial Guinea on the continental and global scene, PAV sat down with him for an interview to preview the stakes in 2023- A few days after the interview and as we were preparing to go to press-Minister Obiang Lima was moved to a different Ministry!! Considering the strong legacy he leaves behind , and the salient issues raised in the interview, it was only fair to give Minister Gabriel Obiang Lima the cover he deserves.

For a man who was all about the energy sector, it was befitting that one of his last acts was to attend the African Energy Chamber-AEC is hosted Invest in African Energy Reception in London. For the AEC, hosting an event in London was a very audacious move and this issue of PAV brings insights on that as well. The issue also takes a look at Ethiopian Airlines USA operations with the opening of flights to and from Atlanta, Georgia. In the issue as well are stories on the conflict in Eastern Congo, the business side of Rwandan military presence in Mozambique, the Canadian foray into the crisis in Cameroon, and more. Happy reading!!

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Cameroon: Twists And Turns In The Canada Peace Process

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

After six years of fighting in Cameroon’s North West and South West Regions, with tens of thousands killed and displaced, the bloodshed many had hoped would be coming to an end after the announcement of a peace process mediated by Canada. However, all that took a different dimension after the Cameroon government rejected the claim it was part of the initiative, raising the question of whether the government wanted to end the crisis or not.

“Canada welcomes the agreement by the parties to enter a process to reach a comprehensive, peaceful and political resolution of the conflict. The parties have also agreed to form technical committees to begin work on confidence-building measures,” The Honourable Mélanie Joly, Canada’s Minister of Foreign Affairs said in a publication on January 20.

“Canada has accepted the mandate to facilitate this process, as part of our commitment to promote peace and security and advance support for democracy and human rights. Our role also reflects Canada’s engagement to work with our African partners to build a better future for everyone,” Mélanie Joly added.

With many displaced people lacking documentation and out of



In throwing cold water on the Canadian initiative, more questions were raised on whether President Biya is still incharge in Cameroon.

the reach of aid organizations, the hardships of life in the bush have been unbearable to many. As the fighting continues, civilians are being pushed into Nigeria by the tens of thousands. And violence from the separatists and the army they are fighting is displacing Anglophone communities—depopulating swathes of the Anglophone regions and

bringing the fight closer to urban areas.

Cameroon government throws cold water

According to the Canadian authorities, this peace process will include the Republic of Cameroon, the Ambazonia Governing Council and the Ambazonia Defence Force,

the African People’s Liberation Movement and the Southern Cameroons Defence Force, the Interim Government, and the Ambazonia Coalition Team.

But, Rene Emmanuel Sadi, Minister of Communication and government’s Spokesman, in a press release on Monday, January 20 rejected the Canadian peace talk, stating that: «The Government of the Republic of Cameroon informs the national and international community that it has not entrusted any foreign country or external entity with any role of mediator or facilitator to settle the crisis in the North West and South West regions.»

“The Major Dialogue, which was held in Yaounde in 2019, was an opportunity for the sons and daughters of Cameroon to exchange freely and discuss prospects for a future of peace, security and progress for our country,” Rene Emmanuel Sadi said.

“The government urges friendly countries to track down and bring to justice those who from broad, are financing and encouraging



René Emmanuel Sadi, says the government has not entrusted any foreign country or external entity with any role of mediator or facilitator to settle the crisis in the NW and SW Regions.

violence in our country and thanks the government of the United States of America for the actions that have made it possible to bring the perpetrators of such acts to justice and encourages other friendly countries of Cameroon to do same.”

A 2019 national dialogue that granted special status to the two Anglophone regions, failed to resolve the conflict which has escalated. With this outright rejection of the peace initiative by the Cameroonian authorities, it thus begs the question what next?

All hope is not lost

Despite the supposed peace talk initiative having met a stumbling block, there is, however, hope that the government of Cameroon will see a reason for it as negotiations do not arrive easily, but through an arduous and sometimes messy scenario.

«Peace processes are always messy and take time, and this is a conflict that has been going on for 40 years,» Mélanie Joly told reporters on the sidelines of a cabinet retreat in Hamilton. Our goal is to be patient and to take a deep breath.»

«We were approached by the Cameroon government, and we also had a UN representative present during the mediation,» Joly said Tuesday. «Our sole interest in this is to make sure that parties are at the table.»

«Like in any mediation, it will be a tough one and one of the outcomes



Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs Mélanie Joly announced a facilitation process that would include the Yaoundé government and multiple non-state armed groups and separatist representatives.

will be it could fail. As Canada has accepted to be a facilitator with some rightfully finding issues with wordings, we must encourage the strengths of this agreement and find common grounds on its weakness,» Mark Baretta, an Ambazonia activist wrote on Twitter.

“I must also mention that criticism will always be there which is a good thing, others will just find any means to spoil the initiative. Amba groups involved in this process should collectively as they have prudently done before this publication raise any concern with Canada.”

CSOs, Religious leaders in favour of the Canada Peace Initiative

While the Cameroon government has refuted being part of the Canadian peace process, civil society and religious leaders have all given their backing to the peace process, while others have called for an end to violence in the conflict as a way to “promote confidence-building and credibility as well as a conducive and assuring environment for the announced peace process to thrive»

In a 7-point joint statement issued on January 22, 2023, the leaders of the Muslim and Christian faiths told the stakeholders of the peace process to be «honest, God-fearing sincere, humble, and patriotic throughout the entire announced peace process and let the spirit of God assist them in their deliberations.» They have equally expressed hope that “all the parties will keep aside their personal and/or political or other exclusive interests, but will sincerely and determinedly work for the common good, inspired by truth, justice, love, and equity,» the religious leaders wrote in a communique.

“I want to appreciate the move by the Republic of Cameroon, AGC, ADF, APLM, IG, ACT, SOCADEF, for accepting to engage on a peace process,» Barrister Felix Nkongho, founder of CHRDA tweeted. “It is also imperative for other stakeholders to join and support the process. I also laud Canada for

stepping in and I wish the process a success.”

Dr Christopher Fomunyoh of the National Democratic Institute in Washington, DC, reacted to Cameroon’s communique with incredulity. “Cameroon has a chance to prove to the world that it sincerely wants peace and prosperity for all its citizens. Disowning the Canadian effort after months of engagement and acquiescence would call into question the government’s credibility and reliability as a partner for the peaceful resolution of the conflict. Refusing to participate in the Canada-sponsored talks will seriously damage the image of the Cameroon government in the eyes of the vast majority of Anglophones and the world.”

Since the degeneration of the crisis in the North West and South West Regions, civilians are bearing the brunt of it with more than 6,000 people losing their lives since 2017. In addition, nearly 800,000 people have been displaced as a result of this crisis, and 600,000 children do not have full access to education.

The UN estimates that the violence has claimed more than 6,000 lives and has kept 600,000 children out of school. Due to attacks on villages, at least 800,000 people have fled their homes, surviving in challenging conditions as internally displaced persons and refugees.



Cameroon has a chance to prove to the world that it sincerely wants peace and prosperity for all its citizens with the Canadian effort , says Chris Fomunyoh.

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Mozambique: The Business Side Of Rwandan Military Support

Rwanda is increasingly strengthening its business presence in Mozambique amid the narrative of military support in the fight against terrorists in Cabo Delgado without demanding anything in return. Both Rwandan President Paul Kagame and his Mozambican counterpart Filipe Nyusi have publicly stated that the military intervention does not imply any kind of payment, but independent analysts say there are no ‘free lunches’ in international relations, suspecting there is some kind of secret agreement between the statesmen.

By Jorge Joaquim

The results of Rwandan military support are unquestionable. The Mozambican province of Cabo Delgado is today relatively peaceful, thanks to the intervention of Rwandan troops, after a long time during which Mozambique failed in the battle against terrorists. The bloody attacks began in 2017 and both the Mozambican army and various mercenaries, including Wagner Group, failed to destroy the rebels’ network, but the Rwandan troops have changed the situation since the beginning of their intervention in July 2021.

Rwanda and Mozambique say that the intervention is gratuitous and does not foresee any type of compensation, apart from peace in the region, but the truth is that since the military aid began, there has been a parallel business presence from Rwanda, and the most recent business known is taking place in the area where part of the Rwandan troops are deployed.

A Rwandan company has won an \$800,000 construction contract in Palma, Cabo Delgado, which will see it provide on-the-job training for Mozambican apprentices while improving the resettlement village for people forced to move by the Mozambique LNG project, according to Zitamar News.

Rwandan construction company Radar Scape signed an agreement with IFPELAC, the Mozambican vocational training institute, in Afungi, in the Palma district of Cabo Delgado, where they will work together to rehabilitate 76 houses in the village of Quitunda, it says.

Government agency IFPELAC is present in Palma monitoring basic courses aimed at young people in the area. Radar Scape is making its first incursion into the Mozambique market, in an area where a



President Felipe Nyusi and his Rwandan counterpart Paul Kagame inspecting troops in Mozambique.

2,500-strong contingent of Rwandan military and police has been present since 2021.

The houses to be rehabilitated were seriously vandalised after the insurgent attack on Palma on 24 March 2021. Quitunda is a new urban village built from scratch to house the displaced population of the area concessioned to the oil and gas companies that are going to exploit Areas 1 and 4 of the Rovuma Basin, on the seafront adjacent to the Afungi Peninsula.

After the 2021 attack, desperate locals from Palma and neighbouring villages headed to Quitunda, occupying all the public spaces and houses under construction destined for the inhabitants of Quitupo, a village within the concessioned area.

According to Zitamar, Radar Scape will do training of trainers and on the job training, bringing IFPELAC trainees to Quitunda. The project is valued at \$800,000, and paid for by

TotalEnergies, the French company leading the gas project, it adds, saying that the involvement of the Rwandan company followed a tender process, though noted there were not many competitors.

The agreement was signed in Quitunda by the IFPELAC delegate in Pemba, João Massingue and the Director General of Radar Scape, Patrick Nzeyimana.

Running another contract in the conflict zone

NPD, a major civil engineering group in Rwanda owned by the ruling party of President Paul Kagame, had joined Italian, South African and Portuguese contractors in bidding for the contract on the TotalEnergies-led project and was added to the shortlist, Paris-based news site Africa Intelligence reports.

There is some speculation that NPD would get the contract as some kind of quid pro quo for Rwanda’s

security investment in Cabo Delgado. The work would involve clearing the site and doing structural work at the project.

TotalEnergies evacuated all employees and declared force majeure on the development, after a major attack in March last year on the town of Palma that’s less than 10 kilometers away. The arrival of troops from Rwanda helped to beat back the insurgency.

Few believe Rwanda has the financial muscle to go this alone, and rumors persist that there is some kind of arrangement involving France and TotalEnergies.

However, last year the European Union’s High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy donated 20 million Euros to support Rwanda’s troops fighting terrorism.

Kagame and Nyusi denies exchange of favours

September last year Rwanda’s

president stated that the military support for Mozambique to stabilise Cabo Delgado is fully supported by Rwanda's own resources, denying having financiers such as France or TotalEnergies.

"Thus far, we have been using our own means. We have decent resources and we are happy to share. There is no one financing us", said Paul Kagame in an interview with RBA public television station RBA.

The Rwandan head of state was responding to a question about possible financing coming from France or its national oil company TotalEnergies.

"Our mission is not linked to resources or other things, it is just to make the area safe" and thus support Mozambique, because "there is a lot to do, one partner is not enough", given the degree of destruction in Cabo Delgado.

For the other hand, President Nyusi said that no country, including Rwanda, has asked for a reward for contributing to the fight against terrorism.

Rwanda was the first of several African countries to provide reinforcements to Mozambique's army, overwhelmed by the worsening conflict in the gas-rich province. A contingent of forces from the regional bloc, the Southern African Development Community, is also patrolling northern Cabo Delgado.



The reliance of President Nyusi on Rwandan troops to meet the security needs of Mozambique may be coming at a price.

The Rwandan security forces have added Ancuabe district to the sectors which they are responsible for defending against terrorists, in addition to Palma and Mocimboa da Praia, where Mozambican and Rwandan forces notched up a major victory, when they drove the terrorists out of their headquarters. The deployment to the district is made up of troops from the Rwanda Defence Force and the Rwanda National Police.

New horizons

On the other hand, Rwanda and Mozambique are strengthening relations. RwandAir will soon start direct flights between Maputo and Kigali, a measure that will stimulate an increase in the volume of business between the two countries.

Recently, Mozambique and Rwanda signed a visa exemption agreement for ordinary passport holders from both countries. Under

the new agreement, citizens of both countries are entitled to stay in the other without a visa for up to 90 days.

Under existing relations, Mozambique currently exports sugar, ores and other mining products to Rwanda. Mozambican businessmen are scheduled to travel to Kigali in March to take part in a road show aimed at mobilising the Rwandan business community to invest in Mozambique.

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South Africa: Furor In Morocco Over Mandela's Speech

By Prince Kurupati

Algeria and Morocco are two neighbouring countries that have a long history of frosty relations. Such is the bad blood between these two countries that the Moroccan football team failed to travel to Algeria to participate in the ongoing CHAN tournament citing the absence of direct flights between the neighbouring countries. To compound matters between the two countries, the speech by Nelson Mandela's grandson on Western Sahara while gracing the opening ceremony of the CHAN tournament in Algeria caused a huge uproar in Morocco.

Algeria is hosted the biennial African Nations Championship (CHAN). This is a continental football tournament where the coaches are expected to pick only local-based players. In preparation for the tournament, Algeria built new stadiums one of which is named the Nelson Mandela Stadium. As a sign of respect, the Algerian authorities invited a Mandela family member to grace the opening ceremony and the person picked by the Mandela Family is the grandson, Mandla Mandela.

Addressing multitudes at the Nelson Mandela Stadium, Mandla Mandela said "Let us fight to free Western Sahara from oppression. Don't forget the last colony of Africa, Western Sahara". The sentiments angered Morocco which for long has always exercised hegemony over Western Sahara.

Angered by the statement, many Moroccans via different media platforms lambasted Mandla Mandela calling him a 'little' Mandela. The Royal Moroccan Football Federation (FRMF) said that the statement was provocative and it wrote a letter to FIFA President Gianni Infantino as well as CAF boss Patrice Motsepe. The letter read "these statements are unquestionably evidence of an extremely serious, obviously premeditated and totally unacceptable interference of politics in the organisation and hosting of the CHAN Algeria 2023".



Mandela angered Moroccans with his thinly veiled support for the SADR .Photo credit humarights.eadl.ir.

FRMF also went further to list demands that it wants CAF to immediately implement. Among these is the need for "CAF to take without delay all the necessary measures and steps to sanction serious and blatant violations to the objectives and fundamental principles of CAF" as well as urging "The President of CAF to urgently conduct an internal and independent investigation in order to determine the internal dysfunctions, shortcomings and responsibilities within CAF and the CHAN Algeria 2022 Organising Committee, and to inform the FRMF as soon as possible of the outcome of such request".

The continental football body CAF also issued a statement saying that it had started an investigation into the matter. The statement read that CAF "will investigate and look into the political statements and events at the opening ceremony of the Total Energies CHAN Algeria 2023".

CAF President Patrice Motsepe in his response to the whole debacle said "We can't have this problem where we have these problems. We've got to look at our roles, look at our laws and it's key (for) football in Africa people stop seeing us as having some rules we don't adhere to and we change

them all the time... We have to be professional; we've got to be ethical. Everybody must comply with our rules and say to Africa and the world that we are serious about African football being amongst the best".

Though it qualified for the CHAN Finals, Morocco is not participating in the tournament being hosted by its neighbour Algeria. Morocco withdrew from the tournament after it had been denied a direct flight to Algeria. Algerian authorities in 2021 cut ties with Morocco in the process closing its airspace to Moroccan flights.

Like most African countries, Western Sahara was under colonial rule from 1884. It gained its 'independence' from Spain in 1975. However, Western Sahara's independence was not autonomous as Morocco and Mauritania were left in charge (administratively) of Western Sahara. In the same year that Western Sahara got its independence, the nationalist Polisano Front was established and its aim was to ensure that Western Sahara become a sovereign nation. Owing to this, Polisano Front has clashed with the Moroccan authorities on a constant basis. Though there was a period of relative peace from 1991 to 2011

thanks to a ceasefire, frosty relations and periodic clashes are now a common feature between Morocco and the Polisano Front.

Western Sahara officially known as the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SARD) is a full member of the African Union. However, though this is the case, the country is not regarded as an autonomous and sovereign state by all African countries. The countries that have recently reiterated their support for SARD are Kenya and South Africa – the country that Mandla Mandela comes from. South African President Cyril Ramaphosa in the recent past invited SARD President Brahim Ghali on a state visit. During the visit, the South African President vowed to "intensify international pressure so that the long-delayed referendum on the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara is held".

On the global stage, SARD currently enjoys diplomatic relations with 41 United Nations member states. The United Nations classifies Western Sahara as a case of incomplete decolonisation. This, therefore, means it's not accorded the full recognition (and related benefits) that other states are accorded.

D.R.Congo : Gruesome Tales From War Victims In Eastern Congo

By Maniraguha Ferdinand

It's been over a year since a war erupted between Democratic Republic of Congo's army (FARDC) and M23 rebel group. It is a war that seems not to end soon, as mediation efforts from regional blocs are not bearing the suitable fruits.

The war was surpassed a rebel and Congolese army level, now it is heading towards Countries, DR Congo and Rwanda. Congo accuses Rwanda of supporting and fighting alongside M23 rebels, claims that Rwanda denies.

A UN expert report on Eastern DR Congo also last year claimed Rwanda's support towards M23, but also accused Congolese army (FARDC) of arming, fighting alongside other rebel groups including FDLR, which was founded by remnants of 1994 Rwandan genocide suspects.

Fear increases day and night that tensions could result in a third Congo war, after the previous two of the late 1990s.

M23 is made mostly of Rwandophones, especially Tutsi (tribe). Tutsi are people who inhabit some parts of Eastern Congo. Their regions had been in Rwanda Kingdom before colonization, but Berlin conference of 1885 put them on Congo.



Refugees standing at the queue waiting for food to be distributed in Nkamira camp

There is an old saying in Africa, that 'When elephants fight, only grasses suffers'. As M23 advances throughout North Kivu province, Rwandophones especially Tutsi are being targeted by FARDC coalition in areas under government control.

According to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR), clashes in North Kivu province has displaced 521,000 people since March 2022.

Rwanda has in January 2023 reported to have received more than

3000 refugees from Congo since November 2022.

Most of refugees, who arrive in Rwanda, are from North Kivu Province especially in the areas where government and M23 rebels are fighting from.

Nyirabagoro Annonciata from Kitchanga, a suburb in North Kivu crossed to Rwanda in early January 2023. She fled with her family after the death of her husband Nzaramba Audace and his elder brother.

was around 9 AM. They first whipped them and removed their clothes and set clothes on fire", Nyirabagoro narrates.

Victims were accused of being M23 sympathizers in Kitchanga. Since the family is made of Tutsi, they were suspected of being behind M23.

"My husband was in his 60s while his elder brother was 70 years old. They took them to Mai Mai headquarters. Whether they killed them during night or day, I don't know. We waited them to return, in vain", she recalls.

In November 2022, United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide to United Nations Secretary General, Alice Wairimu Nderitu issued a statement, condemning the ongoing persecution against Rwandophones in Kivu regions.

Nderitu called on Congolese government to act in order to stop a looming genocide. She said that the region doesn't want another genocide, after the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda.

"Our neighbors were clear; they no longer want Tutsis in Kichanga. They would tell us go to your home in Rwanda. We don't even know Rwanda; I am 60 years old now but

The two, were slain by Mai Mai rebel group on 5th January according to Nyirabagoro. Mai Mai is one of the armed groups that fight hand in hand with government forces against M23 rebels.

Pan African Visions met Nyirabagoro at Nkamira transit camp in North Western Rwanda, where more than 500 refugees are being assisted.

"The day we decided to flee, I was with my husband and his elder brother. Mai Mai rebels came and took them, it



A woman carrying water for washing clothes in the camp.

I had never been in Rwanda before. I was born in Congo, raised in Congo and my parents were born there. They link us to M23, but we don't know those rebels", Nyirabagoro said.

Recently, Congolese government accused Rwanda of luring Tutsi communities so that they flee to Rwanda, in attempts to taint Congo's image.

For refugees, they say that they fled for their life. They feel abandoned by their government.

There is a war in our villages

Kanyamashari Masuhuke, an old man in his 70s from Masisi, North Kivu, told Pan African Visions that "Government forces are the ones who collaborate with those local rebel groups. They even collaborate with FDLR who refugees from Rwanda are. They have now joined Congolese army."

The old man remembers his neighbor whose head was cut off because he is a Tutsi suspected of collaborating with M23.

"They say that there is no war, but we know there is a war at our villages", he said.

Mama Lungu who crossed to



Nyirabagoro fled to Rwanda after her husband was killed.

Rwanda in early January, spoke to this paper from Kijote transit camp in North Western Rwanda.

She said that her security was in danger back home, after one of her sons joined M23 rebels.

"I come from Burungu. I decided to flee my hometown after being beaten by my fellow women whose husbands are in Congolese army. They accused me of having boys who joined M23"

she said.

She insists that her son joined M23 without her consent, but neighbours could not believe it. They vowed to make her pay.

"It was not true, my son joined M23, but I don't know even when he was gone. I didn't send him there; it was his choice. My neighbors killed my herds and my crops, that is why I decided to flee".

Rwandophones especially Tutsi in Eastern Congo, have never been at ease with other communities mostly since 1990s. In 1996, they joined AFDL rebel group led by late Laurent Desire Kabila, who became the third Congo's president in 1997 after toppling Mobutu Sese Seko's regime.

In 1998, Kabila fell out with Rwanda and Uganda, who had supported him during the struggle against Mobutu. Since then, some Tutsi were targeted as the infiltrators and collaborators of Rwanda.

Some soldiers of Tutsi origin started creating rebellion such as RCD Goma and CNDP of General Laurent Nkunda.

In March 2009, Government of Congo signed agreement with CNDP rebels, but some of their wishes were not considered after signing. In 2012, M23 rebel group arose and fought government forces, but they were defeated in 2013 after regional interventions.

Since 2022, M23 resurfaced after almost ten years in Uganda's refugee camps were they had been living. They want Congolese government honor its agreement and guarantee security for Rwandophones in the East.

Congo has categorically rejected their call and accuse them to be the puppets on the service of Rwanda.



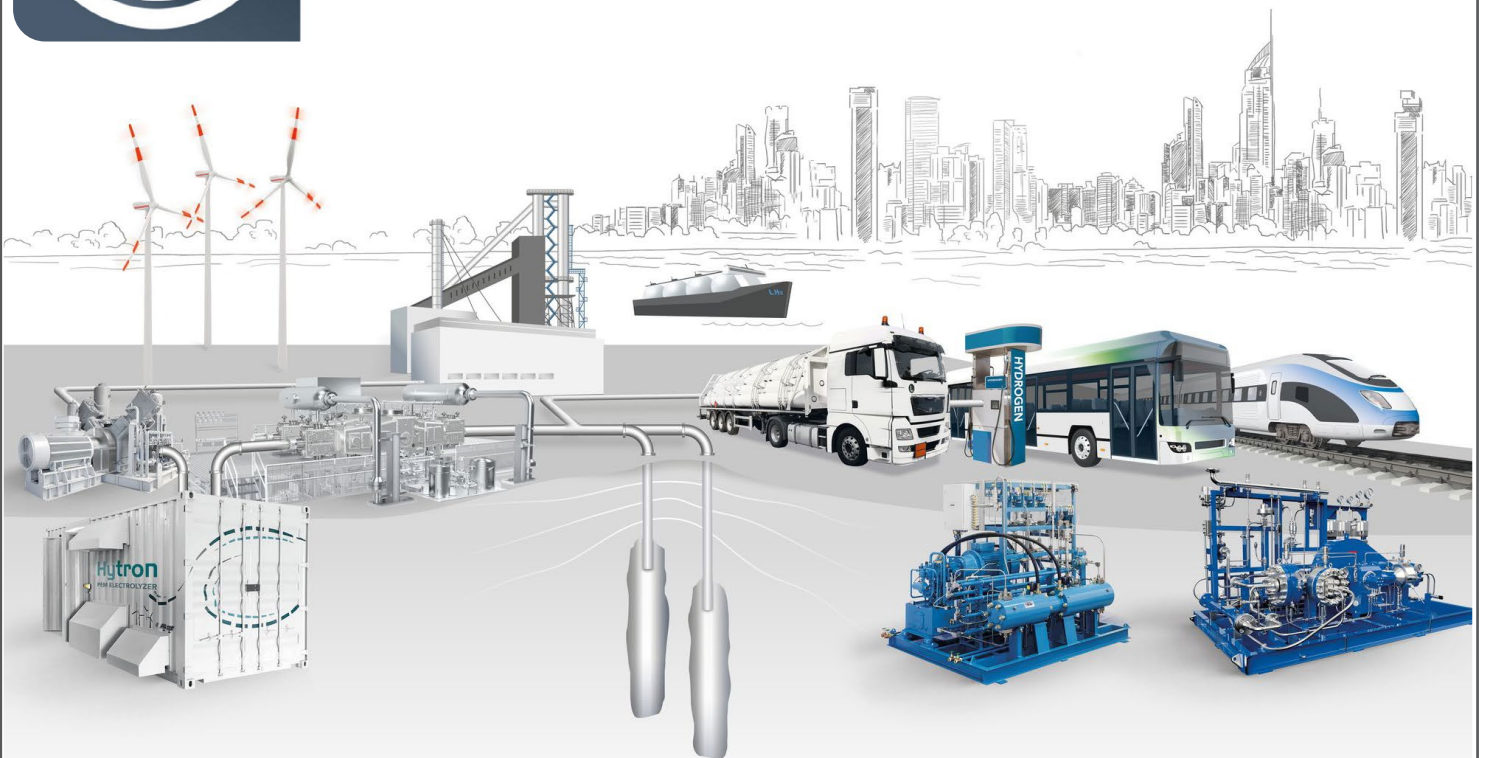
Children playing in front of a tent in Nkamira transit camp, North Western Rwanda.

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Impact And Legacy Of Gabriel Obiang Lima

By Ajong Mbapndah L



For over a decade at the helm, Minister Gabriel Obiang Lima oversaw vital reforms in the energy sector of Equatorial Guinea

Brilliant, focused, and passionate about his job, Gabriel Mbaga Obiang Lima was for some eleven years, one of the most articulate voices on continental wide energy priorities. Serving as Minister of Mines and Hydrocarbons, he overhauled the energy sector in his country Equatorial Guinea. Small in size and population, Equatorial Guinea is today a global actor when it comes to the energy sector.

Despite a supercharged schedule with country, continentwide and global duties he was saddled with, Minister Gabriel Obiang Lima fielded questions from PAV. A few days after the interview and as we were still putting together the February issue of PAV magazine, Minister Obiang Lima was moved to the Ministry of Economy and Planning. Considering the poignancy of issues raised and the vision shared, what is now Obiang Lima's exit interview from the frontlines of the energy scene sheds light on his legacy and a roadmap for his successor and other comrade in arms in the movement to kick energy

poverty out of Africa.

May we start this interview with the oil and gas potential of Equatorial Guinea as it stands now?

Gabriel Mbaga Obiang Lima: Equatorial Guinea has 1.1 billion of proven crude oil reserves and over 1.5 trillion of proven natural gas reserves, most of which remains untapped. With a number of exploration programs underway, by both independent explorers and global majors, our proven reserve base is set to expand. In addition, we also have large oil and gas discoveries, such as Fortuna and Zafiro, which we will be developing to enhance production capacity. With the demand for energy growing locally, regionally and at global scale, the resources we have and the many yet to be discovered following the commencement of new drilling campaigns, continue to make a strong case for foreign investment while attracting a strong slate of new players to the market.

Enhancing the country's

attractiveness even further will be the new Hydrocarbon Law. To date, we are finalizing this new piece of legislation which will lay the foundation for accelerated energy sector expansion. As we continue to make progress towards the creation of a Gas Mega Hub in Equatorial Guinea, opportunities for energy players from across the entire value chain continue to expand. Equatorial Guinea's potential continues to grow, and we are excited to welcome new investors to help grow the market even further.

You have been Minister of Mines and Hydrocarbons for quite a while, what are some of the key reforms that you have brought into the Energy Sector?

Gabriel Mbaga Obiang Lima: My contribution towards the revitalization and growth of Equatorial Guinea's energy sector did not only start when I became minister in 2012, but rather, back in 1997 when I entered the industry as a negotiator for product sharing

contracts and Presidential Advisor for Hydrocarbons before serving as the Secretary of State for Mines and Hydrocarbons. However, Equatorial Guinea's energy environment today and over the past few years when I became minister is no longer the way it was decades ago, a lot of changes have happened and activities, investments and infrastructure developments across the entire hydrocarbon value chain have improved owing to the various reforms we have enacted. We have enhanced fiscal terms for energy firms - hence we now have more global majors and international companies exploring and producing in the country. Through the Gas Mega Hub, we are seeking to accelerate the development and exploitation of the region's natural gas resources. Through the Year of Energy 2019 and Year of Investment 2020 initiatives, we have managed to increase international investments to drive the growth of the oil and gas sector in the country, leading to the country securing up to \$1 billion in foreign direct investment as well as the construction of two refineries.

Local content development is at the heart of everything we do as a Ministry, and the reason why we have contributed towards passing various capacity building laws and driving new regional local content partnerships with African countries such as Namibia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Equatorial Guinea's dream is to see an Africa that is inter-connected. Therefore, together with APPO, we are leading the implementation of the Central African Pipeline System to enhance intra-Africa energy trading to address energy poverty across the central African region and continent at wide.

Minister Obiang Lima has been one of the most vocal voices from Africa on the energy debate, what is at stake for Equatorial Guinea and Africa

when it comes to debate on abandoning fossil fuels?

Gabriel Mbaga Obiang Lima: Africa cannot afford and is not ready to abandon its fossil fuels. By leaving the estimated 125.3 billion barrels of crude oil and 620 trillion cubic feet of gas in the ground, Africa will be losing the opportunity to make energy poverty history, industrialize economies while driving socioeconomic development. Currently, the continent has 600 million people living without access to electricity and over 900 million people without access to clean cooking solutions, and fossil fuels represent the way forward for the continent to meet its growing energy demand, drive gross domestic product growth and to raise the investments required to diversify the energy mix for energy sector resilience. Developed nations have had the chance to develop on the back of oil and gas, and now, it is Africa's turn to do the same with our resources.

When you interact with other key energy players across the continent, do you get the feeling that Africa is on the same page when it comes to defending and protecting its interests in the energy debate?

Gabriel Mbaga Obiang Lima: Africa is united when it comes to promoting the way forward regarding developing both the energy sector and wider economy. As a continent, we are not against renewable energies, but are simply saying that in order to develop, we need to utilize all of our resources, including oil, gas, wind, solar, hydrogen, coal. Oil and gas are the continent's resources of choice to usher in a new era of energy security and independence. Both members and non-members of OPEC and the GECF across the continent are on the same page: that Africa needs to maximize the development and exploitation of its hydrocarbon resources if we are to alleviate energy poverty and address the high energy costs



Thanks to the leadership of Gabriel Obiang Lima, Equatorial Guinea occupies the Presidency of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF) and OPEC.

and fuel shortages resulting from the overdependence on energy imports from international markets.

For all its oil and energy resources, there is also the question as to how well the proceeds have been used, how efficiently has your country been putting proceeds from oil and gas to meet development needs?

Gabriel Mbaga Obiang Lima: Equatorial Guinea's economic growth is expected to see a positive trajectory through 2024 on the back of the successful monetization of hydrocarbons, specifically gas. This alone shows how well we are directing oil and gas profits to support the

wider economy. Equatorial Guinea is one of the few African countries with refineries and LNG export terminals which we have built using energy revenues. By redirecting the revenue we have generated from exports into key sectors of the economy, we continue to scale up the development of a number of industries. From infrastructure to agriculture to education to manufacturing, Equatorial Guinea's economy has and will continue to thrive on the back of oil and gas.

You were recently in Washington DC for the USA-African Leaders summit. What was your general take on the summit, and with regards to



Minister Obiang Lima, made a strong case for advancing gas monetization in Africa at a recent African Energy Chamber Investment event in London.

energy issues, were you satisfied with the way the summit handled them?

Gabriel Mbaga Obiang Lima: The U.S-Africa Leaders' Summit provided an ideal platform for Africa to promote its stance on oil and gas development, while engaging directly with U.S leaders and investors. In the same way in which the U.S is not ready to abandon its oil and gas resources for energy security, Africa is not ready to abandon the very resources that will enable us to develop, industrialize and thrive. During the summit, we made clear our position on the energy transition, oil and gas and what Africa needs to grow.

This year, Minister Obiang Lima will be handling very important international roles including serving as President of GECF and OPEC. How prepared are you for these responsibilities and what should Africa and the world expect from your leadership?

Gabriel Mbaga Obiang Lima: Most of OPEC and GECF member countries are African, and considering that by 2030 the continent is expected to contribute the largest amount of oil and gas to meet growing energy demand, I hope to capitalize on Equatorial Guinea's presidency of OPEC and GECF to help the continent maximize the acquisition of investments, skills and technology required to secure future oil and gas developments. In 2023, both OPEC and GECF will continue to ensure the stability of the global energy market. OPEC will continue to leverage market data to shape global energy reliability and supply while the GECF will help drive new investments across gas-rich nations. Additionally, with many African countries set to discover their own oil and gas resources, another key priority of OPEC and the GECF is to make a case for new members to join these organizations, promoting integration and collaboration as

the ideal way forward.

What role do you think organizations like the African Energy Chamber and the African Energy Week have been playing to facilitate your vision and the ambition of making energy poverty history in Africa?

Gabriel Mbagha Obiang Lima : The African Energy Chamber has been instrumental in connecting not only Equatorial Guinea but African oil producing countries and their respective market players and policymakers with global financiers. What Africa needs now to optimize oil and gas development is new investment, and both the Chamber and the African Energy Week conference have been crucial in driving new investments as well as private sector participation in the sector. With African Energy Week 2023 focusing more on improved cooperation among African countries on local content and infrastructure development, Africa's energy sector is set to see rapid expansion on the back of improved regional cooperation.

The African Energy Chamber has announced the 3rd edition of the African Energy Week for October, does Minister Obiang



Minister Obiang Lima spared no punches when articulating African energy priorities on diverse platforms.

Lima plan to answer present as he has done in previous editions?

Gabriel Mbagha Obiang Lima: 2022 was an important year for Equatorial Guinea's energy sector and 2023 will see this trend continue with us conducting more dialogue and deal signings to enhance exploration, production and infrastructure development in close collaboration

with global players. African Energy Week presents an ideal platform where we will showcase Equatorial Guinea's development strategy while networking with industry players. As the president of OPEC and GECF, the conference represents a critical platform for me to present and discuss industry trends with market players.

also have a mandate to reinvest in dozens of existing wells which have not yet reached their lifespan but have the potential to boost production capacity.

A last question on the future, what other options does Africa have in owning its energy future and focusing on its priorities if the rest of the world, especially the big funders continue to look the other way?

Gabriel Mbagha Obiang Lima: Africa needs to develop its own oil and gas market which will rely on the use of local energy resources to meet growing energy demand. The establishment of the African Energy Transition Bank by Afreximbank is a major milestone in unlocking the pivotal role African financial solutions can play in boosting oil and gas developments across the continent. Additionally, we need to drill more oil and gas wells, accelerate the development of LNG export and import terminals, build more refineries and gas-to-power plants. I also see the potential for improved collaboration on energy trading and investment with the Middle East and Asian countries.

Are there any other key energy developments, opportunities and perspectives that investors should be on the lookout for in Equatorial Guinea this year?

Gabriel Mbagha Obiang Lima: We have new drilling activities in Block G and we are also seeking new investors as well as a developer for Fortuna. We are also committed towards progressing on the development of the Gas Mega Hub and the Central African Gas Pipeline project. As we continue to expand reserves and fast forward the development of recent discoveries, we



Antonio Oburu Ondo who succeeds Gabriel Obiang Lima will have to hit the road running with the international engagements of Equatorial Guinea.

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Zambia: Ode To A Great Pan-Africanist and Peacemaker Kenneth Kaunda

By Prince Kurupati

The first President of independent Zambia Kenneth Kaunda died on 17 June 2021. Kaunda was president of Zambia from 1964 to 1991. Working under the United National Independence Party (UNIP) ticket, Kaunda recorded many great positives some of which have helped Zambia to reach the level of political, economic and social status it now enjoys. In remembrance of his great work during both his presidential and post-presidential days, his party UNIP picked the 28th of April to be the special day that the nation remembers Kaunda. The day is now affectionately dubbed Kenneth Kaunda Day.

Speaking on the official opening of Kenneth Kaunda Day, the current UNIP President the Rt. Revd. Dr. Musonda Trevor Selwyn Mwamba said Zambia's founding father was a great pan-Africanist and peacemaker. To begin his address in line with Kaunda's strong Christian beliefs, President Mwamba repeated the prayer composed by Kaunda which says:

"I release the nation, its people and the presidency from every negative force made against Zambia. I submit the souls now living and posterity and also its presidency to the salvation and Lordship of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Father. I further declare that Zambia shall forever enjoy tranquillity and remain a united and peaceful people under the motto; One Zambia, One Nation. The Lord bless Zambia and keep Zambia".

Highlighting one great attribute of Kaunda's pan-Africanist nature, President Mwamba took the audience inside the University of Zambia (UNZA) auditorium where the lecture was taking place back in time to the time when Zambia hosted the former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere the same university. As the two presidents were deliberating, they came to the same conclusion of embarking on a student exchange program.



Kenneth Kaunda was the founding President of Zambia.

The reasoning behind the student exchange program was to allow both nations to understand each other on a deeper level as only through this deep understanding could there be meaningful creation of synergies be it in the political, economic or social spheres. President Mwamba said by agreeing on such an idea, the two former presidents really demonstrated the desire and willingness to support and help each other on their development paths.

Supporting the idea of the student exchange program, President Mwamba said "To understand your own and other peoples, their outlook, their reactions and attitudes to things, you must understand their culture and social systems, their language, their history, and their contemporary

life in general".

Moving on, President Mwamba said another thing that set Kaunda apart from other leaders of his time and something which endeared him to multitudes of Zambians was his love for the people. In explaining Kaunda's love for Zambians, he broke down the meaning of love according to the Greek language where there are three words that help explain what love is. There is 'Eros' which is passionate romantic love. There is 'philia' which is family, brotherly or sisterly love. There is 'agape' which is unconditional love like the love God has for humanity and the love humanity has for God.

To Kaunda, the kind of love that he had towards Zambians was the 'agape' kind of love. Love that

"embodies justices and righteousness and opposes all forms of injustices that demean humanity". The one great souvenir which Kaunda left the world which demonstrates his agape kind of love are the two books which he wrote detailing his life journey and aspirations; 'Zambia Shall be Free' and 'Letter to My Children'. President Mwamba said that these two books are "an extended fatherly letter of love and wise advice and guidance to his children and the youth of Zambia to whom he grateful dedicated it".

Another great lesson that Kaunda left thanks to his strong Christian beliefs is that power is not absolute but rather borrowed. When in power, one is just a guardian of the power and not the owner as God is the Supreme Being who holds all the power. President Mwamba said that Kaunda during his presidency knew and acknowledged "that he was a guardian rather than the owner of such powers and talents as he possessed, answerable for his use or abuse of them to the One who had loaned them to him and would one day require a full reckoning. The sense of responsibility seemed to be a great burden but at least it freed him from worrying too much about popularity or fame".

For all those who are bestowed power, Kaunda believed that they had the duty to affirm to God and the spirit as the "spiritual dimension (is) an integral part of the human personality". Those who failed to realise and abide by this "became corrupt and immoral... and could be destructive in later life as an immoral force".

Tolerance was also something that Kaunda held in high regard. Taking a cue from the statement uttered by Kaunda during his presidency days, President Mwamba repeated the statement saying "I happen to be one of those odd people who feels equally at home in a cathedral, synagogue, temple or mosque".



Former President Kaunda with current UNIP President the Rt. Revd. Dr. Musonda Trevor Selwyn Mwamba.

Tanzania: Samia Frees Up More Political Space

By Mutayoba Arbogast, Tanzania



President Samia has been slowly but steadily opening up political space in Tanzania and easing political tensions.

Tanzania President Samia Suluhu Hassan has lifted the more than six-year ban imposed on opposition parties from organising political activities and rallies since 2016.

President Samia Hassan who came to power in March 2021 as the 6th president, lifted the blanket ban imposed on opposition political parties by the late president, Pombe John Magufuli, with the decision part of President Samia's 4Rs initiative - Reconciliation, Resilience, Reforms and Rebuilding.

Addressing the political parties' representatives on 3 January 2023, President Samia Hassan said: "My presence before you is to announce that the ban has been lifted and all political parties have rights to politics according to the law. We want positive criticism - Criticism that will build the nation and not a personal attack," admitting that neither legal basis nor the constitution backed up the imposed ban on opposition political parties.

"Our responsibility is to protect

you to hold political rallies peacefully, finish well and leave safely, president Samia said. "Your responsibility as a political party is to follow the laws as they say. Let's do mature politics. Let's do politics to build and not tear down."

"As political party leaders, political parties should use this loophole to make sure that we will demand big reforms in our laws and constitution so that all these rights that some leaders have been breaking will be protected. He added that we should make sure there will be no other leaders in the future who come and use their words to break people's rights," Abdul Nondo, Youth wing National Chairperson of the opposition Alliance for Change and Transparency Party said.

Benson Singo, Deputy Secretary of the Party for Democracy and Progress, better known as Chadema said: "We are not celebrating this because it's our right. We were delayed in conducting our duties as political parties, which is our right according to the law. Singo adds that

what "we need to come together as Tanzanians to push our leaders, who swear to administer and protect the law and should follow the laws."

How Did It Start?

On 24 June 2016, the late President John Magufuli announced a blanket ban on political parties organizing political activities and rallies. The ban was intended to end when the electioneering period started in 2020, but it was carried on after the elections and continued to be implemented by the new administration of President Hassan. Under the ban, the President restricted politicians to holding assemblies in their respective constituencies only.

The blanket ban was selectively applied against opposition parties whose leaders have faced intimidation, harassment, arbitrary arrest, and prosecution on unfair charges, including, participating in unlawful assembly, and holding political rallies against the orders of the President, Amnesty International reports.

The National Election Commission

announced the late Magufuli a winner of the 2015 presidential elections (58.46%), ahead of Edward Lowassa of CHADEMA (39.97%), who complained of irregularities at all stages and that they did not contend with the results. Nine parties stood for the elections.

The Commonwealth Observers Group, among other observers, commended the people of Tanzania for the peaceful and orderly electoral process.

CHADEMA threatened to call a nationwide protest to resist the results and justify the allegations that Magufuli was abusing his power, among other things, the reallocation of the budget without seeking approval from the parliament.

Days of political darkness

The ban on opposition parties caused confrontations, resulting in repeated arrests of some opposition leaders and supporters, journalists and activists. It was a time when people were reported missing, abducted by unidentified persons, believed to be government agents, while others were feared to have been killed.

The 2017 shooting of Tundu Antipasi Lissu, Deputy Chairperson of CHADEMA and Member of Parliament (by that time) while attending the Parliamentary sessions in Dodoma, was connected to the government, as it didn't work out who were the assailants, and up to now, nobody has been brought before the court.

Tundu received medical services in Kenya and Belgium, where he has been living, before returning home recently after president Samia opted to do away with the imposed ban.

Magufuli won overwhelmingly

To add salt to the wound, the elections were held under highly questionable conditions, with allegations of killings, arbitrary and torture, that Amnesty International stated in November 2020, urging Tanzania authorities to launch a

prompt, thorough and independent investigation into the allegations.

Amnesty International's Director, for East and Southern Africa, Deprose Muchena, said: "What we have seen in Tanzania post-election intended to suppress dissent. Criticizing the conduct of an election is not a crime". «States must protect the right to freedom of peaceful assembly, including spontaneous assemblies. Participating in, and organizing, assemblies are a right, not a privilege, and does not require state authorization.»

When Samia Suluhu Hassan came to power, after the death of her predecessor, she vowed to defend the state of democracy and human rights, but surprisingly, the arrest of opposition parties and suspension of newspapers continues.

The main opposition party, CHADEMA's Chairperson, Freeman Mbowe was arrested in July 2021 in Mwanza city when he was scheduled to speak at a conference demanding constitutional reforms and was released in March 2022 on "Noille presequi."

Internal and external pressures? Opposition parties, activists and

individuals, have been airing their voices demanding democracy and rule of law. Among the unforgettable public figures in the struggle are Fatuma Karume and Maria Sarungi Tsehai, who through their writings and spaces brought people of all walks together, to discuss and suggest ways forward on the future of the country.

There have been hot discussions and debates in spaces regardless of which party one belongs and those not belonging to parties all have had room through which their grievances can be heard.

At a time when the media couldn't stand professionalism due to cowardice lest they could be suspended, energetic, tireless and not cowardly lad, Martine Maranja Masese (MMM), whose Twitter account has more than 364K, has been using his platform to educate and inform people on various themes of democracy and freedom of speech. However, he has been facing claims from various people that sometimes he uses abusive language towards government leaders.

Some political analysts say external pressure from international communities, Tanzanians in exile



President Samia (C), with Freeman Mbowe (L) Chairperson of main opposition party, CHADEMA, and Abdulrahman Kinana (R), Vice Chairperson of the ruling party, CCM.

and diaspora, lured President Samia Suluhu Hassan to organize talks with political parties, while others are asking if that was the case, why those pressures didn't help during Magufuli's era.

Pan African Visions magazine met with Dr George Kahangwa, Senior lecturer at the University of Dar es Salaam, who said: "Ever since president Dr Samia Suluhu Hassan of the United Republic of Tanzania lifted the ban over political rallies in the country, political pundits have come up with several assumptions regarding what triggered her bold decision at this point. Some explain the president's decision as a result of a consistent dialogue between the state house and leaders of the main opposition party with Hon. Freeman Mbowe at the forefront."

Dr George Kahangwa added that others simply give credit to President Samia, thanks to her determination to strengthen democracy during her tenure and therefore lay the unshakable foundation for the future. "That it is also rumoured that Her Excellence simply

complied with some external urge, particularly from the USA, that she is obliged to restore democracy before she seeks any kind of Western support."

"Whatever the assumptions, the bottom line of this development is that Tanzania has for several years now committed to embracing the rule of law, cherishing multi-party democracy, and respecting freedom of speech as well as the right of associations, enshrined in the Constitution and Acts such as the Political parties Act of 1992. Generally, what Tanzania needs is firm protection of such principles of democracy, lest another leader emerges to supremacy them again," said Dr Kahangwa

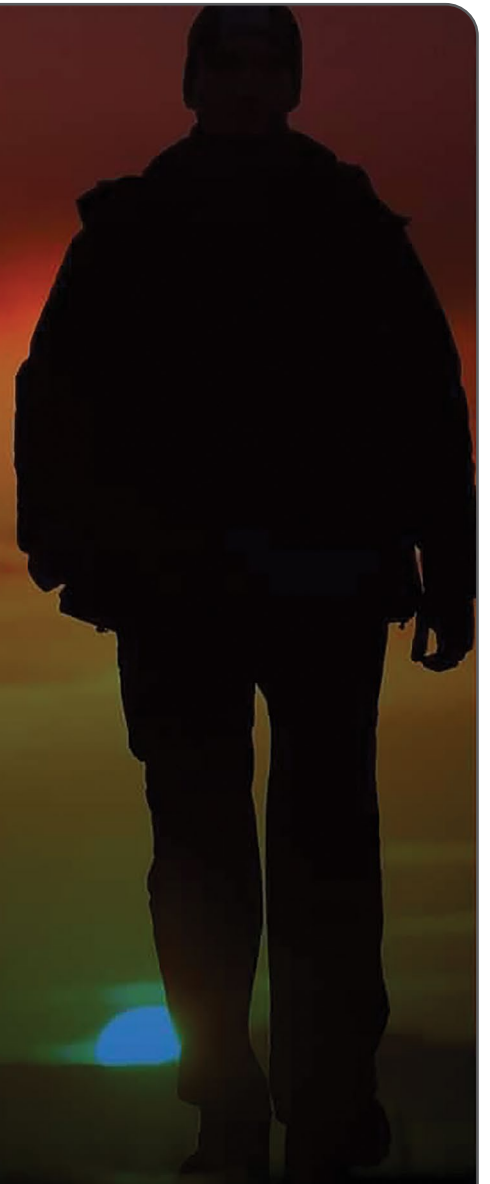
Kumbusho Dawson, executive director of Reach Out Tanzania, a non-government organization advocating for human rights, said he is optimistic about the future. «It is good for the nation because political parties can explain the people's problems and present their policies, he says. But also, Dawson adds, the president clearly explains the issue of continuing the new constitution process; all of these will contribute to removing oppressive laws,» he said.

All in all, President Samia has become a heroine to move a heavy block stone on doorsteps!



Tundu Lissu, Deputy Chairperson of CHADEMA, who survived death after having been shot multiple times by unknown assailants

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AEC's Takes Charm Offensive To London With Invest in Africa Reception

By Ajong Mbandah L and Boris Esono Nwenfor

After a brief hiatus to catch a quick break from the hectic schedule but the highly successful year that 2022 was, the African Energy Chamber has set the ball rolling with even bigger ambitions and optimism for African Energy Fortunes in 2023. In a sign that it means business, the Chamber launched its 2023 schedule with an Invest in Africa reception on 26 January 2023 at the Waldorf Hotel in London.

"We could not have chosen a better city to start our African energy journey. London, we thank you. At the core of what we do is to make energy poverty history," said NJ Ayuk, Executive Chairman of the AEC. "Everybody showed up. That tells you that it's time for Africa and it's time for us to stop apologizing for producing energy for the world."

Attended by over 500 people the high-powered event allowed stakeholders to engage in private meetings with several high-level government and company representatives from the African energy market.

Gabriel Mbagha Obiang Lima, Minister of Mines and Hydrocarbons of Equatorial Guinea; Maggy Shino, Petroleum Commissioner at the Ministry of Mines and Energy of Namibia; Mamadou Fall Kane, Deputy



We need every person who believes in the free enterprise values of individual initiative, hard work and freedom of choice to stand with us, says NJ Ayuk.

Permanent Secretary of Senegal's COS-Petrogaz; and Foday Mansaray, Director General at Petroleum Directorate of Sierra Leone and Rene Awambeng of Afreximbank and Per Magnus Nysveen, Chief Analyst for Rystad Energy were some of the top speakers who joined AEC Chair NJ Ayuk and his team at the event.

According to a presentation from Rystad Energy – "Energy Addition for Africa" – Sub-Saharan Africa holds 140 billion barrels of oil equivalent, of which only one-third is developed and two-thirds of undeveloped resources

are natural gas. New investment in oil and gas exploration and production is necessary, not only to maximize recent discoveries along Africa's 40,000-km coastline but also to meet rising energy demand globally and stabilize price hikes. «For 10 years, production has been lagging, which created the super cycle of oil prices,» said Per Magnus Nysveen, Chief Analyst for Rystad Energy.

Africa only accounts for less than 3 per cent of global emissions, and therefore should be recognized as not the cause of excessive carbon, but rather, the victim of climate change. At the same time, considering the many oil-dependent economies in Africa, with GDP measuring as high as 25 per cent for some, the continent should be able to establish a sensible plan for a just and fair transition.

"We must use this opportunity to promote an approach to reducing global carbon emissions while sustaining current livelihoods which Africa is championing. The transition to green energy must be sensible, pragmatic and rational. It must recognize the enormity of the continent's unmet economic development aspirations, the

necessity to take urgent actions to address its ever-widening development gap and the continent's vulnerability to climate change," Rene Awambeng, Global Head of Client Relations at the African Export-Import Bank said.

"We must give ourselves a breather to use the natural resources at our disposal to urgently deliver our development needs and simultaneously deploy these to promote investments in green energy," Awambeng said in a detailed strategy towards a just and inclusive transition.

"We must proactively and collectively intensify our efforts to implement the AfCFTA, as it is a clear path to mitigating carbon emissions while sustaining lives and livelihoods. We must all support the creation of the Africa Energy Transition Bank so that the continent can take control of its future. We must back the African Energy Chamber so that it can intensify its thought leadership on this subject and ensure that Africa's voice is heard as loudly as possible on issues that matter to us regarding energy."

«Afreximbank is supporting the



Per Magnus Nysveen, Chief Analyst for Rystad Energy during the Invest in African Energy event in London on January 26.

promotion of several such innovative instruments and programs that can catalyze global finance and help close the funding gap for the necessary climate action while not sacrificing the development priorities of the continent. The Liquidity and Sustainability Facility represents one such innovative instrument...Initially launched by UNECA at COP26 in Glasgow, we expect to conclude the first deal in the course of this conference, to be fully funded by the Afreximbank.»

Equatorial Guinea's Minister of Mines and Hydrocarbons, H.E. Gabriel Mbaga Obiang Lima, whose country has assumed the rotating presidency for both the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and the Gas Exporting Countries Forum said "Everyone recognizes that Africa is waking up to oil and gas," stated H.E. Minister Lima. "There are 600 million Africans who don't have electricity. What are we going to be transitioning from – the dark? We need to make sure that Africans have electricity, and that can come from oil, gas, renewables or nuclear power."

Equatorial Guinea is leading an ambitious investment campaign aimed at establishing diversified downstream industries while driving new exploration of existing fields and underexplored continental basins. Upstream, drilling activities at Block G have commenced and are aimed at

offsetting declining production at the country's historic Ceiba Field.

Equatorial Guinea's downstream market is expected to grow by over two per cent annually for the period 2020-2025, on the back of rising gas production and increased refining capacity, which includes the construction of two modular oil refineries in Punta Europa and Kogo, along with the ammonia and urea plants, Liquefied Petroleum Gas storage tanks, a methanol-to-gasoline and derivatives unit and the expansion of the existing CNG plant.

"Everyone should fight so that we can have an impact on climate change. But it is the responsibility of the consumers and not the producers," he added.

For Namibia, the emerging producer is uniquely implementing an integrated hydrocarbon strategy that seeks to achieve first oil, while prioritizing the global energy transition and a diversified energy matrix, with two sister discoveries in 2022 positioning the country at the forefront of Africa's upstream revival.

"The beauty of Namibia [is that it] will give you the opportunity of a lifetime," opened Maggy Shino, Petroleum Commissioner of Namibia's Ministry of Mines and Energy, during her presentation, delivered under the theme, Namibia: Beyond Venus and Graff.

"Kudu is the only field able to give you the solutions that you need.



Mamadou Fall Kane, Deputy Permanent Secretary of COS Petrogaz during the Invest in African Energy event in London on January 26.

The product is ready," stated Shino, speaking to investors. "It will give you a clean energy solution amid the energy transition."

"The quality of Senegal gas meets all expectations. In addition, this time next year, Senegal will become an oil producer, producing 100,000 barrels of oil from the Woodside-operated Sangomar project," said Mamadou Fall Kane, Deputy Permanent Secretary of COS Petrogaz, in a presentation titled, First Gas: Senegal's Energy Future.

Created in 2016, COS Petrogaz serves to define, implement and monitor the country's hydrocarbon sector strategy, to ensure the successful development of its oil and gas projects. Senegal holds substantial oil and natural gas reserves – estimated at 1.03 billion barrels and 910 billion cubic meters, respectively – along with a high potential a geostrategic location on Africa's western coastline.

"Next year, our growth rate is expected to be 10%, which is to say there is a significant transformation in the country. This is the time to invest," Fall Kane stated.

For its part, Sierra Leone's

Petroleum Directorate operates under the mandate to unlock the full potential of its national hydrocarbon resources, regulating the exploration and production of affordable, reliable and cleaner energy across Sierra Leone. In a bid to attract investors, Foday B. L. Mansaray, Director General of the Petroleum Directorate of Sierra Leone stated that Sierra Leone offers access to acreage, competitive fiscal conditions, a transparent and stable government, high-quality data with reprocessing and world-class conjugate discoveries.

"The response from investors [to our fifth licensing round] has been excellent and is part of the reason we extended the deadline. We like to think of IOCs as partners and not investors. We try to integrate into their operations. We've tried to eliminate the red tape. It currently takes 85 days from application to licensing," said Mansaray.

Having launched its fifth licensing round last May, Sierra Leone is seeking to advance in its nascent oil and gas sector, offering over 63,000 square kilometres of highly prospective acreage, with which the Petroleum Directorate has invited investors to engage through the block and technical data acquisition.



We must give ourselves a breather to use the natural resources at our disposal to urgently deliver our development needs, says Rene Awambeng of Afreximbank.



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At Least 21 African Countries to Get Starlink Internet in 2023

By Prince Kurupati

Nigeria as of 1 February 2023 became the first African country to get SpaceX's satellite internet service, Starlink. With Starlink now active in the country, Nigeria now has one of the world's most affordable, efficient and reliable internet services. The milestone reached by Nigeria in welcoming Starlink will however be attained by a whole host of other African countries before the year end.

Starlink internet is supported by a network of over 3000 low-earth orbit satellites. SpaceX has been launching the satellites in batches since 2019 and is expected to continue doing so until it covers the whole world.

Before Nigeria, Africa was the only populated continent that Starlink was not yet live in. The mere fact that the internet service has gone live in Nigeria and in the next two years, it's going to spread to 37 countries (21 countries for 2023 alone) is a cause for celebration as it will significantly help elevate the continent's level of broadband penetration. Currently, Africa has one of the lowest levels of broadband penetration in the world. Such is the low levels of broadband penetration that the World Bank in 2020 estimated that only 29% of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa had access to the internet.

After Nigeria, at least 21 other African countries are set to get Starlink internet. Namely, these include Angola, Benin, Burundi, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eswatini, Gabon, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Somaliland, Tanzania, Togo, Western Sahara, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

In the countries that Starlink is set to go live in, in 2023, citizens can pre-order and deposit a refundable fee (generally pegged at US\$99 in local currency) to reserve the service.

All of the countries that will get the internet are set to benefit immensely. This is largely necessitated by the fact that Starlink's greatest attributes



The Starlink revolution will boost internet connectivity in Africa which still lags behind the rest of the world. Photo credit Africa Press Arabic.

include ultra-fast speed and low-latency connectivity. Moreover, its latest laser-fitted satellites mean Starlink does not need any ground stations hence the internet can be available even in the most remote of areas.

For the general folks, as the standard rectangular satellite dish meant for household (residential) usage comes with download speeds from 20-100Mbps with latency between 25-50ms, the availability of Starlink means that they will be able to access educational materials with ease. At the same time, communication will be enhanced owing to the low cost of the internet.

The presence of Starlink internet in most countries across the continent is a testament to the willingness of the relevant authorities (governments) in liberalising the waves. This is necessitated by the fact that like any other wireless network, Starlink relies on the radio frequency spectrum hence permission is needed first before the internet can go live in any jurisdiction.

Perhaps the most surprising

thing about the countries that are going to get Starlink internet first on the continent is the absence of South Africa, one of Africa's biggest economies. Many would think that the massive nature of the South African economy can be further elevated with a reliable internet service like Starlink but the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) which is tasked with regulating and licensing internet service providers has taken its time in granting Starlink the permission to go live. This means that the country still lies in the 'Unconfirmed Launch Window' category when it comes to the question of when Starlink will go live in South Africa.

Moreover, the mere fact that SpaceX's founder Elon Musk was born in South Africa and has a connection to the country meant that South Africa would be one of the very first countries to get internet service.

Responding to the question of when Starlink Internet will go live in South Africa, ICASA said that SpaceX requires an electronics communications services

(ECS) license and an electronic communications networks service (ECNS) license. The response has led many to come to the conclusion that the absence of Starlink in the country may be down to the absence of these two licenses on the part of SpaceX.

There are also questions of whether Starlink will ever go live in South Africa considering the fact that by law, all prospective internet service providers only receive licenses if they satisfy the 30% black-owned policy. According to the policy, ISPs can only be licensed if they are partly owned by 'blacks' by at least 30% shareholding. The mere fact that SpaceX hasn't received the ECS and ECNS licenses may be down to this policy. The latest data regarding the ownership of SpaceX entails that Elon Musk through the Elon Musk Trust holds 47.7% equity. The remaining shareholding is split between Capricorn, Valor Equity Partners, Founders Fund, Draper Fisher Jurvetson, and Google.

Kenya's Cattle Rustling Menace

By Samuel Ouma

Banditry is still a concern in some parts of Kenya, particularly in the north and northeast as owning cattle in these regions is a matter of life and death.

This has been the life of most of the residents of Taita Taveta, Mandera, Isiolo, Laikipia, Elegeyo Marakwet, Naivasha, Kitui, West Pokot, Lamu, Wajir, Mandera, Marsabit, Samburu, Baringo and Turkana for several decades. The insecurity situation has forced them to arm themselves, which has led to the movement of illegal guns in the country.

Illiterate herd boys are frequently taught self-defence skills at a young age. As early as eight years old, kids are taken away from their mothers and placed in herding camps where they endure hardships. To be sharp and resilient, the boys must master survival skills.

Worse still, kids are made into herders instead of attending school like those in other regions of the nation. This creates an environment of continued insecurity since young boys are recruited into banditry, and young girls are married off at an early



Herders in West Pokot. Photo courtesy.

age.

“In such volatile areas, it is no surprise to have only a few men aged between 15 and 30 — the prime age of cattle rustling and herding — because they die in attacks,” said the police.

In Kenya, banditry has a long history. The habit dates back to the colonial era when British colonizers

took native populations’ land and made them work in mines and fields. As a result, many Kenyans turned to banditry as a method of subsistence, utilizing the money from their robberies to feed themselves and their families.

However, the nature of cattle rustling has evolved due to the rising

availability of high-tech automatic guns like the AK-47. While cattle rustling used to be a criminal activity where the stolen animals were either divided or used as bride price, it has more recently turned into a lucrative business. Livestock which is stolen is being sold frequently across international borders.

What exactly prompts some communities to engage in cattle rustling and banditry? There is historical and ethnic tension. Kenya has a long history of interethnic and intertribal fighting as various groups compete for control of resources and authority. Land disputes are also a contributing factor. In Kenya, the land is a particularly controversial topic, with numerous groups fighting for resources such as grazing land and water. These conflicts frequently turn violent, especially when pastoralist populations are involved, whose livelihoods rely on access to land.

Culture and traditions are also to be blamed for the ballooning menace. Banditry is often tolerated and regarded as a tradition in some communities; hence it is a custom passed down from generation to generation, making it difficult to combat. Furthermore, corruption in the East African country has resulted



Herders in Turkana. Photo courtesy.

in a collapse in law and order, exposing communities to criminal activity.

Local politicians have been accused of exploiting community divisions to advance their political careers by favouring certain tribes over others. It has also been stated on multiple occasions that individuals who own guns are poor young men supported by influential politicians in the region. Some influential persons in pastoralist societies own a significant amount of livestock and hire young men to herd them by buying them guns.

Conflicts and banditry are further exacerbated by environmental deterioration, such as overgrazing, deforestation, and pollution. This is because the destruction of the natural environment has resulted in a loss of resources and a fall in the standard of living for people, which can lead to competitiveness and increase the risk of crime in communities.

Lack of infrastructure, such as roads, hospitals, and schools, has resulted in isolation in some rural areas of Kenya, making it easier for bandits and other criminals to operate. Al-Shabaab, currently active in the Northeastern region and linked to numerous terrorist acts, is also to blame for the country's ongoing security problems, which have increased banditry and other criminal activity.

The menace has had adverse effects, including the loss of life. Both police and innocent civilians, as well as bandits, are reported to have perished in the raids. Economic costs have also been incurred since



Cattle stolen from Isiolo, Eastern Kenya. Photo courtesy.

businesses are closing or relocating owing to the danger of violence, while property prices have dropped in banditry-affected areas.

Additionally, because bandits often use explosives or set buildings on fire to carry out their activities, their actions have damaged infrastructure, including highways and buildings. The government has also suffered a revenue loss due to the decreased investment and travel to areas plagued by banditry. Food insecurity has also been a byproduct of banditry because farmers cannot transport their products to markets due to insecurity.

The Kenyan government has persisted in taking action to combat banditry. This involves setting up

community policing initiatives, deploying security officers in high-risk regions, and implementing projects to lessen unemployment and poverty. The government has also attempted to interact with regional communities and solve the underlying socioeconomic problems that fuel banditry.

Moreover, the number of animals per household has dropped as a result of climate change and the shrinkage of pastures, despite demand increasing due to population growth. As a result, as communities use their gun power to replenish, a single raid will set off numerous further raids.

Despite these initiatives, banditry is still a problem that needs everyone's help if the government is to eradicate

it completely. President William Ruto recently issued a harsh warning to livestock rustlers and robbers, threatening them with severe repercussions.

Ruto revealed that the government would soon adopt a comprehensive plan to end the bandit threat that badly hurts Kenyans' quality of life in several regions of the nation.

«We shall no longer follow the tradition of putting cattle rustlers, bandits and other criminals on notice. Instead, we will move resolutely and systematically take measures to make our presence, intent and capability evident for all to see,» reiterated President Ruto.

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A Look at Africa's Gains from the 2023 World Economic Forum Rustling Menace

By Prince Kurupati

In recent times, many have questioned the relevancy of the World Economic Forum. Having been established by Professor Klaus Schwab as the European Management Forum, WEF in its initial days was concerned particularly with championing best practices in corporate managerial strategy. However, its role over the years has changed and now, it's concerned with tackling global economic and social issues. Looking at this, it's safe to say that though questions

are arising about the relevancy and role of WEF in contemporary times, the forum still plays a major role in global economics and social issues.

For Africa, the relevancy of WEF is clear for all to see. This is necessitated by the fact that the Forum enables African leaders from both public and private sectors to network and establish synergies with leading political and economic actors from all around the globe. At WEF 2023 which ran from January 16 to 20, a record number of CEOs from all around the globe attended the Forum while other key actors especially those working in the climate change sphere were also in attendance. This, therefore, meant the African leaders who attended the Forum managed to rub shoulders, share ideas and establish key synergies with leading actors in an area that's become problematic for the continent as a whole that is, climate change.

The main theme at WEF 2023 across all panels was that Africa's development in the past has always been in fits and starts. There hasn't been a time when the continent enjoyed a long stretch of undisturbed growth. This of course largely necessitated by social and political strife. Vera Songwe an economist

and Chairwoman of the Board of the Liquidity & Sustainability Facility while speaking on the Reigniting Growth in Africa panel said even today, Africa's development trajectory is facing four major obstacles namely conflict, climate, COVID-19 and high living costs.

As such, for the continent to reach the levels of development that other continents have reached, the major thing that's needed is to remove the obstacles to economic and social growth. On this front, a consensus was reached that the best way to eliminate the hurdles is to invest in human development. Having a solid human resource base will ensure that any obstacle faced will quickly be addressed and eliminated and, in some instances, the obstacles may even be prevented before they emerge thanks to an enlightened human resource base.

Tunisia's Prime Minister Najja Bouden said that to develop the human resource base, it's critical that the continent impart the youth and children with key life and educational skills from a very young age. Prime Minister Bouden said that if only the continent can implement the African Union's Agenda 2023 which envisions a continent "whose development

is people driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children," the chances of enjoying a long stretch of undisturbed economic and social growth is a guarantee.

Furthermore, Prime Minister Bouden called on the continent to pave the way and create an enabling environment which fosters entrepreneurship. The dwindling economies of most countries on the continent have resulted in the loss of employment for many. This in turn has led many to venture into the informal economy. There is thus a need to ensure that all those who have been removed from the formal economy channels integrate themselves into the informal channels.

The Chairman of Multichoice Group Services Imtiaz Patel said that the role that the young can play in Africa's development trajectory cannot be underestimated more so when one considers that the world is moving towards the digital realm. To compete with other continents and possibly eclipse them, Africa need to do just as much if not more to digitalise all aspects of the economy. This is where Africa's youth which is ambitious and tech-savvy will come in. "Africans are resilient. They are hungry for

growth. Everybody wants a better life, and the spirit of people should never be underestimated," Patel said.

Africa just like the rest of the world is currently grappling with energy issues. While a large percentage of the continent hasn't been electrified as yet, especially in the rural and remote areas, energy constraints are now forcing even the electrified communities and industries to go for hours or days without power. With power being one of the

major ingredients for rapid economic development, the fears for contracted growth are increasing by the day, many countries thus attended WEF2023 with the intention to find solutions to this problem.

The head of regional agenda for Africa Chido Munyati summed up the continent's energy crisis perfectly saying, "with the energy transition, the reality is that 600m people in Africa do not have access to electricity and this is in the context of Africa having the fastest growing population, and so the question is how will the region attain the cheap affordable and modern energy solutions needed to meet this challenge."

Last year in Davos, Namibia took the unprecedented step of launching its green hydrogen offerings to the community of investors at WEF 2022. The response that the countries gained was huge and in the same vein, several African countries this time around also used WEF as a solution-seeking platform. Thanks to this, several synergies were established while memorandums of understanding relating to the energy sector dominated the Forum.



Davos had a strong showing from African faces. Photo credit New Ziana.

President Zelenskyy's Chief of Staff, Andriy Yermak, welcomes leading African ambassadors to the International Coordination Group for Prevention of Hunger (ICGPH)

- The ICGPH is the latest initiative from President Zelenskyy's 'Grain from Ukraine' programme

- The Group's mission is to influence the provision of food needs of millions of people and build international support for the Ukrainian agricultural industry

- ICGPH meeting attended by high-level 'Grain from Ukraine' African ambassadors, including Former President of Malawi

- Priorities for Group are to create evidence-based approach, with measurable and tangible results

Kyiv, Ukraine – January 25, 2023: Andriy Yermak, Chief of Staff and Head of Presidential Office of President of Ukraine, has welcomed leading African ambassadors to the International Coordination Group for Prevention of Hunger (ICGPH) in Kyiv.

The ICGPH has been established to directly influence the provision of food to millions of starving people whilst building international support for the Ukrainian agricultural industry.

The Group, an initiative from President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's 'Grain from Ukraine' humanitarian programme, aims to protect cultivated areas, maintain production, and strengthen food supply chains. As part of its mandate, the Group will also work with the Ukrainian government to source international customers who can guarantee the purchase of the country's agricultural products.

In his opening remarks, Andriy Yermak, Chief of Staff and Head of Presidential Office of President of Ukraine, said: "We welcome our African leaders and allies to the ICGPH and their support to President Zelenskyy's "Grain from Ukraine" programme. In times of heightened



President Zelenskyy's Chief of Staff, Andriy Yermak.

food insecurity and global inflation, Ukraine stands strong and willing to support vulnerable nations on the brink of starvation across the African continent."

"We see the prospect of expanding the project. To do this, we need reliable partners with local knowledge and extensive connections."

Yermak added: "As part of our commitment to Africa, the Ukrainian government will also look to strengthen its diplomatic relations

with the continent and advance the delivery of President Zelenskyy's vision for a more prosperous and sustainable future for its people."

The Grain from Ukraine initiative was launched in November by President Zelenskyy at a Global Food Security Summit in Kyiv, attended by Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, Emmanuel Macron, the President of France, Olaf Scholz, the German Chancellor, UN Secretary-General António Guterres,

and the prime ministers of Poland, Lithuania, Romania, Belgium, as well as the president of Hungary.

The fourth vessel under the Grain From Ukraine programme has just departed from the port of Chornomorsk, heading for Ethiopia which has been ravaged by famine. The vessel is carrying another 30,000 tons of Ukrainian wheat. Another three ships have already delivered 80,000 tons of wheat from Ukraine to Ethiopia and Somalia.

The meeting with Mr Yermak last week was attended by a number of high-level African delegates and political leaders who have agreed to operate as ambassadors to the 'Grain from Ukraine' initiative.

Among them is former President of Malawi, Dr. Joyce Banda, who is currently active in a number of international organisations, including being a committee member of the AU African Women Leaders Network, an organization initiated and formed by UNWOMEN in 2017. She is also a board member of The Tana Forum for Peace and Security in Africa, and The Club de Madrid, a global organisation of former heads of state and government with headquarters in Madrid, Spain.

The second ambassador of Grain from Ukraine is Dr. Oby Ezekwesili, former Minister of Education of Nigeria and former Vice President of the World Bank, who is currently a Senior Advisor at the Africa Economic Development Policy Initiative, Founder of SPPG- School of Politics, Policy and Governance and President of Human Capital Africa.

The initiative was also joined by Dr. Christopher Fomunyoh, Senior Associate for Africa and Regional Director at the National Democratic Institute (USA), who has led international election observation



Malawi's Former President Joyce Banda.

missions and managed democracy support programs in many countries on the African continent.

Joyce Banda said that she was proud to join the Grain from Ukraine initiative. «We really need to support and help those countries affected by the Russian-Ukrainian war,» she said, noting that with grain shortages due to Russian aggression, many families find it difficult to buy the necessary food. The former President of Malawi also expressed her support for Ukraine and the Ukrainian people and declared her readiness to participate in projects that will help end this war.

Oby Ezekwesili noted Ukraine's active and effective initiatives to combat the food crisis not only on the African continent, but also around the world.

«We are talking about millions of people around the world who will receive this support. These people will suffer if they don't have food on their table,» she said, adding that 62 million people in Africa suffer from food insecurity for one reason or another. «This initiative should therefore support the continent's support longer term policy measures for increasing investment and raising agriculture productivity. That's why we and the world really consider Ukraine as a country that, despite the war, is doing such important things to

help ensure food security,» she added.

Dr. Christopher Fomunyoh stated that he and other experts together have the desire and intention to help overcome the food crisis and work for the benefit of Africa. «I reaffirm my commitment to working with you to achieve results. Our hearts are full of sympathy for the people of Ukraine. We would like to express our respect to President Zelenskyy, the government and people of Ukraine for fighting the threat of annexation despite all the difficulties and setting an example for the rest of the world,» he said.

According to Mr Yermak, since the launch of the Grain from Ukraine program in November 2022, more than 30 donor countries have joined the program. These are the EU countries, Qatar, Türkiye, Japan, Norway, Korea, Canada and the United States. So far, participants have pledged nearly \$200 million.

«The goal is to provide grain to at least 5 million people by the end of this spring, and this is just the beginning of a global humanitarian corridor for countries facing the threat of famine. It is because of Russia that the famine



Dr Christopher Fomunyoh.

is happening,» said Andriy Yermak.

The Head of the Presidential Office noted that Russia has attacked not only Ukraine but is also trying to destroy the rules-based international system via the artificial deepening of the energy crisis in Europe, nuclear blackmail and jeopardising food security for dozens of countries.

«The terrorist country put pressure on various states and blackmailed them with the threat of famine. This led not only to an increase in food prices, but also to social and political consequences in many countries,» stated Yermak.

and diamond mines in impoverished nations, providing weapons and surveillance to questionable regimes and contributing to human rights abuses against civilians.

Putin has long sought to strengthen the Kremlin's influence on the continent, attempting to shore up alliances forged decades ago when the Soviet Union supported some movements fighting to end colonial rule.

The extent of its African influence operations was laid bare last March, when 25 African countries either abstained or declined to vote on the UN resolution to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Background on the ICGPH:

The International Coordination Group for Prevention of Hunger (ICGPH) is chaired by Andriy Yermak, Chief of Staff and Head of Presidential Office of the President of Ukraine. It includes representatives from governments, corporations, and other patrons who can directly facilitate the provision of food needs to millions of people around the world.

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Dr. Oby Ezekwesili.

Before the full-scale Russian invasion, Yermak said that Ukraine's share in the global grain trade was 10%. Ukraine was the 4th largest grain exporter in the world, ahead of all EU member states, and provided the UN World Food Program with about 40% of wheat for countries experiencing serious food shortages.

Russia's malign influence in Africa has grown at an alarming rate in recent years, with reports of Moscow taking control of gold



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A Bridge Building Role For Ethiopian Airlines USA

By Ajong Mbapndah L

With circa three hundred thousand people ferried to and from Africa within the year, the Ethiopian Airlines USA Office has continued to grow by leaps and bounds. A sign of its growth and progress is seen in the recent opening of Atlanta, Georgia as its newest gateway to the USA. When added to Washington DC – Dulles, and Chicago O’Hare, Newark Airport, JFK Airports, it is easy to understand the bridge building role that Ethiopian Airlines plays in USA-African ties.

“We are continually engaging with African and US Officials to review opportunities where it makes business sense to increment our offerings between the US and the African Continent,” says Samson Arega Regional Director Sales, Marketing & Svcs, Ethiopian Airlines USA Office.

In a Q & A with PAV, Samson Arega sheds light and offers insights into the workings of Ethiopian Lines whose fleet and services make it the best in Africa and amongst the best in the world.



We are continually engaging with African and US Officials to review opportunities where it makes business sense, says Samson Arega.

May we get insights into the scope and depth of Ethiopian Airlines operations in the USA?

Samson Arega: Currently we have (4) US Gateways to Africa. Washington DC – Dulles Airport and Chicago O’Hare Airport service our East Africa HUB and connections in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Newark Airport, JFK Airport and Washington DC – Dulles Airport service our West Africa HUB in Lomé, Togo.

We recently announced our newest US Gateway for May 2023, Atlanta, Georgia. We are truly delighted to open our sixth gateway in North America with the new flight to Atlanta. We have been connecting the U.S. and Africa for 25 years now and the new service will help boost the investment, tourism, diplomatic and socioeconomic bonds between the

two regions. As a pan-African carrier, we are committed to further expand our global network and connect Africa with the rest of the world. We are also keen to better serve the U.S. by increasing our destinations and flight frequencies. Ethiopian Airlines is also a member of Star Alliance, the first global aviation alliance ever existed and with that our Connecting Partners and Intermodal Partners extend our network beyond the 1,200 airports currently served by the 26 Alliance’s member airlines worldwide. And through this and other commercial partnership, we are serving the whole US market, connecting our esteemed passengers from various cities and airports in the US at our online US gateways and connect them into our

vast network that we command from our East and West African hubs.

In a year approximately how many passengers use Ethiopian Airlines services to Africa from the USA?

Samson Arega: More than 300,000 passengers were transported from/to US to/from our Africa.

In the face of the growing African diaspora in the USA, what criteria is used in getting states or airports you service and any plans for more in the near future?

Samson Arega : We are continually engaging with African and US

Officials to review opportunities where it makes business sense to increment our offerings between the US and the African Continent. With these opportunities, we are also aware that the growing African diaspora in the US will benefit with more options for travel to their homeland.

Our most recent expansion announced for MAY 2023, is the city of Atlanta, which will now connect customers to our vast network in Africa.

At the Corporate level, how has the leadership of CEO Mesfin Tasew fared since it took office about a year ago?

Samson Arega: Mr Mesfin has an extensive experience in the industry which spans almost 4 decades and him along with his leadership team are committed and determined more than ever to take the Airline to the next level.

What are some of the incentives that Ethiopian Airlines uses to facilitate travel and make the experience more aggregable for its clients?

Samson Arega : Continuous promotions, discounts at time of ticketing, are provided year-round thru our website, mobile app and partnered travel agencies. Special baggage allotment is also rewarded when using our mobile app and our website for check-in prior to travel.

Also, we have preferred rates from our Offline US cities with multiple US airline partners. This allows us to provide ease of connectivity thru any of our US HUBs from any city in the Continental US.

As a brand, what makes Ethiopian Airlines stand out, what are some of the core principles that guide its services?

Samson Arega: As an airline,

safety is our first priority, Ethiopian is a high performance and learning organization with continuous improvements, innovation and knowledge-sharing. We accept change for the growth opportunity it brings and always seek for and apply the best ideas regardless of their source, We recognize and reward employees for their performance and demonstrate integrity, respect to others, candor and team work, Act in an open fashion and be result-oriented, creative and innovative, Adopt Zero tolerance to indifference, inefficiency and bureaucracy, Encourage 360° free flow and sharing of information, Treat our customers the same way we would like to be treated and always look for ways to make it easier for customers to do business with us.

There has been a growing number of airmen from the USA, how prepared is Ethiopian Airlines for the competition?

Samson Arega : We welcome competition as this provides the customer with options for travel. Still, we are the biggest airline in the African Continent and believe that by

listening to our customers, providing better connectivity through a seamless & hassle-free travel experience, we also can expand and grow our network by adding more frequencies or venturing in new destinations across the globe.

Any projections or big plans in view for 2023 and any special message to old and prospective customers of Ethiopian Airlines?

Samson Arega: We are now able to look into the airlines network expansion, post-COVID, and a testament to that is our recent announcement to/from Atlanta, Georgia, USA.

To all our old and new customers, we thank them for their continued support and welcome them on board when they plan their next trip to Africa. Always recommend for them to download our mobile app or visit our website so



Despite the stiff competition, Ethiopian Airlines remains the largest Airlines company in Africa, says Samson Arega.

they may be well informed about new flights, promotions and/or discounts available to them thru our airline.

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Our most recent expansion announced for May 2023, is the city of Atlanta, which will connect customers to our vast network in Africa, says Samson Arega.

Cameroon: Foretia Foundation's SBEC Unveils SMEs Flagship, Job Preparedness Boot Camp

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

The SMEs Flagship, Job Preparedness Boot Camp focus on vulnerable populations, especially those internally displaced as a result of the ongoing armed conflict in the North West and South West Regions of the country was launched on January 19, 2023, at the Immaculate Heart of Mary – Yaounde, with two thousand Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, SMEs, and 5000 women and youths expected to benefit.

The three (3) year project aimed at promoting economic freedom and prosperity for women and youths through improved professional and entrepreneurial skills is run by the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Center (SBEC) of the Denis and Lenora Foretia Foundation.

Dr Denis Foretia, Co-chair of the Denis and Lenora Foretia Foundation and Executive Chairman of the Nkafu Policy Institute said: "It is a wonderful project that the Foundation is taking. I am extremely proud of this project which will seek to help Cameroon and SMEs."

"To achieve Cameroon's set goals;



The advantages are numerous for SMEs moving from the informal to the formal sector – Dr Denis Foretia, Co-chair of the Denis and Lenora Foretia Foundation.

the private sector has a major role to play. SMEs are lot fragile and fail within five years and the project is to help transform several informal sector

businesses to the formal sector." Two thousand (2000) SMEs will participate in this training and are eligible for a 1.500.000 FCFA seed

fund capital and would be sharing experiences, networking, learning modern management technics but most importantly, acquiring relevant skills and tools that would help set their business apart by making it more performant and competitive within the market economy. 30 plus SMEs will benefit from seed fund capital or micro-loans with the project being sponsored by the Rising Tide Foundation and John Templeton Foundation.

"We are looking for businesses who are already there working and doing the best that they can, not businesses that are being formed today as we are speaking, businesses that have been for a year or two years and they know what they need to be able to get to the next stage and we are there to support them. Those are the kinds of businesses we are looking for," Dr Denis Foretia added.

"The key mechanism (for follow-up) is very important because we



Two thousand Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, SMEs, and 5000 women and youths expected to benefit from the training.



Officials pose for a picture at the end of the launch of the SMEs Flagship, Job Preparedness Boot Camp by Foretia Foundation's SBEC.

want to make sure that one or two years from today, we have a good mechanism in place to follow up with them to figure out where they are and to figure out what they need to grow.”

The SME Flagship and job preparedness boot camp training is a solution to small business owners quest for increasing skills and competencies to face the challenging business environment in Cameroon and manage their businesses sustainably. The Small Business and Entrepreneurship Center (SBEC) will provide customized SME Flagship and job preparedness boot camp training to small and medium size Enterprises (SMEs) in five (5) regions of the country, namely: Centre (Yaounde), Littoral (Douala), West (Bafoussam), South West (Buea) and North West Regions.

“The mindset of SMEs needs to change or the investments will not work,” Achaleke Christian, African Union Youth Ambassador for Peace for the Central African Region said concerning the difficulties young people face. “The bigger issue is not the money; give people money and

they use it to solve another thing. So, the mindset of these SMEs needs to be completely changed.”

“I want to thank the Foretia Foundation for this wonderful training given to job seekers and business owners,” Njukang Harmony, a business owner and participant said. “This is a project I believe which is going to boost my entrepreneurship career, most especially to take my project from ideation to the level of execution. I believe with all the partners involve and the various platforms made available, it is going to ensure that many businesses do not die in the space of five years.”

About the Denis and Lenora Foretia Foundation

The Denis & Lenora Foretia Foundation was established to catalyze Africa’s economic transformation by focusing on social entrepreneurship, science and technology, innovation, public health, and progressive policies that create economic opportunities for all. The foundation works in partnership with local governments, policymakers, private enterprises, civil society

organizations as well as development partners to expand the resources available to entrepreneurs, farmers, and small business owners in addition to improving individual livelihoods.

The Small Business and Entrepreneurship Centre (SBEC) was founded to support SMEs across the country and to promote business-friendly policies that stimulate innovation and job creation. Through SBEC Network, member SMEs receive training and administrative support to increase productivity and efficiency.

About the Rising Tide Foundation

The Rising Tide Foundation supports studies and programs that deliver results for cancer patients and empower individuals to develop their skills to make a difference for themselves and the greater community. Based in Schaffhausen Switzerland, but with a truly global reach, it strongly believes that the market economy, in concert with limited government and rule of law, holds the greatest promise of freedom and prosperity for all. Through its philanthropic activities,

the foundation supports efforts that promote financial prosperity, individual flourishing, and sustainable income generation.

About the John Templeton Foundation

Founded in 1987, the John Templeton Foundation supports research and dialogue on the deepest and most perplexing questions facing humankind. The Foundation funds work on subjects ranging from black holes and evolution to creativity, forgiveness, and free will. It also encourages civil, informed dialogue among scientists, philosophers, theologians, and the public at large. With over \$2.8 billion in assets and annual grants of \$220 million in 2021, the Foundation ranks among the 25 largest grantmaking foundations in the United States. Headquartered outside Philadelphia, its philanthropic activities have engaged all major faith traditions and extended to more than 190 countries around the world.



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Sierra Leone: Remembering the Peace Bridge

By Ishmael Sallieu Koroma

Many young Sierra Leoneans born after 2002 have no idea what it was like for those before them running helter-skelter for their lives, in fear of been killed, or to go for days without food, water and even shelter.

This was the experience of Sierra Leoneans during the country's eleven years civil war. The war is considered among the most brutal civil unrests in history, as rival factions attacked civilians, maiming and killing them and destroying buildings.

In March 2002, the late president Ahmed Tejan Kabbah declared the war over, urging Sierra Leoneans to stay calm, embrace peace, and forgive one another. Peace was attained with the help of the international community. The war claimed thousands of lives, left many with lifelong injuries. Thousands of Sierra Leoneans were forced to flee as refugees to neighbouring countries, particularly Guinea and Liberia.

Years of building democracy have earned Sierra Leone a lot of admiration globally. The country has witnessed three successive elections since after Kabbah.

Besides the scars of the war which still remain with Sierra Leoneans, some people say it is important to remember the country's past as that will keep the people informed and help them protect and defend its hard-earned peace. One way of doing this has been by renaming the Congo Cross Bridge to Peace Bridge. This bridge is renowned for been the place where rebels were halted by government forces and civil defense forces, preventing them from advancing further into the capital city on 6th January, the day the rebels entered the city for the first time since the commenced in 1991. It is a symbolic place that serves as a reminder of the legacy of Sierra Leone's past. The bridge was renamed in accordance with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) recommendation for symbolic



Photo showing the Congo Bridge renamed as Peace Bridge.

activities to be carried out, including the establishment of monuments on mass graves. The idea was that it could contribute in the promotion of post-war reconciliation.

However, today, hardly do citizens know the history associated with the Congo Cross Bridge. As a sign of negligence on the part of the authorities, there is not even a sign board to show its name - "Peace Bridge".

The Center for Memory and Reparations, headed by Historian and Lawyer, Joseph Kaifala, has tried to bridge the leadership gap and establish monuments, identifying mass graves and raising awareness on the civil war.

The aim of Kaifala and his team is to facilitate remembrance and collective narratives around the war from 1991- 2002, whilst also serving

as a platform for justice, granting avenue to the voices and experiences of those who were most affected by the war and remain vulnerable in society.

Paragraph 3, Vol. 2, chapter 3 of the TRC report states that "The Commission is of the view that the adoption of its recommendations will assist the people of Sierra Leone to rise above the bitter conflicts of the past, which caused unspeakable violations of human rights and left a legacy of dehumanisation, hatred and fear."

For Dr. Peter A. Dumbuya, Professor of History, Department of History and African Studies, Fourah Bay College, it is incumbent upon Sierra Leoneans not only to preserve and protect historical materials, but also to make them available and accessible to the wider public. He said

it's part of the mandate of institutions of learning, including universities, colleges, and schools, to help preserve that memory through courses and other activities that teach the history of Sierra Leone.

"There is much forgetfulness, as you suggested, in matters that touch upon national symbols because our leaders themselves are not steeped in the history and material culture of the nation. Instead, they are engaged in the necessities of survival, what Jean Francois-Bayart describes in his book as 'the Politics of the Belly.' Furthermore, national and municipal authorities have turned a blind eye to the unchecked growth of slums especially in low-lying waterways including bridges," he said.

According to Dr. Dumbuya, it should come as no surprise that the Congo Cross Bridge/Peace Bridge



Historian and Lawyer, Joseph Kaifala, has tried to bridge the leadership gap and establish monuments, identifying mass graves and raising awareness on the civil war. Photo courtesy.

itself has become a symbol of slum dwelling right in the middle of Freetown, noting that people have precious little time for symbols because they are in a daily survival and subsistence mode, trying to eke out a living anywhere and everywhere they can.

When asked about the decline of students opting to read history and African studies in Sierra Leone’s premier university – , he replied: “FBC is not alone in experiencing a decline in the number of students studying history at the college and university levels. Even in the U.S., where I was a university professor for many years, I saw a decline in history majors to the point where universities and colleges began to discontinue history as a degree program.

Dr. Dumbuya revealed that the decline in enrolment for history majors can be ascribed to many factors which he said included the manner in which history is being taught as a subject that deals in dates and the names of important individuals

and/or states; the rise of subjects in technology and related fields; career and pay issues; dwindling state funding for the social sciences and humanities, vis-à-vis a concomitant rise in funding for courses in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); and poor teacher training.

“I am worried because legislators are not cognizant of the fact that a nation or society cannot create an educated population without the humanities and social sciences in the mix of university and college course offerings. Courses in the humanities and social sciences are just as important as those in the sciences and related fields. This message has to get out to the public in order to restore a semblance of normality in history and related courses in the humanities and social sciences,” he said.

For the nation not to forget the legacy of the war, the TRC recommended that a national peace day be established, during which reconciliation and solidarity with

those who suffered during the war is promoted.

“This should be a national holiday. Activities on this day should take place at all levels, from community level to the national level. The Commission suggests that this be the 18th of January, which is the day on which the war was officially declared to be over in 2002 with the symbolic burning of 3000 weapons at Lungi,” the report reads in [art.

On 18th January 2022, the Center for Memory and Reparation commemorated the day in Lungi, where the war was officially declared over in the country, by lighting a flame of peace at the civil war memorial which was done by government’s spokesman Alhaji Alpha Kanu.

Lack of awareness of the history of the war and its aftermath means Sierra Leoneans like Mohamed Kamara know very little about certain aspects of efforts to memorializing it. He expressed shock when he learnt that the Congo Cross Bridge was renamed Peace Bridge, revealing that

even though he has lived in Freetown for more than twenty years, he didn’t know that the name of that bridge and the meaning it carries .

“I only came to realize that the renaming of the Congo Cross bridge to Peace Bridge has a history behind it. These facts needed to be taught in schools, colleges and universities, so that us as students are aware about our past and where we are heading,” Kamara told me.

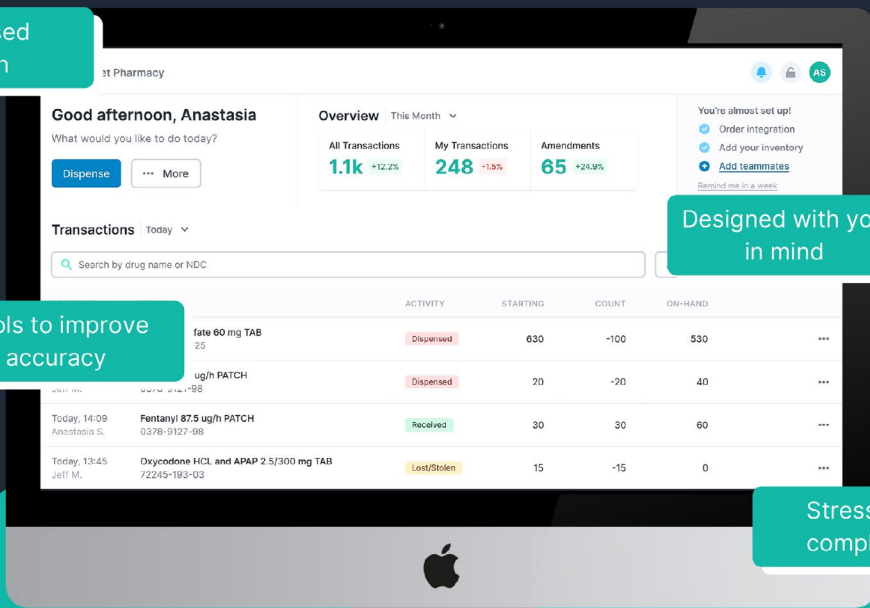
According to Kamara, history is so important that if the people don’t preserve their past, it would affect them. He therefore called on relevant institutions, like the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, to do more.

This article was produced with support from the ATJLF Project on “Engaging the Media and Communities to Change the Narrative on Transitional Justice (TJ) Issues in Sierra Leone,” through the MRCCG.

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Back With A Bang For The AEC

After a brief hiatus to catch a breather from the hectic but highly successful year that 2022 was, the African Energy Chamber has set the ball rolling with even bigger ambitions and optimism for African Energy Fortunes in 2023. In a sign that it means business the Chamber launched its 2023 schedule in London with an Invest in Africa reception on

January 26 at the Waldorf Hotel in London.

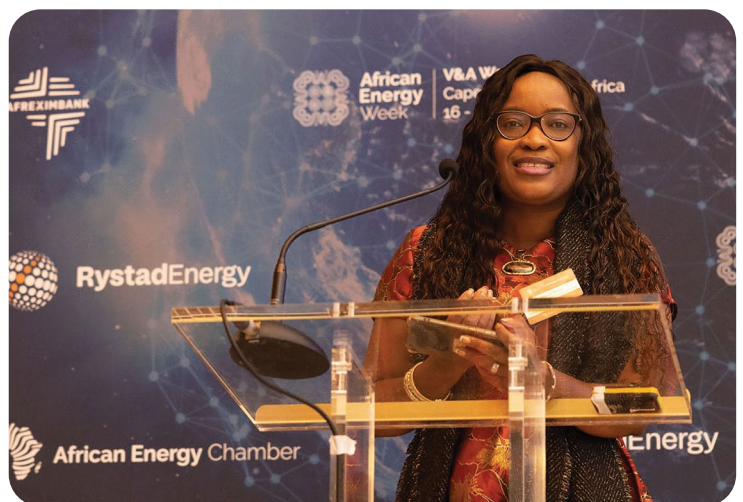
Attended by over 500 people the high powered event gave stakeholders the opportunity to engage in private meetings with a number of high-level government and company representatives from the African energy market. PAV shares images of the AEC's charm offensive.



Invest in African Energy
African Energy Chamber

“ We could not have chosen a better city to start our African energy journey. London, we thank you. At the core of what we do is to make energy poverty history. Everybody showed up. That tells you that it's time for Africa and it's time for us to stop apologizing for producing energy for the world. ”

NJ AYUK
Executive Chairman at African Energy Chamber







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Where is all the Water Going - Lake Kariba's Persistent Low Water Levels

By Prince Kurupati

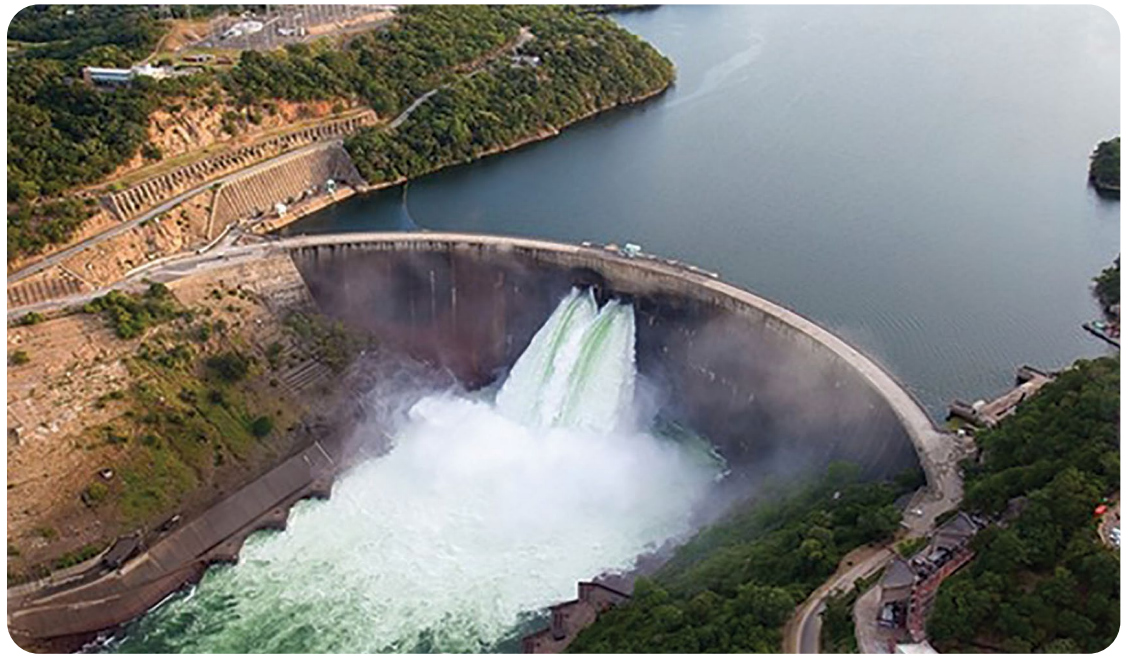
Lake Kariba is the largest artificial lake in the world. Located along the border of Zambia and Zimbabwe, Lake Kariba also is the main source of electricity (hydropower) for both Zambia and Zimbabwe contributing as much as 75% of power generation for both countries.

Back in the day, Lake Kariba used to supply all the needed electricity for both Zambia and Zimbabwe. Times have however changed and now, the lake is no longer providing adequate electricity. This has led the two countries to ration electricity to both household and industrial consumers.

For many, water is an infinite resource hence the power challenges being faced by Zambia and Zimbabwe owing to the dwindling water levels in Lake Kariba raises the question, if water is infinite, then where is all the Lake Kariba water going? Having been built in 1958 and becoming fully operational in 1963, why did the lake maintain its water levels for a good number of years – decades if we are to be specific and only start to dwindle now?

Such is the sorry state of Lake Kariba that during mid-December 2022, the Zambezi River Authority which is in charge of the lake said that only 4.1 per cent of the water in the lake was 'usable'. The problem seems to be more heightened on the Zimbabwean side (Kariba South Bank) than the Zambian side (Kariba North Bank) as in December 2022, the Zambezi River Authority demanded Zimbabwe to reduce its power generation to just 300 megawatts while Zambia was given a maximum limit of 800 megawatts.

According to the Zambezi River Authority, the main reason which has led Lake Kariba to record paltry figures of usable water are reduced inflows from the Zambezi River and its tributaries. In a statement, the Zambezi River Authority said, "the Local Meteorological Departments



of the Republics of Zambia and Zimbabwe all projected Normal to Above Normal rainfall for most of the Southern Africa region. The rainfall season was projected to commence by October 2021 and progress in March 2022. However, the rainfall season only started in earnest late December 2021, resulting in reduced inflows into Lake Kariba, thus the lower lake levels recorded during the period October 2021 to early January".

While the statement by the Zambezi River Authority points to just a specific period, the truth of the matter is that Lake Kariba's low water levels have been persistent for a long time. As such, the problem is not owing to a single season's reduced inflows but rather, there is more to the problem. It is against this background that the argument put forward by Harry Verhoeven of climate change as a possible causative factor rings true. Harry Verhoeven is a senior research scholar at the Centre on Global Energy Policy at Columbia's University of School of International and Public Affairs.

Speaking on Lake Kariba's persistent low water levels, Harry Verhoeven said that the issue needs

not be looked at in unison. Rather, there is a need to consider Lake Kariba as a small piece in a bigger global puzzle. When one does this, it becomes clear that the current water crisis at Lake Kariba has been in the making for years and it's as a result of global climate change.

It is climate change which has on a global scale led to disruptions in normal rainfall patterns and temperatures. The permanent solution to the crisis, therefore, is not to wait for supposed normal rains which will increase the river inflows. What the governments of Zambia and Zimbabwe need to do is to invest and build capacity to adapt to climate change. If this entails reducing the dependence on hydropower for electricity generation, then that should be the case.

Verhoeven also lamented the state of dams and lakes in Africa in general and Lake Kariba in specific. He said that "the revival of dams in Africa is stalling" and that is putting much stress on dams that no longer have the same capacity to produce power as they did in the past. Talking about Lake Kariba, he said that it is badly in need of repair as the bedrock on

which the dam was built has been eroded by routine operations. This, therefore, affects the operations done on and inside the dam such as power generation while at the same time endangering the lives of many as the dam wall may collapse. There is thus a need for routine maintenance to be done frequently if Lake Kariba will keep producing the required power.

The low water levels at Lake Kariba and subsequently the effects on power generation do not just affect household consumers who depend on electricity for cooking and entertainment. The low water levels also affect the development trajectories of both Zambia and Zimbabwe as industries are heavily reliant on power. In a statement, the Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries president Kurai Matsheza echoed these sentiments saying, "Its really crippling industry, we can't go forward and you know without power we can't start our machinery and not only industry is affected. All facets of life and we are really at a point where all our predictions to year-end will not be realised at this rate".

"Together For Healthy Families In Nigeria" Campaign Bags \$2 Million Grant From Rotary Foundation

By Samuel Ouma

The Rotary Foundation donated \$2 million to «Together for Healthy Families in Nigeria,» to reduce maternal and newborn mortality in selected local government areas by 25 per cent.

The Rotary Action Group for Reproductive, Maternal, and Child Health (RMCH), in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Health of Nigeria and Nigerian and German Rotary members, initiated the award.

More than 1.5 million people will be reached through essential health services and awareness-raising campaigns to encourage families to seek clinical care. The initiative will also increase data-tracking capabilities concerning maternal and neonatal deaths so that interventions can be tailored to specific needs.

“Providing mothers and newborns with targeted healthcare, while also improving the systemic access to life-saving services will have an immediate and long-term impact on not just mothers but also the wider community,” said Professor Emmanuel Adedolapo Lufadeju, National Coordinator and member of the Rotary Club of Ibadan-Jericho Metro, who spearheaded the program more than two decades ago.

«Applying our experiences and the lessons learned from our previous efforts in other target states will help facilitate smooth scaling up, replication and sustainability. We have made maternal death in Nigeria a notifiable condition. It is imperative for our future that we address this now», he added.

«Through the power of preventative care, Rotary is committed to providing mothers and children everywhere with the same opportunities for a healthy future,» said Rotary International President Jennifer Jones. «From decades of collaboration and strong partnerships, «Together for Healthy Families in Nigeria» will build upon past successes and lessons-learned to strengthen health systems, instill trust in health services, engage



Providing mothers and newborns with targeted healthcare, will have an immediate and long-term impact on not just mothers but also the wider community, says Professor Emmanuel Adedolapo.

communities, and empower women to advocate for themselves and their families.»

With the help of the Nigerian federal and state ministries of health, the Society of Gynecology and Obstetrics of Nigeria, the Nigerian Society of

Neonatal Medicine, the National Primary Health Care Development Agency, and the Paediatric Association of Nigeria, «Together for Healthy Families in Nigeria» advances the commitment of Rotary members to enhancing maternal and infant health.

“Each pregnancy magnifies the mother’s health risks, especially when she doesn’t have access to proper care,” said Jan-Peter Sander, program lead in Germany and member of the Rotary Club of Deidesheim-Mittelhaardt, Germany.

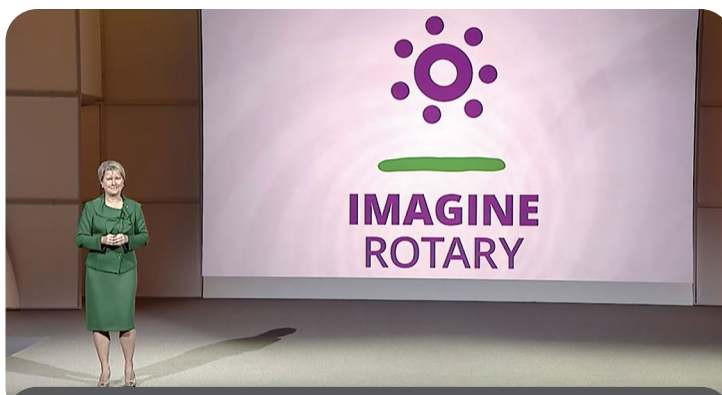
“This initiative is absolutely key in ensuring that every mother and child is given the best possible chance in what is the most vulnerable period of their lives.”

«Together for Healthy Families in Nigeria» is the second awardee for Rotary’s Programs of Scale grant. The Rotary Foundation, Rotary’s charitable arm that assists clubs in collaborating to carry out effective service, will award \$2 million to an evidence-based initiative that is in line with one of Rotary’s causes and has the potential to be scaled up to benefit more people.

Meanwhile, the Nigerian government has committed to ensuring all new mothers and their babies have access to the finest care possible before, during, and following childbirth.

«Rotary has played an integral role in improving maternal and child health outcomes, notably through our collaboration to improve nationwide data collection on maternal and perinatal health incidents – a process critical to saving more lives. We are pleased to continue partnering with Rotary members towards this cause, whose drive and passion are making a great difference in people’s lives in Nigeria and across the world,» said Tinu Tylor, Director of Reproductive Health, Federal Ministry of Health of Nigeria.

Rotary members worldwide develop and implement sustainable, community-driven projects that fight disease, promote peace, provide clean water, support education, help mothers and children, grow local economies and protect the environment. As of now, more than US\$5.5 billion has been awarded through The Rotary Foundation.



Rotary is committed to providing mothers and children everywhere with the same opportunities for a healthy future, says Rotary International President Jennifer Jones.



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Sub-Saharan Africa Records Sharpest Growth In Contraceptive Use

By Wallace Mawire

According to a new report published recently, the use of modern contraception is soaring around the world, with an estimated 371 million women of reproductive age in low- and lower-middle-income countries now using a modern method of family planning—87 million more than just a decade ago.

Family Planning 2030 report shows steady rise in demand for contraception, with women persevering in face of pandemic, conflict, natural disasters.

Report finds women's preferences have changed over time, with a growing preference for long-lasting methods; highlights need to mobilize domestic resources to meet demand.

FP2030's 2022 Measurement Report, which was previewed in November 2022 at the International Conference on Family Planning, shows that more women in low- and lower-middle income countries are using modern family planning methods than ever before. Today, one in three women of reproductive age in those countries are choosing to use modern contraception. While contraceptive prevalence has increased steadily across all low- and lower-middle income countries, in 14 of them the number of contraceptive users has doubled. The sharpest growth has been in sub-Saharan Africa.

The FP2030 report also suggests that despite the unprecedented strain COVID-19 placed on national health systems and global supply chains, and throughout restrictive lockdowns, record numbers of people around the world continued to seek out and use family planning products and services.

"The past ten years have been full of obstacles for country health



systems – wars, political upheavals, natural disasters, deadly disease outbreaks, and lately the COVID-19 pandemic – yet through it all, women everywhere have continued to seek out and use modern contraception in ever-growing numbers," said Dr Samukeliso Dube, Executive Director of FP2030. "What our latest report shows is just how unstoppable the demand for modern contraception is: women want to control whether and when to have children, and how many children to have."

In the last year alone, women's use of contraception in low- and lower-middle income countries has averted more than 141 million unintended pregnancies, 29 million unsafe abortions and almost 150,000 maternal deaths.

"The benefits of family planning are enormous, and have a multiplier effect," added Dr. Dube. "Family planning is the key to reducing maternal deaths; it is the difference between finishing high school and entering into early marriage and

parenthood; and it can unlock a woman's economic survival and prosperity."

Soaring demand in sub-Saharan Africa

The latest FP2030 Measurement Report took a deep dive into 15 African countries, namely Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Togo, and Uganda. Among other things, it looked at contraceptive use among youth and adolescents, and examined differences in method use based on age, geography, marital status, and more.

The report found that contraceptive use among married and unmarried sexually active women aged 15-24 is generally higher in East and Southern Africa than in West Africa. However, unmet need is still high in both regions and for both populations. In most of the 15 countries reviewed, more than one in five sexually active young women (aged 15-24) have an

unmet need for contraception.

"This report shows us that despite progress in recent years, there is still much work to be done when it comes to meeting the needs of women of reproductive age in sub-Saharan Africa," said Jason Bremner, FP2030 Senior Director of Data and Measurement. "If this rising demand is not met by high quality services, consistent contraceptive supplies, and supportive policies and financing, it will be a missed opportunity for millions of women—and for our collective futures."

Women's marital status was also found to influence method use. Young married women aged 15-24 were found to rely on short-acting methods such as injections and pills and obtain these from government facilities, while most unmarried sexually active women aged 15-24 rely on condoms and obtain these from private health sources.

Today, implants are the most used method in 10 countries and the second most common method in another 14. This represents a stark contrast with method mix a decade ago, when implants were not as widely available. There is also evidence to indicate an increase in the use of long-acting methods (such as implants) among unmarried sexually active women in West Africa. Between 2012 and 2018, the use of implants in Benin, Guinea, and Mali more than doubled among unmarried sexually active women aged 15-24, and today more than one in five unmarried sexually active contraceptive users in these countries are using implants.

Stepping up progress

The new FP2030 report demonstrates the strength and resilience of a movement that has withstood a host of global challenges,

as more and more countries and organizations recognize that voluntary, rights-based family planning is integral to their development and a major driver of gender equality.

Less than two years after the FP2030 global partnership was launched, 24 governments and 78 non-governmental actors—including civil society organizations, private sector providers and youth-led organizations—have now made a public financial, policy or programmatic pledge to advance rights-based family planning, vowing to expand access to voluntary, rights-based contraception.

Nineteen countries in sub-Saharan Africa have also finalized their FP2030 commitments, which share many common priorities, including improving service delivery for young people, increasing domestic financing, scaling up postpartum family planning and strengthening supply chains.

At the same time, the report

shows that donor government funding for family planning is not keeping up with the growing demand for modern contraception. While bilateral donor funding totaled approximately US\$1.4 billion in 2021, this was essentially flat compared to 2020 and substantially lower than the peak achieved in 2019 (US\$1.52 billion). Given current financial instability and inflationary trends around the world, there could be further funding cuts in the future.

“Failing to adequately fund family planning efforts would be a missed opportunity for millions of women,” said Dr. Dube. “We need not only to hold the line, but also to secure new funding to accommodate the surge in demand for family planning. The hard-won gains of the last 10 years could slip away if we don’t act now.”



Dr Samukeliso Dube, Executive Director of FP2030.

Doping Taints Kenyans Reputation In The World Of Athletics

By Samuel Ouma

The rampant use of performance-enhancing substances by a section of Kenyan athletes is endangering the country’s advances in athletics.

The northeast African nation’s historical performance in international competitions has not only won them awards but also earned them global recognition. Kenyans’ scintillating performance in athletics had prompted some researchers to research to discover why they perform well in the sport. The researchers found that living at altitude, working hard, and eating properly is key.

Ethiopia is the only African country competing with Kenya in athletics in the continent, yet Ethiopia cannot match Kenya’s incredible feats. In 2022, Kenya bagged ten majors, including Eliud Kipchoge’s Berlin Marathon win in the 2:01:09 world record. Ruth Chepngetich



Betty Wilson Lempus has been slammed with a five year ban.

also won the World Athletics Elite Platinum Label road race at the Bank of America Chicago Marathon,

successfully defending her title in 2:14:18. Additionally, Kenya brought home ten medals from the Olympics

in Tokyo in 2021, including four golds, four silvers, and two bronzes. It was only the US that beat Kenya in

medals.

Although the athletics powerhouse continues to shine in global competitions, its image is being tainted negatively by the continuous banning or suspension of its athletes by the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) or the Anti-Doping Agency of Kenya (ADAK). Numerous sanctions have been imposed due to the negative doping tests, blood anomalies, tampering allegations, and location failures with the latest victim being Betty Wilson Lempus.

The Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) slapped Lempus with a five-year ban in January 2023 for using a prohibited substance known as Triamcinolone Acetonide. She was also sanctioned for tampering or Attempted Tampering with any part of Doping Control, including obstructing or delaying the AIU's investigation through the provision of false information or documentation.

"We are pleased to conclude this case, especially because this athlete almost got away with her attempt to dupe the authorities and to cheat other runners out of their rightful rewards," said AIU Head Brett Clothier.

"This is the right and fair outcome, and it's a signal to all that the AIU takes its mission extremely seriously and will pursue every angle in seeking to reach the truth."

Lawrence Cherono, the winner of the 2019 Boston and Chicago Marathons; Diana Kipyokei, the 2021 Boston Marathon champion; the 2008 Olympic and three-time world 1500m champion Asbel Kiprop and Marius Kipserem, the winner of the Abu Dhabi and Rotterdam marathons are just a few of the notable victims on the list of prohibited athletes.

Doping is attributed to a number of factors, including the rise of athletics cartels that have supposedly established themselves in training facilities and supply innocent athletes with illegal substances.

"We have cartels that have set up



Lawrence Cherono, the winner of the 2019 Boston and Chicago Marathons.

camp in training facilities, and they are the ones damaging the sport by taking advantage of athletes who know little about drugs. The good news is that they are being caught because the test method is precise, and all of them will be caught," said Barnaba Korir, an official at Athletics Kenya (AK).

Another factor is greed for money. With unemployment of more than 10 per cent, most people are turning to athletics to earn a living. And with an excellent reward whenever one wins a race, most try to use every means to be declared a winner, including using prohibited drugs.

Greed for money is another cause. With more than 10% unemployment, most individuals are resorting to athletics to make a living. Since winning a big marathon and/or breaking a course record pays much, most people will attempt anything to win, including utilizing illegal drugs.

The Director of the Anti-Doping Agency of Kenya (ADAK), Sarah Shibutse, attributed the increase in doping cases to the long competitive pause that was imposed by Covid-19 and left athletes inactive.

Many Kenyan athletes, according

to Shibutse, originate from impoverished households and depend on their sports to support themselves and their extended families. The competition was fierce when races could finally be held once pandemic restrictions were lifted, forcing some to get involved in drug cheat.

"Many of them were motivated by this and decided that using drugs would be preferable to simply claiming that they had sufficient training and would succeed through talent," said Shibutse.

Agents, coaches, and managers are also at fault for forcing players too hard to thrive and constitute for missed incomes. Most prohibited substances are freely accessible to athletes in shops and pharmacies. Due to the inadequate resources allotted to ADAK to carry out its goal, there are very few awareness efforts. The agency is in charge of collecting samples for testing.

In December 2022, Kenya survived after the World Athletics announced it was spared from a ban amid growing fears that it would be blacklisted. World Athletics President Sebastian Coe stated that there will be no national ban following the Kenyan

government's vow to contribute \$5 million per year to anti-doping operations over the next five years. The funding will be utilized to conduct additional testing, investigations, and anti-doping education upgrades.

"Kenya has been on the radar for several years. In one year, Kenya has had 40% of all positive tests in world athletics, and this is not a situation that World Athletics was willing to sit back and watch develop. I am delighted that all stakeholders, both domestic and foreign, are now working together to remedy this crisis. But something tells me it'll be a long journey," said Coe.

While celebrating the reprieve, Sports Cabinet Secretary Ababu Namwamba declared war on doping in the country to preserve its reputation.

"We have made a pledge that the fight against doping will be our top priority, and our new mantra as the government and Athletics Kenya is absolute zero tolerance for doping," said Namwamba.

Due to major doping offences, Kenya is one of seven countries on the Category A doping watch list.

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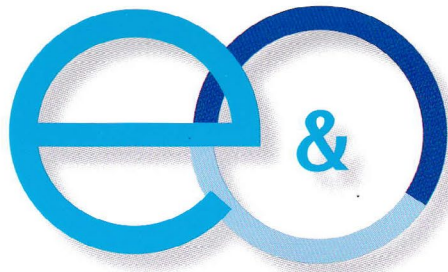
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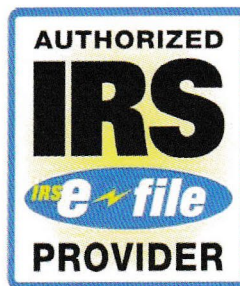
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