

# PAN AFRICAN VISIONS



## A Year Of Governor Agbu Kefas In Taraba State



Rwanda: Kagame  
Bracing For Re-election

South Africa: Status  
Quo No More

A Look At Eximbank's  
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The BAL Revolution



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## A Revolution On Course For BAL

By Ajong Mbapndah L

Sold out crowds, festive atmospheres with round the clock animation during games, bustling crowds around the food courts, fiercely contested games -the scenes at the BK Arena in Kigali were surreal as the Basketball Africa League-BAL rounded up Season four. The Kigali fiesta capped off another season that exceeded metrics and confirmed the meteoric rise of BAL to the pinnacle of global sports events.

In a continent still navigating acute challenges on multiple fronts, the triumph of BAL is testament to the results that creativity, talent, vision and resources can produce. Launched in 2021 when the ravages of COVID-19 were still running riot, BAL has picked up steam and today stands out as a model of excellence with a template worth emulating for successful ventures in Africa.

With the Kalahari, Nile and Sahara Conferences taking place in South Africa, Egypt, and Senegal respectively, BAL extended its footprint across the continent in 2024, and the games were greeted with the same fervor. From stats shared by BAL, more than 500 media members from 20 countries across Africa, Europe and the U.S. were credentialed to cover the three group phases.

- The 12 BAL teams this season collectively featured 154 players from 25 countries across Africa, Europe, Oceania, and the U.S., including five players with NBA experience, 19 players with NBA G League experience, 48 former NCAA Division I players, 18 former Basketball Without Borders (BWB) campers, 12 NBA Academy Africa prospects, and 39 players who have represented their national teams at the FIBA Basketball World Cup and FIBA AfroBasket.

- The 2024 BAL season reached fans in 214 countries and territories in 17 languages through free-to-air and paid TV broadcast partnerships with the African Union of Broadcasting, American Forces Network (AFN), Canal+, NBA TV, SuperSport, Tencent Video, TSN, TV5 Monde, Visionary TV and Voice of America (VOA), and



Ajong Mbapndah L, Managing Editor

livestreaming on the NBA App, NBA.com, BAL.NBA.com and the BAL's YouTube channel

It has been a tale of premium entertainment, revelation of incredible fresh talent, marketing African tourism, and generally promoting the continent to blockbuster audiences who follow up BAL across the globe. With a dynamic leadership team led by Amadou Gallo Fall, a man with unbridled passion for the game and for Africa, BAL is giving new meaning to what a combination of vision, passion, and resources can do for the continent.

The dynamic and visionary team has made it a point to ensure that beyond the sports and entertainment aspects, BAL is a strong tool for development, a vehicle to promote business, an engine to market Africa, a continent with severe challenges but with immense potential, resources and possibilities.

From inception, BAL has creatively and progressively spiced its with programs that show a commitment to its role as a driver of social and economic change as well. The Threes for Trees campaign has added to the beauty of cities like Kigali, Rwanda, and Luanda in Angola. There have been programs to extend outreach and engage with the enterprising African diaspora.

A major highlight on the sidelines of the season 4 playoff and finals in Kigali was the third edition of the BAL Innovation Forum. With the vision of redefining Africa's sports innovation landscape, inspired by

the game of basketball, emphasizing youth empowerment, economic growth, and development, the event explored collaboration and investment opportunities while showcasing Africa's brightest talents in sports technology and innovation.

The Summit highlighted the creative identities of Africa through the lens of arts, culture, heritage, business and innovation, while mobilizing the individuals who have the power to unlock opportunities and build toward a stronger and more connected Africa of tomorrow.

Presented by Visit Rwanda, RwandaAir, and Afreximbank, the Summit that took place on May 30 at the Kigali Marriott Hotel brought together leaders from business, technology, sports and entertainment to explore opportunities and potential of the creative and tech sectors across the African continent.

From BAL President Amadou Gallo Fall, to Claire Akamanzi of CEO of NBA Africa, Masai Ujiri of the Toronto Raptors, Acha Leke of McKinsey, Thierno Habib Hann of Shelter Africa, Prof Benedict Oramah of Afreximbank, Senior government ministers, corporate leaders, established civil society actors and other big names in the basketball galaxy, the Summit was rich in exchange and networking.

"The overarching goal of our league is to build a robust sports business industry and an economic growth engine around basketball. The confluence of sport, tech and entertainment will provide a platform for the continent's leaders to inspire our Africa youth," says Amadou Gallo Fall, BAL President. As he and his team get richly deserved accolades for the ground breaking achievements in four seasons, Africa must continue with reforms that will see more initiatives and visions in the mold of BAL to thrive.

While the headquarters of BAL maybe in Senegal, Kigali and Rwanda played a significant role in its success. President Paul Kagame has been a regular presence at the games over the years and season four was no

different. President Kagame and President Bassirou Diomaye Faye of Senegal attended the BAL game opposing Senegal's AS Douanes and Rwanda's APR Basketball Club during the Sahara conference. Heartwarming to see such endorsements for the noble venture that BAL is.

At a time when even business moguls like Aliko Dangote are growing increasingly frustrated and vocal about the hassles of traveling across Africa with archaic visa policies, countries like Rwanda are getting it right. Visas are issued on arrival in Kigali with little fuss. It is the same for a growing number of African countries, but like Dangote says it is unfathomable that for some one like him, he should find it easier traveling across multiple European countries while having all the stress in the world navigating through African countries.

The success of BAL is part of a reawakening of sorts that Africa is going through. Stronger visions, stronger appreciation and endorsements of what is right, what adds value and what is making a difference. But also, a stronger consciousness on the capacity to sanction, especially on leadership that remains one of the greatest banes. We this in the way South Africans ruthlessly sanctioned the historic and ruling ANC at the recent elections.

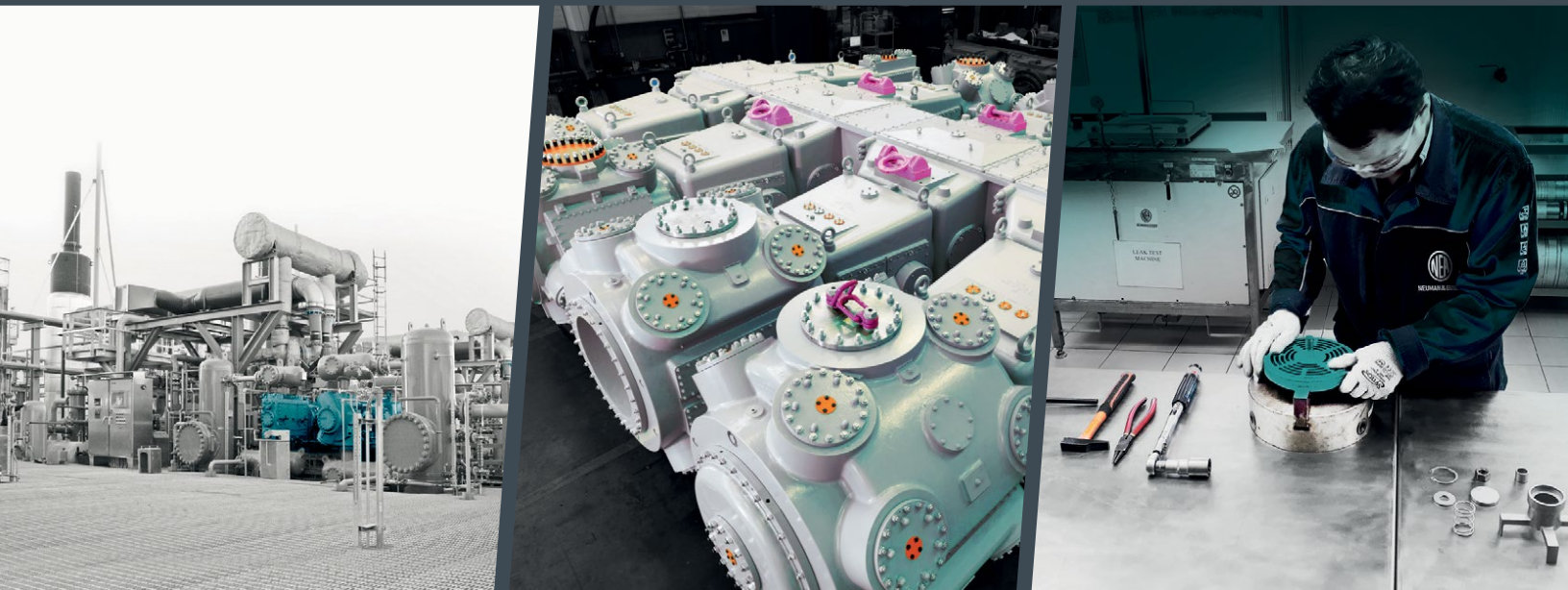
In previous issues of PAV Magazine, we expressed concern not just on the surge in coups but in the glee with which Africans embraced and felt comfortable with military leaders. That in Burkina Faso, the military is extending its stay in power for five years with no one blinking should be a wakeup call for civilian leaderships. Africans may be patient, but that patience has a limit.

In addition to taking hats off to BAL, this issue of PAV takes a look at the upcoming elections in Rwanda, the shellacking of the ANC in the recent elections in South Africa, a year in office for Governor Agbu Kefas in Taraba State, Nigeria, the extension of military rule in Burkina Faso, and more. Happy Reading!!



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# Rwanda at Crossroads: Elections 2024 to Shape Future Under International Scrutiny

By Adonis Byemelwa

As the date of Rwanda's presidential and parliamentary elections approaches, the nation stands at a pivotal crossroads. Scheduled for July 15th, these elections hold significant implications for Rwanda's political future and its standing on the global stage. At the heart of these elections lies the candidacy of incumbent President Paul Kagame, who has been in power for over 24 years and is seeking a fourth term in office.

Kagame's tenure has been marked by a series of landslide victories in previous elections, where he secured over 90% of the vote in 2003, 2010, and 2017. However, his prolonged rule has raised questions about democratic governance and the concentration of power in Rwanda.

A critical turning point in Rwanda's political landscape occurred in December 2015 with the passing of a constitutional amendment that removed presidential term limits. This controversial amendment paved the way for Kagame to contest and win a third term in 2017, amidst both support and criticism from various quarters.

«The removal of term limits raises questions about the consolidation of power and the long-term implications for Rwanda's democracy,» remarked Evelyne Shiga, a graduate of the Kigali Institute of Education (KIE) and an advocate for democratic governance.

The subsequent referendum on December 18, 2015, demonstrated significant public support for these constitutional changes, enabling Kagame's continued rule. However, the amendments also sparked concerns about the fairness and transparency of the electoral process, with allegations of limited political space for opposition voices.

One such opposition figure challenging Kagame's candidacy is Frank Habineza, leader of the Green Party. Habineza, a prominent Rwandan politician and founder of the



*Hailed by millions and criticized by others, re-election is largely guaranteed for President Paul Kagame. Photo courtesy.*

Democratic Green Party of Rwanda (DGPR), has emerged as a vocal critic of Kagame's administration.

«Despite the challenges we face, our candidacy represents a beacon of hope for democratic values and pluralism in Rwanda,» affirmed Habineza during a campaign rally in Kigali.

However, opposition candidates face significant obstacles in their bid for the presidency. Victoire Ingabire, leader of the United Democratic Forces (FDU-Inkingi), has encountered legal challenges preventing her candidacy, underscoring the limitations on political dissent.

«Rwanda's political landscape is characterized by restricted political freedoms and limited space for opposition parties to operate,» remarked Anwarite Antony, another KIE graduate and political analyst.

Meanwhile, Herman Manirareba, an advocate for restoring Rwanda's monarchy, failed to meet the legal requirements for an independent candidacy. Innocent Hakizimana, a

schoolteacher from Nyabihu District, is campaigning to improve living conditions and reform education, highlighting grassroots efforts to effect change.

Despite multiple aspirants, the primary contenders for the presidency remain Kagame and Habineza due to constitutional and legal hurdles faced by other candidates. The parliamentary elections, utilizing a proportional representation system, aim to ensure diverse representation, with seats allocated to special groups like women, youth, and people with disabilities.

«While Rwanda has made significant strides in economic development and social stability, concerns remain about political repression and human rights abuses,» remarked John Migorozzi, a truck driver from Rwanda to Burundi.

The upcoming elections in Rwanda are poised to have far-reaching implications not only for the nation itself but also for its international relations, particularly with key

partners like the United Kingdom. As Rwandans prepare to exercise their democratic rights, the world watches closely, mindful of the potential impact on Rwanda's reputation and global standing.

Analysts like Anwarite Antony Sashay from the Kigali Institute of Education (KIE) emphasize the critical juncture at which Rwanda finds itself: «Rwanda's future hinges on the conduct and results of the election. The outcome will shape the country's trajectory and its relations with the international community.»

The elections are anticipated to be closely monitored, given President Paul Kagame's past electoral victories, which have raised questions about the fairness and transparency of the process. In the 2017 elections, Kagame secured a staggering 99% of the votes, prompting concerns about political oppression and biased registration procedures.

«Despite the appearance of a multi-party system, the dominance of Kagame's Rwandan Patriotic

Front (RPF) has limited the field of presidential candidates,» remarks political analyst Evelyne Shiga. «This election cycle, Frank Habineza of the Democratic Green Party of Rwanda stands as the only notable opposition candidate, highlighting the challenges facing political pluralism in Rwanda.»

These concerns about political repression and limited opposition participation have already reverberated internationally, particularly in the United Kingdom. The UK Supreme Court recently found the UK-Rwanda asylum scheme unlawful, citing Rwanda's poor human rights record and concerns about the potential for refugees to face persecution or lack of fair judicial processes.

«The UK's stance on Rwanda as a safe country for asylum seekers is contentious,» notes John Migorozi, reflecting on the legal challenges surrounding the Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill introduced by UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak. «The outcome of Rwanda's elections could further shape UK policies and political discourse, especially regarding asylum and immigration.»

Beyond asylum policies, Rwanda's elections could impact broader UK-Rwanda relations, including trade, investment, and development



British PM Rishi Sunak hosts Rwandan President Paul Kagame at Downing Street, May 4, 2023. Photo courtesy

cooperation. UK companies have significant interests in Rwanda across various sectors, from infrastructure to consumer goods, as highlighted by investments from companies like Actis, Unilever, and Prudential.

«The UK's engagement with Rwanda reflects its broader foreign policy objectives of promoting stability, prosperity, and democratic values,» remarks Imani Mukuta, a tour operator based in Rwanda. «However, the outcome of the

elections could influence the depth and nature of this engagement.»

Meanwhile, Rwanda's relationships with other global powers, such as China and Russia, also play a crucial role in shaping its economic and geopolitical landscape. Chinese companies have made substantial investments in Rwanda, particularly in infrastructure and technology, while Russia has expressed interest in areas like energy and mining.

«China's investments in Rwanda

contribute to the country's economic development, but they also raise questions about dependency and sovereignty,» observes Shiga. «Similarly, Russia's strategic interests in Rwanda highlight the geopolitical complexities at play in the region.»

As Rwanda navigates these relationships and prepares for the upcoming elections, the international community awaits the outcome with bated breath. The conduct and results of the elections will not only determine Rwanda's political future but also its place in the global arena.

«In the aftermath of the 1994 genocide, Rwanda has made remarkable strides in rebuilding and development,» reflects Sashay. «Yet, the upcoming elections will test the resilience of its democratic institutions and the commitment to human rights and political pluralism.»

Ultimately, the decisions made by Rwandans at the ballot box will reverberate far beyond their borders, shaping the trajectory of the nation and its relationships with key partners like the United Kingdom. As the world watches, the stakes are high, and the future of Rwanda hangs in the balance.



Green Party leader Frank Habineza. Photo courtesy.



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# 30 Years On: A Look at South Africa's Democratic Journey - The Hits and Misses

By Prince Kurupati

30 years ago, South Africans from all walks of life accounting for 86 percent of the registered voters cast their votes in the country's first post-Apartheid elections. The elections, which were conducted on 27 April 1994, were the first to use the universal suffrage principle. 62.65 per cent of the votes cast on Election Day went in favour of the African National Congress (ANC), a party led by a black man who had spent nearly three decades in prison for his role battling the country's segregationist structures. The man is none other than Nelson Mandela.

On May 10, 1994, Nelson Mandela was inaugurated as South Africa's first democratically elected president. His ascension to power embodied African resistance and fortitude. In Africa, South Africa's independence officially marked the end of colonialism as it was one of the last standing white minority-led countries on the continent.

As South Africans celebrated their independence all those years back, they were full of hope for the future. Having been regarded as second-class citizens for many years, deprived of the most basic rights including the right to vote, South Africans on April 27, 1994, had finally won a hard-fought battle - a battle and sweat, tears and blood. Reflecting on this special day, South Africa's current president Cyril Ramaphosa said «On that day, the dignity of all the people of South Africa was restored.»

The South African President uttered the words in his Freedom Day speech, a speech which he characteristically delivered at the Union Buildings. On this particular day, the entire front side of the Union Buildings structure was emblazoned with the word, «FREEDOM». In his speech, President Ramaphosa said April 27 is the day “when we cast off our shackles. Freedom’s bells rang across our great country.” The South African leader also praised the 30-



year journey from 1994 till today saying, “South Africa’s democracy is young. What we’ve achieved in these short 30 years is something of which all of us should be proud. This is an infinitely better place than it was 30 years ago.»

Echoing the same sentiments with those of the President, many South Africans especially those who experienced the Apartheid era as well

as those who have heard tales agreed that there are many gains which should be cherished, celebrated and jealously guarded. Chief among these is the right to vote which South Africans are going to exercised when the country held its much anticipated parliamentary elections on 29 May, 2024.

During the Apartheid era, Nelson Mandela who was the emblem of black South African's resistance to white minority rule frequently bemoaned the state of the media in the country and the role it played in discriminating against black folks. In one of his famous quotes, he declared that «an ignorant society cannot be democratic.» Well, when one juxtaposes the state of the media in South Africa today, there is reason to celebrate as South Africa today has a vibrant and adversarial media landscape.

Prinola Govenden, a media and communications senior lecturer at the University of Johannesburg described the country's media landscape as healthy saying, «The state of media freedom in South Africa is healthy. According to the latest Freedom of the World 2024 findings by Freedom House, the American advocacy and research group supporting democracy, freedom of expression is generally respected. South Africa scores an impressive three out of four



Nelson Mandela casts his vote in South Africa's 1994 election. Photo courtesy.



From grace to grass-the ANC no longer enjoys the cult status of 1994. Photo courtesy

for having 'free and independent media'. Independent civic groups can expose government malpractice and efforts to encroach freedom of expression.»

In agreement with Govenden that South Africa's media landscape has turned out for the better, Fredson Guilengue, program director for Southern Africa at the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation in Johannesburg, also picked out other areas of progress saying, the country has «succeeded in introducing one of the most progressive constitutions in the world, establishing an independent judiciary, a free press, free and fair elections.» Moreover, he said the recognition of LGBTQ+ rights, an expanded education system and greater access to electricity, social housing and social services for the poor are among the key milestones achieved in the past three decades.

Speaking of the other gains that have been ushered in by the ANC

thanks to its democratic victory in the 1994 elections, President Ramaphosa in his Freedom Day speech said, «We have pursued land reform, distributing millions of hectares of land to those who had been forcibly dispossessed... We have built houses, clinics, hospitals, roads and constructed bridges, dams, and many other facilities. We have brought electricity, water and sanitation to millions of South African homes.»

While there are many democratic gains to cherish and celebrate, there are also some misses that need to be pointed out and hopefully eradicated as the country moves forwards. As related by the World Bank, South Africa's official unemployment rate pegged at 32 per cent is the highest in the world. In part to this, South Africa's unemployed population engages in all sorts of vices which are destroying the country's moral and social fabric.

Moreover, while the country gained

political independence, the levers of the economy are still largely in the hands of the whites. South Africa's black majority, which makes up 80 percent of the population is severely affected by poverty. Owing to this, the inequality in terms of wealth distribution in South Africa is the largest in the world according to the World Bank.

Greg Mills and Ray Hartley of the Brenthurst Foundation while writing for the Daily Maverick said that any misses in South Africa's democratic journey from 1994 to today are all down to the ineptitude of the ANC as it has failed to «grasp the key mechanics needed to advance the country economically.» They also state that the country is failing to move forward as its best interests are being sacrificed on the altar of patronage. Using the example of Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma who escaped without punishment for her role in the Sarafina Scandal after the

interference of Nelson Mandela, Mills and Hartley said it became crystal clear from the word go that «there was protection from on high for the ANC's royal game.» This act opened the floodgates for all other scandals which went unpunished including the Arms Deal, State Capture Scandal and Phala Phala Scandal.

The net result of the own goals scored by the ANC which in turn count as misses in the country's democratic pathway is the removal of the ANC from office. This was said by Seth Mazibuko, a well-known anti-Apartheid activist of the 1970s who is now one of the oldest supporters of the Rise Mzansi political party. Rise Mzansi is a newly formed political party which used the occasion of the Freedom Day celebrations to spread its main campaign message of «2024 is our new 1994» as it seeks to wrestle power from the ANC on May 29, 2024.

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# Burkina Faso : Military Consolidates Grip On Power

By Prince Kurupati

The wave of coups that have taken place in West and Central Africa since 2020 has been castigated for reversing Africa's democratic gains. One of the first countries to experience a coup during this wave was Burkina Faso. The country's coup leaders had promised to relinquish power this year and hence restore civilian rule but a resolution passed at the just-ended national talks in the capital city Ouagadougou saw the junta extend its stay in power for another 5 years.

In 2022, the military led by Captain Ibrahim Traore seized power in Burkina Faso removing interim President Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba citing his inability to crush the rising Islamist insurgency in the country. Damiba himself ascended to power via a coup eight months earlier after deposing the civilian and democratically elected leader Roch Marc Christian Kabore.

With Burkina Faso battling Jihadi rebels affiliated with Al Qaeda and the Islamic State group whose insurgency had claimed thousands of lives and displaced millions of others since 2015, the Ibrahim Traore-led coup was welcomed by many in Burkina Faso. They viewed the entry of the military leaders as a positive step meant to stamp out the persistent insecurity that the country had been subjected to. Moreover, Ibrahim Traore's declaration that the military would relinquish power in just two years reassured the nation that the military was just doing the right thing.

In the 'two' years in which coup leader Ibrahim Traore promised to be in power, he said the junta working in partnership with other state institutions would organize elections that would restore civilian rule. The elections were originally set for July 2024. However, towards the end of last year (2023), rumours started to emerge that this wasn't to be the case. The rumours were eventually proven truthful when the junta indefinitely postponed the polls instead calling



*Captain Ibrahim Traore and the military will now stay in power till 2029.*

for national talks with leaders of all opposition parties as well as civic organization leaders and religious leaders.

Dismayed by the postponement of the elections, only a handful of political leaders, most of whom lead the smaller and lesser-known parties heeded the call to attend the national talks. Ibrahim Traore and the junta nonetheless decided to hold the national talks. The main resolutational talks held in May 2024 was that Burkina Faso would postpone elections for a fixed 60 months. In the meantime, the transition back to democracy fronted by the junta will continue to lead the nation with Ibrahim Traore at the helm.

"The duration of the transition is fixed at 60 months from July 2, 2024," said Colonel Moussa Diallo who is the chairman of the organizing committee of the national dialogue process.

While the Charter signed by the junta and all those who attended the national talks is explicitly clear on the timeline of the transition period, it's quite vague when it comes to the question of elections. On the

elections issue, the Charter reads, "The elections marking the end of the transition may be organized before this deadline if the security situation so permits." This statement is quite vague as it doesn't state the exact schedule of when the planning of the elections will start as well as the proposed Election Day. Rather, it leaves room for the junta to decide when to hold the elections based on its interpretation of the country's "security situation". The vagueness of the Charter on this front therefore leaves room for a possible extension of the transition period beyond the fixed 60 months.

Currently, about half of Burkina Faso's territory remains outside of government control. This is despite the junta's move to sever military ties with its former colonial ruler France choosing instead to partner with Russia. In the past, Ibrahim Traore warned that elections are not "a priority" until the territory is recaptured from jihadist forces so that all citizens of the country can vote. If the security situation doesn't change by 2029, there is good reason to fear a further junta extension in power. Considering the reports

from the African Center for Strategic Studies that security in Burkina Faso has worsened since Traore took over with deaths caused by militant Islamist violence increasing by 46%, the likelihood of the elections being held in 2029 just becomes dimmer.

As and when the junta will feel like it's now the right time to hold elections, Capt. Ibrahim Traore according to the Charter will be eligible to run for presidency. This provision when factoring in the influence that the junta may have on any institution that will be tasked with organizing the elections poses a huge dilemma. Will Captain Traore and the junta be guided by the genuine spirit of democracy to conduct purely democratic elections or will they merely conduct elections for expediency purposes?

More ominously, the Charter eliminated the concept of quotas which has traditionally been used to apportion parliamentary seats to participating parties in the general elections. Political parties using the quota system would be awarded parliamentary seats depending on how they fare (votes garnered in comparison to other parties) in the

elections. Instead of quotas, the new criterion to be used in choosing representatives is “patriotism”.

Moreover, the Charter in somewhat of an authoritarian style dictated that the monitoring, control and implementation of the country’s vision in all areas would be overseen by a new body called Korag “through all means”.

Up to the time that Ibrahim Traore organized the national talks, his reign has always sharply divided opinion both domestically and internationally. Junta supporters and those who are sympathetic to its cause have welcomed Traore’s leadership as a breath of fresh air when compared to past leaders. He



*The fiery rhetoric and actions of Captain Ibrahim Traore have drawn mix reactions. Photo courtesy.*

has implemented austerity measures targeted specifically towards the elites which saw the salaries of many top governments slashed. In turn, the salaries of low-income to middle-income earners were significantly boosted. This however is juxtaposed with his failure to stamp out Islamist insurgency, something which he preached about upon ascending to power back in 2022 – it’s also the same thing which he used to justify the coup that toppled his predecessor, Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba. It’s to be seen therefore how the new development (instituted Charter) will impact this stark divide.

## Young Blood Takes the Reigns of Mozambique's Revolutionary Party

By Prince Kurupati

Just recently, Africa welcomed its youngest democratically elected president, Bassirou Diomaye Faye of Senegal. Faye’s elevation to the presidency was widely welcomed, not just because of the new president’s age (44) but because his ascendancy stopped an otherwise unwanted trend of coups in West and Central Africa. Well, something similar is cooking down south as Mozambique picked a ‘young’ man of 47 years to lead the ruling party, Mozambique Liberation Party (Frelimo).

Daniel Chapo, Frelimo’s new supremo is a law graduate, former political science lecturer and radio announcer. Despite his ‘tender’ age, Chapo has already amassed a wealth of experience in politics having served as provincial governor of Inhambane since 2016. Despite this, his elevation to the top post of Frelimo came as a surprise to many largely because of his age - in revolutionary parties, especially, in southern Africa, ageism prevails as the older generation prefers to take control citing their war credentials.

The news of Daniel Chapo’s elevation to the leadership of Mozambique’s revolutionary party



*Daniel Francisco Chapo with his predecessor President Felipe Nyusi .FRELIMO remains the dominant force in Mozambique politics.*

was announced by outgoing president Filipe Nyusi. As he announced the news, President Nyusi also dismissed speculation that he wanted to run for a third term. “The soap opera of speculation ends, including speculation about a third term,” President Nyusi said. Thanks to the announcement, it became crystal clear that the southern African nation is following a democratic pathway

of conducting credible elections contested by constitutionally eligible candidates when they are due.

Though he announced the news, the decision to pick Daniel Chapo as Frelimo’s new leader wasn’t a decree. Rather, it came as a result of a consensus reached by Frelimo’s central committee. The Central Committee met for three days in the capital, Maputo after which the

decision was reached.

For the 47-year-old Daniel Chapo, his main responsibility as he takes the reigns of the ruling party couldn’t be clearer - he is tasked with steering his party to yet another electoral victory come October 9, 2024. Frelimo has been in power since 1975 when Mozambique attained its independence. Chapo will be hoping to extend Frelimo’s hegemony in the

upcoming polls.

Announcing the news that Daniel Chapo had been picked as Frelimo's new leader, President Filipe Nyusi said, «With the election of its candidate for president, Frelimo took an important step to prepare for victory in the October elections.» The statement has been interpreted by political experts as an insight into Frelimo's election strategy of wooing young voters by way of giving them a 'young' candidate to vote for.

While some viewed the elevation of Daniel Chapo as a strategy to woo young voters, some political experts said Chapo's ascendency spelled doom for Frelimo. They cite the withdrawal of Chapo's closest rival, Roque Silva, as a testament to the huge frictions in the ruling party where two factions are fighting to control the party. One of the factions is believed to be aligned to the incumbent Filipe Nyusi while the other is sympathetic to former President Armando Guebuza.

In the first race before the withdrawal of Roque Silva, Daniel Chapo garnered 103 votes and in the second round after the withdrawal of Silva, he garnered 221 votes out of 240. Perhaps as a sign of acknowledgement that Frelimo is currently rocked by infighting and divisions, President Filipe Nyusi when he announced the news of Daniel Chapo's elevation to the leadership of the party made a rallying unity cry saying let's «give Daniel Chapo all our support.» He went on to state that «We must all unite around comrade Daniel Francisco Chapo, in the



Daniel Chapo is tasked with leading the ruling party to victory in the October 2024 elections.

demanding march towards electoral victory next October.»

Speaking for the first time after he was elected as Frelimo's new leader, Daniel Chapo also pleaded for unity and said he is ready to work with everyone. «We will work... with all layers of society -- young people, women, men and war veterans... We are going to work with all social strata,» he said.

As Mozambique prepares to go to the polls in October, Chapo by virtue of being the Frelimo candidate is already the frontrunner to become the next president. This is largely

necessitated by Frelimo's dominance at the polls something demonstrated by last year's local authority elections where Frelimo won 64 out of 65 seats. If elected as Mozambique's new president, Chapo will lead a country that's currently battling an Islamist insurgency in northern Cabo Delgado province - the province with vast natural gas deposits, the largest found South of the Sahara.

Though riddled with Islamist militants, the northern Cabo Delgado province is anticipating «TotalEnergies SE's imminent return to a \$20-billion-plus natural gas

project it paused three years ago after militants staged attacks nearby.» Bloomberg states «The revival of TotalEnergies' plan is crucial for a nation that's among the poorest in the world.»

Chapo is yet to know his main rival in the upcoming polls as Renamo the main opposition party is scheduled to hold its own internal elections this month. Ossufo Momade, its current president, has faced internal criticism of his leadership. He got 21.5% of the national vote in 2019, compared with Nyusi's 73%.



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# Coalition Government: A Test For South Africa's Democracy

By Kestér Kenn Klomegâh

Despite the alarming struggle for control and influence among South African political parties, the African National Congress (ANC) headed by Cyril Ramaphosa has finally constituted a broad coalition government, contentiously designed to contain rising tension and to integrate rival opposition forces such as the Democratic Alliance (DA) and Inkatha Freedom Party into its fold.

However, expert analysis and narratives indicated that despite this first step towards advancing the main political and economic achievements of the ANC and the roadmap for sharing power in the next government, and at the same time, given the latest emerging political model in the country there are diverse internal and external implications for South Africa.

In this conversation, Samir Bhattacharya, a research associate at Observer Research Foundation (ORF) discusses the importance of the political reconfiguration and aspects of its implications. Bhattacharya also provides insights for understanding the common intricacies in the latest developments after the first parliamentary sitting on 14th June 2024 and South Africa's relations with Southern African Development Community (SADC) and African Union (AU). Here are the interview excerpts:

## Is ANC slippery slope in South Africa's politics an expected evolutionary process?

Samir Bhattacharya: When the results of the seventh national election in South Africa were announced in May 2024, it was not shocking that the ruling African National Congress (ANC) had lost its absolute majority for the first time since its 1994 transition to democracy. It witnessed a steady decline in its share of the vote since 1999. However, every time, it managed to secure a majority. Last time, in 2019, it got about 57.5 per



Down but not out, Cyril Ramaphosa remains President of South Africa and the ANC has cobbled a governing coalition. Photo courtesy.

cent vote share. But this time, the vote share dropped abysmally low to 40.2%.

As of present, the African National Congress (ANC) has called for a coalition of national unity in which all parties are welcome to join and take part in governing alongside the ANC. It is anticipated that the cabinet posts will be distributed according to the number of seats each party won. Currently, the coalition's members include the main opposition party, the centrist Democratic Alliance (DA), and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP). The vote shares for the DA and IFP were 22% and 4%, respectively.

This may be a boon in disguise since it will force parties on opposing sides of the aisle to cooperate. Since each party represents a different set of electors, it can foster social solidarity amongst disparate elements of society.

Nevertheless, South Africa lacks a legislative or constitutional structure that would dictate the manner in which the proposed unity government must be constituted. Furthermore, the parties' radically different and occasionally incompatible points of view may result in ideological

conflicts and deadlock in policy. Moreover, if this gap grows, the coalition can disintegrate, leading to political instability.

## As the current situation stands, what signals and implications of the latest development offer for South Africa, and generally for Africa?

Samir Bhattacharya: President Ramaphosa has undoubtedly received a startling reality check after the election result, as his party was not able to secure an absolute majority in parliament. Furthermore, this setback can have an impact on the stability or course of his government during his second term. The primary reason is that the ruling ANC, despite being way ahead than any of its rival parties, has lost its commanding majority and will depend on other parties to keep the government running.

Truly, the recent election of South Africa was quite chaotic, and it witnessed the proliferation of several new political parties. More than 50 political parties participated, highest number of parties fighting in the election in South African history.

While most of them wanted to topple the ANC government, except the four major parties, none even had any national level ambition or vision. They were mostly restricted to highly localised issues and expected to draw some blood from the weakened ANC.

There was no shared leadership or agenda among these parties. Additionally, they have incredibly different and frequently conflicting beliefs about governance. For instance, even though DA agreed to join the coalition, it firmly opposes both the National Health Insurance (NHI) Bill, which would provide universal healthcare for all, and the ANC's black empowerment program, which aims to give black people a stake in the economy as a response to their exclusion during the apartheid era. Meanwhile the radical Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) party and newly formed uMkhonto weSizwe (MK) party endorse nationalising the country's mines and seizing of white-owned land without compensation. The IFP, on the other hand, is a conservative, pro-Israel, pro-West party that is extremely hostile to the migrants.

Within the ANC, there are also



*The resurrection of former President and uMkhonto weSizwe leader Jacob Zuma was a major fallout in the recent elections. Photo Michele Spatarì, AFP.*

internal divisions. The liberal lot, which has been the party's main force since its founding but has now mellowed into a moderate social democrat fraction that currently has the majority, is more inclined to support business interests than to pursue drastic economic reforms. Forming an alliance with the official opposition DA is acceptable to this segment. But, the left wing, which has been historically molded by the Tripartite Alliance between the Congress of South African Trade Unions and the South African Communist Party, will attempt to exert more influence, either under Jacob Zuma's leadership or through the radical leftist Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), should either of them choose to join the coalition.

*And what possible impact do think this would have on its future foreign policy, and considering at the fact that South Africa is a member of Southern African Development Community (SADC) and African Union (AU)?*

Samir Bhattacharya: Foreign policy is rife with ideological divisions, just like domestic concerns. The agenda that the DA seeks is pro-Western. On the other hand, the recently formed MK party, led by former President Jacob Zuma, is anti-Western and pro-

BRICS. MK and Malema's EFF, in contrast to DA, both support Russia. Moving forward, the next administration will need to give the country's foreign policy issues serious attention, chief among them being the delicate balancing act between the West, China, and Russia. Despite being geographically distant, the metastasizing war in Ukraine has had a substantial impact on South Africa, particularly in terms of food security. At a deeper level, the incoming



*The outcome of the elections may be a blessing in disguise for South Africa, says Samir Bhattacharya.*

In response, external actors working with South Africa's coalition government will be required to exercise some patience and remain flexible. In fact, given the extreme ideological division within, it would become increasingly challenging to adopt a coherent policy stance. However, they need to keep in mind that South Africa still finds strength in its democratic system, which remains a cornerstone of stability and inclusivity. Due to its participation in numerous international issues and membership in groups such as the G20 and BRICS, South Africa is a significant global player. It has lately surpassed Nigeria to become the largest economy on the African continent.

South Africa also plays a major role in a number of international platforms and problems. South Africa received international recognition for its action in January when it approached the International Court of Justice (ICJ), filing a case against Israel. But the DA's alignment with Western perspectives, its backing of Israel, and its strategic uncertainty about the Palestinian cause might have a significant impact on South Africa's foreign policy, especially with regard to Palestine. However, a partnership between the ANC and Malema's EFF would bolster South Africa's opposition to Israel and increase its voice in several international fora.

In conclusion, it goes without saying that the election outcome and its fallout will be closely watched not only in South Africa and throughout the continent but also globally. This uncertainty is primarily caused by the difficulties in interpreting any prospective change in South African foreign policy and whether the coalition government would significantly alter or reframe its stance and policies in light of various global occurrences. The functional elements of the coalition will become more apparent in the days to come. After all, the devil is always in the details. Nevertheless, this would be a test for South Africa's democracy because a stable South Africa would be important for its citizens as well as for the rest of the continent.





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# Dangote Laments Africa's Strict Visa Regime

By Prince Kurupati

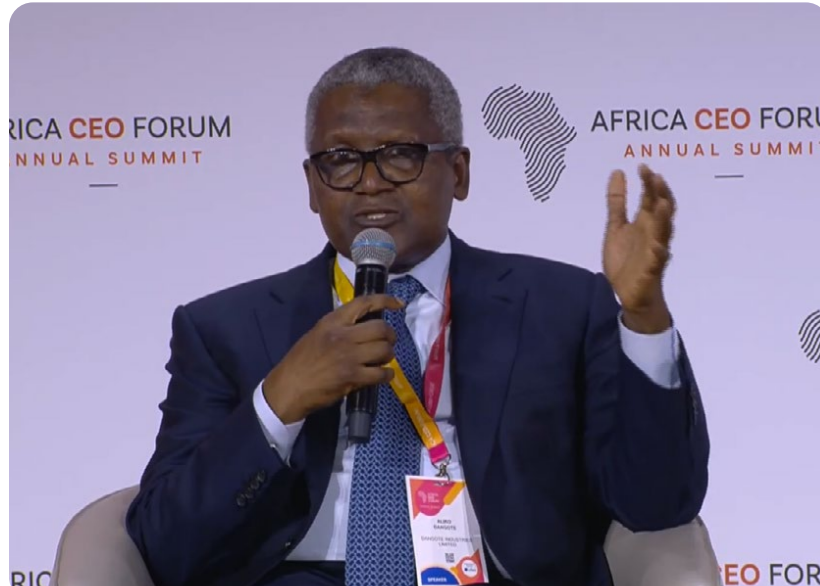
Eight years later after Aliko Dangote, Africa's richest man lamented Africa's strict visa regime, little has changed. In an interview in 2016, Dangote said that he needed 38 visas to travel across Africa. Fast forward eight years later, while speaking at the Africa CEO Forum, Africa's richest man said he currently needs 35 visas to travel on the African continent.

Essentially when taking the words of Dangote as is, it means Africa has recorded minimal progress in its open borders initiative. The minimal almost immaterial progress when juxtaposed with the African Union (AU)'s "vision and roadmap ... of scraping visa requirements for all African citizens by 2018," demonstrates a rather puzzling and embarrassing commitment to achieve set out goals and objectives.

Dangote during the discussions at the Africa CEO Forum held in Kigali Rwanda said many investors like him don't have much time to visit embassies and go through the visa application processes. As business people and investors, the ease of doing business and free movement across the continent is imperative for the economic benefit of the continent at large. Owing to this, the current strict visa regimes in Africa are a huge disservice to the continent's aspirations of transitioning from a developing to a developed continent.

"As an investor, as someone who wants to make Africa great, I have to apply for 35 different visas on my passport. I really don't have the time to go and drop off my passport in embassies to get a visa," Dangote said.

The 67-year-old businessman said what's even more worrying and frustrating for Africans is that travelling across Africa is more difficult for them than for Europeans. Stressing a point Patrick Pouyanne, the CEO of Total Energies sitting next



*Strict visa regimes in Africa are a huge disservice to the continent's aspirations of transitioning from a developing to a developed continent, says Aliko Dangote. Photo credit The Cable.*

to him, Dangote said, I can assure you that Patrick doesn't need 35 visas on a French passport, which means you have freer movement than myself in Africa."

For countries that have taken the lead in eliminating strict visa regimes through entirely scrapping visas for all African nationals such as the host country Rwanda, Dangote commended them saying what they did should set a good precedent that other countries should follow. Other countries that have entirely scrapped visas for all Africans are Benin, The Gambia, and Seychelles.

Kenya in the recent past made the headlines after President William Ruto famously said he had eliminated visas for all African nationals travelling to his country. He announced at the time that the visa regime was being replaced with an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA). Many at the time welcomed the move and heralded it as a step in the right direction. However, as the ETA began to be implemented, it became clear that it was pretty much similar to a visa regime – the supposed elimination of visas was just a matter of semantics. Currently, without processing fees, the ETA costs \$30 and takes several days to be

approved.

The comments by Dangote have prompted several Africans to air their views on Africa's strict visa regimes. Many argued against the visa regimes with some saying their personal experiences have been characterized by discrimination, hostility and sky-high fees. Tayo Aina, a Nigerian travel filmmaker said he has had humiliating experiences in Kenya, Ethiopia and South Africa. At one point, he said he had to give a stool sample in front of an Ethiopian immigration officer. Because of the humiliating experience and the overall difficulty attached to using an African passport, Aina said he finally resorted to buying a foreign passport from the Caribbean country of St Kitts and Nevis that gives him more freedom as it allows him to go to more African countries compared to his Nigerian passport.

Giving his views on why African countries are not receptive to the idea of opening up their borders, migration researcher Alan Hirsch said this is largely necessitated by the fear of permanent migration. "There's a fear in richer African countries that people from poorer nations might be looking for a way to permanently move there. A lot of Africans cross borders informally and we don't have a real

record of that. Some countries fear people applying for asylum and then disappearing under the radar," Hirsch said.

Referencing the (unsuccessful) AU's vision and roadmap to scrap visa requirements for all Africans by 2018 and current strict visa regimes across the continent, Larry Madowo writing for CNN said this demonstrates how African leaders in general are big when it comes to words and commitments but always fall short when it comes to implementation of ideas. He said this will ultimately affect other facets such as the recently instituted African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) whose success is largely premised on the free movement of people,

goods and services.

The sentiments echoed by Madowo are in line with the remarks said by Dangote as part of the solutions to Africa's strict visa regime. Dangote called upon African leaders to prioritize open borders and ease of doing business initiatives as the economic upliftment of the continent is solely hinged on Africans taking charge of their destiny. He said if foreigners are to come, then they will do so simply to add to what's already been built.

"Our main job is to make sure the regional markets all work. Once they work, then we can now go to the AfCFTA. But then, for AfCFTA also, we need to make sure that it works. We cannot have a very promising continent and our intra-trade rate is less than 16 percent. Okay, so we Africans will have to do it. If we are waiting for foreigners to come and do it, then the development of Africa, is not going to happen. So, it can only happen to us Africans. We must risk our sources and make sure that we lead, and then we will have people who actually trust and believe in Africa like Patrick to come and help us to push to the next level," Dangote said.

# Taraba State Nigeria- A Year In Office For Gov Agbu Kefas

By Ajong Mbapndah L



*We have seen progress on multiple fronts including agriculture, mining, women's empowerment amongst a host of other important areas, says Governor Agbu Kefas.*

of salaries, as well as commenced payments of pensions, gratuities, and the wages of retired civil servants. Moreover, on the job front, we are providing employment opportunities in continuing the development of many critical infrastructure projects. This includes a new ICT centre, which will provide opportunities for digital businesses and start-ups, as well as a palliative market, which will employ local people and sell goods at discounted prices for those in need. My administration also launched an initiative to employ 10,000 young people to help clean and develop waste management capacity in the State. We have overseen the payment of N15,000 to each participant monthly, as they support our efforts in making Taraba State a healthier place to live for local people.

*Taraba State is said to be the 3rd largest landmass in Nigeria and 85% of its 3.7 million population is engaged in agriculture, how is that sector faring and what vision do you have to make it better?*

**E**lected in March 2023 with the People's Democratic Party (PDP) Agbu Kefas took office in May 2023 as Governor of Taraba State, in Nigeria. Governor Kefas is part of a new generation of Nigerian politicians and is determined to develop Taraba across several key focus areas. A year into office, Governor Kefas fielded questions from PAV on developments and progress with implementation of the vision that brought him to power.

Barite, Lead-Zinc and Copper, that we want to sustainably exploit in collaboration with investors to create economic benefit for our people. As Governor, my commitment is to create prosperity for our community, prioritizing our talented people as we work with enterprises to support us in the realisation of our potential.

*In what shape was the State when you took over as Governor and what progress is there to see since you took office?*

As Governor, education has been fundamental to our administration's efforts, and we have seen significant progress over the course of my first year in office. I strongly believe that everybody should have access to education to contribute to the growth of our nation. That is why my first act was to pass legislation ensuring free education for all primary and secondary schools in Taraba. We are already seeing very promising results: this year, attendance rates increased by 34% in primary schools and up to

64% in secondary schools. Moreover, we have seen progress on multiple other fronts including agriculture, mining, women's empowerment amongst a host of other important areas. On the security front, the AECLD ranked Taraba in the top 5 most improved states in Nigeria in reducing fatalities caused by incidents of political violence from 2022 to 2023. Our focus moving forward is to sustain this progress across sectors and continue to deliver tangible results for the people of Taraba.

*Based on the campaign promises you made to the people of Taraba State, how will you rate the implementation rate a year into your administration?*

During our campaign one of the main promises was to restore the dignity of labour. I understand the importance for people in Taraba to have fulfilling employment opportunities and to be justly rewarded for their efforts. To this end I have ensured the payment

My ambition is to bring about Taraba's potential in the agriculture sector as the breadbasket of the nation. The US International Trade Administration reports that Nigeria relies on \$10 billion worth of imports to meet its food and agricultural production shortfalls. We are a state with an expansive landmass containing bountiful quantities of unused arable land making us ripe for production. For this reason, I have provided farmers with easier access to pesticides and fertilizers amongst other essential farming equipment including tractors. Part of this supply came from a deal I secured with the Czech Republic to supply 850 tractors for Taraba State. I have also established the "Agriculture and Food Sustainability Committee", to focus on strategizing development to fulfil Taraba's agricultural potential as we engage investors to further innovation and expand our efforts.

*Could we start with an introduction of Taraba State in Nigeria for those who may not be familiar with it?*

Taraba's slogan is "Nature's Gift to the Nation", and it perfectly reflects what the state is. Taraba is a vast and fertile land, with great agricultural potential and natural resources. Our main economic driver is agriculture, and we lead in the domestic production of maize, tea, millet, sorghum, and rice. Our land is also rich with natural resources. We have deposits of Gold,



*My ambition is to bring about Taraba's potential in the agriculture sector as the breadbasket of the nation, says Governor Agbu Kefas.*

in the agri-sector to address the food security issues in Nigeria and abroad. Also to invigorate other sectors including renewable energy and mining. Due to geographic positioning near the equator and the vast expanse of land in our state, we are in a prime position for solar project development. In the mining sector, we have significant deposits of valuable resources as well as potential for further discoveries. The success we have had in tightening up security makes Taraba an attractive destination from a risk perspective. Across sectors, I am focused on creating favourable conditions and enabling investment through state support. We are actively collaborating with investors who wish to explore our natural resource base and help us in harnessing its value.

**In terms of some the biggest challenges typically associated with Nigeria-insecurity, power supply, unemployment, corruption, how does Taraba State fare on these metrics?**

Since coming to office, I have made security a priority. I met with leading security personnel from across the country to garner support and foster collaborative efforts. This includes with the leads of the Nigerian Navy, Army, and Airforce to receive guarantees of support in their relevant domains. As well as with the Chief of Defence Staff and the Chief of Army staff, who have pledged a battalion to be deployed to Taraba State to embolden the security presence. Under the umbrella of my security mandate have been my efforts to crackdown on illegal mining. I established the Taraba State Special Task Force on Environment and Illegal Mining, as well as signed the executive order to ban illegal mining practices. We saw substantial results with over 100 illegal miners arrested and prosecuted. Having previously served for 21 years in the Nigerian army, I will always endeavour to sustain a secure environment for all

Tarabans and our partners.

**For those looking to invest in Nigeria, can you give some reasons why Taraba State should be considered as a**

**destination, what opportunities are there in your state?**

Taraba State is abundant with vast amounts of untapped natural resources, and we are determined to make significant improvements

**How are relations between Governor Agbu Kefas and President Tinubu considering that you both belong to different parties, and how do you think Nigeria is faring under his leadership?**

Nigeria operates a federal constitution that stipulates the roles of



*During my administration we will never shy away from the challenges we face, and we will work to make sure Taraba grows and flourishes, says Gov Kefas.*

both the President and the governors. This helps to regulate the relationship between both segments. I'm a member of the Nigeria Governors Forum and from this platform, I relate very easily with the Presidency. We collaborate across many areas, and we sometimes disagree, but in most cases, we share common ground on issues of moving the country forward. It is a relationship that cuts across party divides and helps us to work as a unit for the best interests of the nation.

**Still on politics, what accounts for the poor run of results that your party the PDP has experienced on the national scene in the last three or so election cycles and what groundwork or discussions are taking place within the party**

**for a better showing in future elections?**

We are currently working diligently with other PDP governors to find answers to the important concerns you have raised. We are reviewing our approach and examining the challenges that have led us to our current position. We are also working to bring about reconciliation and are currently in the process of redefining our values. Providing credible opposition to the ruling party and presenting ourselves as a worthy alternative is what we will continue to do. We remain confident that we will succeed in our efforts.

**Can you share some insights on how the remaining three years of your first mandate are going to look like, what are some of the signature projects**

**or programs that you and your administration will be working on?**

In education we are strategizing a new initiative to upgrade schooling infrastructure and improve the capacity of teachers to educate students. I have dedicated 24% of the state budget in 2024 to education to sustain the transformative progress we have already delivered in the sector. In agriculture we are engaging investors to fund the development of agri-tech projects and innovative agricultural enterprises. We are leveraging finance and expertise from overseas to help us reach our potential in establishing projects to grow fresh produce for distribution throughout the nation, whilst training and empowering Taraban people.

**Going forward after a year in**

**office for Governor Agbu Kefas, what gives you hope for the future of Taraba State and any fears?**

In this first year of government, we started addressing important challenges and paving the way for reforms in key areas such as education, security, developing agriculture, mining, as well as empowering youth and women. Looking ahead, I am determined to continue the work we have started and tackle the great challenges we will face, such as those posed by climate change, which is a harsh reality for our communities. This year, I launched the Greening Taraba Initiative to tackle issues such as desertification and flooding. During my administration we will never shy away from the challenges we face, and we will work to make sure Taraba grows and flourishes. —

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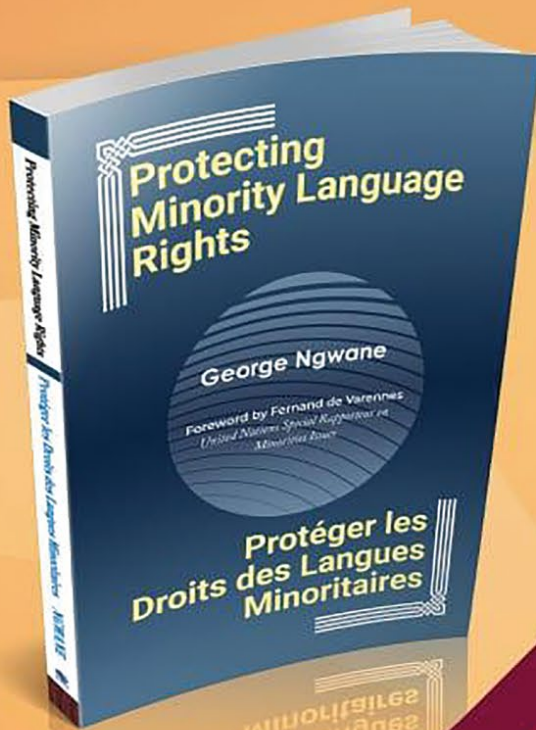


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# Botswana Remains One of Your Safest Bets-Masisi To Investors At US-Africa Business Summit

By Ajong Mbapndah L

**D**r. Mokgweetsi E.K. Masisi, President of the Republic of Botswana, has made a strong case for Botswana as a top investment destination, citing the country's stability, progressive policies, and strategic initiatives promoting economic growth and sustainability.

The Botswana leader spoke during the 'Doing Business in Botswana' session of the US-Africa Business Summit 2024 in Dallas, Texas.

Addressing a strong audience of potential investors, and summit attendees, President Masisi outlined Botswana's strategic priorities under the 'Reset Agenda,' which aims for significant post-pandemic recovery and sustainable development.

He emphasized vital areas such as digitization, value-chain development, and green energy, highlighting the country's commitment to digital innovation and boosting key economic sectors such as agriculture, tourism, and mining.

"These priorities are not only geared towards recovery measures in the aftermath of the pandemic,



*Botswana consistently ranks in the Top 10 for ease of doing business and global competitiveness in Africa, says President Masisi.*

but are also an embodiment of our people-centric approach to inclusive governance, where full focus is directed towards our people as we strive to eliminate poverty, address inequality, unemployment, as well

as enhancing sustainability across our key industries and sectors," said President Masisi while underscoring the active role of the youth who constitutes 60 per cent of the population.

President Masisi also called for long-term investments in green energy, reflecting Botswana's commitment to meeting global climate goals, such as achieving net-zero emissions.

He announced that Botswana consistently ranks in the Top 10 for ease of doing business and global competitiveness in Africa, as well as the Botswana Board of Investment formation, which he will chair to improve the country's business environment.

"As part of our broader investment promotion drive, and to ensure that we remain investor friendly and competitive, my Government has taken a decision to set up the Botswana Board of Investment, which I will chair, as a way of affirming our total commitment to the ease of doing business in Botswana," he added.

Additionally, President Masisi outlined significant infrastructure projects for the 2024/2025 fiscal year, including the development of the Mmamabula-Lephalale Railway



*My Government has taken a decision to set up the Botswana Board of Investment to affirm our total commitment to the ease of doing business in Botswana, says President Masisi.*

line and investments in road, rail, and air infrastructure totalling USD 216 million. These projects aim to better integrate Botswana into regional economic networks and capitalize on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

“Botswana in collaboration with Zambia have invested in the construction of a bridge across the Zambezi River, at a strategic place called, Kazungula, thus creating a transport and logistics corridor linking Southern Africa with Central Africa, and the rest of the African continent.”

Botswana’s digital transformation strategy was also highlighted. The President emphasized the critical need to improve ICT networks and establish local data centres to reduce reliance on external data hosting. He also emphasized the importance of strengthening innovation and supporting knowledge-based industries.

Looking ahead, President Masisi reassured investors about Botswana’s political and macroeconomic stability, describing the country as a democratic, investor-friendly platform for doing business in Africa.

He also mentioned the upcoming national elections in October, promising they would be conducted transparently and fairly as Botswana’s democratic process.

“Our democratic and investor-friendly Botswana is positioned to become a launch pad for doing business in Africa through our unrivalled good governance, macroeconomic and political stability, as well as our commitment to continuously improve our business environment,” added President Masisi.

At the same time, he invited the attendees to explore investment opportunities in Botswana and directed potential investors to the Botswana Investment and Trade Centre (BITC) for further assistance.

President Masisi also called for enhanced women’s role in trade during the summit. Speaking at the event focused on «Facilitating U.S.-Africa Trade and Investment: Women



*Botswana Investment and Trade Centre (BITC) CEO Keletsositse Olebile was part of the delegation.*

and the Diaspora.» he underscored the urgent need for increased female participation in trade locally and internationally.

The side event was organized by the African Women’s Entrepreneurship Program (AWEP) in partnership with the United States Department of Commerce Commercial Law Development Program (CLDP), the Africa Women and Youth Empowerment Group (AWYEG), and the Corporate Council on Africa.

President Masisi pointed out women’s significant economic contributions, particularly through informal cross-border trade valued at USD 17.6 billion.

In spite of their contributions, women frequently face exploitation and violence, with little protection.

To address these challenges, Botswana’s head of state emphasized the importance of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which is expected to boost Africa’s income by USD 450 billion by 2035 and significantly increase intra-African exports.

Masisi stated that the Botswana government has proactively assisted

women entrepreneurs through various initiatives, including a focus on public procurement opportunities for women-owned businesses and a partnership with UN Women on entrepreneurship training programs.

President Masisi further stressed the importance of transformative trade reforms that explicitly reduce gender discrimination and strengthen women’s capacity to meet global trade demands.

He referred to the World Trade Organization’s Buenos Aires Declaration on Women’s Economic Empowerment as a motivator for incorporating gender considerations into trade policies.

“I note with appreciation the adoption of the Buenos Aires Declaration on Women’s Economic Empowerment by the World Trade Organisation in December 2017. This continues to motivate Governments to mainstream gender in trade, including in cross-country trade agreements,” he stated.

Highlighting the barriers women entrepreneurs face, such as access to markets, finance, and capacity building, President Masisi called

for tailored support programs that can propel small and medium-sized enterprises (SMMEs) to global competition.

President Masisi also advocated for significant investments in programs that not only prevent violence against women but also encourage their leadership in critical areas such as digital technology and climate action.

Furthermore, President Masisi recommended a comprehensive policy shift to ensure that women have equal opportunities in international trade, which aligns with the goals of Agenda 2030 for sustainable development and gender equality.

Described by some as Botswana’s Chief Marketing Officer, President Masisi was accompanying in making the sales pitch for his country by a strong cast of different agency staff handling key sectors of the economy with strong investment potential. Noticeably present in Masisi’s delegation were dynamic young entrepreneurs who were presented with the opportunity to directly pitch some of their services and opportunities to investors.



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*Founded thirty years ago, Perenco is an independent hydrocarbon producer involved in the entire lifecycle of projects, from exploration to decommissioning. Gross production is over 510,000 BOEPD. The group's strength lies in the technical ingenuity and versatility of its 7,470 employees, who deliver safe and environmentally aware solutions to oil and gas fields around the world. By enhancing and developing local resources, Perenco is proud to support economic growth and social development wherever it works. Perenco operates in 14 partner countries and is based in the United Kingdom.*

# A Broader View of Eximbank's Activity and Achievements in Its Africa Portfolio



*President and Chair of Eximbank Reta Jo Lewis with President Masiwi of Botswana in a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the recent US-Africa Business Summit in Dallas, TX*

The undersigned are each members of the U.S. Export Import Bank Sub-Sahara Africa Advisory Committee (SAAC), an outside advisory body made up of professionals who in each instance have extensive experience in US/Africa in regards to trade, investment, development and development policy and or diplomacy relating to the African continent. (This letter expresses the opinions of the undersigned only, not the SAAC or US Export Import Bank.)

We are prompted to submit this Letter by an article that appeared in Bloomberg News on May 15 detailing the Eximbank Inspector General's report which, among other findings, faults current Eximbank leadership in regards to certain of the Bank's Africa activities. Indeed, the undersigned have each now reviewed the IG's May 10th report regarding Exim performance in Africa and believe that, while certain of its conclusions and commentary are supportable, its conclusions do not provide a fulsome

or particularly current picture of the work Eximbank is currently engaged in in Africa.

For instance, we note that the report covers the period FY 2014 through FY 2023 – a decade during which there were many years that Exim's operations were severely impacted by certain authorizations and funding being withheld. Exim's statutory authority lapsed between July 1 and December 4, 2015, and from July 2015 to May 2019 a lack of quorum on Exim's Board of Directors prevented the agency from authorizing transactions in excess of \$10 million. As a result, the total value of Exim's annual authorizations declined by nearly 84 percent – from \$20.5 billion in FY 2014 to \$3.3 billion in FY 2018. The normal pipeline of projects seeking financing for exports to sub-Saharan Africa was depleted and rebuilding that pipeline took some years to begin recovering once Exim's authorization was restored in 2019.

Upon assuming Chairmanship of

Eximbank in February 2022, current Chair Reta Jo Lewis – the first African American woman to serve in that role – pronounced her intention to make the Bank's involvement in African trade and US/Africa economic

partnership consequential. (For those of us with decades of interaction with Eximbank and with considerable experience in US/Africa trade issues, this factor is not inconsequential in this effort to engage in productive trade partnerships in Africa.)

We are not intending to second guess the Inspector General regarding the purposes for the report. However, we are of the opinion that if the IG Report was intended to create a productive outcome for the Bank's Africa programs, that goal was not fully met. While we do not ascribe any particular motive to the OIG's report, its tenor might create an erroneously negative impression of Exim's current Africa initiatives. We believe it is important to augment the public record with facts relating to some historically important achievements in Africa of late by the Bank.

To begin with, for those of us with decades of interaction with Eximbank, we are immediately struck with the fact that Ms. Lewis is the first African American woman as Eximbank's Chair, a factor which is not inconsequential towards engaging Africa's trading partners. Moreover the Bank has on dozens



*Jude Kearney is Managing Partner ASAFO & Co. US LLP.*

of occasions of late, at home and internationally, publicly committed to greatly improving its coverage in Africa and to make its involvement in the US/Africa trade partnership reflective of the current importance of Africa to world commerce. We believe that the Bank, so far, is largely living up to those intentions, even as it acknowledges inherent and historic challenges.

As some examples of current forward leaning activities by the Bank in regards to its Africa portfolio, we wish to list just a few of the Bank's current actions which highlight their focused and dedicated attention to US/African trade. Last month, in mid-April, the Bank hosted an exceptionally popular and well attended Global Business Development Summit which highlighted the African diaspora and specifically focused on increasing—and financing—US/Africa trade. Africans from the public and private sector were there, as were their counterparts from the US and the Caribbean.

Moreover, Senior Leaders of Exim have seemed purposeful in trying to meet African leaders and African



*Florie Liser, President and CEO Corporate Council on Africa.*

project sponsors where they are. The Chair and senior officials have traveled to the African continent 8 times so far and have met with and hosted over 60 African heads of state and senior ministers. Additionally—and importantly, given the endemic lack of financing available to wishing to trade with Africa—Exim has focused on forging new trade finance

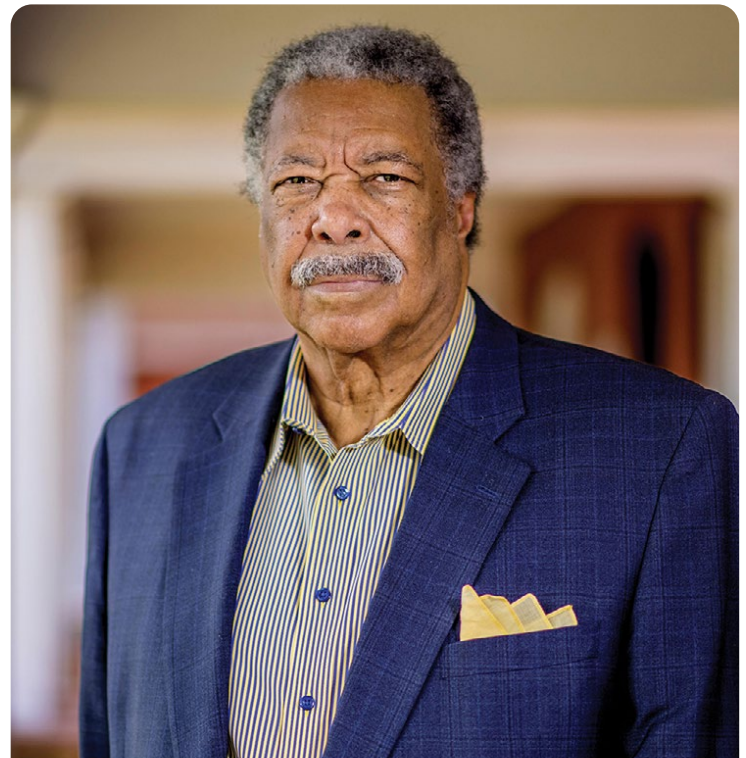
leveraging arrangements with African sovereigns and with Africa-focused financial institutions, including US banks and investment banks, Afreximbank, African Development Bank, African Finance Corporation, and the Bank of Industry in Nigeria.

Exim has been heralded worldwide for its historic \$1.4 billion financing of solar energy and related infrastructure

projects and, among other projects, financing of Ethiopian Airways asset acquisitions which were needed in order to sustain its leadership role among global carriers. In all, from where we each sit in regards to our work in Africa, Eximbank's current activities on the continent have resulted in its most active presence in Africa and the African diaspora in its



*Ambassador (Retired) Harry Thomas, Kissinger Fellow, Yale University's Jackson School of Global Affairs.*



*Mayor (Retired) Wellington Webb, President and Founder of Webb Group International.*

history.

Our job as the SAAC committee is decidedly NOT to publicly defend Eximbank or its officials in any way. Far from it. We are instead asked to use our experiences in our support of and advice to Eximbank towards greater supportable Eximbank financing of US/Africa trade, done in a way that is both sustainable in the long run and designed to improve the lives of normal citizens on both continents. We believe that by ensuring that the record of Eximbank's achievements in African trade is accurate and ensuring that policymakers and stakeholders know of the Bank's earnest efforts, growth in the US Africa trade relationship can

grow. That is our point in presenting the points in this letter.

Signed:

Jude Kearney, Managing Partner  
ASAFO & Co. US LLP

Florie Liser, President and CEO  
Corporate Council on Africa

Ambassador (Retired) Harry  
Thomas, Kissinger Fellow, Yale  
University's Jackson School of Global  
Affairs

Rev. Matthew Watley, Senior  
Pastor, Kingdom Fellowship AME  
Church

Mayor (Retired) Wellington Webb,  
President and Founder of Webb  
Group International. \_\_\_\_\_



Rev. Matthew Watley, Senior Pastor, Kingdom Fellowship AME Church.

## Zoom On Standard Bank With Anne Alikor

By Ajong Mbapndah L

With a strong presence in some twenty markets, Standard Bank stands out as one of the largest banks in Africa by way of assets. For Standard Bank, Africa is home, and we drive its growth, says Anne Alikor, Standard Bank's Group Head, Corporate and Investment Banking, Client Coverage. Fielding questions from PAV on the sidelines of the 2024 US-Africa Business Summit in Dallas, TX, Anne Alikor says from energy, infrastructure, financial institutions, telecoms, media and technology and more, Standard Bank is firmly focused on sectors driving economic growth in Africa.

*For those who may not be familiar with Standard Bank, could you start with an introduction for us?*

Anne Alikor: I like that question because it helps us frame a lot of the rest of the discussion. So, Standard Bank is Africa's largest bank by way of assets, I think that's an important thing. And we are very unapologetically an African bank. We don't have aspirations to be a global bank. We are a very good African bank that is where our experience is, and that is where we focus. We have a presence in 20 markets in Africa,



Standard Bank is firmly focused on sectors driving economic growth in Africa, says Anne Alikor.

primarily Sub-Saharan Africa, and across Africa.

We do the whole suite of banking, all the way from your retail account, so that's what we call our personal, our private bank, the SME segment, we call that our business and commercial bank, and then our corporate investment bank where we deal with the larger corporates, the sovereigns,

and we do investment banking and the entire suite of banking.

So, we're pretty active, we have a significant global markets business. I think the opportunity, the insight we obtain in working across all those different markets, it means that we have practical experience, and we're able to help our clients who are in those markets, both work in

their domestic situation, connect to markets, customers outside of their country. Very importantly, we also have a presence in four global centres, and these are all what I call centres of capital.

We have a presence in North America, and you will know America is a very large source of capital in the world, we have a presence in London, and London has historically been one of the largest financial centres, but that gives us access to Europe, we have a presence in Dubai, the Middle East is a growing centre of capital, and we have a presence in Beijing, and the Far East is another very active economic region.

Our presence outside of Africa is really designed to enable us to support those companies who are based elsewhere but have operations on the continent, and it's important for them that they have a trusted partner on the continent who understands how the continent works, but also understands how business works in the US, in Europe, in the Middle East, and can both navigate and interpret to enable them to deliver on their strategic imperatives.

Looking at the present-day African context, how will you situate the importance of Standard Bank on business and the general economic

development of Africa?

Anne Alikor: Let me start with our purpose and our vision. We say Africa is our home, we drive her growth, and it is a phrase and a statement that we're not cynical about, and it's really important. If you just step back a little bit, it talks about why we operate on the continent and why we've decided to stay there. It is our home, and I believe quite strongly that financial institutions almost operate as a private-public good and have a purpose that connects you to the economy and the people and the geographies in which you operate. That's important because you know why it's important. It also helps you when you're making any trade-off decisions.

When you happen to decide whether to do one or two or three, you can refer to your purpose and that will help you. And that speaks to why Standard Bank is important in Africa. One, it's directly about our purpose. It means that in Africa, on the continent, we focus on the sectors that drive the economic growth of the continent.

So, energy, infrastructure, financial institutions, telecoms, media and technology, that's been a fast-growing industry all over the world. Mining and metals. So, your American readers will be familiar with the fact that Africa has a huge wealth of resources and deposits, particularly copper and cobalt, the critical minerals that are used for the batteries. Consumer and I always think of consumers farm to fork, everything you do from the farming area to what goes into your mouth. So, we focus on those sectors because those are the sectors that are driving the growth of the economies in which we operate. But interestingly, also the sectors that provide the greatest opportunity for inward investment too.

***In terms of the services that you provide, how accessible are there to investors, for people to benefit from opportunities with Standard Bank? How easy is that?***

Anne Alikor: If we're talking about



companies and individuals who live and work in the geographies in which we have banking licences and which we have banking operations, then they're very accessible; because that's our core business, that's what we do. And our ability to attract clients is quite important to our growth and our success. And if you look at our performance over the last three years, it would suggest that we have been able to meet the needs of our clients.

When you're talking about investors outside of Africa, people who want to invest in Africa, then Standard Bank is a great intermediary and conduit for that. And I think that's because often they'll be banking with someone else in their home market. You might have readers who want to send money home. They could use very different apps, fintechs and other parties to do so. But once that money hits the continent, often those intermediaries will use Standard Bank, one, to convert the hard currency to local currency, and secondly, to ensure that the final beneficiary receives money. That, I think, is access to our services.

For the companies, for the large corporations who set up subsidiaries in Africa, if they need financing, if they need transactional accounts, if they need to be able to convert local currency to U.S. dollars or

U.S. dollars to local currency, then those are all services that Standard Bank provides and are accessible to clients, irrespective of whether clients are actually on the continent or are based elsewhere, but operate, have operations in Africa.

As the African continental free trade area gets its act together, what role do you think banks like Standard can play to catalyze stronger growth and economic integration in Africa?

Anne Alikor: We're excited by the possibility and the opportunity that the African continental free trade agreement provides for the continent. I think the creation of a common market, of a single market on the continent that drives trade, trade and investment will drive growth and profitability and economic growth for the entire continent. Once again, I refer you back to our purpose, Africa as a home, and driver of growth.

Now, what role can Standard Bank play there? Because we operate in so many markets, to drive trade, you need a financial intermediary. Someone needs to settle. You need to be able to buy goods and settle them. You need to be able to have access to money to invest in a new market. It's useful, and I think important, to have a bank that is operating in so many different geographies to provide that

to any party who's trading across the continent.

We're already there. These are not markets that we are starting to learn. We have invested the time. We understand how these markets operate. We are already operating in those markets, in those industries, in those sectors. We, I think, will be a very effective and important partner for anyone who wants to take advantage of the African Continental free trade agreement.

***In terms of challenges that the bank has faced, any that you want to share with us?***

Anne Alikor: I think it's the second time I've had that question in a different form this week. As I reflect on that, one of the things I think about is, are the challenges different when I operate in Africa as they would be if I operate in Europe? I think the response I often give to that is, we operate on the African continent. Now, often what is seen as a challenge is a question of perspective.

If you are used to operating out of New York, then it can be daunting to think of operating in a market where you've got 26 different local currencies and you are working in all of them at the same time. That is our bread and butter. That is a capability that we have built, that we have invested in and that we're good at. That stops being a challenge and becomes more of an opportunity. One could then also say that the differences in infrastructure investment on the continent create a challenge. That is a significant challenge for our clients, but only where they want to export between one market and another.

For us as a bank, we rely on digital infrastructure. The growth of the telecoms industry across the continent; and the growth of development of data centers and cloud storage eases that. Once again, there's an opportunity. I think, much like any other business, we operate in the context of a geography in which we find ourselves. I see that as less of a challenge than simply the environment in which we operate. If I look at our performance over the

last few years, I think there's more opportunity than challenges.

If I were to say that, the last thing I would suggest to anybody who's looking at the continent as granular is that there's an opportunity for anyone willing to invest the time to do their work, to understand the environment, and importantly, to understand what solutions their clients need.

**We are doing this interview on the sidelines of the USA-Africa Business Summit in Dallas, Texas; any impressions from that?**

Anne Alikor: The first one is I didn't realize Dallas was such a big economy. I'm extremely impressed. That's one, but it's more about where we found the summit as opposed to the summit itself. I do have an impression that there's a lot of interest that has been demonstrated from U.S. companies, and the U.S. government, in actually supporting the growth of investment and trade ties between the U.S. and the African continent. That's important because the U.S. is a big market and is potentially a very big trade partner.

If you look at the statistics over the last few years, the U.S. trade with Africa has reduced in percentage terms. In nominal terms, it has grown. I think we shouldn't lose the visibility of the fact that it has grown. Now, it's not necessarily a bad thing. That has simply happened because other economies have grown.

We're in a continent where 25 per cent of the youth population will be African. We are a growing consumer market. I think it's important that we have trade and investment ties with other large economies. I'm getting a sense that there's a lot of interest and there's action behind the work, so it's

not merely a sentiment.

**To potential investors and partners who are still nervous about Africa, from someone who knows the continent inside out, what message do you have for them?**

Anne Alikor: I think that the easy answer would be to look at Africa and give it a go. The reality is it depends on your industry. If you're looking for a market that is a consumer market and you have products and goods that can be manufactured on the continent to address that particular market, do so. There are some incredibly successful companies on the continent, very well run. We're a growing economy where there's a lot of investment going into energy. That really ought to be an opportunity.

I think pretty much anything that is going to be supported by the growth of the population. But it takes work, and that's no different in Africa than it is in any other geography. I think there are very, very few industries where you can go in, not work hard, not do the granular, not make the granular decisions that need to be made and expect to be successful. One should expect that going into the African continent that the work, you must do the work. You must understand where in the continent you want to start.

We often say that Africa is not a country. That is very, very true, in the same way that the U.S. is not one state. The states are different. They have a different underlying economy. They have a slightly different way of doing business. The things that will make you successful in Texas may be a little different from the things that make you successful in upstate New York.

**Let's look at perspectives in Africa going forward, making projections as bankers do, looking at the continent, what makes you optimistic, and what are your fears or in what areas do you think the continent needs to improve?**

Anne Alikor: Let me start with where we need to improve. We have a whole host of areas where we need to improve. I'm not hesitating because I don't know, but because I'm talking about very many different countries, and they all have slightly different areas where they must improve. If there would be some broad themes, definitely infrastructure.

If you think of the map of the continent, and if you were to overlay that map with the road network and the rail network, you'll find it goes around the coast. What that means is there needs to be more investment in infrastructure across the continent which will enable goods and services to move and that's the African Continental Free Trade Agreement. So, we're seeing a lot of investment into that. It's still an area where we need to move because you're creating and building infrastructure across more than one country, so the ability to have a multi-country project possibly with consistent policies underpinning it, I think that's an area of improvement. Hopefully between the African Continental Free Trade Agreement and the AU, we'll see more of that.

I think the increased liquidity as countries trade businesses in one country and sell to businesses in another country, will be increased trade and increased liquidity in the local currency markets. I think the ease with which we convert from one kind of currency to another rather

than via the US dollar or the Euro, I think that needs to improve, but I think it also provides an opportunity. Policy consistency is one we often talk about, and I think this is true in every single geography, I don't think it is specific to Africa.

But you asked me why am I optimistic. Firstly, if we look at the last ten years and look at the growth that has been achieved, there is a track record that underpins the reality of that hope, and it's just worth reflecting on. So, we know some of the largest, fastest growing economies in the world are from Africa, but we also know they're coming from a low base. That doesn't mean that the growth isn't transformational, it means it's real and it does have an impact. So that gives me hope.

We have a growing population of young, work-aged people. Young, work-aged people work, and they become innovative. That gives me hope. And these are real things that are happening. When you look at the changes in purchasing power across the continent, whilst in one sense you can say it's still relatively poor, you can see that the middle class is growing. Whilst the numbers might look small, the percentage growth is quite dramatic.

So, when you take a step back again and you see the successful companies and then you overlay that with the percentage growth of the middle class, irrespective of where they sit on that spectrum that gives me hope. And we see all of this reflected in the growth of transactions in the banking sector of the continent.

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# Insights On ELSEWEDY ELECTRIC's Mega Projects in Africa

By Ajong Mbandah L

With a rich history spanning over 85 years, ELSEWEDY ELECTRIC has become a global leader in integrated infrastructure solutions. Its commitment to innovation and quality is reflected in the over 19,000 strong workforce and annual revenue exceeding USD 5 billion. With a strong presence in 19 countries and 31 production facilities across Africa and Asia, we export high-end products to over 110 countries worldwide. Our core strength lies in our all-in-one Engineering, Procurement & Construction (EPC) service, enabling efficient delivery of complex turnkey projects, says Nadia Derafa, Regional Business Development Director Africa at ELSEWEDY ELECTRIC.

“We recognize the exciting transformation underway across Africa. Economies are growing, education and literacy rates are rising, and the continent is attracting more foreign direct investment than ever. As an African-based company, ELSEWEDY ELECTRIC is uniquely positioned to support this growth,” says Nadia Derafa.

**Could you start by giving us an overview of ELSEWEDY ELECTRIC, its operations and networks?**

ELSEWEDY ELECTRIC has evolved from a local manufacturer into a global leader in integrated infrastructure solutions. We employ over 19,000 people and generate more than USD 5 billion in revenue annually. Our operations span five key sectors: Wire, Cable & Accessories, Electrical Products, Engineering & Construction, Digital Solutions, and Infrastructure Investments.

With a strong presence in 19 countries and 31 production facilities across Africa and Asia, we export high-end products to over 110 countries worldwide. Our core strength lies in our all-in-one Engineering, Procurement & Construction (EPC) service, enabling efficient delivery of complex turnkey projects.



*As an African-based company, ELSEWEDY ELECTRIC is uniquely positioned to support growth and development, says Nadia Derafa*

Sustainability is a core mission. We establish green energy projects and smart cities across Africa, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe. Aligned with our 2030 strategy, we aim to extend our positive impact, provide energy access to more people, and drive decarbonization, digitalization, and sustainable development.

Our growth is fueled by talent acquisition and empowering communities. We offer extensive digital solutions to empower customers with increased efficiency and agility in an evolving world. We strive to serve our customers and the environment responsibly, continuously developing more sustainable business practices.

**May we have some figures in**

**terms of employment, revenues, and depth of the company's operations across Africa and the world?**

With a rich history spanning over 85 years, ELSEWEDY ELECTRIC has become a global leader in integrated infrastructure solutions. Our commitment to innovation and quality is reflected in our 19,000+ strong workforce and annual revenue exceeding USD 5 billion.

Our reach extends far beyond borders. We operate in 10 countries, with a strategic presence in Africa to serve our neighbors effectively. A network of 48 international offices ensures seamless communication and support, while 31 production facilities strategically located across Africa and Asia form the backbone

of our manufacturing prowess. This global footprint allows us to export high-end products to a remarkable 110 countries, solidifying our position as a trusted leader in the international market.

The depth of our experience is evident in the over 500 projects successfully completed across 35 countries. These projects encompass a wide range of specialties, including building over 23,000 kilometers of distribution networks and delivering a staggering 23 Gigawatts of total power.

We recognize the exciting transformation underway across Africa. Economies are growing, education and literacy rates are rising, and the continent is attracting more foreign direct investment than ever. As an African-based company, ELSEWEDY ELECTRIC is uniquely positioned to support this growth.

We are not just a provider of assistance, but rather a partner in knowledge exchange and localization. We leverage our global expertise to empower African nations and fulfill their development plans, building a brighter future for the continent together.

**What type of markets or projects does ELSEWEDY ELECTRIC typically find interest in?**

ELSEWEDY ELECTRIC is particularly interested in markets and projects that leverage our integrated solutions approach and expertise across the power sector value chain. These include:

- **Infrastructure Development:** Building and upgrading electrical grids, transformers, substations, and smart grids for developing nations.
- **Renewable Energy:** Implementing solar, wind, and hydro projects to support the global shift towards sustainable solutions.
- **Digital Transformation:** Integrating digital solutions for improved efficiency, automation, and smart grid management in new and



existing projects.

- **Industrial and Commercial Projects:** Providing EPC services and electrical products for industrial facilities, commercial buildings, and large-scale developments.

We actively seek projects requiring a high degree of engineering expertise, complex project management, and a successful execution track record. Our focus aligns with Africa's development, the Middle East's economic growth, and global sustainability efforts through these project types.

**What makes the services from ELSEWEDY ELECTRIC stand out from those of rival companies, why should African markets embrace or consider ELSEWEDY ELECTRIC for business and partnerships as opposed to others?**

ELSEWEDY ELECTRIC stands out as a premier partner for African nations seeking to develop their energy, infrastructure, and digital solutions landscapes. Our comprehensive approach and proven track record in Africa make us the ideal choice for driving progress across the continent.

Here's what sets ELSEWEDY ELECTRIC apart:

- **Unparalleled Solutions Portfolio:** We offer a vast array of products and services, encompassing power generation, transmission & distribution, smart metering, renewable energy projects, and a full range of electrical products like cables and transformers. This one-stop shop approach streamlines project execution and ensures seamless integration for our clients.
- **Deep African Roots:** With a significant presence and extensive experience in Africa spanning over 85 years, ELSEWEDY ELECTRIC boasts numerous successful projects across the continent. Our in-depth understanding of local market dynamics, regulatory environments, and infrastructure challenges positions us as a knowledgeable and reliable partner

you can trust.

- **Local Focus, Global Strength:** We prioritize fostering local partnerships, collaborating with businesses within the region and employing local workforces. This commitment empowers communities and stimulates economic growth within Africa.

**Financial Stability, Financing Flexibility:** ELSEWEDY ELECTRIC's robust financial standing allows us to undertake large-scale projects with confidence. We offer competitive financing options, providing peace of mind and mitigating potential financial risks for our clients. Furthermore, our established relationships with international financial institutions allow us to facilitate access to crucial financing solutions, overcoming a significant hurdle for infrastructure development in many African markets.

By choosing ELSEWEDY ELECTRIC, you choose a partner that is deeply invested in Africa's success. We offer a comprehensive suite of solutions, unparalleled experience in the region, and a commitment to empowering local communities. Together, we can build a brighter future powered by innovative energy, infrastructure, and digital solutions.

**Based on your experiences, what are some of the challenges ELSEWEDY ELECTRIC has faced in Africa and any policy recommendations to improve the business climate?**

Our experience in Africa has been marked by both tremendous opportunities and unique challenges. Here are some key obstacles we've encountered:

- **Infrastructure Hurdles:** Inadequate infrastructure, particularly in remote areas, can significantly complicate project execution. Limited transportation networks can drive up costs and extend timelines.
- **Financial Fluctuations:** Currency fluctuations and economic instability pose financial risks. These factors necessitate careful planning and risk mitigation

strategies.

- **Political and Economic Uncertainty:** Political and economic instability can create uncertainty, impacting project funding and overall market demand.
- **Despite these challenges,** we remain firmly committed to Africa's development. To create a more favorable business environment, we advocate for the following policy recommendations:
- **Streamlining Approvals:** Implement «one-stop-shop» services to expedite the approval and licensing process. This would significantly reduce bureaucratic delays and improve project efficiency.
- **Infrastructure Investment:** Increased investment in infrastructure development across Africa is crucial. Improved infrastructure will not only facilitate project execution but also enhance operational efficiency for businesses.
- **Financial Market Development:** Encouraging the development of local financial markets and institutions would provide more financing options for businesses operating in Africa. This would address the challenge of limited access to capital.

By implementing these recommendations, African nations can create a more attractive and supportive business climate, fostering sustainable growth and development. Elsewedy Electric stands ready to partner with African nations in navigating these challenges and building a brighter future.

**This interview has been done on the sidelines of the US-Africa business summit, how has the experience been for you and ELSEWEDY ELECTRIC?**

Participating in the US-Africa Business Summit proved to be an invaluable experience for both Elsewedy Electric and myself. The summit offered a dynamic platform for:

- **Expanding our Network:** We connected with a diverse range of

stakeholders, fostering valuable new partnerships and strengthening existing relationships.

- **Engaging Discussions:** The summit facilitated insightful discussions on critical topics like economic policies and sustainable development. These exchanges allowed us to gain valuable perspectives and identify potential areas of collaboration.
- **Showcasing Expertise:** The summit provided us with a platform to showcase Elsewedy Electric's commitment to delivering integrated energy solutions across Africa. We were able to highlight our expertise and how we can contribute to the continent's development goals.

The summit's success underscores the importance of fostering closer collaboration between the US and Africa. Elsewedy Electric remains firmly committed to playing a key role in Africa's growth, and we look forward to participating in future US-Africa Business Summits to further strengthen these vital partnerships.

**What is the view at ELSEWEDY ELECTRIC on the AfCFTA, what opportunities is the company anticipating in terms of expanding its footprint across Africa?**

ELSEWEDY Electric views the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) as a significant opportunity to expand its footprint across Africa. The company sees several key opportunities that AfCFTA presents:

- **Access to a Larger Market,** AfCFTA creates a single, large market by eliminating trade barriers between African countries.
- **Enhanced Trade and Investment,** the reduction or elimination of tariffs under AfCFTA lowers the cost of exporting and importing goods and services, making ELSEWEDY Electric's products more competitive.
- **AfCFTA is expected to drive significant investment in infrastructure,** including energy, transportation, and communication networks. This aligns with ELSEWEDY Electric's capabilities

and expertise, providing numerous business opportunities.

- Anticipated Opportunities for ELSEWEDY ELECTRIC:
- Expansion of Renewable Energy Projects, the push for renewable energy across Africa, supported by AfCFTA's framework, provides opportunities for ELSEWEDY Electric to expand its solar and wind energy projects.
- Infrastructure Development, the need for enhanced power infrastructure across Africa presents significant opportunities for ELSEWEDY Electric to expand its transmission and distribution projects.
- Local Manufacturing and Sourcing,

AfCFTA's promotion of intra-African trade can support the establishment of manufacturing hubs for ELSEWEDY Electric's products, reducing reliance on imports and enhancing local value addition and by sourcing more materials and components locally, ELSEWEDY Electric can reduce costs and support local economies.

***With all the great business that ELSEWEDY ELECTRIC does, how does the company give back to the community?***

At ELSEWEDY ELECTRIC, our commitment to giving back to society and communities is deeply ingrained in our core values. We actively seek

opportunities to expand our positive impact on vulnerable groups and communities facing environmental and social challenges. Through various initiatives and collaborations, we strive to contribute to accessible education, better healthcare, and inclusive development. From assessing the impacts of our previous initiatives to identifying new opportunities aligned with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we continuously work towards scaling up positive change. One of our significant contributions is the establishment of Elsewedy Technical Academy, through which we promote inclusive education by welcoming students from diverse

backgrounds, including people with disabilities, and providing practical training opportunities. Moreover, our involvement in projects like the Smart Community Hub in Madagascar showcases our commitment to sustainable development, providing green energy and digital platforms to support rural transformation. Our collaborations with government entities further demonstrate our commitment to advancing national development goals and building prosperous, inclusive societies. Through these multifaceted efforts, we aim to make a lasting and meaningful difference in the communities where we operate.

***A Glimpse of some of ELSEWEDY ELECTRIC's Mega Projects in Africa***



*Julius Nyerere Hydropower Project (JNHPP) - ELSEWEDY ELECTRIC'S Commitment To Clean Energy*

- Annually generating 6,307 GWh , enough to supply 16.6 million households
- Generating 2,115MW of renewable energy
- Will save 400 hectares of trees annually that were cut for firewood and charcoal

*ELSEWEDY ELECTRIC Powers Up Egypt With 130 Mw Benban Solar Plants*

- Capacity: 130 MW (2 x 65 MWp each plant)
- Energy Production: Enough to power over 140,000 households
- Emissions Reduction: Prevents over 120,000 tons of CO2-equivalent emissions annually



*ELSEWEDY ELECTRIC Boosts Angola's Power Infrastructure*

- 192 KM 400 kV Single-circuit overhead transmission line
- Four 60/30 kV Substations
- 42 KM 60 kV Overhead Transmission line
- 2 Mobile Generation Units

# African Leaders Join African Development Bank's Call for Action to Reform the Global Financial Architecture at its 2024 Annual Meetings

*-The Annual Meetings bring together the Bank Group's governors representing 54 African countries and 27 non-African shareholders*



Host country, Kenya contributes \$20 million to Bank's concessional financing window; pledges increased equity contribution; The African Development Bank: a Solutions Bank, at the heart of Africa's transformation agenda.

With \$200 billion invested in development projects across the continent since its establishment in 1964, the African Development Bank Group is leading the charge in transforming Africa's development landscape, as a solutions bank.

At the institution's 2024 Annual Meetings in Nairobi, six African Presidents joined the Group's President Dr. Akinwumi Adesina's call for action to reform the global financial architecture to unlock more resources to scale up Africa's economic transformation.

The Annual Meetings bring together the Bank Group's governors representing 54 African countries and 27 non-African shareholders.

Kenya's President William Samoei Ruto emphasized the need for change, saying, "Today, we assert that transforming the international

financial architecture is imperative to give Africa a fair chance to turn its immense potential into opportunities to overcome multiple challenges and develop inclusively and sustainably."

In a show of support for the Bank's efforts, President Ruto announced that Kenya will spend \$100 million over the next three years to increase its shareholding in the African Development Bank, Afreximbank and Trade Development Bank. Additionally, he announced a commitment of \$20 million to the African Development Fund, the Bank Group's concessional window, "as a demonstration of Kenya's confidence [in the Fund]."

President Ruto praised the commitment of the Bank Group to infrastructure development in Kenya, saying, "Kenya is among the beneficiaries, in a very big way, of the African Development Bank's financial might, and its innovative financing of projects."

He cited four Bank Group-financed projects as testament to this commitment: the construction of the Nairobi-Thika Superhighway; the construction of the Thwake

Multipurpose Dam, Kenya's biggest; the completion of water and sanitation projects in 28 Kenyan cities, and a last-mile connectivity project that has provided electricity to more than 10 million households.

### Vote of confidence

President Ruto also expressed Kenya's support for the channeling of IMF Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) through multilateral development banks, a move that the African Development Bank together with the Inter-American Development Bank has championed, with success.

Several heads of state attended the opening ceremony of the Annual Meetings on Wednesday and participated in subsequent presidential dialogues. They included President Denis Sassou Nguesso of the Republic of Congo, Rwanda's President Paul Kagame, Zimbabwe's President Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, the President of the Presidency Council of the Government of National Unity of the State of Libya Mohamed Younis al-Menfi, Somali President, Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud, and African

Union Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat.

Close to 5,000 delegates are attending the Bank's Annual Meetings, including heads of multilateral development banks, diplomats, development partners, representatives of civil society organizations and the private sector.

In his keynote address, Adesina highlighted the impact of the Bank's investments across Africa through its High 5 priorities of Light up and Power Africa; Feed Africa; Integrate Africa; Industrialize Africa and Improve the quality of life for the people of Africa. Over the last eight years, the Bank's investments have impacted more than 400 million people

### Record investments

"In 2023, our financing totalled over \$10 billion, across all our High 5 priorities," he said, adding, "In the past nine years, we have invested well over \$50 billion in infrastructure projects on the continent, by far the largest investment of any multilateral development bank or institution."

Adesina listed several innovative

initiatives to demonstrate the Bank's role as a catalyst for change, driving Africa's transformation through record investments and partnerships. He highlighted the \$10 billion Alliance for Green Infrastructure in Africa (AGIA), a groundbreaking partnership with Africa50 and the African Union, aimed at accelerating the development of sustainable infrastructure projects. This initiative is set to drive the continent's transition towards a greener and more resilient future.

Adesina also emphasized the Bank's commitment to supporting the digital economy, citing the \$618 million i-DICE program in Nigeria, that will create 6 million jobs and add \$6.4 billion to the economy.

**Catalyzing Development**

The Bank's Affirmative Finance Action for Women (AFAWA), in partnership with the Africa Guarantee Fund, has financed more than 18,000 women-owned businesses, providing them with the capital and support needed to thrive in their respective markets. "By the end of this year, AFAWA would have reached \$2 billion in support for up to 30,000 women-owned small and medium sized enterprises," Adesina said.

Last year, the Bank established Youth Entrepreneurship Investment Banks to provide financial and technical support to businesses owned by youth. The Bank's Board of Directors has already approved \$16 million for Liberia

**Inclusive**



Kenya's President William Samoei Ruto announced that Kenya will spend \$100 million over the next three years to increase its shareholding in the AfDB, Afreximbank and Trade Development Bank.

and \$12 for Ethiopia to set up Youth Entrepreneurship Investment Banks. More countries have applied to join the initiative.

In eleven African countries—Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Guinea, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, Togo, and Zambia—the Bank, together with partners, is establishing Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones (SAPZs), designed to transform Africa's agricultural sector by creating value-addition hubs.

**Mobilizing Financing, Deepening Reforms**

Dr. Muhammad Sulaiman Al Jasser, Islamic Development Bank Group President, outlined the benefits of a longstanding cooperation with the African Development Bank. "Between 2017 and 2023, we achieved

a record co-financing volume of \$2.9 billion with the African Development Bank, enabling us to co-finance 22 operations across diverse sectors," he said, adding that both banks have recently set new co-financing targets, to deliver greater impact.

African Development Bank Group Boards of Governors' Chairperson and Cabinet Secretary of the National Treasury of Kenya, Prof. Njuguna Ndung'u urged Governors to "deepen discussions" on growing the Bank's callable capital. "This will protect the Bank's triple A rating on sustainable basis against recurrent external shocks, including downgrade of its triple A rated shareholders [and] enable the Bank maintain its lending trajectory and preserve its position as a strategic lender and the premier development finance institution in Africa."

The African Union Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat described the 2024 Annual Meetings as "an appropriate forum" for kickstarting "the process of formulating and working out the African common position on strategic issues" such as the reform of the Bretton Woods system, debt management, climate change financing, and the international tax system.

Leaders also stressed the urgency of mobilizing financing to build climate-resilient African economies. The Bank, Adesina said, "is well on its way to reaching its goal of mobilizing \$25 billion in climate finance, and last year we devoted 45% of our total lending to climate finance."

**Strong financial position for greater impact**

The only AAA-rated financial institution in Africa, the Bank's financial records for 2023 put the Bank in an optimal position to better serve Africa and create more significant impact in the continent's development. Its income from loans and treasury investments increased by 123% from \$775 million in 2022 to \$1.73 billion in 2023. The Bank also achieved its largest-ever net income before distributions, amounting to \$545 million, and allocated a record-high \$335 million to reserves.



In the past nine years, we have invested well over \$50 billion in infrastructure projects on the continent, says AfDB President Dr. Akinwumi Adesina.

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# East Africa To Lead Africa's Growth Rebound In 2024- Report

By Jean-Pierre Afadhali

African economies remain resilient amid multiple shocks, with their average growth projected to stabilize at 4.0 percent in 2024–25, nearly one percentage point higher than the 3.1 percent estimated in 2023, revealed the Africa Economic Outlook report launched on Thursday in Nairobi, Kenya.

The report released by the African Development Bank during the Annual Meetings, looks into the continent's economic performance and the challenges that hinder its growth.

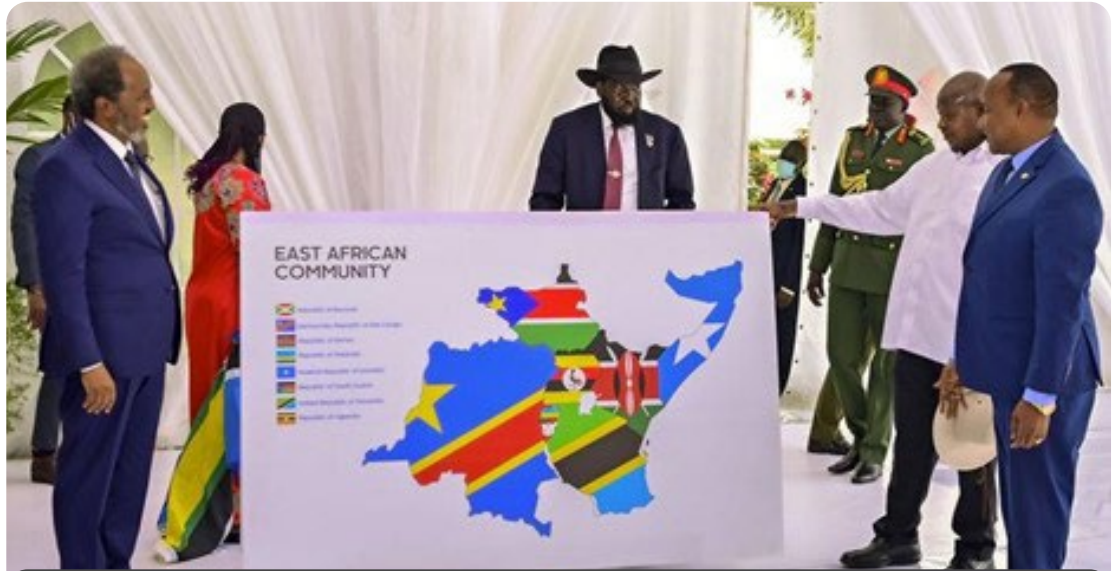
Speaking during the report launch Dr Akinwumi Adesina, the president of AFDB group said Africa still faces many challenges to finance its economic development, including the high cost of borrowing.

"The era of cheap money is gone," said Dr Adesina.

The projected rebound in Africa's average growth will be led by east Africa (up 3.4 percentage points) and Southern Africa and West Africa (each rising by 0.6 percentage points), noted the AFDB'S flagship report.

"East Africa is expected to bounce back as Africa's fastest growing region, with real GDP growth rising from an estimated 1.5 percent in 2023 to 4.9 percent in 2024 and 5.7 percent in 2025," read the AFDB report. The downward revision of 0.2 percentage points for 2024 compared with the forecast in the January 2024 MeO (Macro-economic Performance Outlook) is due to larger-than-expected contractions in Sudan and South Sudan due to the ongoing conflict in the former.

Meanwhile, growth in Central Africa is expected to moderate from 4.3 percent in 2023 to 4.1 percent in 2024 before improving strongly to 4.7 percent in 2025. The upgraded forecast of 0.6 percentage point for 2024 over the January 2024 projections is attributable to expectations of stronger growth in Chad and the Democratic Republic of Congo due to expectations of favourable metal prices.



East Africa is expected to bounce back as Africa's fastest growing region, with real GDP growth rising from an estimated 1.5 percent in 2023 to 4.9 percent in 2024 and 5.7 percent in 2025.

## Growth to pick up in West Africa

The Africa Economic Outlook report states the growth is projected to pick up in West Africa, rising from an estimated 3.6 percent in 2023 to 4.2 percent in 2024 and consolidating at 4.4 percent the following year. This is an upgrade of 0.3 percentage points for 2024 over the January MeO 2024 projections, reflecting stronger growth upgrades in the region's large economies—Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal.

In North Africa, growth is projected to decline from an estimated 4.1 percent in 2023 to 3.6 percent in 2024 and 4.2 percent in 2025, with a downward revision of 0.3 percentage point for 2024 from the January 2024 MeO. except for Libya and Mauritania, growth has been revised downward for all other countries in the region.

Growth in Southern Africa is projected to pick up slightly from an estimated 1.6 percent in 2023 to 2.2 percent in 2024 and firm up to 2.7 percent in 2025. The growth rates for 2024 and 2025 show an upgrade of 0.1 percentage point over the January 2024 projections, mainly reflecting a 0.7 percentage point increase

in South Africa's projected growth. Due to South Africa's larger weight

in the region, the upgraded growth forecast offset the combined effect of downward revisions in Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

## Growth in non-resource-intensive economies to improve

Average growth in non-resource-intensive economies is projected to improve from an estimated 4.8 percent in 2023 to 5.3 percent in 2024 and 5.6 percent in 2025. This growth is underpinned by increased public investments in major growth sectors and substantial capital outlays on critical public infrastructure including electricity, transport, and logistics.

Growth for tourism-dependent economies is projected to decelerate from 5.8 percent in 2023 to 4.7 percent in 2024 and further to 3.9 percent in 2025. This deceleration reflects the stabilization of tourism numbers to trend levels, with projected slower economic growth in Mauritius and Seychelles as the key driver for the group.

Average growth in oil-exporting countries is expected to decline from an estimated 3.7 percent in 2023 to 3.5 percent in 2024 but could pick up the pace to 4 percent in 2025.

Growth in other (non-oil) resource-

intensive economies on the continent is estimated to improve strongly from 0.3 percent in 2023 to 2.7 percent and consolidate at 3.3 percent projected for 2024 and 2025. The sharp increase in growth will be driven largely by rebound in China's demand for metals and minerals linked to expansions in smart grids and construction.

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## Consumer price inflation increases

Average consumer price inflation in Africa is estimated to have increased by 3 percentage points to 17 percent in 2023, from 14 percent in 2022. The increase reflects a combination of higher local food prices induced by drought-related domestic supply shortages, liquidity overhangs from pandemic-related fiscal and monetary policy stimulus undertaken in 2020–21, and the pass-through effects

of currency depreciation against a strong US dollar propelled Public debt is declining but still above pre-pandemic levels, highlighting the severity of the debt burden on the continent. Africa's average public debt ratio, which rose from 54.5 per cent of GDP in 2019 to 64 percent in 2020, stabilized at around 63.5 percent from 2021–23 and is expected to decline further to around 60 percent from 2024— halting a decade-long upward trend. AFDB report notes mix of policies is needed in the short, medium, and long terms to address Africa's macroeconomic challenges and put economies back on the path of sustained, higher growth.

## African Energy Week (AEW) 2024 to Explore African Energy Opportunities with First Speaker Lineup

*The African Energy Week (AEW): Invest in African Energy conference will once again unite African governments, national oil companies and think-tanks with global investors and project developers*

*The event convenes under a common goal of making energy poverty history by 2030 and represents the premier platform to sign deals and advance projects in African energy.*

The AEW: Invest in African Energy conference proudly announces its initial group of high-level speakers who will drive discussions on investing in Africa's energy future this November in Cape Town. Stay tuned, there are more speaker confirmations to com.

African energy demand is projected to more than triple by 2040, largely due to anticipated population growth and increased demand across the petrochemical and transportation industries. At the same time, Africa's proven oil and gas reserves have increased in 2024, as recent discoveries continent-wide open-up new frontiers. As the continent moves to address projected

demand – all while supporting clean energy infrastructure amid efforts to initiate a just transition – a wealth of investment opportunities has emerged continent-wide.

Returning in 2024 as the biggest energy event to take place in Africa, the African Energy Week (AEW): Invest in African Energy conference will once again unite African governments, national oil companies and think-tanks with global investors and project developers. The event convenes under a common goal of making energy poverty history by 2030 and represents the premier platform to sign deals and advance projects in African energy.

AEW: Invest in African Energy

is the platform of choice for project operators, financiers, technology providers and government, and has emerged as the official place to sign deals in African energy. Visit [www.AECWeek.com](http://www.AECWeek.com) for more information about this exciting event.

A focus on improving the regulatory environment for investment in Africa has led to the introduction of attractive fiscal terms and policies, further underscoring the competitiveness of investing in African energy. Representing African governments, the following speakers have joined the AEW: Invest in African Energy conference, where they will outline regulatory measures and industry opportunities.

- Mohamed Arkab, Minister of Energy and Mining, Algeria
- Yacouba Zabre Gouba, Minister of Mines and Energy, Burkina Faso
- Antonio Oburu Ondo, Minister of Mines and Hydrocarbons, Equatorial Guinea
- Nani Chrougha, Minister of Petroleum, Mines and Energy, Mauritania
- Ekperikpe Ekpo, Minister of State for Petroleum Resources (Gas), Nigeria
- Viriato Luis Soares Cassamá, Minister of Environment & Biodiversity, Guinea-Bissau
- Mohamed Oun, Minister of Oil & Gas, Libya
- Tom Alweendo, Minister of Mines

and Energy, Namibia

- Chief Adebayo Adelabu, Minister of Power, Nigeria
- Sen. Heineken Lokpobiri, Minister of State for Petroleum Resources (Oil), Nigeria
- Haitham Al Ghais, Secretary General, OPEC
- Dr. Matthew Opoku Prempeh, Minister of Energy, Ghana
- Bruno Jean-Richard Itoua, Minister of Hydrocarbons, Republic of Congo
- Omar Farouk Ibrahim, Secretary General, APPO
- Doto Mashaka Biteko, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Energy, Tanzania
- Marcel Abeke, Minister of Petroleum, Gabon
- Foday Mansaray, Director General, Petroleum Directorate of Sierra Leone

African national oil and gas companies are rapidly emerging as strong partners for global E&P companies, increasing their competitiveness and expertise while driving projects forward. During this year's AEW: Invest in African Energy conference, a strong lineup of African NOCs will lead discussions around investment and partnership opportunities in Africa's oil and gas-rich nations. These include:

- Micklas Reuben, Deputy CEO of the National Oil Company of Malawi
- Maixent Raoul Ominga, Managing Director, Société Nationale des Pétroles du Congo
- Sebastião Gaspar Martins, CEO of Sonangol
- Mussa Makame, Managing Director, Tanzania Petroleum Development Corporation
- Teresa Isabel Nnang Avomo, Managing Director, GEPetrol
- Godfrey Moagi, CEO of the Strategic Fuel Fund
- Philip Mshelbila Managing Director & CEO, Nigeria LNG Limited
- Ebson Unguta, Interim Managing Director, NAMCOR
- Ishmael Poolo, Group CEO, Central Energy Fund
- Rachid Hachichi, CEO of Sonatrach

Across both emerging and

established energy markets, Africa offers robust opportunities for investors and project developers alike. Discoveries made in Namibia, Mauritania, Senegal, Mozambique, Ivory Coast and more have revealed frontier basins while efforts to increase reserve portfolios in producing countries such as Angola, Nigeria, Algeria, Egypt, Gabon and more have triggered newfound investment prospects. A strong lineup of IOCs, independents and private E&P players have joined the AEW: Invest in African Energy conference, where they will discuss ongoing projects, future prospects and efforts to maximize Africa's energy resources. These include:

- Ian Cloke, COO of Afentra
- Anastasia Deulina, CFO of Afentra
- Paul McDade, CEO of Afentra
- John Hamilton, CEO of Panoro
- Jean-Michel Jacoulot, CEO of Trident Energy

- Ahonsi Unuigbe, Founder and CEO, Petralon Energy
- Anibor Kragha, Executive Secretary, African Refiners & Distributors Association
- Adewale Tinubu, GCE, Oando PLC
- Roger Brown, CEO of Seplat Energies
- Dr Jiri Rus, Sales Director: Africa, Neuman & Esser
- Andrew Inglis, Chairman and CEO, Kosmos Energy
- Zion Adeoye, CEO of CLG
- Nick de Blocq, CEO of Kinetiko
- George Maxwell, CEO of Vaalco Energy
- Armel Simondin, CEO of Perenco
- Gbite Falade, CEO of Aradel
- Oladapo Filani, CEO of Waltersmith Petroman Oil Limited
- Tony Attah, CEO of Renaissance Africa Energy Company
- Anthony Adegbulugbe, Chairman of Green Energy International Limited

- Julius Rone, Group Managing Director & CEO, UTM Offshore Limited
- Kola Karim, CEO of Shoreline
- Edson R dos Santos, CEO of Etu Energias
- Anabela Marcos, CEO of SONILS
- Phuthuma Nhleko, Chairman, Tullow
- Cobie Loper, SVP: Operators and Geographical Sales, NOV
- Jorge de Morais, CEO of Kaeso
- Gil Holzman, President & CEO, Eco Atlantic Oil & Gas
- Hasan Mutlu, Co-Founder, CS Oilfield
- Chris Drage, Senior Vice President: Sales, PGS

There is still time to register your participation at the biggest energy event in Africa. Visit [www.AECWeek.com](http://www.AECWeek.com) or contact [register@aecweek.com](mailto:register@aecweek.com) to secure your place at this highly-anticipated event.

\*African Energy Chamber





# Energy Investments are Propelling an African Natural Gas Revolution in Angola

*From exploration to production to exports, the Angolan oil and natural gas industry is bustling with new initiatives.*

By NJ Ayuk\*

Africa is witnessing a natural gas drive in Angola that is set to revolutionize the continent's natural gas industry. From exploration to production to exports, the Angolan oil and natural gas industry is bustling with new initiatives. This past year alone, international oil companies and the Angolan government partnered to award numerous regional operators with service contracts worth billions of dollars in combined value.

The African Energy Chamber has been particularly pleased to see Angola driving its natural gas industry forward.

In August 2022, solidified plans to develop the Quiluma and Maboqueiro gas fields in the Lower Congo Basin offshore Angola saw Italian multinational oilfield services company Saipem granted USD900 million between three engineering, procurement and construction contracts for both onshore and offshore work associated with the project at three separate sites.

Movement on these endeavors is due in part to the establishment of the New Gas Consortium (NGC) and its relationship with Angola's National Agency for Oil, Gas & Biofuels. Investment in the NGC is multinational, with Italian hydrocarbon giant ENI at the helm and France's TotalEnergies, Britain's bp, Angola's Cabinda Gulf Oil Company and Sonangol signed on as shareholders. The NGC expects production at the Quiluma and Maboqueiro fields to begin in 2026 and to produce at an estimated rate of four billion cubic meters (bcm) of liquefied natural gas (LNG) per year.

## The Right Approach

This success story, just one among many in Angola, wouldn't be



possible without the welcoming and investment-friendly environment that Angolan leadership has worked to cultivate in recent years.

Despite its status as sub-Saharan Africa's second-largest oil producer, boasting an approximate output of 1.1 million barrels per day (bpd) of crude oil - a similar level to its output before it left the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) -, it expects to increase production in the near future especially with ExxonMobil's Block 15 deepwater discovery at the Kizomba B area. The working interest partners in the block - Azule Energy, Equinor and Sonangol - have not held back on investing in this project.

Angola rejects complacency and strives to grow those numbers by starting new wells while reevaluating its more mature facilities. Angola's approach and its commitment to continued progress should serve as a template for every other African country to follow.

Angola sits atop 27 trillion cubic feet of natural gas - a largely untapped

wealth of resources that represents a path toward vast employment opportunities, a route away from energy poverty, and a bridge to an eventual energy transition. One of the key elements ensuring that this economic development evolves in both Angola's and Africa's favor is a competent administration to help guide it.

## Political Will and Leadership is Key.

Since taking office in 2017, President João Lourenço has maintained a positive bearing on strengthening and enhancing Angola's oil and gas sector and focusing on enriching its population.

Employing a rational, long-term mindset in the effort to expand Angola's LNG exports and further develop its gas industry, President Lourenço has been managing a multi-faceted master plan that he hopes will set Angola in an exponentially more prosperous position over a 30-year timeframe.

Lourenço's actions in this

regard have been proactive and comprehensive and performed in support of a healthy national oil and gas industry. By working to improve Angola's business environment and rooting out internal corruption, Lourenço has made the nation much more attractive and favorable to foreign investment. The reappointment of Diamantino Pedro Azevedo as Minister of Mineral Resources, Petroleum and Gas - a key player in Angola's regulatory overhaul and an outspoken advocate for the African energy industry - demonstrates Lourenço's commitment to preserving a cabinet that produces meaningful results.

President Lourenço's outlook includes much more than the successful export of Angola's hydrocarbon resources. His plan includes provisions for expanding the country's refining and storage facilities as well as preparations for the transition to a low-carbon economy through the implementation of photovoltaic power plants, the production of green hydrogen, and

a pledge to increase Angola's own use of energy from clean sources like hydroelectric.

Lourenço has confidence that his country will be able to achieve these goals in part by fostering productive international relationships, a practice that he contends will also secure future business partnerships.

**A Ready-Made Market**

President Lourenço's 2023 Whitehouse meeting with U.S. President Joe Biden saw a declaration of Angola as a strategic partner and the announcement of billions of U.S. investment in a system that will supply four provinces in southern Angola with photovoltaic power.

The wide-ranging difficulties extending from the ongoing war in Ukraine have put Europe in a precarious situation concerning its natural gas provisions, the bulk of

which came from Russia until the start of the conflict. President Lourenço has confidence that Angola can offer Europe an alternative source of LNG through European investment in the country and cooperative relations between the two regions.

Angola may get to a more sizeable position in the global LNG market, and sooner than expected, even without Europe's immediate support. Lourenço foresees an economic boom on the horizon that will put Angola's LNG production and export on the fast track in the coming years.

**System-Wide Improvements**

In addition to the developments at the Quiluma and Maboqueiro fields, other Angolan natural gas projects are well underway.

The Angola LNG Project, a joint venture led by Chevron and Sonangol north of Luanda in the province of

Soyo, processes and monetizes 1.1 billion cubic feet of natural gas per day while reducing gas flaring and greenhouse gas emissions.

Sonangol has also been hard at work in Cabinda, modernizing, automating and subsequently tripling their plant's gas filling capabilities from 3,000 12-kilogram gas cylinders per day to 9,000 cylinders per day, which should increase regional gas availability by 28%.

By next year, Angola expects the 750 MW Soyo II combined-cycle power plant to be operational, which will contribute to a nationwide effort to expand the population's electricity access by nearly 20% via gas-to-power generation.


Angola's Falcão Natural Gas Project promises to diversify the country's stake in the natural gas industry by providing a means of producing fertilizer, reducing reliance

on importation while cutting overall agricultural costs.










These developments — paired with Minister Diamantino Azevedo's assurances at the 2022 International Conference on Angola Oil and Gas that Angola will soon have floating liquid natural gas platforms off its shores — paint a positive picture for Angola's energy future.


The African Energy Chamber celebrates Angola's progress in the LNG sector. Natural gas offers a clean and practical energy source with the power to eradicate energy poverty and boost local economies across the continent while also providing a pathway toward a just energy transition. We encourage all the nations of Africa to join Angola on the trail they are currently blazing.


\*NJ Ayuk is Executive Chairman, African Energy Chamber








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# Shift In U.S Business Mindset Towards Africa Imperative - Gunster's Jonathan Stember

By Ajong Mbapndah L



*I advocate for a shift in the U.S. business mindset towards Africa, emphasizing openness and a reduction in risk aversion, says Jonathan Stember*

Africa's resurgence hinges on embracing transparency and cultivating meaningful partnerships that propel the continent towards a future brimming with promise and prosperity, says Jonathan Stember, Partner at Gunster Strategies Worldwide. Fielding questions on the sidelines of the recent US-Africa Business Summit in Dallas, TX, Jonathan Stember says the growth potential in Africa is considerable and it is imperative for the US to rethink its business mindset and strategy towards Africa.

"I advocate for a shift in the U.S. business mindset towards Africa, emphasizing openness and a reduction in risk aversion. This approach has personally driven me to success, as evidenced by our firm's notable achievements. Our efforts have resulted in the establishment of bridges that facilitate connections

between Africa and the U.S., fostering mutual growth and understanding," says Stember.

A prominent figure in both political and corporate campaigns on a global scale for over 25 years, Jonathan Stember says there are broad areas of win-win partnerships and cooperation between US firms and entities and Africa. With specialty in international advocacy and multicultural campaigns with experience across Africa, South America, Europe, and the Middle East, Jonathan believes in the mantra that "There's no substitute for being there." Against the backdrop of missed opportunities, a new dawn emerges, says Jonathan, one ripe with promise and collaboration spanning across technology, youth empowerment, food security, trade and commerce, and the establishment of sustainable economies, and a

myriad of other sectors.

***You are a partner with Gunster Strategies Worldwide. May we get an introduction of your company and its services?***

Gunster Strategies is a global public affairs and strategic communication firm, with offices in key locations such as Washington London, Cairo, Rabat, and Tbilisi. Our expertise lies in addressing the strategic communication requirements of corporations and providing assistance to political candidates abroad in effectively engaging and persuading target audiences. Our approach is grounded in data-driven insights, enabling us to craft communication strategies that seamlessly blend factual information with emotional resonance. We excel in telling compelling stories that resonate with decision-makers,

facilitating impactful communication and influencing outcomes.

***We are doing this interview on the sidelines of the U.S-African business summit. How has the experience been for you?***

The gathering here showcases individuals, companies, and representatives with distinctive qualities. My deep-rooted experience in West Africa underpins my steadfast dedication to the region. The growth potential in Africa is considerable. Our firm excels in understanding diverse cultures, fostering effective communication, and bridging gaps between stakeholders and decision-makers. We strive to facilitate collaboration among African governments, companies, and U.S. entities to ensure seamless communication. Despite the interest of numerous U.S. companies across

sectors like tech, mining, satellite connectivity, and food security in entering African markets, many hesitate due to a lack of trusted partnerships. I'm here in Dallas with this group to leverage my established relationships, with a vision to fortify them further. Over the past 4 to 5 years, I've forged invaluable connections with trusted partners who have evolved into cherished friends and esteemed colleagues. Furthermore, the majority of our business relies on referrals, underscoring the significance of cultivating relationships worldwide in our success. GSW public affairs work has adeptly met this imperative.

**What's the nature of your operations in Africa, what kinds of business is typically done for clients there?**

Having been approached by various US and African companies seeking guidance on crafting effective messages tailored for operations within Africa, I've provided assistance to aid their entities in navigating the region. Witnessing the remarkable expertise in campaign management and effective communication strategies, including political campaigns, has been enlightening.

Understanding how to resonate with diverse audiences through messaging has been a focal point of my career.

This endeavor aims to ensure clear and impactful messaging, leveraging our professional approach to drive successful outcomes for our clients in Africa. With industries such as fintech, mining, oil and gas, healthcare, sustainable economies, food security, and political campaigns in focus, there's ample opportunity to foster collaboration and growth in the region.

**From a seasoned professional like you, what are some of the reassuring messages you can share with African companies still skeptical of doing business**



*Africa presents an array of prospects spanning technology, youth empowerment, food security, trade and commerce, says Jonathan Stember with Dr. Armstrong Takang, CEO, MOFI Nigeria*

**in Africa?**

Creating a reliable partnership, whether in Africa or globally, mirrors the challenges inherent in any business endeavor—it demands dedication and perseverance. Mutual trust is key for success among all parties involved. Communication, a fundamental aspect of human interaction, plays a crucial role in nurturing these partnerships. I advocate for a shift in the U.S. business mindset towards Africa, emphasizing openness and a reduction in risk aversion. This approach has personally driven me to success, as evidenced by our firm's notable achievements. Our efforts have resulted in the establishment of bridges that facilitate connections between Africa and the U.S., fostering

mutual growth and understanding.

**We also are doing this interview with elections coming up in the USA. What do you think are the stakes in the Biden-Trump race for Africa?**

The outcome of the race remains uncertain, with both contenders fiercely competing for victory. Irrespective of the result, I strongly believe the incoming US administration should recognize this as a critical juncture to bolster engagement with Africa. While our historical involvement in the region has been somewhat tepid, there exists immense untapped potential. I earnestly hope the new administration embraces this opportunity for

enhanced collaboration and prosperity with Africa.

**From your experience over the years in Africa, what are some of the major changes that you have seen and in terms of things that African governments could, improve on to attract more investors from the US?**

In the pursuit of global integration, transparency emerges as a cornerstone, especially for African governments striving for inclusion on the world stage. This commitment to transparency not only fosters trust but also unlocks a multitude of opportunities, inviting foreign direct investment (FDI) across the continent. However, transparency transcends mere governance; it is the bedrock of trust and openness essential for sustainable progress.

Reflecting on the past decade, one glaring absence stands out: the lack of robust partnerships. Yet, against this backdrop of missed opportunities, a new dawn emerges – one ripe with promise and collaboration. Africa presents an array of prospects spanning technology, youth empowerment, food security, trade and commerce, and the establishment of sustainable economies.

Take Nigeria, for instance, a nation pulsating with potential and boasting nearly 200 million inhabitants. With longstanding relationships and an unwavering vision for the future, Nigeria epitomizes progress in motion. Embracing advancements technology becomes not just an option but a necessity for Africa's development trajectory, highlighting the mutually beneficial nature of this partnership.

As we stand at this critical juncture, the need for transformative alliances has never been clearer. Africa's resurgence hinges on embracing transparency and cultivating meaningful partnerships that propel the continent towards a future brimming with promise and prosperity.



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# African Development Bank Group Unveils New Ten-Year Strategy 2024-2033

*Central to the 2024-2033 strategic vision is the belief in Africa's vast potential for societal and economic transformation*



*The Ten Year Strategy outlines how the Bank will invest in Africa's best asset- its vibrant young men and women.*

The African Development Bank Group has unveiled its new Ten-Year Strategy 2024-2033, a blueprint to confront Africa's pressing challenges and to help put the continent firmly back on track towards sustained economic growth and prosperity.

Unveiling the strategy during the Bank Group's Annual Meetings in Nairobi, Kenya, African Development Bank Group President Akinwumi Adesina said, "As Africa's premier development finance institution, and Africa's solutions bank, we are acutely aware that the next decade will be decisive in transforming the continent. Therefore, as we celebrate 60 years of making a difference in the countries and lives of the people of Africa, we remain resolute in our determination to accelerate the support we provide to African countries."

The aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in heightened food insecurity and a burgeoning debt crisis across Africa. At the same time, the impacts of climate change are intensifying and accelerating, alongside a surge in conflict and political instability. Compounded by

a youthful demographic outpacing job creation, Africa is witnessing a significant exodus of its future workforce seeking opportunities abroad.

The strategy, approved by the Board earlier this year, sets out decisive and urgent actions the Bank will take to support African countries navigate the unprecedented global and regional challenges. These actions will build on Africa's multiple unique assets and reignite momentum towards achieving the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals, ultimately fostering lasting growth.

Central to the 2024-2033 strategic vision is the belief in Africa's vast potential for societal and economic transformation. By leveraging the youngest and fastest growing workforce in the world, rapidly growing urban markets, the wealth of natural resources and vast clean energy potential, Africa stands poised to drive sustainable growth and make significant contributions to global solutions over the next decade.

"The Ten-Year Strategy outlines how the Bank will invest in Africa's best asset: its vibrant young men

and women. Africa's population, which is the fast growing in the world, presents the continent with an unparalleled demographic window of opportunity," Adesina said.

The new strategy articulates a vision of a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and integrated Africa, underpinned by two key objectives over the next decade: accelerating inclusive green growth and fostering prosperous and resilient economies. With an emphasis on sustainability, the Bank will strive to balance environmental concerns, equity, and economic advancement.

Building upon the past decade of successful High 5 implementation, the Bank aims to accelerate and scale up its efforts, focusing on transformative projects with far-reaching impacts. To optimise results while managing risks, the Bank will streamline its operational model for increased agility and effectiveness. The Bank's High 5 operational priorities listed below, are integral to achieving these objectives:

- Light up and power Africa: Promote universal access to modern and affordable energy.
- Feed Africa: Ensure food

security through agricultural transformation.

- Industrialise Africa: Catalyse manufacturing as a critical driver of job creation.
- Integrate Africa: Foster regional integration and value chains for a more cohesive economy.
- Improve the quality of life: Enhance living standards, particularly for women and youth.

Key cross-cutting priorities include promoting gender equality, investing in young people, responding to climate change, and investing in climate action, supporting fragile states, and promoting good governance and economic stability.

The Bank sees the pivotal role of the private sector in driving Africa's transformation. Over the next decade, it will strengthen collaboration with the private sector, prioritising investments in firms, value chains, and micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises especially those led by women and youth.

The magnitude and urgency of the challenge will require greater resources than before. The Bank pledges to mobilise resources from

diverse sources, including domestic revenues and private finance. It aims to triple private-sector finance by 2033 while bolstering its financing capacity through innovative mechanisms. In response to calls for Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) to maximise the potential of their balance sheets, the Bank will pursue various options to boost its financing capacity over the life of the Ten-Year Strategy. Measures include the Sustainable Hybrid Capital, Risk Transfers and re-channeling of significant portions of the International Monetary Fund's Special Drawing Rights through Multilateral Development Banks.

The Strategy outlines how the Bank will answer the call for MDBs to scale

up urgently their efforts to respond to the priorities and significant ambitions of African countries and tackle global and regional challenges affecting the people of Africa. MDBs are essential to addressing the immense global and regional challenges the world faces. They are a valuable source of low-cost finance, technical knowledge, and policy advice for emerging and developing countries.

**Highlights of the Strategy:**

- Investing in women and young people: The Ten-Year Strategy outlines how the Bank will invest in Africa's best asset: its vibrant young men and women. Africa's population, which is the youngest

and fastest growing in the world, presents the continent with an unparalleled demographic window of opportunity. The Bank will address disparities and promote inclusivity by empowering women and youth, enabling them to contribute meaningfully to sustainable economic growth and prosperous societies.

- Climate change adaptation: Recognising Africa's vulnerability to climate change, the Bank will promote low-carbon development pathways aligned with the Paris Agreement while safeguarding biodiversity and nature.
- Supporting fragile states and building resilience: Amid rising conflicts, fragility, and political

instability in Africa, the Bank will intensify efforts to assist fragile countries. Special attention will be given to tackling cross-border challenges and reducing the isolation of landlocked and remote areas.

- Promoting good governance: The Bank emphasises the importance of economic governance, including domestic resource mobilisation, transparent financial management, and anti-corruption measures. Sustainable debt management practices will also be prioritised to ensure long-term economic stability.

\*AfDB \_\_\_\_\_

## Cameroon: CHRDA's Human Rights Report Shows Sliding Trend in Rights Violations

*Like in the last quarter of 2023, the month of January 2024 witnessed an upsurge in violence in the conflict-affected North West and South West Regions*

By Boris Esono Nwenfor



*In the first Quarter of the year 2024, CHRDA recorded a significant number of killings Arbitrary and extrajudicial killings as well as targeted killings.*

**B**UEA, Cameroon – The Center for Human Rights and Democracy in Africa, CHRDA has released its first quarter Human Rights Report for the year 2024 and shows a drop in the number of rights violations across the conflict-affected regions.

The report from CHRDA (January to March 2024) released on May 7, 2024, notes that among the most violated rights in January were the right to life, freedom of movement and association, freedom of speech, the right to own and dispose of one property freely among other rights.

In the first Quarter of the year 2024, CHRDA recorded a significant number of killings Arbitrary and extrajudicial killings as well as targeted killings, a total of 52 deaths were recorded. The majority of people killed in this first half include civilians, Defense and security forces as well as Separatist fighters.

There were at least 30 cases of arbitrary arrest and detention. CHRDA was able to intervene and secure the release of some persons



arbitrarily arrested and detained while others remain under detention some of whom are incommunicado. There were also at least 37 cases of kidnappings, and at least 71 persons injured. Non-State Armed Groups carried out a good number of kidnappings and Ransom Taking. This was principally to secure funding for their activities

The North West and South West regions, primarily English-speaking have been embroiled in conflict since 2017, following a declaration of independence by separatists. The roots of the conflict lie in decades of perceived discrimination against the English-speaking population by the French-speaking majority.

**Boko Haram Attacks abridged**

Boko Haram attacks in the Far North Region have comparatively reduced significantly, but these attacks are far from being a thing of the past as propagated by some persons. Some of the key violations in this region include the violation of the right to life, the Right to freely own and dispose of one's property, and freedom of movement among other rights

In the Far North Region, CHRDA recorded a total of 48 deaths in the first quarter. To secure funding for their operations Boko Haram elements carried out a series of kidnaping and demand for ransom. CHRDA monitored and documented a total of 6 cases of kidnapping in the Far North Region.

**CHRDA continues to call for restraint**

CHRDA continues to call for restraint on both camps, a call for a cessation of hostilities and a resolve to engage in meaningful dialogue. The organization notes that civilians



*CHRDA's Executive Director Dr Violet Fokum speaks during the launch of the organization's first quarter report*

who are not actively participating in hostilities as well as their property are not to be attacked and added that these violations are committed in total violation of International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law.

“We urge the State Defense and Security Forces and Separatist Fighters to exercise restraint and desist from committing human rights violations and abuses, especially attacks against civilians and their properties,” CHRDA noted as a recommendation.

CHRDA has called on separatist fighters and their leadership to stop attacks on school infrastructure, teachers, school children and other academic stakeholders while calling on judicial authorities to judiciously exercise their function of administration of justice and the promotion of the rule of law by the

regulations in force as well as by the International Commitments that Cameroon is a party to.

In the Far North Region, the Cameroon Government should foster civil-military cooperation and also increase security measures in the region to curb the frequent attacks from the Boko Haram militias on the population and also educate the population on vigilante measures.

We encourage the Cameroon government to increase security measures in the Far-North Regions to protect civilians and their properties from the Boko Haram attacks in the region.

**International Community should step up**

CHRDA has called on the international community to pressure the State of Cameroon to respect its international Human rights as well

as humanitarian law commitments while urging the international community to continue to use all the available means to make the State of Cameroon as well as separatist fighters and their leadership to adopt a sincere, inclusive and negotiated dialogue as a means of resolving the conflict in the North West and South West regions of Cameroon.

The Rights organization has also called on the International Community to urge the state of Cameroon to investigate and prosecute persons suspected of committing crimes against humanity in the context of the Anglophone conflict, while publicly condemning human rights violations and abuses committed by Cameroon Defense and Security Forces and armed separatists.

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# Faced With The Threat Of Regional Disintegration In West Africa, Resignation Is Not An Option

- We need an ECOWAS that gives young people reasons to dream

By Dr Olakounlé Gilles Yabi\*



In 2014, when I was working to launch the citizen think tank WATHI, I wrote the following in the concept note I proposed to dozens of friends interested in the present and future of West Africa:

‘West Africa is a very young region. The proportion of the population aged under 25 in each country of the region exceeds 60%. Demographic growth in West Africa will remain strong in the medium term. The prospects outlined by the region demographic projections entail daunting security, economic and social challenges for countries whose states and economies are mostly weak. These demographic trends, together with the region’s abundant natural resources and the weakness of local production systems, are some of the reasons behind the renewed interest in African economies shown by old and new dominant players in the global economy. However, if the enthusiasm regarding West Africa’s economic promise is not tempered by an overall acknowledgment of the security and political threats the region is facing, the result will likely be further disillusionment’.

### One of the worst scenarios we could have imagined ten years ago

Ten years after this diagnosis of the state of the region, the situation in

West Africa in 2024 looks grimly like one of the worst-case scenarios we could have imagined back then. I’m among those who believe that we need to change the narrative about our part of the world, about Africa in general. However, the desire to highlight the positive developments in many areas, the extraordinary potential of our young people, should not distract us from a dispassionate observation of the reality of the moment. The only way we will be able to bring about the much-needed changes in political practices in the region is through a candid observation of the state of affairs in the region.

West Africa is currently facing unprecedented level of security and political uncertainty. Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Nigeria are among the 10 countries most affected by terrorism in the world. This however is only a partial reflection of the spread of insecurity, the rivalization of violence and the overall worrisome consequences on social cohesion and the physical and mental health of millions of children who are growing up in a context of violence and without any educational or emotional support from their families.

In four countries undergoing transition following coups d’état (Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea and Niger), there is no regional institutional framework to set

limits on military rulers who have no internal checks and balances. However, the restrictions on political freedoms and freedom of expression by those regimes, against a backdrop of growing economic difficulties for the population, are beginning to provoke protests and strikes, despite the high risks of repression and threat of imprisonment.

In some other West African countries that are formally democratic and run by civilians, checks and balances exist only in theory, and in reality, there is little possibility of political alternation. In many countries presidents have taken the initiative to revise or change the constitution to evade term limit and remain in power indefinitely. The recent constitutional reform in Togo, a country that has not had a democratic transition for 57 years, provided another shocking example of a parody of democracy in West Africa. The content of the country’s supreme law, which abolishes presidential elections by universal suffrage, was not made public until after its enactment. And even in the few countries that are often held up as examples of political alternation through credible elections, with the possible exception of Cabo Verde, the general perception held by citizens is that resources and economic opportunities are monopolised by small circles of

relatives, friends and political allies. Democracy and elections continue to unbearably accommodate high levels of corruption, mismanagement and embezzlement.

### An unprecedented crisis in regional integration

The simultaneous announcement on 28 January 2024 by the governments in power in Bamako, Ouagadougou and Niamey to leave ECOWAS opened up an unprecedented crisis in the process of regional integration in West Africa. We have all become witness to the continued strained relationship between neighboring countries such as Benin and Niger, a distressing waste of time and energy at a moment when communities continue to be impoverished by restrictions on cross-border economic activities.

The next few months will be decisive for the regional integration process. The decision of Burkina, Mali and Niger to leave ECOWAS enable military leaders in those three countries to free themselves from ECOWAS supervision of transition and related constraints. They were also able to make this announcement because they knew that the short-term political and economic cost would be limited. As a matter of fact, they did not withdraw from the West African Economic and Monetary Union

(WAEMU), which brings together eight countries that share a common currency, the CFA franc (seven countries that were once colonies of France and have been joined by Guinea Bissau in 1997). Membership of WAEMU allows these countries to retain most of the benefits of regional integration within this sub-area of ECOWAS. In addition, leaving WAEMU is more difficult and requires prior preparations than exiting ECOWAS.

The political cost of leaving ECOWAS was also limited because the military leaders were aware of the degraded image of the regional organisation among a large part of West African population, not only in the Sahel. ECOWAS' management of the coup d'état in Niger dealt a blow to the regional organization's perception among West African public opinion. The political and symbolic impact offered an un hoped-for opportunity for the military leaders to portray themselves as the victims of a plot by their own regional organisation to launch a military intervention in one of its own member states.

**A regional organisation always reflects the political will, capacities and dynamics of its member states**

Many West Africans reduce ECOWAS to the Conference of Heads of State and Government, which takes decisions on political and security issues at ordinary and extraordinary summits. All the other dimensions of integration that are the subject of the daily work of the Commission, other bodies and specialised agencies, are simply not known or poorly known.

The vast majority of young people in urban and rural areas have no precise knowledge of the history of regional integration, of the major stages in the construction of ECOWAS since 1975, of the benefits of regional integration for the people, of ECOWAS's decisive diplomatic and military interventions in countries in armed conflict in the 1990s and 2000s. Few citizens of West African countries can mention the names and missions of ECOWAS's two



Dr Olakounlé Gilles Yabi.

specialised agencies. Few are aware of the existence and crucial role of the Court of Justice, which can be seized by any citizen of a member country even before domestic remedies have been exhausted. This court is a great tool for the promotion and protection of human rights in West Africa. However, it has consistently been undermined by the same member states which created it and who often do not abide by its rulings. The region is therefore paying the price for what has not been done in terms of education, the inclusion of regional integration issues in curricula and overall communication on regional integration.

There is a great deal of confusion between what is the responsibility of the Member States and what is that of ECOWAS. Many people are fiercely critical of ECOWAS because they expect it to be a substitute for states, a means of freeing themselves from their weaknesses, their dysfunctions and sometimes the lack of legitimacy of their leaders. It is not ECOWAS that chooses the Heads of State of the member countries, but the latter then form the college of ultimate political

decision-makers of the organisation. This is true of all regional organisations worldwide. Regional organisations cannot work miracles in the absence of impetus, strong will and capacity for action on the part of the member countries, or at least a core group of influential countries among them. A regional organisation always depends on its member states, which can give or refrain from giving the organisation the means to act and the freedom it needs to implement its integration agenda.

It must be acknowledged that some very unfortunate decisions have been taken by the ECOWAS Conference of Heads of State and Government in recent years. It is also necessary to recognise the structural shortcomings, while welcoming the many achievements of ECOWAS over the past 49 years and the immensity of the ground covered. If the record had been better in terms of regional infrastructure, for example if ECOWAS had been able to lead and ensure the effective implementation of a regional rail network programme, if the record had been better in terms of the harmonisation of sectoral

policies and the promotion of regional integration in education systems, the political cost to each Member State of leaving the Community would have been much higher. And that rubicon would have been much harder to cross even for authorities who have seized power by force.

**What is at stake is the West Africa we want for our children**

Alongside discreet diplomatic efforts, a public campaign is needed to explain why ECOWAS is an essential, crucial institution for the future of West Africa. The ECOWAS Commission must speak directly to the people. The organisation should explain the *raison d'être* of the additional protocol on democracy and good governance. It should also explain the reasoning behind the broadening over the years of its missions and objectives, beyond economic integration. Those who criticise ECOWAS for straying from its original economic mission, for violating the sovereignty of states by interfering in internal political issues, are either ignoring the rational evolution of the organisation's rules and regulations in responding to armed conflicts and violent political crises, or are acting in bad faith. We must, however, accept a debate with all these voices acting in good faith or not. We need to explain how the promotion of the rule of law in the region is not just a dream of westernised elites who are out of touch with reality, and how it is the only way to protect all citizens of West African countries from arbitrariness.

More than ever, West Africa needs a strong ECOWAS that focuses on clear priorities. We need an ECOWAS that develops its capacity for strategic thinking by capitalising on the region's human resources, including the diaspora. We need an ECOWAS that helps to protect the region from the potentially devastating consequences of battles for influence between powers on West African soil. As we all know, without perhaps realising the magnitude of the threat, this battle is also being waged in cyberspace, where opinions and

certainties are spouted all day long via social media, in order to suppress any hindsight, critical thinking or attachment to facts in people's minds.

We need an ECOWAS that gives young people reasons to dream. We need to create and maintain a desire for integration. We also need the demographic, economic and military powerhouse of the region to act as a driving force. We need a committed Nigeria and a core of personalities in each of the countries in the region who are genuinely committed to the

integration project. Let me reiterate: no regional organisation exists without its member countries and without the social, political, economic and cultural forces that shape the development of each of these countries.

What will be at stake in the coming months is the shape and the type of West African region we want for our youth, our children for decades to come. The choice before us is that of continuing belief in the possibility of making West

Africa a region of collective progress and freedom, where fundamental rights are protected or resignation. The latter is undesirable because it implies accepting that our region is deeply fragmented, that each country becomes inward looking and focuses on what it perceives as its strictly national interests. It would mean accepting the real and very high risk of a return, almost everywhere, to autocratic regimes where leaders are accountable to no one. We have already experienced this in the past in

a majority of countries in the region and on the African continent. It was not a resounding success. Resignation is therefore not an option.

\* Dr Olakounlé Gilles Yabi, Founder and CEO of the citizen think tank WATHI .This article is a modified and expanded version of Gilles Yabi's speech at a public event organised by the ECOWAS observation mission at the United Nations to mark the regional organisation's 49th anniversary, New York, 7 June 2024.



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# AFRICA'S BUSINESS HEROES

## Who We Are

Africa's Business Heroes (ABH) is the Jack Ma Foundation's flagship philanthropic program in Africa to support entrepreneurs. Launched in 2019, ABH aims to enable 100 African business Heroes to inspire millions more through our Competition, Show and Community.

## What We Do

### The Competition

- Every year, we call on entrepreneurs from every sector and across Africa to apply to Africa's largest and most-inclusive pitch competition.
- We award \$1.5 million in grant funding every year to ten finalists who also gain access to mentorship, training and the ABH community.

### The Community

- We provide training, mentorship, networking and investment opportunities
- We support our finalists collaborate, engage in peer-to-peer learning and provide mutual support through offline gatherings, the ABH Summit and our local lead initiative

### The Show

- We produce **the annual Africa's Business Heroes TV show**. The ABH show is an entertaining and educational video series detailing the inspiring background stories of the ABH finalists and their journey to the grand finale.
- The show is broadcasted on CNBC Africa, StarTimes, DSTV, numerous country TV stations and online. The ABH Documentary has **won over 9 international awards**.

## Our Values



TRULY PAN-AFRICAN

We are open to Candidates from all 54 African Countries



INCLUSIVE

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SECTOR-AGNOSTIC

Entrepreneurs from all industries are eligible to apply



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We are looking for entrepreneurs from all levels of society

## Key Figures

70K



Applicants Since 2019

54



Representing Every Country

~30%



Female Participation

~15%



Francophone Participation

300mil



PR Reach

50mil



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Impacted By ABH Training

\$80mil



Debt And Equity Raised

100K



Community Members

## BAL Scales New Heights In Season 4

With deafening chants of *Petro, Petro, Petro*, BAL President Amadou Gallo Fall handed over the BAL Season 4 trophy to Captain Carlos Morals of the Angolan side. A sold-out crowd at the BK Arena Arena including President Paul Kagame and his wife saw Petro de Luanda of Angola defeat Al Ahly of Libya 107 to 94 to emerge as Season 4 Champions of the Basketball Africa League. The fiercely contested finals capped off another Season that showcased the growing influence of BAL across the continent. PAV was in Kigali and came back with photos from the games, the finals, the entertainment, the BAL Innovation Summit, the media workshop and other side events that graced the BAL Season 4 finale.









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# Cameroon: Philemon Yang Elected 79th UN General Assembly Session President

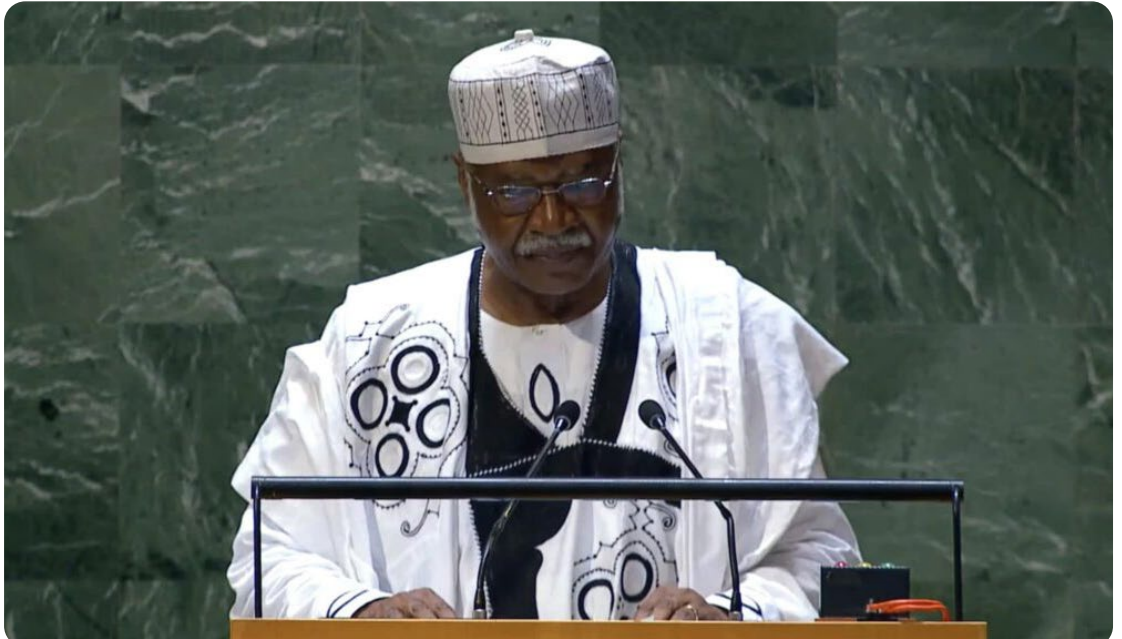
By Boris Esono Nwenfor

**B**UEA, Cameroon – Former Cameroon Prime Minister Philemon Yang has been elected as the 79th United Nations, UN, General Assembly Session president, scoring a big victory for the Central African nation in the world’s diplomatic scene.

In a speech on Thursday, June 6, the president-elect Yang said that geopolitical tensions continue to fuel distrust among states and intensify an arms race. He added that conflicts are increasing in various regions of the world with an unbearable toll on civilians, and the «cases of Gaza and Ukraine are very painfully illustrative in this regard.»

As President-elect Yang arrives to lead the seventy-ninth General Assembly, he does so at a challenging moment. Conflicts continue to rage. Climate catastrophe is deepening. Poverty and inequality are rife. Mistrust and division are pulling people apart. The Sustainable Development Goals are dramatically off-track. And developing countries are left without the support they need to invest in their people.

Dennis Francis, President of the General Assembly said. «His steadfast leadership has also been characterized



*Philemon Yang of Cameroon, President-elect of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly.*

by a consistent commitment to dialogue, cooperation, and inclusivity – principles that are essential for guiding the General Assembly’s work.»

The 79th session of the General Assembly will convene on 10 September, with the body’s high-level general debate starting on 24 September 2024.

At an informal dialogue with Assembly members in May, then-

candidate Yang, highlighted his theme for the 79th session as «unity in diversity, for the advancement of peace, sustainable development and human dignity for everyone everywhere.»

### *A vital voice to the UN Hall*

With the world confronting multiple, complex challenges, Mr. Francis emphasized the importance of multilateralism and international

cooperation. He urged all Member States to work together - and work harder - to ensure nobody is left behind.

“With His Excellency Philemon Yang at the helm, I am confident that the General Assembly will rise to the occasion to meet this challenge with courage and compassion,” he added.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said: “He brings a vital voice to this Hall. He has a wealth of experience representing his country as a diplomat and public servant, as well as his work with the African Union and at the highest levels of Government – including as Prime Minister of Cameroon.”

Guterres urged everyone not to lose sight of the collective objective of a more peaceful and sustainable world. He acknowledged the leadership of Assembly President Francis, adding that like him, president-elect Yang will also play an important role.

“He is also a proud African dedicated to the future of his continent. African countries like Cameroon are bursting with potential. Realizing this potential requires rallying around African countries – and indeed, supporting developing



*Philemon Yang's victory for Cameroon is a big victory for the Central African nation in the world's diplomatic.*

countries around the world,” Antonia Guterres added.

“I look forward to working closely with him as he unites the Member States around collaborative solutions that can deliver justice to Africa and the developing world. Across all of this important work, this Assembly and its President can count on my full support. The United Nations General Assembly stands as a unique and vital body in a divided and troubled world, and we must all commit ourselves to its success in the time ahead.”

The assembly also elected five non-permanent members of the Security Council for a two-year term from

January 2025. Denmark, Greece, Pakistan, Panama and Somalia were elected from candidates representing each region of the world. Pakistan will replace Japan as a representative of the Asia-Pacific next year.

**About Philemon Yang**

Ambassador Philemon Yang is a seasoned diplomat with a track record of experience. Internally, he served as Prime Minister, Head of Government, from 2009 to 2019. In this capacity, he represented the Head of State at various important high-level regional and international meetings. He has held other important government

positions, including Vice-Minister of Territorial Administration (1975-1979), Minister of Mines and Energy (1979-1984), and Minister, Deputy Secretary General at the Presidency of the Republic (2004-2009).

Since 2020 he has been serving as the Grand Chancellor of National Orders at the Presidency of the Republic. Internationally, Mr. Philemon Yang served as Cameroon’s High Commissioner to Canada (1984-2004), where for 14 years he doubled as Dean of the Diplomatic Corps. He has led Cameroonian delegations to high-level economic summits in Washington D.C, London, New Delhi

and several other capitals.

At the African level, he took part in various sessions of the African Union (AU) Conference of Heads of State and Government, including the Summit on the institutional reform of the African Union. He has held the position of Chairperson of the Panel of Eminent Africans of the African Union, since February 2020. This Panel is, among other things, responsible for examining candidacies for important positions within the African Union, such as those of African Union Commissioners.

**Q & A With Lorna Williams On The Global Leadership Investment Summit**

*By Ajong Mbandah L*

Running from July 28-31, 2024, in Houston, Tx, the Global Leadership Investment Summit & Awards Conference (GLISA TEXAS 2024), will bring together a diverse mix of successful global leaders and exceptional entrepreneurs to strengthen economic ties with various countries and global investors for a coalition to promote new ideas, policies and initiatives, and as a liaison between government and independent stakeholders, says Dr Lorna Williams.

As Secretary General USA of the United international Peace and Governance Council -UNIPGC that is the organizer, Dr Williams says the Summit is aimed at fostering continued improvements for both the public and private sector. With participation expected from all over the world, Lorna Williams describes Houston as the ideal place for GLISA and the myriad of opportunities it has to offer.

**Could we start with an introduction of the Global Leadership Investment Summit?**

The Global Leadership Investment Summit & Awards Conference (GLISA TEXAS 2024), presented by the United International Peace



*With participation expected from all over the world, Lorna Williams describes Houston as the ideal place for GLISA 24 and the myriad of opportunities it has to offer.*

and Governance Council, formerly International Peace and Governance, in collaboration with the Noble Institute for Environmental Peace

(NIEP) and Nikola Tesla Foundation International (NTFI), will bring together a diverse mix of successful global leaders and exceptional

entrepreneurs to strengthen economic ties with various countries and global investors for a coalition to promote new ideas, policies and initiatives, and as a liaison between government and independent stakeholders. Overall, the platform strives to promote investments, trade, and capacity building of countries.

How was the idea of the Summit conceived and what are some of the sellable points or benefits that you are pitching out to potential participants and sponsors?

The idea of the Summit was birthed in line with the vision of UNIPGC, NIEP & NTFI to make the world a better place and also to help advance minorities, the Continent of Africa, Asia, ethnicities, their businesses and governments, economically, by having an investment summit in one of the most ethnically diverse cities of America.

Some of the selling points to participants include the UN SDG Award registration package, presented by NIEP, which has special consultative status with the United Nations. We are also presenting the Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award to outstanding and reportable individuals who have made impactful contributions to society.

Sponsors benefit by getting

worldwide recognition of being part of a historic event as well as supporting the overall vision of UNIPGC that is aimed at implementing trade, investment and capacity building of countries on a long-term basis. Some sponsorship levels include a chance to be on the board of Trustees or the Grand Patron or Matron of the Organization. A person who donates \$500,000 or more to UNIPGC and whose association is deemed helpful for the promotion of the objectives of the organization shall be confirmed by the Supreme Council as Grand Patron.

The Grand Patron shall be persons of outstanding character, committed to and believer of the principles and mandates of the United Nations. The Grand Patron shall collectively have consultative and supportive function aimed at guiding the council to meeting its objectives and fulfilling its mandate within the framework of the provisions of this constitution.

May we know some of the big names in terms of confirmed participation?

Some names we can share for the Presidential award include-

HRM. KING NII GAMU AMUI ISAAH, King of Accra, Ghana,

Her Royal Highness Princess Dato' Seri Dr. Romona Murad, Malaysia,

Islamic Scholar Mr. Sultan Fiaz ul Hassan, Pakistan,

Mr. Yasir Shah, National Test Cricketer, Pakistan,

Dr. Shimail Daud Arain, CEO Maryum Hospital, Pakistan

**Speakers include**

Mr FAROOQ NATHANIAL, Assistant to Secretary General, The Nikola Tesla Foundation International

H. E Jewel Howard-Taylor, former Vice President of Liberia

Dr Alicia Eugene-Ford, Director of Universal Health Coverage, St. Lucia Arijit Bhattacharyya,

Founder Virtual infocom, World leader Summit, Mentor, Angel Investor, VC Fund partner

The names mentioned are far from exhaustive as we do have a long and growing list of participants who will make the Summit impactful.

**We see Niep and Nikola Tesla as collaborators of Global Leadership and Investment Summit, what exactly will be their role?**

As co-organizers with a common vision aligned with UNIPGC, they are bringing their resources and network that would benefit from this conference. The support and partnership will be most useful, and we remain open to more partnerships with other companies and stakeholders interested in joining this noble venture.

To potential investors, companies or individuals willing to attend, what does it take to be part of

the Summit and how much time do they have left?

What it takes for investors, companies, or individuals willing to attend the Summit, either in person or virtually, is to go to <https://bit.ly/GLISATEXAS2024TICKETS> and select either a registration or sponsorship package. Also, for recognition they can submit a 3-4 Short Paragraph bio, a professional photo and company logo at <https://bit.ly/GLISATEXAS2024AWARDS>.

We can accept sponsorship at any time, however, the sponsorship deadline is due by July 10th, as there are sponsorship Packages which relate to the overall vision of our organization and not just to sponsor the conference.

Regarding in person registration, the deadline is July 1st without late increased registration fees, as there is limited in person registration. For Virtual registration the deadline is July 15th and is unlimited. And for the stand alone ALL WHITE GALA AWARDS DINNER the deadline is also July 15th and limited.

**Is the Summit a one-time thing or do you have plans to make it an annual event?**

The Summit is an annual event to foster continued improvements



60% of seaport trade, represents a significant share of US chemical exports, handling about 1/3 of all exports Texas is #1 in renewable energy production in the USA. Tech companies like Google and Apple are present in Texas along with aircraft company Boeing and space exploration company NASA. Texas is one of the top states for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

With regards to the South Shore Harbor Resort where the events will be hosted, it is located in the South of Houston, going towards Galveston. It is the Bay Area's most

modern resort and Conference Center with an Oasis pool and swim up bar, Fitness Center and SPA. It is near Clear Lake, the country's third largest boating destination.

Close to South Shore Harbor Country Club for golfing, near the Kemah boardwalk, near Moody Gardens on Galveston Island. It is close to NASA/ Johnson Space Center Houston, 30 minutes from the world's tallest masonry monumental, San Jacinta Monument. South Shore Harbor Marina is Clear Lake's largest marina.

**For those who have never been to Houston, what are some other attractions or opportunities that could also enthuse participants to make it to the Summit?**

Texas is the Energy Capital of the World. Houston is the most diverse city in the USA. Texas is the home to the most Fortune 500 companies of any state in the United States

The only state in America that has its own ETF on the NYSE. One of the most promising areas for real estate and Opportunity Zone fund investing. Texas has been the top high tech exporting state for 10 consecutive years Houston has the largest Nigerian population in Texas. The Port of Houston is a major gateway for national and international trade, leading the nation in foreign waterborne tonnage and ranks 15th in the world, represents about

**For people attending from Africa, anything organizers are doing to facilitate visa processes for travel?**

For those individuals who are reputable and vetted and register in time they can submit an application at <https://bit.ly/GLISATEXAS2024AWARDS>. There is a possible possibility that the organizers may be able to facilitate visa processes for travel to the Summit. And if they are not able to secure their visas in time for GLISATEXAS2024, we can also begin working on it for GLISATEXAS2025 in September, 2025.



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# A Gateway To East & Central Africa Through Mikumi Freight Forwarders

By Ajong Mbapndah L

With specialty in transporting heavy machinery, equipment, and goods like cotton, coffee, and iron ore, Mikumi Freight is emerging as a key actor in the business and economic landscape of East and Central Africa.

From its hub in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, Mikumi Freight Forwarders provides premium cargo and freight services. Its local divisions are outfitted with expert staff committed to offering competitive rates for customs clearance, freight forwarding, removal assistance, and daily correspondence. In Dallas, TX, USA to market, network and build partnerships Mikumi Freight Managing Director Emile Nyilidandi fielded questions from PAV.

### Can you start by introducing Mikumi Freight Forwarders for us?

Mikumi Freight Forwarders Limited, with headquarter in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, is a global freight forwarding company that specializes in comprehensive logistics and supply chain management, and a broad range of support services.

### In what countries do you have operations in?

We serve all East African countries as well as a few Central and Southern African countries, including Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda, DRC, Burundi, Uganda, Southern Sudan, Zambia and Malawi

### How will you describe the business climate in Tanzania and East Africa?



Mikumi Freight Managing Director Emile Nyilidandi.

Africa being emerging markets, one would wonder as to why not take ripe of faith and get into these new markets. East Africa is current the fastest growing economies, Tanzania being a leading in growth. Key areas to consecrate or to keep eye on is Agriculture off cause, Tourism, Fishing as well as Logistics and supply chain.

### What are some of the

### opportunities or networks you were looking to get at the US-Africa business summit in Dallas?

Our business [Freight Forwarding] works well with word of mouth (Referrals) hence our main reason to come here was to Network of which went well. Being our first time to attend US-Africa Business Summit, we wanted to explore the funding system. After meeting few financial

institutions, we realised that we needed more Partners who are in the same field to be able to bridge the gap between US-Africa Import and Export market. *What is your general take on the summit, did it meet your expectations?*

A well organised, informative and a good platform for the members to air out their views, challenges and success.

There was a new Tanzanian trade office inaugurated in Dallas during the summit, how is this going to help businesses like yours?

Tanzania have proven that it can support any investor big or small, with trade office in Dallas many people will have access of information they would have accessed by visiting Tanzania Investment Canter physically in Tanzania. The office in Dallas will be a source of information as well for Tanzania companies wanting to do business in US

### What are some of the challenges you typically face?

Compared to our US counterpart, access to reasonable funding is still the biggest challenge. Global issues affecting supply chain are among the cause of high goods transit time.

### Any last to prospective business partners and networks open to taking fresh look and prospects of working with you?

We managed to link up with few companies/individuals who keen to explore East and Central African markets. Few who are currently on the ground who the ground and happy to work with us.

# A Mixed Bag of Progress and Challenges As UN to Remove Tanzania from Least Developed Countries List

By Adonis Byemelwa

In a significant development, Vice President Dr. Philip Mpango announced at the first National Conference on the preparation of Tanzania's National Vision and Development 2050 that the United Nations plans to remove Tanzania from the list of least developed countries. The announcement, made at the University of Dar es Salaam on June 8, 2024, highlights the nation's progress across various development indicators from 2000 to 2018.

Dr. Mpango emphasized the marked improvements in several key areas. «This year, 2024, the United Nations has begun the process of removing our country from the group of least developed countries. Regarding specific development indicators, the rate of basic needs poverty has decreased from 36% in 2000 to 26.4% in 2018,» he stated.

He also noted that food poverty dropped from 19% in 2000 to 8% in 2018, while the under-five mortality rate fell from 147 per 1,000 live births in 1996 to 43 in 2022. Additionally, access to essential medicines in health centers improved from 64% in 2015 to nearly 80% in 2022, and primary school enrollment surged from 69% in 1999 to 97% in 2022.

However, Dr. Mpango acknowledged that despite these strides, poverty reduction in Tanzania remains inadequate. He stressed the need for continued government efforts to ensure equity and create a robust workforce by balancing the distribution of basic needs among citizens.

«A basic needs poverty of 26.4%, meaning 16.3 million people, is still very high and unacceptable. Similarly, a stunting rate of 30% in a nation with a surplus of food is unsatisfactory if we aim to develop a robust workforce,» he asserted.

The conference, organized by the President's Office of Planning and Investment, brought together various stakeholders, including political



Vice President Dr. Philip Mpango. Photo State House.

parties, academicians, civil society, students, religious leaders, and other groups. Key themes of the discussion included the economy, population, the vision's drafting process, and the institutions responsible for its implementation.

In his presentation, renowned academician Professor Issa Shivji highlighted the ideological framework of the vision, advising that it should not be time-bound. «A vision is not the same as a development plan; a development plan is for a specific period. In my opinion, a vision has no specific timeframe,» Professor Shivji explained. He cited the Arusha Declaration as an example of a national vision without a set timeframe.

Professor Shivji also cautioned against subjecting the nation to experiments in the creation of its vision. «Let's not allow ourselves to be experimented on; the experiments that took place in the 1960s are enough.

We should involve the citizens wherever they are to get their

opinions about the country they want, the Tanzania they desire, and prioritize their aspirations. This cannot be achieved without having a national dialogue,» he emphasized.

The panel discussion included politician Zitto Kabwe, former leader Gertrude Mongella, and academicians Professor Samuel M. Wangwe, Dr. Richard Mbunda, and Neema Mduma.

There was a strong emphasis on local ownership of the vision. Participants highlighted that the first vision was not truly locally owned due to the extensive influence of development support agencies, and the lack of adequate national consultation made the vision appear partisan.

One of the aspirations of the current vision, an inclusive economy, was noted as unachieved, partly due to a lack of discipline in implementing the country's vision. «The first plan to implement Vision 2025 was enacted in 2010.

This is over ten years since the enactment of the vision; this itself

shows a lack of discipline,» said Zitto Kabwe. He argued that for Tanzania to attain middle-income status by 2050, it needs at least 8 percent growth in the first 10 years, which requires disciplined leadership.

While Tanzania has made significant progress, the situation reflects a broader paradox seen in many developing countries.

Nations like Ethiopia and Rwanda often show impressive development statistics yet continue to grapple with pervasive poverty. Despite rapid economic growth and infrastructural advancements, the benefits often do not reach the common citizenry.

In Ethiopia, for instance, GDP growth has been among the highest in the world, but a significant portion of the population remains impoverished. According to World Bank data, Ethiopia's poverty rate fell from 44% in 2000 to 24% in 2016, but the absolute number of people living in poverty remains high due to population growth.

Economist Stefan Dercon noted, «Ethiopia's growth has been

impressive, but it is still a country where millions struggle daily to meet basic needs.» The disparity between urban and rural areas is stark, with rural communities lagging significantly in access to services and economic opportunities.

Rwanda presents a similar scenario. Often lauded for its rapid development and stability since the 1994 genocide, Rwanda's GDP growth rate has consistently been over 7% annually. However, around 38% of its population lives below the poverty line.

Despite impressive development strides, nearly 26 million Tanzanians still live in extreme poverty, surviving on less than \$1.90 a day. Photo courtesy.



*Despite impressive development strides, nearly 26 million Tanzanians still live in extreme poverty, surviving on less than \$1.90 a day. Photo courtesy.*

The government has implemented ambitious social programs, yet the rural population, which makes up the majority of Rwandans, faces persistent challenges in health, education, and income generation. Economist David Booth emphasizes, «While Rwanda has made notable progress, its development remains uneven, and poverty reduction has not kept pace with economic growth.»

These examples underscore the complexities of development. Impressive statistics on paper do not always translate into tangible improvements in the lives of ordinary citizens. In Tanzania, despite the reduction in basic needs poverty from 36% in 2000 to 26.4% in 2018, Vice President Mpango's acknowledgment of the still-high poverty rates and stunting underscores the challenge

of ensuring that economic gains are broadly shared.

To address these issues, it is essential to focus on inclusive growth and equitable distribution of resources. Dr. Mpango's commitment to investing in equitable distribution and creating a strong workforce is a step in the right direction.

However, achieving this requires a multi-faceted approach involving robust policy frameworks, effective implementation, and constant monitoring.

Economist Amartya Sen's concept of «development as freedom» highlights that true development involves expanding people's freedoms and capabilities rather than merely increasing income.

This approach emphasizes the

importance of health, education, and political and civil rights as integral to development. As Tanzania prepares its Vision 2050, incorporating such holistic perspectives will be crucial to ensuring that development benefits all citizens, not just a privileged few.

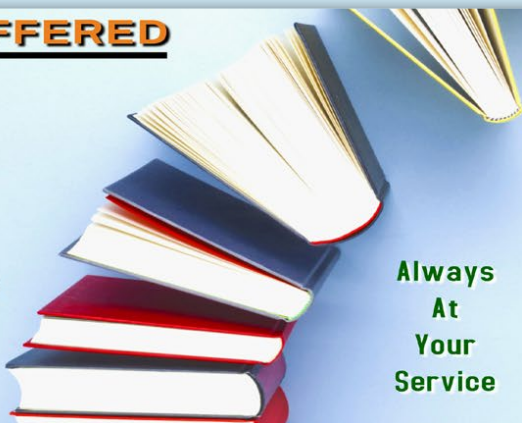
The National Conference on Vision 2050, with its diverse stakeholder engagement, reflects a positive move towards inclusive planning. By listening to a wide range of voices, including political parties, academicians, civil society, and ordinary citizens, Tanzania can craft a vision that truly reflects the aspirations of its people. As Professor Shivji rightly pointed out, involving citizens fully in the visioning process is essential for genuine national ownership and successful

implementation.

The UN's removal of Tanzania from the list of least-developed countries marks a significant milestone, underscoring the nation's progress. However, this achievement comes with a stark reminder of the persistent challenges ahead. Despite impressive development strides, nearly 26 million Tanzanians still live in extreme poverty, surviving on less than \$1.90 a day, according to a World Bank report. The lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic pushed an additional 100,000 people into poverty in 2022 alone. As Tanzania charts its course to 2050, the imperative is clear: economic growth must translate into tangible improvements for all citizens, ensuring no one is left behind. \_\_\_\_\_

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# Finally - Zimbabwe Licenses Starlink

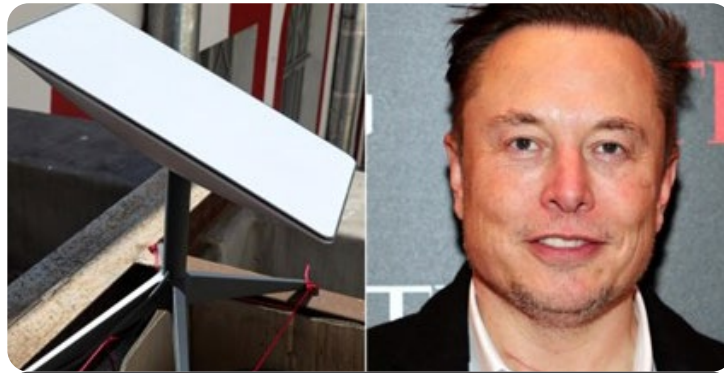
By Prince Kurupati

May 25 is a very special day in Africa as it's the day set aside to commemorate the founding of the Organization of African Unity (now African Union). This organization helps the continent to spearhead and push for the betterment of the continent as a whole. Traditionally, African leaders on this day recite speeches or release statements that celebrate and outline the continent's successes while at the same time remembering the sacrifices of Africa's forebearers. In line with this trend, Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa duly released a statement via his official X (formerly Twitter). Nearly an hour after releasing his Africa Day statement, the President used the same platform to release another statement, this time, a statement with huge (positive) ramifications for Zimbabwe's future.

The statement read: «One of the strategic pillars that anchor the 2nd Republic's (current administration) developmental agenda under Vision 2030 is innovation, science and technology. Prioritization of the digital economy and the emerging importance of technology in our day-to-day activities requires the Government to lead from the front in providing an environment where investment in technology is promoted.

In this vein, I'm pleased to announce that I have approved the licensing of Starlink by POTRAZ to provide advanced internet and related digital processing services in Zimbabwe through its sole and exclusive local partner, IMC Communications (Pvt) Ltd. Starlink @Starlink is a Low Earth Orbit (LEO) Satellite operator wholly owned by global conglomerate Space X led by prominent multi-billionaire @ElonMusk.»

Immediately after the statement was released, hundreds of Zimbabweans from across the political divide flooded the President's timeline praising him for his 'brilliant' decision to license Starlink. Many concurred that the licensing of



The move could have far reaching effects on Zimbabwe. Photo Credit Business Insider Africa.

Starlink will usher in much-needed development in the country. Pastor and development economist Eddie Mahembe said, «The licensing of @Starlink is a game changer for Zimbabwe. This move should be applauded, especially by us who have been advocating for innovation and rural development initiatives.»

Away from the social media and messaging platforms, general citizens interviewed by different media houses all praised the move. Many castigated the telecoms actors currently serving the Zimbabwean market saying that they were shortchanging consumers by charging exorbitant data prices. They said the introduction of Starlink globally famed for its affordable prices will change the internet landscape in the country and give data consumers a great alternative to settle for.

The director general of the Posts and Telecommunication and Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (POTRAZ) Dr Gift Machengete said the licensing of Starlink comes as a welcome development, especially for rural and remote areas which up until now haven't been connected. «Satellite service providers provide high-speed internet services. There will be areas that they will be providing services that have not had the service, like the rural areas, where there is no optic fibre,» Dr Machengete said.

According to a World Bank report released in 2021, only 34.8% of Zimbabwe's population have access to the internet. This percentage is likely to shoot up thanks to the introduction of Starlink said Mr. Jacob Mutevedzi,

an ICT expert. «Zimbabweans, their location notwithstanding, are finally able to access internet service despite the absence of physical infrastructure traditionally set up by local internet service providers, the absence of which has always been blamed for lack of service,» Mr. Mutevedzi said.

The POTRAZ director general however said Zimbabweans will have to wait till the third quarter of the year to start using Starlink services. In an interview, Dr Machengete said, «With regard to Starlink, they have indicated in their application that they will roll out service in the third quarter of the year. That is what they have said. In their application, they will provide backhauling connectivity and they can also enter into commercial arrangements with local players.»

Zimbabwe's minister of Information, Communication and Technology, Postal and Courier Services, Dr Tatenda Mavetera said there are both technical and economic benefits to be derived from the introduction of Starlink. «There will be better service delivery by the Government – in schools and hospitals, the Government has an opportunity now to provide Internet coverage in remote places at a lower cost. Tax revenue – increased digital transactions will result in a direct increase in tax revenue for the Government, which, in turn, will result in better service delivery,» she said.

While praises for the decision announced by President Mnangagwa

have come from all directions, economist Stevenson Dlamini warned that there is a need to be cautious as the set-up cost for the Starlink kit may be out of reach for many. «It (Starlink kit) will cost an arm and a leg, but in the long run, it will be worth it. In rural communities, we can only wish that the government purchases the kits to supply schools, hospitals and other public facilities in need,» Dlamini said. The website of IMC, the «sole and exclusive» partner of Starlink in Zimbabwe is currently under construction hence the actual price of the kit is not known as yet.

Another point of debate which has emerged following the recent development is the announcement of the news by the president instead of the telecoms regulator POTRAZ. Moreover, lawyer and former spokesperson of the main opposition party Fadzai Mahere questioned why IMC, the company owned by ex-convict and close confidant to the president was given «sole and exclusive» partnership rights to work with Starlink saying, «POTRAZ, the regulatory body, that "approved" the arrangement is a public administrative body. In terms of section 68 of the Constitution, every decision they make has to be lawful, reasonable and fair. How is it rational or fair to impose a regulatory requirement that Starlink operates exclusively with one Zimbabwean company with no transparent process underpinning that administrative decision? What is the basis of this decision? What does it mean for other players? How did it come about? Is it lawful in light of the clear terms of the Competition Act around restriction?»

When Starlink finally goes live in Zimbabwe in the third quarter of the year, it will join several other African countries that are already using its services which include Nigeria, Zambia, Mozambique, Tunisia and Malawi.



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## Angola's Petro de Luanda Clinches Historic 2024 BAL Championship



*BAL President Amadou Gallo Fall handed over the BAL Season 4 trophy to Captain Carlos Morals of the Angolan side.*

**P**etro de Luanda of Angola won the 2024 Basketball Africa League (BAL) final game, defeating Libya's Al Ahly Ly 107-94 at Kigali's BK Arena.

The Angolan side has become the first Sub-Saharan African team to win the BAL Finals, which had previously been dominated by Egyptian and Tunisian clubs.

Petro de Luanda faced numerous challenges on its way to the championship. Following a decisive 5-2 performance in the Kalahari Conference group round in Pretoria, South Africa, they moved to the playoffs, defeating Senegal's AS Douanes and South Africa's Cape Town Tigers in the quarterfinals and semifinals.

The team's triumph over Al Ahly Ly in the finals cemented its place in history and demonstrated the league's developing competitive spirit and quality.

Following the game, BAL President Amadou Gallo Fall and FIBA Africa President Anibal Manave handed Petro de Luanda the BAL Championship Trophy. Jo Lual-Acuil Jr., a great player for Al Ahly Ly, received the Hakeem Olajuwon Trophy for Most Valuable Player (MVP) and the Dikembe Mutombo Trophy for Defensive Player of the Year.

Despite his team's loss, Lual-Acuil Jr. was crowned Scoring Champion and All-BAL First and Defensive Teams, highlighting his season

statistics of 21.1 points, 9.9 rebounds, and 1.6 blocks per game.

The 2024 BAL season was notable for several significant accomplishments and milestones. The league's social and digital media networks attracted over 1.6 million live viewers, with games televised in 214 countries and territories in 17 languages. This broad reach demonstrates the growing global interest in African basketball and the league's effectiveness in extending its fan base.

«We're feeling motivated and reassured once again. The league's response to feedback has been positive, as evidenced by increased fan interest and engagement. Our talent pool continues to grow while

programs are improved. However, I avoid using the term 'satisfied' because we are still in the early stages and have lofty goals for the league,» said BAL President Amadou Gallo Fall, reflecting on the season's success.

The league's dedication to community engagement and growth was also evident. Through projects such as BAL4HER, BAL Advance, and different youth camps, the league has involved over 5,000 youngsters from the local community.

Furthermore, the BAL Elevate program continues to provide elite NBA Academy Africa prospects with opportunities to play in the BAL, increasing talent and providing a platform for young players to hone

their skills.

The BAL's impact extends beyond the court. According to Amadou Gallo Fall, the league's goal is to stimulate economic growth in its operating regions.

«We aim to make this league a catalyst for economic growth, significantly boosting the economies of areas where travel and tourism thrive. The diverse crowd consists of young, vibrant, tech-savvy, and urban culture, setting a more significant stage than just basketball and sports,» he said.

The collaboration between the BAL and its partners has been critical to its success. The Rwanda Development Board, NIKE, Jordan Brand, Wilson, and marketing partners Afreximbank, Castle Lite, Hennessy, and RwandAir have contributed significantly to the league's growth and expansion.

In a remarkable milestone, the BAL and Bank of Kigali have formed a partnership to improve fan attendance and in-arena experiences during playoffs and finals. This



Al Ahly Ly forward Jo Lual-Acuil Jr. received The Hakeem Olajuwon Trophy for the 2024 BAL Most Valuable Player Award and The Dikembe Mutombo Trophy for BAL Defensive Player of the Year.

collaboration demonstrates the league's commitment to offering a world-class entertainment experience for fans.

The 2024 BAL season also saw

the addition of numerous new teams and countries, reflecting the league's growing presence on the continent. Notably, US Monastir (Tunisia)

became the first team in league

history to overcome a 0-3 start in the group phase and advance to the playoffs, finishing 3-3.

Looking ahead, Amadou Gallo Fall highlighted the league's ambitious goal.

«We have very big ambitions. We want to establish this league as one of the absolute best in the world for years to come. Just continuing to work with our partners and being able to rely on the NBA's best-in-class expertise, to operate and commercialize a professional basketball league,» he stated.

As the BAL grows and evolves, it continues to be a source of hope and opportunity for young athletes across Africa, inspiring future generations and contributing to the continent's economic and social growth.

With its successful 2024 season, the BAL has solidified its position as a leading basketball league with a bright future.



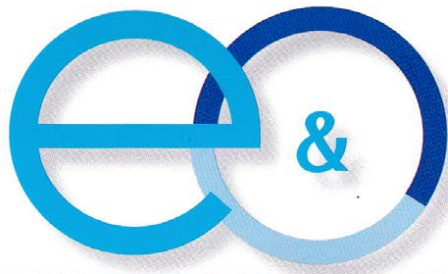
The Angolan side became the first Sub-Saharan African team to win the BAL Finals.

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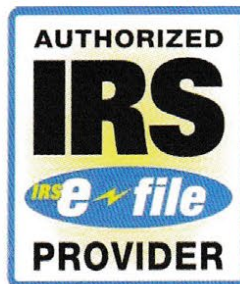
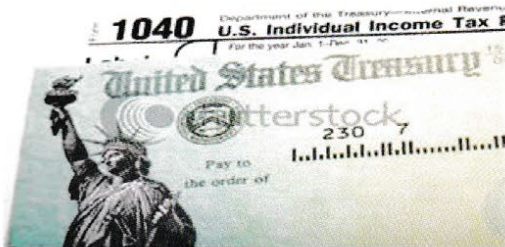
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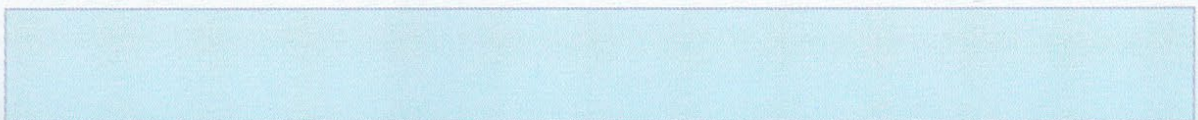
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