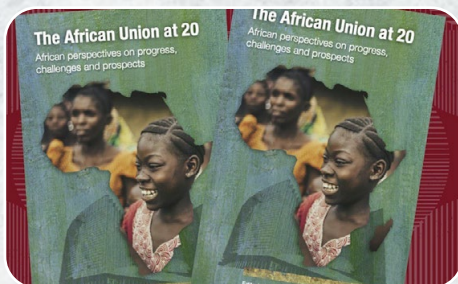




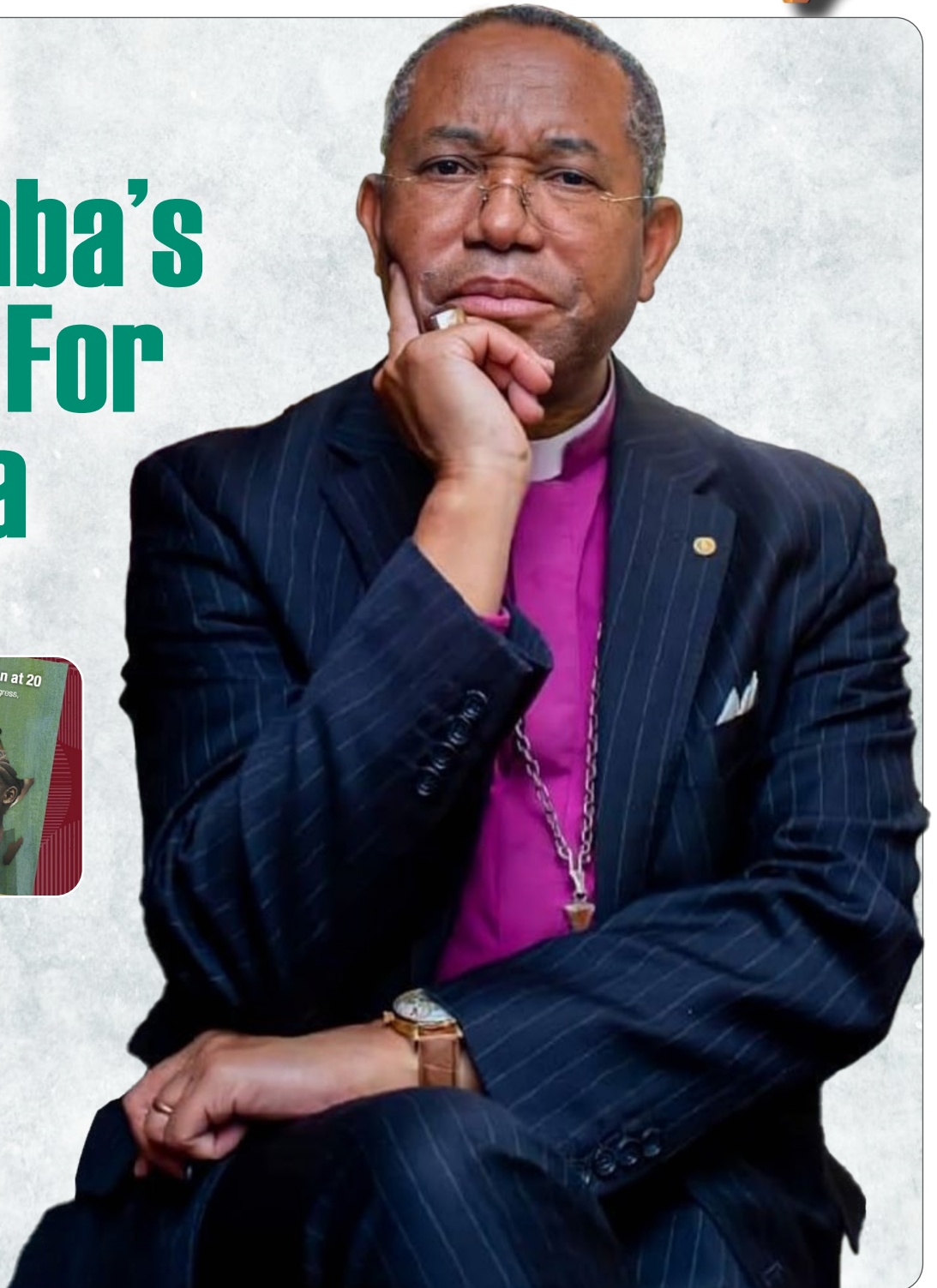
Bishop Mwamba's Vision For Zambia



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Questions On African Solidarity From Malawi

By Ajong Mbapndah L

A carnage of enormous proportions recently hit the Southern African nation of Malawi. Cyclone Freddy came and left in its trail according to official figures some 500,000 people affected.

Government, and UN figures put the death toll at over 500 and counting. As the people of Malawi grapple with the pain that comes with such a calamity, it is the silence of African countries that is jolting.

Charity should begin at home, goes a popular saying. Curiously, each time an African country is visited by a calamity, the norm seems to be total indifference from neighboring countries and voices that should count.

“Chairperson of the Working Group on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Africa and Country Rapporteur on the promotion of human rights in the Republic of Malawi, Honourable Commissioner Mudford Zacharia Mwandenga, on behalf of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (the Commission), is closely following the socio-economic situation in the country,” read a statement from the AU. AU Chair Faki issued a tweet expressing condolences to the people of Malawi. The rest of the responses from the continent had nothing to write home about and certainly had no firm or concrete pledge to support Malawi.

A few years ago, when the Charlie Hebdo killings took place in France, about three African Presidents flew all the way to Paris to join in public protests against the barbaric act. As expected, the presence of African leaders at the march drew its fair share of criticisms, and for understandable reasons too. How did leaders who characteristically remain indifferent to the multiple calamities that plague the continent expect to be taken seriously when they showed up for the march in Paris?

For Africa, and most of the present crop of leaders, charity has not always begun at home. When an incident takes place in foreign countries, they are quick to issue public statements in solidarity, when tragedy hits an African country, the response or reaction is either subdued, or in-existent. Incidents

of this nature are legion across the continent.

Many may hide beyond the question of means as an excuse, but it is more than that. During the COVID 19 pandemic, Morocco made medical donations to many countries across the continent. There are countries in the continent that could make a difference—South Africa a neighboring state to Malawi and with strong claims to continental leadership could play a bigger role. Nigeria, and other countries primed for continental leadership could equally respond more vigorously to rallying aid for Malawi, and other affected countries like Mozambique.

In other parts of the world, we would see sportsmen and personalities in showbiz making rallying calls for support. In the USA for instance, there are moments when former Presidents Clinton, Bush, and Obama have worked together in getting support for important causes. We saw former Presidents Bush and Clinton in action to get support for Haiti after the earthquake in 2010. Last year, we saw Presidents Clinton, Bush and Obama at work in urging people to get COVID vaccines in the USA.

Without copying everything wholesale, Africa has former leaders whose voices could create an impact in times like this. The SADC region that Malawi is part of has some of the most respected elder statesmen in the continent and their moral authority and credible voices could be put to use in getting needed support.

If charity is not beginning at home for Africa, the chief culprit here should be the leadership. A leadership that takes delight in honoring more invitations to events out of the continent than within the continent. Leaders who will shun regional engagements, snub AU Summits, but be the first to jet to Paris or some western capital for events even of the most mundane nature. For all the amazing touristic sites mother nature has graced the continent with, come vacation time, there are many leaders who prioritize destinations outside of the continent. At the sight of ailments, it



Ajong Mbapndah L, Managing Editor

is to Europe, Asia and the USA that they rush to for treatment. Curiously, some of the best Doctors and Nurses in these hospitals are talents forced out of Africa for diverse reasons.

When we look at the systematic but regular expulsions of Cameroonians in Equatorial Guinea, when we look at acts of xenophobia against fellow Africans in South Africa, when we see the instrumentalization of religion, the dangers of identity politics, and more, there is reason for Africa to be weary in the midst of all the excitement on prospects of change. When we look at the shocking indifference with which some leaders perceive conflicts across the continent, there is reason to be worried. When Africa fails to adequately respond to its crisis and foreign actors take the lead, the continent should blame itself.

Constructive critique is at the core of a new book on the AU by a group of African intellectuals led by Prof Wafula Okumu, an Honorary Fellow at the Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh, Scotland and the Executive Director of The Borders Institute in Nairobi, Kenya, who has taught at various universities in the United States, Canada and Japan.

Titled “African Union at 20: African Perspectives on Progress, Challenges and Prospects,” the book offers unfiltered insights into the organization from an African perspective.

“Over the past two decades, the AU has become the face of Africa and represented its interests. Nevertheless, the success of promoting and protecting

Africa’s interests on the global arena has been undermined by the AU’s over-reliance on “external partners,” says Prof Wafula Okumu.

Contributing to efforts to reduce the over-reliance on external partners is the Rt.Revd. Dr. Musonda Trevor Selwyn Mwamba, President of the United National Independence Party—UNIP in Zambia. Two years ago, Bishop Trevor Mwamba took over the leadership at the party on Easter Sunday. The symbolism of resurrection was strong here as UNIP, the party of Zambia’s founding President Kenneth Kaunda had literally been phased out of the country’s political map.

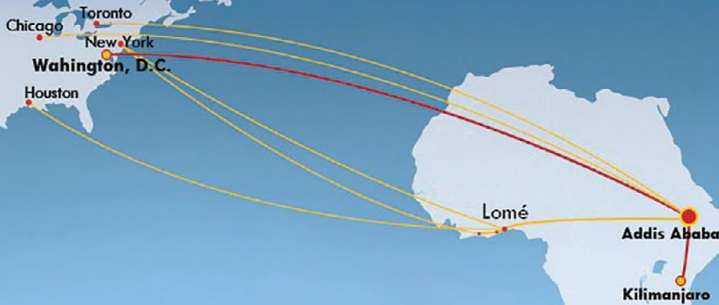
“As a historic party within and outside, UNIP cannot be erased from the consciousness of the Zambian people. UNIP forms the identity of Zambia and the region,” says Bishop Trevor Mwamba, as he vows to keep up with the legacy of Kenneth Kaunda. It is hard to write the history of modern-day Africa without a choiced place for leaders like Kaunda, a man who did not only champion the fight for independence for his country, but equally played a key role in the fight against apartheid.

In addition to his party duties, Bishop Trevor Mwamba is at the helm of the Peacemaking Advisory Group (PAG) with a vision to create a safe and non-partisan platform for discussion and consultation between critical stakeholders based on mutual respect and ubuntu. The PAG strives to deescalate intercommunal tensions and to unlock the development potential of the province of Cabo Delgado, Mozambique.

Bishop Trevor Mwamba and Prof Wafula Okumu shed light on seminal developments and perspectives across Africa in this edition of PAV magazine. Also in focus are the political tensions in Kenya, the obese majority of the ruling party in Cameroon, the wave of protests across Africa, security challenges in Mozambique, developments from the energy sector and more. Happy Reading!!!

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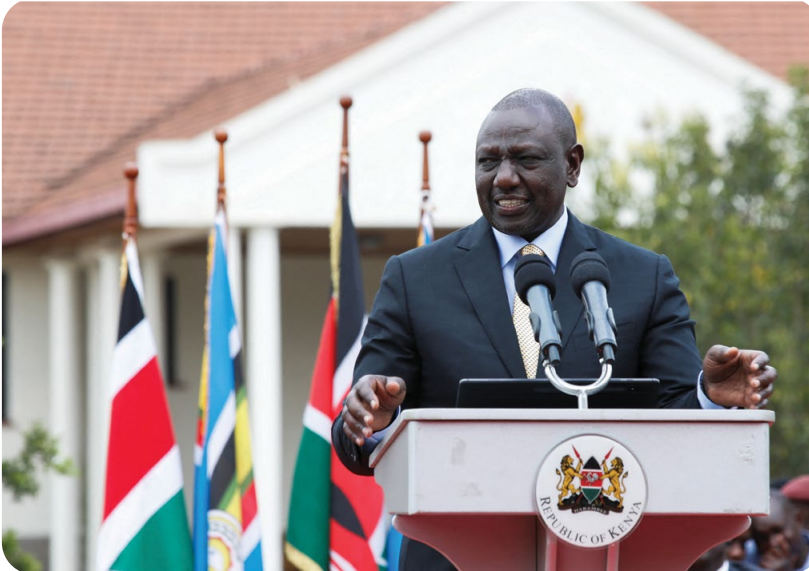
Kenya: Ruto's Restive Honeymoon

By Samuel Ouma

As the rift between the government, the opposition, and their followers escalates, Kenya risks devolving into anarchy. The nation may find itself in a similar situation to that of Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), which have slipped into the path of disorder and lawlessness.

Once a peaceful nation has become an epicentre of conflicts with, the two antagonists' group, the government and the opposition, are on each other's neck. Blood-thirsty politicians from both divides have resorted to chest-thumping, intimidation, and hiring goons to attack their opponents to achieve their selfish ambitions. All these are happening under the watch of President William Ruto, who promised peace during his inauguration in 2022.

The East African nation has been marred with anti-government protests in the last few weeks, especially in the capital, Nairobi and the Lake City of Kisumu. The demonstrations organised by the opposition leader Raila Odinga who is also the Azimio La Umoja-One Kenya coalition, has halted economic activities and paralysed transportation. Due to his vast following base, the 78-year-old leader has succeeded in rallying his supporters behind him to ouster William Ruto's administration which



It has been a rocky start of the year for hustler President Ruto.

he has described as illegitimate.

The fearless Odinga claims that Ruto colluded with the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) to snatch victory from his hands in the August 9 general elections. Even though the country's Supreme Court validated Ruto's victory, Odinga has alleged that the Judiciary and the electoral agency had been captured by cartels and ruled in favour of his opponent.

The former Prime Minister and his allies have been piling pressure on President Ruto to open the IEBC server if he is confident that he won the election. Odinga's numerous calls to have the election server opened have

been ignored as they maintain that the 2022 election was doctored in favour of Ruto. Odinga has been quoted on several occasions saying that an audit of the IEBC's servers was the only way to validate the presidential election results in 2022.

The demands of the former AU special envoy come on the heels of explosive allegations of election rigging by a purported anonymous whistleblower at the IEBC, who claims that the former premier won the election. Odinga claims to have received 8.1 million ballots to Ruto's 5.9 million.

«Ruto stole my victory, and I will reclaim it. I am sure because the whistleblower spoke up. The whistleblower came with machines, and they obtained the true findings.»

«At the time of the court verdict, we still didn't know the truth, but once we did, I stood up and rejected his government, calling his presidency illegitimate. He claims he cannot open the servers because there is no legislation and there is a dispute over the election results,» said Odinga.

The Azimio leader also wants former IEBC deputy chair Juliana Cherera and three other former commissioners, Justus Nyang'aya, Irene Masit, and Francis Wanderi, to be reinstated. IEBC vice chair Cherera and the

commissioners were ousted after dismissing presidential results announced by the agency's then-chair, Wafula Chebukati. Chebukati retired early this year after his term expired.

The opposition also wants Ruto to reconstitute the IEBC selection panel by appointing new members from political parties to the six-member panel. They also want taxes, school fees, and commodity costs to be reduced.

The outcome of the mass protests taking place every Monday and Thursday is not pleasing. We have witnessed the destruction of property, loss of lives, including civilians and

security officers, and massive looting. For instance, one police officer was killed and 20 others injured during the protests on March 30. The deceased, Ben Oduor, succumbed to injuries he sustained with protesters in Kisumu. Reports indicated the officer was hit on the chest with a catapult-propelled stone.

«As a result of Thursday's (March 30) demonstrations, one police officer in Kisumu succumbed to injuries sustained while on duty, 20 officers were seriously injured as they repulsed violent demonstrators,» said Kenya police boss Japhet Koome.

On the same day, goods disguised as protestors stormed the Jaramogi Oginga Odinga Teaching and Referral Hospital (JOOTRH), vandalised it and stole items worth millions of shillings. Rioters vandalised a hearse and took away equipment such as trolleys and laptops. Others removed furnishings as well. The \$28,0937 «Kwee Funeral Home» facility included a state-of-the-art Farewell Parlour, a Doctors Call Suite, and a refurbished Medical Ward. It was designed to support the modernisation agenda, which aims to improve service delivery to the populace.

«Why did the police fail to protect the facility from the gang which also carted away computers and other



Odinga, allies and supporters holding peaceful protest in a Nairobi estate.

valuable equipment? The police must hunt and arrest the criminals,” said Kisumu Governor Anyang’ Nyong’o.

On March 27, another gang raided retired President Uhuru Kenyatta’s family farm in Ruiru, Central Kenya. Tens of people invaded the Northlands Farm, armed with power saws, machetes, and other implements, and used them to cut down trees before setting fire to a large portion of the private property. The thugs also fled with an undetermined number of livestock, which they were seen loading into vehicles or taking on their backs. Others were seen selling stolen livestock to unsuspecting bystanders at bargain rates.

Even though the robbery and heinous devastation started early in the morning, there were no police officers visible on the scene, which led some leaders to criticise the government for failing to protect property.

Kenya’s Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua was one of three politicians accused of planning the attack on Uhuru’s farm. Kimani Ichung’wah, the majority speaker of the National Assembly, and Moses Kurai, the cabinet secretary for investments, trade, and industry, were also involved in the incident. However, they distanced themselves from the attack that cost Uhuru Kenyatta’s family an untold number of losses.

The raid on Kenyatta’s property came just days after Kimani Ichung’wah accused Uhuru of sponsoring the protests and urged Nairobi residents to «defend their property.»

“If you want to be respected, you must also respect other people and their properties. If you don’t, we will invade your large tracts of land and allocate them to the landless. And that is my message to none other than Uhuru Kenyatta,” Ichung’wah reiterated.

Not only the opposition should be held accountable for the ongoing chaos in the country but also the government. William Ruto’s administration’s tactics in countering their opponents are barbaric and uncalled for. According to many observers and other Kenyans, demonstrations are always peaceful



Security officers after dispersing demonstrators.

until the police use excessive force on harmless civilians. Police officers have been provoking the demonstrators by hurling teargas and water cannon at them. Police brutality, unwarranted violence and human rights violations have attracted condemnation from human rights activists, including Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR).

«The fundamental rights, freedoms and democratic principles enshrined in our Constitution are now at stake. The dark and painful past of our country, where political intolerance, negative ethnicity, incitement, lack of safety and security, hooliganism and the emergence of criminal gangs was rife, is once again rearing its ugly head,» reiterated Roseline Odede, KNCHR chairperson.

The Media Council of Kenya (MCK) described the month of March 2023 as the darkest in Kenyan media history, with over 25 local and foreign journalists targeted by both state and

non-state actors since the protests began on March 20. Camerapersons and photographers have been the most targeted journalists, with perpetrators of violence and lawlessness attempting to destroy any proof caught on camera. Journalists covering the protests have also been assaulted during their duty.

Head of Media Programs at the MCK Brian Bwire revealed that six journalists suffered severe body injuries after being assaulted during the March 30 demos. In broad daylight, a police officer was captured on video firing a canister inside a car full of helpless journalists. The officer said to be assigned to Nairobi’s Kamukunji Police Station, was caught strapping a black bag over his shoulders, clad in a checked shirt and jeans, and with an earpiece, adjusting as if getting orders from somewhere else.

Some journalists’ phones and devices were stolen or damaged during the unfortunate incident. Police have allegedly threatened some of them,

illegally detained others, and coerced others into deleting video of the protests in some cases.

«In March, we recorded over 25 journalists who have been harassed, brutally physically attacked, arrested, slept in cells, had their equipment destroyed or stolen, been attacked by mobs who steal their equipment, and have been profiled in public and on television by politicians,” said Brian Bwire.

The attack on the journalists was not taken lightly by the American government. US Ambassador to Kenya Meg Whitman condemned the attacks, saying a free press is essential in the development of any democracy.

“The United States is deeply concerned by recent reports of attacks against journalists. Protecting press freedom and safety is a cornerstone of democracy,” Ambassador Whitman posted on Twitter.

The police department is yet to comment on the actions of its officers, and the government has stayed silent, particularly on allegations that government officials are inciting hatred and division among Kenyans.

Amid the chaos, there have been calls for dialogue between Odinga and Ruto. The African Union chair Moussa Faki recently called for calm, urging those involved to engage in dialogue to address any differences that may exist in the supreme interest of national unity and reconciliation.

“In this regard, the Chairperson wishes to recall the successful conduct of General Elections in August 2022 in Kenya and the subsequent unanimous confirmation of the election outcome by the Supreme Court,” said Faki.

Odinga cancelled planned demonstrations to open the door for talks with the government in response to calls for dialogue, but with a proviso. The former premier stated that his camp is prepared to restart protests if a meaningful resolution is not reached within a week.

«William Ruto has issued what I regard as an important statement, we have met and listened to a lot of people, including religious leaders, they have implored us to give dialogue a chance,» Odinga said.



Journalists’ vehicle destroyed by the police.

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A Historic Visit To Africa For US VP Harris

By Prince Kurupati

U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris landed for her first official visit to Africa this past month. Kamala's first trip to Africa saw her visit three nations starting with Ghana before proceeding to Tanzania and then Zambia.

In her first public address after landing in Ghana, Vice President Harris quickly made her agenda clear saying she is «looking forward to this trip as a further statement of the long and enduring and very important relationship and friendship between the people of the United States and those who live on the continent of Africa.» The statement quickly made it clear that she is furthering President Biden's desire to strengthen U.S.-Africa relations and at the same time counter the influence of China and Russia on the continent. President Biden earlier demonstrated his desire to expand the influence of the U.S. in Africa during the U.S.- Africa Summit held a few months back.

Not to hide the geopolitical clash between the West and the East on the African continent, U.S. senior administration officials while previewing the Vice President's Africa tour said, «We can't ignore the current geopolitical moment. It's no secret that we are engaged in competition with China. And we've said very clearly we intend to out-compete China in the long term».

Moving into the future, Vice President Harris said the cooperation between her country and the African continent should be guided by mutual cooperation and reciprocity in outcomes and benefits. She said the time of the U.S.' big brother mentality is now gone and all parties now have an equal voice in deliberations, trade and any other areas of common interest. «The U.S. is strengthening our partnerships across the continent of Africa, and they are guided not by what we can do for Africa, but with Africa and our African partners on this continent,» Harris said.

Putting words into practice, Harris



VP Harris arrives at the Kotoka International Airport, Accra, Ghana for the tour that also took her to Tanzania and Zambia. Photo credit Francis Kokoroko, Reuters.

said that the U.S. is pledging \$100 million in new support for Benin, Ghana, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, and Togo. The money will be channelled towards efforts in addressing key issues such as security, governance, and development issues. Moreover, she said that she and the Biden administration at large have already undertaken a drive to push more U.S. investors to Africa. She said that in the recent past, most investors were showing a blind eye to Africa despite the numerous investment opportunities abundant on the continent. Ghana's president Nana Akufo Addo agreed with these sentiments saying that only state-affiliated bodies and organizations were eager to invest in the country while private investors neglected the country. He however said his administration is determined to «change that dynamic.»

The visit by Vice President Harris solidifies the sentiments echoed by Richard Gowan, U.N. Director for the International Crisis Group who

said the U.S. is now on a diplomatic offensive and now looking to counter Chinese and Russian influence on the continent. «But at the end of the day... African leaders will ask if this is a short-term courtship or the start of a more sustained U.S. attempt to rebuild ties on the continent because China is winning influence in Africa through long-term business arrangements... If the U.S. is not able to counter China's economic outreach, American diplomatic outreach will not be a game-changer.» In countering the China and Russia influence, Harris couldn't have picked a more perfect country as Ghana currently boasts of a \$2 billion infrastructure agreement with a Chinese company to help develop roads and other projects, in exchange for access to aluminium ore.

Apart from strengthening U.S.-Africa ties, the first black woman Vice President of the U.S. said she also wants to ensure that issues of climate change and security do not hamper the progress the continent is taking. She did acknowledge the

immense work Ghana has done in safeguarding democratic principles and the will of the people through consultative processes in governance issues. For his role in promoting democracy, since he assumed power, Vice President Harris lauded the Ghanaian president for having made Ghana a «beacon of democracy.»

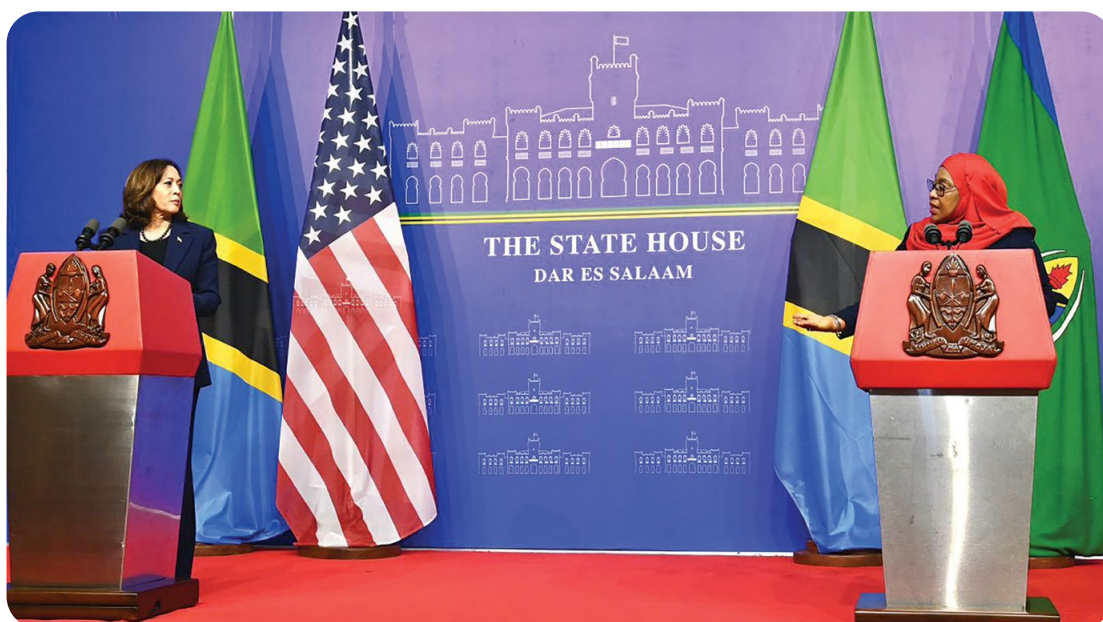
Harris' visit certainly reassures the Ghanaian president on the security front as he has expressed dismay at the presence of the Wagner Group, a Russian private military contractor based in neighbouring Burkina Faso and Mali. Nana Akufo Addo is convinced that the Wagner Group was invited by Burkina Faso and is concerned that its presence threatens the peace in the region. In a statement at the end of last year, the Ghanaian president said «It (presence of the Wagner Group) raises the very real possibility ... that once again our continent is going to become the playground for great power conflict». Akufo Addo will thus be hoping that the \$100 million injected by the U.S.

for addressing security issues in the region goes a long way in eliminating the threat posed by the Wagner Group.

The second country Vice President Harris visited during her tour Tanzania is another country in which China has had a massive influence. The first country that current Tanzanian president Samia Suluhu Hassan visited in an official capacity is China to meet President Xi Jinping in Beijing where their meeting focused on areas of cooperation such as agriculture trade and infrastructure. The choice of Tanzania, therefore, is quite interesting.

Rounding off her Africa tour, Harris visited Zambia, the country of her ancestral heritage. Harris last travelled to Zambia in the 1960s to visit her maternal grandfather. The maternal grandfather was once a civil servant in the Zambian government.

Harris' visit to Africa follows a long list of top statesmen from the



Vice President Kamala Harris and Tanzania's President Samia Suluhu Hassan.

U.S. who have visited the African continent in recent times. These include «US first lady Jill Biden who returned from her trip to Africa last month. American Ambassador to

the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield visited earlier this year. Secretary of State Antony Blinken travelled to Ethiopia and Niger last week». The U.S. President is expected to visit the

continent later this year. The flurry of visits by U.S. top statesmen reflects a significant change between U.S.-Africa relations experienced during the Trump era.

Cameroon: Senatorial Elections Confirm One Party Rule

By Boris Esono Nwenfor

The constitutional council unsurprisingly proclaimed the Cameroon Peoples Democratic Movement, CPDM, Party as the winner of the March 12 Senatorial election, ushering a complete dominance of the ruling party at the upper house of assembly with a one hundred per cent victory.

Results of the March 12 polls were proclaimed on Thursday, March 23 in a solemn court session at the Yaoundé Conference Centre, chaired by Clement Atangana, President of the Constitutional Council. Following the results, women now make up 28 of the 70 elected senators, this figure does not take into account the 30 senators that were appointed by the president.

The term «one-party state» now seems entirely satisfactory, and this had in the past happened in Cameroon, and it ought not to cause any surprise today, as the CPDM won 70 of the 70 seats that were being contested across the country.



88-year-old Marcel Niat Njifenji was recently re-elected President of Cameroon's Senate.

«It is very dangerous in a democracy for you to sweep an entire position as a contestant. There is something that looms and there is a lot that is not right. The victory of the CPDM party does not reflect democracy,» Nji Lucas, a political analyst and Human

rights defender said.

«We are technically in a mono-party system. If you look at what has been put on the ground to get such a result, the environment, and the people that are there are not capable enough to decipher what is right. The House is

not going to have a resemblance of a heterogeneous house but it is going to be homogenous in decision-making.»

In the manifesto, the CPDM Party stated: «Our objective is to work for an even stronger Senate, to complete decentralization, guaranteeing

an ever more dynamic local democracy and catalyzing the socio-economic development of the communes and regions, by the law on the general code of decentralization, promulgated by the President of the Republic on 19 December 2019.»

«For this new term, I think senators will be more present in the field. We have witnessed the creation of a whole ministry in charge of decentralization and the Senate represents decentralized structures,» CPDM senator for the South West Region Otte Andrew Moffa said.

«I think that Cameroonians want decentralization. So, we have a lot to do. We will work a lot with this ministry, with municipal councillors, and municipalities ... to make laws that are favourable to development. I think that with the help of God, it will be okay.»

Electioneering characterizes senatorial election

Denis Emilien Atangana, of the Front des Démocrates du Cameroun, or FDC, told VOA that it was scandalous for the ruling CPDM to hire buses to transport all municipal and regional councillors who constitute the electoral college to polling stations.

He also said the CPDM used threats, bullying and vote-buying to deprive voters of their freedom to make democratic choices, while in the buses, officials of the CPDM distributed money and threatened to punish voters who refused the bribe. Pan African Visions cannot independently verify this statement.

The Constitutional Council President Clement Atangana and his peers examined the complaints filed by three political groups: the Cameroonian Democratic Front (FDC) of Denis Emilien Atangana, the Social Democratic Front (SDF) of John Fru Ndi and the National Union for Democracy and Progress (UNDP) of Bello Bouba Maigari. All the files were declared not admissible.



The Cameroon Senate has 100 members, seventy are elected and thirty appointed by President Biya.

«The opposition admitted for the first time that this was one of the most transparent elections. To me, it is transparent because the winners of the election were already known,» Nji Lucas added.

«The level of party discipline in Cameroon is what is killing our democracy. Because party discipline is more of a personality cult and when that continues, it becomes very difficult to have the kind of democracy that advances a country.»

About 15,000 councillors in 60 divisions across Cameroon made up the electoral college. Elections Cameroon, ELECAM, the body in charge of organizing elections in the country said more than 97% of electors exercised their voting rights.

The Minister of Territorial

Administration, Paul Atanga Nji, said the government did not report irregularities that could jeopardize the outcome of the polls. «More than 3,000 national and international observers were accredited by the ministry of territorial administration,» he said.

«They travelled across the country, and we hope that they will produce objective reports on the conduct of this election, which in our opinion was free, transparent and credible. As of now, no major incident has been reported in any of the 58 divisions of the country.»

Opposition parties at the mercy of President Biya

The Senate, or the upper house of parliament, has 100 seats. Seventy

are elected by the councillors. The other 30 are appointed by President Biya, who has the power to select opposition members as senators. 30 Senators (three from each region) were appointed by President Paul Biya, as stipulated by Cameroon's Constitution and Section 215 (3) of the Electoral Code.

Following his traditional habit, President Biya used this opportunity to offer some seats to allied parties. This to some political observers is a sign that the senate will not have decisions made only by one party. Six opposition political parties have their members

appointed. The parties are ANDP, MDR, UNDP, FSNC, SDF, and UPC. Former President of the Cameroon Football Federation, FECAFOOT, Saidou Mbombo Njoya is on the list.

In the outgoing Senate, the CPDM and its allies held 93 seats out of 100, with the remaining seven going to the SDF. Vanigansen MoChiggle, the incumbent senate vice president was elected back in 2018 but his SDF list won just 40 votes in this year's senatorial election. However, he is the only one from the SDF party in the North West that was appointed by President Biya as a senator.

88-year-old Marcel Niat Njifenji was recently elected again as the head of the upper house. This "Bamileke apparatchik" as the Africa Report calls him, "was retired and living far from public life when Biya called him back in 2013, and his health is failing." As the second most important person in the government, it is Njifenji who must take over in case of a vacancy at the top."

The outcome of the March 12 Senatorial election is a big indication of the work left in the hands of the opposition parties who must more than double their efforts with the legislative and Municipal elections presenting the bigger challenge ahead even before the Presidential election.

SÉNATEURS NOMMÉS / APPOINTED SENATORS

--- March 31, 2023 / 31 mars 2023 ---

Adamaoua/Adamawa 1. MOHAMAN GABDO 2. MOUSSA SABO 3. OUMAROU MAZADOU	Littoral 1. MOUEN DIBOUNDJE Ernest 2. ETAME MASSOMA David Siegfried 3. NGAYAP Pierre Flambeau	Ouest/West 1. NIAT NJIFENJI Marcel 2. CHATUE Emmanuel 3. MBOMBO NJOYA SEIDOU
Centre 1. PONGMONI Jean Marie 2. NKILI Robert 3. SOURNAC Henriette	Nord/North 1. ABOUBAKARY ABDOULAYE 2. HAYATOU AICHA Pierrette 3. TIZI TOURMBA MALAYE Yves	Sud/South 1. NGALLI NGOA Pierre Henri 2. MENYE ONDO François Xavier 3. BISSECK Paulette
Est/East 1. ZE NGUELE René 2. DIWALA Mory Hilarion 3. ABOUI Marlyse	Nord-Ouest/ North West 1. Fon CHAFAH Isaac 2. Regina MUNDI Elisabeth 3. VANIGANSEN MOCHIGGLE	Sud-Ouest/South West 1. ANDJA Simon ONJWO 2. EKOKO MUKETE 3. LEKE BESONGOH AKEMFOR Philip
Extrême-Nord/Far North 1. MAHAMAT BAHAR MANOUF 2. MALLOUM BRA		

President Biya flooded the the list of thirty members he appointed with more members of the ruling CPDM party.

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Zambia: Bishop Trevor Mwamba On The Resurrection Of UNIP

By Ajong Mbapndah L

The task is challenging, challenging to the extend some may see it as impossible in the present-day Zambia, but The Rt.Revd. Dr. Musonda Trevor Selwyn Mwamba believes firmly in the task of preserving the legacy of founding President Kenneth Kaunda and United National Independence Party-UNIP.

Taking over the reins of UNIP on an Easter Sunday summed up the devotion and seriousness with which Bishop Trevor Mwamba took the task of resurrecting party whose fortunes had gone South since the ouster of President Kaunda in 1991.

“As a historic party within and outside, UNIP cannot be erased from the consciousness of the Zambian people. UNIP forms the identity of Zambia and the region,” says Bishop Trevor Mwamba.

The rebuilding of UNIP requires effective communication, transparency, and inclusivity to bring members together, understand their concerns, and create a shared vision for the future, Bishop Mwamba says. Undaunted by the myriad of challenges Bishop Trevor Mwamba is of the firm believe that the rebuilding efforts will reinvigorate UNIP, attract new followers, and position it to compete more effectively in future elections.

In the interview which also offers broad insights and perspectives on developments in Zambia, the leadership of current President Hichilema, Chinese influence, the African Union and more, Bishop Trevor Mwamba believes it is critical for Zambians to emulate the kind of integrity that graced the life of late President Kenneth Kaunda. It is only with virtues like integrity that Zambia and the world can be made better, he says.

It's been a couple of years now since you took over the leadership of United National



As a historic party within and outside, UNIP cannot be erased from the consciousness of the Zambian people, says Bishop Mwamba.

Independence Party-UNIP, may we know how the party is doing?

Bishop Trevor Mwamba: Two years ago, on Easter Sunday April 4th, 2021. I took over the leadership of the United Nation from my predecessor Mr. Tilyenji Kaunda who had been President of the Party for 20 years. As a Christian, I thought it was an auspicious date when Christendom celebrates the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. So, on a political level we could say UNIP resurrected then!

Now, whenever there is a leadership change in a political party, it is essential to focus on rebuilding for its survival and growth. Under my leadership, we are infusing fresh ideas, a focused vision, and a new direction for UNIP, but we also face the challenges of changing mindsets, attitudes, whilst retaining the support and loyalty of party members who were loyal to the previous leadership.

The rebuilding of UNIP requires effective communication,

transparency, and inclusivity to bring members together, understand their concerns, and create a shared vision for the future. This process entails strengthening UNIP's grassroots organization, engaging new and young members, diversifying the Party's base, and reaching out to disenchanted supporters. It is our belief that our rebuilding efforts will reinvigorate UNIP, attract new followers, and position it to compete more effectively in future elections.

I often think of what President Woodrow Wilson of America, once said, <what use is a political party unless it's being served and used by the nation for some great purpose.>

This is the essence of UNIP's founding which we are reviving to be inspired again by the 'great purpose' of service to the nation to effectively serve and be of use to the nation for the greater good.

For the historic party that UNIP should be may we know why the fortunes of the party have

continued to go downhill since the late President Kaunda left office?

Bishop Trevor Mwamba: UNIP is indeed a historic party in Zambia as well as in Africa. UNIP in Zambia is the oldest political party that brought about independence and on attaining it focused on developing the country for the benefit of the citizens. In regard to Africa UNIP is pan African. UNIP supported the liberation movements, such as, the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa; South African Communist Party (SACP); (FRELIMO) of Mozambique; MPLA of Angola; SWAPO of Namibia; ZANU and ZAPU of Zimbabwe; by hosting them in Zambia and giving them financial, material, military, and moral support.

The support of the liberation movements in Zambia came at a great human, economic, and infrastructure cost to the country.

When UNIP lost power in 1991 through a democratic election to the Movement for Multiparty Democracy

(MMD) led by Mr. Frederick Chiluba. President Kaunda was magnanimous and humbly conceded defeat by accepting the people's will. He doing so became the father of democracy in Zambia and Africa having created the democratic space and accepting its results thereafter.

In this light your question is very important in seeking to know why the fortunes of the party went downhill after the late President Kaunda left office. The simple answer is that President Chiluba's view of democracy was of smokes and mirrors.

He was an artist of deception with the gift of the gab who projected himself as a democrat when in fact he was not. He demonstrated this by embarking on a strategy or policy of deliberately trying to destroy UNIP.

Some examples will suffice. First, fearful that President Kaunda could possibly beat him at the polls in the 1996 elections he amended the constitution by including a parentage clause which barred a presidential aspirant from contesting the presidency if both parents were not of Zambian birth. This disqualified President Kaunda whose parents came from Malawi though he was born in Zambia.

The irony was that President Kaunda had ruled Zambia for 27 years! In protest UNIP boycotted the 1996 elections and forfeited all the seats they had in parliament.

The party demonstrated that Zambia could not claim to be democratic by eliminating other participants, and that time as a country we never rose to the occasion by demanding fresh elections.

Second, the government compulsorily acquired under the Lands Acquisition Act, land on which was built the New UNIP Headquarters. President Chiluba decided that it was in the interest of the government to acquire the property. It's now a government complex where some government ministries are based.

Third, on Christmas Day 1997, President Kaunda was arrested on unspecified charges. He was released from prison on 31st December 1997



UNIP has birthed the vision and spirit of Zambia's identity in the national slogan -One Zambia One Nation.says Bishop Mwamba.

and placed under house arrest. His release came after former President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania visited him in jail. President Chiluba was under a lot of international pressure to release President Kaunda.

Fourth, President Chiluba maliciously mistreated President Kaunda during his tenure in office, for example, he instructed all Zambian diplomatic missions not to welcome and receive President Kaunda whenever he travelled abroad. However, President Kaunda was welcomed by many friendly African embassies who held him in high esteem to the embarrassment of the Zambian diplomats and government.

Fifth, UNIP was infiltrated by President Chiluba's agents to destroy the Party from within. One of the infiltrators was elected President of the Party.

Sixth, President Chiluba's government instructed the government-controlled media, TV and radio to report negatively about the Party.

These few examples, there others distressing such as the assassination of President Kaunda's son Major Wezi Kaunda, illustrate why UNIP's

fortunes went downhill over the last few decades.

It's a tale of a leader who instead of strengthening democracy by working with his predecessor and building on the good achieved instead sort to destroy him and everything connected to UNIP which he perceived as threat to his power.

In the end President Chiluba lost all credibility as a 'democrat' when he tried to run for a third term and was utterly rejected by the wise Zambians.

As a historic party within and outside, UNIP cannot be erased from the consciousness of the Zambian people. UNIP forms the identity of Zambia and region.

As a liberating party, it's unique from other subsequent parties. UNIP has birthed the vision and spirit of Zambia's identity in the national slogan "One Zambia One Nation", which in fact is the motto of the Party enshrined in the UNIP Constitution.

UNIP's undying value is premised on the truth that people above all matter and government must always exist to serve the interests of its citizens. This is the essence of UNIP's philosophy of Humanism based on social democratic principles.

UNIP as a historic Party is an important part of our identity, how Zambia came about, the challenges and difficulties it faced; the successes and failures it experienced; what we learn from it all; and how we can build a better Zambia. It's all essential to the development of a nation.

Marcus Garvey wisely wrote:

"A people without knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots".

An essential part of Zambia's wholesome growth as a nation is for her citizens be aware of UNIP's vital place in the nation's history and identity and therefore our lives. Lest we be "...like a tree without roots".

In the rebuilding and revival of UNIP is the rediscovery of our history taking us uphill.

At the last Presidential elections, UNIP did not do well, it was your first shot at the top job in Zambia, may we know what lessons were drawn from that experience and what is it you and the party are doing to prepare for the next elections?

Bishop Trevor Mwamba: Being elected President of UNIP, three months before the General election was certainly a challenge, however, it was vital for us to fully engage in the election and utilise the experience to gain insight and truly understand the electorate, their concerns and have a deep and thorough understanding of the challenges firsthand on the ground. It was an extraordinary experience, and I was privileged to meet citizens from every Province, it deepened, my appreciation of the challenges and opportunities, as well as lessons learned after the election.

First and foremost, it was important for UNIP conduct a thorough analysis of the election outcome. This included examining messaging, campaign strategy, and how the opposition was able to gain support. It was also vital to understand the concerns and needs of the voters who chose not to support UNIP, and to make efforts to address their issues.

This was also a reminder to our

members to remain engaged and active in the Party, and not to distance oneself after the defeat. By remaining involved and contributing to the rebuilding effort, active members continue to make valuable contributions to the Party's future success.

Finally, in our commitment to sustaining democracy, it was essential for UNIP to acknowledge and accept the result, and to move forward with a positive attitude and a willingness to learn and grow from the experience.

What do you make of the way the way current President Hichilema has managed the country since his election?

Bishop Trevor Mwamba: I think it's important to recognise that any president faces challenges in governing a nation. One of the primary difficulties is navigating the complex political landscape and balancing the needs and wants of different groups within society.

Every president has their unique style just as people dance differently. Our analysis of how President Hichilema has managed the country hitherto is to commend him on

repealing the death penalty and the offence of criminal defamation of the President.

This is a positive step making Zambia compliant with the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The President's act augurs well towards the promotion of human rights and free speech.

We commended him too for the considerable progress made to repeal and replace the archaic colonial Public Order Act.

We would further urge the President to repeal expeditiously the remaining repressive laws on the statutes. Of which the top two are the Cyber Security and Cyber Crimes Act allowing the authorities to tap and confiscate electronic devices without proper safeguards.



Bishop Trevor Mwamba believes it is critical for Zambians to emulate the kind of integrity that graced the life of late President Kenneth Kaunda

The Penal Code Act on which the Zambia Law Development Commission completed a 10-year comprehensive review and the Criminal Procedure Code and recommended the immediate removal of several provisions restricting human rights.

The President is also focusing on enacting the Law on Access to Information – giving Zambians the right to seek, receive, and impart information held by public bodies.

A law which previous governments have promised and failed to deliver.

President Hichilema's moves markedly indicate his administration's commitment to promoting human rights and advancing democracy.

More significantly for President Hichilema is to keep focus on the specific campaign promises made to the Zambian people when he was a presidential aspirant. These promises assured a lower cost of living and higher standard of life. Sadly, these promises have not been met in part because the government has chosen to go the route of the IMF.

On the question of mining the Zambian mining investment firm ZCCM-IH has hired investment bank Rothschild & Co for a strategic review of Mopani Copper Mines.

ZCCM-IH had sort a financial adviser to restructure Mopani and

help find a new external investor for the mining complex, which Glencore had sold.

it's mind boggling that the government would seek a foreign consulting firm and pay them millions of dollars to advise on a matter requiring expertise already in place in the country.

Our government would have established a group of Zambian mining engineers, metallurgists, lawyers, and consultants to address the mining challenges. Zambia has considerable local talent in this regard. Our government would have used that talent.

Since its founding in 1959 UNIP's driving ideologies are based on uplifting the lives of ordinary Zambians, safety and security, education, humanism, pan Africanism and socio-economic sustainability.

Had UNIP won the 2021 election, we would be lifting the Zambian citizens through various targeted policies and initiatives such as;

Economic growth is crucial to uplifting citizens and reducing poverty. The UNIP government would promote economic growth by investing in infrastructure, supporting entrepreneurship, and creating opportunities for job creation. Additionally, promoting industrialization can create more job

opportunities and increase economic output.

Education and vocational training is one of the primary tools for social transformation and economic growth. A UNIP will uplift its citizens by focusing on improving the quality of education and making it accessible to all. A UNIP government will invest in building more schools, hiring qualified teachers, providing resources and materials, and ensuring that education is affordable for all.

Safety and security are paramount to citizens' well-being and would be a top priority for the UNIP government. A UNIP government will take

appropriate measures to ensure the safety and security of their citizens. This includes providing adequate law enforcement, strengthening the justice system, and increasing public safety measures.

Humanism is another essential aspect of uplifting citizens. A UNIP government both historically and in the future is focused on humanism, values the dignity, rights, and welfare of each individual. The government must ensure that citizens have access to basic healthcare, social services, and protection from discrimination and violence.

Promote Pan-Africanism is a philosophy that seeks to unify African peoples and promote African identity and destiny.

A UNIP governments will uplift the Zambian citizens by promoting Pan-Africanism through various initiatives. This includes promoting African culture and heritage, encouraging regional integration, and strengthening ties with other African countries.

Sustainable socio-economic development is vital for ensuring that development is inclusive and benefits all citizens, including future generations. A UNIP governments will promote sustainable development through various policies and initiatives, such as encouraging green

energy, promoting conservation, and addressing issues related to climate change.

In conclusion, UNIP has since inception been focused on unity and uplifting Zambian citizens, ensuring that all citizens have the opportunity to live fulfilling lives. By focusing on education, safety and security, humanism, Pan-Africanism, economic growth, industrialization, and sustainable socio-economic development, a UNIP government will improve the lives of their citizens and promote a brighter future for all. For UNIP has always had the blueprint of the Zambia's development and where subsequent governments have made progress has been in reference to the blueprint.

If you and UNIP were actually in office at the moment instead of Hichilema, what are some of the things you would have done differently?

Bishop Trevor Mwamba: We would not seek help from the IMF to help with our debt challenge. The history of IMF involvement in our country and elsewhere is clear. IMF programmes come with injurious conditionality which harms people's welfare.

For example, the removal of subsidies on food and fuel leads to increased poverty.

We would therefore avoid the IMF.

Instead, we would promote pan Africanism in a meaningful way and turn to sister governments for mutually beneficial support.

Specifically, we would approach three or four African countries and ask them to advance money to Zambia on more favourable terms than the IMF offers.

Consider, for example, that South Africa, Nigeria, Morocco, and Botswana collectively have foreign exchange reserves amounting to \$118 Billion. Zambia is seeking \$1.3 billion, about 1% of the reserves held by these friendly African countries.

The interest earned on these reserves is around 2.65%. Zambia

could offer, say 3.65% interest or higher and thereby provide an incentive to these countries to lend to us.

The capital outlay for each country participating in the proposed program would be \$325 million, a minuscule amount.

The UNIP party has been a party of unity, humanism and equitable advancement; embracing and valuing diversity.

UNIP recognized that unity of diverse citizens promotes sustainable socio-economic development by creating a cohesive community that values collaboration and inclusivity. When individuals from different backgrounds come together, they bring with them a diverse range of skills, experiences, and perspectives that can contribute to finding innovative solutions to complex issues.

The first Cabinet of Zambia was reflective of the diversity of the Country. By working together towards a common goal, diverse citizens can overcome cultural, linguistic, and social barriers, leading to increased trust and respect among each other. This cohesion does translate into sustainable social and economic development as shared resources and knowledge are leveraged to create more equitable opportunities and stronger communities.



Undaunted by the myriad of challenges, Bishop Trevor Mwamba says that the rebuilding efforts will reinvigorate UNIP and position it to compete more effectively in future elections.

Ultimately, the unity of diverse citizens is essential to building a sustainable future that benefits everyone.

Equitable advancement and investment in each citizen by a UNIP government towards economic emancipation is crucial to achieve a sustainable socio-economic development.

A UNIP government would recognize the importance of investing in education, healthcare and basic infrastructure for all citizens, especially those in marginalized communities. This investment must be equitable and tailored to meet the unique needs of each individual to bridge the wealth gap and create opportunities for economic mobility.

A UNIP government would also focus on creating a favorable environment for businesses to thrive, which would lead to job creation and development in all regions of the country. Furthermore, a UNIP government would leverage technology to create customized solutions and increase efficiency in public service delivery, which will help in minimizing corruption and increasing transparency.

Humanism is the belief that humans should be the central focus of political, social, and cultural life. For UNIP this means that our ideals are centered around promoting

the well-being and dignity of all human beings, regardless of tribe, gender, religion, or socioeconomic class.

Humanism involves valuing individual freedom, human rights, and social justice, and promoting a society where everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Our philosophy serves as the bedrock of UNIP's ideals because it emphasizes the importance of empathy, compassion, and cooperation in shaping policy decisions. By prioritizing humanism, we would build a platform that serves as a reflection of the values that the Party believes should be fundamental to

society. Ultimately, a humanistic approach to politics can create a more equitable and just society that benefits everyone.

It is UNIP's firm belief that with unity, humanism and equitable investment and advancement in each citizen, the government can achieve economic emancipation and create a more resilient, prosperous, and sustainable society.

Based on what you know as President of UNIP, may we know the myths and realities of Zambia at the mercy of foreign interest and control especially China-how much of Zambia is under Chinese ownership?

Bishop Trevor Mwamba: Poor China it's having a bad press in certain quarters but not in Zambia.

Zambia and China have shared a long-standing diplomatic relationship, in fact the establishment of formal ties took place on October 29th, 1964, five days after we gained independence.

This paved the way for deeper and more meaningful cooperation between the two nations. Over the years, this relationship has been marked by mutual development, cultural exchange, infrastructure development, and loan facilitation, which has strengthened the bond between the two countries.

We should put context in China and Zambia's relationship.

In November 1965, Rhodesia's Prime Minister Ian Smith announced a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI), prompting the United Nations and the British government to impose economic and financial sanctions on his government.

The sanctions meant newly independent Zambia would be crippled economically and the consequences would be dire, so it had to find a new route to transport its cash commodity, copper.

Dr Kaunda's government engaged the World Bank to fund a railway alternative link away from Southern Rhodesia to one that would run through Tanzania on its eastern border, but the World Bank and other western donors refused to fund the railway project stating the project would never be economically viable and a waste of money.

Undeterred by the West's rejection, President Kaunda in 1967 undertook a high-level trip to China to discuss possible funding for the crucial railway link. China agreed to finance the 1,860 km railway line between Zambia and Tanzania at a cost of US\$500 million interest free.

White controlled southern Africa and the West even then saw China's assistance for Zambia and Tanzania as a way of increasing its footprint in Africa. The project was highly politicised. But the Tanzania Zambia Railways project known as Tazara, was an economic lifeline for Zambia.

About 50, 000 Chinese and some thousands of Zambian and Tanzanian workers laboured on the line from 1970 to 1975 to successfully complete the project that effectively halted Zambia's dependence on apartheid South Africa and white controlled Southern Rhodesia.

China has been a major investor, providing financial and technical assistance to Zambia in different fields such as education, health, agriculture, and infrastructure, among others.



Bishop Mwamba addressing a congress of Mozambique's ruling party. The historic importance of UNIP is recognized across Southern Africa and beyond.

This support has helped Zambia advance economically and build its infrastructure network. The cultural exchange between China and Zambia has also been significant, with Chinese culture being highly visible in Zambia, and vice versa.

Additionally, the two countries have cooperated extensively in the area of loan facilitation, with China often providing concessional loans to Zambia. This has been a significant boost to Zambia's economy, with the country being able to undertake various developmental projects that would have otherwise been impossible.

Overall, the friendly and mutually supportive relationship between Zambia and China is a testament to the strength and importance of diplomatic ties in promoting development and cultural exchange.

The UNIP Government framed Zambia's foreign policy of non-alignment of not being tied either to the West or the East. Which subsequent Zambian government to a great degree have adhered to.

In short Zambia sees China in the same way it sees the United States and Russia and Britain and India as a friend. It's naive to think that Zambia's relationship with one country or power bloc negates its relationship with others. Politically and economically Zambia's strength has been its non-aligned policy.

Zambia to echo what a Prime Minister of Barbados once said is capable of being a friend of all and a satellites of none. Zambia needs the support of every country in the world to develop. No one country or bloc can meet Zambia's aspirations or needs on their own.

The main principle of Zambia's foreign policy and trade has been that of peaceful coexistence with her neighbours and the international community.

To insinuate that Zambia is at the mercy of foreign interests and control especially is myopic.

We need to have a 20/20 vision that sees clearly, for example, it's a fact that China holds a large percentage of assets within the United States of America and a large amount of their treasuries as well. So, the question could be asked how much of the US is under Chinese ownership?

It's rather disingenuous for anyone to focus on Africa or so-called developing countries trade with China without recognizing the role that China is playing in Europe or in the North Atlantic countries.

What is your assessment of the state of democracy in Zambia, are the frequent orderly transitions a sign that all is well?

Bishop Trevor Mwamba: I believe in the wisdom of the Zambian people.

Since 1991 when my Party UNIP was voted out of power and MMD voted into power; in 2011 when MMD was voted out of power and PF voted in power; in 2021 when PF was voted out of power and the UPND - Alliance voted into power; the Zambian people have wisely demonstrated to the world their shrewd understanding of a working democracy by consistently choosing a government for themselves they believed was in the best interest of the nation.

We have seen a consistent rebirth of democracy in the vein of what President

Abraham Lincoln wisely said in his Gettysburg Address in 1863:

"...we here highly resolve that... this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom - and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

We can paraphrase this to:

"...we here highly resolve that... Zambia, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom - and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from Zambia."

It's the wisdom of the Zambian people that has inspired the spirit of smooth transition of power of four different political parties, UNIP, MMD, PF, and UPND; and shall not perish from Zambia.

On reflecting on this smooth transition of power I recall especially 2021, which politically was a historic, dramatic year of political change.

2021 saw the voting into power of the UPND - Alliance government. The change reinforced Zambia's democratic credentials in Africa and the world. For the fourth time there was change of government from a different political party.

Dr Kenneth Kaunda, the first president of Zambia, is widely credited with setting a precedent for the orderly transition of power following a general election. This has helped to bolster and sustain democracy in

Zambia over the years, as subsequent government administrations have continued to uphold this tradition.

President Kaunda, who served as president from 1964 to 1991, oversaw the transition to multi-party democracy in the early 1990s. This was a significant moment for Zambia, as it marked the end of one-party rule and the return to multi-party democracy.

Under Kaunda's leadership, Zambia held its first multi-party elections in 1991, which were won by the opposition party, the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD). Despite losing the election, Kaunda handed over power peacefully and gracefully, setting the stage for a new era of democratic governance in Zambia.

The peaceful transition of power after the 1991 election helped to cement Zambia's reputation as one of the most stable and democratic countries in Africa. Subsequent governments have continued to uphold this tradition of orderly succession, ensuring that democracy remains firmly entrenched in Zambian politics.

In the years since the transition to multi-party democracy, Zambia has held several successful elections, with power changing hands between different political parties.

While there have been some instances of political tension and controversy, the overall trend has been towards peaceful, democratic governance.

Today, Zambia remains a strong and stable democracy, with a vibrant civil society and a free and independent media. While there are still challenges and issues to be addressed, the legacy of Dr Kenneth Kaunda's leadership has set the foundation for a strong and sustainable democracy in Zambia for years to come.

Former President Edgar Lungu declared April 28th as a national holiday in honor of Founding President Kenneth Kaunda, are you satisfied with this honor, and anything planned by UNIP to celebrate



Bishop Mwamba thinks that former President Edgar Lungu declaring founding President Kenneth Kaunda's date of birth April 28th as a national holiday was befitting an honour.

the holiday this year?

Bishop Trevor Mwamba: I think that former President Edgar Lungu declaring our founding President Kenneth Kaunda's date of birth April 28th as a national holiday was befitting an honour.

President Kaunda was colossal on the political world stage, a moral force, a great statesman of conscience and conviction, great pan Africanist, a peacemaker.

To further honour him I recommend that all his books such as Zambia Shall Be Free, A Humanist in Africa, and Letter To My Children, should be compulsory reading in all schools and universities in Zambia. I further suggest that a statue of him should be erected at the AU headquarters for his role as a great Pan Africanist.

In regard to planned activities to celebrate the holiday we are proposing a Public Lecture at the University of Zambia and other activities to benefit needy communities.

Last year in commemoration of the official opening of Kenneth Kaunda Day my Party in corroboration with the University of Zambia, and Government hosted the inaugural Public lecture at which Her Honour the Vice President Mrs W.K. Mutale Nalumango was the guest of honour.

What is your take on the African Union, what seems to be working and what is not working for the continental body?

Bishop Trevor Mwamba: The African Union (AU) is a political and economic organization that was formed in 2002, with the aim of promoting economic, social and political integration across the African continent.

At the launch of the African Union (AU), former South African president Thabo Mbeki noted: "Africa was free from colonial and apartheid oppression, except for the persisting case of western Sahara ... That its inaugural conference was held in erstwhile apartheid South Africa emphasised the fact of this new reality on our continent."

The AU's mission statement speaks of "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena". This is the African vision of the future inspired by the ideals of African renaissance and Pan-Africanism. This vision should be taught to African children across the continent from primary to university level.

Whilst the AU has achieved

successes, there are also some challenges and limitations that it faces, which may hinder its effectiveness in achieving its mandate.

Successes

AU Constitutive Act of 2000

- A key foundation pillar of the AU that differs considerably from its predecessor, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), is the adoption of the AU Constitutive Act of 2000.

The Act allows for "the right of the Union to intervene in a Member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely: war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity."

The Act has successfully been used to address a worrisome phenomenon of unconstitutional change of government and an increase in the frequency of military coups. As a result, military regimes in Burkina Faso, Egypt, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Sudan and Togo have at various times been suspended from the AU.

Agency

- The AU has developed a significant level of agency which has strengthened its ability to shape its

own agenda and to take decisions in favour of Africa's interests while actively participating in global affairs.

The AU has helped Africa to develop into a regional bloc second only to the EU in its institutional development. This has significantly strengthened Africa's international agency, allowing Africa to speak with one voice on a diverse range of issues for the benefit of African needs and priority areas, such as peace and security, infrastructure and energy, climate change, innovative development financing, training youth and women's empowerment.

- Agenda 2063 presents Africa's vision for its growth and development over the next 50 years. This blueprint for the continent has been at the forefront of political dialogue between African countries and strategic international partners.

African Continental Free Trade Area

- The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is the World's largest free trade region bringing together all 55 countries of the AU and eight regional economic communities. The overall mandate is to create a single continental market with a population of about 1.3 billion people and a combined GDP of approximately \$3.4 trillion.
- The AfCFTA is one of the flagship projects of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, the AU's long-term development strategy for transforming the continent into a global powerhouse eliminating trade barriers and boosting intra-Africa trade. The success of the AfCFTA could potentially lift 30-million people out of extreme poverty.
- The importance of regional integration cannot be overstated, given the low proportion of inter-African trade when compared with other regions. The volume of trade among countries is around 15% of total trade, while in Europe, North America, and Latin America,



Bishop Mwamba with current Zambian President Hichilema. Despite the respect, there are sharp policy differences, says the Bishop.

rates are 68%, 37% and 20%, respectively.

We therefore welcome the establishment of an African free trade block. We caution however that for these efforts to succeed AfCFTA must be seen to benefit, in a practical way, individual citizens of the 55 countries on the continent.

So, it is important for us that under AfCFTA, Africans are given preferential treatment in the issuance of business licences and work permits where ever they may wish to operate on the continent.

Decade of women's economic financial inclusion

- In February 2020, the AU championed a 10-year continental declaration focusing on gender equality and women's empowerment. This declaration, called the Decade of Women's Financial and Economic Inclusion, sees African leaders commit to gender inclusion towards sustainable development at national, regional and continental levels.

Peace and security

- The AU has made some progress in peacekeeping across the continent by establishing the African Standby Force (ASF) in December 2003.

The ASF is a multidisciplinary peacekeeping force with military, police and civilian contingents that acts under the direction of the AU.

- The ASF is intended to be deployed in times of crisis in Africa. To ensure effective operation, the force is decentralised and coordinated at a regional level. It has been deployed in varying degrees to confront and manage insurgency-related conflicts in various countries.

- Apart from the ASF, the African Union has carried out peacekeeping operations, often in collaboration with United Nations missions, in Burundi, Sudan, Somalia, and elsewhere on the continent.

The AU has also successfully led several diplomatic initiatives to resolve conflicts on the continent, the most recent being talks between the Ethiopian government and Tigray Peoples' Liberation Front in South Africa.

Human Rights

The AU has developed an African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which promotes and protects human rights across the continent.

On Missed opportunities-

Continued acts of unconstitutional

change of government.

- The AU has been accused of being slow to act on coup makers. This contrasts with its outspoken stance in previous years, ostracising military regimes in Guinea-Bissau and São Tomé and Príncipe (2003), Togo (2005), Mauritania (2005, 2007), Guinea (2008), Mali (2012) and Egypt and the Central African Republic (2013).

- A reason for coup frequency may partly be explained as a consequence of democratic backsliding on the continent. There is a need for the AU to adopt more stringent resolutions aimed at addressing unconstitutional change of governments, while strengthening its promotion of democracy.

Limited political influence

The AU has limited political influence in international affairs, which limits its ability to effectively advocate for African countries on global issues.

Limited cooperation among member states

The AU faces challenges in getting member states to cooperate fully, given the differences in political systems, economic interests, and

cultural identities.

Lack of engagement with civil society

• The AU has also been criticised for its lack of consultation with Member States' civil society stakeholders. Increased engagement with civil society could lead to better accountability and provide a sense of ownership for the citizens of Member States and importantly bridge trust deficits.

Funding challenges

• The AU remains heavily dependent on external funding for its operations. For example, at the October 2021 executive council meeting, ministers approved an overall AU commission budget for 2022 of just over \$650 million. This comprises \$176 million for operations, \$195 million for programmes and \$279 million for peace support. International partners were expected to fund 66% of the budget and member states 31%. The remaining 3% was to come from the administrative and maintenance reserve funds. This is, however, far from the AU's goal of self-financing its total regular budget and at least 75% of its programme budget, which is still fully funded by partners.

Improving the AU's effectiveness

We can work towards improving the AU's effectiveness by;

1. Increased funding: The AU needs increased funding and resource development from member states to ensure it is better able to address pressing issues on the continent.
2. Improved cooperation: The AU should foster improved cooperation among member states, to ensure that they are able to work together more effectively. As well as Regional Economic Communities such as SADC, ECOWAS, East African Community, engagement and collaboration.
3. Integrity: ensuring integrity



Bishop Mvumba with President Ramaphosa of South Africa. We would promote pan Africanism in a meaningful way and turn to sister governments for mutually beneficial support, he says.

intolerant to greed is the bedrock of AU's work by strengthening the institutions/bodies that address corruption viz, African Union Convention on Preventing and Combatting Corruption; African Union Advisory Board Against Corruption; the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) APRM and the African Governance Architecture (AGA).

4. Agency and autonomy: The AU should enhance its agency and autonomy in the face of external pressures, and work to become more self-reliant.

In conclusion, Africa is burdened with many challenges addressing them will require increased funding and resources; greater cooperation among African nations as well as regional economic communities; increased engagement with civil society, and more autonomous action from the AU itself.

I believe Africa needs the AU because it's playing a pivotal role in addressing the various challenges confronting the continent. While the AU can be criticised for some acts of inaction, it is also the only inclusive platform available to achieve "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena".

Could you shed light on the vision and activities of the Peacebuilding

Advisory Group that you are part of?

Bishop Trevor Mwamba: The vision of the Peacemaking Advisory Group (PAG) is to create a safe and non-partisan platform for discussion and consultation between critical stakeholders based on mutual respect and ubuntu. The PAG strives to deescalate intercommunal tensions and to unlock the development potential of the province of Cabo Delgado, Mozambique.

The PAG is a politically neutral regional initiative harnessing the experience and expertise of its members to support peace and development processes in the region.

I chair the PAG comprising the following members:

Bishop Dinis Matsolo, President of the Justice, Peace, and Reconciliation Commission of Christian Council of Mozambique (CCM) and Executive Director of Programa Inter-Religioso Contra a Malaria (PIRCOM), Republic of Mozambique.

Sheikh Aminuddin Muhammad Ibrahim,

President of the Islamic Council of Mozambique, State Council Member, President of Council of Religions of Mozambique, Founder and Director of the Hamza Institute.

• Mr Chris Maroleng, Global Advisor and Executive Director of Good Governance Africa, Republic of South Africa.

• Ambassador Roeland van de Geer, Chairman of the European Board of Good Governance Africa and former Ambassador of the Netherlands to the Republic of Mozambique.

• Ms Alice Mogwe, Executive Director of DITSHWANELO - The Botswana Centre for Human Rights and President of the International Federation for Human Rights.

• Ms Fatma Karume, leading Human Rights Lawyer, United Republic of Tanzania.

The PAG also has the support of an Eminent

Persons Group (EPG) comprising of distinguished leaders from the region.

Its secretariat is based in Johannesburg, South Africa at Good Governance Africa (GGA), a registered non-profit organisation focused on researching, advocating, and improving governance across the African continent with additional offices in Accra, Addis Ababa, and Lagos.

As part of the PAG's activities, in February 2023, we undertook our first mission to Mozambique to engage various state and non-state actors in Maputo and Pemba.

The objective of the mission was to gauge the willingness for the commencement of a dialogue process as a conflict transformation tool to address the ongoing insecurity in the northern Mozambique province of Cabo Delgado.

It is our belief that creating a safe and non-partisan platform strengthens the promotion of dialogue and consultation between critical stakeholders while also pursuing measures to reduce intercommunal tensions and in the case of Mozambique, to unlock the province's vast development potential.

The PAG will meet with the SADC Secretariat with the hope of establishing a synergy to work in tandem with the SADC Mediation and Conflict Prevention and Preventative

Diplomacy Structure.

Where SADC leaders can convene high level meetings, the PAG's added value is the ability to create a safe and non-partisan platform for discussion and consultation between communities experiencing high levels of tension and insecurity. Together both approaches will strengthen the process of Peacemaking in the region.

A last word on Zambia to conclude this interview, what gives you hope and what are your fears for its future?

Bishop Trevor Mwamba: The Zambian national anthem is actually a hymn. It remembers God, it exhorts God, it invokes God, it seeks God's blessings and guidance.

"Praise be to God, Zambia, Zambia, bless our great nation, Zambia, Zambia..." these are lyrics from our national anthem.

It has its roots in a Christian hymn "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika", "Lord Bless Africa" - originally composed in 1897 by Enoch Sontonga a Xhosa clergyman.

My hope for Zambia lies in God. For whenever the hymn is sung it's a prayer that invokes God's blessing and guidance on the country. And profoundly what Zambia and our world needs is the blessings of integrity.

Integrity builds a nation and corruption destroys a nation.

Integrity in a mathematical context is an integer a whole number. So a person of integrity is one who is whole, principled and honest, someone who is trustworthy, someone who cannot be compromised.

The great African writer Chinua Achebe said:

«One of the truest tests of integrity is its blunt refusal to be compromised.»

Zambia was founded on integrity. Integrity defined the characters of our founding leaders and inspired their vision in building Zambia. The



The legacy of Dr Kenneth Kaunda's leadership set the foundation for a strong and sustainable democracy in Zambia for years to come, says Bishop Mwamba.

leadership is summed up in the motto One Zambia One Nation.

The motto, a prayer, a vow, a vision, expresses integrity, of a whole country, a united people, essential in developing Zambia to greater heights. Integrity inspires an ethical approach in our lives and state of affairs. It nurtures morality in our lives and nation essential for progress and development.

The Irish statesman Edmund Burke once said, 'Liberty does not exist in the absence of morality.' Neither can democracy exist in the absence of morality, or unity exist in the absence of morality, or peace and prosperity exist in the absence of morality.

Morality as a virtue inspires the best in people. It radiates good thoughts and deeds towards others. «So, in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you". This is the golden rule. This is morality.

The American President Theodore Roosevelt once said, "To educate a

man in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society."

For we live in a moral universe in which the good, the truth cannot be suppressed indefinitely.

The Czech President Vaclav Havel wisely said, 'The desire to be in touch with what is true, and to live by it in all its consequences, is deeply embedded in human beings. We cannot live for long <within the lie>.

What therefore gives me hope about Zambia's future is that her people are peaceful, gracious, humble, and blessed with integrity. They have in the history of Zambia avoided living 'within the lie'.

Its integrity we need to live up to the best in ourselves, to the better angels in us for a better Zambia.

It's because of integrity that the wisdom of the Zambian people has been manifest since 1991 by peaceful changing governments when they believed it was in the best interest of the nation.

My fears for Zambia's future and indeed Africa are an echo of what President Julius Nyerere expressed at a rally in 1966. It was that the greatest danger to Africa was her own leaders if they did not think of their responsibility to the people.

Yes, the greatest danger to Zambia are her own leaders if they do not think of their responsibility to the people.

The only way to escape such a nightmare which all of us already know, to assure good presidential decisions is to elect and support good Presidents. For in the end the formula is very simple if we elect bad leaders, we are guaranteed bad decisions and if we elect good leaders, we are guaranteed good decisions.

It brings us back to integrity. It is integrity we need to live up to the best in ourselves for a better Zambia and world.

President Kaunda lived a life of integrity. He committed to bringing about justice, equality, and democracy for all. He tried to make Zambia and our world better.

Integrity as a blessing of God reminds us to:

«Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind' and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'»

For these two commandments are the essence of life which the ancient prophet Micah condensed in these ageless words:

<He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.>

As God lives in people <to walk humbly with your God> is to see in each other a child of God. It's to see God in each other irrespective of religion, colour, creed, gender, tribe, or nationality.

This is what ultimately gives me hope for Zambia and the world. And leaders of integrity see this. _____

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Malawi: Unfriendly Cyclone Freddy Leaves Heavy Mark

By Joseph Dumbula

Martha Taulo, has lived for 42 years but says she has never seen a disaster in this sort as together with her husband and two children are now being housed in a makeshift camp following the washing away of their home in the commercial city of Blantyre. The disaster is one Cyclone Freddy. It has now claimed over a thousand lives and left thousands of households homeless, businesses shuttered and social life distorted.

As PAV talks to Taulo she weeps in full disbelief that at just a night long rain, the family would lose all property.

She says: "I sometimes feel like I am solely dreaming. That I am sharing a home with over seventy other people I do not know. That my home is no longer in existence. We have lost literally everything including our cattle which was the main source of income over sale of milk. How do we start again?"

At the Manja camp, which lies about a twenty- drive from Blantyre Central Business District, even aid workers are finding it hard to deal with continued deaths, treating injured people and fetching resources to feed the families. minute

But, the situation only gets better



President Chakwera comforting afflicted Malawians.

when President Lazarus Chakwera had on 14th March declared a State of Disaster in the Southern Region following the devastating effects of

Tropical Cyclone Freddy, effectively appealing for local and international support for the affected families.

The declaration covered Blantyre,

Chikwawa, Chiradzulu, Mulanje, Mwanza, Neno, Nsanje, Thyolo, Phalombe and Zomba districts.

At this time, media reports are already rife that a major referral hospital Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital in the city had its mortuary filled to the brim by people trapped in the mud.

The situation had coincided with closure of primary and secondary schools where Taulo and many others are being sheltered in relief terms.

The deadly Cyclone Freddy has broken records for the longest-lasting storm of its kind and has struck neighboring Mozambique and also Madagascar.

The country later marked a 14-day mourning period with the President and pledging \$1.5m in assistance, but lobbied for more aid, saying the country's capacity to provide relief is limited.

"Climate change is real, and what



Local community members embark on a rescue mission.

we are having to see is devastation,” the president said. “Thirteen months, three devastating cyclones. We are trying to do the best we can to pull ourselves by our bootstraps,” he said in one of his routine updates.

According to the Department of Disaster Management Affairs Commissioner Charles Kalemba, at the moment there are no chances of finding alive anyone who is missing.

“There are people still missing. They would not be alive by now considering that it’s now about so many days after they went missing, although we have the Malawi Defence Force search and rescue teams in the field,” he said.

The situation has forced government to trim the 2023-24 proposed national budget.

As a result, the proposed budget has been trimmed from K3.871 trillion to K3.788 trillion.

“This is because some of the micro-economic assumptions used in preparing the budget have shifted because of the cyclone,” Sosten Gwengwe, Finance Minister said.

“Otherwise, our projected deficit will just rocket and that might create inflation and evils that come with such kind of policies. The only bold thing we had to do is to be realistic



Malawi main road, the M1 is still in bad state

to see what is with us and on the ground [and] then see how best we can respond,” he said.

At the moment, the Southern African nation is expected to toil with hunger as farms have been washed away, when the cyclone came nearly harvest time more especially for maize, the country’s staple food.

According to an expert working

with Farmers Organization Limited, Eric Trinta, there is need for full throttle winter cropping to avert the looming hunger.

“We have to have winter cropping and resilient seeds for us to be able to deal with this devastating situation. The farmers have to be empowered with soft loans because we are talking about over five hundred thousand

farmers at subsistence level affected so far,” says Trinta.

Until now, the nation is still grappling to mitigate the effects and according to Chakwera, it is going to be a tall order given that the nation has already been struggling.

Last year, an expanded Affordable Inputs Programme (AIP) swallowed 85% of the agriculture budget, crowding out expenditure on irrigation and other much-needed farmer support services. The government was forced to scale back the number of farmers it aimed to reach from the planned 3.7 million to 2.5 million – partly as a result of rising global fertiliser prices.

But the overall management of the AIP has also been a challenge. The hurdles include the logistical headache of getting fertiliser and seeds to farmers on time to allow them to plant with the first rains; the tendency of poor farmers who need immediate cash to sell the subsidized inputs; and the broader problem of corruption within the system.

Now, the nation has crises ranging from health, social life, academic and infrastructure to manage and to quote the daughter of a devastated Tauro, ‘Life will not be the same again’.



Rescue missions searching for bodies.

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A Checkered Scorecard For AU In New Book

By Ajong Mbapndah L



The success of promoting and protecting Africa's interests on the global arena has been undermined by the AU's over-reliance on external partners, says Co-Editor Prof Wafula Okumu.

Launched in July 2002 with so much fanfare, it is a checkered balance sheet for the continental body according to a new book by a group of African intellectuals. Titled *African Union at 20: African Perspectives on Progress, Challenges and Prospects*, the book offers unfiltered insights into the organization from an African perspective.

“Over the past two decades, the AU has become the face of Africa and represented its interests. Nevertheless, the success of promoting and protecting Africa’s interests on the global arena has been undermined by the AU’s over-reliance on “external partners,” says Co-editor Prof Wafula Okumu.

Okumu, an Honorary Fellow at the Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh, Scotland and the Executive Director of The Borders Institute in Nairobi, Kenya, who has taught at various universities in the United States, Canada and Japan, and advised the United Nations on border issues, says the book is a conversation between Africa and the AU. In the book, the authors candidly reflect on the noble idea of transforming the AU into a

vibrant, pro-active, self-reliant, African-oriented organization, he says.

“Learning lessons from its experiences should be part of the agenda of the next decade. It would guarantee Africa’s path towards the fulfilment of Agenda 2063. If not, a damning story will be written when the AU is assessed in 2063,” Prof Wafuka Okumu says in an interview with PAV.

You are out with a new book titled African Union at 20: African Perspectives on Progress, Challenges and Prospects, may we know the motivation for and relevance of this publication at this point?

Prof Wafula Okumu: There are several motivations for releasing this book at this point. As you know, the 20th birthday is a gigantic leap into adulthood—it marks a time of coming of age, a point for you to live your own, to start your life. It is in one’s 20s when major decisions that will affect the rest of your life are made. Hence, we had the urge to tell the story of the African Union over the past 2 decades—what happened to the agenda encapsulated

in its Constitutive Act? What happened to radical norms such as the right to intervene in failing and failed states? Etc.

Second, the book is a conversation amongst us (Africans) and with the AU in which authors candidly reflect on the noble idea of transforming the OAU into a vibrant, pro-active, self-reliant, African-oriented organisation. It is an open conversation of and between Africans with the AU. We critically review its performance over the past two decades, point out its achievements, challenges and offer ideas/proposals on how the AU can perform better and serve the African people over the next 30 years.

Our third motivation is revealed on the cover of the book—to tell an African story of the AU; Africa of hopeful, confident, and placid people; to depict an AU as a “people organisation” rather than that of leaders and the glittering Chinese-build structure.

The fourth motivation was our passion to see the AU succeed by pointing out its strengths, weaknesses that need to be addressed, & opportunities that will contribute to the achievement of

Agenda 2063. We note that the past 20 years have generated enough lessons that the AU can draw from to reach its goals in the next 30 years. The book points out that the organisation has generated many valuable lessons that should be reference points instead of reinventing wheels whenever it is confronted by new challenges. Learning lessons from its experiences should be part of the agenda of the next decade. It would guarantee Africa’s path towards the fulfilment of Agenda 2063. If not, a damning story will be written when the AU is assessed in 2063.

The fifth motivation was our willingness to share the richness of ideas about the AU. Contributors to the book are former AU employees and Africans who have worked with the AU or studied the organisation over the past two decades. We noted there are big voids of African-generated knowledge and hope such a book will fill some of them.

Lastly, we wanted to find out why the AU, despite having many advantages, has underperformed in implementing its decisions & key instruments by analysing the importance of institutions and leadership in implementing the ambitious agenda adopted in 2002.

Looking at the global context, can you situate the importance of the African Union, and looking at its membership, can you say the body represents the hopes and aspirations of ordinary Africans?

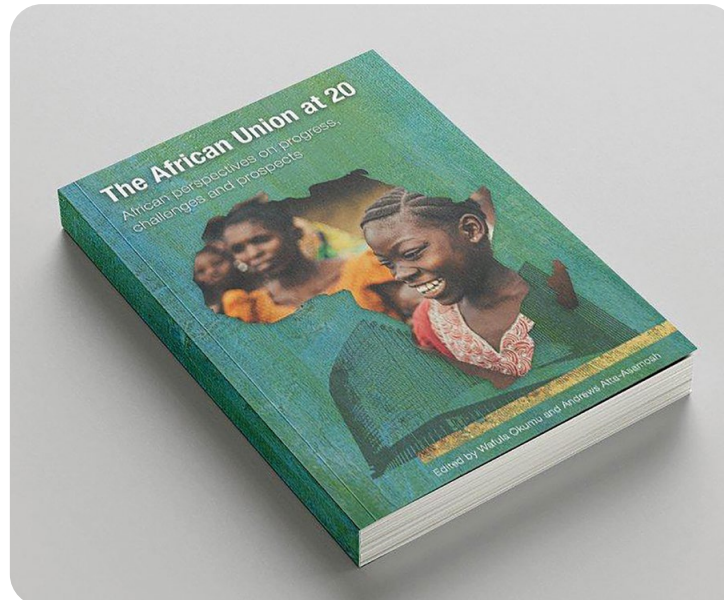
Prof Wafula Okumu: The AU was established as ‘a dynamic force’ representing Africa ‘in the global arena.’ It was to be a platform for ‘encouraging international cooperation,’ and an instrument to ‘develop ... common policies on trade, defence and foreign relations’ to be used to defend the continent and strengthen ‘its negotiating positions.’ The AU has not only forged working relations with other international organisations, but it also has established permanent missions in Beijing, Brussels, New York and Washington, DC, to pursue these goals. Over the past two decades, the

AU has become the face of Africa and represented its interests. Nevertheless, the success of promoting and protecting Africa's interests on the global arena has been undermined by the AU's over-reliance on "external partners." These partners have taken advantage of AU's high appetite for donor funds to manipulate, coerce and exploit its member states, Commission, and institutions to serve foreign interests rather than the African people. Some of these external partners have hijacked initiatives such as the African peace and security architecture (APSA), "silencing the guns in Africa" and the "border programme" to implement their "solutions" to "African problems." The AU Border Programme that was established in 2007 to ensure borders do not cause disputes between African countries has in the past 10 years been taken over by a foreign country that claims to be implementing it on behalf of the AU.

The AU was launched with so much fanfare, from your perspective, what accounts for that fact that its twentieth anniversary went largely unnoticed?

Prof Wafula Okumu: Indeed, the razzmatazz that marked the launch of the AU symbolized the enlivening moment—the African renaissance had arrived! The backdrop of this moment was the debilitating underdevelopment on the Continent caused mainly by bad governance and violent conflicts that the Organisation of African Unity had failed to address. Under the OAU, Africa had gained a dubious distinction as a continent ruled by strong 'big men' who flagrantly abused the rights of their subjects under the guise of sovereignty and the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of independent states. The OAU was generally considered to have underperformed in promoting 'the unity and solidarity of the African States' and coordinating 'efforts to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa,' as expressed in Article 2 of its Charter.

The new organisation was celebrated as a momentous transformation of its predecessor and for bringing about



Titled African Union at 20- African Perspectives on Progress, Challenges and Prospects, the book offers unfiltered insights into the organization from an African perspective

doctrinal and radical paradigm shifts. Among the many distinguishing features of the AU were that it was to involve citizens in its activities, intervene in states that had failed in the responsibility of protecting their citizens, and the banning of unconstitutional changes of governments. The AU offered hope that it was the elixir of addressing Africa's development challenges. Unfortunately, the AU 20th anniversary passed unnoticed with no acknowledgement of its key achievements. It is not clear why the AU top organs never issued any statement, planted a tree, or erected a monument to commemorate this milestone. Only the Chairperson of the AU Commission can explain why this moment was insignificant and undeserving an acknowledgement.

From your findings, may we know where you see progress for the AU, what achievements have been recorded by the continental body?

Prof Wafula Okumu: Most of key achievements of the AU were recorded in the first 10 years. During this period, African leaders adopted radical measures to protect civilians from weakening and collapsing states, to consolidate democracy, to enhance good governance, to promote peace, to maintain security and to

achieve the dreams that were deferred during the OAU years. Progress was also made in operationalising key institutions such as the Peace and Security Council, adoption of key policies and legal instruments, and playing active roles in keeping peace in war-torn countries such as Burundi and Somalia. Also, the AU admirably midwifed the birth of South Sudan, and timeously intervened to stem the spiralling 2008 post-election violence in Kenya. The AU also attempted to resolve conflicts in the CAR, Comoros, Libya, Mali, and Madagascar. Most recently, the AU astutely facilitated the peaceful resolution of the Tigrayan-Ethiopian federal government crisis, and commendably handled the Ebola epidemic and COVID-19 pandemic. It is also notable that since the formation of the AU, more countries have embraced multi-party-political systems, and politics of the bullet which marked the OAU era has been replaced by politics of the ballot with almost all AU member states holding regular multiparty elections.

In terms of failures and challenges, can you highlight some of the gaping or most consequential ones?

Prof Wafula Okumu: We note from the onset that the AU is not guided by Pan-Africanist ideology that birthed it.

Pan-Africanism has been undermined by sovereignty; leading the AU to wobble without an ideology to drive its integration agenda. Pan-Africanism is viewed as a threat to national sovereignty by elites who control nation-states that guarantees them privileges a supranational entity does not provide. So long as these selfish elites control AU member states, the organisation will always be ineffective in implementing a Pan-Africanist agenda.

Since its formation, the AU has made too many decisions and commitments; most of them unmet, deferred or abandoned. The speed with which the AU makes decisions, resolutions, communiqués, and other forms of communication has contributed to their inconsistencies and obvious inapplicability among many of the AU's documents. Yet, the AU lacks the 'powers to enforce its decisions and the legislation adopted by its institutions.' In 1986, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere lamented that it had become 'a regular practice for African states to dishonour their obligations to African institutions or other African states.' Professor Tiyanjana Maluwa, who served as the legal counsel when the AU was being formed, points out in his chapter that "the growth of AU law requires an organisation endowed with supranational powers to make legally binding decisions that are prerequisites for advancing the economic integration project."

We have not only witnessed reversal of key norms but also of the existence of a wide gap between norm-setting and norm-implementation as AU Member States generally lack the political commitment to effectively implement norms and instruments that inculcate a culture of democratic governance, constitutionalism, rule of law and human rights. It is also notable that although the Constitutive Act is the grand norm of the AU system, it is sparingly referred to or invoked in formulation of initiatives, as well as in decision-making and policy implementation processes.

AU's frosty relations with the International Criminal Court and its action to give African leaders immunity from prosecution of international

crimes has undermined achievements made to prevent and end a culture of impunity in Africa. Additionally, its tolerance of “good coups” and the failure of member states to ratify key human rights instruments and their lukewarm support of existing human rights bodies have blotted out the AU’s good intentions to promote a culture of human rights, rule of law and constitutionalism. Since 2012, we have witnessed the AU endorse “good coups” in Egypt, Guinea, Mali, Sudan, and Zimbabwe.

Despite AU adopting elaborate legal frameworks to promote good governance, the continent has over the past decade been experiencing “democratic haemorrhage,” according to Dr Khabele Matlosa, former AU director of political affairs department and contributor to the book. This haemorrhage has been described variously in terms such as democratic erosion, democratic recession, democratic backsliding, democratic breakdown, democratic façade, democratic reversal, democratic slowdown, etc. The democratic haemorrhage has manifested itself in ways such as manipulations of electoral processes, violence accompanying elections, weakening of democratic institutions to serve interests of the political class, declining electoral integrity, declining public trust in governance institutions, declining voter turnout, unconstitutional changes of government despite the AU’s zero tolerance against this phenomenon, constitutional amendments to tamper with or remove term limits, etc.

While the AU has made major achievements of including women and youth in the AU governance, its member states have yet to establish accountability mechanisms to ensure that women and youth empowerment strategies are implemented. However, in member-states, unemployed youth have been linked to urban violence, and the youth bulge has contributed to the widening gap between the ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’.

The AU is not yet the organisation of the African people. The African population is generally not knowledgeable and supportive of the



Learning lessons from its experiences should be part of the agenda of the next decade. If not, a damning story will be written when the AU is assessed in 2063, says Prof Wafula Okumu

AU agenda. Hence the lack of African people’s commitment and participation in its implementation. The statist nature of the AU has locked out the people and turned it into a protector of state interests rather than those of the continent and its people. It is noteworthy that ECOSOCC, the people’s body, was designed to serve as ‘an advisory organ composed of different social and professional groups,’ and its ‘functions, powers, composition and organization’ were to ‘be determined by the (AU) Assembly’ of Heads of State and Government.

Institutionally, the AU is headed by maladroitness leadership and staffed by dispirited and unmotivated employees. In terms of capacities of AU institutions, they are still weak and poorly managed and have, therefore, been unable to effectively implement AU agendas, including the articulation of African interests in the global arena. Reports by panels headed by Adebayo Adedeji, former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo and Rwandan President Paul Kagame as well as a commissioned report by PricewaterhouseCoopers have all pointed out to various dimensions of prevailing serious institutional defaults and governance challenges the AU faces. This begs the question: can an organisation that is poorly governed and badly managed promote good governance in a continent yearning for it?

Overall, the AU lacks strong, strategic, and visionary leadership like that of

Muammar Gaddafi, Thabo Mbeki and Olusegun Obasanjo that drove the efforts to establish the AU. Currently, Africa lack leaders who are committed to a Pan-African agenda. Most are more absorbed in their domestic affairs and have little time for continental matters. They only show interest in the latter if they will benefit them.

What assessment was your team able to make on security and conflict resolution, what needs to be done for Africa take ownership of its own security needs?

Prof Wafula Okumu: When the AU was formed, its founders realised that it needed an effective mechanism to address Africa’s conflicts and insecurity, particularly of the complex nature such as the Rwandan genocide. The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) was a creative arrangement for preventing, managing, and resolving conflicts and maintaining security in Africa. It was conceived with key institutions functioning under specific conditions, glued by norms and principles, and undergirded by a slew of legal instruments. However, APSA mechanisms have not been fully implemented, delaying interventions to mitigate and resolve conflicts. Conflict prevention mechanisms such as the Continental Early Warning System and the Panel of the Wise and conflict management instruments such as the African Standby Force lack capacity to effectively undertake their mandates.

Despite this, AU member states have ensured that they do not act swiftly and robustly by invoking their sovereign right to manage their internal affairs without external interference.

Over the years, we have witnessed replacement of institutionalised mechanisms by ad hoc arrangements that are now the norm and AU’s preferred conflict management and resolution method, although they were intended to be stopgaps. The AU has relied on “high-level panels” to undertake missions to facilitate peace in Darfur, and between Sudan and South Sudan, investigate human rights violations in South Sudan and assess APSA institutions. These panels intervene

in conflicts instead of Panel of the Wise, while peacekeeping arrangements such as AMISOM, RCI-LRA and the Multinational Joint Task Force operation against Boko Haram and the G5 Sahel Joint Force are preferred to the African Standby Force regional brigades. Some ad hoc arrangements, set up to operate differently outside APSA mechanisms to enhance donor interests, have severely undermined ‘African solutions to African problems.’ Ad hoc arrangements have been tailor-made to meet sponsors’ interests or their understanding of the African problem. For instance, the EU proclaimed in 2004 that it would support the AU through the African Peace Facility (APF) to implement African solutions to African problems with APSA. However, by 2021, it had replaced APF with the European Peace Facility, which bypasses APSA by directly supporting ad hoc arrangements. By stripping it of its central role in addressing African peace and security challenges, the EU has pulled the rug from under the APSA. We strongly recommend that APSA must be fully implemented through subscription to its core principles of partnership, coordination and cooperation, consultations, African ownership, comparative advantage, subsidiarity, complementarity, lessons learnt and best practices.

Finally, we strongly recommend that for the AU to effectively assume its primary responsibility of promoting



A key finding in the book is that Since its formation, the AU has made too many decisions and commitments; most of them unmet, deferred or abandoned.

peace and security on the African continent, its member states and the African people must assume the primary responsibility for funding its peace and security agenda.

How are foreign interests helping or stalling the AU agenda?

Prof Wafula Okumu: The support of external partners has been critical over the years to the point that without it, the AU would not have delivered its agenda or built most of its institutions. The high appetite for donor support of its projects and programmes, has seen the AU forge international partnerships with the UN, the European Union, the League of Arab States, South America, Germany, the US, China, Japan, Russia, France, India, Turkey, and Korea. The nature and objectives of these international partnerships to a large extent reflect the wishes of the incumbent chairperson of the AUC at the time entered. But the agreements are not public and most of them were not subjected to due diligence to protect Africa's interests. Since most of these agreements provide for financial exchanges, the AU pays little to no attention to the fine prints that compromise the independence of the organisation and betray its pan-African aspirations and status. Most of these deals have conditions that strip the AU of its control and

ownership of projects or initiatives being funded by external partners. For instance, the AU has largely handed over the operationalisation of its peace and security architecture. Most disheartening was the handover of a programme established to address African border issues to a European country.

How was the book received at the AU and what feedback have you received from the public so far?

Prof Wafula Okumu: So far, we have not solicited any feedback from the AU but hope to get its views when we will engage with various officials and organs on major findings and recommendations in the book. We sincerely look forward to engaging with the AU since this book is an open conversation of and between Africans with the AU. The feedback from the public has been positive so far. We hope to receive more feedback as the book is freely available online. As you know, most books on Africa published by major publishing companies are exorbitantly priced. By making this book easily accessible to the public, African people, whom the book is written on their behalf, can now find out why the AU has not worked for them as expected, and how to make it work better for them in the future.

What other broad policy recommendations are there to make the AU more efficient?

Prof Wafula Okumu: There are many recommendations that can be summarised:

The AU should truly embrace Pan-Africanism as AU's & Africa's ideology. Pan-Africanism will reify the AU and Africa's common position and action, guide the AU to formulate, adopt an 'African mind-set' or a truly African-outlook, and characteristic African ideas that distinguishes us from the rest of the world. In this regard, the AU must reclaim its primacy in promoting African integration and unity by subscribing to the pan-Africanist value of self-reliance and protection of African interests by sustainably financing its institutions and activities.

For the AU to achieve its agendas of integrating, unifying, and developing Africa, it must be given supranational powers. The AU needs supranational powers to enable it to make legally binding decisions applicable to member states so that it does not end up as another "talking shop."

Africa's ability to meet its development, integration, constitutionalism, rule of law and human rights targets will largely be determined by the AU's success in addressing the continent's instability, insecurity, and conflicts.

To curb its penchant for duplicating decisions, activities, and institutions, which increases costs astronomically and extends time for meeting commitments, the AU must be disciplined in its approach to policy and programme implementation, and financial spending.

To be an effective voice of Africa on the global arena, the AU must clearly articulate common African positions and skilfully navigate international relations. The shepherding of African leaders to foreign capitals to be paraded in "African summits" is disgraceful and demeaning.

The AU should carefully choose and judiciously manage both African and external partnerships. Africa's partnerships should be based on quality rather than quantity. Accordingly, the AU should significantly reduce reliance on external partners for funding their preferred programmes and projects at the expense its agendas and commitments to the African people. Overreliance on external partners for funding has led to gaps in priority and ownership of Africa's agendas. The high level of donor dependency has weakened African ownership in the implementation of AU agendas and led to non-African strategy drift.

AU must reclaim ownership of ideas, projects and institutions that have been undermined or made moribund by foreign interests. A special focus should be in cases where foreign actors claim to support "African solutions to African problems" but enact processes that undercut the AU's ability to act. Some foreign role-players have taken advantage of AU weaknesses and challenges to promote other processes, which has ultimately prevented full implementation of a Pan-Africanist agenda.

The AU must reclaim the identification and understanding of African solutions and the generation and implementation of solutions. It must rely on African paradigms to understand African realities and challenges. It must work with African research institutions and experts, and fund solutions generated using African knowledge. Choosing the proper paradigm and producing the necessary knowledge is key to solving

most of African problems. Finding the appropriate knowledge for the right initiatives at the right time is the responsibility of the AU and its member states.

Institutional design and functionality, as noted by AU founders, is critical to its success in implementing its agendas. Consequently, the AU must enhance its institutional capacities, administrative and operational abilities, effectively manage its organs and mechanisms and provide sufficient finance for its

initiatives. Additionally, the AU must implement all audit reports relating to its governance, and its institutions must be professionally run.

For the AU to make progress in achieving Agenda 2063, it must hold more consultation and allow involvement of the African people, through the civil society organisations, in its implementation. This will require better sharing of information and making the AU more accessible and accountable to the people rather than

only to the Africa heads of state and government.

The AU must be ably led. This requires strategic and visionary leadership to mobilise human, financial, scientific, and social resources needed to implement its agendas. The continent is in dire need of a new generation of more assertive Pan-Africanist leaders to lead the AU if it is to succeed in integrating, unifying, and developing the African continent.

For those interested in the book, where can they procure copies from?

Prof Wafula Okumu: The book can be downloaded from the Institute for Security Studies website: <https://issafrica.org/research/books-and-other-publications/the-african-union-at-20-african-perspectives-on-progress-challenges-and-prospects>

Nuclear Power: A Clean, Green, Reliable Strategy for Africa -A Just Transition With An Energy Mix

By Cheikh Niane and NJ Ayuk*



Globally, 800 million people lack electricity – and 80% of them live in Africa. With the continent's population expected to nearly double by 2050, our energy needs are only growing. Generating reliable electricity for 2.5 billion souls – in a safe, green, and sustainable manner – will prove no small feat.

Fortunately, one solution does meet those competing criteria: nuclear energy. No single power source is a panacea, but nuclear answers many of Africa's energy needs. It's a safe, reliable, long-term power source that

is arguably more eco-friendly than the most advanced forms of wind and solar energy. Better yet, small modular reactors (SMRs) are addressing the issue of nuclear's large startup costs. SMRs' largest components can be built in-factory and shipped to site, which makes them significantly more affordable and scalable for developing nations. I'm encouraged to see Ghana pursuing this technology, and South Africa and Egypt operating and building traditional plants. I can only hope that other nations follow suit – nuclear remains a strong weapon

against energy poverty.

Safe

Pop culture has created myths about the dangers of nuclear energy. Even taking the Chernobyl, Russia explosion and Fukushima, Japan evacuations into account, nuclear remains ranked as the world's second safest energy source. At .03 deaths (per terawatt hour (the average power flow over 1012 hours), it's nearly as safe as solar (.02 deaths per terawatt hour). Coal, on the other hand, sees 24 deaths per terawatt hour.

Tellingly, the U.S. and France – the world's largest producers of nuclear energy – have never seen a serious reactor accident. In short, responsible nations should ignore unscientific fearmongering and continue to work with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which helps nations develop safe and compliant nuclear programs.

Reliable

Nuclear easily holds the crown in terms of reliability – of all energy sources it has the highest capacity

factor, which means that nuclear plants produce at maximum capacity 92% of the time. Contrast this with wind and solar, which operate at full capacity 35% and 25% of the time, respectively. Unlike nuclear fission, these renewables produce at the mercy of weather. Nuclear plants also require less frequent maintenance, so they operate for longer and more consistent stretches.

This matters because we need reliable tools to combat energy poverty. We can't ask the 900 million Africans who use dirty or hazardous cooking fuel to place their sole trust in wind or solar - a grid that operates 25-35% of the time does not constitute a significant step forward. Renewables do have a place in Africa's future - but our current strategy needs to incorporate more tried and true methods.

Green

Last July, the European Union began to acknowledge nuclear power as a sustainable energy source. Cynics attribute this new label solely to rising oil prices, but nuclear's green benefits have always been clear: It's a zero emission, long term, plentiful source that demands little land and generates negligible amounts of waste (The nuclear waste created by one American's electricity use over 70 years would fit into a soda can.) And despite the enthusiasm for renewables like solar and wind, nuclear power outstrips both in sustainability.

By its very nature, nuclear power is eco-friendly: Reactors create energy by fission (the splitting of

atoms) - so they emit virtually no greenhouse gasses or pollutants. The International Energy Agency estimates that nuclear energy enables the globe to avoid 1.5 gigatonnes of emissions each year (the equivalent of what 200 million cars emit annually).

Nuclear facilities also use very little land. A 1,000-megawatt nuclear facility requires one square mile to operate - to generate the same amount of power, a solar photovoltaic plant would require 75 miles, and a wind farm 360 miles. In terms of land footprint, nuclear is literally over a hundred times more efficient than these much-touted renewables.

Nuclear power also creates minimal byproducts, which Africa is well suited to manage. Literally all of the nuclear waste generated by the U.S. in five decades could fit into a football field 10 yards deep. Future waste could be buried deep in the ground - a storage method suited to nations that already contain deep mining facilities, including South Africa.

It's also worth noting that nuclear equipment simply lasts longer than that of renewables. A single reactor can operate for upwards of 70 years, partly because old components can be maintained and replaced. Contrast this with solar panels, which are designed to last 30 years at most. The used panels - and their toxic components like cadmium, arsenic, and chromium - must then be disposed of, creating a never-ending waste management problem.

Improved Technology

Of course, nuclear power has

always suffered from a significant disadvantage: Its installation is expensive and requires considerable upfront investment. Many nations that could afford nuclear energy remain understandably wary of the 10 to 15 years required for constructing a traditional plant.

However, new technology is already cutting that time in half - SMRs can be built in under five years, offering game-changing opportunities for Africa's nuclear development. This significantly reduces startup costs, enables more flexible siting, and allows for incremental growth - nations can gradually add multiple SMRs as they expand their grid. These qualities all make nuclear much more accessible for nations with smaller budgets and scattered populations - and a few, including Ghana, have already taken notice.

Moving Forward

Ghana, which operates a research reactor and follows the IAEA "milestone approach" for adopting nuclear power, has ambitions to become a leader in SMR deployment. Its commitment has already attracted international investment - Japan and the U.S. are contributing feasibility studies, with plans to provide technical and regulatory assistance. The joint endeavor is partly enabled by the American program FIRST, which supports nuclear as a method of fighting climate change. It's a reminder that the international community increasingly embraces nuclear as green - nations should open their eyes to these partnership

opportunities.

It's also worth noting the nations pursuing more conventional plants -- South Africa currently operates a commercial nuclear plant, and Egypt has already begun construction on one with Rosatom, a Russian company that also installs SMRs.

Several other African states have strong potential to construct plants by 2030. Algeria, Morocco, and Nigeria also operate research reactors and have expressed interest in commissioning plants. Kenya and Sudan have worked with the IAEA and supplier countries such as Russia and China.

Countries like Ethiopia, Kenya, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia are currently working with IAEA who is supporting them as Embarking Countries in Establishing National Infrastructure for Research Reactors program and this is progressing well considering the milestones approach of the IAEA.

We encourage these states to continue the good work, and for others to accelerate their talks with the IAEA. Even a single SMR can power an entire city for decades, and scaling them will only grow easier. Nuclear remains a safe, clean, and reliable long-term investment - and our strongest weapon against our rising population's demand for energy.

* Cheikh Niane, Permanent Secretary for Energy, Secretary general of Ministry of Petroleum and Energies, Senegal and NJ Ayuk, Executive Chairman, African Energy Chamber.

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Time To Break The Deadlock On Totalenergies' Offshore Gas Deal

By NJ Ayuk*

TotalEnergies has been trying to negotiate a deal that would involve pumping production from Luiperd through a 109-kilometer, 18-inch pipeline to the FA platform.

South Africa is a regional heavyweight. Its economy is one of the largest on the African continent — as well as the most diversified, the most industrialized, and the most technologically advanced. It has more extensive road and rail networks than any other African state, a feature that puts it in a good position for future growth.

But South Africa also has a very big problem. Since 2007, the national power provider Eskom has not been able to produce enough electricity to cover domestic demand — and the ever-widening gaps between supply and demand have given rise to a steady deterioration in power supplies and citizens' quality of life. They've made blackouts commonplace, and they led President Cyril Ramaphosa to take the unprecedented step of declaring a "national disaster" in February.

I'd like to say that South Africa has reason to look forward to relief within the next few years — that the country has laid a foundation for using its own natural resources to resolve its energy shortages and can expect conditions to improve over time. Unfortunately, it would be premature to make such a statement.

Here are some of the reasons why.

Coal, Carbon, and Gas

As detailed in "The State of South African Energy," a new report prepared jointly by the African Energy Chamber, the country's electricity shortages stem in large part from problems with Eskom's coal-fueled thermal power plants (TPPs). These stations have long served as the backbone of South Africa's power sector, but Eskom has failed to manage, maintain, and expand

them adequately. Unfortunately, the results of its failure are glaringly evident in the form of load-shedding and increased reliance on diesel generators.

In the meantime, there's another complication at hand, in that South Africa's government has pledged to reduce the power sector's carbon emissions intensity. That pledge hampers the country's ability to compensate for Eskom's previous failures by building more coal-burning TPPs or expanding existing facilities (steps the chamber believes are necessary to resolve the crisis). That means the country must find lower-carbon energy options.

One obvious lower-carbon energy source is a pair of massive natural gas fields that TotalEnergies has found offshore in Block 11B/12B, a license area in the Outeniqua basin. According to documents the French major has submitted to South African authorities in the hope of securing environmental authorization for development, the two fields may hold as much as 4.5 trillion cubic feet (127.4 billion cubic meters) of gas in recoverable resources. Luiperd, the larger of the two sites, appears to contain around 3 tcf (85 bcm) of

gas, while Brulpadda field appears to contain another 1.5 tcf (42.4 bcm).

TotalEnergies has been trying to negotiate a deal that would involve pumping production from Luiperd through a 109-kilometer, 18-inch pipeline to the FA platform, an existing offshore facility at state-controlled PetroSA's Block 9. At the FA platform, the gas could then be transferred to existing infrastructure for delivery to customers on South Africa's southern coast. Likely buyers would include PetroSA, which needs feedstock for its idle Mossel Bay gas-to-liquids (GTL) plant, and Eskom, which needs fuel for gas-burning TPPs.

Theoretically speaking, this deal makes a tremendous amount of sense for South Africa. The country needs a relatively low-carbon way to generate more electricity, and it just so happens to have a lot of gas available in fields off its southern coast. Shouldn't it be rushing to develop these fields?

Bad Timing and Limited Patience

South Africa's energy challenges will be front and center at African Energy Week scheduled to take place on 16-20 October in Cape Town.

Practically speaking, though, South Africa hasn't been in a rush at all. Instead, it has let the process play out for too long.

Last year, TotalEnergies was upbeat, saying it was on track to wrap up a gas sales agreement (GSA) for Block 11B/12B in September 2022 — and that if it could do so, it would be in a position to start extracting gas from Luiperd in 2027. Since then, though, negotiations on the GSA have stalled out, largely because the state-owned companies involved in the process (PetroSA and Eskom) have been dragging their feet over questions related to pricing and financing.

In the meantime, load-shedding has only grown worse and worse, putting the country's economic well-being and sparking civil unrest.

What's more, TotalEnergies has grown exasperated with the delays. As described in our report, it informed South African authorities in January 2023 that it was considering swapping the original plan to supply the domestic market for an alternative that would see future production exported via a floating liquefied natural gas (FLNG) vessel with a capacity of 3.4 million tons per year (tpy).



aecweek.com

It's easy to see how such an arrangement might benefit the French major and its partner, QatarEnergy. It would give the two companies a way to produce and deliver more LNG to markets in Europe and other regions where demand is high. However, the idea of fast-tracking a project in order to facilitate the export of gas from a country that's running short of energy is so politically dicey that South Africa's government is unlikely to approve it, which means that there may be even more delays ahead.

Ramaphosa's government can avoid that outcome, though, by taking the steps necessary to authorize TotalEnergies' original plan — that

is, the one that aims to supply the domestic market — and make the FLNG option less attractive. This will involve taking practical steps such as providing guarantees for Eskom and PetroSA as they sign the GSA, since neither state-controlled company is in a solid financial position. But it will also involve summoning the political

will to break the deadlock and stop simply letting matters get worse.

*NJ Ayuk is the Executive Chairman of the African Energy Chamber and Author of A Just Transition: Making Energy Poverty History with an Energy Mix

South Africa: Walking A Tight Rope On Putin And BRICS Summit

By Prince Kurupati

South Africa has been left in a catch-22 situation following the issuing of an international arrest warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin. The International Criminal Court (ICC) on March 18 issued an international arrest warrant for Putin citing "the unlawful deportation and transfer of Ukrainian children from occupied areas of Ukraine to the Russian Federation, contrary to article 8(2)(a) (vii) and Article 8(2)(b)(viii) of the Rome Statute".

South Africa among 117 other global countries that are signatories to the Rome Statute which gave birth to the ICC are expected by the court to effect an international arrest for Putin as soon as he lands within their jurisdiction. However, for South Africa, things are much more complicated as it has cordial relations with Russia.

Even more worrisome for South Africa is that from August 22 to 24, South Africa is going to host the BRICS Summit in Durban. BRICS is an economic grouping comprising of Brazil, Russia, India and China. South Africa before the issuing of the warrant of arrest had already invited the Russian president to attend the Summit. With the current standoff between Russia and the West as well as western aligned nations, South Africa will most likely be the first country he visits after the ICC's decision hence



President Ramaphosa and Russia's President Putin attend the Russia-Africa Summit in Sochi, Russia, on Oct. 24, 2019. Sergei Chirikov, AFP.

the ball will be in South Africa's hands to decide upon acting in the interests of the ICC international arrest warrant or not.

On the surface, the decision to be taken by South Africa will no doubt have a significant bearing on its international image. Heeding ICC's decision to arrest Putin during the BRICS Summit will go a long way in strengthening the country's relationship with the Western nations. Ominously though for South Africa are the sentiments echoed by former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev who warned that any attempt to arrest Putin over the ICC arrest warrant would be considered by Moscow to be "a declaration of war". Inversely, allowing Putin to step foot in South Africa and not arresting him will

solidify the country's relationship with Russia but significantly tainting its relationship with the West.

To circumvent any possible inconveniences that may be brought about by action or inaction in acting in favour of the ICC international arrest warrant, South Africa saw it best to seek advice on the best way forward for handling the delicate situation. South Africa's ruling party ANC through its national spokesperson Mahlengi Bhengu-Motsiri said that consultations have already begun internally in discussing how the country will act. «The ANC has taken note of the ICC's decision on Russian President Vladimir Putin and is engaging its employees in government to gain an in-depth understanding of the implications of this route taken

by the court," said Bhengu-Motsiri.

South Africa's foreign minister Naledi Pandor also echoed the same sentiments stating that «SA will have to look at existing provisions of our legislation. We also will have to have a discussion as cabinet, as well as with our colleagues in Russia, and really determine the way forward.»

SA's Presidency department through the president's spokesperson Vincent Magwenya said «With respect to the ICC we note the report on the warrant of arrest that the ICC has issued against President Putin. It remains

South Africa's commitment and a very strong desire that the conflict in Ukraine is resolved peacefully through negotiations. We as a government are cognizant of our legal obligation. However, between now and the summit we will remain engaged with relevant stakeholders with respect to the summit and other issues related.»

A few years back, South Africa faced a similar situation following the issuing of an international arrest warrant for former Sudan President Omar Al-Bashir by the ICC. The arrest warrant was issued just before the Sudanese president was set to attend the AU Summit which was being held in South Africa. Acting against the dictates from ICC, South Africa did not arrest Al-Bashir when he set foot in the country. Rather, it argued that

al-Bashir was coming to attend the AU Summit and not visiting the country and as such, it did not have the power to decide who attends the Summit or not. South Africa's decision was contested by a human rights organization in the courts of law but by the time the ruling was passed, Al-Bashir had already left the Summit. The court decided that South Africa had the responsibility of arresting Bashir owing to her signatory

status to the Rome Statute. In an appeal, the South African government lost and the ruling was maintained. Owing to this, South Africa cannot repeat what it did the last time around during the Bashir incident but has to decide if it's to arrest or not arrest Putin. Acting in any other way, the South African government will violate the ruling passed by its own court.

Meanwhile, one of the biggest and

most vibrant opposition parties in South Africa EFF led by outspoken Julius Malema said Putin is «welcome» in South Africa. "If need be, we will go and fetch him from the airport to his meeting, he will address, and finish all his meetings, we will take him back to the airport. We are not going to be told by these hypocrites of the ICC who know the real violators of human rights, who know the murders of this

world," Malema said.

Malema went further stating "Former British prime minister Tony Blair admitted that they made a horrible mistake by killing Saddam Hussein, but they have not been charged to date. [Former US president] George W Bush is still there and has not been charged till today. Barack Obama killed Muammar Gaddafi and nothing has happened." —

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Mozambique: Rise Of Terror Regime On Civil Society

A young man was kidnapped and severely tortured by police officers in Nampula, Mozambique, following his role in organising a peaceful march in honour of rapper Azagaia. The situation showed one more time that Frelimo members are the only citizens with the right to demonstrate in Mozambique. The municipal authorities and the police have always allied themselves to repress marches organised by civil society, but are committed to the security of the Frelimo Party demonstrators.

By Jorge Joaquim

In the last five years, several reports from international organisations have assessed Mozambique as an authoritarian State, with a civic space that has gone from “obstructed” to “repressive”, the worst classification one can have. In fact, as Mozambican NGO CDD notes, this assessment accurately reflects the hostile attitude of Filipe Nyusi’s government towards the freedoms and rights of citizens enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique.

Gamito dos Santos Carlos is one of the recent victims. He was abducted at around 1pm on 18 March, a few hours after police had disrupted the march in honour of “rapper of the people” Azagaia by firing tear gas at the participants.

As in other cities around Mozambique, including Maputo, Beira and Xai-Xai, the municipal authorities had agreed to the march taking place, and the police were informed in good time, but did not make a statement until Saturday morning, when they moved heavily armed contingents to the locations



designated for the marchers to gather.

Hundreds of people were affected by tear gas fired by the police where marches were planned to take place, social activist Cidia Chissungu, the main organiser of the marches. Dozens of people were injured

while fleeing, and others because of beatings by police officers, she added.

There were also dozens of people detained, such as Gamito dos Santos, who wrote about his ordeal on Facebook. He said he was picked up at a restaurant in Nampula city by

the special forces group who took him to the provincial police district command in Nampula. From there, he was blindfolded and transported to another, unknown location, where he was stripped of all his clothes and tortured for two hours.

«They hosed hot water at me, and delivered blows against my entire body, including kicks with boots on my head and genitals,» he said. «All this happened while I was blindfolded and hands tied,» he explained, saying that the officers made clear that he was being beaten for organising and mobilising people for the march.

At 3pm he was returned to the police command, where he was detained until close to 8pm with no right to communication and denied water to drink. He was then transferred to a local police station, from where he would be released at 11am on Sunday, without his belongings, including a phone, which he only recovered on Tuesday.

Police violence also occurred in



Maputo, where tear gas canisters shot by police severely injured two young men in the eyes, causing both of them to permanently lose sight in one eye.

Police Claim 'Indications Of A Violent March'

The police spokesman in Nampula denied that Gamito had been tortured, saying that force was only used when he was resisting arrest. Zacarias Nacute said Gamito was detained because he was a threat to public order.

Gamito, however, completely dismisses the police version.

«None of what the police said is the truth,» Gamito said. «I have torture marks on my body that prove what I say.»

Deputy police commander general, Fernando Tsucana, said in Maputo that although the marches had municipal permits, the police found that there were strong indications that the peaceful demonstrations would turn violent, and decided to cancel them.

However, he said, demonstrators disobeyed the police authorities, uttering insults, throwing blunt objects, physically confronting police officers and in some cases even attempting to seize firearms. He also alleged that some participants were under the influence of alcohol and

drugs.

However, none of the many videos and images circulating on social media give any credence to Tsucana's claims. Journalists and social activists are unanimous in stating that firing tear gas was the police's initiative, in order to disperse the demonstrators.

Another reason why the police prevented the march, according to Tsucana, was the presence of political actors such as Venâncio Mondlane of the MDM; Manuel de Araújo of Renamo; Quitéria Guirengane of Nova Democracia, João Massango of the Ecologist party, and others.

However, as Guirengane said, there is no command in the constitution of the republic of Mozambique which prohibits political agents from taking part in peaceful marches.

Contrary to the Constitution of the Republic and other laws, the government of Filipe Nyusi simply banned the right to demonstrate in Mozambique. CDD notes that since Filipe Nyusi came to power there has not been a single peaceful demonstration which has not been aborted by the police authorities and the organisers thrown into prison.



Excessive Use Of Police Force

The 36 people who were arrested on Saturday were all victims of arbitrary arrests, according to the Mozambican Bar Association, which says that police repression not only violates the fundamental rights of citizens, but also puts democracy at stake.

Luis Bitone of the National Human Rights Commission CNDH told newspaper O País that the police acted with excessive use of force.

Several civil society organisations, individuals, political parties and other actors also criticised the way the police acted — including Frelimo member Samora Machel Júnior, also known as Samito, son of Mozambique's first President, Samora Machel. He wrote on Facebook that the acts of unjustifiable violence against defenceless citizens, was «a betrayal of the fundamental values and principles» of Frelimo.

His sister Josina Machel reacted to Saturday's violence saying that the level of oppression and terror of civil

society in Mozambique is "reaching suffocating levels".

The organisers of the marches and the anti-corruption watchdog CIP are taking criminal and civil action against the Mozambican state through the attorney general's office.

While uncertainty remains about the accountability of the aggressors, Gamito said that, despite the torture, he will not give up fighting for a better Mozambique.

«I will not back down,» he said. «I will remain steadfast in the mission of activism.»

Mozambican youths were participating in authorized nationwide peaceful demonstrations in five provinces, including in Maputo, to remember the fallen artist, Azagaia. Azagaia, who inspired many with his music, sang about injustice, including mistreatment of people by the authorities and poverty and social injustice and urged people to hold their authorities to account. He died suddenly on 9 March 2023.



A stylized map of Africa is the central element, colored in a vibrant green. The map is decorated with various icons representing sustainable energy: three wind turbines are positioned at the top left, two solar panels are at the top right, and a black silhouette of a ship is on the left side. The title 'A JUST TRANSITION' is written in large, bold, white capital letters across the middle of the map. Below the title, the subtitle 'MAKING ENERGY POVERTY HISTORY WITH AN ENERGY MIX' is written in smaller, bold, white capital letters. At the bottom of the map, there is a black silhouette of a wind turbine. The entire graphic is set against a light beige background.

A JUST TRANSITION

MAKING ENERGY
POVERTY
HISTORY WITH
AN ENERGY
MIX

N J A Y U K

Protests Fever Engulfs Africa from the South to North

By Prince Kurupati

“No one can stop a revolution,” EFF leader Julius Malema said as he addressed his supporters popularly known as the red berets before the planned 20 March shutdown in South Africa. In urging his supporters to take to the streets, Malema said they need to be «militant and radical» but «peaceful» so that their concerns are heard by President Cyril Ramaphosa and his administration. Come 20 March, the day of the planned national shutdown, thousands of red berets from Cape Town to Musina thronged the streets calling for the removal of President Ramaphosa citing the deteriorating economic conditions, stratospheric unemployment and unending power shortages.

While Malema said that a revolution was inevitable owing to the massive challenges South Africa was experiencing on all fronts, his message was directed towards his EFF party supporters, and his call for nationwide protests did resonate with the calls by various other government critics from several other African countries. On the same day that the EFF took to the streets in South Africa, citizens in Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal and Tunisia also took to the streets in their respective countries.

To Malema and his party, the



EFF supporters with placards castigating President Ramaphosa for multiple woes of South Africa. Photo courtesy.

national shutdown was a resounding success on the political front as well as on the economic front. On the former front, the EFF states that the executive did get the message that the nation is not happy with the economic freefall the country is undertaking. Moreover, the high levels of unemployment and unending power challenges which seem to be worsening by the day regardless of the state of disaster declared by President Ramaphosa a month ago have left the

nation questioning the competency of the executive. On the economic front, the national shutdown led many businesses to close shop on the protest's day hence the country to an economic standstill.

President Ramaphosa however differed saying the national shutdown led by the EFF was a flop and he was happy that «South Africa did not heed the call» to demonstrate. His sentiments were also echoed by his party's (ANC) Secretary

General Fikile Mbalule who said «I characterize the shutdown as the biggest flop» and that «it «was neither in the interest of the country nor did it advance our hard-won democracy. Instead, it served as the clearest demonstration that the EFF has no interest in building a cohesive nation.»

In Kenya, mass protests were led by opposition leader Raila Odinga of Azimio la Umoja One-Kenya who castigated the recently inaugurated William Ruto for failing to maintain and propel the Kenyan economy to greater heights so it can benefit the whole populace. Odinga also condemns Ruto for engaging in underhand dealings before the national election something which propelled him to power «unfairly». Thousands heeded Odinga's call to take to the streets, especially in the capital Nairobi where some protesters ended up engaging in running battles with the police. Speaking after the protests, Kenya's deputy president, Rigathi Gachagua claimed that the economy lost Sh 2 billion due to the protests.

Speaking to the AFP, one protester in Kenya said that they only came to the streets to vent out their



Kenyan opposition leader Raila Odinga has been leading huge protests across Kenya. Photo credit AFP.



supporters in protest against the conduct of the 2023 elections in Nigeria.

frustrations over unfulfilled electoral promises. He however lamented the heavy-handedness of William Ruto and his troops towards the protests. "We came here peacefully but they tear-gassed us... They lie to us every day. Where is the cheap maize flour they promised? Where are the jobs for the youth they promised? All they do

is hire their friends."

In Nigeria, the main grievance that sparked the protests was the recent election which saw Bola Tinubu elected as the new Nigerian president. The main opposition leader of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) Atiku Abubakar aggrieved by the results of the election claimed that

Tinubu's victory was only enabled by rigging. Determined to seek redress, Abubakar teaming up with other opposition parties called for nationwide protests aimed at forcing the country's Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to relook at the results as well as the entire electoral process while

considering the submissions made by those that claim that the election was rigged.

In Tunisia, thousands of protesters took to the streets to vent out their frustrations at the alleged authoritarian rule by President Kais Saied. Kais Saied has been doing it all alone for nearly a year after dissolving parliament in July last year. His one-man rule has seen him arbitrarily arrest opposition politicians, trade union members, judges, a prominent businessman and the head of an independent radio station something which has angered most citizens. Demonstrating his dictatorial nature, President Saied in an independence speech warned everyone with contrary views to his leadership that "all who want to undermine independence" would be «expelled» from the country.

In Senegal, the protests were in support of Ousmane Sonko, an opposition leader who on the eve of the national election is facing a libel case that puts his candidature in doubt.

Malawi: Mutharika Mulling Another Presidential Run

By Joseph Dumbula

Former President Peter Mutharika has admitted that he is still looking into calls for him to contest in the 2025 presidential polls as the 82-year-old says he is getting massive support from people who feel the Lazarus Chakwera government has failed to manage the affairs of the Southern African nation.

This has come when divisions are already coming evident within the party as blocs within the central and northern and southern regions have conspicuously announced they are rallying behind Mutharika ahead of the party's convention this June.

The Lawyer, who lost the presidency in the 2020 fresh presidential elections has glaringly said he is at the moment consulting his family, friends, and advisers on whether or not to be in contention as 'he loves



'I have been receiving calls from local leaders, the clergy, the civil society and so many stakeholders for me to lead again, says Prof Mutharika.'

the country a lot.'

Mutharika was declared the winner of the 2019 presidential elections but his opponents Chakwera and Saulos Chilima went to court before the results were nullified by the Constitutional Court in 2020 which resulted in the holding of fresh presidential elections in which Chakwera and Chilima were elected president and vice president respectively.

Mutharika has for a long period been insisting that the current government colluded with the Judiciary to remove him from the government after one year of his second term.

The latest remarks after Mutharika stayed away from a meeting that Chakwera called to strategize with his predecessors for the recovery path from Tropical Cyclone Freddy damage.

During the meeting held at Sanjika Palace in Blantyre and attended by former presidents Bakili Muluzi and Joyce Banda, the two accepted Chakwera's proposal for them to take up ambassadorial roles to drum up support.

But according to Mutharika, the meeting was not important as the cyclone recovery plan requires authorities to do the work and not be in the confines of board rooms.

"I thought technocrats need to work on recovering the nation from this cyclone and not me going over for such meetings. We need to do the work and not sit over for a talk," he says.

However, political analyst Wonderful Mkhutche says: "Mutharika has not lived up to his words on reconciliation and willingness to offer his support to the nation. This was an important high-level meeting amidst the dilapidating economy and the natural disaster".

Meanwhile, Mutharika who leads the Democratic Progressive Party has a review that could see him back into the ballot paper.



Former President Mutharika and his successor Lazarus Chakwera have dominated political space in Malawi for the last few years.

"I have been receiving calls from local leaders, the clergy, the civil society, and so many stakeholders for me to lead this country just yet again because they feel this leadership has no clue on how to manage the economy given rising corruption, a rise in the cost of living and heightened blame on issues like Covid19, Russia-Ukraine war and disaster. He [Chakwera] was appointed to deal with problems facing people, that is leadership," he said in an interview with a local channel TTV.

His stand has since led to fresh divisions within the party as some section in the northern region has reportedly thrown weight behind Mutharika's candidature at the convention.

Goodall Gondwe, a renowned economist who has worked under Mutharika's rule since 2014 as Finance Minister told the media that they seek Mutharika again because he initiated "a lot of incomplete projects in the region" and is the "right leader to finalize them".

He is quoted as saying: "Why do we want him [Mutharika] to continue? We found out that the more candidates you have, the more divided you are and the only person who can get us [DPP] to continue our unity is APM. And, therefore, we think that to go into an election united, he must continue to unite us."

At the moment, the Central Region bloc has also endorsed Mutharika for the role who

Announcing the decision in Lilongwe Wednesday, DPP Central Region governor David Kambalame said they want Mutharika to contest in 2025 polls as Malawians want him to be back in power.

"Malawians are suffering. They have asked us to go to our president and ask him to contest in the coming 2025 polls. They are tired with the current leadership; they say it has failed them," Kambalame said.

The said endorsement however comes when about five other people have shown interest to take over the mantle of the party.

They include former Reserve

Bank of Malawi governor Dalitsio Kabambe, Leader of Opposition in Parliament Kondwani Nankhumwa, former minister of Finance Joseph Mwanamvekha, and Bright Msaka who worked during Mutharika's leadership as Justice Minister.

The DPP is an offshoot of the United Democratic Front Party. The UDF was formed by Muluzi and came to power in 1994. After Muluzi's two terms were over, Bingu wa Mutharika (Peter's brother) succeeded him as head of the party and nation. However, Muluzi remained involved in running the party; therefore, Mutharika formed his party, the DPP, in early 2005.

Many UDF members defected to the DPP which was in power before Peter Mutharika won in 2014 two years after Bingu died following a heart attack, a timeframe in which Joyce Banda, then vice President now led the nation through her Peoples Party.

The African Union at 20

African perspectives on progress,
challenges and prospects



Edited by Wafula Okumu and Andrews Atta-Asamoah

South Africa: A Nation Burning Over Energy Crisis

By Prince Kurupati

In recent times, South Africa has been making international headlines owing to its severe electricity challenges. Africa's most industrialized nation has had to grapple with a power challenge that sees most communities including industrial locations going for 12+ hours without electricity. Explaining the problem, the South African government and other relevant power authorities cite technical challenges as the main cause of load

shedding. However, government critics aren't convinced for this reason. One such body is the vibrant opposition party Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) led by outspoken Julius Malema which ascribe the power challenge to poor leadership and therefore calls for the removal of President Cyril Ramaphosa from power.

In calling for the removal of President Cyril Ramaphosa, Julius Malema and his party state that he has demonstrated great incompetency in executing his duties. To justify this, they cite the dire electricity shortages, stratospheric unemployment, and the deteriorating macroeconomic environment.

As the vehicle for removing the President from power and subsequently taking the first step in addressing all the challenges, Julius Malema called for a nationwide shutdown on 20 March 2022. The response by his army of supporters popularly known as the red berets were impressive. Thousands from all corners of the country primarily in urban areas took to the streets to vent out their frustrations against the government. Thousands of others whether by intention or otherwise also lent the shutdown legitimacy as they did not turn up



South Africans taking out their frustrations in the streets. Photo credit AFP.

at their workplaces. This in essence meant that not only was the shutdown a political success, but it was also an economic success as it partially brought the South African economy to a standstill.

Heeding to the calls of their leader, the red berets who took to the streets were «militant and radical» but «peaceful». Thanks to this, the shutdown did send a message to the authorities that the nation is frustrated but more importantly, it showed that the EFF can hold peaceful protests something which many outsiders

doubted. Perhaps adding to the peace that transpired during the shutdown was the heavy deployment of state security apparatus. In the lead-up to the 20 March protests, President Cyril Ramaphosa «instructed law enforcement agencies to ensure that we do not have to see the repeat of those scenes that we saw back in 2021». About 350 people lost their lives in 2021 after nationwide protests broke out sparked by the jailing of former president Jacob Zuma.

Adding to the success of the shutdown was the endorsement from

SAFTU. SAFTU (South African Federation of Trade Unions (SAFTU) confirmed that it will join the national) joined in protests saying that the concerns raised by EFF were legitimate as most of its members were being affected by the deteriorating economy. SAFTU's endorsement was huge for the EFF as it «has 24 trade union affiliates which span several sectors including facilities management, transport, the public sector, manufacturing, mining, and construction».

While the political message sent to President Ramaphosa thanks to the shutdown was well received, some economic analysts said the protests failed to have as much of an impact on the economic front. Dale McKinley, who is a political economist, said that «The economic loss is not as great as what possibly was being projected precisely because the state responded proactively, saturated security-wise on many of the hotspots and even though some of the city centres and other places were very quiet, the economic losses beyond the closure of more medium and small-scale enterprises were not that great.»

The ruling party ANC said the shutdown was not a success either on the political front or economic front. President Ramaphosa thanked the nation saying, «I'm happy the majority of SA (South Africa) did not heed the call (to come out in the streets and protest).» ANC Secretary General Fikile Mbalula said the shutdown was a «flop» and it «was neither in the interest of the country nor did it advance our hard-won democracy. Instead, it served as the clearest demonstration that the EFF has no interest in building a cohesive nation.»



EFF Leader Julius Malema is now calling for the resignation of South African President Cyril Ramaphosa.

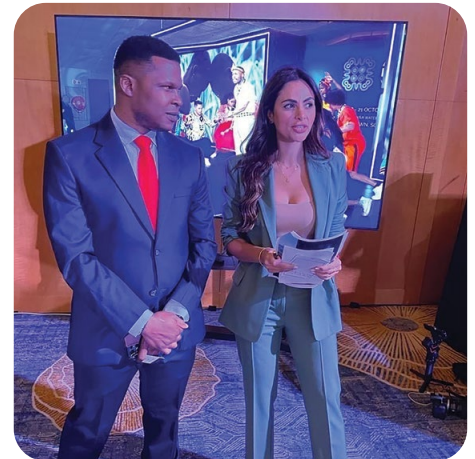
Another Home Run For The African Energy Chamber In Dubai

Following successful stops in London, Oslo and Frankfurt earlier this year, the African Energy Chamber's global investment tour continued to Dubai – representing a global financial capital and trade center – to catalyze new pathways of financing and developing African energy projects.

The AEC united financiers and energy stakeholders from the UAE, Middle

East and Africa during its Invest in African Energy reception in Dubai, aimed at cementing deeper, longer-term and mutually beneficial relations between the two regions and advancing shared interests in diversification, energy security and infrastructure development. PAV shares photos of the Dubai reception as the Chamber warms up for the next stop in Paris on June 1st, 2023.







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June 1st 2023

Cameroon: A Tale Of Floods And Demolitions In Buea

By Boris Esono Nwenfor & Synthia Lateu

At least two people were killed after torrential rains triggered flash floods in Buea, the chief town of Cameroon's South West Region, on March 18, 2023, according to local authorities. At least 10 people received treatment in hospitals in the town after sustaining injuries from the disaster.

The flash flood caused significant damage to the affected areas and left many families homeless. The situation was of great concern to the authorities, as the Minister of Territorial Administration, Paul Atanga Nji paid a visit with some relief items to the affected persons. The government also promised to provide support to those who have lost their homes and possessions as a result of the floods.

David Mafani Namange, Mayor of Buea council, said the flood was triggered by several hours of heavy rain which carried away cars and debris and inundated the basement and ground floors of some buildings, turning roads into rivers. He also frowned on the haphazard construction of structures by inhabitants.

«Two corpses were recovered on Saturday (March 18). The material damage is quite huge. The women in the market have lost all their goods,» Namange said while evaluating the damage caused by «the unprecedented» flood.



The flash flood caused significant damage to the affected areas and left many families homeless

Buea, a city of around 300,000 inhabitants is situated on the eastern slopes of Mount Cameroon. Buea's poor drainage infrastructure was unable to cope. This is not the first time that the town is experiencing such a disaster; back in March 2020, a similar flood caused havoc in the town.

«The flood caused my store to collapse on me. I was covered in the mud and water and it's only through a miracle that I struggled to come out of there alive,» Esther Doru who received treatment in the hospital said.

Above-average rainfall and devastating flooding across West

and Central Africa have affected five million people in 19 countries across the region, claiming hundreds of lives, upending livelihoods, displacing tens of thousands from their homes and decimating over a million hectares of cropland - in a region already in the grips of an unprecedented hunger crisis. This climate-related disaster is one of the deadliest the region has seen in years and is likely to deepen the already worrisome hunger situation for millions

«Strengthening resilience and promoting climate adaptation is an essential part of anticipating climate hazards, restoring degraded ecosystems, and protecting vulnerable communities against the impact of climate extremes,» said Chris Nikoi, the UN World Food Programme (WFP)'s Regional Director for Western Africa.

«The issue of climate change and extreme weather events is a reality and adaptation measures must be proactively put in place by the government at the risk of having to deal with the same damage after the disasters have occurred. This toll recorded in Buea is frightening when we know that we are only in the first weeks after the return of the rains,» said Ranece Jovial

Ndjeudja, Greenpeace Africa's forest campaigner for the Congo Basin.

Haphazard Construction Affecting Waterway

Following the tragic incident, the local authorities in Buea went ahead with a demolition exercise as they sought to open the pathway for water to pass through. Some structures that had been built on waterways were destroyed, as the Buea council sent out a strong warning on future constructions on waterways.

The Mayor of Buea said the council will take appropriate measures to avoid future floods which are mostly caused by the poor construction of houses. Barrister Mafani Namange said: «The natural waterway is too small because of haphazard construction. People just build houses on the waterway and this is one of the major causes of the tragedy.»

«The reaction of the authorities and the relief efforts, if fully effective, are to be welcomed and encouraged. However, the state must work upstream to avoid or at least reduce such incidents. The actions implemented after these events, although comforting, cannot, unfortunately, bring back to life people who have died,» adds Ranece Jovial.



Local authorities in Buea went ahead with a demolition exercise as they sought to open the pathway for water (1).

The establishment and popularization of warning systems, better use of the information contained in the regularly published weather bulletins as well as the implementation of adaptation and prevention measures for risks and disasters contained in Cameroon's convergence plan would greatly mitigate these negative impacts."

On the evening of 21 March 2023, the city of Yaoundé experienced severe flooding after heavy rain fell on the capital city. In 2022, 40,000 people were displaced in the far north of Cameroon due to flooding. Several cases of flooding were also



Humanitarian assistance, consisting of food and non-food items provided to victims of the flood (1).

observed in several other cities and towns in Cameroon.

The flash flood in Buea is a tragic reminder of the impact of climate change on vulnerable communities. As extreme weather events become more frequent and intense, governments and communities must work together to strengthen infrastructure and develop effective disaster response strategies. While the immediate priority is to provide support to those affected by the floods, it is also essential to learn from this event to mitigate future risks and prevent similar tragedies from occurring in the future. _____

Kenya: The Perils Of Food Lovers In Nairobi

By Samuel Ouma

Food consumption is crucial for preserving health and preventing illness from entering the body. Foods that have been contaminated constitute a significant source of foodborne illness, notably cholera, which accounts for a sizable portion of the global disease burden, particularly in Africa. Both growing food consumption and ensuring food safety are crucial for enhancing population health. Consumers in Nairobi are highly concerned about food safety. Most of the identified food safety issues in Nairobi have been brought to the government's attention. However, they still need to be resolved because there needs to be a strong regulatory body. The issue of hygiene has been one of the main ones. In the 2013 National Food Safety Policy, the Kenyan government outlined a complete set of measures to improve food safety, but these have not yet been implemented, creating a severe crisis in Nairobi's food safety.

Nairobi residents deal with a variety of risks to their ability to eat safely, including contaminated produce grown next to sewer lines, fresh meat laced with hazardous chemicals, and brands of peanut butter and maize flour that contain aflatoxin, a naturally occurring fungus that is dangerous to both people and

Before there were drugs
There was nature

Eat whole foods,
Fruits,
Vegetables



For the healthiest life
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animals.

Our correspondent based in Nairobi, Samuel Ouma, reached out to Dr. Dennis Ouma, a food scientist, to shed light on the current food safety in Kenya's capital. Dr. Dennis Ouma is a professional food scientist and food science expert. He is also the founder of FIT AND HEALTHY CITIZEN, a food and health education, consultancy, training and advocacy company. His primary goal is to be a global food and health education advocate. Here is the conversation:

Let's begin with a brief introduction of who you are.

Dr. Dennis Ouma: My name is Dr. Dennis Ouma. I pursued a Bachelor of Science in Technology from the University of Nairobi. I'm a food scientist, and I have a company called Fit and Healthy citizen that deals in training, consultancy and advocacy on food and health.

What inspired you to become involved in food safety and how does this mirror the objectives of your firm Fit and Healthy Citizen?

Dr. Dennis Ouma: There is a disconnect between the issue of food and our health in our society if you look at it. Most of the time,

when one of us gets sick, it may be misdiagnosed, and if they pass away, it will be blamed on witchcraft when, in fact, it could have been a foodborne disease. Therefore, when I had the opportunity to pursue a food science course at the University of Nairobi, my perspective on food and health changed. In my third year, I resolved to help our society understand food and health. After graduating, I realised I was responsible for improving our community by teaching people about food and health. I decided to share knowledge that can help society and enhance it concerning the food that we consume. About Fit and Healthy Citizens, the company's primary business is health education, training, advocacy, and general wellness.

How important is food safety in today's context?

Dr. Dennis Ouma: Protecting consumers of food items from foodborne illnesses or accidents associated with food consumption is the primary goal of food safety. Because of inadequate food safety, foodborne diseases severely threaten the food industry and impact people everywhere. Foodborne pathogens, including dangerous bacteria, fungi, yeasts, parasites, or viruses, are primarily to blame for these side effects. In addition, chemical compounds, heavy metals, and excessive additives can also result in acute poisoning and foodborne diseases. Effective food safety practices can also save money on healthcare costs by lowering the chance of disease occurrence. A food company can reduce waste due to a better food production process by employing proper food safety practices. Food safety also offers a better way of life because everyone can enjoy the pleasures that foods bring and live a healthy life without the inconvenience and dangers that food safety hazards bring.

Can you shed light on some experiences you have had with food safety, especially in Nairobi.

Dr. Dennis Ouma: There is



Dr. Dennis Ouma is passionate about health and eating habits of fellow Kenyans.

a big issue with food safety in Nairobi. In particular, food vendors offering raw and cooked food are unregulated. They work loosely, without overseeing what they prepare or how they do it. Vendors lack food preparation training because most of their skills were learned through observation, while others were instructed by their parents in informal settings. Furthermore, most raw food preparation surfaces in most restaurants are not washed regularly, cooked foods are stored at room temperature in cupboards, plastic bowls, jugs, and buckets are just left out in the open uncovered, and most vendors have garbage and waste bins adjacent to the food stalls. Personal hygiene is also not followed, as vendors or workers

in many restaurants never cover their heads, handle money and food simultaneously, do not wear overcoats/aprons, and handle food with their bare hands. Statistics indicate that residents of Nairobi are more affected by foodborne diseases like cholera than the rest.

What are some usual culprits for foodborne illnesses in Kenya's capital and who is to be blamed for the increasing number of foodborne diseases?

Dr. Dennis Ouma: Unwashed or improperly washed kale, tripes known locally as Matumbo, and the fabled African sausage known as mutura are among the foods connected to food poisoning in Nairobi. Others are veggies, lemon pie

pudding, maize flour, meat and meat products, milk and milk products, meat and meat products, bread, scones, and other wheat products. Slums in Nairobi like Kibera, Baba Dogo, Mathare, Korogocho, Dandora, Kariobangi, Mukuru Kwa Njenga, and Kawangware are prone to foodborne illnesses. It is so tragic that some eateries or vendors offer food they cannot consume because they are aware that it is unsafe to eat. For them, protecting their fellow humans comes second to a love of money. I can boldly say that the Ministry of Health has failed to implement the food safety policies in place. There is some laxity in the Ministry.

What are some of the basic food safety measures or tips you can share?

Dr. Dennis Ouma: After cooking, let food cool completely at room temperature before storing it in the refrigerator if you won't be eating it right away. Reheat leftovers once to steaming hot, and consume them within two days. Do not reheat leftovers more than once. Cutting boards should be thoroughly washed in hot, soapy water, separately from other utensils, then rinsed with plain water and allowed to air dry. In order to kill germs, you should periodically disinfect kitchen sinks and drains with a cleaning solution and wipe down kitchen counters and other open surfaces with hot, soapy water. Additionally, it's crucial to maintain good personal hygiene. If you handle food, wear a clean apron, cover your head, and bathe regularly.

What are some of the biggest challenges in ensuring food safety in Nairobi and what should the government do to solve the food safety menace?

Dr. Dennis Ouma: The public is accustomed to consuming bad food, which is the first factor. When you questioned individuals about why they consume unhygienic food. They will probably respond by saying, «I have been doing so all along and have not been impacted. This results from ignorance or lack of

awareness. Another problem is that some processed food items on the Kenyan market are of subpar quality, even though there is an established legal framework for food safety and quality controls, such as the Kenya Bureau of Standards. The regulator is tainted by corruption, and as a result, the nation's food standards have been weakened, endangering many lives. Another major challenge in food safety in Kenya is a lack of food safety systems, systemic surveillance, underdeveloped human resources, and insufficient ability to identify the magnitude of the problem.

Additionally, numerous nutritionists in the country are unwilling to share their knowledge with others to make society safe for everyone. The government has mandates to ensure that healthy food is available everywhere by directing regulators to enforce the policies in place. Along with employing nutritionists, food experts, or scientists to assist in implementing food safety policies for the benefit of society, it should also teach people about the importance of food safety.

What are some of the risks Kenyans face from eating so much meat, how is this unsafe?

Dr.Dennis Ouma: Since humans are omnivores, occasionally eating meat can be acceptable and healthful. However, many behave like carnivores. They are unaware of the risks of consuming inappropriate kinds or amounts of meat. Scientists have examined the issue and found justifications for limiting human consumption of flesh, particularly red meat. More toxins are present in red

flesh than in almost any other food. For example, if an animal consumes a pesticide, sulfa medication, hormone, antibiotic, chemical, or other toxic residues, it will typically store it in fat. The same toxins enter your body through that fat and congregate in your fat if you eat it. Although improved, white meat is not perfect. Tetracycline is a particularly effective

antibiotic administered to chickens to combat salmonella and other bacteria. Growth hormones and estrogen were frequently given to animals in the past to increase their size and worth. Thankfully, these customs have changed.

Moreover, cold-cut and packaged meats, such as bologna, salami, hot dogs, bacon, sausage, and processed

ham, are frequently saturated in fats, which are linked to high levels of nitrites and nitrates, which can combine to create chemicals called nitrosamines or n-nitroso compounds that can cause cancer. These substances have been linked to oral, bladder, stomach, and brain tumours.



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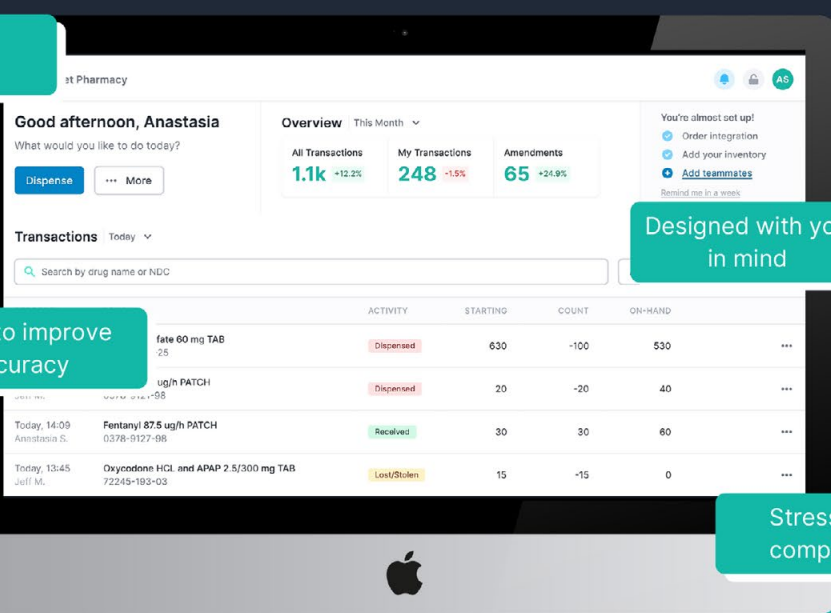
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A Commitment To Eliminate Cervical Cancer For Find

By Jessica Ahdor

Nairobi, Kenya- Dr Angela Muriuki, Director of Women's Health at FIND, says Sub-Saharan Africa requires strong political commitment and resolve to eradicate cervical cancer as a public health issue that affects not only individuals but also households, communities, nations, and regions.

Fielding questions from Pan African Visions, Dr Muriuki says galvanizing action towards elimination requires strong government leadership with the political willingness, commitment and resource investment to ensure that cervical cancer is no longer a public health problem.

"Countries in the region can do that through understanding the targets set by the World Health Organization as markers of progress towards elimination of this disease as a public health problem and find out whether progress is being made in your household, community, country and region," Dr. Muriuki explained.

Can you provide a brief background about FIND and what it does as a programme.

Dr Angela Muriuki: FIND is a global non-profit focused on the development and access of quality diagnostic testing. We are working to ensure that everyone who needs a test can get one – so that people can be linked to care as soon as possible, and lives can be saved. The COVID-19 pandemic showed how fundamental diagnostics are to sustainable, resilient health systems, providing critical data for decision-makers and picking up outbreaks of new or existing diseases.

Women's Health is a newly constituted programme within FIND. Our main goal is to drive attention, partnership and action to meet the critical gap in diagnostics for conditions that affect women and girls, based on their unique requirements at different ages and life stages. Our work is geared towards improving access to diagnostics for women and girls, at the lowest level of care close



Dr Angela Muriuki.

to where they live, through women-centric technologies and delivery models that are responsive to their needs and expectations, including self-testing and self-sampling.

How long has FIND been operational?

Dr Angela Muriuki: FIND was founded at the World Health Assembly, in 2003 – this is our 20th year of operations. Our focus is on improving health outcomes in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) through testing, and we work across the African continent. I work out of our office in Nairobi.

Why the focus on cervical cancer and not any other cancers, and why now?

Dr Angela Muriuki: Globally, one woman needlessly dies every 2 minutes from cervical cancer – needlessly because death due to

cervical cancer is preventable through a combination of vaccination, screening and treatment strategies. The loss of a woman has devastating consequences on her family and community and those who survive sometimes have to deal with lifelong physical, mental and social consequences of the disease and its treatment.

But even though preventive and treatment measures exist, they just aren't reaching the regions with the highest burden of disease. Limited availability of new high-performance tests, high prices, lack of public awareness, health system level gaps and stigma all create barriers to access. For example, despite the critical role that screening plays in early detection and treatment, today, we are facing a situation in which less than half of women in LMICs have ever been screened.

Evidence suggests that cervical

cancer could be the first cancer to be eliminated in our lifetime. WHO has defined three ambitious targets that countries must attain by 2030 as critical markers of progress towards elimination cervical cancer as a public health problem:

- 90% of girls completely vaccinated against human papillomavirus (HPV), the virus responsible for most of cervical cancer cases;
- 70% of women screened using a high performance test by age 35 years and again by age 45 years; and
- 90% of those identified with cervical diseases are managed appropriately.

Elimination of diseases has been done before and the COVID-19 pandemic has shown us what can be achieved, in timelines previously thought impossible, when we coalesce around a common goal.

Why now? Seven years away from the target, little progress has been made with approximately 25% of LMICs having introduced HPV vaccination and less than half of women living in LMICs having been screened for cancer with an even lower proportion having been screened with a high-performance test. Why now is because, to use a popular quote, the best time to get started was 20 years ago, the next best time is now.

Cervical cancer is one of the many conditions affecting women in sub-Saharan Africa especially in low-income countries. What strategies are you deploying to achieve equity?

Dr Angela Muriuki: One of the key drivers of inequity in cervical cancer screening is the limited access to high-performance tests for HPV. "High-performance" in this case refers to a test that can detect HPV, and this is what countries should be using as their primary method of cancer screening. HPV screening allows for early detection of the

cancer-causing strains of the virus, further assessment of HPV-positive women to determine whether they have any precancerous lesions, and for treatment of those with lesions to prevent further progression to cancer. Making HPV testing widely available and affordable could expand access to more women at lower levels care. HPV testing also offers the option of self-sampling, where a woman collects her own vaginal sample using a swab either at home or in a facility. This has been shown to be more acceptable and preferable to a pelvic exam by women without compromising quality of sample collected, and therefore offers choice to women and flexibility to the design of screening programmes.

HPV screening is limited particularly in LMICs in part due to limited awareness, high costs and limited investment. We are working on more affordable HPV testing options, including exploring options for local manufacturing, working with governments to build evidence-informed investment cases and identify strategic levers for investment within the health system to expand access to screening, and working with communities in the design and delivery of scalable solutions to drive demand for and access to HPV screening.

Screening alone contributes, but will not lead, to elimination of cervical cancer. Therefore, we are ensuring that expanding access to screening goes hand in hand with and is embedded within a holistic approach that expands access to HPV vaccination for girls and timely treatment and care for those women diagnosed with precancer or cancer.

On International Women's Day, in partnership with KILELE Health Association, you announced the launch of a community engagement coalition to expand cervical cancer screening in sub-Saharan Africa. Can you tell us more about this collaboration and how it is poised to help



in the elimination of cervical cancer especially in Africa?

Dr Angela Muriuki: We are so honoured to be partnering with KILELE Health Association on this and learning from those who know what it means to survive or lose someone to cervical cancer. The community engagement coalition is a network of community and civil society organizations that will work to identify the obstacles that limit uptake of screening for the disease, raise awareness of preventive measures, advocate for urgent action to accelerate progress towards achieving national targets, and provide user-led feedback and preferences to inform development and scale-up of new testing technologies and strategies. It's exciting because we are working with women-led community organizations to co-create scalable solutions to address health inequalities and expand access to care. These women, representing those bearing the heaviest burden of cervical cancer globally, should be shaping policies and driving action at national, regional and global levels so that policies are responsive to their needs and expectations.

What are key policy actions needed to drive cervical cancer elimination in Africa?

Dr Angela Muriuki: There are adjectives that we use in reference to cervical cancer that are rarely associated with a cancer – preventable, treatable, curable and eliminable. What we need now is to convert adjective to action. For a country, district, community, organization, individual looking to drive action, there are various ways to do so:

- Understand the burden of disease, who is most affected and why, what it means for a woman, her home and community, to be directly or indirectly affected by the disease.

- Understand the actions associated with each of the adjectives we are using – what can we do to prevent, treat, cure, eliminate cervical cancer.

- Understand the targets set by the WHO as markers of progress towards elimination of this disease as a public health problem and find out whether progress is being made in your household, community, district, country and why/why not. For instance, why are girls not receiving the HPV vaccinations they require to

prevent cervical cancer? Are eligible women being screened using a high-performance screening test for early detection and treatment?

- Commit to action – for example, at individual level, commit to learn about the disease and what is needed to prevent, treat, cure and eliminate; ensure those around you know about the disease and take action (girls of eligible age are vaccinated, women of eligible age are screened using a high-performance test); integrate cervical cancer elimination strategies in your work.

Galvanizing action towards elimination requires strong government leadership with the political willingness, commitment and resource investment to ensure that cervical cancer is no longer a public health problem. The COVID-19 pandemic reminded us that complex problems can be solved rapidly, when we decide that they can be solved.

In the words of Professor Mahmood Fathalla, “Women are not dying because of untreatable diseases. They are dying because societies have yet to make the decision that their lives are worth saving.”



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Africa Missing As Malawi Sinks

By Prince Kurupati

March 2023 is one of the worst months in the history of Malawi. At the beginning of the month, the country was just experiencing its normal routine as the residents went about their day-to-day life in a normal fashion. However, as the month came to an end, tears of sorrow, despair and loss were trickling down on every Malawian citizen - well, at least for those who were fortunate to end the month alive. Those who were unfortunate - reports say at least 511 - were swept away by Cyclone Freddy. Cyclone Freddy is the third cyclone to hit Malawi in 13 months but undoubtedly the worst one. It has since «broke the world record for most accumulated cyclone energy, a measure based on a storm's wind strength over its lifetime,» as reported by Al Jazeera.

While Malawians wept, what was quite noticeable from a distance in the early days when the cyclone was at its worst was the silence of neighbouring countries. Immediately after the cyclone hit the Nsanje district in



Cyclone Freddy affected over 500.000 people in Malawi according to UN reports. Photo courtesy.

southern Malawi, the hardest hit area, Malawi President Lazarus Chakwera, appealed to the world for assistance stating that Malawi alone did not have the capacity to address the damage done by Cyclone Freddy. At the same time, President Chakwera also «declared a state of

emergency in the affected districts and a subsequent period of 14 days of national mourning.»

Heeding President Chakwera's public call for assistance in the immediate aftermath were several western nations and foreign organizations. Surprisingly, Malawi's own African brothers needed a period of warming up before extending support to victims of Cyclone Freddy. With most victims in desperate need in the «now», the delay in extending support to Malawi certainly aided in worsening the impact of the cyclone. Perhaps as an excusatory factor to neighbouring nations such as Mozambique and Zimbabwe, they too were affected by Cyclone Freddy and hence couldn't do much to help when they also needed the help.

Showing support from lands far away were several international organizations which include the World Health Organization, Save the Children and Trocaire. Cyclone Freddy came at a time when Save the Children was already doing a huge job of saving Malawian children's



In the midst of all the chaos and pain in Malawi, the silence from African countries was deafening.

lives from the jaws of cholera. After Cyclone Freddy hit Malawi, Save the Children quickly extended its tentacles in helping all the affected. The move however stretched the organization's resources as evidenced by Palal Areman; deputy operations team lead for Save the Children's Emergency Health Unit in Blantyre who said in a statement:

«The country was dealing with a big situation with the cholera outbreak and resources had been stretched. With Cyclone Freddy hitting, the normal healthcare routine is completely disrupted. Children are traumatized by the cyclone, they were brought to hospital with head injuries, broken limbs, and bruises, while others looked worried or had no family members.

«Temporary tents put up to treat cholera patients have been destroyed,

putting medical services out of reach for many. I think in the long term with water disruption, the pipes broken and water contamination highly likely, cholera cases will most certainly go up.»

Immediately after the cyclone hit Malawi, the World Health Organization in a statement by its regional director for Africa, Matshidiso Moeti quickly embarked on a resource pooling mission to gather resources to be used in alleviating the disaster. Its efforts were aided by the World Food Program which was already helping thousands in the country with food aid. The World Food Program said that the disaster brought about by Cyclone Freddy in Malawi exacerbated the country's food insecurity and as such, it would help with food aid to the 500,000 displaced people.

Trocaire in partnership with the Catholic University of Malawi also extended immediate relief to Malawi. In its report following Cyclone Freddy, Trocaire said that it started monitoring the cyclone and offering support to Malawians through its «village protection committees and Chiefs to ensure adequate warnings were given to people living in areas that could potentially be impacted.» After it made landfall, «The Catholic University of Malawi, who partner with Trócaire through student climate justice clubs and advocacy around climate change, immediately mobilized its staff and vehicles to provide lifesaving support. They transported the injured people to the hospital and brought other displaced people to safer places for temporary shelter, while also taking those who died to the mortuary.»

Moreover, «Trócaire supported the Catholic University's appeal for any in kind or cash assistance to the people of Ntauchira village. University staff and students conducted an assessment to ascertain the most urgent needs of survivors in the village, the hospital and the temporary shelters. They then procured the necessary items and assembled the packages. They worked tirelessly around the clock to get everything packed. Large quantities of donations in the form of food, clothing and kitchen utensils were also packed.»

The deafening silence of Malawi's African brothers only came when the cyclone's impact was receding. The leading African countries to provide aid to Malawi are Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe: Furor Over Aljazeera Gold Mafia Documentary

By Prince Kurupati

For over two years, Al Jazeera through its investigative unit undertook an undercover investigation into the handling and exportation of Zimbabwean gold. The investigation revealed that a cabal of influential people, and clerical and political leaders are engaging in illicit gold exportation and money laundering schemes. The results of the investigation are being aired in a four-part docu-series dubbed Zimbabwean Gold Mafia. Only two episodes of the four-part docu-series have been aired thus far but the two have been enough to propel the Zimbabwean government to issue its first response.

Zimbabwe's Minister of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services Monica Mutsvangwa while addressing a press conference in the capital Harare said that the government following the revelations exposed in the Gold Mafia documentary will institute full-scale investigations of its own to determine the level of involvement in graft activities by the implicated individuals. She said that all those



The documentary has ruffled feathers in Zimbabwe. Photo Credit, ZiMetro.

found guilty will face the full wrath of the law.

Government takes the allegations raised in the documentary seriously and has directed relevant organs to institute investigations into the issues

raised therein... Any person found to have engaged in acts of corruption, fraud or any form of crime will face the full wrath of the law, Minister Mutsvangwa said.

The minister went further stating

that Zimbabwe abides by the international statutes which guide the smooth flow of transactions on the global stage. She did however give a stern warning to the «personalities» featured in the documentary.

Government takes this opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to upholding local and international laws, including laws relating to financial transactions, and the trade of gold and other precious minerals... Boastful behaviour and name-dropping by some personalities featured in the documentary, seeking personal gain and glory should never be taken as an enunciation of Government policy, she said.

Many Zimbabwean citizens posting on social media platforms Twitter and Facebook have welcomed the decision by the government to institute investigations. They however call upon the authorities to prosecute all those found guilty regardless of their status.

Meanwhile, soon after Minister

Mutsvangwa's press conference, the government spokesperson Nick Mangwana in a Twitter post announced that the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe through the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) had frozen the assets of eight implicated personalities.

Transparency International has since called upon the Financial Intelligence Unit, Zimbabwe Republic Police and the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission to investigate further and prosecute without bias all those implicated. In a statement, Transparency International said the documentary comes after the release of the 2022 Corruption Perceptions Index, which revealed endemic corruption in Zimbabwe, with a score of just 23

out of 100. New scandals of grand corruption and abuses of public office continue to emerge, which damages the country from the perspective of investors and development partners. Along with the shocking findings of the documentary, these results make clear that it's time for the government to take stronger action against corruption and money laundering.

Furthermore, Transparency International added As the documentary highlights, more and more cartels work with individuals and institutions in Zimbabwe to move dirty money using anonymous trusts and shell companies in tax havens and other secretive jurisdictions. This insidious relationship facilitates organized crime and huge outflows of gold and other precious minerals... In

particular, the documentary exposes incidences of alleged under-invoicing and under-declarations by registered gold dealers to Fidelity Printers and the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority, alleging even higher losses than previously assumed. This reduces the country's ability to build critical infrastructure and support the needs of the population or respond to urgent challenges. To combat this, the government of Zimbabwe should strengthen mutual legal assistance with other involved jurisdictions to facilitate the exchange of information. They must also ensure that such institutions have the capacity to manage mutual legal assistance requests.

Thanda Island: World's Best Luxurious Island In Tanzania

By Prince Kurupati



If you want to enjoy life on the world's smaller private island in Tanzania, administration of Thanda Island charges US\$45,000 per night for a minimum of five-night stay, during which you will have the single-key luxury Villa and island exclusively to yourself."

By Prosper Makene

Located in Tanzania's Shungimbili Island Marine Reserve in Mafia and surrounded by its own coral reef, Thanda Island is one of the truly exclusive tropical islands in the world.

The luxurious Island is located off the coast of Tanzania and was

inspired by the traditions of iconic properties where family generations reconnect and spend precious time together.

The Island is owned by a generous European family. It is natural, pristine and magical, and entirely for you and your family.

If you want to enjoy life on the

world's smaller private island in Tanzania, the administration of Thanda Island charges US\$45,000 per night for a minimum five-night stay, during which you will have the single-key luxury Villa and island exclusively to yourself.

Thanda Island is your home away from home, with an incredible choice



of amenities and adventures included in the price.

On its uniqueness, Thanda Island has on October 2022 announced Africa's Leading Luxury Island by organizers of the World Travel Awards. This was the six years in a row that Thanda Island won the category that scooped for the first time in 2017.

More than an incredible destination

Thanda Island is more than just an incredible destination - it is also highly active in several conservation and community initiatives.

The Island partner with the Tanzanian Marine Parks and a leading NGO, Sea Sense, on a range of marine conservation and education programmes in the region. Their philosophy is underpinned by a sincere commitment to the Tanzanian people, and the Thanda team is participating in a range of social empowerment programmes on nearby Mafia Island.

Marine conservation is at the core of the Island's offering and guests are encouraged to get involved in a range of projects, such as marine wildlife monitoring or awareness workshops with villagers on neighbouring Mafia Island.

Sailing & Deep Sea Fishing Boats

At Thanda Island, you have exclusive access to the stunning Shungimbili Island Marine Reserve as well as a fantastic range of water and marine sports.

Scuba diving

The largest marine protected area in the Indian Ocean offers some of the most spectacular diving off the East African Coast, including an intriguing diversity of coral reefs, five species of turtles and 400 species of enchanting reef fish.

On the Island, guests can rejuvenate and enjoy a variety of water sports or island activities as they explore this remarkable destination, where

shades of turquoise infuse the days and tropical spices the nights.

Snorkelling

In Thanda Island, marine turtles have frequently been sighted during snorkels, along with plenty of exciting marine species, including trumpet fish, threespot dascyllus, blue-spotted stingray, jewel damselfish, cleaner wrasse, goldbar wrasse, reef needlefish and cornetfish.

Big game fishing

If you would like to do some big game fishing, they guide and lead your fishing expedition on Real Magic to seek out iconic catch-and-release species or bring home the catch of the day for our chefs to prepare for lunch or dinner at your private villa. Children are also welcome to fish or learn how to fish. The fishing season is from September to March, with Sailfish from November to January.

Swimming with whale sharks

One of the most emotional and

spectacular ocean wonders you can ever experience in Thanda Island is being up close with a whale shark, which can grow to an astonishing 18 metres. These harmless, gentle giants - the largest fish in the world and categorised by the IUCN as vulnerable to extinction - are an incredible part of the Thanda Island experience, as they feed just south of the Island from October to March. We are privileged to be able to share these beautiful creatures up close with you: you can either swim with them or view them from our luxury adventure vessel, ably commandeered by our trusted captain.

Location & access

Thanda Island is located in between the mainland of Tanzania and Mafia Island. To get to the Island, international guests fly directly into Dar es Salaam. From Dar es Salaam, you can either go directly to the Island by helicopter or fly to Mafia Island by fixed-wing plane, from where you can reach the Island by boat.

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Coton Sport FC: Dominant Force In Cameroon But Continental Toothless Bulldog

By Boris Esono Nwenfor & Sonita Ngunyi Nwohtazie

Regarded as one of the best or if not, the best football team in Cameroon, Coton Sport FC of Garoua, has been a model which many teams in the country sought to emulate. Constantly reaching the CAF competitions, the Garoua-based side won their 17th Cameroon league title in July last year and also picked up the Cup of Cameroon title, something they had not done since 2014.

The double victory was the Cotton weaver's Seventh domestic double after they previously won the same in 2003, 2004, 2007, 2008, 2011 and 2014. Only two-times TotalEnergies CAF champions league winners Canon of Yaounde, with their 10 Cameroon cup trophies, has done better than Coton Sport's Seven.

Having constantly been mingling with the big boys in the CAF Confederation and CAF Champions League in the past couple of seasons, you would have expected the side to fare better this year in the CAF Champions League. However, the team seems to be going through a



Coton Sport has only won 1 of their last 9 games in all competitions, just 2 wins in 2023.

somewhat disastrous phase in their history, as they have failed to win any game in Group B.

Last of the class in Group B of the CAF Champions League with 5 defeats in as many games, the defending champion of Cameroon is making headlines for the wrong

reasons. Never before has Coton Sport been in such bad shape on the African stage. The side hasn't fared better in the Elite 1 this season as they struggle to make it amongst the top two of Group B.

The only Cameroonian representative in the CAF Champions League, the Garoua-based club has managed to pull off a feat, conceding 5 defeats in as many games. The five defeats mean that Coton Sport FC has been eliminated from the competition. Whose fault is it? Is the team a sub-standard version compared to their group B giants? Or the momentum of the side dying?

A team decimated by departures

You would have thought that the team that has the ambition of faring better than their previous editions at the CAF-organized competitions would be able to keep most of its star players. That, however, has not been the case as a series of key departures have almost completely handicapped the side.

Marou Souaibou was the key to Coton Sport's qualification to the CAF Champions League and also played a vital role last season as Coton picked

up the Elite 1 and Cup of Cameroon titles. The best Cameroonian player of last season scored 3 goals in the 4 games played during the qualifiers.

Souaibou's performance was so vital that it allowed the 22-year-old to be selected by Head Coach Rigobert Song amongst the players who took part at the FIFA Qatar World Cup, which was the first national call-up for the player. The best offensive asset of Coton Sport joined the South African side Orlando Pirates earlier this year. And this is not the only loss suffered by the club.

«Marou comes to South Africa on the back of a three-year stint with his former club, Coton Sport, winning two league titles in the process, including Player of the Season award in 2022,» Pirates said in a statement. «His form in the Cameroonian league didn't go unnoticed as he was selected to the 2022 FIFA World Cup squad that competed in Qatar.»

As if that was not enough, the very experienced midfielder Felix Oukine and the best goalkeeper of last season, Anye Derrick, also left Coton Sport for greener pastures. The former joined Raal, a third-division club in Belgium, while the latter



Bisseck Jean Baptiste, former coach of Canon of Yaounde is the new coach of Coton Sport.

signed with Maritzburg United in the South African first division. Without their best striker, midfielder and goalkeeper, what could Coton Sport hope for? «When a team is built and the best players leave, that's what happens,» said coach Gabriel Haman, who recently was removed as the first team coach due to bad results.

Decimated by the departure of these three key players, the situation of the club has not improved as other players of the club have been looking for a way out. The recent case is Kaïba Djawa who has left Coton despite a clause in his contract that compels him to finish the season with Coton after his move to another club.

«Coton Sport to me did not do much planning, before the start of the campaign in the CAF Champions League. At the start of a major competition, the team already sold most of its talents and did not bring quality players that could match up to the talents of the players that they sold,» Valentine Bambot, sports journalist with CBS Radio Buea told Pan African Visions.

«To me, they failed to beef up their squad and tactically failed to express themselves. Also, they found themselves in a difficult group, a group that had the most successful team in the competition, a former champion and another heavyweight from Sudan Al Hilal.»

«These are teams that are very powerful in African football. they were in a group of death and they were the underdogs. I did not expect much from Coton but I think their problems started with them before their group pairings,» Valentine Bambot added.

Defensive errors - Coton Sport's Achilles heel

Coton Sport began the group stage of this Champions League with a more changed squad than the one that qualified through the group stages. Evidently from the first game against Mamelodi Sundowns in Cameroon, Coton lost that game 1-3, a lot of defensive errors were noted, something that the side worked on extensively last season. The defending champion has seen its defence easily



crushed by opponents.

The midfielders, key in winning games for any side, have not proved their worth this season. Coton Sport has failed to pose the game or control the tempo in all their games and as a result, the strikers have not received good services. This is evident as just 2 goals have been scored in all five games played in the CAF Champions League.

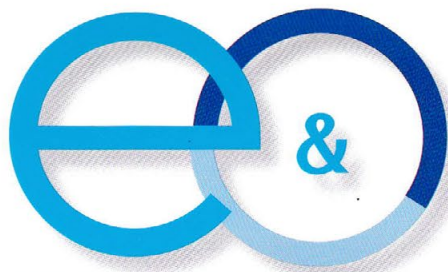
The goalkeeping department of the side has been found wanting on so many occasions. Gadin Allambatan and teammate Saliou Mamoudou have both conceded 14 goals between them. «There are realities that we

discovered in the CAF Champions League: the level is a notch above, Gabriel Haman admitted. «We have to look at what other top teams are doing and try to implement it at home to progress.»

Following the bad results, the management of Coton Sport has been swift to bring changes to the technical bench of the side. Bissek Jean Baptiste, former coach of Canon of Yaounde, fired for a poor result this season, has been brought in to steady the ship of Coton Sport. Coton Sport has only won 1 of their last 9 games in all competitions, with just 2 wins in 2023. That victory came in a 1-0

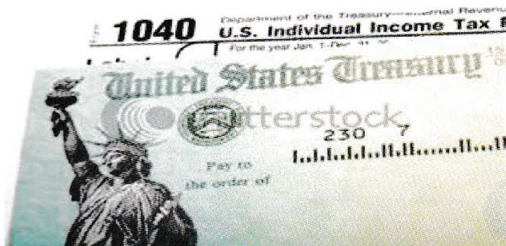
victory against Djiko FC.

It is thus high time for Coton Sport and any other team that qualifies for the CAF Confederation and CAF Champions League to revise their strategies coming into African interclub competitions for the seasons to come. Since Canon last tasted glory at the CAF Champions League, no club in Cameroon has ever gone close to the final. PWD Social Football Club of Bamenda, APEJES de Mfou, Les Astres FC of Douala and even Coton Sport have all tried and failed. Something thus needs to change. Can next year produce a miracle? Only time will tell.



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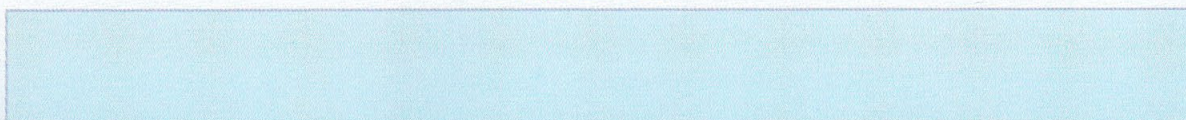
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