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Africa's Aid Conundrum

By Ajong Mbapndah L

As the Trump administration takes shape in the USA, the decision to scale back or recalibrate its foreign engagements has reignited the aid discourse in Africa. In excerpts of a video clip that went viral, former Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta was miffed that some Africans were apoplectic at the impact that dwindling American aid could have on African countries. President Trump's mandate is to look after the citizens of the USA first. The Kenyan leader mused as he challenged Africans and their leaders to look for alternative ways to address their development needs instead of expecting aid from foreign partners.

While it may be wrong to issue a blanket dismissal on the impact of foreign aid, for decades, there has been a growing chorus of African voices calling for the prioritization of trade and not aid. If the volume of aid that had flown to Africa was to make a difference, Africa would probably have more to show for its development than what is seen around most parts of the continent today. The overwhelming impression most Africans have is that aid has enriched a few in leadership roles to the detriment of the broader majority.

Whether President Trump reverses course on this or not, his decision to freeze aid should be a wake-up call for Africa. With a population of a billion plus, the continent represents a market that continues to garner global attention, enormous human and natural resources, and a diaspora yearning for the opportunity to be adequately inserted in the development equation, aid should not be a policy priority in Africa at this point.

Taking just the example of the African Continental Free Trade Area, AfCFTA, it is easy to tell that the issue is not at the level of ideas



Ajong Mbapndah L, Managing Editor

or vision, more of the political will, and gutsy leadership. The complex international system still leaves Africa in a precarious position, still, there are lots of things that the continent could do to better meet its development needs and aid should not be something to pin hopes on. What should make any visionary leader think that aid will develop a country faster than trade in such a huge market?

In recent times, we have seen institutions like the African Development Bank and Afreximbank take the lead in continental wide investment and development initiatives. In the face of capital drying up for energy related investments, the African Petroleum Producers' Organization (APPO) and Afreximbank came together to float the African Energy Bank. These are just some examples of what Africa seems to be doing right to help itself.

How could aid still be in debate when corruption indexes in most African countries are permanently high? When public treasuries are still looted with impunity, when many in power prefer siphoning funds to offshore accounts to the detriment of investments in their home countries? Why should people reasonably see aid as a solution in countries where leaders prefer to jet off to Europe

and the Middle East to treat common ailments as opposed to building and equipping hospitals in their countries?

While not been insensitive to the plight of those whose livelihood has been impacted in one way or the other through aid, the frustration of Africans who want leaders to go beyond paying lip service to the trade not aid mantra can be understood. By freezing aid, President Trump may unwittingly be reminding Africa to sit up and take charge of its own needs and shape its own future. Some of the basic steps are not that complicated, how about easing travel for Africans across the continent?

What about speeding up progress on the African Union passport that was launched with much fanfare in Rwanda in 2016? What about more accountable from those in public offices and positions of trust?

As the 21st century hits the quarter way mark, Africa does itself a disservice by dwelling on aid. The continent muddles progress of the AfCFTA with the conflict in the DR Congo threatening to engulf the whole region. With DR Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, South Africa, and others drawn into the conflict each for their own reason, how can trade thrive? When instead of learning from China and India to max the potential of its diaspora, many African countries still have policies that are so repellent, it is the continent that loses. Level the playing field, provide a conducive environment and the creative genius of dynamic Africans home and in the diaspora will work miracles for the continent. Miracles that dependence on aid will never unleash.

Talking of the conflict in the DR Congo, that Africans themselves are taking the lead in trying to quell the conflict is a noteworthy step. Africans need to take the lead in addressing its conflicts. The reasons maybe varied, but the efforts of regional

bodies like the SADC and EAC in addressing the Congolese conflict are salutary. Hopefully the plight of innocent Congolese whose only crime is that mother nature placed them in a coveted resource rich country are taken into consideration.

From leadership to a vision for the way forward, the February issue of PAV delves into some of the issues with a bearing on the aid debate. Leadership, with former Malawian President Prof Peter Mutharika bracing up for a return to the presidency following the abysmal record of his successor. For a man who ruled for one term, won re-election for a second term, had his victory annulled by the courts, lost in the rerun under dramatic circumstances, accepted the results and his faith stoically, and gave his successor ample space without interference to deliver for the people of Malawi, President Mutharika deserves utmost respect. The failures and challenges of his successor are nothing to gloat about especially with the general stagnation of Malawi and the pain of its citizens, but victory for Prof Mutharika will have a zest of poetic justice.

On the way forward, PAV shares the interesting perspectives of Danish American entrepreneur JP Følsgaard on Africa's industrialization card. For Følsgaard, Africa is in a unique position at this moment to welcome an industrialization boom. The passion with which Følsgaard harps about Africa, its potential, immense opportunities and the myriad of reasons why the continent should unleash a new era of industrialization are remarkable for someone who is not from that part of the world.

The February issue is complemented as well by a look at the Simandou 2040 project in Guinea, the challenges of President Chapo after taking office in Mozambique, what the Trump presidency could mean for Africa, stories on business, education, health and more. Happy reading!!



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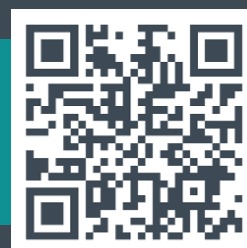


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Crisis in the Great Lakes: Regional Leaders Scramble to Avert Full-Scale War

By Adonis Byemelwa

The air in Dar es Salaam was thick with urgency as regional leaders gathered for a crucial summit—one that had the potential to reshape the Great Lakes region. Eastern DR Congo teetered on the edge, the city of Goma in crisis, and tensions between Rwanda and the DRC had reached a boiling point.

The world watched as the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) attempted to forge a path to peace in one of Africa's most volatile conflicts on 8th February 2025.

Félix Tshisekedi, the Congolese president, was notably absent, opting instead to send a representative. His absence spoke volumes. Kinshasa was done with diplomatic theatrics while M23 rebels, allegedly backed by Rwanda, advanced further into Congolese territory.

His spokesperson, Tina Salama, was clear: the DRC expected «severe sanctions against Rwanda» and an immediate withdrawal of foreign forces. This was not diplomacy as usual—it was a desperate call for action.

Across the room sat Rwandan President Paul Kagame, facing a skeptical assembly of leaders. Rwanda had consistently denied supporting M23, but mounting evidence suggested otherwise. The



Leaders of the SADC and EAC are taking laudable steps to stem the conflict in the DR Congo and avert a regional war .Photo credit Reuters.jpg

rebels wielded advanced weaponry, operated with military precision, and moved with a strategic depth that pointed to external backing. For many in that summit, the equation was simple: without Kagame's hand, M23 would crumble.

South Africa's Cyril Ramaphosa and Uganda's Yoweri Museveni walked a tightrope, urging de-escalation while ensuring the summit didn't collapse into hostility. Somalia's Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, acknowledging the wider regional implications, added

his voice to the call for peace. Leaders from SADC and EAC were not just there to talk—they were there to enforce a solution, fragile as it may be.

Meanwhile, Goma had become a city of sorrow. Over 3,000 lives lost, communities uprooted, and a once-thriving hub of trade and culture is now paralyzed by war. Schools shut down, hospitals ran out of supplies, and civilians were trapped in an ever-worsening nightmare.

A senior official at the summit put it bluntly: «The world cannot continue to watch as Congo bleeds. This is not just about geopolitics—this is about human lives, and we are failing them.»

But in a room filled with seasoned politicians, words were not enough. The summit's primary order was clear: military chiefs from both blocs had five days to draft a roadmap for an immediate ceasefire.

Their task was to restore security in Goma, reopen supply routes, and ensure humanitarian aid flowed unhindered. Most critically, Goma's airport had to resume operations to facilitate relief efforts.

Beyond the battlefield, another critical resolution emerged—the consolidation of the Luanda and Nairobi peace processes into one framework. African diplomatic efforts had long been plagued by fragmentation, with multiple negotiations often leading to diluted outcomes.

The new «Luanda-Nairobi process» aimed to unify peace talks, ensuring that all key actors—governments, opposition groups, civil society, and armed factions—operated under one umbrella.

Yet, even as leaders signed resolutions, a fundamental issue remained: Rwanda's role in the conflict. The demand for the removal of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), a remnant of Rwanda's post-genocide history, was largely accepted. But Kinshasa's insistence on Rwandan military withdrawal—paired with calls for sanctions—set the stage for a deeper confrontation.

For Rwanda, the presence of the SADC mission in the DRC was another point of contention. Kigali



Rwandan President Paul Kagame faced a skeptical assembly of leaders as he consistently denied Rwandan support of M23 rebels.Photo courtesy.

had condemned the mission as aggressive rather than peacekeeping. Their demand for the withdrawal of Burundian troops further complicated an already intricate web of alliances.

Reports of M23 rebels inching closer to Bukavu only deepened fears that the conflict could spill over, dragging neighboring states into a war no one could afford.

Then there was the issue of perception. Kagame, once celebrated for Rwanda's economic transformation, was now drawing comparisons to past leaders who wielded power with an iron grip. The narrative that Rwanda was merely a bystander in Congo's struggles had worn thin. The international community, long fatigued by diplomatic half-truths, was demanding accountability.

Recent satellite images from Kigali's military cemetery added fuel to the fire—at least 600 new graves had appeared, raising questions about Rwanda's true level of involvement.

Intelligence reports suggested the number of Rwandan casualties was in the thousands, a claim Kigali dismissed. But evidence of overwhelmed military hospitals and families receiving empty caskets only intensified scrutiny.

Pressure on international organizations, including the United Nations and African Union, to investigate was mounting. The implications were vast—not just for Rwanda and the DRC, but for the entire region, where tensions had escalated to a dangerous level.

The DRC remained firm in its accusations, demanding an immediate ceasefire, Rwandan troop withdrawal, and the reopening of Goma's airport for humanitarian aid.

The summit, hosted by Tanzanian President Samia Suluhu Hassan, gathered key regional leaders, including Kenyan President William Ruto, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa, and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa. Kagame was present, but Tshisekedi's absence underscored the widening rift between Kinshasa and Kigali.

The summit's key resolution mandated military chiefs to draft a security plan for Goma and surrounding areas within five days. Their directive included securing supply routes, ensuring aid delivery, and reopening the airport. A separate agreement aimed to integrate the Luanda and Nairobi peace talks into a single, streamlined process to prevent



Félix Tshisekedi, the Congolese President, was notably absent. Photo courtesy

bureaucratic gridlock and ineffective diplomacy.

One of the most contentious issues was the immediate removal of the FDLR from Congolese territory. While Kinshasa viewed the group as a minor threat, Kigali had long used its presence as a pretext for intervention. The summit reaffirmed the Luanda peace agreement's call for all foreign forces—including Rwandan troops—to withdraw.

Leaders also instructed EAC and SADC military chiefs to draft a timeline for the withdrawal of all foreign forces that had not been formally invited by Kinshasa. To ensure progress, a joint ministerial meeting was scheduled

within 30 days to review security recommendations and assess the situation on the ground.

Despite these agreements, skepticism remained. History has shown that regional summits often produced strong statements but little action. The ongoing war had already displaced thousands, leaving Goma—a critical city for trade and governance—crippled. Hospitals were overwhelmed, schools had shut down, and essential services had collapsed under the weight of conflict.

For the people of Goma, these high-level talks meant little unless they resulted in real change. The road ahead was fraught with obstacles, and the success of the summit would not be measured by agreements on paper but by lives saved on the ground.

As Africa's leaders weighed their next steps, one truth was clear: the time for posturing was over. Only decisive, coordinated action could prevent the eastern DRC from descending further into chaos.

With tensions still simmering, all eyes remained on the next steps. Would Kagame bow to pressure and pull back? Would the international community step in with tangible measures? Would the ceasefire hold, or would it become yet another forgotten accord?

In the days that followed, answers would emerge, but for the people caught in the crossfire, every passing moment without action was another step closer to despair. And as Goma held its breath, the world could no longer afford to look away.



The enduring struggle of refugees as they flee violence and instability in the DRC. Photo courtesy.

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Mozambique- Rocky Start For Daniel Chapo's Presidency

By Prince Kurupati



President Daniel Chapo inspects a guard of honour in Maputo at his swearing in on January 15, 2025. Photo credit AP.

Daniel Chapo's inauguration as Mozambique's fifth president on January 15, 2025, was supposed to mark a new chapter for the country. Instead, his early days in office have been overshadowed by political turmoil, economic instability, and a growing crisis of legitimacy. Post-election protests, allegations of fraud, and dwindling international support have put his leadership under intense scrutiny. If left unaddressed, these challenges could seriously threaten his presidency and the stability of Mozambique as a whole.

The October 9, 2024, election that brought Chapo to power was marred by controversy from the outset. Official results state that Chapo, the candidate of the ruling Frelimo party, secured 65% of the vote, while opposition leader Venâncio Mondlane, running as an independent, received 24%. However, Mondlane and other

opposition figures have contested and rejected the results, citing widespread electoral fraud, voter suppression, and intimidation.

International observers, including the European Union and the United States, expressed concern over the fairness of the election. The EU's observer mission stated that the electoral process was compromised by «an unjustified alteration of results,» while the US Department of State noted «irregularities that cast doubt on the credibility of the outcome.»

Protests erupted across the country following the announcement of Chapo's victory. Opposition supporters took to the streets in Maputo, Beira, and Nampula, clashing with security forces. By the time Chapo was inaugurated in January 2025, an estimated 103 people had died in election-related violence according to Wilker Dias, the executive director of Civil Society

Platform for Election Monitoring (DECIDE). The unrest has not abated, with civil society groups warning that Mozambique is at risk of deeper political instability.

Chapo's inauguration was notably subdued, with few international dignitaries in attendance. Among the few heads of state present was South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, while other key regional leaders—including Zambia's Hakainde Hichilema and Tanzania's Samia Suluhu Hassan—were absent. Analysts suggest this lack of international representation reflects broader concerns about Chapo's legitimacy.

This diplomatic cold shoulder could have long-term consequences for Mozambique. The country relies heavily on regional and international partnerships for trade, security, and development assistance. A weakened relationship with key allies could

hinder economic recovery and complicate efforts to tackle security threats.

Chapo also inherits an economy struggling under the weight of debt and stalled investment. With a debt-to-GDP ratio of 93.7% as of 2023, Mozambique remains highly vulnerable to financial instability. The government is grappling with revenue shortfalls, and austerity measures could worsen public discontent.

One of the most significant economic blows has been the continued delay of TotalEnergies' \$20 billion liquefied natural gas (LNG) project in Cabo Delgado. The project was expected to bring significant revenue and employment opportunities, but repeated attacks by insurgents have forced a suspension of operations. TotalEnergies CEO Patrick Pouyanné recently stated that security conditions must improve before the company resumes work.

The LNG delays are exacerbating an already dire employment situation. With youth unemployment hovering above 30%, many Mozambicans are frustrated by the lack of economic opportunities.

The cloud of corruption looms large over Mozambique's political landscape. The sentencing of former finance minister Manuel Chang in the infamous «tuna bond» scandal has reignited public anger over government mismanagement. The scandal, which involved \$2 billion in undisclosed loans and widespread corruption, has had lasting economic consequences, including the suspension of international aid.

Chapo has vowed to crack down on corruption, stating in his inaugural speech: «Mozambique cannot remain a hostage to corruption, nepotism, and incompetence. We must rebuild trust in our institutions.»

However, critics argue that dismantling entrenched corrupt networks will be difficult, particularly given Frelimo's long history of shielding influential figures from



Mozambique cannot remain a hostage to corruption, nepotism, and incompetence, President Chapo said at his inauguration. Photo courtesy.

accountability. Investigative journalist Luis Nhanchote noted: «Chapo will face many enemies because it looks like Mozambique is run by cartels. If he is serious about fighting corruption, he must be ready to challenge his own party.»

In addition to political and

economic instability, Chapo must confront an ongoing Islamist insurgency in the northern province of Cabo Delgado. The insurgency, led by Ahlu Sunnah Wa-Jama (commonly known as al-Shabaab in Mozambique), has displaced nearly one million people since 2017.

While joint military operations by Mozambican, Rwandan, and SADC forces have weakened the insurgents, sporadic attacks continue. In the weeks following Chapo's inauguration, armed groups launched multiple assaults in the region, highlighting the fragility of security efforts.



We must rebuild trust in our institutions, says the new President. Photo courtesy.

A Rocky Road Ahead

As Daniel Chapo begins his presidency, the challenges ahead are daunting. Post-election unrest, economic hardship, corruption, and security threats all pose significant risks to his tenure. While his commitment to governance reform and economic development is commendable, he will need to take decisive action to regain public trust and secure Mozambique's future.

His ability to navigate these crises will determine whether he emerges as a transformative leader or merely a caretaker of Frelimo's dominance. For now, Mozambique remains a nation on edge, and Chapo's next moves will be closely watched—both at home and abroad.

Tanzania: Samia Reshuffles Political Cards

By Adonis Byemelwa



President Samia Suluhu Hassan is leaving nothing to chance as she braces for the 2025 elections. Photo courtesy.

President Samia Suluhu Hassan made a bold announcement at the CCM Special National Congress on January 19, 2024, naming Dr Emmanuel Nchimbi as her running mate for the 2025 elections.

The decision, which replaced Dr Philip Mpango, was met with cheers and applause from delegates, marking a moment of unity and anticipation for the future of Tanzanian politics.

The Vice President, Dr Mpango, who had been with President Samia since her ascension to power, warmly shook Dr Nchimbi's hand in a gesture of congratulations.

Stephen Wassira, recently elected as the party's Vice Chairperson, also joined in the applause, creating an atmosphere of unity and support.

This moment highlighted not only the political maturity of President Samia but also her growing confidence as she prepares for the upcoming 2025 general elections.

This year's Special Congress was not only about electing a new Vice Chairperson for Mainland Tanzania; it also highlighted President Samia's

strategic maneuvering within CCM.

With the backdrop of a largely unpredictable political environment, Samia's quick endorsement as the presidential candidate for the 2025 elections sent a clear message: she is not just ready for re-election, but she's already set the stage for the next phase of leadership.

As President Samia addressed Congress, she explained the decision to replace Dr Mpango with Dr Nchimbi. She noted that Dr Mpango had requested to step down due to health concerns.

Nevertheless, many political analysts and insiders speculate that there was more to the decision than meets the eye.

President Samia's careful consultation with CCM's top brass seemed to leave little room for opposition, signaling that she has effectively neutralized any political threats within her party.

In her announcement, President Samia remarked, "We have worked together as a team for the good of Tanzania, and with the same spirit,

we will continue this journey." Her words resonated with many, marking a departure from the political uncertainty that once plagued her leadership.

The move to endorse her candidacy months ahead of the official CCM nomination process is not only unprecedented but also reflects Samia's growing dominance within the party.

For the first time, the CCM has chosen its presidential candidate so early, bypassing the traditional nomination process that typically takes place in June or July.

The early nomination has two possible implications: on one hand, it is a masterstroke of political maneuvering that ensures no one else can challenge President Samia's candidacy from within CCM.

On the other hand, it sends a message of unity, particularly as President Samia is seen as consolidating power within the party and the country.

Former President Jakaya Kikwete, speaking at the Congress, boldly

proclaimed that CCM's victory in the 2025 elections was a certainty, mocking the disarray within the opposition. "No one is ready to face us," he declared, pointing out the lack of unity and direction within rival political parties.

Samia's rise to the presidency was nothing short of dramatic. She took office in March 2021, following the sudden death of President John Magufuli. At the time, few expected her to thrive in a male-dominated political environment.

Yet, within just a few years, Samia has proven to be a force to be reckoned with. Her critics, both within and outside the party, have largely been silenced as she has steadily asserted her authority.

Many recall her first public address after her swearing-in, where she admitted that some forces within the government did not want her to succeed Magufuli.

The path forward was rocky, as President Samia had to navigate the fraught political landscape left in the wake of her predecessor's sudden death.

In her early days as president, Samia had to confront the hard reality of managing a deeply divided government and party. Despite the challenges, she handled her critics with remarkable tact, gradually gaining respect and support from a growing number of influential figures.

Her political resilience was first seen when she ousted Dr Bashiru Ally, a staunch Magufuli ally, in a high-profile purge that sent a clear signal to both her supporters and opponents. The removal of Speaker Job Ndogai, who had publicly criticized her leadership, further demonstrated her growing control over the party.

As Samia has increasingly solidified her leadership, she has also worked to reposition CCM's political strategy for the 2025 elections.

By reintroducing figures such as January Makamba, Nape Nnauye, and Abdulrahman Kinana—who

were sidelined during Magufuli's administration—she appeared to be recalibrating CCM's team, positioning herself as the champion of party unity.

Nevertheless, as time went on, she made a bold decision to part ways with Makamba, and Nnauye, and even accepted Kinana's resignation, signaling that her political strategy was far from static.

This recent reshuffle, capped by the announcement of Dr Nchimbi as her running mate, represents a further consolidation of Samia's political position.

Critics within CCM, particularly those from regions such as Dar es Salaam, Shinyanga, and Mwanza, have voiced discontent, claiming that the party is no longer following its traditional democratic processes.

"It's a case of a predetermined outcome," said one source within the party, expressing frustration with the lack of an internal contest for the presidential nomination.

In contrast, opposition members view this as further proof of CCM's undemocratic tendencies. Many believe that by securing the nomination months before the official election timeline, President Samia has stifled any potential challenges, reinforcing her hold on power.

"This is not democracy," one opposition leader from Dar es Salaam



Dr Nchimbi(right) has established a robust network that could prove invaluable as Samia faces the challenges of the upcoming election cycle. Photo courtesy.

remarked. "It's a mere formality to ensure Samia remains in power. Where's the competition?"

The situation surrounding Dr Philip Mpango's voluntary resignation from the running mate position is another element that has sparked debate.

While some argue that it was a move motivated by health concerns, others believe it was part of a larger political game orchestrated by President Samia.

Some CCM members are privately questioning the timing of his decision, suggesting that it was made to pave the way for Dr Nchimbi, who has a long history within the party.

As a former ally of Edward Lowassa, Dr Nchimbi has established a robust network that could prove invaluable as Samia faces the challenges of the upcoming election cycle.

The controversy surrounding the early endorsement of Samia's candidacy was particularly evident during discussions among party members. A comment made by former President Kikwete, in which he appeared to dismiss any opposition to Samia's leadership, created a stir within CCM circles.

"There's no one else; it's Samia or no one," he declared, adding that any internal dissent should be quashed

immediately. His comments were met with mixed reactions, particularly among those in CCM who felt that the party had lost its way by sidelining potential challengers.

Despite these tensions, Samia's camp is confident that her choice of Dr Nchimbi as a running mate will strengthen her re-election bid. "We need unity and strength, and Dr Nchimbi is the right person to help me lead this country into the next phase of development," Samia said in her address.

Her supporters agree, believing that the combination of her experience and Nchimbi's political acumen will prove a formidable force against any opposition in the 2025 elections.

Whether this strategic move will lead to a smooth path for President Samia remains to be seen. However, one thing is clear: her political maneuvers have reshaped CCM and Tanzanian politics, potentially setting the stage for a landmark election in 2025.

As one political observer put it, "Samia has shown that she is playing the long game, and the real test will come when the ballots are cast. Until then, she's firmly in control."

In the weeks ahead, all eyes will remain on President Samia as she continues to consolidate power and prepare for the next chapter in her political career. The landscape may be shifting, but for now, it is clear that her grip on the CCM and the nation is stronger than ever.



No love lost between President Samia and outgoing Vice President, Dr. Philip Isidor Mpango . Photo courtesy.



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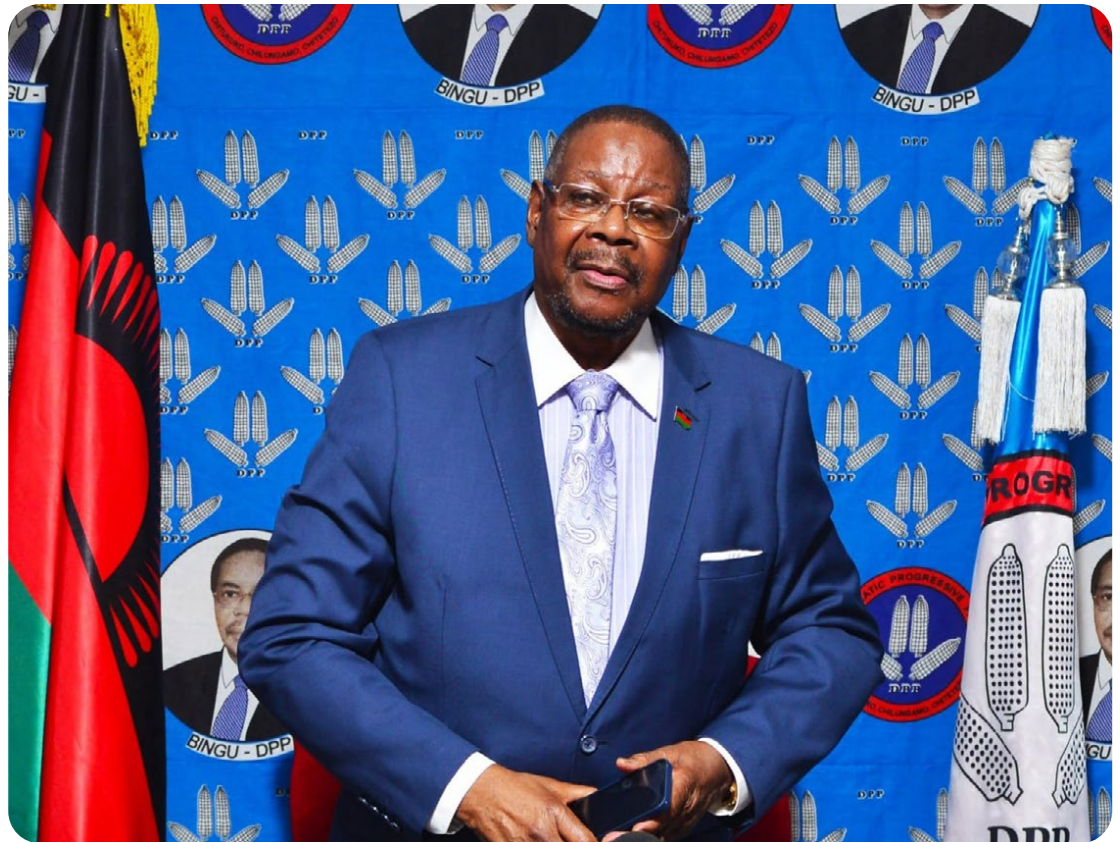
Malawi: Mutharika Braces For Comeback

By Ajong Mbatndah L

It is time for Malawians to get decisive leadership action and not continued excuses, says former President Peter Mutharika as he continues to offer hope and strike a sharp contrast between him and incumbent President Lazarus Chakwera. With elections looming in the horizon, former President Mutharika and his successor President Chakwera are the leading candidates in what will be a rematch of the 2020 elections.

"Malawi is at a critical crossroads. Our nation's challenges are immense, rooted in failed leadership and a lack of vision. Many of you are tired by empty promises and leadership that delivers no solutions. This cannot continue," President Mutharika recently told Malawians in a national address on the hunger crisis devastating the nation, the economic collapse tearing apart families, and the threats to democracy and freedoms.

Together, we can rebuild and reclaim the promise of our great nation with leadership you can trust, Prof Mutharika said after reassuring Malawians that he understood their acute pain, the burden of uncertainty they carry, and the hardships they have been left to endure without guidance or hope.



Together, we can rebuild and reclaim the promise of our great nation with leadership you can trust, says Prof Mutharika to Malawians.

For President Mutharika and the Democratic Progressive Party-DPP that he leads, it is the inept leadership of President Chakwera that has taken the country to the brink and stopping

Malawi from its current race to the bottom requires a decisive vote to remove the government that has betrayed the country.

"It is time to stand united, to speak with one voice, and to reclaim the promise of our great nation. Help is on the way. Freedom is within reach. But freedom will only come if we rise together, reject fear, and boldly make our voices heard at the ballot box. Let us not allow oppression to silence us. Let us vote decisively to remove this government that has betrayed the trust of Malawians," Prof Mutharika said in his address.

Fielding questions from PAV, Prof Mutharika says he and his party are optimistic of victory because the current President has been a failure in terms of governance and has admitted so himself. Fixing the economy will be the priority, says Prof Mutharika.

"We need to deal with forex shortages, inflation and shortage of basic commodities such as fuel,

fertilizer and food. I have set up a committee of seasoned economists who are preparing an economic recovery plan to be implemented on day one of my second administration," Prof Mutharika told PAV.

How will you sum up Malawi today economically, socially and politically?

Economically, the economy has collapsed. The country has zero foreign reserves. Socially, our society is no longer cohesive. It is divided along regional lines. Politically, there is a serious threat to democracy as the government resorts to reckless political arrests.

May we know the essence of the address that you made to Malawians on January 13, what was its intent?

The essence of the address was to point out the dire economic and governance situation the country is



Prof Mutharika is urging Malawians to vote decisively to remove the government of President Chakwera that has blatantly betrayed their trust.



Record crowds continue to show up at Prof Mutharika's rallies as Malawians increasingly look to the former President to rescue a country in freefall

facing and to encourage Malawians not to lose hope.

There have been a few dissents with some disenchanted members left, how prepared is your party for the upcoming Presidential elections?

Actually, no member left. We expelled ten members of the party for gross violation of the party constitution, indiscipline and disloyalty. We are very prepared for the upcoming Presidential, Parliamentary and Councilor elections. The unprecedented massive patronage of our rallies are a clear manifestation of the popularity that our party enjoys.

To the people of Malawi, you where there for a full term, what makes you think you are the one to get Malawi out of the current mess, and why should your compatriots trust you to deliver?

I believe we have the capacity to take the country out of the present mess. We did it in 2014 after the infamous "Cash gate". We know the root causes of the problem. My

compatriots are aware of our record. The massive support they are giving us is a clear indication that they have confidence in our capacity to deliver.

It will literally be a rematch of the last elections between you and current President Chakwera, besides the reversal of roles, what makes you optimistic of victory?

We are optimistic of victory because it's clear beyond any doubt that the current president has failed to govern this country. He himself has admitted that.

If elected, what are some of the priority areas that will receive immediate attention from the second Mutharika administration?

Of course, the priority will be to fix the economy. We need to deal with forex shortages, inflation and shortage of basic commodities such as fuel, fertilizer and food. I have set up a committee of seasoned economists who are preparing an economic recovery plan to be implemented on day one of my second administration.

In your recent address, you urge Malawians to stand united, to speak with one voice, and to reclaim the promise of their great nation, how do you think a second Mutharika presidency impact this promise?

The second Mutharika Presidency will certainly build on what we did in the first Mutharika administration -massive infrastructure development, Youth empowerment through skills training, Women empowerment through cash transfers and subsidized access to decent housing to the elderly, disabled, orphaned families and people with albinism.

On the age card that the ruling party and some actors have tried to play, what how do you respond to that or reassure Malawians that there is nothing for them to worry about that?

I am frankly now very tired of this age thing. Recently, I have addressed ten plus rallies in one day. The age thing is complete baloney. However, I have said many times that should I reach a point where I feel that I cannot manage to campaign, I will withdraw

from the race. I have no intention of embarrassing myself or my family. No job on earth is worth that. Let me say this to those Malawians who are so obsessed with the age thing: If you don't like APM because of his age, don't vote for him!

How inspired are you with the return to power of President Mahama in Ghana and what is your take on the 2024 election cycle in Africa with shocking defeats from some incumbents and ruling parties?

The return of president Mahama in Ghana and President Trump in the USA are quite inspirational. The defeats of some incumbents and ruling parties in Africa is a reflection of our mature democracy. Our people are now looking at issues not personalities and that is good for our continent.

You have accused the current administration of repression aimed at silencing the voices of Malawians. How confident are you in the Institutions of the country to deliver free and fair

elections?

I have reservations about the ability of the Malawi Electoral Commission and the National Registration Bureau to deliver free and fair elections because these two institutions are being manipulated by the Government. They are incompetent and they are biased towards the Government

If for some reason, Prof Mutharika is beaten fair and square in the elections will you accept the results?

Yes

Any last word to the people of Malawi and Africa as we wrap up this interview?

Africa is now at crossroads. The stakes are very high. In choosing leaders for our continent, our people must look at substance not trivialness.



Help is on the way, freedom is within reach, but it will only come if Malawians rise together, reject fear, and boldly make their voices heard, says Prof Mutharika



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Burkina Faso- Ibrahim Traoré's Two Years of Progress and Challenges

By Prince Kurupati

Since assuming leadership in October 2022, Captain Ibrahim Traoré has embarked on an ambitious journey to reshape Burkina Faso's economic landscape, assert its sovereignty, and improve the quality of life for its citizens. While his administration has scored remarkable challenges, it has equally faced significant and ongoing challenges in its two years of existence.

Economic Growth and Financial Independence

Under President Traoré's stewardship, Burkina Faso's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has risen from approximately \$18.8 billion to \$22.1 billion, reflecting a robust economic expansion. A cornerstone of his economic policy is the rejection of external financial aid. He has notably declined loans from institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, asserting that «Africa doesn't need the World Bank, IMF, Europe, or America.» This approach underscores his commitment to fostering economic self-reliance.

To promote fiscal equity, the administration reduced the salaries of ministers and parliamentarians by 30% while increasing those of civil servants by 50%. Additionally, the government has successfully settled local debts, contributing to financial stability.

The Traoré administration has focused on adding value to local produce to stimulate industrial growth. The government initiated a \$8.9 million tomato processing project in Bobo-Dioulasso, which is expected to generate over 150 direct jobs and more than 10,000 indirect jobs upon completion.

In 2023, a state-of-the-art gold refinery was commissioned to enhance local processing capabilities. This move aligns with the administration's decision to halt the



Hero to some, villain to others, Captain Ibrahim Traore has built a cult following for himself across Africa.

export of unrefined gold to Europe, ensuring that more value is retained within the country.

The textile industry has also seen significant developments, including the establishment of Burkina Faso's second cotton processing plant and the inauguration of the first National Support Center for Artisanal Cotton Processing. These initiatives aim to support local cotton farmers and promote the domestic textile sector.

Agriculture remains a vital component of Burkina Faso's economy. In 2024, the government allocated equipment worth over 78 billion CFA francs to local producers, including tractors, tillers, motor pumps, and motorcycles, to boost agricultural productivity.

These efforts have led to notable increases in crop production. Tomato output rose from 315,000 metric tonnes in 2022 to 360,000 in 2024. Millet production increased from 907,000 metric tonnes to 1.1 million

metric tonnes, and rice production grew from 280,000 metric tonnes to 326,000 metric tonnes during the same period.

Recognizing the importance of healthcare, President Traoré donated 15 fully-equipped mobile clinics and cold chain equipment to the Ministry of Health and Public Hygiene in July 2024. This initiative aims to provide specialized healthcare services to underserved populations and ensure the proper storage of vaccines.

In a move to reinforce national identity, the administration banned the use of British legal wigs and gowns in local courts, replacing them with traditional Burkinabé attire. As reported by Arise News, "The colonial-era wigs, long seen as symbols of external control in African judicial systems, will now be replaced with traditions rooted in local culture. With Traore's decision, Burkina Faso joins a growing list of African nations critically reassessing and discarding

colonial legacies. The ban is reminiscent of the wider cultural shift across the continent, with countries striving to reclaim indigenous values and assert their sovereignty."

On the international front, President Traoré has taken decisive steps to assert Burkina Faso's sovereignty. French military operations and media outlets have been banned, and French troops were expelled from the country. These actions reflect a shift towards self-determination and the establishment of new alliances.

Infrastructure development has been a priority for the Traoré administration. The government is constructing new roads, widening existing ones, and upgrading gravel roads to paved surfaces to improve transportation and connectivity.

The Ouagadougou-Donsin Airport is a significant project expected to be completed in 2025. With a capacity to handle 1 million passengers

annually, this new airport aims to bolster the country's transportation infrastructure and stimulate economic growth.

Security Challenges

Despite these achievements, Burkina Faso continues to face significant security challenges. The country has been grappling with extremist violence, leading to the displacement of over 2 million people and leaving substantial portions of its territory outside government control. In response, Burkina Faso, along with neighboring junta-led nations Niger and Mali, announced the deployment of a joint force comprising 5,000 personnel to address the escalating extremist violence in the Sahel region.

The security situation has also adversely affected the education sector. Islamist militants have seized control of up to 40% of the country, leading to the closure of nearly a quarter of Burkina Faso's schools. Teachers and students face significant risks, including attacks, kidnappings, and killings, making it perilous for educators to continue their work.

While President Traoré's



Through populist initiatives, Captain Traore continues to endear himself to millions across Burkina Faso and Africa. Photo courtesy.

initiatives have garnered support for their focus on economic self-reliance and cultural identity, the escalating security situation poses a significant challenge to his administration. The effectiveness of the newly formed

joint force and the administration's strategies to address extremist violence will be critical in shaping Burkina Faso's future stability and development.

As President Traoré's

administration progresses, the focus remains on consolidating these gains, addressing ongoing challenges, and steering Burkina Faso towards a future of sustained growth and stability.



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Gambia -Fresh Menace From Yahya Jammeh

By Lamin Sanyang

Gambia Government has vowed to prosecute Yahya Jammeh, exiled former President for alleged human rights abuses if he sets foot to The Gambia. Jammeh who lives in Equatorial Guinea, has ruled the tiny West African country with an iron fist for 22 years. He was forced into exile in 2017 after losing the elections to then opposition coalition led by Adama Barrow.

In a recent WhatsApp audio message widely shared on social media, the former President boldly declared his intention to come back to The Gambia and hold the government accountable, alleging failures across key sectors such as health, education, agriculture, and security amongst others.

«Whether anybody likes it or not, by the grace of the almighty Allah, I am coming. Threats of sending me to jail; let them wait until I arrive there and see who is going to jail,» Yahya Jammeh stated in a WhatsApp audio that sparked controversy.

He added: «All they are telling you is a bunch of nonsense.»

The former dictator accuses the current administration of making the Gambia suffer, arguing that the country has become a laughingstock: «All sorts of crimes have been committed in the Gambia with nobody ever being prosecuted and convicted—the armed robbers, rapists and killers, you can name it,» Yahya Jammeh said.

Speaking to Peter Gomez's «Coffee Time» on West Coast Radio, the Government Spokesman, Ebrima G Sankareh, said he had a meeting with President Adama Barrow lasting over an hour, and the audio of the former president was among several things that he discussed with him.

«Well for President Barrow, the ranting was uncalled for and all the threats that went with the audio were unnecessary as far as the President is concern,» said Ebrima G Sankareh, Spokesman of The



Whether anybody likes it or not, by the grace of the almighty Allah, I am coming, exiled President Jammeh declares. Photo courtesy.

Gambia Government.

He added: «President Barrow is the least worried about the ranting.»

Sankareh said the former President Yahya Jammeh is a Gambian citizen who has a right to return home but he would be prosecuted when he comes back. He stressed that Gambian people want to hear from him allegations of atrocities committed by his regime.

«The liquidation of 44 plus West African migrants, majority of them Ghanaians, the liquidation of school children April 10 and

11, the liquidation of military officers in November 10 and 11, the assassination of Deyda Hydara, the assassination of a state Minister Ousman Koro Ceesay and Journalist Chief Ebrima Manneh. There is a litany of murder, disappearance, torture and of liquidation or whatever you may call it. So basically, these are the things that former President Jammeh faces when he comes back to The Gambia,» Spokesman Sankareh stated.

He stressed that Jammeh is not coming back to No. 1 Marina Parade,



Former President Yahya Jammeh is free to return as a private citizen, but he should be ready to answer for his crimes, says President Barrow through a spokesperson. Photo courtesy

as a President but he would be treated as a former president who would be prosecuted for the allegations of atrocities committed by his regime.

«That is his new badge, a former President of the Republic of The Gambia. A president who has a lot of questions to answer regarding the financial misappropriation of our resources, the brutalizing of people, the allegations of rape. People who appeared before the Trrc made serious allegations against him and his character and as a former President, he is ultimate responsible for whatever happened under his tenure as President for 22 years from July 1994 to December, 2016,» Mr. Sankareh asserted.

He strongly denied the former President Yahya Jammeh's threat that when comes back to The Gambia, President Barrow would flee the country.

«Under no circumstances would President Barrow ever flee this country,» he said.

In December 2024, the authority of Heads of State of ECOWAS has approved the establishment of a «The Special Tribunal for The Gambia» to prosecute perpetrators of gross Human Rights violations.

According to a media released, the Special Tribunal for The Gambia would be an independent, sui generis institution, combining elements of both domestic and international law. Its structure will include Gambian, ECOWAS, and International Judges, prosecutors, and staff, along with international experts as necessary. The Tribunal will have jurisdiction over international crimes as well as serious violations under Gambian law.

While headquartered in The Gambia, the Tribunal will have the flexibility to hold proceedings in a third country if required for practical or security reasons. It will operate with full judicial and operational independence.

South Africa 2025's Probable Political Plots

By Vedhan Singh*

As 2025 dawns, South Africa's political theatre is set to rival any high-octane drama series. The script features intrigue, power plays, and egos clashing on a precarious stage. The stakes? Nothing less than the heart of a nation state grappling with its identity, its economy, and the ghosts of past promises.

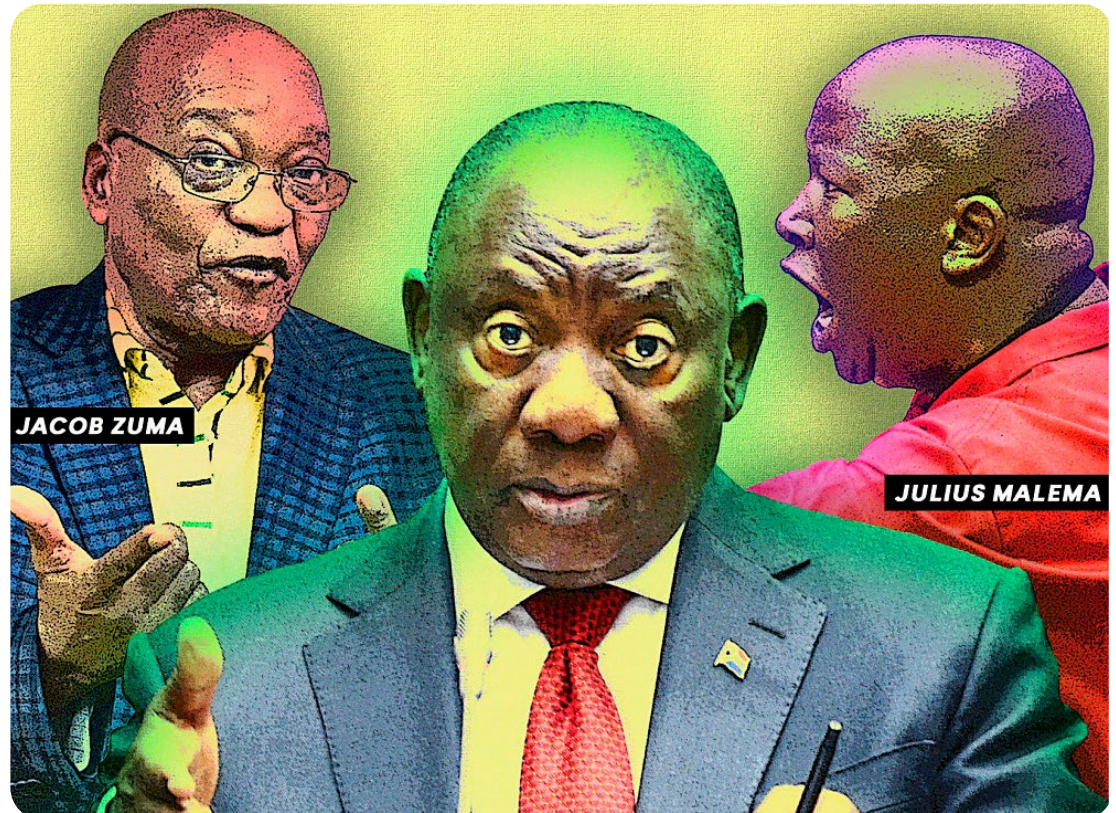
The aftershocks of 2024: The «Year of the GNU (Government of National Unity)» linger like a bad hangover. While the African National Congress (ANC)—South Africa's former ruling party and the oldest liberation movement in Africa—survived an electoral scare, it did so by clinging to a tenuous Government of National Unity that feels more like a «government of necessary dysfunction.» The 7-page agreement binding the GNU's uneasy bedfellows reads like an ill-conceived group project: Too many cooks, not enough cooking.

But 2025? This Is Where The Action Begins.

MK Party: The Rebel Rising

After a breakaway from the ANC, South Africa's former president, Jacob Zuma, and his newly formed uMkhonto weSizwe (MK) Party is determined to challenge the country's 2024 general election results, with courtrooms being their battleground. Zuma's legal showdowns are nothing new, but this time, MK wields a secret spear: The Pan-African Parliament (PAP). With Duduzile Zuma-Sambudla as chairperson of PAP's Southern Africa caucus, MK might just play the long game, leveraging regional influence to amplify its claims of electoral fraud—pending court outcomes at the level of the nation state, MK may make submissions to the African Court on Human and Peoples Rights and the International Court of Justice.

The province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) rightfully remains MK's



As 2025 dawns, South Africa's political theatre is set to rival any high-octane drama series. Photo credit Businesslive.

fixation—it garnered the majority of the votes in KZN but is not governing the province. Despite its lack of outright control, the province teeters on the edge of political realignment. If MK manages to outmanoeuvre the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)-led Government of Provincial Unity (GPU) in KZN, expect the province to become a staging ground for a broader national challenge. And don't sleep on former KZN Premier Willie Mchunu; he's the 'come-back kid' MK might bet on.

The ANC: Cyril's Swansong or Sunrise?

ANC's Secretary-General Fikile Mbalula has declared ANC and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa untouchable: Though one wonders whether he's trying to convince the ANC's highest decision-making body, the National Executive Committee, or himself. The ANC's real headache lies in its disintegrating provincial

structures.

KZN's ANC—once the party's biggest voting bloc—is a shadow of its former self, torn apart by factionalism and MK defections. The province of Gauteng isn't faring much better, as whispers of disbandments loom following poor branch performance. Ramaphosa may hold onto the presidency for now, but the cracks are showing, and 2025 will likely force him to play referee while his lieutenants fight for scraps of power.

SACP: From Tenant to Landlord?

The South African Communist Party (SACP), in a Tripartite Alliance with the ANC from pre-democratic South Africa, is finally ready to step out from the ANC's shadow—or so they say. Having promised to contest the 2026 local government elections independently, 2025 will be a trial by fire.

Can the SACP—the oldest communist party in Africa—build

its own electoral machinery, or will it find itself lost without the ANC's infrastructure? This will be the year it discovers whether it can be a legitimate voice for workers or remains a mere ideological echo chamber.

Cosatu: A Fight for Relevance

On the backs of more than 100,000 jobs on the chopping block at AcelorMittal, 2025 is a make-or-break year for the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu)—also a member of the Tripartite Alliance. If Cosatu continues to prioritise ANC loyalty over worker advocacy, it risks becoming a relic. South Africa's unemployment crisis needs bold solutions—it has the highest unemployment rate in the world—and Cosatu must decide: Will it confront its political allies or maintain its complicit silence?

Parliament: Soap Opera or

Service?

If South Africa's 2024's Parliament year was a circus, then 2025 promises an entire traveling carnival. MPs spent last year embroiled in scandals, from opulent wardrobes to diplomatic hissy fits. This year, expect more of the same unless the electorate and the media demand accountability.

Predictions: Crystal Ball or Kaleidoscope?

1. ANC Fragmentation: The disbandment of the ANC's KZN and Gauteng provincial structures is imminent. These provinces are holding on by a thread, and Ramaphosa's January 8th Statement address hints about "rogue branches" will likely culminate in major interventions or implosions.

2. MK Power Play: Expect a strong MK push for provincial control in KZN by mid-year, leveraging defections and political manoeuvring to force the IFP-led GPU into chaos.



Vedhan Singh is an independent governance, peace and security expert, and a commentator on politics and human rights.

3. Local Government Battlelines: As 2026 looms, the ANC will struggle to retain its municipal strongholds. The SACP, Economic Freedom Fighters, and even independents will exploit local grievances to carve out new footholds.

4. Cosatu's Reckoning: Faced with escalating job losses, Cosatu will either emerge as a true workers' champion or fade further into irrelevance, particularly if it remains tethered to the ANC's political wagon.

5. Scandals Galore: Parliament will

continue to make headlines for all the wrong reasons: Opulence, infighting, and a lack of tangible progress.

The Bigger Picture

South Africa's political landscape in 2025 will be one of flux. The old guard is fraying at the edges, while newcomers like MK and smaller parties like the Patriotic Alliance aim to fill the void. But amid all the politicking, one question looms large: Can anyone govern effectively?

For now, it seems 2025 will be less about solutions and more about survival—a year where South Africa's democracy, bruised but unbowed, holds up a mirror to its leaders and its people alike. The reflection isn't pretty, but it's honest. And maybe that's a start.

Let the games begin!

*Vedhan Singh is an independent governance, peace and security expert, and a commentator on politics and human rights.

Central Africa: Touadéra and Putin Review Strategic Partnership

By Adonis Byemelwa

Central African Republic (CAR) delegation headed by Faustin-Archange Touadéra was in Moscow to discuss the status and development of bilateral relations with President Vladimir Putin. Russia and CAR reaffirmed their multifaceted strategic ties during this high-level meeting in the Kremlin held on Jan.16, the first Russian-African consultative interaction for 2025, which signifies Russia's preparedness to foster consistent consolidation of relations with Africa. Perhaps by inviting CAR president, Kremlin will enhance its geopolitical influence beyond CAR, especially in the central and southern Africa.



President Vladimir Putin with President of the CAR Faustin-Archange Touadéra, Jan. 16 2025.

Security Challenges

Russia-CAR relations have sustained admirable progress these several years, emphasis has been laid on speeding up security cooperation. Since 2017, Russia has identified, as

the first and foremost, the engagement of security to fight against frequent treats from political rebels, growing terrorism and Islamist attacks,

complicating the landscape for any sustainable development.

An agreement on military-technical cooperation with the

Russian Federation includes supply of specified military weapons and equipment, training of personnel in Russia's military institutions as

well as building military base in the country in exchange of having complete access to natural resources. There are estimated 2,500 Russian instructors working there, according to local Russian media reports. The agreement stipulates more specific military needs within the defense cooperation in future.

Analysts, however, speculate that permanent Russian military base will be created in CAR. Large proportion of the estimated 5.6 million is impoverished, wallow in abject poverty despite the untapped natural resources endowed

in the country. By the official decree for private military Wagner group, currently referred to as the African Corps, Russia has provided considerable support in maintaining relatively peace for the political administration of Faustin-Archange Touadéra. In the context of security cooperation, Moscow's consistent efforts have brought stability to the country and its sovereignty. This has particularly become an example for the whole of Africa and is a source of inspiration for many countries in Africa and around the world.

Russia-Africa Summits

During the first (October 2019) and second summit (July 2023), Faustin-Archange Touadéra signed several agreements in the field of politics, security, trade and economy as well as humanitarian sphere. The Kremlin rekindled its highest commitment and renewed friendship with the delegation, highlighting practical understanding of outstanding matters for further review and negotiation. In other words, Moscow and Bangui, both intend to continue developing cooperation within the framework agreements that were previously signed.

Economic and Trade Cooperation

Records have indicated that



Touadéra is highly interested in investments from Russia in agriculture and mineral resources mining.

bilateral trade volume grew eightfold in 2024. Statistics were not provided to support this claim of increasing trade volume, but a number of reports pointed to \$5.9 million in 2021. That however, between 2022 and 2024, the trade turnover was estimated around \$4 million. Russia imports mainly fruits, vegetables and related products, while the CAR imports Russian mineral oils and grain. Despite the low level of trade transactions, Putin stressed the possibility for increasing trade within the legal framework of the existing bilateral economic cooperation. «Several documents have already been signed between various ministries and departments, and during your visit we also plan to sign several documents that will create a good, solid legal basis for our interaction,» the Russian President said.

For its part, Russia is drawn to opportunities in developing the CAR's reserves of gold, oil, uranium, and diamonds. On the other side, CAR is particularly interested in Russian technologies and industrial goods, including manufactured vehicles. For ensuring food security, Russia plans to export its grains and other agricultural products there as significant aspects of the strategic priorities and prospects in the bilateral relations.

Touadéra is highly interested in investments from Russia in agriculture and mineral resources mining and also the necessity to make deliveries of special machinery from Russia. Concerning agriculture, the CAR boasts huge potential with its large territory - over 15 mln hectares. In order to develop the agricultural sector, specialists and required equipment are badly needed in the country.

«We would like investors from Russia to invest more in projects related to agriculture and animal farming, to facilitate diversification of cotton and peanuts exports. We believe Russia can supply machinery and equipment and provide technologies for agriculture development, so that we can raise cotton and produce sugar. As regards special machinery for agriculture development, we are also interested in it,» Touadéra underscored in his talks with Putin in the Kremlin.

Appreciating Grains and Fuel Supply

Touadéra expressed gratitude for Russia's supplies of grain as part of the humanitarian aid to the Central African Republic in 2023 and 2024. For bolstering relations, Putin guaranteed further at «no-cost deliveries of grains» to continue cooperation in this area of food

supplies, specifically wheat. Putin made that decision to provide aid to the CAR and other African countries during the second Russia-Africa summit, which took place in St. Petersburg in 2023. In January 2024, Russian Ambassador to Bangui, Alexander Bikantov, reported the shipment of 50,000 tons of food was delivered from Russia to CAR. It showed that Putin's promise was fulfilled.

Due to the shortage of fuel and lubricants, Russia also delivered a cargo of 30,000 tons of diesel fuel in Jan. 2025. Last year, Russia and the Central African Republic

held talks on the delivery of 30,000 tons of Russian fuel, and this delivery could continue on a commercial basis if requests are promptly made from the CAR authorities within the framework of the signed memorandum.

Notwithstanding some criticisms combined with unforeseen obstacles, Russia-CAR bilateral relations on the whole can be described or summarized as promising partnership. Russian enterprises and agencies are showing dynamic interest in enhancing security and military-technical, trade and economic cooperation. These reflected in the speech by CAR President Touadéra when he said that «the official visit serves as further evidence of the genuine cooperation, sincere friendship, and resilience of pragmatic partnership.»

The name of the Central African Republic is derived from the country's geographical location in the central region of Africa and its republican form of government. Despite its significant mineral deposits and other resources, such as uranium reserves, crude oil, gold, diamonds, cobalt, lumber, and hydropower, as well as arable land, it is among the ten poorest countries in the world. It shares borders with Cameroon, Chad, Sudan, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Republic of the Congo.



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Zoom On NIES 2025 With Dr James Shindi

By Ajong Mbpandah L

The 2025 Nigeria International Energy Summit N.I.E.S is not just another conference as it is the gateway to unlocking unparalleled opportunities in Africa's largest energy market, says Dr James Shindi, CEO of Brevity Anderson, event producers of NIES.

In a Q & A with Pan African Visions (PAV) Dr Shindi says Nigeria stands at the forefront of the global energy transition, and N.I.E.S provides a unique platform to engage directly with key decision-makers, policymakers, and industry pioneers shaping the future of energy.

This year's summit promises to be the largest and most impactful yet, as it will bring together a robust lineup of industry leaders, policy-makers, innovators, and investors, says Dr Shindi

How are preparations going for the 2025 Nigeria International Energy Summit?

Preparations for the 2025 Nigeria International Energy Summit (NIES) are progressing exceptionally well. This year's summit promises to be the largest and most impactful yet, as we have brought together a robust lineup of industry leaders, policy-makers, innovators, and investors. Our team has been working tirelessly to ensure that every detail, from program development to delegate experiences, reflects our commitment to excellence and innovation.

As the event date approaches, we remain focused on delivering a summit that not only addresses industry challenges but also unlocks new opportunities for collaboration and growth. We look forward to welcoming everyone to Abuja for this landmark event.

In terms of impact, how have the Summits impacted the energy fortunes of Nigeria?

Since 2018, the Nigeria International Energy Summit (NIES) has become Nigeria's premier platform for transformative energy



N.I.E.S is not just another conference as it is the gateway to unlocking unparalleled opportunities in Africa's largest energy market, says Dr James Shindi

discussions and policy innovation. Officially endorsed by the Federal Government, it fosters partnerships and actionable solutions for the energy sector. NIES emerged from a vision to save millions in foreign exchange by eliminating costly delegations to Houston's Offshore Technology Conference, positioning itself as a driver of energy transformation in Nigeria.

NIES has catalyzed key initiatives, including Nigeria's exit from Joint Venture cash calls, unlocking private investment, and launching the Decade of Gas initiative. Projects like the \$2.8 billion Ajaokuta-Kaduna-Kano gas pipeline, the \$5 billion NLNG Train 7 project were unveiled at the summit.

The Nigeria Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) utilized the NIES platform to engage stakeholders for the Marginal Bid Round. The result was securing over N200 billion and \$7 million for the Federal Government while empowering 161 firms with Petroleum Prospecting Licenses.

The summit's advocacy for the

Petroleum Industry Bill culminated in its passage into law as the Petroleum Industry Act (P.I.A). But N.I.E.S. didn't stop there, it hosted a robust debate on the final version of the Act, ensuring it reflected the aspirations of stakeholders and the nation.

In terms of potential and opportunities available, what message do you have for investors and any tips on how to navigate the market?

Nigeria presents an incredible opportunity for investors in the energy sector due to its vast natural resources, growing energy demand, and increasing focus on energy transition. The country holds the largest proven natural gas reserves in Africa, significant crude oil resources, and an untapped potential for renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and hydropower. With a population of over 200 million people and a burgeoning industrial sector, the energy demand is set to grow exponentially, creating lucrative opportunities for local and

international investors.

To navigate the Nigerian energy market, you need to understand the regulatory environment by familiarizing yourself with key policies, including the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA), which provides clarity on fiscal terms and governance in the oil and gas sector. You also need to engage in local partnerships by collaborating with established local players who understand the market dynamics and regulatory landscape. More so, Local content requirements in energy projects make partnerships with Nigerian firms essential.

More importantly, you need to mitigate risks strategically by conducting thorough due diligence to address potential challenges like currency volatility, bureaucratic delays, and infrastructure gaps.

Nigeria's energy sector offers diverse opportunities for transformative investments. Success in this market requires a deep understanding of its unique challenges, a commitment to compliance, and a long-term perspective. By aligning with the

government's vision for energy sustainability and economic growth, investors can make impactful contributions while achieving significant returns.

How has the energy sector in Nigeria fared under President Tinubu?

Since taking office on May 29, 2023, President Bola Tinubu has introduced sweeping reforms in Nigeria's energy sector to drive growth and revitalization. A cornerstone of his agenda was the immediate removal of longstanding fuel subsidies, aiming to curb government expenditure and promote a market-driven petroleum industry. However, this decision triggered a sharp rise in fuel prices, sparking public discontent and prompting labor union discussions to mitigate the economic impact.

In February 2024, President Bola Tinubu issued three executive orders to revitalize Nigeria's oil and gas sector. The first offers tax incentives to

attract investment, while the second mandates compliance with local content laws to boost Nigerian participation in the industry. The third streamlines contracting processes, reducing costs and timelines to enhance efficiency. Together, these reforms aim to improve the investment climate, stimulate economic growth, and position Nigeria as a leading destination for oil and gas investments in Africa.

As a seasoned actor in the energy sector, what is your take on debate on fossils and its future from a Nigerian context?

The debate on the future of fossil fuels, particularly from a Nigerian perspective, is multifaceted and deeply tied to the country's economic, social, and environmental

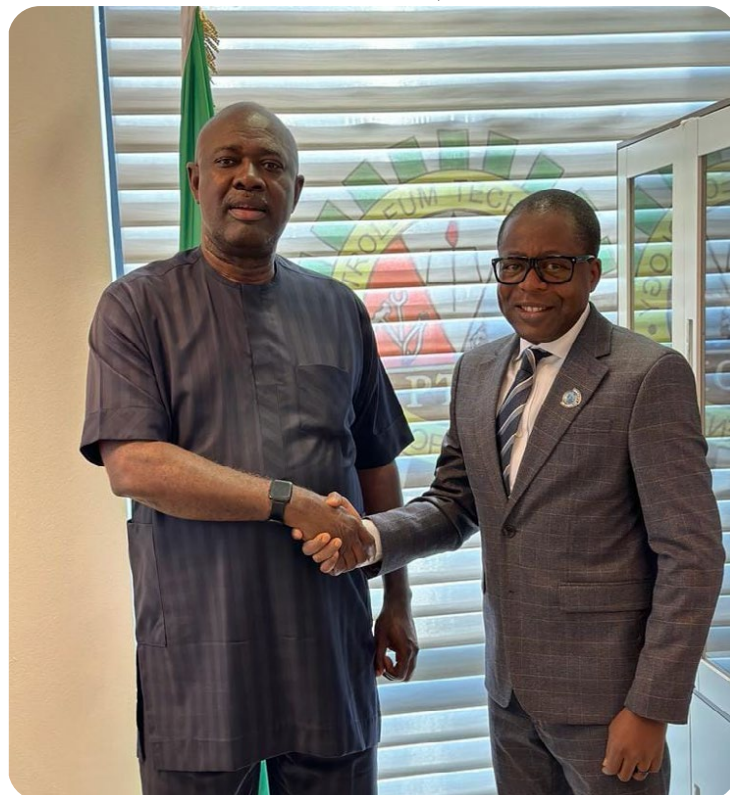


N.I.E.S is more than a summit; it is a catalyst for meaningful partnerships and impactful investments, says Dr Shindi

moving away from fossil fuels, Nigeria's pathway must be carefully managed to address its unique challenges and leverage its opportunities. The focus should be on an equitable and inclusive energy transition that safeguards economic stability, promotes environmental sustainability, and improves social outcomes.

Any last sales pitch to potential investors and partners who are still hesitant about making the trip to Nigeria for N.I.E.S 2025?

N.I.E.S 2025 is not just another conference; it is the gateway to unlocking unparalleled opportunities in Africa's largest energy market. Nigeria stands at the forefront of the global energy transition, and N.I.E.S



Minister of State for Petroleum Resources (Oil), Senator Heineken Lokpobiri (Left) and Mr. James Shindi (Right).

realities. Nigeria, as a leading oil producer in Africa, faces significant challenges and opportunities in navigating this discourse.

Nigeria's economy heavily relies on fossil fuel exports, particularly crude oil, which accounts for over 80% of export earnings and a significant portion of government revenue. This reliance creates a vulnerability to price volatility and makes transitioning to alternative energy sources complex. Diversifying away from oil is a significant challenge, given entrenched interests, infrastructure limitations, and a lack of political will in some quarters.

Nigeria's vast natural gas reserves, however, offer an opportunity to reduce reliance on more carbon-intensive fuels like coal or diesel while supporting economic growth and industrialization. Initiatives like the Decade of Gas aim to maximize this potential. Policies like the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) aim to improve governance and attract investment.

While the global trajectory is

provides a unique platform to engage directly with key decision-makers, policymakers, and industry pioneers shaping the future of energy. Where else can you gain real-time insights, forge partnerships with government and private stakeholders, and explore tangible investment opportunities in a rapidly growing market? It is the N.I.E.S platform!

We have curated this summit to deliver maximum value, featuring: exclusive networking opportunities, cutting-edge discussions and investment-ready projects. N.I.E.S is more than a summit; it is a catalyst for meaningful partnerships and impactful investments.

The global energy landscape is evolving, and Africa is poised to lead. Join us in Nigeria for N.I.E.S 2025 and take your place at the table where tomorrow's energy solutions are being crafted today. We look forward to welcoming you and ensuring your experience is both rewarding and unforgettable.



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Powering Africa: Mission 300 Sparks a New Era in Energy Revolution

By Adonis Byemelwa

Today 27th January, an international two-day energy summit focusing on Africa commenced at the Julius Nyerere International Convention Centre in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Bringing together prominent African leaders, private sector representatives, and development partners, the summit has set the stage for vital discussions on addressing the continent's urgent energy needs and driving transformational change.

The event—dubbed a critical moment for Africa's energy future—is anchored by Mission 300, an ambitious initiative aimed at providing electricity access to 300 million people across the continent by 2030.

With 600 million Africans still living without electricity, representing 83% of the world's energy deficit, the stakes couldn't be higher.

Leaders are deliberating on strategies to expand reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy to power homes, schools, businesses, and hospitals.

The summit has attracted a wealth of expertise and leadership. Dr Akinwumi Adesina, President of the African Development Bank, Ajay Banga, President of the World Bank, and Dr Rajiv Shah, President of the Rockefeller Foundation, are delivering keynote speeches.

Their insights centre on how partnerships, investments, and policy reforms can fast-track energy access while fostering economic growth and climate resilience.

Moderated by CNN International's Zain Asher, discussions have been vigorous, with panelists addressing the role of private investment and the necessity for policy changes.

Among the key questions raised are: How can governments accelerate energy reforms to achieve universal access? Why should private companies invest in Africa's energy sector? And what role must global partners play in ensuring the success of Mission 300?

The urgency is evident. Energy is not



AfDB President Dr Akinwunmi Adesina, Ajay Banga, President of the World Bank, and Dr Rajiv Shah, President of the Rockefeller Foundation, were part of the Summit. Photo courtesy

just a utility; it's a lifeline. Its absence stifles development, deepens poverty, and perpetuates inequality.

This summit underscores the resolve to change that narrative. Africa's energy challenges are vast but not insurmountable. Technological advancements and innovative financial models are making it increasingly feasible to bridge the energy gap, even in remote areas. Solutions such as off-grid solar systems and mini-grids are already demonstrating transformative potential.

Tomorrow 28th January 2025, heads of state from across Africa will join the dialogue to solidify political commitments. Tanzania, the host nation, will play a pivotal role in advocating for bold regional initiatives.

Alongside the African Union, the World Bank, and the African Development Bank, leaders are expected to unveil national energy agreements and outline measurable targets to overhaul their energy landscapes.

These agreements will address key areas such as expanding electricity generation, improving cross-border energy trade, and fostering private sector participation.

The challenges are complex, but the

momentum is palpable. Mission 300 has already captured the attention of major stakeholders, offering a beacon of hope for millions.

The initiative emphasises the need for robust infrastructure investment, from expanding power grids to deploying decentralised energy systems in underserved communities.

For nations grappling with fragile economies, such investments are not just about energy but about unlocking economic opportunities and securing a brighter future.

The involvement of the private sector is critical. Africa's energy transition will require unprecedented levels of funding, technical expertise, and innovation.

Private investors are being urged to seize the opportunity to play a transformative role. Renewable energy solutions, such as solar, wind, and hydropower, present lucrative avenues for investment while addressing climate goals.

Nevertheless, to attract these investors, governments must create an enabling environment through clear policies, streamlined regulations, and incentives.

During a thought-provoking panel session led by Dr Kevin Kariuki, Vice

President of Power, Energy, Climate, and Green Growth at the African Development Bank, policymakers discussed strategies for fostering energy reforms.

Participants, including energy ministers from Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Morocco, and Zambia, shared success stories and challenges in implementing sustainable energy solutions.

Dr Kariuki highlighted the importance of regional cooperation, financial transparency, and capacity building to ensure reforms are impactful and inclusive.

One overarching theme emerging from the discussions is the imperative to make energy affordable and accessible to all. For too long, rural and marginalised communities have been left behind, with limited access to electricity hindering education, healthcare, and economic activity.

Mission 300's emphasis on decentralised renewable energy systems offers a promising pathway to close this gap. These systems, often powered by solar energy, are cheaper, faster to deploy, and more environmentally friendly than traditional fossil fuel-based solutions.

Global partners, including philanthropic foundations and

multilateral institutions, are pledging to ramp up support. The World Bank and the African Development Bank are increasing funding and technical assistance to accelerate progress.

Collaborative efforts with organisations like Sustainable Energy for All and the Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet are bringing additional resources to the table. This convergence of global and regional efforts is crucial to ensuring Mission 300's success.

As the summit progresses, it's clear that political will is at the heart of Africa's energy revolution. Governments must lead the charge by

implementing reforms that prioritise energy access as a cornerstone of development.

Transparent governance, sound fiscal management, and strategic public-private partnerships will be key. Equally important is the active involvement of local communities in the planning and execution of energy projects to ensure they meet the needs of those they are designed to serve.

Mission 300 is more than a campaign; it's a movement aimed at transforming lives. Reliable energy powers progress. It brings light to classrooms, powers hospitals, and enables businesses to thrive. It's an

engine for job creation and economic growth.

For women and girls, who often bear the brunt of energy poverty, access to electricity means greater safety, better education, and expanded opportunities.

The environmental benefits are equally compelling. Shifting from polluting fossil fuels to renewable energy reduces greenhouse gas emissions, improving air quality and contributing to global climate targets.

For Africa, this transition is not just a necessity but an opportunity to position itself as a leader in sustainable energy solutions.

As the summit draws to a close tomorrow, the commitments made here will echo far beyond Dar es Salaam. They will define the trajectory of Africa's energy sector for decades to come.

Mission 300 represents a bold vision, but it is one grounded in possibility. With the right partnerships, investments, and policies, the dream of universal energy access in Africa can become a reality—lighting up homes, industries, and futures across the continent.

Guinea- Djiba Diakité Touts Simandou 2040 Vision

By Prince Kurupati

Guinea is at a pivotal moment in its history—a moment defined by unprecedented investment in its natural resources and a commitment to long-term economic renewal. At the heart of this transformation is Djiba Diakité, a leader whose innovative vision and steadfast determination are turning a massive mining project into a multifaceted engine for national progress. As Minister Chief of Cabinet to President Mamadi Doumbouya and Director of the Strategic Committee for the Simandou Mining Project, Diakité has become synonymous with its progress. Under his guidance, the Simandou project is not merely about extracting iron ore; it is a blueprint for Guinea's future prosperity encapsulated in the ambitious "Simandou 2040" plan. Working under the supervisions

A Vision Beyond Traditional Mining

Diakité's approach to Simandou is innovative and holistic. Recognizing that Guinea's true potential lies in its mineral wealth and ability to harness that wealth for broad-based development, he has reimagined Simandou as a multi-user infrastructure project. The project's scale is staggering—with an estimated 8 billion tonnes of high-grade iron ore managed alongside international



Under the guidance of Minister Djiba Diakité, the Simandou project has become a blueprint for Guinea's future prosperity encapsulated in the ambitious "Simandou 2040" plan

giants like Rio Tinto and a consortium of Asian investors—but Diakité's vision stretches far beyond mining. His long-term "Simandou 2040" framework is built on five strategic pillars:

- Agriculture, Food Industry, and Trade: Leveraging mining revenues to ensure food security and expand exports.
- Education and Culture: Strengthening human capital to sustain industrial growth and

innovation.

- Infrastructure, Technology, and Transport: Developing vital networks such as railways and ports to boost domestic industry.
- Economy, Finance, and Insurance: Building a resilient financial ecosystem to support entrepreneurship.
- Health and Well-Being: Investing in social services that improve everyday lives.

By focusing on these interconnected

areas, Diakité is ensuring that Simandou becomes the cornerstone for a diversified and sustainable economy.

Transformative Leadership in Action

Under Diakité's stewardship, progress on Simandou has been swift and decisive. His assertive statement that "industrial commitments to Simandou are now irreversible" reflects a deep conviction that

the project will redefine Guinea's economic landscape. Already, massive investments—estimated at \$23.2 billion—are fueling mining operations and the development of a 600-kilometer railway and a deep-sea port with the capacity to handle 120 million tonnes annually. These infrastructural feats are poised to open up new corridors for commerce and agriculture, mirroring the transformative impact seen in other regions with shared infrastructure models.

Local development is another key pillar of Diakité's strategy. With strict local content laws ensuring that at least 40% of procurement is sourced from domestic suppliers, the project is expected to infuse over 10% of Guinea's GDP into local businesses during peak construction phases. In the following years, this local procurement will contribute around 5% annually, significantly boosting the domestic economy. Additionally, the creation of thousands of jobs—exemplified by the graduation of the first cohort of railway engineers from the University of Conakry's dedicated training program—highlights the tangible human impact of this visionary leadership.

Economic Impact: A Golden Ticket for Growth

The numbers underpinning the Simandou project are as impressive as they are promising. The economic implications are enormous, with the potential to double Guinea's GDP—from \$31 billion in 2022 to a projected \$132 billion by 2040. Revenue forecasts further underscore this potential. Between 2029 and 2034, under stable market conditions with iron ore prices at \$100 per tonne, Simandou could generate up to \$2 billion annually for the state, with more optimistic scenarios projecting peaks of \$3.3 billion per year. Such revenue would fortify public finances and provide the necessary fiscal cushion for vital investments in public services and infrastructure.

"This is Guinea's golden ticket," remarked an official close to the negotiations, echoing the sentiment



President Mamadi Doumbouya continuous to follow with meticulous attention the progress of Simandou piloted by Djiba Diakité.

that Diakité's leadership is converting a once-in-a-generation opportunity into a transformative reality. His approach promises to elevate the country from its long history of underinvestment to a future where every citizen can share in the benefits of its vast natural resources.

A Model of Accountability and Sustainable Development

Despite the enormous potential, Diakité remains mindful of the challenges that come with managing vast wealth. Past experiences across resource-rich nations have shown that even the greatest opportunities can falter without careful oversight. Diakité's administration is therefore focused on transparency and accountability. Improvements in governance metrics—such as better

rankings in the Natural Resource Governance Index and adherence to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative—are evidence of a commitment to avoid the pitfalls of mismanagement and corruption.

By pledging that revenues will be reinvested into schools, hospitals, roads, and other public goods rather than being siphoned off, Diakité is ensuring that Simandou's benefits will be felt across all segments of society. His strategy is clear: economic development must be inclusive, and every step of progress must serve the people of Guinea.

Looking Ahead: A Legacy in the Making

As the Simandou project advances, Guinea's future is being written under Diakité's visionary leadership.



As Minister Chief of Cabinet to President Mamadi Doumbouya and Director of the Strategic Committee for the Simandou Mining Project, Diakité has become synonymous with its progress

Beyond the tangible infrastructure and the surge in economic activity, his forward-looking "Simandou 2040" framework represents a commitment to long-term national development. By integrating mining with sectors such as agriculture, education, technology, and health, Diakité is crafting a model that could serve as a benchmark for responsible, sustainable development across the region.

In a country long challenged by underinvestment and governance issues, the progress made under Diakité is not only a promise of wealth but also a promise of transformation. With every milestone—from groundbreaking infrastructural developments to innovative policies that boost local business and employment—the foundation is being laid for a brighter, more prosperous Guinea.

As one development expert put it, "This project is bigger than just iron ore. It's about giving a country long known for lost opportunities a chance to finally get it right." Under Djiba Diakité's guidance, Simandou is emerging as the symbol of a new dawn—a future where visionary leadership meets practical progress to build a legacy that will endure for generations.

Djiba Diakité's leadership is the linchpin in Guinea's journey toward economic renaissance. His unwavering focus on long-term development, commitment to inclusive growth, and strategic orchestration of one of West Africa's largest projects set the stage for a future defined by prosperity and sustainability. Through the transformative power of the Simandou project, Diakité is not only reshaping Guinea's landscape but also inspiring a new era of innovation and hope for the nation and its people.

By channeling immense natural resources into a holistic vision for national development, Djiba Diakité is ensuring that the Simandou project will be remembered not only as a mining venture but as the cornerstone of Guinea's modern, thriving economy.



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JP Følsgaard Bak on the African Industrialization Card

By Ajong Mbapndah L

Across the globe, industries are transforming as new powerhouses emerge in unexpected places. Africa, long viewed primarily as a source of raw materials, is now poised for an industrial revolution. JP Følsgaard Bak, Esq., a seasoned entrepreneur, thought leader, and the Chairman at Industry Five Group, has been at the forefront of this discussion, sharing his bold vision for the continent's future on platforms like LinkedIn and Numeris Media. His ideas recognize Africa's emerging consumer market and embrace a strategy of knowledge transfer and local ownership blueprint that could reshape global manufacturing.

Curious to learn more about his industrialization crusade for Africa, PAV's Managing Editor Ajong Mbapndah L met with him in Washington, DC recently. The working launch at a prestigious club that JP Følsgaard had access to was initially estimated to last for about an hour, but it dragged on for about three- as time took a backseat in the face of the passion with which he shared his thoughts and vision. His depth of knowledge is remarkable, his vision clear eyed with strong emphasis on training and employing Africans for all manufacturing processes.

The Moment for African Industrialization

JP Følsgaard's message is unambiguous: the African continent is no longer a peripheral player but a rising giant.

"Trust me, in two years, there will be a stampede from Europe and the USA like the gold rush in California," JP Følsgaard affirms with strong conviction.

This emphatic statement is not just a prediction but a call for recognizing Africa's unique position. The continent's vast consumer market, a rapidly growing youth demographic, and abundant natural resources are converging to create an environment



The African continent is no longer a peripheral player but a rising giant.,says JP Følsgaard Bak

ripe for industrial transformation. Unlike past eras that focused primarily on extracting resources, today's challenge is to build a self-sustaining industrial ecosystem, says Følsgaard.

Learning from the Past: The Power of Knowledge and Technology Transfer

One of JP Følsgaard's key insights is that true industrialization requires more than just an influx of capital. Reflecting on historical examples, he points out that the commercial success of nations such as the United States and China was not solely driven by financial investment. Instead, it was the transfer of technology and knowledge—from post-war Europe to America, and from the United States to China after its WTO accession—that spurred sustainable growth.

"It is not enough to provide financial injections," JP Følsgaard emphasizes. "The real value lies in empowering local businesses through knowledge and technology transfer, ensuring that Africans own their industrial destiny."

By embracing a similar model akin to that of the United States

after World War II and China post-WTO accession, African nations can leapfrog traditional stages of development. This approach would create new jobs, build infrastructure, stimulate innovation, and drive export-led growth. In doing so, Africa would gradually shift from merely a resource exporter to a global manufacturing and technology center.

JP Følsgaard calls for "homegrown ownership" as a key ingredient for Africa's industrial future. Such a strategy would help the continent break free from decades of dependence on foreign financing and resource extraction, setting it on a path toward long-term self-reliance.

The Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) as the platforms for foreign partnership allows the local businesses to secure the finances themselves and work with the foreign companies, being minority owners in lieu of transfer of Technology and logistic knowledge, JP Følsgaard opines.

"Apart from infrastructure projects and other financially heavy investments, it is my experience, that in most cases the funding of startup

businesses can and should be funded by local governmental sources or by investments from the private sector or diaspora," says JP Følsgaard

The BRICS Factor and Shifting Global Alliances

JP Følsgaard's analysis also extends to the impact of global alliances like the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) on Africa's prospects. While these emerging economies have traditionally commanded attention, JP Følsgaard argues that Africa is uniquely positioned to become the next major industrial hub. As labor costs rise in established manufacturing centers in Asia, companies will be compelled to explore new regions that offer competitive advantages. With its abundant, youthful workforce, Africa stands ready to take on this role.

Furthermore, Africa's potential to serve as both a consumer market and a production base could create a virtuous cycle—driving demand for locally produced goods while reducing reliance on imports. In essence, Africa's industrialization could realign global trade patterns, benefiting the continent and

reshaping global economic balances.

Creating a Coherent Strategy: Homegrown Ownership

A recurring theme in JP Følsgaard's commentary is the need for a clear, coherent industrial strategy that prioritizes local ownership. For Africa to capitalize on this industrial moment, governments, investors, and entrepreneurs must work together to build robust value chains. This means investing in physical infrastructure like roads, power grids, and human capital through education and vocational training programs.

JP Følsgaard's vision calls for a shift from traditional, capital-heavy investments toward strategies that empower domestic industries through technology transfer and skill development. This approach is already being discussed at the highest levels—recent initiatives by the African Union and policy debates across various African nations emphasize the need for integrated industrial policies that foster innovation and local participation.

A Global Ripple Effect: Implications for the World Economy

The global economic landscape could change dramatically if Africa successfully embraces industrialization based on homegrown ownership and technology transfer. JP Følsgaard



By learning from the past and embracing a strategy of homegrown ownership, Africa can meet the challenges of global competition and redefine its place in the world economy, says JP Følsgaard seen here with President Tshisekedi of DR Congo

predicts that in the near future, major consumer electronics—such as the iPhone—could be manufactured on the continent for both domestic consumption and export. This would bolster Africa's industrial base and reduce global manufacturing bottlenecks that have long plagued supply chains.

The broader implications extend to global trade. As Africa's industries mature, the continent could help reduce the saturation of consumer markets in traditional manufacturing hubs like Asia and Europe. With increased local production and a more integrated market through initiatives like the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), Africa can achieve economies of scale that

benefit both local economies and international investors. The resulting shift in manufacturing centers could herald a new era of global economic diversification.

Looking Ahead: A Blueprint for Africa's Industrial Future

JP Følsgaard Bak's insights present a compelling case for rethinking Africa's role in the global economy. His vision is not just about catching up with other regions but transforming Africa into a self-sustaining industrial powerhouse. The blueprint he outlines involves:

- **Strategic Technology Transfer:** Partnering with global firms to ensure African industries access the latest technology and

management practices.

- **Education and Skills Development:** Investing in human capital so local workforces can operate, innovate, and lead.
- **Robust Infrastructure:** Building roads, power grids, and digital networks that form the backbone of an industrialized nation.
- **Policy Integration:** Developing and implementing coherent industrial policies that foster both local production and regional integration through initiatives like AfCFTA.

As Africa stands at the threshold of this transformative period, JP Følsgaard's call to action is timely. By learning from the past and embracing a strategy of homegrown ownership, Africa can not only meet the challenges of global competition but also redefine its place in the world economy.

JP Følsgaard Bak's bold vision for Africa's industrialization is a strategic call to action. His insights remind us that real transformation goes beyond financial investments—it requires building the capacity of local industries through technology, education, and robust infrastructure. As the world shifts and traditional economic powerhouses make way for new centers of growth, Africa's time is now. With the right strategy and a commitment to homegrown ownership, the continent can forge a future defined by self-reliance, innovation, and sustainable industrial growth.

With operations and experiences in Uganda, Nigeria, and Ethiopia the Chairman of Industry Five Group, is uniquely aware of the daunting challenges that come with doing business in Africa. From the investment climate to the complex bureaucratic set ups that hamper speedy decision making to the need to train local talent to meet specific industrial needs, and the endemic corruption that is still too pervasive for comfort in several parts of the continent, JP Følsgaard prefers to see the brighter side and will continue to bank on Africa.



JP Følsgaard with PAV's Ajong Mbapndah L Funding of startup businesses should be provided by local governmental sources, investments from the private sector or diaspora, he says.

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Africa Takes Charge: Leaders Push for Homegrown Credit Rating Agency

By Adonis Byemelwa



With the establishment of the African Credit Rating Agency (AfCRA), Africa is reclaiming control over its financial narrative.

In a bold step towards financial sovereignty, African leaders have moved to establish a credit rating agency designed to reflect the continent's true economic potential.

The African Credit Rating Agency (AfCRA), which emerged from growing dissatisfaction with global credit rating systems, promises to transform how Africa's economies are evaluated on the international stage.

The move, a key agenda item at the African Union's 37th Ordinary Summit, seeks to provide Africa with a credit rating system that aligns more closely with its growth potential, resilience, and unique challenges.

For decades, African nations have had their creditworthiness assessed by international agencies that often failed to capture the continent's diverse economic realities and prospects. These ratings,

many argue, have been biased and flawed, frequently ignoring Africa's economic transformation, innovative financing models, and infrastructure development.

As a result, borrowing costs were often inflated, and the continent's investment potential undermined. With the establishment of AfCRA, Africa aims to take control of its financial narrative and create a system that reflects its aspirations.

Set to officially launch in June 2025, AfCRA promises to provide an alternative to the dominant global rating agencies that often apply a one-size-fits-all model.

Unlike these international players, AfCRA will be focused exclusively on Africa, using local economic data, regional indicators, and context-driven analyses. The agency's methodology will emphasize

sustainable development, financial inclusivity, and a more accurate representation of the continent's risk profile.

Far from replacing existing agencies, AfCRA seeks to offer an African perspective on credit ratings that is transparent, fair, and development-focused.

The push for a homegrown credit rating agency stems from a long-standing frustration with international rating agencies, which have been accused of applying punitive ratings to African economies. Many African leaders believe these ratings fail to take into account the resilience of their economies and the progress made in key sectors such as infrastructure, governance, and financial inclusion.

AfCRA aims to correct this oversight by ensuring that Africa's

credit ratings are more closely aligned with the continent's actual economic realities.

As the African Union's core initiative for financial independence, the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) has played a pivotal role in the formation of AfCRA. APRM, an organization committed to improving governance and development across the continent, has provided the technical expertise and policy frameworks necessary for the agency's launch.

The APRM's involvement ensures that AfCRA aligns with Africa's broader financial integration goals and that it operates with transparency, credibility, and independence from political influence.

AfCRA's approach will be a distinctive one, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative measures

to assess a country's economic health.

It will take into account factors such as infrastructure development, innovations in finance, and improvements in governance. This approach promises a more holistic view of a nation's economic strength, presenting a clearer picture of the potential risks and rewards for investors.

In addition to creating a more accurate and inclusive credit rating system, AfCRA is expected to make credit ratings more affordable for African countries and businesses.

The cost of credit ratings is a significant barrier for many African nations, limiting their access to capital markets and making it harder for them to attract investment. By providing fair and affordable assessments, AfCRA will lower these barriers, enabling governments and enterprises to tap into the financial markets with greater ease.

The impact of AfCRA could be profound. In addition to reducing the cost of credit ratings, the agency will help African governments secure better-borrowing terms and increase foreign direct investment.

A more accurate representation of Africa's economic strengths and risks will boost investor confidence, which is vital for long-term economic

stability and growth. By providing a credit rating system tailored to the continent's unique needs, AfCRA will empower African nations to make more informed policy decisions and further their development agendas.

One of the major concerns surrounding the establishment of AfCRA has been the question of credibility. Critics argue that without proper oversight, a continental credit rating agency could become vulnerable to political influence or a lack of objectivity.

To ensure the agency's independence, AfCRA will be governed by a strong institutional framework, with policies and procedures in place to prevent conflicts of interest. The agency will recruit top-tier financial analysts and economists, adhere to global best practices, and maintain full transparency in its methodologies.

This transparency will include regular consultations with African governments, businesses, and other stakeholders, ensuring that AfCRA remains accountable and trustworthy.

The creation of AfCRA comes at a time when Africa is increasingly looking to assert its financial independence. By establishing a homegrown credit rating agency, the continent aims to ensure that

its economic narrative is shaped by its people, not by external agencies whose interests may not align with Africa's long-term goals.

This move is a crucial part of the African Union's broader push to reduce dependence on international financial institutions and foster a more self-reliant economy.

The importance of AfCRA cannot be overstated. It is a pivotal moment in Africa's financial history—a moment when the continent took control of its economic future and worked towards building a system that reflects its unique characteristics.

AfCRA represents a shift in the global financial landscape, where African nations can finally set their terms when it comes to creditworthiness.

The success of AfCRA will depend on the active participation of various stakeholders, from African governments to financial institutions and international partners.

The upcoming Presidential Dialogue, set for February 14, 2025, will be an important step in finalizing the operational roadmap and ensuring that AfCRA has the support it needs to succeed.

The dialogue will bring together policymakers, financial experts, and development partners to discuss

the agency's implementation and its future role in Africa's economic development.

In the long run, AfCRA could reshape the global financial system by offering a new perspective on credit ratings and putting Africa in the driver's seat when it comes to its financial future.

The establishment of this agency signals a commitment to breaking free from external dependencies and charting a new course for Africa's financial destiny.

As the world's fastest-growing economic region, Africa's time to shine has arrived, and AfCRA will be the catalyst that ensures the continent's voice is heard loud and clear in global financial markets.

By giving Africa control over its financial assessments, AfCRA will empower the continent to make decisions that benefit its people and businesses, fostering greater investment, stability, and prosperity for years to come.

The creation of AfCRA is a monumental achievement—one that could redefine the future of Africa's economic landscape and put the continent on a path toward sustainable, long-term growth. —

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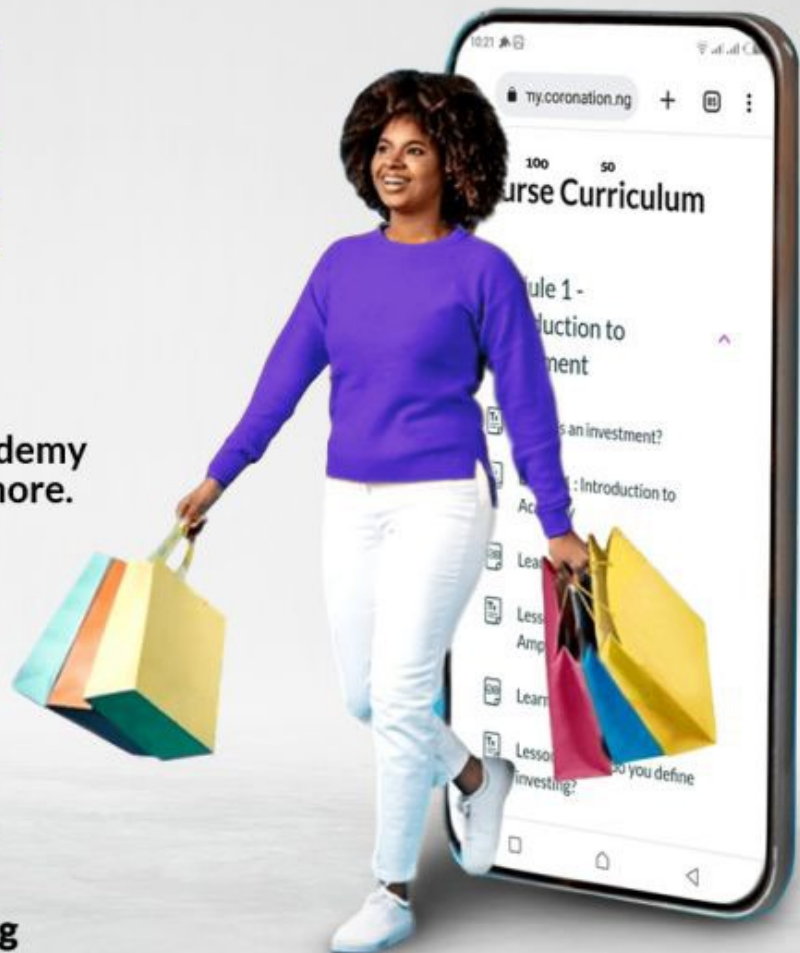
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AFRICA's Fintech & Investment Outlook 2025, Setting the Expectations

By Zekarias Amsalu*

2024 had a mixed bag for the African Fintech & Investment landscape – as expected and outlined in our prediction for 2024, the year has showed a \$2.2B funding, that is some 25% YOY decline as per the report by Africa: The big Deal, at the backdrop of 46% YOY decline in 2023, when the ‘great VC freeze’ arrived to Africa after the highest tech funding was exhibited in 2022! While the overall YOY funding showed a decline, there is an encouraging nuance in the details – H2 funding had an 80% increase YOY showcasing that the ‘funding winter’ is slowly coming to an end paving way to an accelerated tech funding and investment cycle in 2025, albeit with corrected valuations and cautious investor moves. The year also has birthed 2 new African Fintech Unicorns in Moniepoint & Tyme.

Against the above backdrop, what can we expect in the African Fintech & Investment landscape in 2025? I hereby summarize what I expect the Fintech and Investment outlook of the continent will possibly look like.

A Year of Unpredictability, Uncertainty & Increasing Protectionism – While the continent is moving towards a single market under AfCFTA, the global geopolitical scene is increasingly being characterized as unpredictable, uncertain and protectionist that ultimately impact African fintechs participating in the global economy. While uncertainty is inevitable around global macroeconomic uncertainty, escalating geopolitical tensions and sanctions & trade restrictions, fintechs that remain agile, diversify revenue streams, and proactively engage with regulatory changes will be better positioned to thrive in 2025.

Stablecoins will achieve enterprise-wide usage in Africa - As highlighted in our Stablecoin & Africa report, stablecoins have proven their use cases & mass adoption in the P2P,



remittance & cross border trade space in/with Africa and as a bridge between traditional finance and decentralized systems. Stablecoins will now find accelerated adoption among businesses for cross-border transactions, institutional treasury management, B2B payments and supply chain efficiency in 2025 naturally leading into regulatory formalization & commercial & central banking adoptions in 2026 and beyond. This will create positive windfall for African crypto exchanges, orchestration startups, on/off ramp solution providers, global payroll solution startups and blockchain payment infrastructure startups.

Surge in Mergers and Acquisitions (M&A) Activity - As competition intensifies and historical tech funding pace slows, smaller or mid-sized fintechs may merge or get acquired by larger players seeking to consolidate market share. 2025 will see a surge in M&A activity within Africa's fintech landscape as companies seek scale and sustainability amid tighter funding conditions.

Consolidation & Shift Towards Profitability Over Growth: Investors are increasingly favoring sustainable

business models over aggressive user acquisition. As a result, Fintechs will likely adapt by prioritizing unit economics and operational efficiency while on the other hand, market pressures, funding challenges, and competition will lead to the exit of underperforming players, paving the way for a more mature ecosystem. African fintechs will pivot toward profitability, with many focusing on monetizing existing customer bases rather than purely expanding user numbers. On the other hand, 2025 will see additional fintech closures in Africa, as struggling startups fail to secure funding or adapt to changing market dynamics, creating market consolidation & room for stronger players to thrive.

Return of Large Ticket Fundraising - After a period of funding slowdowns, investor confidence will return, driven by improved macroeconomic conditions and proven business models. Large ticket fundraising will make a strong comeback in 2025, with African fintechs attracting significant investment from global strategic investors in the Fintech space, VCs and debit providers as well as other hybrid capital market

instrument issuers.

From Africa to the World - African Startups Will Go Global - African fintechs, having proven their models locally, will expand to international markets, particularly in regions with similar financial inclusion challenges especially in the southern hemisphere of LATAM-Africa-southeast Asia corridor. 2025 will mark a pivotal year for African fintechs going global, with startups exporting their innovative solutions to underserved markets worldwide. No wonder that we have selected the theme of “From Africa to the World” for 2025 for the Africa fintech Summit!

Embedded Finance Growth via Mobile Money - Africa has birthed Mobile Money innovation and as a result value transfers via electronic payments and Mobile money will continue to exponentially increase providing last mile financial inclusion. In 2025, embedded finance delivered via Mobile Money platforms will drive exponential growth in Africa's fintech sector, bringing additional digital services to MoMo users. Fintechs will double down on embedded services in 2025, leveraging mobile technology and partnerships with telcos to



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unlock opportunities in underserved markets.

Rise of Cross-Border Fintech Solutions spurred by AfCFTA's Digital Trade Protocol - With the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) gaining traction and the AfCFTA digital Trade Protocol ratified in February 2024, Businesses in e-commerce & logistics, cross-border payment systems, Datacenter & related infrastructure businesses and trade-tech solutions will flourish. Cross-border payments spurred by the Pan-African Payments Settlement System (PAPSS) and regional collaborations will dominate Africa's fintech space in 2025, fueled by AfCFTA's efforts to ease trade across the continent.

Regulation Driving Innovation - Governments are rolling out stricter regulations for fintech, but this could spur innovation in compliance tech and risk management tools including Digital identity, reg-tech, fraud detection & prevention, compliance to both global and local best practices including the localization, deployment and usage of AI & data-driven technologies.

Africa's Leap in Data Centers & AI has a new path via Bitcoin Mining - Bitcoin has historically proven its

use case in P2P and decentralized financial inclusion spaces in Africa. However, recent trends have shown that Africa is moving just from a consumer/user of Defi instruments to active ecosystem participant via bitcoin mining, being responsible to some 3% of global hashrates as of Dec 2024 and increasing as highlighted in our report 'The History & Future of Bitcoin in Africa' last December.' In addition to forex revenue generation on renewable energy and investment justification for distributed rural electrification, an increased bitcoin mining investment will lead to an increased investment in Data Centre & Artificial Intelligence investments, both of which require connectivity and affordable energy which Africa can play to its advantage.

AI (re)defining the Future of Work & The war on future-proof Talent to intensify - Artificial Intelligence will profoundly transform the future of work including in Africa thereby reshaping industries, redefining job roles and altering economic landscapes including fintech business models. On a positive side, AI will create new opportunities for gig workers, freelancers and the creative industry through AI-powered platforms along with real-

time translations and hence breaking down language barriers enabling African skilled tech talent access global markets and clients both via 'talent export' both via immigration & remote roles. Fintechs in digital payroll services, cross-currency & crypto payroll functionalities, compliance and HR services will be in great demand as Africa's digital-first youth become part of the global digital economy.

African Fintechs will Acquire Banking & MF Licenses - African Fintechs traditionally in the payments space are horizontally and vertically expanding organically & via acquisition. In 2025, we will see this trend to include Fintechs acquiring Microfinance & local banks and as a result turning themselves into digital banking service providers with a prized possession of banking license.

A Rising global IPO Tide will Lifts African 'Fintech Boats'- With global funding freeze expected to come to an end with an increased M&A and IPO activities in 2025, this seismic trend will impact the African fintech space in a way at least some of the existing African fintech unicorns will be solidifying their preparation and position to going global via IPO in the next 1-3 years.

Finally, potentially more African Fintech Unicorns - Related to the above 'rising tide' analogy, we expect a new wave of African Fintech Unicorns joining the ranks with some sort of priced funding as big-ticket funding and Capital Markets instruments coming to the play. My expectation is that atleast some of these prime African fintechs with global footprints, cash flow and profitability focus and unique business cases in their offering in Africa and beyond would join the Unicorn status in 2025:-

- Onafriq - AFTS 2024 Excellence in Cross-border Transfer Awardee & African fintech largest digital gateway with 500M+ connected mobile wallets
- Moove - AFTS 2024 Fintech Investment of the Year Awardee that expanded to Asia, Mexico & USA
- M-KOPA - African fintech platform that provides affordable financial and digital products with smart devices
- Kuda - AFTS 2023 Excellence in Digital Banking Awardee
- Yellow Card - Past AFTS AE Pitch Competition Cohort & Africa's Blockchain based Borderless Payment Success Story
- Yoco - South African Payments Startup.

2025 is going to be a challenging year, testing the adaptability, ingenuity, and resilience of African fintechs, their founders, teams, investors, and the broader ecosystem. However, African innovators are no strangers to overcoming obstacles and will emerge stronger—leaner, smarter, and more resilient. To support this journey, Africa Fintech Summit will provide regular insights through our Africa's Weekly Fintech Review newsletter, AWFR LinkedIn Newsletter, social media platforms X(Twitter) , LinkedIn and our flagship events in Washington, DC (April 24 2025) and Accra, Ghana (November 2025).

*Zekarias Amsalu is Co-Founder & MD - Africa Fintech Summit and Founder & CEO - Ibex Frontier



**A sustainable
and resilient
future beckons
with increased
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Aigbovbioise Aig-Imoukhuede On The Future Of Africa's Capital Markets

By Aminu Adamu

In this exclusive interview with Pan African Vision's Aminu Adamu, Aigbovbioise Aig-Imoukhuede, the Managing Director of Coronation Asset Management, speaks extensively on shaping Africa's economic trajectory, the role of financial service providers (FSPs) and fintech in unlocking the full potential of capital markets across the continent.

What role do you believe financial service providers (FSPs) and fintech play in unlocking the full potential of capital markets across Africa, and how can they help drive industrial growth and democratize wealth creation?

FSPs and fintech are pivotal in creating accessible, intuitive financial systems. Coronation Group is committed to reinventing wealth creation in Africa, offering solutions that democratise wealth at all levels. By leveraging digital platforms and fintech innovation, we connect issuers with investors and provide tools that promote financial literacy and inclusion. This approach drives industrial growth by ensuring that capital markets are accessible, even to smaller investors, fostering a culture of long-term investment.

What are some of the most significant challenges facing Africa's capital markets, and how can FSPs and fintech address these challenges, particularly in terms of low market liquidity, knowledge deficits, and the digital divide?

Africa's capital markets face barriers like low liquidity, limited listed securities, and knowledge deficits. Coronation addresses these by promoting financial literacy through initiatives like the Investment Academy, which has empowered over



Coronation Group is committed to reinventing wealth creation in Africa, offering solutions that democratise wealth at all levels, says Aigbovbioise Aig-Imoukhuede

100,000 users. Additionally, our digital solutions bridge the divide by providing rural areas access to financial tools, encouraging a robust investment culture. Fintech platforms, such as mobile money, also play a critical role in reducing these challenges.

Can you share examples of how Coronation has leveraged fintech to bridge gaps in the market, and the role of bespoke financial products in addressing underserved markets?

Coronation has been at the forefront of fintech innovation, offering platforms like Fiducia, which provide flexible financing solutions to businesses, reducing

Fiducia are examples of innovations that boost GDP and democratise wealth creation.

Promising emerging innovations include the adoption of blockchain and digital assets allowing fractional ownership of high-value assets like real estate or bonds, crowdfunding platforms for businesses to raise capital, bypassing traditional barriers like stringent lending requirements AI, and intuitive data analytics and regulatory technology (Reg Tech) which help financial institutions meet compliance requirements efficiently, ensuring the growth of capital markets is aligned with regulatory standards.

Over the next decade, Coronation plans to lead this transformation, ensuring that technology bridges existing market gaps.

What role do you believe impact investing can play in sustainable economic growth in Africa, and how can FSPs balance growth with risk management and compliance?

Impact investing is crucial for fostering economic growth that benefits both investors and the broader community. Coronation balances this by offering structured financial products that are both innovative and compliant with regulatory standards. Our focus on digital platforms and inclusive financial solutions ensures that economic growth aligns with societal progress.

How can policymakers and regulators create an enabling environment for fintech and capital market development in Africa?

Policymakers and regulators must establish a framework and harmonised standards that foster innovation while ensuring robust risk management. Coronation supports collaborative efforts

between regulators and industry players to build digital infrastructure, improve financial literacy, and create accessible financial products. Partnerships with traditional institutions, such as Access Bank, enhance the development of these ecosystems.

What significant opportunities and challenges do FSPs and fintech face in Africa, and how do you see them evolving in the next 5-10 years?

Opportunities for FSPs and fintech include the rapid adoption of mobile money, increasing digital literacy, and growing demand for financial inclusion. However, challenges like regulatory constraints and infrastructural deficits persist. Coronation aims to navigate these by investing in technology and partnerships, ensuring financial services evolve to meet market needs.

How can FSPs and fintech address financial inclusion for underserved markets in Africa?

Financial inclusion is central to Coronation's mission. By leveraging mobile money and digital payment platforms, we reach underserved communities and encourage participation in the financial ecosystem. Initiatives such as gamified education on investments help bridge the gap for populations with limited financial knowledge.

What advice would you give to young entrepreneurs in Africa's



Fintech will play an essential role in the future of Africa's capital markets, says Aigbovbioise Aig-Imoukhuede.

financial sector?

Aspiring entrepreneurs should focus on understanding local market dynamics, building technology-driven solutions, and fostering partnerships. Coronation's success is rooted in these principles, demonstrating how innovation, resilience, and collaboration can lead

to transformative impacts.

What trends will shape Africa's capital markets, and how can FSPs position themselves to take advantage?

Key trends include the rise of mobile money, digital payments, and fintech platforms targeting

underserved markets, creating opportunities for embedded finance. Coronation is positioned to capitalise on these trends by investing in infrastructure and offering bespoke financial products. By connecting issuers and investors through digital solutions, we continue to shape Africa's financial future. _____

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U.S. Foreign Policy For Africa Under The Trump Administration

By Ambassador Omar Arouna, MBA*

With the new Trump administration taking shape, its foreign policy direction for Africa is becoming increasingly evident. Guided by the «America First» principle, this strategy prioritizes American interests through pragmatic diplomacy, targeted partnerships, and a focus on security and economic priorities. Below is a detailed exploration of the policy directions and their implications for U.S.-Africa relations, updated to reflect the latest developments.

Pragmatic Diplomacy and Economic Engagement

The «America First» strategy emphasizes partnerships that yield mutual benefits for American investments and strategic interests. African nations with significant economic or geopolitical advantages are likely to attract U.S. attention.

1. **Resource-Oriented Partnerships:** Africa's extensive reserves of rare earth minerals, critical for technological industries, remain a key focus area. However, the administration's new trade measures and emphasis on securing supply chains for critical materials have intensified competition with China.

2. **Trade Policy Adjustments:** Existing programs like the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) are under review, with a shift toward enforcing stricter reciprocity. Additionally, the administration's new America First Trade Policy prioritizes U.S. exports over preferential trade terms for African nations.

Reduced Engagement with Multilateral Institutions

The administration's skepticism toward multilateral organizations has significant implications for Africa:

1. **Cuts to U.N. Contributions:** The administration has announced



African nations with significant economic or geopolitical advantages are likely to attract U.S. attention. Photo courtesy.

plans to reduce U.S. funding for U.N. programs, potentially affecting peacekeeping and development initiatives across Africa.

2. **Impact of USAID Shutdown:** USAID, traditionally a key player in U.S. humanitarian and development efforts, is being dismantled and merged into the State Department. This move has resulted in a freeze on billions of dollars in foreign assistance, directly impacting health and infrastructure projects in Africa.

3. **China's Expanding Influence:** The rollback of U.S. engagement in multilateral institutions leaves a vacuum that China is poised to fill. Through its Belt and Road Initiative, Beijing is increasing its economic footprint in Africa.

Security and Counterterrorism Emphasis

Security cooperation remains central to U.S.-Africa relations, but the administration is demanding greater financial and operational contributions from African nations:

1. **Counterterrorism Priorities:** Support is concentrated on combating extremist threats in regions such as the Sahel, Somalia, and the Lake Chad Basin. However, the administration's cost-cutting measures mean that African nations will be expected to assume a larger share of the financial burden.

2. **Reassessment of Military Presence:** The administration is reviewing U.S. troop deployments in Africa, with potential troop reductions and increased reliance on partner-led security initiatives.

Economic Strategy and Trade

Economic policies under «America First» prioritize safeguarding American industries while fostering selective international trade relationships:

1. **Stricter Trade Enforcement:** The administration has imposed new anti-dumping measures and countervailing duties, which could negatively impact African exports, particularly in textiles and agriculture.

2. **Market Access**

Opportunities: Countries that demonstrate openness to U.S. goods and investments may see expanded trade agreements, but preferential treatment will be minimized.

Strategic Competition with China

Countering China's growing influence remains a core aspect of U.S. strategy in Africa:

1. **Developing Alternatives:** The administration is exploring new infrastructure and technology investments as alternatives to Chinese-backed projects, though funding limitations may hinder execution.

2. **Protecting Intellectual Property:** Enhanced measures to safeguard American technological interests from Chinese competition are being implemented.

Migration and Governance Policies

1. **Tighter Immigration Controls:** Stricter visa policies and a reduction in refugee resettlement

quotas directly impact African nations. The suspension of refugee programs is particularly affecting countries facing humanitarian crises.

2. Governance Incentives: Support for democratic governance and anti-corruption programs will be contingent on alignment with broader U.S. strategic interests.

Climate Policy

1. Withdrawal from Climate Commitments: The administration has formally withdrawn from international climate agreements, signaling limited U.S. engagement in renewable energy and climate adaptation initiatives in Africa.

2. Reduced Green Energy Investment: U.S. funding for green infrastructure in Africa is being cut, which could hinder the continent's transition to renewable energy sources.

Humanitarian Assistance

1. Aid Program Reductions: The administration is scrutinizing aid programs to ensure alignment with American interests, with immediate crisis response prioritized over long-term development efforts.

2. USAID Overhaul: The Trump administration's dismantling of USAID and its absorption into the State Department has led to uncertainty for many ongoing humanitarian projects.

Diplomatic Reorganization

The administration is streamlining diplomatic efforts by focusing on countries of strategic importance while reducing engagement with less significant nations. This targeted approach aims to maximize U.S. foreign policy returns.

Implications for Africa

Opportunities:

- Countries with strategic relevance to U.S. security or trade may benefit from enhanced partnerships.
- U.S.-backed infrastructure and technology projects could create new growth avenues, particularly as alternatives to Chinese initiatives.



Ambassador Omar Arouna, MBA, is President Global Public Affairs and Engagement at Gunster Strategies Worldwide.

Challenges:

- Nations reliant on multilateral aid or U.N. programs might face funding shortages, prompting a need for alternative development strategies.
- Smaller or resource-scarce countries may be marginalized due to the transactional nature of U.S. engagement.

Conclusion

The «America First» doctrine under the renewed Trump administration

is redefining U.S.-Africa relations by emphasizing selective engagement, reduced multilateral commitments, and strategic economic and security partnerships. African nations must adapt their policies to align with these priorities, seizing opportunities while mitigating challenges in this evolving geopolitical landscape.

ABOUT GUNSTER STRATEGIES WORLDWIDE

Gunster Strategies Worldwide

is a prominent issue advocacy firm specializing in political communications, government engagement, and strategic influence on a global scale. The firm has a well-established track record in shaping major political and corporate campaigns around the world, including its role in the Brexit referendum, in Europe, Africa, and various high-profile advocacy efforts across industries and governments.

Gunster's engagement with government affairs extends to advising policymakers and clients on navigating complex regulatory landscapes, ensuring alignment with political administrations to drive impactful change. With the return of the Trump administration, the firm has strengthened its focus on advancing U.S. policy interests both domestically and internationally. Leveraging its expertise in grassroots mobilization, digital advocacy, and strategic lobbying, Gunster helps shape policy decisions that impact trade, economic reforms, and diplomatic initiatives.

Within the America First framework, Gunster Strategies is also actively engaged in advancing U.S.-Africa policy, ensuring that diplomatic and economic relations align with American strategic interests. This includes advocating for policies that strengthen trade agreements favorable to U.S. businesses, reinforcing security cooperation in counterterrorism efforts, and positioning U.S. influence as a viable alternative to China's growing economic presence on the continent. By leveraging its deep connections in Washington and across African markets, Gunster is helping shape a U.S.-Africa policy that prioritizes economic opportunities for American companies while fostering sustainable partnerships with African nations in line with the administration's broader geopolitical objectives.

* Ambassador Omar Arouna, MBA is President Global Public Affairs and Engagement at Gunster Strategies Worldwide



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USA, South Africa, Africa, Executive Order : Africa Arise! Sleeping Giant Arise!

By Chief Charles A Taku*

The Executive Order by President Trump suspending all American aid to South Africa for its restorative justice land policy aimed at mitigating historical wrongs, particularly apartheid, has exposed at long last, the universal ambitions of the Racist Revival Movement which hence is operating within and on the platform of MAGA coalition Movement in the United States. Elon Musk and President Donald Trump, two consequential leaders of the MAGA coalition have been loud and clear in their objective, mission and universal goals.

Elon Musk, with the encouragement and approval of President Trump and the entire MAGA coalition, using the platform of MAGA has attempted to energise Racist Revival Movements in Germany, Britain and other parts of Europe. He is on a mission to give the resurrected ghost of racism a new lease of life mirroring the success of MAGA experiment which, with the governing power apparatus of the most powerful country in the world, a platform, a voice, power, resolve and an ideology is on mission to impose a vengeful new world order through the perversive evangelical wings of white supremacy.

The racial motivation of the Executive Order against South Africa, is a centrepiece of MAGA politics which campaigned and won elections on the platform of returning America to its people, mass deportation of immigrants, evisceration of all diversity equity and inclusion policies, reduction of rising costs of goods and fair economic policies; end of conflicts and wars in parts of the world, and the establishment of an America First Foreign policy. So far Executive Orders which have been signed in order to execute these MAGA



President Ramaphosa says it is wrong for his US counterpart Donald Trump, to interfere in the affairs of South Africa. .Photo credit SABC news.

goals have turned out to be loose canons of chaos, vengeful actions, unconstitutional power grabs, white supremacy tonics of prejudice and dog whistles of lawlessness and subordination of loyalty to the President.

American constitutional democracy is at great risk. America first foreign policy has turned out to be a mirage: Threats of occupation of Gaza under genocide and international arrest warrants for perpetrators of genocide and atrocity crimes, takeover of Greenland, Canada and Panama Canal. These threats are inconsistent with the pledge of peace and an

end to wars. The Executive Order imposing sanctions on ICC officials is an assault on the rule of law mirroring the contempt President Trump has for the justice system in the US when it is not immunizing him from accountability for personal crimes and subordinating to his whims and caprices. The blanket pardoning of his supporters who attacked the heartbeat of American democracy-the US Congress- in order to overturn a democratic election on 6 January 2020 is a strong indictment of the ability of America to portray itself as a beacon of democratic values to the rest of the world.

The Executive Order granting secured privileged immigration status to South African Whites who may be affected by the restorative justice land policy of South Africa in favour of disadvantaged blacks victims, a policy which was established by the institutional sovereign constitutional arrangement of South Africa, maybe interpreted as an apology of historical injustices against victims of historical wrongs not only in South Africa, in the USA but worldwide.

However, the so-called termination of all aid to South Africa, should be a tonic of hope for South Africa and Africa generally to review the aid policies with the US and the West; particularly aid which is with strings attached. This again, is a tonic of hope for intra-Africa cooperation; indeed an 'African First policy.' These Executive Orders have rendered bilateral treaty regimes with Africa generally and South Africa in particular, open for thorough reviews in order to safeguard African priorities and interests. In this regard, the American coercive measure may turn out to be a blessing in disguise.

The politics of foreign aid in Africa was never intended to be in the interest of ordinary Africans. It was intended to chain the continent to the coattails of colonialism, vampires of exploitation and perpetual enslavement. The smokescreen of foreign aid has striped itself naked in the marketplace. Africa Arise! SLEEPING GIANT ARISE.

* Chief Charles A. Taku, Barrister at Law, International Lawyer Organization Lead Counsel, International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, Special Court for Sierra Leone, International Criminal Court, Oude Waalsdorperweg 10, 2597 AK Den Haag, Netherlands



The politics of foreign aid in Africa was never intended to be in the interest of ordinary Africans, and freezing it maybe a blessing in disguise for Africa, says Chief Taku

Former Prime Minister of Ethiopia leads African Legacies Institute Delegation on Historic Visit to Washington, D.C.

The African Legacies Institute

Washington, D.C. – January 2025 – The African Legacies Institute (ALI), a pioneering organization dedicated to preserving, honoring, and promoting the legacies of democratic African Heads of State and Government, achieved a significant milestone during a high-profile visit to Washington, D.C.

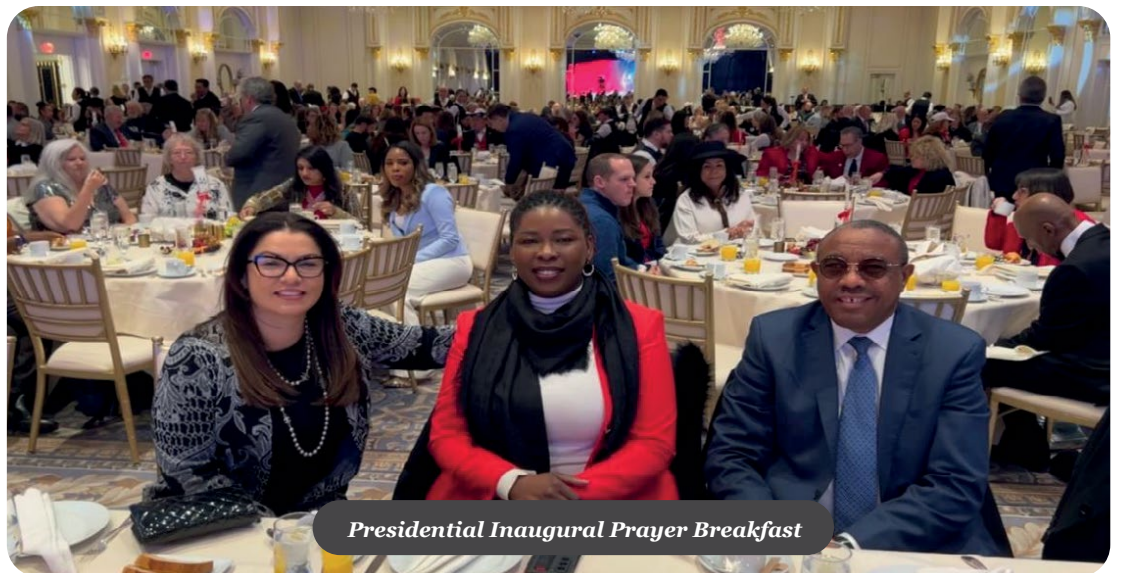
Leading the delegation was H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn, former Prime Minister of Ethiopia, who was among a select group of former heads of state invited by the Multicultural Coalition Inaugural Ball Committee. Accompanying him were ALI officials Rachelle Yayi, Franya Cabral Ruiz, Sheree M. Mitchell, and George Williams II. Representing the Institute with distinction, H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn highlighted ALI's mission to preserve Africa's democratic legacies, emphasizing the importance of good governance, peaceful transitions of power, and sustainable development to an enthusiastic and supportive audience.

The visit reinforced ALI's unwavering commitment to celebrating and safeguarding the contributions of Africa's democratic leaders. As of 2025, 36 living former African Heads of State and Government have successfully overseen democratic transitions. Their enduring legacy, marked by integrity, visionary leadership, and adherence to constitutional principles, serves as an inspiration for future generations and underscores Africa's commitment to peace, unity, and sustainable democracy.

The delegation's participation in the inaugural festivities of the second Trump presidency provided a unique platform to engage with global audiences and policymakers. Throughout their visit, the ALI delegation participated in a series



Presidential Inaugural Prayer Breakfast



Presidential Inaugural Prayer Breakfast

of high-level events, bilateral discussions, and public engagements, fostering dialogue on the critical themes of democracy, governance, and Africa's leadership legacy.

By showcasing the enduring contributions of Africa's democratic leaders, the African Legacies Institute continues to elevate the continent's aspirations on the global stage and

promote a vision of shared prosperity and peace.

Key Highlights of the Visit:

Presidential Inaugural Prayer Breakfast

The delegation attended the Presidential Inaugural Prayer Breakfast at the Waldorf Astoria, a

bipartisan event started in 1992, that joined spiritual leaders and global dignitaries from over 50 countries featuring renowned Pastor Nathaniel Bassey and other prominent speakers.

In an interview with the South Shore Press, the event's organizer, Mike Guerrero, stated: "I'm blown away... the former Prime Minister of Ethiopia



Multicultural Coalition US Presidential Inaugural Ball



Multicultural Coalition US Presidential Inaugural Ball

is here.” H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn received special acknowledgment and was invited to join the attending pastors in prayer.

Multicultural Coalition US Presidential Inaugural Ball

The ALI delegation received a special invitation from Chairman Pastor Mark Burns, spiritual advisor to President Trump, to attend the prestigious Multicultural Coalition US Presidential Inaugural Ball. The event brought together a diverse array of prominent figures from politics, entertainment, and advocacy, to celebrate leadership and unity. Notable attendees included actor Jon Voight, political figures such as Roger Stone, Congressman Bob Barr, spiritual leaders like Dr. Alveda King and other distinguished personalities including General Michael Flynn, Brock Pierce, and Lt. Gov. Jennifer Carroll, New York Mayor Adams, and newly appointed Assistant Secretary of State Albert Gombis. Upon arrival, H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn was graciously welcomed by Dr. Burns and other members of the multicultural coalition.



Interview with Voice of America largest US International Broadcaster

Interview with Voice of America largest US International Broadcaster

The visit featured a historic televised interview of H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn, former Prime

Minister of Ethiopia by journalist Peter Clottey of Voice of America, the largest U.S. international broadcaster. The conversation delved into the remarkable contributions of former democratic heads of

state and government in Africa, particularly in driving national development, fostering peace, and advancing democratic governance. Throughout the interview, H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn shared his

insightful reflections on leadership, emphasizing the essential role that former African leaders play in shaping the continent's future. He also underscored the importance of preserving their legacies, ensuring that their contributions continue to inspire and guide future generations. The visit was marked by a warm and gracious welcome from the Africa Division Director Salwa Jaafari and her dedicated team.

High-Level Meeting at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP)

H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn and the ALI delegation engaged with Dr. Joseph Sany, Vice President of the Africa Center at USIP, to explore potential collaborations on peacebuilding, leadership training, governance frameworks, leveraging the expertise of the former African heads of state and government.



High-Level Meeting at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP)



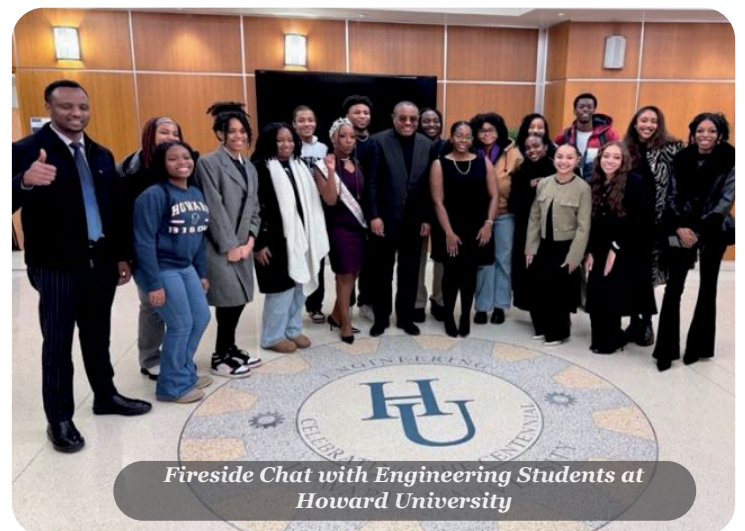
Reception at the Hay-Adams Hotel

Reception at the Hay-Adams Hotel

The ALI delegation joined a distinguished gathering of global leaders, policymakers, and industry figures at the Hay-Adams Hotel for a reception hosted by Gunster

Strategies Worldwide. The event featured prominent guests such as Nigel Farage, leader of Reform UK (guest of honor), African Ambassadors to the US, US Ambassadors to Europe, and high-level elected officials.

Fireside Chat with Engineering



Fireside Chat with Engineering Students at Howard University

Students at Howard University

H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn led an intimate fireside chat with student leaders from Howard University's College of Engineering and Architecture. The session reinforced ALI's commitment to fostering collaborations between Africa and

the African Diaspora while at the same time encouraging students to support economic development on the Continent.

For more information on the African Legacies Institute and its initiatives, visit www.africanlegacies.org.



BASKETBALL AFRICA LEAGUE EXPANDS FOOTPRINT IN SEASON 5

#AFRICAScores

BY NINETEEN31

Dr Denis Foretia Highlights Future of India-Africa Relations at Africa India Global Dialogue

By Boris Esono Nwenfor



The India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) launched in 2008 has been pivotal in deepening cooperation, says Dr Foretia. Photo courtesy.

The relationship between India and Africa was at the centre of discussions at the Africa India Global Dialogue, where Dr Denis Foretia, Executive Chairman of the Nkafu Policy Institute, delivered a keynote address on «India-Africa Relations: Strengthening Strategic Cooperation.»

Dr Denis Foretia, who is also Co-Chair of the Denis and Lenora Foretia Foundation, emphasized the deep-rooted connection between India and Africa, exploring the challenges and strategic opportunities for fostering greater collaboration. Recognizing the centuries-old ties built on trade, migration, and cultural exchange, he highlighted India's historical presence in East Africa and the shared struggles for independence during British colonial rule.

“The relationship between India and Africa is one of history, mutual respect, and shared aspirations. It is a partnership built on the values of solidarity, economic cooperation, and cultural exchange,” Dr Denis Foretia said.

“Today, as we navigate an evolving global landscape, strengthening strategic cooperation between India and Africa is not just a diplomatic

necessity—it is an opportunity to unlock immense potential for both regions.”

One of the most important figures linking India and Africa, Mahatma Gandhi, inspired African leaders like Nelson Mandela and Julius Nyerere through his philosophy of nonviolent resistance. Post-independence, India actively supported African decolonization efforts and played a key role in advocating for African nations at international forums such as the United Nations and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

India-Africa Forum Summits

Recognizing the need for structured diplomatic and economic engagement, India launched the India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) in 2008. Dr Denis Foretia explained that the IAFS was designed to create a high-level platform for long-term cooperation based on mutual respect and demand-driven partnerships. Since its inception, three summits have been held in 2008, 2011, and 2015, with the last summit marking a milestone as all 54 African nations were invited, eliminating earlier limitations imposed by the Banjul Formula.

“The primary goal was to move beyond transactional relationships and establish a mutually beneficial development partnership based on Africa's needs and India's strengths in areas such as trade, investment, healthcare, education, and technology,” Dr Foretia added.

The Executive Chairman of the Nkafu Policy Institute identified several critical sectors where India and Africa have made significant progress and where further collaboration could unlock new opportunities.

Economic and Trade Relations

Trade is one of the strongest pillars of India-Africa relations. In 2001, India-Africa trade stood at \$3.3 billion; by 2022, it had surged to \$98 billion, making India Africa's fourth-largest trading partner. India imports crude oil, gold, and agricultural commodities from Africa, while Africa benefits from Indian pharmaceuticals, automobiles, and technology products. Indian companies such as Tata Group and Bharti Airtel have established a strong presence, created jobs and driven economic development. India has also extended over \$12 billion in Lines of Credit (LoC) to finance

African infrastructure projects.

Technology and Innovation

As Africa undergoes rapid digital transformation, India has been a key partner in fostering technological advancements. Initiatives like the e-Vidya Bharati and e-Arogya Bharati (e-VBAB) program have provided thousands of African students and healthcare professionals with access to digital education and telemedicine services. The Pan-African e-Network Project has connected African universities and hospitals with Indian institutions, facilitating knowledge transfer and capacity building.

Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals

India has earned a reputation as the «pharmacy of the world,» providing affordable, high-quality medicines and vaccines to African countries. Indian pharmaceutical companies can expand their footprint in Africa, helping address critical healthcare challenges. Dr Foretia emphasized that medical tourism is another area with great potential, as many African patients seek medical treatment in India due to advanced healthcare facilities and cost-effective services.

“As a surgeon, I know first-hand

India's advances in providing quality, timely and affordable healthcare. My family members have been treated in India," Dr Foretia said. "The potential for India to support healthcare in Africa extends beyond medical tourism. By collaborating on healthcare infrastructure development, training healthcare professionals, and providing telemedicine services, India can significantly enhance Africa's healthcare systems for mutual benefit."

Human Resource Development and Education

Education and skill development are at the heart of India-Africa cooperation. India provides over 50,000 scholarships annually to African students pursuing degrees in medicine, engineering, and business administration. Programs like the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) have trained thousands of African professionals in fields such as public administration and renewable energy.

Security and Defense Cooperation

India has deployed over 200,000 peacekeeping troops to African conflict zones since the 1960s, contributing to stability in regions like South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Additionally, India has partnered with African nations to combat piracy in the Indian Ocean and ensure maritime security. The India-Africa Defense Ministers' Conclave in 2020 reinforced India's commitment to supporting African defence infrastructure and counterterrorism initiatives.

Challenges in India-Africa Relations

Despite progress, Dr Foretia acknowledged several challenges hindering deeper India-Africa cooperation: Delayed India-Africa Forum Summits; Bilateral Relations



The relationship between India and Africa is one of history, mutual respect, and shared aspirations, says Dr Denis Foretia

Over Continental Engagement; Negative Public Perceptions and Ease of Doing Business – Indian businesses hesitate to invest due to regulatory uncertainties and lack of reliable local partners.

To overcome these challenges and strengthen India-Africa ties, Dr Foretia outlined four priority areas such Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals – Establishing joint hospitals and expanding pharmaceutical manufacturing in Africa. Establishing an Information Technology and Digital Innovation – Leveraging India's expertise to support Africa's digital transformation.

There is also a need for Agriculture and Food Processing – Transferring agricultural technology and investing in value-added food processing and

Trade Enhancement through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) – Strengthening economic integration and creating regional value chains.

Critical Role of Think Tanks in Shaping Policy

Dr Foretia highlighted the importance of think tanks in shaping India-Africa cooperation. Institutions like the Nkafu Policy Institute and their Indian counterparts play a crucial role in providing research-driven policy recommendations, facilitating dialogue, and strengthening diplomatic ties.

"African and Indian think tanks must work together to conduct joint research on areas of mutual interest. By pooling our expertise

and resources, we can produce comprehensive studies that offer actionable solutions to the challenges faced by both regions. As you know, our work is critical in facilitating Track 1.5 and Track 2 diplomacy. So, it is an important component that should be leveraged," Dr Foretia said.

With a powerful reminder from Nelson Mandela: «It is in your hands to create a better world for all who live in it,» the co-chair of the Denis and Lenora Foretia Foundation, Dr Denis Foretia highlighted that the future of India-Africa relations depends on collective action from governments, businesses, and civil society. By strengthening strategic cooperation, India and Africa can build a more prosperous, equitable, and sustainable future together.——

Dr. Samuel Maimbo: A Visionary Leader for AfDB's Future

By Ajong Mbapndah L



Dr. Maimbo's campaign is backed by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA).

A Critical Moment for Africa's Development

Africa stands at a defining crossroads in its economic journey, and the leadership of the African Development Bank (AfDB) will be instrumental in shaping the continent's future. With pressing challenges such as energy access, infrastructure financing, and economic inclusion, the next AfDB president must be a bold leader with a clear vision for sustainable growth.

The Race for AfDB's Top Job Heats Up

The competition for the AfDB presidency is intensifying, with Zambia's Dr. Samuel Maimbo officially launching his campaign. He will go head-to-head with Senegal's Amadou Hott, a key player in the Alliance for Green Infrastructure, and Mauritania's Sidi Ould Tah, former head of the Arab Bank for Economic

Development in Africa. With outgoing president Akinwumi Adesina's tenure ending in October, the May election in Abidjan will determine who will steer Africa's premier financial institution through a defining era.

Africa Needs Bold Leadership

Dr. Maimbo's campaign is backed by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). His leadership bid is centered on revitalizing Africa's economic trajectory, focusing on industrial growth, infrastructure modernization, and energy access. With the continent's share of global trade stagnating at just 3%, he has vowed to strengthen regional markets and accelerate economic integration.

A Shift from Rhetoric to Action

"Africa stands at a critical juncture," Maimbo declared in Lusaka. "We

need to get one billion people to work as quickly as possible by strategically supporting the industries that will improve livelihoods and ignite prosperity on our continent." His campaign promises to move beyond discussions about Africa's potential and take tangible steps toward unlocking it.

A Legacy of Leadership and Vision

Since 2015, Adesina has championed agriculture as a key investment driver, and last week, he secured an \$8 billion agreement with the World Bank to power 300 million Africans.

With the AfDB maintaining its stellar triple-A rating, the incoming president will have a solid foundation to build upon. Maimbo, a former World Bank executive, has emphasized forging stronger public-private partnerships to unlock capital

for Africa's ambitious development projects.

A New Era for Africa's Economic Transformation

Maimbo's campaign has also gained momentum after South Africa, the continent's largest economy, withdrew its initial support for another candidate and backed him as the SADC choice. As the election date draws near, African nations are weighing their options for a leader capable of delivering tangible, transformative results.

The AfDB presidency is not just a title—it is a commitment to driving Africa's progress in an era demanding visionary leadership. With Africa's future on the line, the right choice in May could redefine the continent's economic trajectory for generations to come.



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Designing and Implementing Meaningful Education for Nation-Building in Africa

By John Nkemnji, Ph.D.*

Introduction: Transformative Power of Education

Education is the bedrock of nation-building and development, capable of dismantling the barriers of poverty and propelling individuals and nations toward prosperity. For Africa—a continent rich in resources, diversity, and potential—meaningful education offers individual empowerment and the key to unlocking long-term sustainable growth. Sadly, today's young adults across Africa lack an education that truly serves their needs and society. The inherited Euro-centric curriculum, the colonial legacy of language, inadequate teacher preparation, lack of adequate didactic materials, political corruption, and other systemic barriers all undermine the potential of African youth and society. Education has remained a means of socializing the African elites into colonial ideologies.

Colonial tutelage created a divide between generations of Africans, with younger people often more schooled and adopting foreign values. This divide destroyed the traditional family dynamic as younger generations became less inclined to respect elders or follow Indigenous norms. This divide also produced a crop of backstabbers and traitors.

Additionally, Euro-centric education often emphasized individualism over communalism, and that altered family coherence. Elders had been leaders in decision-making, imparting wisdom, and settling disputes. Respect for elders was paramount, and the cohesion among family members was good. Many families are disunited and dysfunctional today, and members behave like antagonists. Elders were instrumental in preserving cultural traditions, customs, and



Dr. John Nkemnji is a Professor Emeritus of Education and an Educational Media Consultant

oral histories, ensuring a smooth continuity between generations. They taught the tradition and the skills that enable the young to earn a living.

The sage led Indigenous education, coaching, expert mentoring, and apprenticeship. African children were nurtured to be compassionate, cooperative, creative, respectful, adaptive, and inquisitive. However, with the introduction of the Euro-centric curriculum, things fell apart. Competition was encouraged, and success was ascribed to succeeding at standardized examinations or securing capitalist-scarce white-collar jobs. The colonial program of studies enabled Africans to abandon

their identity—change their language, appearance, mannerisms, and even their spirit of Ubuntu (the philosophy of interconnectedness, patience, and compassion)—to fit a foreign mold. Learning focused on simple rote memorization and recall to sort workers for colonial economies, not thinkers, innovators, problem solvers, or nation-builders.

For Africa to reclaim a meaningful education system, policymakers and educators must liberate young minds from the constraints of colonial mentality and refocus on both liberal and technical education. Despite abundant all-year sunlight, wind, and water, many African cities

go for days without necessities like potable water, electricity, or phone service. Engineers on the continent should be capable of maintaining basic infrastructure and workable systems that foster healthy living, critical thinking, innovation, and long-term stability with the available talent pool and raw materials.

The Current State of Education in Africa

Despite meaningful learning and progress in other parts of the world, Africa still faces immense challenges in its educational systems and daily existence. Population growth, lack of adequate planning, limited technological resources, corruption, and disparities between urban and rural areas create a complex environment that does not allow the citizens to live a good life. In many African countries, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) programs dominate educational courses, often at the expense of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The focus on rigid curriculums has contributed to growing miseducation: children have become more disrespectful, family bonds are weakening, and corruption and distrust are rising. Governments influenced by colonial powers fail to serve the people and often undermine those trying to improve their societies.

Emerging trends as responses to local challenges

The growing patches of youth-led innovations and initiatives across Africa testify to groundbreaking technological, healthcare, renewable energy, agriculture, and education achievements. These innovations can potentially transform lives, locally and globally—provided the influence of

political leaders, their colonial rulers, and multinational corporations does not hinder them. These praiseworthy innovations are counteracted by the Western miseducated crooks, scammers, and corrupt and selfish elites in their midst.

From the construction of the Great Pyramids in Egypt to today's innovative young minds, Africans have consistently contributed to advancements in various fields. Many of these innovations stem from Necessity or as responses to local challenges, especially from young people who have dropped out of Eurocentric education systems - disconnected from local realities. As it is said, Necessity is the mother of invention.

While these innovations are sparse, they are no less impressive. Examples include the solar-powered car, the M-TIBA mobile health wallet, solar-powered water purification systems, the Luvivi App for learning, innovative classroom technologies, and biogas plants that convert organic waste into energy. Despite limited resources and the ongoing challenge of brain drain, these limited yet highly impactful solutions continue to emerge, demonstrating the incredible intellectual potential of African youth. With the right climate, policies, technological advances, and a break from the chains of neo-colonialism, the future of African education is promising. Below are key recommendations for reform:

Invest in Teacher Training and Retention

Teachers are the backbone of the education system. Yet, many African countries experience a shortage of qualified teachers in rural areas. Governments must prioritize the correct type of teacher education, offer ongoing professional development, and provide fair compensation. Incentivizing teachers to work in underserved areas and investing in modern pedagogical methods will



The transformation of Africa's education systems is imperative—an achievable reality waiting to unfold.

significantly improve educational outcomes. Additionally, the curriculum must be designed to align with the continent's development needs.

Leverage Technology to Enhance Learning

While the digital divide remains challenging, technology has immense potential to transform African education. Governments should invest in infrastructure to ensure students can access digital learning tools. Technology should enhance student engagement, provide personalized learning experiences, and equip students with the skills they need to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

Construct Curriculum for Local Relevance

The imported curriculum played a central role in the success of colonialism by controlling knowledge, shaping ideologies, and creating an educated elite that could manage the colony on behalf of the colonizers. Policymakers, educators, and governments must actively reconstruct Africa's education system to catalyze change. Many African education systems still rely

on curricula inherited from the colonial era—curricula disconnected from local contexts and realities. Policymakers should work with educators to design curricula that reflect African communities' cultural, economic, and social needs. A curriculum emphasizing critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and local knowledge will better prepare students to tackle the continent's challenges.

The Role of Governments and Policymakers in Shaping the Future

For meaningful education, change, and progress, African governments must go beyond simply passing pirated education laws—they must demonstrate a genuine commitment to long-term planning and collaboration with local communities. Education should be a central pillar of national development strategies. Governments must ensure that education budgets (not just military) are sufficient, policies align with national development goals, and sage-diverse voices are included in decision-making.

A Call to Action

The transformation of Africa's

education systems is imperative—an achievable reality waiting to unfold. By implementing bold, inclusive policies, prioritizing teacher training, investing in technology, and reforming curricula, Africa can lay the groundwork for a brighter future for the individual and society. The time to act is now. Education is the key to unlocking Africa's full potential, and by returning to a more student-centered, locally focused educational model—one that emphasizes character formation and taps into indigenous resources—Africa can build a truly transformative education system. It is time to reclaim education as a tool for empowerment, sustainability, and nation-building—free from the influence of multinational corporations. With abundant resources and meaningful education, Africa can nurture students who are not merely consumers but creators and manufacturers, but global competitors.

*Dr. John Nkernji is a Professor Emeritus of Education and an Educational Media Consultant. He advocates for life-long learning and a comprehensive reconstruction of education in Africa at all levels. _____

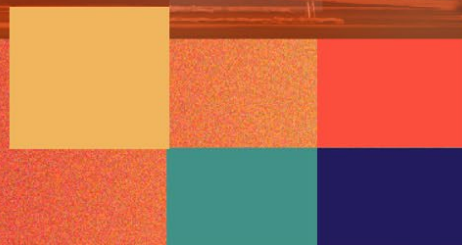
Africa Fintech Summit

On the sidelines of the WB/IMF Spring Meeting

24th April 2025,
Halcyon House,
Washington DC



#AFTSDC2025



Merck Foundation and Africa First Ladies Unite for 2025 Vision

The Merck Foundation Africa Asia Luminary 2024, 11th Edition, served as a dynamic platform for collaboration, bringing together Dr. Rasha Kelej, CEO of Merck Foundation, and First Ladies from Africa and Asia. This annual event spotlighted urgent global healthcare priorities, including the elimination of infertility stigma, enhanced access to specialized care in oncology and diabetes, and bolstering media capacity to raise health awareness.

The First Ladies and Dr. Kelej underscored the importance of education and advocacy, urging decisive action by 2025 to establish sustainable healthcare systems. Notable discussions focused on innovative programs to empower medical professionals through scholarships and training while fostering cultural shifts to address societal taboos surrounding infertility. PAV shares photos of the Luminary that took place in Tanzania.





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Where will H.E. John D. Mahama Play The Public Fontomfrom Drum Of Ghana's Sovereignty? A Preliminary Enquiry

By Dr Charles Prempeh*

In my previous two articles, published by Pan African Visions magazine, I emphasized the centrality of social contract as a critical determinant of electoral outcomes in Ghana. Specifically, I focused on the centrality of faith and family as the anchor and boundaries upon which citizens determine the boundaries of power of the political class, nationalism, citizenship and the sovereignty of the country. It is also against this context that the constitution of Ghana, particularly that of the 1992 Constitution which has held the fortress of governance for the past 30 years, invests the country's ultimate sovereignty in Ghanaians.

Similarly, public governance is about reasonable, social and culturally nuanced demonstration of wits and sagacity that the political class brings to bear in ensuring that differences are properly managed to steer the multi-loyalties of Ghanaians towards the state— knowing the state is a consequence of social and cultural construction, sustained through socialization and ritualization of nationalism. As it stands, Ghana's sovereignty and its saddles is not any different from many other African countries that are battling for their souls against impinging and ever-growing seductiveness of ideological imperialism. Since the late 1960s, Cultural Revolution of progressive cultural decadence emerging from the liberal leftist group in the United States of America and their cognate European counterparts has evolved to become part of a syndicated instrument of ideological suppression of nations that stand for ontological sanity. The complexity of ideological globalism redefines the contours and trajectories of the whole notion of globalism. Unlike the much-touted idealisms of globalization that blindly heralded the world's entry into the 21st century, current leftist-driven



No time for a honeymoon as Ghanaians are expecting President to deliver on lofty campaign promises. Photo credit X.

ideological globalism has sought to rather foster and envision global unity around the valve of unshared and discredited sexual values. Africa's resources cannot forever be exploited, stolen and return to them (us) through arm-twisting. Enough of imperialism!

This also means that the unusual, austere, banal, and subverted sexual de-values, framed around the liberalization of what has come to be known in leftist discourse as minority sexual rights has and will become the frontiers of eternally unacceptable western creeping imperialism. It is the major aspect of life's fault line that together we rise cannot hold as a cherished truism for an imagined global governance. Anchored on the sacerdotal status of faith and family as the subsidiarity of society, sexual liberalization would only thrive on divided we rise, together we fall. This implies that America's leftist party and their partners across the world must appreciate the fact that

for Ghana's religious constituency and their counterparts around the world (since their citizenship is also trans-national and ultimately transcendental) the country's sovereignty will not be outsourced to mammon. Imperialist compradors, acting as factors and collaborators of depravity in the corridors of power cannot and ought not to be inveigled to steal the public fontomfrom drum of their nation's sovereignty and think of securing a serene, quiet and peaceful place to play and enjoy its melodious heartbeat of dim, dim, dim.

Putting everything in context, since 2006, some leftist and compromised Western leaders have harvested every resources to shove down the throats of Ghanaians the liberalization of imagined minority sexual rights. This so-called rights lacks the logicity of being sociogenic. It is also alien and an affront to all of Ghana's Republic Constitutions since independence. At the same time, the country's

apex court has had occasions to rule decidedly against every attempts by locally minted, but foreign leaning imperial stooges to redefine the clarity of Ghana's position of queer (indeed, queer) sexualities. Perhaps, the Western world would have the temerity to treat Ghanaians as the West pleases because recent leaders of the country, since the end of the J.J. Rawlings' regime and as I shall soon discuss John Dramani Mahama have decided to reduce the country's sovereignty to grass. By reducing Ghana's sovereignty to grass in name of going to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) with cup in hand, they have reduced the country to the eating pleasure of any manner of goats and sheep! And yet, they all came to power in the name of the Lord!

As a matter of fact, recent developments in the country, particularly from the major institutions of public governance, namely chieftaincy and

transcendental religions (Christianity and Islam) index a nation that is ever ready and enthusiastically poised to denounce and part company with the rest of the West on the basis of decadent sexualities. The vision of the West, ever since it envisioned globalism as part of the phillias of its 19th century enlightenment, was to secularize public governance. Affixing it to disenchanting the public through secularizing the charisma of leadership and fostering bureaucratization and institutionalization of governance, religion was expected (or so they imagined in their wildest dream) to decline. This means that for ideological globalism to operate in deconstructing the ethical and ontological boundaries of life, religion had to either give way or liberalize to accommodate the fault lines and rapturous effects of the modern world.

Since the 19th century, therefore, some liberal thinkers from the Western world have taken every step within their stride to alter reality to their own destruction. They have sought, through deprecatory theories, such as existentialism and so-called critical thinking, which is nothing short of recuperated Marxism, to realign illusions and illusions in a concentric epistemic racking of the brain, hoping to attain the fecundity of reality. As a consequence, since the late 1980s, Western-led economic liberalization has reduced public universities in Ghana and certainly many of the universities across the continent of Africa to teach courses that do not align with the lived experiences of those whose primary hell it is to carry the burden of paying taxes of all shades to keep university dons and largely their (university dons) research works afloat.

University dons in Ghana are paid from the taxes derived from the rank and file of Ghanaian citizens, who sweat away their humanity in a country that lies between longitude 3.11 west—1.11 east latitude 4 – 11.5 north. And yet, at the University of Ghana, for example, the crusaders of Western imported penis and



Successive peaceful transfers of power have Ghana credit as a reference for democracy in Africa. Photo courtesy.

vagina battles have consistently been allowed to supplant the pristine cultural relevance of Family Studies. Amidst all these, university dons never run short of dabbling in the frivolities of seeking to decolonize the university. Decolonization, to be sure, has become nearly nothing other than a clanging buzz, lacking vision, substance and direction. There is hardly any serious conversations about recuperating Ghanaian family values as the hub of decolonization in the universities. Maybe a question for reflection is: what are these dons even decolonizing, if not running in a treadmill race of their own Western imported ideologies? After all, at the unset of the University of Ghana, sanity prevailed that allowed for ordered and convivial epistemic engagements. It was about the gown interacting with the town.

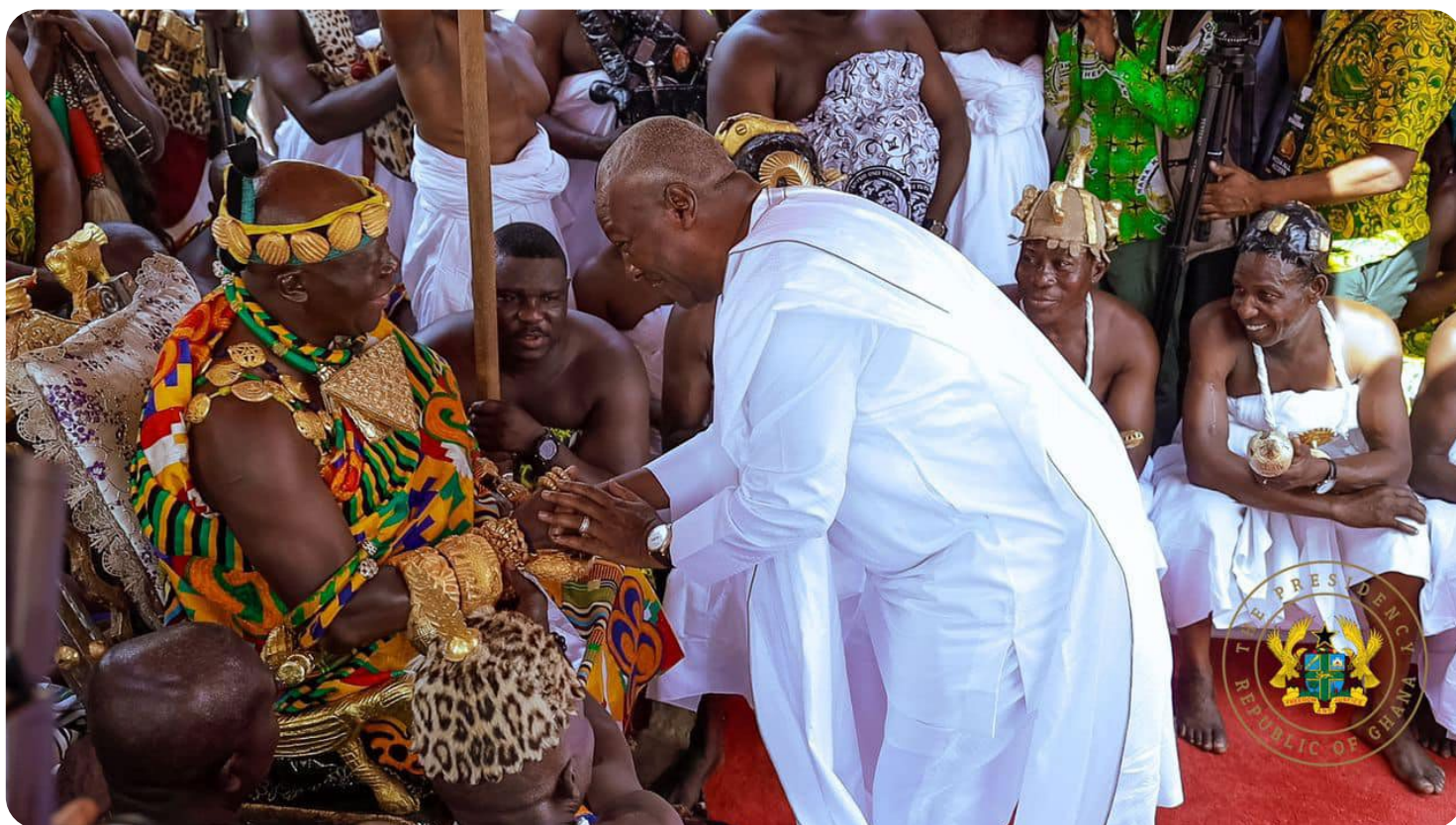
To complicate matters, as part of reducing ourselves to grass to be feasted on by goats and sheep, some of the conditions upon which academics are promoted include how much cup in hand academics they have been. Several academics are compelled to live a life of laboro

in terms of the usual begging from the West to support trite and basic research projects such as causes of teenage pregnancy. To add insult to injury, the fountainhead of Ghanaian scholarship is generally measured against how many Western so-called high index journals academics have published with. Meanwhile, there is no gainsaying that many of the Western publishers have outsourced the logicity and reasonability of scholarship to the market, such that market value, instead of knowledge value, largely determine what is published and what is not. In the end, the question that is left unanswered for academics is about who controls the market and for what purpose?

Returning the conversation to Ghana's John Dramani Mahama, he is progressively becoming a walking contradiction, drifting into his own nemesis. In the heat of Ghana's December 2024 elections, John Mahama did not mince words and miss any opportunity to call on Ghana's immediate former President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo to sign the country's Family Value Bill. The Bill was sponsored as a

by-partisan private member Bill, of which Samuel Nartey George (aka Sam George), the NDC MP of Ningo-Prampram Constituency served as a pioneer advocate both locally and trans-locally. He attained, and rightly so, both local and international fame for standing in defense of the country's sovereignty against ideological imperialism. In tandem with his political and religious activism, now President, John Mahama promised to also sign the bill when elected into office. Obviously, it was not lost on him that the Bill was a major point of convergence for a cross-section of Ghanaians whose vote or literally power he needed to ascend to the high office of the state. In most of his meetings with religious figures, he identified with their sentiments and justifiable concerns by accusing Nana Akufo-Addo of refusing to sign the Bill.

Now, Nana Akufo-Addo, for whatever reasons did not assent to the Bill, a reason I have argued elsewhere contributed to the decisive defeat his party suffered. Incidentally, ever since John Mahama was sworn into office on 7 January 2025 as Ghana's



President Mahama will need all the support he can get to move Ghana forward. Photo courtesy.

President, he has been politically-nuanced enough in deflecting the attention of Ghanaians from the Bill. In nearly all of the public meetings he has had with religious people, whether Muslims or Christians, he has curated conversations away from everything to do with the Bill. He would often talk about tangential things that hardly formed part of the core of his campaign promises. For example, on Friday 10 January 2025, when the President interacted with Muslims at the National Mosque around Kanda, Accra, he did not say anything about the Bill.

Instead, he decided to reinforce an issue that does not constitute the gravitas of nation building or the interest of majority of Muslims. Here, I am referring specifically to the Islamic veil/hijab. To be sure, Muslims would be grateful to have all female Muslims accord their constitutional rights to wear the veil in public. Nevertheless, there is hardly any equivocation that the veil or hijab issue is a pressing matter to Muslims. There is also no law that bars Muslim women from using the

veil in public. The discrimination some of them suffer is at the discretion of some biased individuals in public institutions. That the subject of the veil is not as important as the Family Bill could be assessed from the response of Al-Hajj Imam Umar, the national leader of Ghana's Ahlu Sunna Muslims. Al-Hajj Umar was one of the pioneer Ghanaian student to have studied at the university level in Saudi Arabia and returned to Ghana in the late 1960s to embark on the reformation of Islam. As part of his campaign, he ensured, especially later in the 1980s that the veil was incorporated into public discourse as part of the visible identity markers of female Muslims.

However, since the beginning of 2000s, any elementary student of Islam in Ghana would not fail to discern the shift that has happened over the veil or hijab discourse in the country. The veil has transcended the parochial discourse of religious signification to a co-constitutive part of expressing religious ideals and aesthetic/sartorial choices of Muslim women. At the same time, Al-Hajj

Imam Umar has himself shifted progressively from the veil politics to emphasize the pivotal role of educating the Muslim woman to stage her presence as a nation builder.

Also, the discourse on the veil was re-enacted to an inconsequential cul de sac during the vetting of Ghana's first Muslim Supreme Court nominee, Justice Issifu Omoro Tanko Amadu. In the course of his vetting on 12 May 2020, Justice Amadu was invited by Mahama Ayariga, NDC MP for Bawku Central constituency, to shed clarity on the issue of the veil. Justice Amadu's response, in my interpretation, was to the effect that the education of the Muslim child should not be undermined because of the politicization of the veils. And appropriate remedial answers must be sought in an instance of clear violation of the rights of a Muslim girl or female worker because of the veil. He also added that the veil is not necessarily the index of religiosity, since for him, religion is largely about one's relationship with one's God, not so much about one's dress code. A cross-section of Muslims, fronted by

one Sheikh Anas Taufiq in Kumasi, who dissented with him thought they could find solace in Al-Hajj Umar. To their obvious disappointment, Al-Hajj Umar stood in support with Justice Amadu, demanding that the state concentrated on the education of the Muslim child. In all my personal conversations with Al-Hajj Umar, he always wanted to speak English, though he is not fluent in the language. But whenever I shifted to Hausa, he would just say, "My friend, I also want to learn English."

From the foregoing, it is curious to find out exactly what the motivation of John Dramani Mahama is and how he thinks he could purge himself of assenting to the Bill, ultimately when he decided to rather re-stocked an issue of less importance to the Muslim community. Why is he seeking to deflect the attention of Ghanaians from the Bill, which he promised to sign? Drawing his attention to the ethical and ontological concerns of Muslims that also constitute the boundaries of Ghana's sovereignty, John Mahama should aver his mind to what the Ameer of the Ahmadiyya

Muslim Mission, Alhaj Maulana Noor Mohammed Bin Salih told him. On 9 January 2025, President John Dramani Mahama undertook his first public function ever since he was inducted into office by attending the 92nd annual conference of the Ahmadiyya Muslims. During his opening address, Maulana Bin Salih, the Ameer of the Mission reminded John Mahama that Muslims will not tolerate any President who abuses the emotions of Ghanaians. He reminded the President about a presidential ultimate source of power to govern, the people of Ghana and what constitutes them. This was when the Maulvi reminded the President that he (John Mahama) had requested the prayer of the Ahmadiyya Muslims in Ghana and also visited their international leader, Mirza Masroor Ahmad in London to support Mahama's presidential aspiration.

To be sure that the Mission was referring to how the former President politicized the Human Sexual Rights and Family Values Bill to the peril of the NPP, the last day of the convention featured a lecture, anchored on the problems of Ghana and the Western world. The lecture focused on how same-sex issues are now threatening the sovereignty of Ghana. In the end, the Ahmadiyya lead presenter indicated that their loyalty on such matters is not to the President, the Western world, but to their Allah, the Prophet Mohammed, the Qur'an, all crystalizing in the teaching, interpretations, and guidance of the promised Messiah, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, and his current successor.

Un/expectedly, in his address to the Ahmadiyya Muslims, John Mahama unlike what he had done during the campaign season, decided to stay clear of the Human Sexual Rights and Family Values Bill and instead promised to help the Mission get a thriving poultry industry. As I watched, the applause from the gathering was less encouraging and enthusiastic, which also communicated that the horizons had more to offer him than he expected.

In all of this, it is important to state that John Dramani Mahama's

record on the LGBTQ issue is, in principle, no better than that of his immediate predecessor, Nana Akufo-Addo. During Mahama's first tenure as President (7 January 2013 to 6 January 2017), he appointed Nana Oye Lithur (now Nana Oye Bampoe Addo) to head the Gender, Children, and Social Protection Ministry. Before her appointment, Nana Oye had established herself as advocate of homosexual rights. So, upon her nomination, several Ghanaians protested against her. But John Mahama was more than determined to push her through. Eventually, when she faced the Appointments Committee of Parliament for vetting, Nana Oye Lithur still insisted that she would defend homosexual rights. To that end, the die was cast for Ghanaians to determine the direction of the gavel. But the President would have none of that.

It was the precedence John Mahama set that culminated in the formation of a group in 2013 that was determined, upon hindsight to protect the family values of Ghana. This group, led by the venerable Lawyer Moses Foh Amoaning has evolved to constitute one of the major focal points of inter-faith and ecumenical coalition that has brought nearly all Ghanaians together to submit a Human Sexual Rights and Family Values Bill to the country's Parliament in 2021. The hindsight I mentioned above relates directly to the fact that, as previously indicated, since 2006, the Western world has tried to leverage their imperial stooges to normalize homosexual activities in Ghana. In 2011, the former Prime Minister of Britain, David Cameron, could not hide his imperialist tendencies when he stated arrogantly that Britain would cut aid to countries, including Ghana that failed to liberalize homosexual rights. So, Britain, a geographically island-based country has gold and cocoa better than Ghana?

During John Mahama's first tenure, in 2012, he was, in addition to the Oye Lithur's quandary, saddled with a charge of conferring with one Andrew Solomon. Andrew Solomon,

an openly confessed gay is said to have supported the publication and launch of Mahama's maiden book, *My First Coup d'Etat: And Other True Stories from the Lost Decades of Africa*. When the issue became topical as a result of rising ideological globalism, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) had wanted to shield the President, by claiming, initially, that the President only incidentally knew Andrew Solomon during the launch of the President's book. But over time, the then Minister of Information, Mahama Ayariga, had to come clear on the issue, by rather claiming that the President would not cower to the pressures of the West to decriminalize homosexual issues.

Certainly, one may be wondering whether President Mahama had forgotten his own history, especially when he made the Bill a political issue. Now that he is in office; now that the chickens have come home to roost, he is emerging as a hero of moral education, instead of emphatically going ahead to ask Parliament to re-consider the Bill for him to assent. If he now thinks that Ghanaians need to focus more on moral education as a moral vanguard against ideological globalism, why did he not make that clear during his campaign? Was he involved in the usual politics of duplicity when he promised to assent the Bill if it was brought to him? By the way, has he forgotten that Ghanaians were marking the space when he subtly departed from his political rhetoric of defending the Bill in his response to a BBC journalist about the Human Sexual Rights and Family Values Bill? To be clearer, during an interview with the BBC, which was just a few days to the December 7 elections, when the President was asked about whether he would assent to the Bill when it was presented to him, instead of saying yes or no, he rather said he would first consider its content.

Expectedly, his response smacked of a traitor seeking to man the corridors of power. The NPP's Nana Akomea, then the Vice Chairman of his party's presidential candidate, Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia, had a cause

to charge Mahama of lacking candor and candidness on the subject. Was the President leading Ghanaians to believe that he did not know the content of the Bill when he said he would sign it, and when he urged it on his predecessor to also sign it? Again, recently on Sunday 12 January when he gathered religious figures for his thanksgiving service held at the Ohene Konadu auditorium of the University of Professional Studies, Accra the President did not say anything about the Bill. Was he running away from his own shadows? Did he not previously, before the elections, assured the same clergy that he would not accept gayism, and received standing ovation, resultantly? Again, when, on 14 January 2025, representatives of the Ghana Catholic Bishop Conference paid the President a courtesy call, the President now shifted, as I have indicated, the direction of the conversation from assenting to the Bill to rather proposing a re-submission of it to Parliament on a different route. The President suggested that the Bill should be re-packaged as a government-sponsored bill rather than a privately-sponsored one. He accentuated this with a suggestion that Ghanaians should rather have focused more on moral education.

The President of Ghana must be aware that the stakes against him are high. Ghanaians are aware that in the midst of the usual campaign promises, he had said more than what the economic conditions of Ghana would allow. He is not new to the fact that when the foundations are weak, inflation would betray the promiser of good fortunes. While, there was no obligations on him to make all his promises, including abolishing E-Levy, he is now faced with an economic situation that forces him to re-negotiate with the IMF. Meanwhile, Ghanaians are aware that the previous Government did not make any efforts at assenting to the Bill because of how it would entangle Ghana and the IMF. So, it is obvious and trite knowledge that Mr. Mahama is faced with reality. He is faced with

a reality that is indifferent from what Nana Akufo-Addo face.

Nevertheless, Mr. Mahama should know and, indeed, he knows that Nana Akufo-Addo's decision against assenting to the Bill concurrently contributed in no small measure to the defeat of the New Patriotic Party (NPP). It was the same IMF's involvement in Ghana's financial regime that paved way for the NDC and John Mahama to get the second chance to lead the country. NDC should remember their own histories (of possible tragedy of good intentions) with the IMF and their founder, Rawlings. As it stands, John Mahama cannot pretend that Ghanaians are ignorant about what he may be facing with the Bretton Wood Institution. It will also not detract citizens from asking him to ensure that the Bill is passed into law. Already social media is buzzing with vociferous voices from a cross-section of Ghanaians who are labelling him a hypocrite. Sam George, a champion of the Bill, is also being invited to stage his position on what his President is advocating.

All said, as the President admitted,

whether the Bill is re-routed as state-sponsored bill or not, the facts of the matter are clear. The Supreme Court, as the President himself admitted, cleared all the objections in the way for his predecessor to assent to the Bill. Second, even if it will cost the nation's all its economic fortunes that is what Ghanaians have decided they want. At least, as a nation, we cannot cheapen our birthright and exchange it for mammon. As the NDC and the President have indicated, the country is rich in every sense of the word. It is rather corruption and all shades of nepotism and immorality in public governance that have reduced as from eagles to chickens in the eyes of the world. It is the imperialist stooges in the academic institutions who are undermining the fecundity of our ancestral sagacity in our public universities.

The President should focus on legitimately deploying the Operation Recover all Loot (Oral) to restore to the nation the glory it needs and ought to have. As he was told by the Ameer, he should pursue pragmatic politics that are in tandem with lived reality in Ghana and aspirations of

citizens than just seeking to please the impossible idealism of ideological globalism. At the same time, yes, Ghanaians would continue to teach the moral education in the schools. But this never stops the nation from holding the legal fortress against imperialist forces that seek to undermine the sanctity of our family values through advocacy and cajoling. Education would touch the heart, the law would control our public space from the insanity and inanity of the West. Morality will secure the religious position of Ghana, and the covenant we have with God, while the law will secure the sovereignty of Ghana's public governance away from ideological imperialism. The fact that a child is given all the doses of moral rectitude should not similarly disallow the passage of laws against crime.

He should also understand that he will not be the only person to suffer cancel culture if he stands for Ghanaians. As academics, some of us have suffered marginalization from the imagined powers that be, and yet, we stand for what is good for our nation. All said, President

John Dramani Mahama should know that the very canon that was used to measure against the NPP would be used against him and his party, the NDC when he decides to politicize the Bill. Also, if John Mahama was expecting Nana Akufo-Addo assented to the Bill to absolve him (Mahama) of any tension with the IMF, Mahama must deal with the reality that is facing him. For it will be the basis of his tenure of legacy and the future electoral fortunes of the NDC. Meanwhile, unlike the NPP's Presidential candidate Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia's who had a limited time to swim against an impossible tide to turn his fortunes around, Mahama has more time. But, as he is aware, in Ghana, campaign for the next elections begins soon after the Electoral Commissioner has made a declaration on an incumbent regime.

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Dr. Ifedayo Adetifa on NTDs, Cervical Cancer & Africa's Pandemic Preparedness

By Adonis Byemelwa

Dr. Ifedayo Adetifa is a leading force in global health. As CEO of FIND, he is revolutionizing infectious disease diagnostics. Previously, he led Nigeria's Centre for Disease Control & Prevention (NCDC), securing critical funding and strengthening pandemic response. With expertise in Lassa fever, vaccines, malaria, tuberculosis, and respiratory viruses, his impact spans Africa and beyond. He also advises the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI). A graduate of the University of Ilorin, he holds a Ph.D. in Epidemiology from the University of Amsterdam and was an Associate Professor at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine. In an exclusive Pan African Visions interview, Dr. Adetifa discusses the fight against Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs), cervical cancer, and the future of pandemic preparedness in Africa, offering crucial insights on breaking disease-driven poverty cycles and strengthening health systems.

NTDs are often described as diseases of poverty. Beyond the health impact, how do these diseases keep communities trapped in hardship?

NTDs fuel poverty by draining household incomes, with families forced to spend scarce resources on treatment. They also reduce productivity—when adults fall sick, they can't work, and children miss school, limiting future opportunities. Women, often the primary caregivers, bear the additional burden of looking after sick relatives, leading to lost income and worsening economic instability. The lack of clean water, sanitation, and healthcare infrastructure in affected communities perpetuates disease transmission, creating a vicious cycle of poverty and ill health. Governments, industry, and civil society must join forces to



Investing in better diagnostics will allow us to track, treat, and eliminate these diseases more effectively, says Dr Ifedayo Adetifa.

raise awareness and expand access to treatment, prevention, and care. Universal health coverage is crucial—people must have access to quality and affordable health services. Clean water and sanitation are also key to stopping NTD transmission. The WHO's 2021–2030 roadmap on NTDs sets ambitious elimination targets, but success hinges on better diagnostic tools. At FIND, we are working to accelerate the development of accurate, affordable, and accessible diagnostics, ensuring they reach the communities that

need them. Education is equally important—people need to know when, where, and how to seek testing and care.

You've been at the forefront of advancing diagnostics in Africa. What are the biggest gaps in NTD detection today, and how can better diagnostics revolutionize the fight against these diseases?

Despite progress—seven countries have eliminated sleeping sickness, and 42 have eradicated at least one NTD—these diseases still affect over

a billion people annually. A major challenge is access to simple, reliable tests that can be used in remote areas. Accurate diagnostics are crucial for implementing elimination strategies like mass drug administration. FIND has developed DxConnect, a directory that helps countries identify available tests, their manufacturers, and how best to deploy them. Investing in better diagnostics will allow us to track, treat, and eliminate these diseases more effectively.

Cervical cancer remains one of

the most preventable yet deadly diseases for women in Africa. What needs to change in policy and practice?

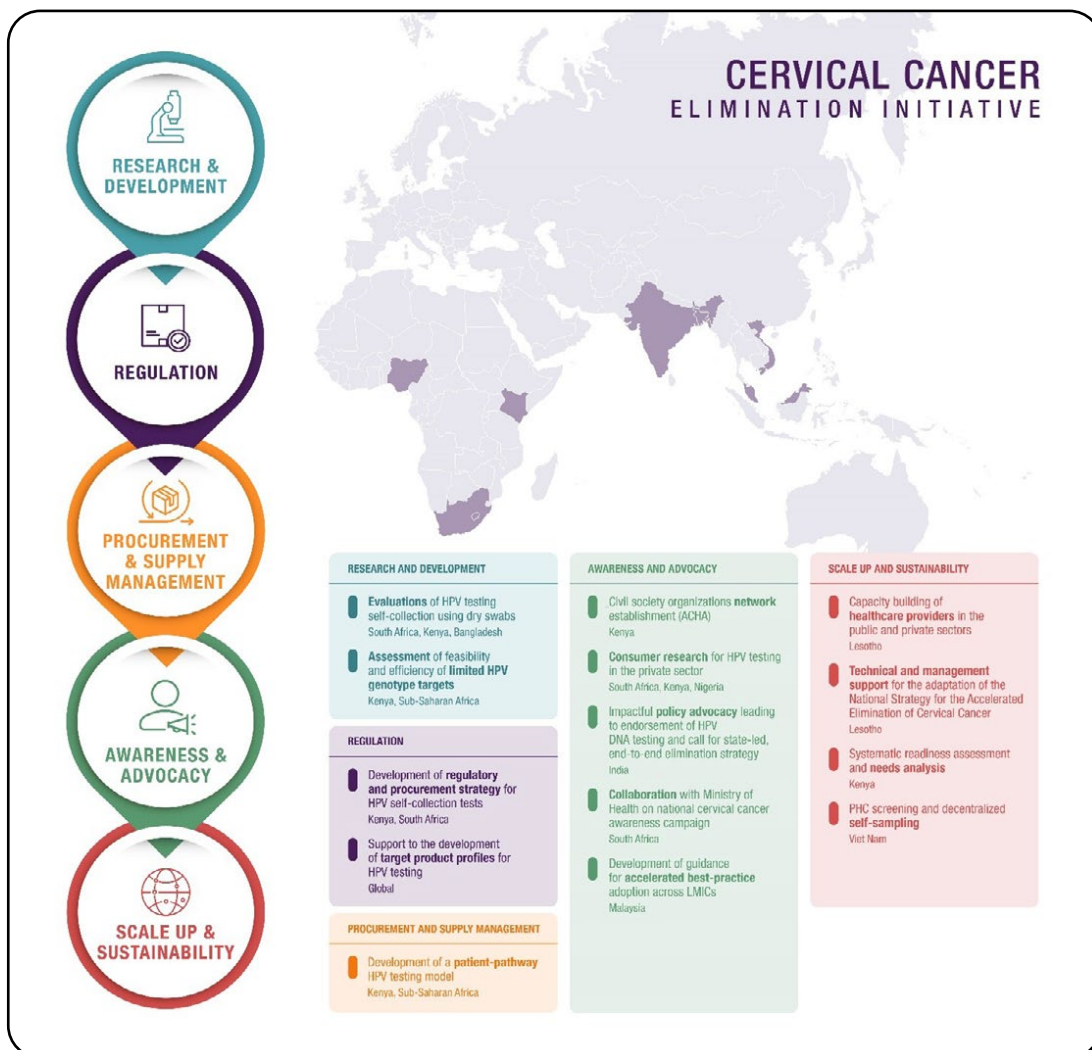
Despite being vaccine-preventable, cervical cancer kills one woman every two minutes worldwide. In South Africa alone, over 10,700 new cases are diagnosed yearly, with more than 5,800 deaths. To eliminate cervical cancer, two things must happen: vaccinate boys and girls between ages 9–and 15 against HPV and expand access to HPV screening for all women. Early detection saves lives. Governments must ensure that affordable, high-quality diagnostic tests—including DNA self-testing kits—are widely available. Making these tests accessible in pharmacies at a low cost will encourage more women to get screened.

How prepared is Africa for the next pandemic, and what lessons from COVID-19 must not be ignored?

Of the top 20 potential pandemic threats identified by WHO, we have adequate diagnostics for only two. That's alarming. Outbreaks like Ebola and Marburg virus show that Africa remains highly vulnerable. However, Rwanda's swift containment of Marburg and Uganda's rapid Ebola vaccine deployment demonstrates growing preparedness. Post-COVID-19, many African nations

recognize the need for quick action, with diagnostics as a pillar of response. Encouragingly, South Africa—holding the G20 presidency—has made pandemic preparedness

a top priority. The challenge now is ensuring that commitments translate into tangible investments in disease surveillance, laboratory systems, and rapid-response infrastructure.



Governments must integrate diagnostics into primary healthcare and national systems—not just for NTDs and cervical cancer but to prevent the next pandemic, says Dr Ifedayo Adetifa

The “100-Day Mission” aims to accelerate responses to new health threats. What does this mean for Africa, and how can we ensure equitable distribution of diagnostics, vaccines, and treatments?

Diagnostic gaps delay outbreak detection, prolonging suffering and increasing fatalities. To fix this, Africa must prioritize developing tests for its top 20 priority pathogens, as outlined by the Africa CDC. A continental playbook is needed to standardize the distribution of medical supplies during cross-border outbreaks—something that was sorely missing during COVID-19. Proactive investment in disease surveillance, laboratory capacity, and supply chain readiness is key. At FIND, we support initiatives like Senegal's diaTROPIX manufacturing facility, which now produces 75 million diagnostic tests annually. We also assist Kenya and

Zambia in tracking antimicrobial resistance and have strengthened Lassa fever diagnostics in Liberia. Preparedness is a marathon before the sprint—governments must invest now to avoid scrambling when the next outbreak hits.

Can you share a success story where better diagnostics have changed lives?

The development of the first-ever rapid diagnostic test for sleeping

sickness was a game-changer. It enabled WHO to classify the disease for elimination, a target already met by seven countries. For schistosomiasis, a new rapid test covering all major worm species is making screening cheaper and more accessible. Meanwhile, during COVID-19, FIND played a pivotal role in assessing new diagnostics and ensuring their global availability.

As we observe World NTD Day

and Cervical Cancer Awareness Month, what message do you have for governments, health organizations, and individuals?

Diagnostics are the foundation of health—they save lives, prevent suffering, and provide early warnings for emerging threats. Yet, nearly one in two people lack access to accurate, affordable testing. FIND is committed to making diagnostics available to all, but we need governments and industry to step up. Investment in diagnostic

innovation is vital, but so is ensuring these tools reach the communities that need them most. Governments must integrate diagnostics into primary healthcare and national systems—not just for NTDs and cervical cancer but to prevent the next pandemic. The Pathogen Diagnostics Readiness Index provides a roadmap for filling diagnostic gaps and guiding investments where they matter most. The time to act is now.

African Union Urges Self-Reliance Following US Withdrawal from WHO

By Adonis Byemelwa

Addis Ababa—The Chairperson of the African Union Commission Moussa Faki Mahamat on January 21, 2025, delivered a sharp and poignant critique of the United States' unexpected decision to withdraw from the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Describing the move as a monumental setback to global health security, Mahamat emphasized the far-reaching consequences for international cooperation and regions like Africa, which heavily depend on collective efforts to combat pandemics and strengthen fragile health systems.

Calling the move a blow to global health security, Mahamat highlighted the implications for regions like Africa, which heavily depend on international partnerships to address pandemics and other public health challenges.

For over seven decades, the US has been a cornerstone of WHO support, helping shape global health strategies. Its exit sends shockwaves through the international health community.

«The USA has been instrumental in supporting the Africa CDC and the WHO in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from pandemics,» Mahamat stated.

He warned that the withdrawal could undo years of progress in strengthening health systems across Africa and beyond. Social media has been ablaze with reactions, with Euphrasia Makata, a prominent voice



AU Chair Moussa Faki and WHO's Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus hold a signed MOU to expand access to medicines & bolster epidemic preparedness in Africa

online, saying, «African leaders, it's time to get serious. Start funding the AU and our African health organisations. We need visionaries who act, not beggars.»

The US decision aligns with a broader trend under Trump's administration, which has focused on scaling back involvement in global institutions.

The country has also exited the Paris Climate Agreement, reduced financial commitments to NATO, and pulled

funding from UN sub-organisations such as UNHCR and UNDP. While this strategy reflects an «America First» approach, critics view it as a retreat from the global stage.

Analysts believe African leaders should take this as a wake-up call. «Trump's decision is not surprising,» remarked Hon. Peter Maina, a political observer. «His administration is prioritising domestic challenges and low prioritising global organisations. African leaders must stop expecting

perpetual funding from the West. This is a moment to shift towards African solutions to African problems.»

Others on social media pointed out contradictions within the US itself. Wisdom Onyeka commented, «The US struggles with issues like mass incarceration, gun violence, and broken family systems. Perhaps stepping back from global responsibilities will help them focus on fixing their challenges, while Africa uses this opportunity to step up.»

The withdrawal raises urgent questions about Africa's dependency on donor funding from Western nations. For decades, international assistance has sustained key health initiatives, infrastructure, and trade agreements. The US departure from the WHO underlines the fragility of this reliance, challenging African leaders to take greater responsibility for the continent's future.

Chairperson Mahamat urged the US to reconsider its decision, stressing that public health is a shared global good that transcends borders.

However, he also emphasised the need for African nations to step up and fund their health organisations to ensure long-term sustainability.

Euphrasia Makata's online post resonated widely, declaring, "We need to stop begging. The AU and Africa's health institutions must rise to the occasion. This is a blessing in disguise if only we use it to build stronger, self-funded systems."

Many see this as a defining moment for Africa. The shifting geopolitical landscape requires innovative solutions and regional collaboration. Hon. Maina added, "The world is moving into a multipolar order where Africa must prioritise independence. Our leaders need to act swiftly to ensure we can handle our challenges without waiting for external aid."

Social media reactions have been divided. While some expressed dismay

at the US decision, others saw it as an opportunity for Africa to chart its course. Wisdom Onyeka remarked, "If the withdrawal is truly about prioritising their issues, then maybe it's better this way. Africa must now focus on what's within its control and find new alternatives."

The sentiment was echoed by many who see the dependency on external donors as unsustainable. Makata's call for self-reliance has reignited conversations about the AU's financial strategies. With the US cutting back on funding for institutions like the WHO, climate agreements, and NATO, the message to Africa is clear: the continent can no longer afford to rely on the West to sustain its development.

The African Union now faces the challenge of turning this moment into an opportunity. Chairperson Mahamat concluded, "This is a wake-up call. By investing in our initiatives and reducing dependency, we can protect our people's health and well-being regardless of external developments."

As global leaders prepare for emergency discussions on the implications of the US decision, Africa stands at a critical crossroads. This is a chance to redefine its path, focusing on homegrown solutions and regional cooperation. Whether the continent rises to the occasion or remains entangled in dependency will shape its trajectory in the years to come. _____

Zimbabwe -First Lady Auxillia Mnangagwa Champions Cultural Heritage

By Prince Kurupati

In Zimbabwe, a passionate advocate for the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage has been found in First Lady Dr. Auxillia Mnangagwa. Through her Angel of Hope Foundation, she has initiated and championed various programs that reinforce traditional values, arts, and cultural practices. A cornerstone of these efforts is the Gota/Nhanga/Ixhiba program, designed to instill moral values and cultural knowledge among the youth.

Beyond this, she has also spearheaded health, education, agricultural, and women empowerment initiatives that align with the preservation of indigenous knowledge systems and traditional ways of life. Her work has earned widespread recognition for its impact in revitalizing Zimbabwean culture while addressing contemporary societal challenges.

The Gota/Nhanga/Ixhiba Program: Revitalizing Cultural Education

The Gota/Nhanga/Ixhiba program is a cultural and moral education initiative that brings together children and adolescents in settings reminiscent of traditional learning



Gota Nhanga Ixhiba Program is initiated by First Lady Dr. Auxillia Mnangagwa to reconnect young people with Zimbabwe's rich cultural heritage. Photo credit X

environments—Gota for boys and Nhanga or Ixhiba for girls. In these spaces, elders and community leaders impart lessons on cultural norms, ethics, and life skills to help shape responsible citizens.

Key Focus Areas of the Program

- Respect for Elders and Authority: Teaching children to respect parents, teachers, and traditional leaders.
- Traditional Gender Roles and

Responsibilities: Encouraging boys to embrace leadership and responsibility, while guiding girls in domestic skills and self-respect.

- Cultural Identity: Preserving indigenous knowledge, language, and customs.
- Social Challenges: Addressing drug abuse, teenage pregnancies, early sexual activity, and the erosion of moral values among young people. At a recent session held at the

Harare Children's Home, the First Lady emphasized the importance of education and self-respect, saying:

"Our wish as grandmothers is for them to preserve their bodies, know household chores, not to fall in love at tender ages, and to emphasize that professional careers are important and everything else is secondary."

This program has been widely embraced across Zimbabwe and is now expanding regionally. At the



Discipline, resilience, and hard work will take you far. If you embrace these values, you will achieve your dreams, says Dr. Auxillia Mnangagwa to the youth

2024 Regional World Children's Day commemorations in Victoria Falls, the First Lady hosted a special Gota/Nhanga/Ixhiba session for children from Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Botswana, and Namibia. Addressing the children, she said: "Discipline, resilience, and hard work will take you far. If you embrace these values, you will achieve your dreams."

This initiative reflects her commitment to fostering a new generation of Zimbabweans who are culturally rooted, responsible, and prepared for the challenges of modern life.

Angel of Hope Foundation: Promoting Culture, Health, and Development

Beyond the Gota/Nhanga program, the Angel of Hope Foundation spearheads various initiatives that align with the promotion of arts, culture, and improved living standards.

Health and Traditional Medicine Advocacy

The First Lady is actively involved in promoting indigenous health

solutions. She has led medical outreach programs to rural areas and has worked closely with traditional healers and scientists to explore the medicinal benefits of Zimbabwe's native plants.

In partnership with the University of Zimbabwe, the Angel of Hope Foundation is conducting research into the health benefits of traditional grains, leading to the development of innovative products such as:

- Somira bread (made from indigenous grains)
- Cooking oil and fish feed derived from traditional crops

She has called for a return to traditional diets, noting that modern processed foods contribute to health problems such as diabetes and hypertension.

Women's Empowerment and Cultural Food Preservation

Through the Agri4She Initiative, the First Lady empowers rural women by providing them agricultural inputs, chemicals, and machinery to enhance food security and nutrition. She encourages women to grow traditional crops and preserve cultural recipes to sustain families

and communities.

To celebrate these efforts, she hosted an African-themed appreciation dinner at State House, showcasing traditional dishes, music, and attire.

Educational Initiatives and Moral Guidance for Youth

The First Lady's Elementary Club is another groundbreaking program targeting primary school children. It tackles social issues such as teen pregnancies as well as drug and substance abuse.

Through this initiative, she engages directly with children, discussing their challenges and aspirations. She emphasizes cultural values, self-discipline, and respect as keys to a successful future.

Cultural Legacy and Future Prospects

Dr. Auxillia Mnangagwa's work in championing Zimbabwean culture extends beyond mere preservation—she actively integrates traditional values into contemporary challenges. She has emerged as a leading figure in cultural revival, ensuring that young Zimbabweans do not lose touch with

their identity.

Her multi-dimensional approach combines culture, education, health, and economic empowerment. This has positioned her as a transformative leader whose work impacts Zimbabwe and the entire Southern African region.

First Lady Dr. Auxillia Mnangagwa is at the forefront of cultural preservation and societal development in Zimbabwe. Through initiatives like Gota/Nhanga/Ixhiba, she is restoring traditional values among the youth, tackling modern challenges, and empowering communities.

Her Angel of Hope Foundation continues to drive health, education, agriculture, and women empowerment programs, reinforcing the importance of indigenous knowledge in national development.

As Zimbabwe navigates modernization and globalization, her efforts to keep cultural traditions alive will undoubtedly shape future generations, ensuring that Zimbabwean heritage remains strong, relevant, and deeply rooted in the country's identity.

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Sidiki Traore On Transforming Africa Through Resilience and Education

By Ajong Mbandah L

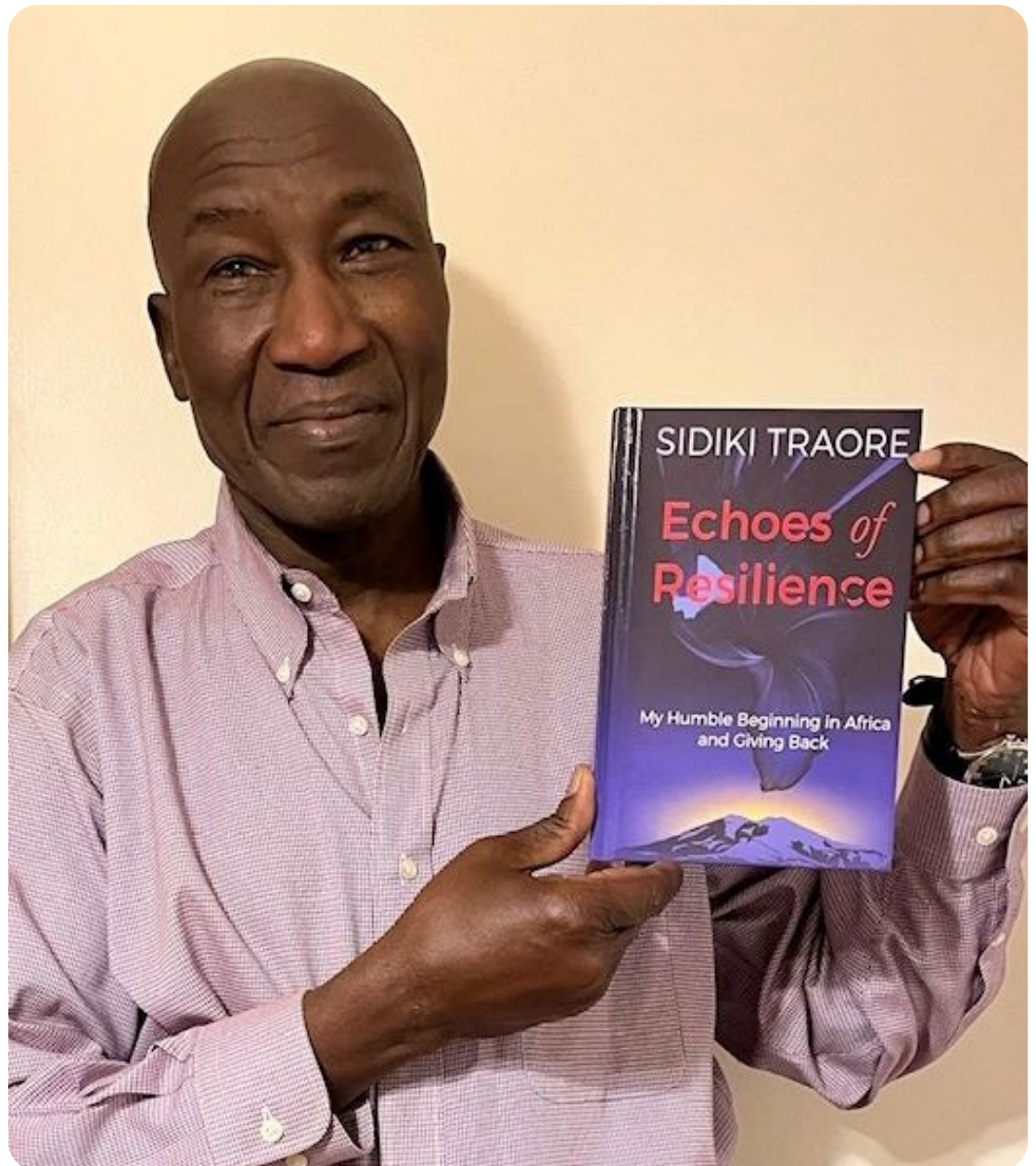
When I was a child running on the dirt roads of my village in Mali, if someone had told me that one day I would be in Bamako, Paris, Bloomington, or Washington, D.C., I would have thought that he or she was crazy. Yet, here I am—a testament to the power of resilience, says Sidiki Traore. Out with a new book titled *Echoes of Resilience*, the former World Bank cadre, and seasoned educator tells ambitious but challenged young Africans that determination and not circumstances make the difference.

In an interview with Pan African Visions, Sidiki encourages Africa's youth to focus on the positive, embrace opportunities, and never stop learning. In the interview Sidiki also dwells at length on how his passion for equitable access to education culminated in the founding of Distance Education for Africa (DeAfrica), an organization dedicated to bridging the educational gap for Africans through innovative distance-learning solutions. The challenges faced in bringing this vision to life were immense. Funding was scarce, infrastructure was lacking, and the physical demands were daunting, yet Sidiki prevailed.

A significant milestone was achieved in August 2020 when DeAfrica reached learners from all 54 African countries. Today, we have learners in every single country across the continent, and over 60,000 scholarships have been awarded, creating the largest engaged educational ecosystem in Africa, says Sidiki Traore.

"We have reached the unreachable, providing students and professionals from diverse backgrounds with access to quality education. To build a thriving Africa, we must skill, reskill, and upskill our workforce. That is the gap I am committed to bridging," says Sidiki Traore.

You are out with a new book



Challenges are inevitable, but perseverance, hard work, and self-belief can turn obstacles into stepping stones, says Sidiki Traore

*titled **Echoes of Resilience**, for those who may not know, could you introduce the book for them and why the decision to have it out now?*

Thank you so much, Ajong. It is truly an honor to be interviewed by Pan African Visions, one of the leading magazines covering Africa.

My book, *Echoes of Resilience*, highlights the transformative power

of education. It reflects my deep passion for learning and its ability to shape lives and societies. Education is a force for change, and I believe in the importance of investing in it, no matter the challenges.

The book shares stories of learners who persevere against adversity, proving that resilience can open doors to new opportunities. Now feels like the right moment to reflect on my

journey—the struggles, the victories, and the people who supported me along the way. More importantly, I hope to inspire others to give back to their communities and make a lasting impact.

From the humble beginnings in Mali that you talk about to the global summits in Washington and the Bank, how challenging

was the journey for you and what is the message that you have for others from less privileged backgrounds seeking to make it in the challenging world of today?

My message is simple: never give up. Challenges are inevitable, but perseverance, hard work, and self-belief can turn obstacles into stepping stones. Life is a struggle, but success belongs to those who push forward despite the hardships.

When I was a child running on the dirt roads of my village in Mali, if someone had told me that one day I would be in Bamako, Paris, Bloomington, or Washington, D.C., I would have thought that he or she was crazy. Yet, here I am—a testament to the power of resilience.

For anyone striving to build a better future, remember this: focus on the positive, embrace opportunities, and never stop learning. Your circumstances do not define you; your determination does.

How important do you think the book can be in the development context of Africa today?

This book serves as both an inspiration and a call to action. It aligns with the mission of Distance Education for Africa (DeAfrica) and supports our broader vision of “Building Inclusive Workforce Education at Scale Across Africa” (which is also the title of our seventh book).

DeAfrica has been instrumental in breaking educational barriers by providing accessible, high-quality online learning to thousands of students. This book outlines our innovative approaches—integrating technology into education, addressing digital literacy, and ensuring equitable access to skills training.

To build a thriving Africa, we must skill, reskill, and upskill our workforce. That is the gap I am committed to bridging.

You talk so much about education, when you look at

Africa today and Africa at the time you were growing up, what is going right and what seems to be missing in terms of aligning education with global development trends?

While there have been advancements, significant challenges remain. Many education systems across Africa are rigid, with a heavy focus on theoretical learning rather than practical application. This disconnect limits students’ ability to compete in a rapidly evolving job market.

To align education with global development trends, course content must be dynamic, market-driven, and continuously updated to reflect emerging industries and business models. A more adaptive and skills-based education system will better prepare students for the realities of the modern world.

Let’s talk about DeAfrica, what motivated you to create it and what are some of its achievements or success stories you can share with us?

Education changed my life. My father instilled in me the value of learning, and despite the challenges, I saw firsthand how education can uplift individuals and communities.

After traveling to over 44 African countries, I witnessed firsthand the gaps in access to quality education—gaps that, if properly addressed, could reduce poverty and create sustainable jobs. Africa is full of resourceful, hardworking, and talented people. However, without the right education and training, their potential remains untapped.

Education is not just a right; it is an imperative. Practical and accessible learning can provide solutions to our continent’s most pressing challenges. This belief led me to establish Distance Education for Africa, a platform committed to providing quality, flexible, and skills-oriented education to empower Africa’s next generation.

While institutions like the African Virtual University have made efforts, they haven’t fully closed the gaps.

That’s why I asked myself: How can we provide a brighter future for Africa’s youth? How can we leverage technology to transform lives? DeAfrica is my response to those questions.

SUCCESS STORIES

The scholarship has equipped students with essential, market-relevant skill sets, enhancing their problem-solving abilities, job readiness, and overall employability.

Furthermore, many students have reported that they have already begun applying what they learned from the Darden School of Business, seeing immediate positive results. Their newly acquired knowledge has enabled them to offer practical solutions to real-world challenges in both their professional and social environments.

1.MALAWI

DOMINIC TEMBO

Business consultant

1.A case in example of Dominic Tembo from Malawi who after finishing Design thinking for Innovation managed to apply the Visualization tool to a struggling local beverage company, thereby helping it explore new possibilities to stay afloat.

Dominic is a consultant offering business development services. Recently he was contacted by a company which he helped to register in Malawi in 2015, as a manufacturer a line of carbonated soft drinks. The company intended to relocate to another country with a promising market.

Ultimately the company was closing down citing poor sales resulting from low purchasing power. It was further stated that the company is generally facing very slow growth and they have not been able to cover operational costs. Looking at the available data one could hardly conclude that the poor sales was a result of low purchasing power. Dominic thought of sitting down with the management

convincing them that they could work together to find a solution that could save the business. Dominic Tembo proposed for team of 8 employees, 4 from strategic positions or 4 from operational positions which he could work with to look at the elements that could attribute to the problem space.

Selection

The tool adopted was visualization or visual thinking to achieve a common understanding of the problem space prior to identification and definition of probable answers to the existing problem. By using visualization tool as learnt in lecture 1, with employing inductive reasoning they were able to think about possibilities that they had not yet seen. The choice of visualization was motivated by the fact that a conclusion to the problem was already reached therefore it was necessary to open up to new unlimited possibilities to reach the cause to the problem. Visual thinking gave Dominic and the team a wide room to consider all possible answers or ideas and minimize the risk of omitting important ideas or solutions in the problem space.

Application

The 8 participants were first put at around table with whiteboard in front for mind mapping. As learnt in lecturer 2 about preparing your mind, it was necessary to encourage every participant to be free from the decision made by management and open up to novel ideas that can be tested. To achieve this everyone had to agree that there was a problem but no one knows the exact problem and the issue of low sales was just a sign to a problem.

To understand the context of the problem space Porter Five Force Model was used. The model was graphically presented to identify on higher level the force(s) with higher influence in the problem area. Those with higher influence were isolated and were used to develop a stakeholder mapping. The stakeholder mapping is an important step to understanding who the key stakeholders are, where they come

from and what interest they have in relation to the business. Stakeholders with unpredictable influence on the business were again isolated from the rest. Using brainstorming as a tool for idea generation as learnt in lecture 4 the two groups exhaustively looked at the behaviors of each stakeholder in line with the problem space. The behaviors or characteristics of

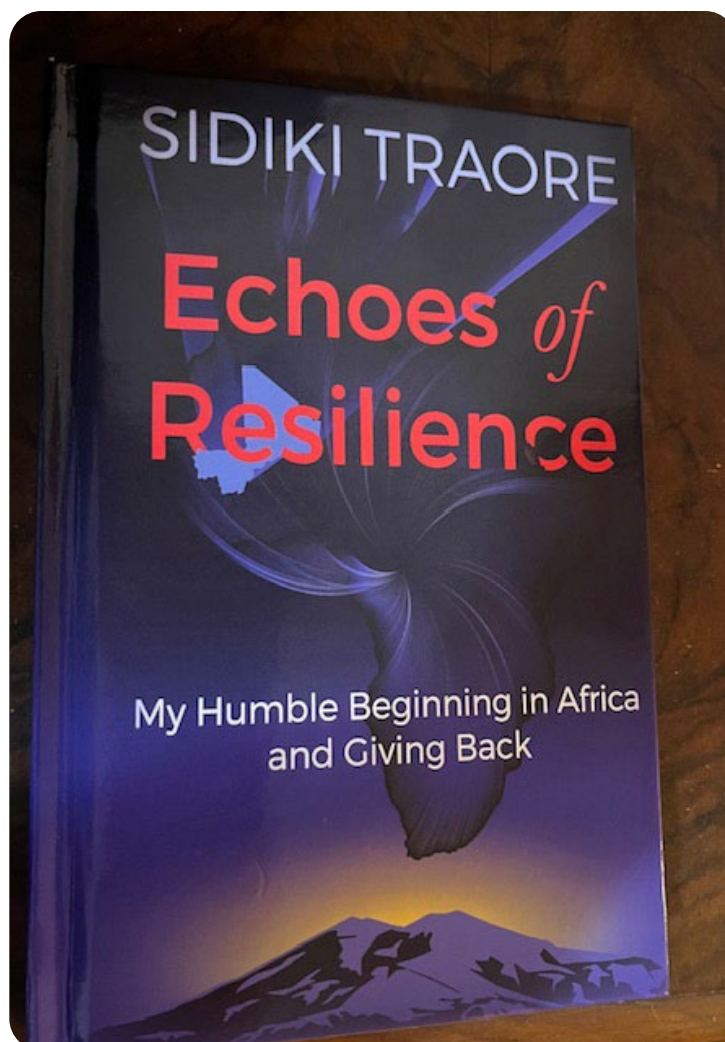
the stakeholders in the problem space were mapped in relative terms to the business performance. This session took 30 minutes. Then the 8 participants were grouped into two strategic and operational with respect to their positions. In the second session which was a 15 minutes session required the participants to answer questions on a piece of paper which was shared to them. They were told not to put their names on it. This was done to encourage participants to use their emotional intelligence. The questions used in this activity were; (i) who are the key stakeholders of the company, (ii) what interest do they have on the business, (iii) Why do you think they have such interest (iv) How have the company anticipate and met their expectations (v) what could be done to improve on delivering expectation.

Insight and Approach

It was an intriguing exercise with unpredictable results. The exercise revealed that there was no single answer to the cause of low sales. The first session results showed that the elements that were more customers-centered. The second session results had an internal focus. The elements that were highlighted attributing to the problem

space was more of employees' motivation and capacity to perform their duties efficiently and effectively. The graphical representation on feedback reinforced a shared perspective of the attributes to the problem space.

Elements that would have likely been overlooked in traditional methods to problem solving were uncovered and considered. Given that implementation of some of the new insights will require prototyping and



Sidiki's latest book Echoes of Resilience, highlights the transformative power of education.

testing of new work-flow processes, the best approach would be learning launch.

This course has been very instrumental in broadening the way he thinks and approaches problems and deriving on a particular solution. The platform has been very convenient to his schedule as it so flexible and offered an opportunity for back-and-forth learning. This afforded him to get more insight from the course content and possibility of extrapolating the content to the context of real world.

He thanked DeAfrica, University of Virginia and Coursera, for giving him this wonderful opportunity!

2.UGANDA

AMPAIRE -TESTIMONY

Ireen got to know DEAFRICA through a friends WhatsApp status.

Before enrolling, she felt stuck in a dead-end job with limited opportunities for growth. Ireen enrolled for a two months course of CERTIFICATE IN PROJECT PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT with DeAfrica. But after completing the course, she gained the skills and confidence to land her dream job. She said that the course was incredibly well-structured, with engaging video lessons, interactive quizzes, and practical exercises. The instructor's expertise and support were invaluable, and the community of fellow learners was motivating and helpful. Thanks to the course, she acquired in-demand skills that made her a competitive candidate in the job market. Within just 2 months of completing the course, she applied

for a job at BRAC UGANDA an NGO and she received a call for interview. During the interview the panelists thought she did the course from the University of Virginia (UVA) in the US. She said that she never went physically to UVA. She received a job offer as a Program Assistant Social Empowerment and later on was promoted as Branch manager.

She is grateful for the opportunity to have taken the course and highly recommend it to anyone looking to upskill, reskill, or transition to a new career. The investment of the time was worthwhile.

She kindly requests DEAFRICA to always bring such courses to help the youth learn and gain more skills. She thanked DeAfrica for building and shaping her.

3.BOTSWANA

1.Amantlle Baratedi from Botswana Created a Digital Transformation Company;

Amantle took the Modern Business Speciation course that is composed of 4 courses

1. Digital Transformation
2. Design Thinking
3. Digital Product Management
4. Customer Centric IT Strategy

After the 4 courses, Amantle Baratedi decided to put in good use what she has learned. She turned what she has learnt into more concrete, tangible for people in Botswana and beyond.

She created an app that is focused on

Product development (offer strategies to companies)

1. Digital Product Development
2. Payment solutions (that is beyond the tradition payment solutions in Botswana)

She is now Entrepreneur and a Digital Solutions Consultant

2.Pearl Ndlovu, Boswana works at Botswana Telecommunications Corporation (BTC).

She moved up from the position of Relationships Management at BTC to an Innovation Specialist at BTC.



DeAfrica has been instrumental in breaking educational barriers by providing accessible, high-quality online learning to thousands of students.

After her second baby was born, there was not much to be done at home. Her husband encouraged her to enrolled in DeAfrica courses. She started with Project Management, Digital Transformation and Business Strategy.

After she kept taking more DeAfrica courses. She enrolled in our Specialization in Business Strategy.

One day, she went to the Strategy Department of BTC to inquiry what they were doing. The Manager of Strategy Department invited her to come to their regular meetings. While attending the meetings she offered herself as a part time basis and learned more about what the Strategic Department was doing.

Then she enrolled in the Specialization in Business Strategy and took:

1. Costumer Centre IT Strategy
2. IT Strategy
3. Innovation with Business

- Model Canvas
4. Advanced Business Strategy (strategic Formation)

Then, after gaining skills from Specialization in Business strategy, she started shining and she got promoted to become an Innovation Specialist at the Botswana Telecommunications Corporation.

4. CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Using a proven distance education model to create lasting economic impact

Gérard LAOULET – YANGUEL

Chef de Service Etude et Développement Informatique à la Caisse Nationale de Sécurité Sociale (CNSS)/Bangui(RCA)

Gérard LAOULET – YANGUEL
DeAfrica Graduate of 2012

in Bangui, Central African Republic

An alumnus of Distance Education for Africa Computer Security and Web Design and Programming from Laval University in Canada

Gerard Laoulet has a Bachelor's degree in Administration and Maintenance of Computer Systems. In 2011, Gérard was enrolled in three online training modules from DeAfrica in partnership with University LAVAL in Canada. For each module of the training, learners were awarded a certificate (Java programming, Network security and web application). The knowledge and skills acquired during this course played a very important role in his profile as a professional developer that he is today. Also, this training allowed him to be distinguished and gave him the upper hand in the job search market, to be recruited and to make a career within the current

company where he is currently working. Today, Gérard leads a team of seven (7) developers and they are working on the development and implementation of a social security management application system. This application manages the registration of all workers in the country's private sector, the collection of their contributions and the management of benefits divided into three products (Family allowance, Work accidents - Occupational diseases and the AVID Pension). The stake of this application on the institution is estimated at several thousands of billions of CFA francs and has also made it possible to improve the quality of services to users.

In terms of depth and scope, how vast is the spread of the educational programs of DeAfrica?



Distance Education For Africa (DeAfrica) celebrated its sixth Annual graduation ceremony in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on May 21, 2022.

The Africa Scholarship Cohort (ASC), the flagship program of Distance Education for Africa (DeAfrica), began in 2016 with just 100 students from seven African countries. With each new course, more participants from additional countries joined, expanding the program's reach.

To assess the program's impact, seven courses were randomly selected and analyzed, providing statistical insights. Rosette Melikian, Senior Director of Data Science and Advanced Analytics in Washington, D.C., identified a total of 52 unique countries represented in those 7 courses. The top ten countries with the highest participation were Kenya, Botswana, Nigeria, Uganda, Mali, Ghana, Mauritius, Ethiopia, Côte d'Ivoire, and Senegal. Notably, Eritrea and Libya were the only two African countries not represented. They did join later with the help of the DeAfrica Whatsup group.

A gender analysis by course revealed significant variations across countries. In Kenya, Botswana, and Uganda, female participation exceeded 50% of incoming students, with Kenya leading at 80%, Botswana

64%, Uganda 52%, Nigeria 48%, Burundi 46%, Senegal 36%. In contrast, South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Guinea had male-dominated enrollments, with over 80% of students being male.

The program has created lasting economic impact in Africa and worked to promote gender equity showcasing an equal number of female and male in the published books.

A significant milestone was achieved in August 2020 when DeAfrica reached learners from all 54 African countries. Today, we have learners in every single country across the continent.

To date, over 60,000 scholarships have been awarded, creating the largest engaged educational ecosystem in Africa. We have reached the unreachable, providing students and professionals from diverse backgrounds with access to quality education.

Our courses have benefited individuals across various sectors, including:

- **Universities:** In Kenya alone, students, faculty, lecturers, and professors from more than 43

universities have participated, along with staff from over 34 government agencies and county governments. Similar participation is seen in Botswana, where over 40 government agencies have enrolled. Hundreds of professionals from the private sectors have enjoyed our courses in Botswana.

- **Defense Forces & Air Forces:** Including the Ghana Air Force, Kenya Air Force, and Botswana Defense Force.
- **Airlines:** Employees from Kenya Airways, Mauritius Airways, Ethiopian Airlines and others.
- **Banks & Ministries:** Government ministries and agencies focused on education, youth, transport, rural development, and more have leveraged our programs for professional development.
- **NGOs & the Private Sector:** Organizations across various industries have greatly benefited from our courses.

Correctional Facilities & Refugee Communities: Botswana's prison system and refugee communities, such as Nakivale Refugee Settlement in Uganda, have also gained access to valuable learning opportunities.

How did we achieve the spread of educational program in Africa? The CoI framework

ONLINE LEARNING USING A COMMUNITY OF INQUIRY FRAMEWORK

The Community of Inquiry (CoI) Framework is a theoretical framework for designing exemplary online education experiences. There are three essential elements in this model: **cognitive presence, social presence, and teaching presence.**

In the African Scholarship Program, cognitive presence is provided through online courses hosted on the Coursera massive open online course (MOOC) platform. Most of the courses have been business courses authored by faculty at the University of Virginia (UVA). Coursera is available through a smartphone application to both iOS and Android devices. Content is downloadable so learners can participate in courses by watching lectures while offline. Typically, a learner must be online to complete quizzes. All Coursera content has methods to access the

content regardless of ability.

Social presence is provided through a vibrant community hosted on regional WhatsApp groups. Learners can sign up for WhatsApp groups and go to these groups to get feedback, answer questions, and motivate one another. It is a great opportunity to connect with other participants in the program and stay accountable for completing online course work. DeAfrica graduation ceremonies are one of the most important elements in the Social Presence.

Teaching presence is provided through a network of volunteer regional

mentors; there are almost one hundred mentors across Africa. These mentors individually reach out to participants that are new to the program and who need help navigating the course work and they support those learners as they reach their goals. Typically, mentors have taken several courses in the program and are helping others so that they can get similar value from the program. Many of the mentors have said the program helped them to transform their lives.

Book publications

Nine books have been published to showcase the work done with the scholarship programs. There are four main books and a series of five Business Case Study Handbook.

What kind of programs does DeAfrica prioritize and what is the criteria used in selecting students who benefit from DeAfrica programs as well

Our courses are open to everyone, they are professional development courses. They are University level courses.

Criteria is: access to the Internet and a well-working smartphone or laptop and willing to complete the course. A participant should apply to show interest in a specific program.

We have other specific criteria that

depend on the terms and guidelines of the grants avail. DeAfrica applies for those grants.

Moreover, the specific criteria target part of demographics like women only. The applicants can be accessed through social media groups. An example of this type of partnership was between DeAfrica and New Zealand Embassy in Ethiopia and the University of Virginia. That projects run between 2022 to 2024.

We would like offer many on-demand courses that are market-related such as:

- Artificial Intelligence
- Entrepreneurship courses
- Marketing Management (Certificate in Marketing management)
- Digital Marketing (Certificate in Digital Marketing)
- Human Resource Management (Certificate in Human Resource Management)
- Accounting and Finance
- Business Administration
- Business in information technology and related software programs used eg SAP, Tally, excel, et
- Business course (Management, Strategic)
- Cyber security
- Agricultural poultry management
- Short courses in Agriculture

Other in-demand workforce courses may be offered as well.

What are some of the challenges that you have faced in trying to grow and sustain DeAfrica?

Funding has been our biggest challenge. As you know, it is incredibly difficult to make a non-profit organization sustainable, especially when resources are limited and the demand for impactful programs continues to grow. We do need support in funding.

To institutions, governments, and potential partners out there,

what sales pitch can you make to them to consider supporting the work and vision of DeAfrica?

At its core, Echoes of Resilience is about hope. It is about the ability of individuals to rise above circumstances through learning, adaptation, and perseverance. As we continue working to bridge the education gap in Africa, I urge policymakers, educators, and communities to invest in skills-based learning.

A continent rich in potential deserves an education system that unlocks it.

Given the latest developments and the growing challenges in securing financial support, it is imperative that we build a strong network of collaborators and partners who share our vision for a better future. To sustain and expand these life-changing initiatives, we seek financial contributions, strategic partnerships, and in-kind support from those committed to empowering Africa's next generation. Your support—whether through donations, mentorship, or advocacy—can be the catalyst that transforms lives and creates lasting opportunities. I invite you all to be part of this transformational journey, ensuring that Africans everywhere have access to the hope, dignity, and opportunities that every human being deserves.

LOOKING AHEAD: SCALING IMPACT

What's Next? The DeAfrica-Pan African Human Infrastructure (PAHI)

DeAfrica aims to create a **formal mentorship and networking program called DeAfrica-Pan African Human Infrastructure (PAHI)**

Distance Education for Africa - Pan-African Human Infrastructure (DeAfrica -

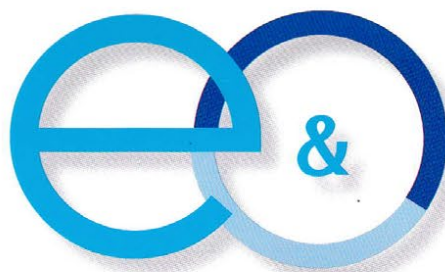
PAHI): A formal networking and mentorship program to catalyze economic growth and job creation across Africa

The proposed project, the De-Africa-Pan African Human Infrastructure (DeAfrica-PAHI), **aims to develop and implement a formal mentorship and networking program to foster a community of like-minded entrepreneurs, thereby stimulating job creation and economic growth in Africa.**

Given that DeAfrica has provided 60,000 + scholarships – 36% of which have directly led to business creation – the organization is strongly positioned to establish a formal network and mentorship program building on the collective talent and experience of DeAfrica Alumni and associated experts on the African continent. Our aim is to strengthen and fully implement the DeAfrica COI framework to expand the impact of DeAfrica and build a highly active community across Africa where like-minded women and men entrepreneurs can support one another, stimulating economic growth and job creation for women and men in Africa.

With unique access to a robust network of entrepreneurs, we will draw upon the knowledge and experience of successful DeAfrica alumni in the provision of mentorship guidance, strategic advice, and leadership development to DeAfrica trainees. We will connect network members with further education, leadership development, funding and partnership opportunities. We seek to inspire creativity, confidence, and tenacity - and provide a supportive environment for women and men members to overcome obstacles and unlock their leadership and business potential.

Join us in shaping Africa's future through education and innovation!



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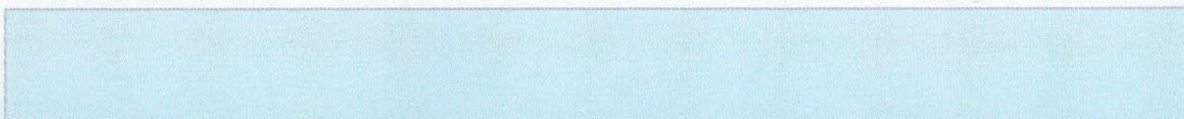
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Top African Tourist Spots to Visit in 2025

By Prince Kurupati

Africa remains an unparalleled travel destination, boasting breathtaking landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and some of the world's most extraordinary wildlife. While many tourists flock to well-known spots like the Maasai Mara, Victoria Falls, and the Pyramids of Giza, the continent is brimming with lesser-explored gems that promise unique and immersive experiences.

In this guide to the top African tourist spots for 2025, we'll explore a balance between popular attractions and undiscovered treasures that deserve more attention. Whether you're an adventure seeker, a cultural enthusiast, or a relaxation lover, Africa offers something for everyone.

The Classics: Timeless Must-Visit African Destinations

While these locations have long been popular, they continue to evolve with new attractions, improved infrastructure, and fresh experiences.

1.1 Victoria Falls – Zambia/Zimbabwe

One of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World, Victoria Falls remains a bucket-list destination. Known locally as Mosi-oa-Tunya («The Smoke That Thunders»), it offers breathtaking views, adrenaline activities like bungee jumping and white-water rafting, and serene sunset cruises on



One of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World, Victoria Falls remains a bucket-list destination. Photo courtesy.

the Zambezi River. In 2025, expect new eco-friendly accommodations and guided night walks to witness the falls under moonlight.

1.2 Maasai Mara National Reserve – Kenya

Kenya's Maasai Mara remains a prime safari destination, particularly during the Great Migration from July to October. With renewed conservation efforts in 2025, travelers can experience more sustainable

safari options, including community-led eco-lodges and guided cultural tours with the Maasai people.

1.3 The Pyramids of Giza & Grand Egyptian Museum – Egypt

Egypt's timeless pyramids never lose their allure, but what makes 2025 special is the recent opening of the long-awaited Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM). Housing thousands of artifacts, including all of King Tutankhamun's treasures, the GEM is set to revolutionize Egypt's tourism scene.

1.4 Bazaruto Archipelago – Mozambique

Bazaruto Archipelago offers unrivaled snorkeling and diving experiences for those seeking pristine beaches and marine biodiversity. The region's luxurious yet eco-friendly lodges make it an excellent choice for sustainable travel in 2025.

explored.

2.1 Loango National Park – Gabon

Dubbed «Africa's Last Eden», Loango National Park is a paradise where rainforests meet the Atlantic Ocean. Visitors can witness elephants, hippos, and even surfing hippos along the beaches. In 2025, conservation-driven tourism initiatives will enhance visitor experiences while protecting the park's fragile ecosystem.

2.2 Ennedi Plateau – Chad

If you're a fan of breathtaking landscapes, Chad's Ennedi Plateau should be on your radar. Featuring otherworldly sandstone formations, hidden rock pools, and ancient petroglyphs, this UNESCO-listed desert wonder remains one of Africa's least-visited gems.

2.3 Lake Turkana – Kenya/Ethiopia

Known as the «Jade Sea», Lake Turkana is the world's largest desert lake and a UNESCO World Heritage site. It offers a dramatic landscape



Dubbed «Africa's Last Eden», Loango National Park is a paradise where rainforests meet the Atlantic Ocean. Photo courtesy.

2. Hidden Gems: Africa's Most Underrated Travel Destinations

Beyond the classics, Africa has an abundance of stunning but lesser-known destinations waiting to be

of volcanic islands, crocodile-filled waters, and prehistoric archaeological sites. Cultural interactions with the El Molo and Turkana people make it a fascinating, off-the-beaten-path destination.

2.4 Île Sainte-Marie – Madagascar

This tropical paradise off Madagascar's eastern coast remains largely undiscovered. With its secluded beaches, pirate history, and seasonal whale watching, Île Sainte-Marie is an idyllic escape for nature lovers.

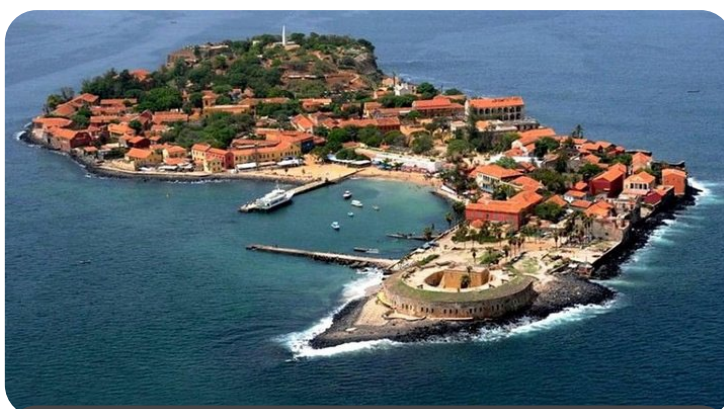
2.5 Mount Nyiragongo – Democratic Republic of Congo

For adventure seekers, climbing Mount Nyiragongo is a thrilling experience. This active volcano is home to the world's largest lava lake, which offers dramatic views of molten lava bubbling inside its crater. While past conflicts have deterred tourists, improved security and eco-tourism efforts make it safer to visit in 2025.

3. Cultural & Historical Treasures: Africa's Rich Heritage Sites

3.1 Lalibela – Ethiopia

Famous for its rock-hewn churches, Lalibela is often dubbed the "New Jerusalem." In 2025, new heritage conservation programs will offer travelers deeper insight into



A deeply moving historical site, Gorée Island was a major hub during the transatlantic slave trade. Photo courtesy.

the town's fascinating history and religious significance.

3.2 Kano Ancient City – Nigeria

With over 1,000 years of history, Kano is home to ancient city walls, bustling markets, and the famous Gidan Makama Museum. It's an excellent stop for history buffs wanting to explore West Africa's medieval past.

3.3 The Island of Gorée – Senegal

A deeply moving historical site, Gorée Island was a major hub during the transatlantic slave trade. Visitors can explore the House of Slaves museum, which tells the painful story of Africa's past while celebrating resilience and cultural heritage.

4. Natural Wonders & Unique Landscapes

4.1 Tsingy de Bemaraha – Madagascar

This UNESCO-listed site features razor-sharp limestone formations, suspension bridges, and incredible biodiversity. A must-visit for adventure seekers, Tsingy de Bemaraha offers a thrilling mix of hiking, wildlife spotting, and breathtaking scenery.

4.2 The Richat Structure – Mauritania

Also known as the "Eye of the Sahara", this massive circular geological formation is visible from space. For travelers looking for an extraordinary desert adventure, the Richat Structure offers a surreal landscape in the heart of the Sahara.

4.3 Lake Assal – Djibouti

The lowest point in Africa and one of the saltiest lakes in the world, Lake

Assal in Djibouti boasts stunning turquoise waters surrounded by otherworldly white salt flats. It's often compared to the Dead Sea, with visitors floating effortlessly in its dense saline waters.

5. Unique Safari & Wildlife Experiences

5.1 Odzala-Kokoua National Park – Republic of Congo

One of the best places in Africa to see Western lowland gorillas, this remote park offers a more intimate and off-the-grid safari experience than the crowded gorilla trekking destinations in Uganda and Rwanda.

5.2 Kidepo Valley National Park – Uganda

Uganda's Kidepo Valley National Park is an underrated gem for wildlife lovers. Nestled in the remote northeast, it offers dramatic landscapes, rich wildlife, and fewer tourists compared to more famous parks.

5.3 Liuwa Plains National Park – Zambia

This lesser-known Zambian park is home to the second-largest wildebeest migration in Africa, yet it remains relatively undiscovered. With vast open plains, rare bird species, and a strong conservation ethos, Liuwa Plains is ideal for nature lovers seeking an offbeat safari experience.



Uganda's Kidepo Valley National Park is an underrated gem for wildlife lovers. Photo courtesy.

Why Africa in 2025?

Africa's travel landscape is evolving with increased sustainability initiatives, community-driven tourism, and infrastructure improvements making remote destinations more accessible. Whether you're looking for legendary landmarks or hidden gems, 2025 is the perfect time to explore Africa's diverse wonders.

From towering waterfalls and ancient cities to untouched beaches and rare wildlife encounters, Africa offers an adventure for every kind of traveler. Which destination are you adding to your 2025 travel bucket list?



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